Old New Zealand-The Days Before Discovery

The outstanding success of the celebration of the Treaty of Waitangi directs attention to the past history of the Dominion—even before the advent of man. A series of talks on these lines is being given by the Rev. A. B. Chappell, M.A., from 1YA, and we reproduce here the first talk which is particularly appropriate at this juncture.

THAT New Zealand is old should never be forgotten by those interested in its history, a history full of fascination. This land, though bearing a name suggestive of youth, is one of the oldest in the world. In the remote days when the earth was cooling and crinkles appeared on its hardening surface, there was, it is thought, a vast ridge, broken here and there, of which these little islands remain to tell the tale. Down the Eastern Hemisphere it ran, by way of the Rockies of North America and the Andes of the South, went across the Antarctic region, where its heights yet challenge investigation, came on to endure in these and other islets lifted bolt above the sea, and so continued across to Asia, where the Himalayas rear their towering heads. That is, in part, conjecture, but without doubt, as many geological features show, together with our bird life of very ancient lineage and such rare quadrupeds as the tuatara, these islands are old beyond reckoning.

It is not of any natural "claims of long descent," however, that I am to speak, but of the human happenings that prefaced the life we New Zealanders here lead. These we can trace with considerable precision.

For long centuries New Zealand, far from the birthplace of man, was unknown to him. Its physical changes, wonderfully on beyond his ken. Not written in the remnants of glacial and volcanic activity, were unobserved. Its clothing with verdure went slowly, until civilisation had passed through ages of varying fortune did he glimpse this land, and what we call its "discovery" was to wait until quite modern times. Of that discovery—when voyagers from far-off Europe lighted upon it, in their bold venturings across the world—we are to think together a fortnight hence.

Visitors From the Pacific.

CENTURIES before Cook came, before Tasman saw New Zealand's southern cliffs lift unexpectedly out of the east, these islands were visited by brown men of the Pacific. These voyagers sprang from the island peoples who had earlier spread eastward from Asia. This Polynesian stock, giving rise to the Maori of New Zealand, was not mankind's earliest representative in the Pacific. There is some authority for the belief that, about the seventh century B.C., Phoenicians settled in these spacious waters. In Easter Island, where the great stone images and an unknown script cut into wood bear witness to a very ancient civilisation touching it once upon a time, a folk traditionally described as "long-eared" were of old in possession. There are legends among many Polynesians of a preceding people, the Manahune, of whom little is recalled beyond their name In Maori lore is a circumstantial story of the finding here of some earlier inhabitants—non-Polynesian, to judge from the description in the story.

Whatever these things denote—and they cannot be airily dismissed—of New Zealand's Maori occupation we have some sure knowledge. The tale begins in a remote corner of the world. In a land far away to the westward, named Uru, the ancestors of the Maori once dwelt. They migrated eastward to a country called Irihia, a hot country to which legend sometimes confusingly gives the name Hawaiki. Is it unimportant that an old Sanscrit name for India corresponds closely to this ancient Irihia? In that land these ancestors met many tribulations, including constant warring with a primitive black-skinned folk; and eventually they sought a new home, eastward still across the ocean, ever making for the rising sun. So they came to Tawhiti-roa, and afterwards Tawhiti-nui. At length six vessels—great double canoes or single craft fitted with outriggers, steered by reliance on the heavenly bodies—reached the Pacific isles of Ahu, Maui, and Hawaiki.

Great Drift Voyages.

A COMPARATIVELY quiet life followed for a while. Then, increase of numbers and consequent quarrels set many of them afloat again after the manner of their forefathers. Some of these adventurings were drift voyages, daringly risked before the sea-roads of the surrounding Pacific became known; and two of these bold drifts led to the finding of New Zealand. Indeed, there is a tradition of a southward journey, onward from these islands to the region of the Antarctic. In that region, ever and anon, the descendants of those sea-rovers, unable to return, light large fires to acquaint the Maoris of New Zealand of the fact that they survive and are in need of help. Less imaginative, most of us call these plaintive signals the Aurora Australis.

Great winds, at all events, are known to have brought hither from Hawaiki, in the Society Group, the first Maoris to see this land. One, a westerly sweeping through Melanesia, brought one company directly to the North Island. Another, easterly, brought indirectly the first settlers in the South Island.

