

ISLANDS ARE FOR ISLANDERS

(Written for "The Listener" by
G. M. WILSON)

BACK in the late twenties I was privileged to become a settler on a few acres of bush land at Norfolk Island. I had little money, only health and strength, and spurred on by the prospect of a competency through a banana plantation I set to with the fervour of a pioneer. The climate allowed for first, a tent, then a hut, with simple cooking arrangements (a kerosene tin with two bars across). Fruit and vegetables grew easily and profusely, and all seemed well in its simplicity. Later I took a wife and built a bungalow; fresh meat replaced the canned; and a modern stove provided a much higher standard of living all round.

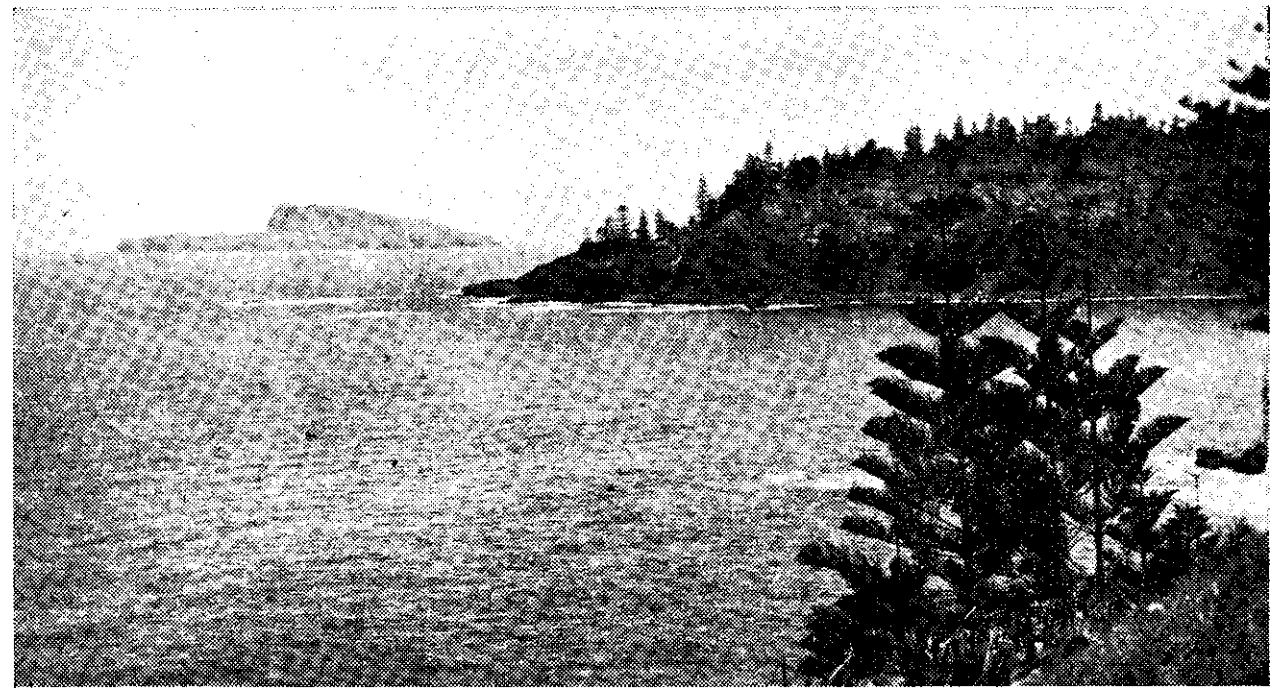
THE Islanders, a fine people, simple, hospitable, and wise, with a background of tradition and experience, looked on, marvelling at our industry and enterprise, but too polite to advise. We believed we had found independence and a freedom from the restraints of the Mainland, a way of life which would include the amenities of a city and still allow us to live an Island existence. Bananas sold well in Sydney and Auckland; our Canadian-wonder green beans and seed were established on the New Zealand market; and neither Sydney nor Auckland could get enough of our juicy oranges.

