

THE ELEPHANT AND SOCIETY

THE talk which we reprint below was broadcast on Sunday evening, October 31, by DR. D. DAICHES RAPHAEL, M.A., D.Phil., who has occupied the Chair of Philosophy at Otago University for the past three years. He entitled it "Some Reflections on New Zealand"—and in the belief that what he had to say merits further reflection by New Zealanders we offer our readers the full text.

THREE years ago I was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy at Otago University. I have lately resigned that position, and shall shortly be leaving to take up a Lectureship at the University of Glasgow.

To-night I'm going to think aloud about New Zealand, but perhaps you might like me to begin by saying why I decided to come to New Zealand and why I am now going back to Britain.

Well, it was partly a matter of chance that I came to New Zealand at all. The



PROFESSOR D. DAICHES RAPHAEL
"Most people like best the places they grew up in"

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Tahitians. They took it in good part, however, and joined in the drinking of the coconut milk.

The Dane was one of the four members of the crew of a 52ft. yawl which was making its way round the world, and Rolley joined forces with them, living on the boat and, after several weeks, sailing with them to Fiji.

The air of British efficiency and respectability of Suva did not appeal to him after the freedom of other parts of the Pacific and he soon returned to Tahiti, where he obtained a job teaching English to Chinese children. They knew French, but as Rolley's French was limited to the rusty school-boy variety he used a method (of which he had read in a digest!) whereby a language can be taught without the teacher knowing any tongue other than the one he is teaching.

Later he visited the Marquesas. It was a rough trip. One of the crew was washed overboard, but was rescued after a quarter of an hour in the rough shark-infested water. The beautiful Marquesas, where the soil was amazingly fertile, attracted Rolley greatly, but his stay was cut short by an accident, and

Chair of Philosophy at Otago University happened to be advertised at a time when the war was coming to an end and I was consequently looking forward to leaving my war work and returning to the teaching of philosophy. But that isn't the whole of the story. I wouldn't have applied for a philosophy job in any country, but when the Otago position was advertised, I reflected that if I wanted to visit a British Dominion, New Zealand was the one. I didn't want to go to something very different from Britain, and New Zealand is, of course, in many ways rather like the British Isles. The climate was said to be better, and that sounded attractive. But, more important to my mind, New Zealand attracted me, first because of its progressive social legislation, and secondly, because the relations between the European population and the Maoris seemed so much better than the relations between white and coloured people anywhere else in the world.

So much for the reasons why I came. Why am I going back? Well, you may have noticed that I spoke of "visiting" a Dominion. I never imagined that I would want to stay there. I like Britain and Europe too much to say farewell to them for ever, and I always anticipated that I would go back after a few years. I hadn't expected to return quite so soon, and in some ways I am sorry that my stay in New Zealand has been so short. But the opportunity to return was offered to me, and it seemed wise to take it while it was going. I am particularly sorry that I haven't been able to see more of the New Zealand countryside and its wonderful scenery. But on the other hand, if I had stayed much longer, I should have found myself even more reluctant to leave than I am now.

he had to return to Tahiti for hospital treatment. After a further stay there he joined a ship and worked his way to Australia.

He signed off at Geelong and hitchhiked up the Australian coast. For a while he worked in a sugar plantation in Queensland, and was perturbed at the methods employed, only artificial fertiliser being used to replace all that was being taken from the ground, for waste foliage was burnt. Productivity was slowly decreasing and, while crops were still good, he had doubts about the future of the land if these methods were continued.

Later he joined a travelling sideshow and worked his way down to Brisbane, where he caught a ship for Auckland. And all I need to round off this story is to be able to say that Rolley has returned to "Stonehenge" to live happily ever after convinced that New Zealand is the "best little country in the world." Such an ending would doubtless be very pleasing to all staunch New Zealanders, but it would be a dream, not reality. Rolley has applied for a visa so that he can go back to Tahiti.

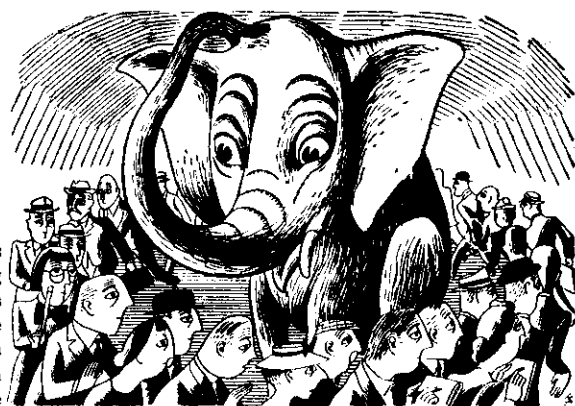
—P.M.