It is with the names of Kupe and Ngahue and Toi that these earliest arrivals are particularly associated. The first two, in company, made their landfall near the North Cape. A white overhanging cloud was the first sign of land. "He ao! He ao!" cried one of the voyagers, wife of Kupe ("A cloud! A cloud!"). So New Zealand got its first name, Aotea (White Cloud), afterwards lengthened to Ao-tea-roa (the Long White Cloud), as its far-stretching shore lines north and south became known. The islands from which these adventures had come were small in comparison with the land on which they had lighted.

Others Induced to Come.

THEIR explorations led them down the East Coast of the North Island. They camped on the shores of what is now Wellington Harbour—nearly 900 years before Cook found it. Exploration continued—across Cook Strait, into Porirua Harbour, and then down to the West Coast of the South Island. At Arahura greenstone was discovered in the bed of the river—a discovery that was to prove of great importance—and thereabouts they first killed a moa.

They did not stay in New Zealand. returning across 2000 miles of ocean to their old home. But the news they took back was destined to induce others to come and settle. Soon a way known to many was opened between the far-off Society Group and this inviting land. The day of haphazard roving was passing. There was one more drift voyage, however, of consequence. It was that which brought hither the people called, by the Maori, the Maruiwi, after the name of one of this people's chiefs, and later known as the Mouriuri They were not Polynesians. Tall, spare, thin-shanked folk, with their noses and widespread nostrils, and overhanging eyebrows, and some of them with fuzzy hair, they have passed into Maori tradition as a people of low culture, indolent, and treacherous. They cannot have been so mean in attainments as they are customarily described. The evidence points to a relationship to the Melanesian section of the Fijians, and some crafts of non-Polynesian origin among the Maoris doubtless sprang from contact with them.

Two hundred years of this partial Mouriuri occupation were followed by the coming of Toi, and then the several organised migrations from Hawaiki. These, which gave origin to the various tribal groups in New Zealand, are the subject of oft-told tales. Their chief points of interest may be left until the story of Maori conflicts comes to be told in this series. Meanwhile, it is well to recall that these islands, so far remote from Europe, but eventually occupied by white men and brown, living together in amity and co-operation, were so long ago first visited by voyagers across the sea. Even in human reckoning, ours is indeed an Old New Zealand.

Radio on the Railway--the Modern Touch

A Glorious Run to Egmont as a Week-End Outing

"THE only thing we want now is a radio!" That is what the big man with the booming voice and overpowering personality said, as the train ran through the afternoon sunshine on its way to Mount Egmont.

"Well, let's have it," responded a quiet stranger in a grey suit, as he lifted from the floor a neat black box, removed one side, and adjusted it on the top. Then he adjusted the discs, and, consulting his watch to see that 2YA was "on the air," he switched on and there it was! Amazed exclamations on all sides greeted this performance, but there it was in the portable radio in operation. For over an hour the excursionists maintained contact with 2YA, greatly to their delight. The radio fans who were present seized the opportunity to impress others with the lordly luxury of "listening" and its charms, and undoubtedly many converts were made, and this was the latest week-end run of the railways from Wellington to Mount Egmont. It will probably come as news to most to know that on one week-end recently the railways ran excursions from Auckland to the National Kauri Forests of Dargaville, from Invercargill and Dunedin to the Southern Lakes, from Christchurch to the Bealey Glacier, from Wellington to Hawera and Mount Egmont, from Palmerston North and the Wairarapa to Napier, and from the central North Island townships to Wellington and the cool sea breezes of Paekakariki. And each and every one of these specially devised outings exceeded expectations both with the railways and the travellers. Several factors have contributed to this result, for one thing New Zealanders are discovering that they do not know New Zealand. This is a defect which—thanks to radio—is gradually being remedied, and with the spreading of greater knowledge of the Dominion there is born the desire to see. So the railway is stepping in to supply the need, and is doing the job very thoroughly too.

RUN TO MOUNT EGMONT.

Mount Egmont is nearly 250 miles from Wellington, and previously Wellingtonians could only reach this lonely sentinel of the Taranaki Plains by private and individual enterprise, entailing the expenditure of much time and adding up to a rather costly figure even for a visit to this perfect cone which raises its volcanic peak over 8000 feet up—right into the region of everlasting snow. This particular outing could be done at a total cost of not more than £3 to the individual.