And so we spread ourselves. Motor cars and trucks replaced the faithful horse. Golf became an essential pastime. Our homes were furnished more and more like those we had left. Stores opened displaying temptingly the delicacies from the Mainland which we relished. We were prosperous, so why not enjoy the best of both Island and Mainland?

Then gradually something crept in. Whispers were heard that merchants did not want our products. Some growers actually had received debit notes instead of cheques. Storekeepers began to assess our capacity to pay

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being solemn and even priggish, but at any rate they are not usually shallow or superficial. Looking as an outsider upon the two dominions I receive the impression that all the current fads of European and American literature and art are imitated—and brilliantly imitated—in Australia before New Zealand has even heard of them. Our reactions in these remote islands are notably sluggish, and we have hardly begun to create anything in painting or the theatre, but when it does come I believe it will not be slick or cheaply sensational. It will be solid, and it will be our own.

This is one of the reasons why our national theatre, when we get it, should not be afraid to give us the works—the works, in this case, of such as Sophocles, Shakespeare, Ibsen, Chekov and Shaw. My impression is that the New Zealanders, like everyone else, will take the easiest stuff that's going, if left to their own devices, but if offered the very best, a larger proportion of people here than in some other places will reach up and take it.



NORFOLK ISLAND seascape, with Phillip Island in the background—"Memories of glorious sunshine, singing birds, and seas lapping over golden beaches"

our bills. Credit was restricted. We did not panic, but we were preplexed. Surely a slump could not affect Norfolk Island!

But it did. One by one we had to leave, selling out to pay our store bills and provide a steamer passage. We had to leave because we simply "could not carry on"—we who were of the Mainland.

BUT what of the Islanders? They were educated much as we were in State schools. They read good literature, and worked very much as we did. How did it affect them? They did not need to give up their homes, and land, neither were they particularly embarrassed. We from New Zealand had gone to Norfolk Island to live free, we thought, but we carried bondage and

defeat with us the day we tried to make Norfolk Island another New Zealand. We demanded amenities we considered essential, improvements we called them, but a day came when we had to forgo all, because we failed to understand that the basis of simple living was to keep within the resources nature had provided. The Islanders were not disturbed! Did not the sun shine, and ample rain provide pasture, with vegetables and fruit in season? They carried on as before, working sufficiently to provide food and raiment and gathering in groups under shady trees to sing and enjoy one another's company, selling in Sydney and Auckland products to provide, now a less sum for those "other" things, but still sufficient. They lived on their Island,

asking no more than was their due from their Island, and not attempting to give it Mainland standards.

AND so we of the Mainland were defeated. We had to give up, not because there was insufficient food for our sustenance, or local timber for our shelter, or even surplus products for export, but because we could not live without Mainland "comfort." We failed because we brought to the Island a measure of value which did not apply there, and so were obliged to come away with nothing but memories of glorious sunshine, singing birds, and seas lapping over golden beaches.

So it will be again if we join a second island rush and forget that islands are for islanders only.

From the House to the Country

EVERY listener to New Zealand Parliamentary broadcasts during the last eight years has heard the voice of K. G. Collins announcing, as he sat at the instrument-panel on the floor of the House, "You are listening to Mr. . . . Member for . . .," for that has been part of his duties in the course of 20 years' service with the NZBS. Mr. Collins has now been appointed Station Manager of Station 1YZ, the new 10 kw. station at Rotorua, which is designed to give first-class radio coverage to listeners throughout the Rotorua-Bay of Plenty area, and which will be opened officially on Wednesday, April 27.

During his 20 years at 2YA, Mr. Collins was responsible for the technical side of all studio work, which includes the various aspects of microphone technique and "balance." He has done similar work for all studios in the Wellington district area since the amalgamation



Spencer Digby photograph
K. G. COLLINS

of the National and Commercial Services. He has also had considerable experience of announcing, for he was assistant announcer at 2YA for 15 years, taking over the senior announcer's duties during the war years.