

A Cry from Isolation

Plea for More Extensive Development

TO many listeners ensconced in comfortable homes the picture of isolation and pioneering conditions still obtaining in Southern Westland, which was outlined by Mr. W. D. Nolan, of Okuru, South Westland, in a talk from 2YA on July 18, must have come as a surprise. His story gave a vital glimpse of a necessary phase of our development still in progress in this part of the Dominion. Because of its special appeal Mr. Nolan's "talk" is worth reproducing:—

"I am a visitor from a little-known part of the Dominion—Southern Westland—and through the courtesy of the management of 2YA I am privileged to invite your attention to a few words descriptive of that district of wonderful possibilities. Come with me in imagination, please, to the tiny settlement of Okuru, some twenty miles north of the deep-sea port of Jackson's Bay. The population of Okuru is less than a dozen families. Their principal occupation is cattle raising, and large mobs of Hereford cattle are driven over a hundred miles to market each year. Butter is also manufactured in limited quantities, and one of the settlers runs a cheese factory. Isolation? Well, yes, at present; but we live in hopes of the dawning of a brighter day. The means of communication with the outer world which we at present enjoy would, I am afraid, be considered rather poor by the average city dweller. We have a fortnightly mail, carried on pack-horses, and a small trading steamer calls in every two months, brings us our stores, and takes away our produce.

"The port of Okuru is a bar harbour, inadequate for the export of timber, and so the very extensive white and red pine virgin forests in this great district have never been tapped. However, a movement is afoot to endeavour to induce the Government to construct a motor road from Jackson's Bay to Okuru, some 24 miles, and thus pierce this virtually primeval country and make available for close settlement a vast area of good dairying land, at the same time giving access to the sawmiller, for whose enterprise there awaits untold millions of feet of valuable timber.

"We who live in its vicinity and are acquainted with its fine natural characteristics are convinced that the port of Jackson's Bay could, with a little attention, be made to accommodate the largest vessels trading in New Zealand waters, while strategically it is a most valuable asset to the Dominion. It is 85 miles nearer to an Australian port than is any other port in New Zealand, and it is the only big port suitable as a safe shelter for vessels on the West Coast of the South Island, and in saying this I do not hesitate to include the entire coastal line from Nelson to the Bluff. Unfortunately, Jackson's Bay remains undeveloped and practically unknown.

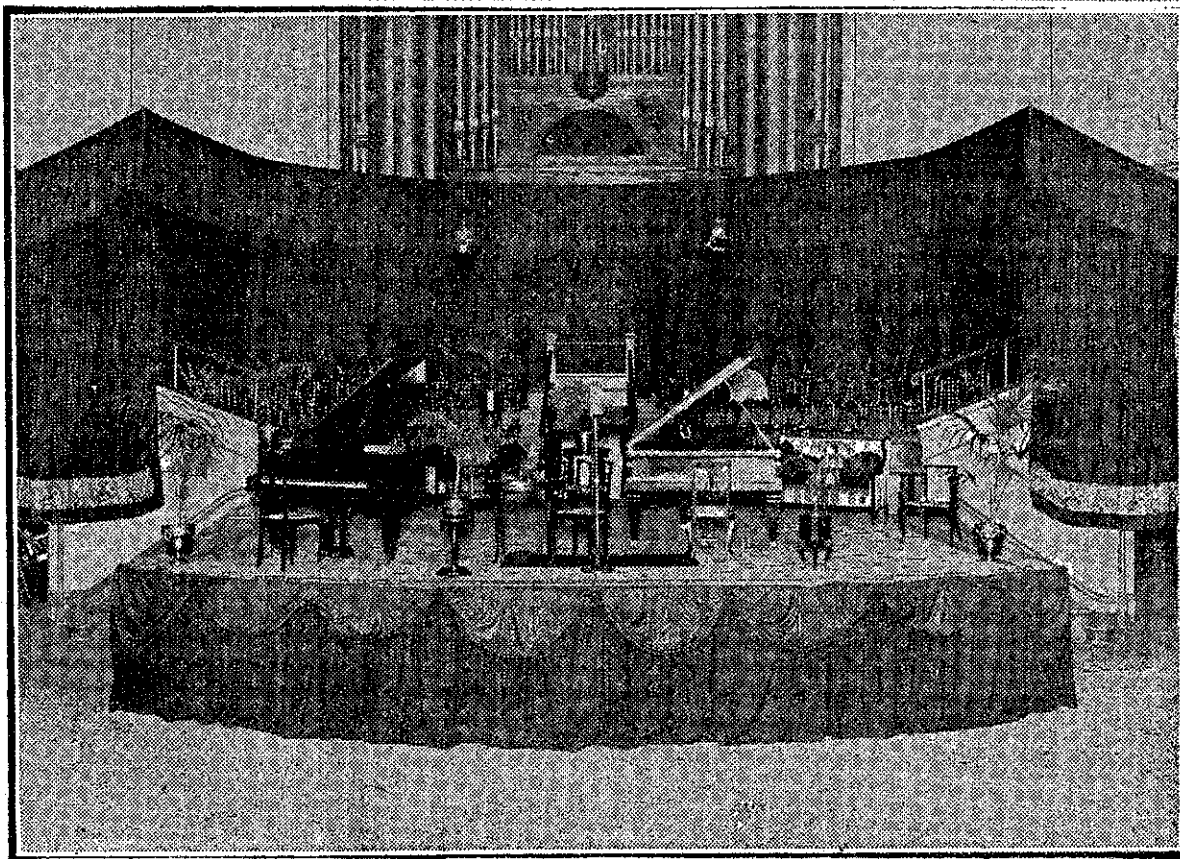
"Not only is the land in this district of a highly fertile character, and the forests of pine almost unexcelled throughout the Dominion, but in the vast ranges at the back have been