And this is how it was accomplished The railway made it known that the excursion would be undertaken if it could be accomplished cheaply for the passengers, and they set the example by cutting the ordinary fares in half. The hostels and other accommodation places in Hawera followed suit by reducing their tariffs below the ruling rate for the benefit of the week-end travellers. Then a low charge was decided upon by the motor companies for the conveyance of passengers from Hawera to the mountain, and special arrangements were made at Dawson Falls for providing a hot luncheon at the accommodation house there, for this is the point—over 3000 feet up—at which road traffic terminates. For the convenience of trippers the railway ticket was made to include all transport charges, such as motor rates and mountain toll fees, and the Department also took in hand the arrangement of accommodation for the visit to Hawera.

So convenient were the transport arrangements made that from the time of leaving Wellington at about 1 o'clock on Saturday afternoon to the time of arrival back before midnight on Sunday, 406 miles were travelled by rail, 60 miles by motor, and as much further as the excursionists cared to walk during the five hours spent on the mountain. And this was accomplished without interfering with a good night's rest at Hawera on Saturday, for the train arrived there before 9 p.m., and the next day's motoring did not commence until 8 a.m.

On a previous occasion a jazz band was tried out on the train. This time the railway refreshment branch sent a man through with ice-creams, chocolates, soft drinks, fruit, cigarettes, etc.

THE COMMUNITY SPIRIT.

After leaving Aramoho (the junction of the Wanganui branch) the train was joined by Messrs. L. O. Hooker and R. F. Page, representatives of the Citizens' Committee of Hawera. Short addresses were given on the train explaining the arrangements made for the entertainment and assistance of the tourists. Each visitor was supplied with a silk badge as a souvenir of the trip. This was worn for identification purposes and to facilitate the extension of hospitality by members of the Citizens' Committee, who were similarly badged.

The arrival at Hawera was in itself quite an event for a great gathering of citizens was there and a pipe band discoursed sweet music as the train pulled in. Later in the evening a civic reception took place in the King Edward Park, where the Mayor (Mr. P. A Pacey) gave an address of welcome. Here the Municipal Band was in attendance, a concert on the main lawn was given, the park was specially lighted, and dancing on the green was indulged in.

MORNING ON THE MOUNTAIN.

In the morning very complete arrangements were found to have been made for conveyance to the mountain. The South Taranaki Automobile Association had generously come to the assistance of the organisers by placing their private cars at the disposal of the excursionists, and Mr. W. G. Walkley, the genial secretary of the association, carried through the work of allotting car accommodation to this record number of visitors. Arriving at Dawson Falls, Mr. C. Gibson, of the South Egmont Park Board, welcomed the visitors, and explained that guides had been arranged to take different sections of the party to the various points of interest. Although the mountain peak itself was veiled in mist, the fresh, invigorating air found at the 3000 feet level encouraged the visitors to move about very freely and enjoy the many wonderful views which this great mountain, with its volcanic soil and sub-tropical, luxurious vegetation, has to offer.

The coolness that comes with elevation sets the mind soaring into a realm of possibility. One bright intellect suggested hthat the best advance that could be made would be to hoist a wireless outfit up Mount Egmont and send out stirring signals to the universe at large, for it is in such places as this that excessive blood pressures are reduced (as well as the waist-line), and the brain responds with spirit to the eager call for thought.

The return trip found the visitors all entranced with the plethora of good things in the way of sight-seeing and travel that had been provided on this week-end outing, and the arrival in Wellington shortly before midnight terminated what was generally considered to be one of the most enjoyable week-end trips that it would be possible to undertake. Again, on the return journey, the portable wireless played its part between 8.30 and 9.30, and gave a unique touch to the trip.

It is certain that the continuation of such methods for popularising the State transport service will yield good results.

Impressive group of week-enders who visited Mt. Egmont on the occasion of the Railway Department's special excursion recently.

—Publicity Department photo.

RFM, the Siberian short-wave broadcast station, has proved almost as elusive as the Pimpernel of late. He is on a different wavelength every night, and one has to comb the ether to find him. Maybe he's searching for the most satisfactory wavelength.

Printed and published for the New Zealand Radio Publishing Company, at the registered office, Dominion Avenue, Wellington, of the Wellington Publishing Company, by Archibald Sando, of 47 Freyberg Street, Lyall Bay, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1928.