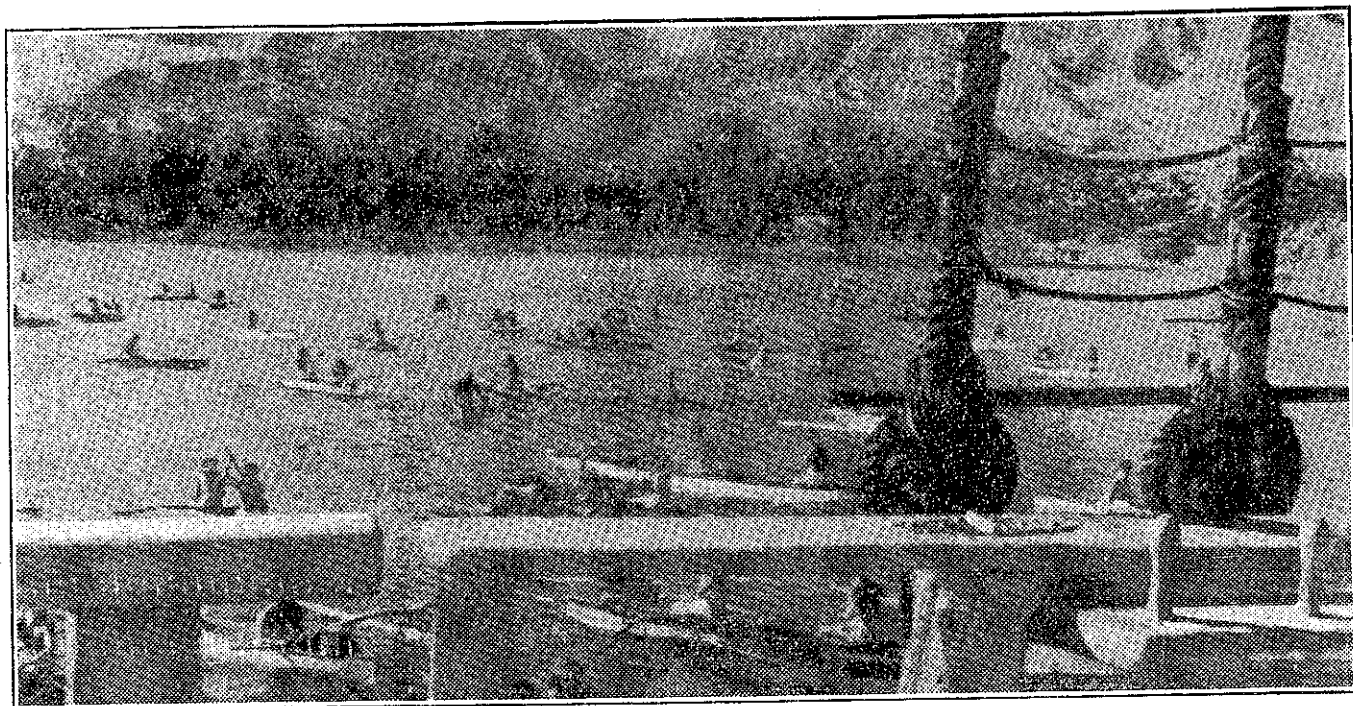


# They Sought Their



## WHERE TAHITIAN NATIVES MET THE MUTINEERS

**T**HE STORY of H.M.S. *Bounty*'s dramatic and ill-fated voyage to the South Seas has become world famous. Few incidents in British history have raised greater controversy. Was Captain Bligh a villain or a hero? Was Fletcher Christian idealist or treacherous mutineer?

Although I appeared in the American film version, and in the B.A.P. radio presentation now being heard over New Zealand Commercial stations, the study I have made of the history of the *Bounty* does not permit me to lay down any forthright opinion one way or the other.

### Truth Buried With Ship

THE ship which has given rise to this controversy now lies at the bottom of the sea close by Pitcairn Island's rocky coast, which has been her grave for nearly 150 years. Personally, I should say that her commander, Captain Bligh, was not the tyrant he has frequently been made out to be. At any rate, he was no worse than any other sea captain of his day. The quarrel between him and Christian, too, was principally a matter of clashing temperaments.

Certainly I don't feel inclined to commit myself to a definite opinion, despite the fact that I knew Charles Nordhoff and Norman Hall, the authors of the book, which M-G-M subsequently filmed. In this book they have wisely presented the facts and left the reader to draw his own conclusions.

THE American film, however, took a number of liberties with history. . . . Hollywood never scruples to do this in the cause of romance and love interest. Frank Lloyd, who directed the picture, told me himself that he had protested against this distortion of the true story, but he was overruled. As a result of the criticism which followed the release of the film, he resigned from the M-G-M studios. . . . In their radio version, B.A.P., on the other hand have gone out of their way to avoid the mistakes in the film, and, after much detailed research, they produced a feature which

**PITCAIRN**, the world's loneliest island, forgotten in the 18th and 19th centuries, has become the news highlight of the 20th century. The strange tale of Captain Bligh's mutineers, who sought their Shangri-la in the solitude of the Pacific, found Paradise there and lost it and years later found it again, has thrilled the world in book, on the screen and on the radio. And, to-day, the islanders—through the installation of radio—are coming again into touch with the world on which they turned their backs so long ago.

adheres rigidly to fact. Incidentally, I learn that quite apart from its success on the Dominion ZB stations, "The Mutiny of the *Bounty*" is now playing on 39 commercial stations, which must be a record for any Australian-created transcription.

**PITCAIRN ISLAND**, a tiny point of land breaking the surface of the great Pacific, is to-day a living memorial to those bygone mutineers. The inhabitants are all direct descendants of the *Bounty*'s crew. Totally isolated from the outer world, self-dependent by force of circumstances, without any new strain in their blood, they have developed their own individual mode of life.

The Pitcairners, speaking a language of their own—a queer mixture of Tahitian and Biblical English—have founded a picturesque colony which has no parallel anywhere in the world.

### The Link Re-welded

**FLETCHER CHRISTIAN** and his fellow mutineers disappeared from the face of the world in 1790. And from that date their descendants have lived in complete isolation until to-day. In the register of Births, Marriages, Deaths and Remarkable Family Events, the following entry is to be seen:

"Jan. 23, 1790, H.M.S. *Bounty* burned at Pitcairn Island."

It commemorated the destruction of the last link with civilisation. And now, after a lapse of 150 years, this link is to be re-welded. A shortwave radio station is being installed.

Probably the next historical entry in the Register of Births, Marriages, Deaths and Remarkable Family Events will read:

"Pitcairn is once more in contact with the world. A radio station is now in operation."