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The Third Million

THE population of New Zealand is growing rapidly, and by 1975 is expected to be 3,000,000. A reviewer who looks at the Government's *Economic Survey, 1953*, on page 12 explains what this will mean in houses, schoolrooms and hospital beds. In the next 22 years New Zealanders are going to be very busy people: they will have to be, if their economy is to stand the heavy and increasing strains of expansion. Moreover, the strains will not end suddenly in 1975. According to provisional estimates, the population will be nearly 5,000,000 in the year 2000. Most adults now living will have no cause to be anxious about their situation at the turn of the century; but a nation has to make plans for the future, and these plans will affect all of us for the rest of our lives.

It is clear, for instance, that there must be continued and heavy investment in capital works. National income and savings must be drawn upon to increase the generation of electricity, to build schools and hospitals and housing settlements, to replace old buildings, and possibly to make far-reaching changes in transport systems. If more money is needed for these works, less can be spared for current expenditure. The national income can be raised by higher farm production; but much of the new output will have to feed and clothe a larger population, and the export surplus will not be easily maintained. It is, of course, impossible to look far into the future. Problems are made to seem larger than life-size when they are brought together for speculative treatment. Yet if the population of New Zealand is to increase as rapidly as the evidence suggests, there are questions of some urgency to be dealt with.

New houses will probably occupy more than 60,000 acres by 1975. Where are they to be built without swallowing productive land, including the rich land needed for market gardens? Are our cities to go outwards, or should they begin to go upwards?

These questions, and others like them, have more than economic implications. Our social habits are not immutable, but can be changed by physical facts. A rising population does not necessarily mean that more people will live as we are living today. Amenities in the cities, especially transport and recreation, can be outdistanced by congestion. Ribbon development offers spacious and pleasant living, but has to be paid for in waste of time and energy, and in a consequent restriction of social activity. Finally, if plans and decisions are made, it is doubtful if they can be acted upon without some infringement of our present liberties. We are facing the dilemma of a young nation which, accustomed to spreading its butter thickly, may have to pass through a time when the same amount of butter will have to go further. In the background of our thoughts is always "the standard of living." We live comfortably because farm products are far in excess of what is needed for home consumption. Expansion is inevitable, and will bring great benefits as well as difficulties; but we see it as a process which will allow us to keep our advantages, even to improve them. The truth is, however, that New Zealand is still a frontier country; and this means, or should mean, hard work for its people. Whether we have kept the frontier outlook, without which there can be no progress, is a question that can be answered only when it is seen what preparations are made for the third million.

"Why not me?"

—thought
Uncle
Chris.



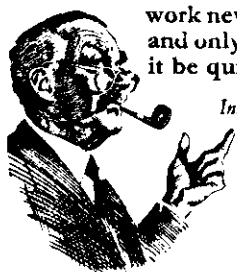
"Take the job I want, would he? .. Been toadying to Mr. Peters, has he? .. I'm the one who deserves to be made a Salesman, not him!"

"These were the thoughts that tumbled through my mind for weeks afterwards ... for weeks I was short-tempered and surly.

"Until the day the truth dawned—and it was a blow, I can tell you! Suddenly I realised why Jim Richards had been made a Salesman, not me. Because he deserved it. While I'd been just jogging along, Jim had been showing some real enterprise; he'd put the good of the firm first, relying on them to recognise it. They had—and, underneath, now I was rather glad.

"So I decided to be like Jim. I worked. Six months later I was appointed a Salesman, too, and I've never looked back.

"D'you know, that's what I've always noticed since—willingness to work gets what it deserves in private enterprise. Real work never goes unnoticed there, and only under this system can it be quickly rewarded!"



Inserted in the interests of all sections of the community by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of New Zealand.