

Shangri-La

Specially Written For The "Record"

By George Farwell

THE islanders became radio-conscious last year, when an American schooner, Yankee, anchored off their little domain and sent their radio operator ashore. He discovered that Pitcairn had a tiny receiver, donated in 1920 by a British Company, on condition that Andrew Young, descendant of a mutineer, would learn the morse code.

Young did so, and, in 1928, an amateur operator from New Zealand installed an ancient transmitting set, which drew its power from a petrol engine designed to keep the batteries charged. Unfortunately, the New Zealander forgot to bring a petrol pump with him, and the transmitter rarely went on the air.

What a Scoop!

Occasionally Andrew Young could "borrow" a few gallons of juice from one of the very rare ships that call, and for a few hours "Pitcairn Island" was able to splutter out a few dots and dashes. As a rule, the petrol was wholly used up in transmitting a message of thanks to those who donated it.

NOW an American business group has donated a modern shortwave transmitter, operated entirely from storage batteries, and the NBC of America have arranged to pick up Pitcairn Island programmes and relay them throughout the United States.

Negotiations are now under way which will enable the NBC to broadcast the "Mutiny of the Bounty" direct from Pitcairn Island. What a scoop! Identical records such as those now being heard from all New Zealand stations will be sent by B.A.P. to Pitcairn Island, and further radio history will be made.

For The Glory of England

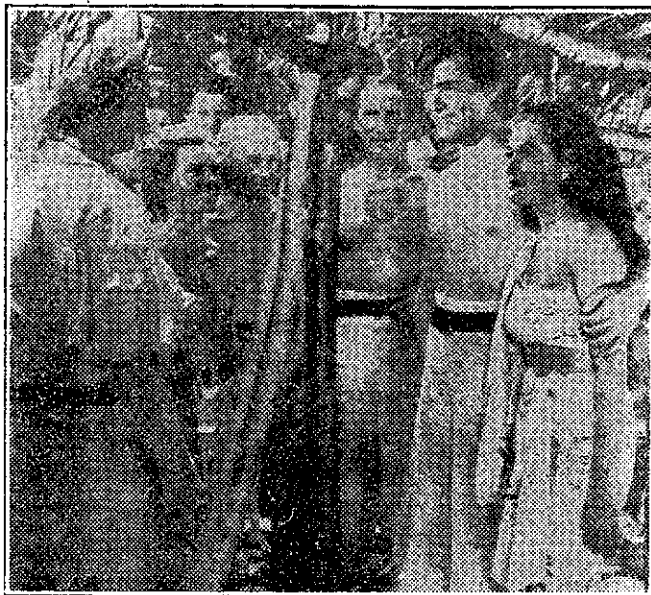
IN a splendid resume of the history of the Bounty, James Street, a well-known American writer, says: "It was one hundred and fifty years ago that pig-headed old George the Third commissioned Capt. Jonathan Bligh to sail the stout little warship Bounty to the South Seas, gather breadfruit trees and take them to the West Indies and plant them, so that the slaves would have cheap food, and could work harder in human bondage for the power and glory of England." (Did we mention that the gentleman was an American?)

"A crew was got, mostly from the slums, and the Bounty sailed from Spithead in 1787, and in October of 1788 hove to at Tahiti, almost around the world from England. . . . The voyage had been tortuous. There had been calms and storms and other things that try men's hearts. Bligh was a driver. He had orders to get breadfruit for His Majesty's slaves, and nothing was going to defeat him . . . not even the sea. But he reckoned not with the courage of men.

THE crew had taken almost inhuman punishment, and when the Bounty sailed from Tahiti after a twenty-three weeks' stay, she had a hold full of breadfruit trees for slaves, and a fore-castle full of grim Englishmen who would not be slaves.

"Fletcher Christian, his spirit rebelling because Bligh was beating and driving his crew, could stand it no longer, and planned to desert the ship alone. But a seaman saw him attempt to get a boat away, and told him that several of his comrades would mutiny.

"The next day Christian and twenty-four seamen



AS THE FILM SAW THEM

. . . Bounty mutineers with their wives.

—M.-G.-M. photo.

mutinied and cast Bligh and twenty-one loyal seamen adrift in an open boat, with ample provisions. Bligh, one of the greatest sailors the world has ever known, sailed the little craft three thousand miles to safety. He had vowed to bring the mutineers before an admiralty court, but while he was battling the sea, Christian sailed the Bounty back to Tahiti.

"Realising that England would hunt him down, Christian attempted to persuade the mutineers to go with him to an undetermined destination. Only nine would venture back aboard the Bounty, but these took with them nine Tahitian wives. Six other Tahitians—three with wives—went with them.

"Christian, if he ever knew, never told his companions where they were going. They sailed 1400 miles north-west and came eventually to tiny Pitcairn Island, which had been discovered in 1767. The world soon forgot about them, and no wonder, for their new home was 4600 miles from San Francisco, 5300 miles from Australia, and 3800 east of New Zealand.



GEORGE FARWELL.

. . . The Author, at Pitcairn Island.

Plotted Murder

"DISSENSION cropped up soon after the Paradise was founded, and the women got the blame. In 1793 John William's wife, Fasto, died, and the Englishman took unto himself, without permission, the wife of one of the natives. The native men, all six of them, plotted murder, but the wives of the white men got word of the plan and warned their husbands by sing-a-song: 'Why do the black men sharpen their axes? To kill the white men.'

"There was war in Paradise, and five of the original mutineers, including Christian, (Continued on page 49).