

(Continued from previous page)

The Maori language, per se, appeals to us as a graceful, charming speech in which few harshnesses appear. But we have only to listen to Maori vowels as spoken by the *pakeha* to realise how they can be mutilated practically beyond recognition, with a deftness that seems almost deliberate. *Paikok*, for Paekakariki, or worse still, *Paikokareek*; *Wokker*, for Whakarewarewa; and *Waimack*, for Waimakariri. The aboriginal language is naturally harsh, so that there are numerous influences operating to sharpen our vowel sounds and to encourage the evolution of somewhat unlovely-sounding slang terms.

Whatever conclusions New Zealanders may reach on the subject of slang, let them be wary of dismissing it as a mere passing phase in the history of their country.

Australia has been using her own slang for 140 years or more; New Zealand for over a century. It is obvious that, as is the case with every other large country in the world, slang serves its purpose in the Antipodes and will survive prejudices against it.

Sergeant-Major "Lofty" Blomfield

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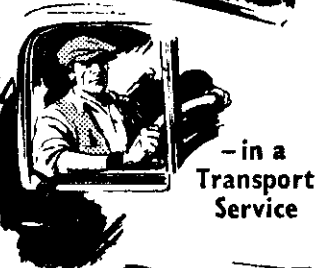
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