found traces of valuable mineral wealth, such as gold, copper, asbestos, chrome ore, etc. The geologists have never explored these parts, and who knows but that in the fastness of these mountain ranges in this untouched South Westland we may have the makings of another Eldorado!

"From a scenic point of view, also, this district offers great attractions. With its plentiful supply of rain and its mild climatic conditions South Westland can boast of a most luxuri-

ed on the Prime Minister and his colleagues on Wednesday, and promptly set about the opening up of this virgin and wonderfully prolific territory. The handful of pioneers who have for years suffered untold privations have kept the flag flying. They have struggled on against terrible odds, and are now surely deserving of some attention at the hands of the Government. A natural port with a wealth of natural resources behind it should not longer be left in the same primitive state as

J. Cronn and C. Eggeling, representing the Advisory Committee of the Westland County Council; Mr. W. Searle (a member), and Mr. D. J. Evans (secretary) of the council; and Mr. Mörpeth, Commissioner of Crown Lands for Westland. Our deputation was introduced by Mr. J. O'Brien, M.P. for Westland, while Mr. W. A. Bodkin, M.P. for Central Otago, strongly supported our representations. The urgency of the case which we presented was stressed as one of national importance warranting the sympathetic consideration of the Legislature without regard to party considerations. That it will be so dealt with, to the ultimate benefit of the Dominion as a whole, we are encouraged to hope and believe, not only by reason of the very courteous and attentive hearing accorded us by the Prime Minister and the Hons. G. W. Forbes and E. A. Ran-



Handsome studio arranged by 2YA at Town Hall, Wellington, on the central stage, for transmission of programmes. Intense interest was displayed by the audience in the arrangements for transmission.

—Wallace, photo.

ous growth of practically evergreen bush and fern, providing scenic beauties unrivalled in any other district, North or South. The rivers abound with trout, the waters of Jackson's Bay teem with fish, and deer have made their appearance in the high country. From the tourist or holiday-makers' point of view, the completion of the Haast Pass track (the construction of a portion of which has now been commenced in earnest) will be the means of adding materially to the many scenic attractions of the South Island.

Let all of us—you more comfortably situated thousands as well as we few isolated settlers—hope that the Government, in its quest for new lands for settlement, will accede to the prayer of a deputation which wait-

when it was first seen by Captain Cook 200 years ago. My fellow settlers who are listening in—and, believe me, radio is a wonderful boon to us—will be pleased to learn that their representatives were accorded a most sympathetic hearing by Sir Joseph Ward and his colleagues, the Ministers of Lands and Public Works. Associated with me in what I believe will prove an historic deputation were Messrs.

som, but by reason also of the assurance which we afterwards received from the Right Hon. J. G. Coates, Leader of the Opposition. We are returning to our isolated homesteads confident that in the not distant future our rich district will be touched by the magic wand of developmental progress and become one of the most prosperous and closely settled areas of this rich Dominion."

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