

# LEAGUES ACROSS THE SEA

## Journalist With Touring Footballers

"IT looks a bit like dog eat dog," said Eddie Waring, in the broad but pleasant accents of a young Yorkshireman, when we asked him for an interview the other day. One of the four British journalists travelling with the English Rugby League team through New Zealand, he told us first how much the team appreciated the warm welcome New Zealand had given its members, but one thing greatly disturbed him.

"I am troubled," he said, "at the opposition and lack of sympathy there seems to be between the Rugby League and the Rugby Union codes in Australia. And I have been told that here, in Wellington, boys who play League at school are not allowed to play the Union game. I feel strongly that boys should be allowed to play any code. There is room for both. League and Union players were good enough to fight in the war together; they should be good enough to play football together."

Waring, who is a broadcaster as well as a pressman, represents the London *Sunday Pictorial* for which he is League feature writer, and his own paper, the *Yorkshire Evening News*; his home town is Dewsbury, Yorkshire. While in Christchurch he broadcast a talk from 3YA.

### An Early Wartime Tour

Though what he writes for his papers is all about League, including a weekly article on the tour, Waring is also compiling a general story about the countries and people visited. While he was manager of the Dewsbury Club in 1939, he said, all football in Britain was stopped on the declaration of war. But on September 8, 1939, at 9.0 p.m., the Government announced that the ban was lifted, and clubs could play matches with the permission of the Chief of Police, who was the man to decide when and where crowds could safely congregate.

Waring got permission from his club to arrange a match against the New Zealanders who were then touring England; the tourists had played only one game when their trip was cancelled. So a match was staged at Dewsbury on September 9, before 10,000 people. It was a win for New Zealand by 16 points to 10, after a 10 to 5 deficit at half-time.

After the game the Dewsbury club directors entertained the New Zealanders and, following football tradition, the players exchanged jerseys, ties and pins as mementoes. He has brought one of those New Zealand jerseys on the present tour. There were two sequels to this affair: The first came in 1941 when some members of the New Zealand team who had returned to England with the NZEF got into touch with him and eventually played for his club. They were Jack Campbell, Ivan Stirling and a Maori forward, Toga Kirkley. These men went overseas. Kirkley and Stirling were captured and Campbell escaped from Crete.



EDDIE WARING  
He was troubled

Waring kept in touch with them by letter while they were prisoners and then, when he arrived in Auckland the other day with the team, the old friendship with Stirling was renewed. He was told, too, that Campbell intended to look him up. Kirkley was killed in an air-raid in London. Waring also renewed acquaintance in Auckland with J. A. Redwood, President of the New Zealand Rugby League, whom he met at the match in England on September 9, 1939.

This was the first time, Waring said, that journalists had accompanied a British Rugby League team on an overseas tour and that was an indication of the popularity of the code in Britain. "We feel very much at home here," he said. "The people are like ourselves. When our plane was coming in and we saw the green farms, I heard some of our chaps say, 'Just like home.'"

We asked Waring if he had met Winston McCarthy, of the NBS, who did the commentaries for the BBC during the recent NZEF Rugby Union tour. "No," he said, "but I would very much like to. Perhaps I'll strike him on the boat for Lyttelton to-night." The other day Waring telephoned his home in England. "It was as clear as a bell," he said, "and it made me feel all the more at home. Not many years ago when a football team went overseas it wasn't heard of for months."

The badge members of the touring team wear on the left breast of the blazer is a lion and crown over a red rose, with a daffodil for Wales, a thistle for Scotland and a shamrock for Ireland. Above it are the words, "British R.L. Australian tour" and below is "1946." And the word Australian, by the way, is a mistake; it was meant to be Australasian, Waring explained.

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