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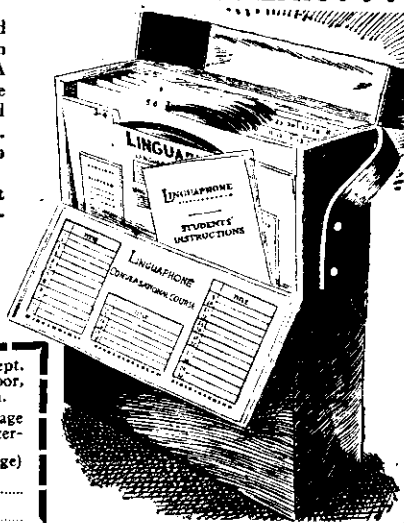
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The Dream and the Reality

LAST week we wrote about an American view of life in New Zealand. It was, of course, the view of only one American, and fair-minded readers would not see it as anything more. If, however, we want to think about the difficulties of mental adjustment which confront the stranger in our country we do not need to look beyond our own kinsmen. We are frequently reminded of this by statements attributed to English people who, after staying a few months or perhaps a year, go home with strong prejudices. They do not like New Zealand, and there is often an inference that they would not have come here if they had received reliable information about our social system. It is necessary at such times to remember the thousands of settlers who have adapted themselves to New Zealand conditions. The satisfied and happy settler has nothing to say: he is too busy earning his living and making himself at ease in his new surroundings. Men and women with grievances are usually more vocal: they feel that the world should hear of their disappointments. We may be certain that such people would want to cry out against their destiny if they were set down in the fairest land which can exist in the imagination. Yet it may be wise to remember that even the well-adjusted settler has much to overcome before the strangeness disappears. This truth has become clearer to us after reading a pamphlet* which explains in a simple and straightforward way what the settler may expect to find when he reaches these islands. The ordinary New Zealander must feel that settlers who read the pamphlet, and who later are disappointed with the reality, have only themselves to blame if they have expected too much. Nevertheless, we come here to a

psychological dilemma. A plain and accurate description of life in a new country can provide a factual framework, but it must be filled in by personal experience. The man or woman who has grown up in England or Europe is bound to think in terms of what is known and familiar. If the wages seem to be better than a man has been able to earn at home, he thinks involuntarily of the use he can make of the money, and he thinks of amenities and pleasures to which he has become accustomed. But the New Zealander finds his pleasures in an unsophisticated environment. Our night life, though a natural expression of our rather prosaic habits, and therefore satisfying to us, may seem a little dull to the newcomer with memories of London. Further, photographs of our mountains and lakes may leave an impression that New Zealanders go often and cheaply to places where life can be edged with the smooth beauty of country above the snowline, whereas most of us spend our days in towns and cities from which the mountains are to be seen only as enticing shapes in the distance. If we want more than that, we must save for our holidays as firmly as most people in other parts of the world. Settlers from overseas are people with private dreams, and the mere fact of crossing the ocean is in itself an encouragement for illusion. The pamphlet *Prospects of Settlement* will be valuable, but we may be sure that dreamers and optimists will continue to come hopefully in search of Utopia. Most of them will adapt themselves to the sober facts of life in New Zealand, and some of them will learn to see beyond the facts to the vision of our country that is in the minds of the native-born. If, however, we see the need for patience with our kinsmen, we may find it easier to understand, or at least to tolerate, the opinions of visitors.

*NEW ZEALAND: *Prospects of Settlement*. Issued by the Immigration Division of the Department of Labour and Employment, Wellington.

N.Z. LISTENER, OCTOBER 28, 1949.