

Imperfect Paradise

(continued from previous page)

Zealand, because of housing and shipping shortages, of the understandable wish to resettle her own Servicemen first, and perhaps also because of internal political obstacles, has done notably little to bend the unsettlement of adventurous war-time British youth to her future advantage.

Some of these shortages and obstacles are formidable, not wholly within your control. Nevertheless, coming as I do from my job amidst teeming Asiatic multitudes and assuming (as the available evidence suggests I must) that you remain opposed to Asiatic immigration, I sense here a great historic opportunity almost missed. Among India's 400 millions are folk fully as talented, mentally and physically, fully as worthy of the best this globe can offer, as any Europeans; and those Indian millions are being increased by a further 30 millions every decade. China, Japan, Malaya, Burma, Indonesia must also be remembered. In Mr. Wendell Willkie's "One World" there will be no room for ethnic vacua, for fertile lands under-populated and insufficiently developed because of un-prescient or timid past policies.

As in the fundamental problem of immigration, so in defence, New Zealand, to a friendly visiting eye, seems to be taking the short-sighted easier course. Britain nowadays is also under a Labour Government whose members once had pacifist traditions. Her post-war domestic strains, productive needs, and manpower shortage are much worse than New Zealand's.

Yet she feels reluctantly obliged by the world's still distressful, precarious state and the peace's chanciness to maintain large armed forces by conscription. Here, the visitor finds with surprise, conscription has lapsed. The argument is heard, in explanation, that to put compulsorily through military training a nation's youth before the shape of any future major war can be discerned is wasteful. That is hardly convincing if not similarly acted upon by all nations.

Holiday Paralysis

The impression of a fortunately placed country not fully pulling its weight is intensified by your holidays. A stranger arriving in one of your towns late on a Friday with business to do, like myself, is startled to find that nothing can be done till Monday. For two whole days in every seven, virtually all business in New Zealand ceases, your urban centres lie paralysed. Similarly a visitor in December, like myself, is confronted, in your Christmas-New Year festival, by an unstaggered summer holiday longer and fuller than anything in the pleasure-loving 1930's during Britain's August holiday season. By it a big proportion of New Zealand's factories, shops and places of commerce is put completely out of action for about three weeks. When so many things urgently need doing everywhere to relieve the loss and suffering from an unprecedented global war, so much holidaying here seems wrong. So, during my visit, seemed the piling up of vital exports through your prolonged waterfront dispute, and the evidence that even within your general 40-hour working week there is idling or skimped effort by some.

Plainly it would be rash for a passing visitor to offer verdict on a much de-

bated complex economic question: whether New Zealand's main activity and source of wealth, farming, has been properly balanced with her new industrial development. Reflection suggests that a country of small population, dependent chiefly on the produce of her grassy fields, with poor internal resources in metals or coal, may not have capacity for some sorts of work in factories—that your new industrialism, in fact, may prove in part parasitic. If so, the parasitism will in part be blame-worthy on the 1930-33 slump. After so shocking an experience then of collapsed world-prices for farm produce, it is understandable that New Zealand should strive to widen the range of employment, to take some eggs out of the one hazardous rural basket.

But however your industrial programme may work out, it seems a serious national weakness that so many of the farming community, still the most important producers, should remain in unreconciled opposition to your Labour Government—a Government moreover that has lost some electoral support lately, and contains curiously few young men.

Social and Racial Justice

Another problem on which a stranger feels a diffidence in commenting is your domestic racial one. Though the claim may be right that New Zealand has done better than any country in avoiding injustice and intolerance based on colour-prejudice, relations between the numerically preponderant whites or pakehas and the Maoris do not seem, from hasty observation, so idyllic as some literature suggests. That last year's general election left so delicate a balance between your two chief political parties, with the Maoris in the position of make-weights, may temporarily worsen matters.

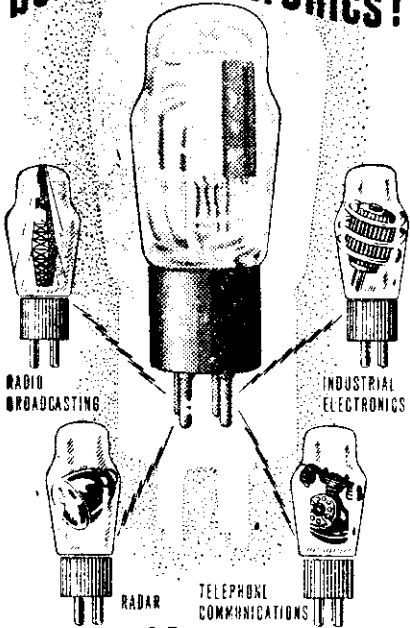
But they are not bad. Plainly, social and racial justice, to an impressive extent, has already been won in New Zealand. In sharp contrast to the huge, diversified, tragic country I work in, in contrast too—even nowadays, under its new Labour Government—with the island where I was born, New Zealand has few inequalities, and is practically without rich or poor. Self-respecting, middlingly prosperous, easy-going citizens walk your streets and fields; good people nearly all—but perhaps rather too much alike in thought and habits.

There lies my concluding criticism. I think I discern in your admirably unstratified society one curious flaw. Perhaps it is socialism's inevitable outcome, perhaps a special consequence of your history. By comparison with the British public, New Zealanders seem in some ways conventional. For the unorthodox, the social nonconformist, the eccentric and the solitary, there is probably less scope here than in Britain.

A friendly visitor's views have now been set forth frankly. New Zealand is no Utopia—though nowadays some optimists in less happy, war-ravaged lands suppose so. It has diverse imperfections, mankind everywhere being imperfect. But it is a very delightful place to be in nevertheless, certainly among the most favoured on earth in these times. To this particular visitor it has given the pleasantest, fullest, most refreshing holiday he has enjoyed for 10 years. He is grateful; and would like, some day, to

(continued on next page)

What is behind Electronics?



It's the Vacuum tube developed by Brimar

What is a vacuum tube? It's a highly delicate precision built electrical valve—playing a vitally important role, because without it there would be no Electronics. Foremost in the development of electronics, of radio and television broadcasting equipment, and of Radar, was S.T.C.-made Brimar. Years of leadership, of achievements in technical experiment are linked with the development of Brimar Radio receiving valves.

Always specify Brimar. The valve with the world reputation for strength and reliability.

BRIMAR

British Radio

V A L V E S

Standard Telephones & Cables Pty. Ltd. (Inc. in N.S.W.)

Wellington Box 438 Christchurch Box 983
Wanganui Box 293 Auckland Box 107