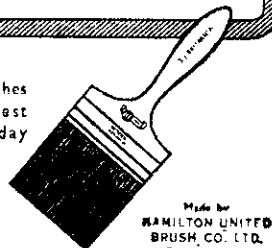


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THROUGH NORTHLAND

TEA at 8/6 a pound, they say. Well, there's one good answer to that. Grow your own. There's a little book printed in England in 1865 which lists the tea-growing countries of the world and New Zealand is on that list. Sounds fantastic, but Jim Henderson, wandering through Northland, found a man growing tea—really first-rate tea. With Tom Graveson, of Kerikeri, tea-growing is only a hobby, so far. He makes his living growing citrus fruit, but a while back he heard of a man, Bruce Westland, of Tuakau, near Hamilton, who had grown six tea bushes from seed sent in a match-box from Ceylon. Tom Graveson got two young bushes from him, waited four years for the tea to develop and raise flowers and seeds, and now he is raising young tea plants quite easily which give tea after three years.

At present the Gravesons are picking tea from two bushes—one Ceylon, one Darjeeling—at the rate of half a pound of finished tea or four pounds of fresh shoots and first leaves a week from one bush. Frosts up to twelve degrees haven't harmed the bushes, and they have no insect enemies or diseases. You can pick your shoots in the morning, spread it on sacks in the sun for the day, put it in the oven at 400 degrees at the end of the day, leave to cool and—"Your tea, sir? Ready, sir!"

In his travels through Northland, Jim Henderson found many unusual things. Very largely he found it to be a picture of a wilderness turning into a promised land. What had been miles and miles of sullen, unprepossessing manuka scrub was blossoming into green, fat pastures where sheep grazed nose-down in the grass, and dairy cattle comfortably carried out their lactation processes.

"War in the North," the fifth talk in Jim Henderson's *This Is New Zealand* series on Northland, tells the story of the breaking-in of huge tracts of scrub country under the direction of the Superintendent of Land Development, Auckland. This Government project not only cleans up the country for ex-soldier settlers, but top-dresses, grasses, stocks with sheep and cattle, fences, builds houses, woolsheds, yards, sheep-dips and puts in sanitation. Then along come the farmers to take over, to lease or buy straight out, these farms carrying 50 cows or 800 sheep.

People are important in places like Northland, where pioneering is still very much a day-by-day activity. Sometimes, as in the case of Bruce Crowley and his wife and three young children, it's not so much breaking in the land as breaking in yourself, because this family took up a dairy farm near Okaihau, 170 miles from Auckland, after leaving a successful business in the city, after two years' subscription to the *N.Z. Journal of Agriculture*, and after one week's work on a farm. And they're making a

success of it, as Jim Henderson tells in "Escape from the City."

Northland seems to be the sort of place which breeds them hardy and independent. Jim Henderson met Jim Taaffe, who spends his days beach-combing. Jim Taaffe scours an awful lot of beach—the Ninety Mile. On it he's found timber and turtles, love-letters and ambergris. Another elderly lone venturer is the heroine of "The Home and the Arum Lilies." She is Mrs. Charlotte Larkin who, at the age of 60, designed and built herself her own home. She started with a gorse-covered section for £40. She slashed and grubbed the gorse, then levelled the ground, made her own clay bricks, carrying water from a creek a quarter of a mile away, made the fireplace of stones from the beach; then, with the aid of a friend, aged 68, the roof and windows went in, the pipes and the tank. The total cost of the land and the five-roomed cottage was £159.



A BLACK MARLIN being hauled in off Cape Brett in the Bay of Islands



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There is courage in the communities of Northland, too. Jim Henderson, in "The Red Lion of Courage," describes the epic migration of the Scottish settlers who left their colony at Nova Scotia from 1851 to 1860 and settled at Waipu. Half around the world they sailed in six little ships from 100 to 300 tons. In his talk Jim Henderson has included the recorded voice of Mrs. Norman McKenzie, aged 101 years, and one of the last two survivors of the voyage. Beside Parenga Harbour sprawls New Zealand's most northerly settlement—Te Hapua, the pool or the hollow. This tiny cluster of 200 people includes two pakehas, the school teacher, Pat Gaitely, and his wife.

Jim Henderson humps his swag to Spirits' Track itself in "To the Top," to Cape Reinga lighthouse in "The First Light," to Russell for "Big Fish," to Ngataki, in search of a typical Maori school, and to the sanctuary of Little Barrier Island, where "The Bird's the Boss." *This Is New Zealand* will be broadcast by ZB stations at 7.30 p.m., beginning on Wednesday, February 16.