So perhaps it is just as well that I am going before the pang becomes too painful; for I have no doubt that my roots are in Britain and in Europe. Most people like best the places they grew up in. That, in short, is why I am going back.

No Seasons Here

I have mentioned to you the reasons which made New Zealand seem attractive to me when I contemplated coming here, and you may want to know whether I found that the country came up to my expectations. Broadly, yes. The climate is undoubtedly better than that at home. Mind you, it takes a bit of getting used to. I found the sudden and violent changes very trying at first. It's true that England is a lot colder and has less sunshine, but when it's cold in England you know it's cold and it stays cold. You pile on your winter woollies and you keep them on. But in New Zealand you have to be ready to change your clothes at an hour's notice. In winter it can be very hot in the afternoon, and in summer it can be jolly cold at morning, noon, or night. You never can tell. There aren't any seasons really. In England we always think of the antipodean Christmas as an affair of ice-cream on the sea shore, but I soon found that in Dunedin at least it isn't very different from the English Christmas. But all the same, I think the Dunedin climate is good, whatever people in the North Island may say. The summers are disappointing, but the winters are beautifully mild, and the autumns are lovely.

Likewise, I find the general social atmosphere at least as good as I had anticipated. I was glad to see a decent basic wage, good standards of housing, and, roughly speaking, as near an approach to equalitarianism as we are likely to get in this imperfect world. It was good to find the tram conductors talking to me freely about my job, and telling me about theirs, looking on me as a potential friend and expecting me to reciprocate. All this, I think, is fine. But I must confess that I was a bit disappointed in the Social Security legislation. The spirit behind it is rather different from what I expected. You see, in England, the Beveridge Report was the response to a genuine and widespread feeling of wanting to make a better society—a spirit of idealism, if you like, though I don't want to exaggerate its extent. Now I had expected to find an even stronger spirit of idealism behind the New Zealand social security legislation, because that hadn't needed a war to bring it about. But in fact, it seems to me, Social Security in New Zealand has a rather individualistic, almost slightly selfish, feeling behind it. Maybe I'm doing New Zealanders an injustice in saying this. Anyway, I consider that the effect of Social Security is on the whole good, though I do think some



features of its administration weaken initiative and could be improved without any essential loss of the over-all advantages.

New Zealand Has Been Lucky

The relation of the New Zealander to the State is a very interesting one. He is far less suspicious of State interference than the Western European is apt to be, far more ready to turn to the State when a job needs to be done. This difference of attitude is not due to any deep-seated difference of temperament. I think it is purely the result of historical and geographical facts. The history of government in Europe is filled with memories of tyranny and oppression; the New Zealander has been more lucky, simply because his community and its government only came into existence in the 19th Century. That is the historical factor. The geographical one is this. New Zealand is a fair-sized country inhabited by an incredibly small number of people, often scattered in tiny villages and solitary homesteads; consequently, many of those people wouldn't get common services if they were not centrally planned and largely financed from central taxation; it wouldn't pay private enterprise to provide such services. Thus a certain amount of central planning in New Zealand is inevitable, and there is no dark history to give warning of the dangers of too much centralised control. So the New Zealander takes Government control for granted, and whenever a new task is called for he looks to the Government to take it on. André Siegfried noted this in his book *Democracy in New Zealand*, written at the beginning of the century, but I don't think he appreciated its causes. And likewise I don't think they are appreciated by those people abroad who describe New Zealand as a "laboratory of social experiment." A laboratory is a place where you try out experiments with the idea of using them outside on a large scale if they are successful. Now if you jiggle about with a chemical in a test-tube, it behaves in the same way as it would in a large container. But that's not true of people. Social institutions that work in New Zealand won't necessarily work in other parts of the world where you don't have the same conditions repeated. The social conditions peculiar to New Zealand are a small population in a good-sized and highly productive country, as the result of which New Zealand has to have a certain amount of central planning and can afford expensive administration.

Now of course the ordinary New Zealander doesn't bother his head much
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