

Impressions of the Earthquake Area

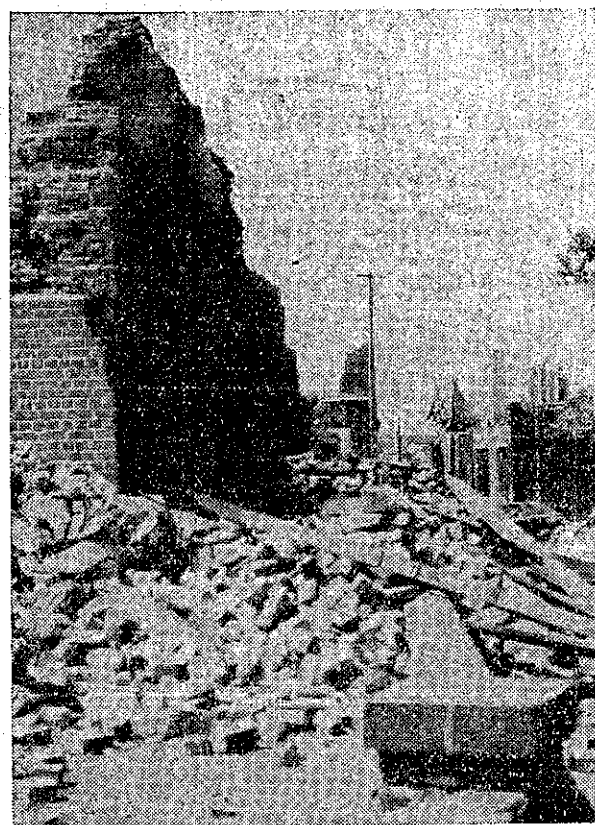
Indomitable Pluck and Endurance of People in Stricken Towns

By
Our Special Representative

TRAGEDY, stark and terrible, has swept New Zealand. The earthquake and fire demons have wrecked the business portions of two of our most prosperous towns, and with appalling loss of life have paralysed the activities of a province. Hundreds are dead, thousands homeless, and thousands more will carry with them to the grave the tragic memories of the greatest disaster which has ever swept our young nation. But amid all the tragedy and the pathos there emerges a story of epic courage, which should ring down the years as an inspiration to young New Zealand.

Faced with the loss of all material things, having seen the destruction of their businesses, the ruin of their homes, and the loss of friends and dear ones, the people have risen magnificently above the calamity. No words can describe and no photographs portray the full story of those fearful days of trial.

It is probably true that in New Zealand we had apparently lost something of that heroic pioneering spirit so evident in our early history when incredible hardships had to be faced, but the happenings of the past week prove that this spirit was but dormant, and that as a people we are still capable of rising supreme over our greatest catastrophies. After the happenings of the last few days it is difficult to sit down quietly and record the story of selfless devotion which manifested itself in every direction. There have been no



"A glimpse of war with the added frightfulness of war upon a civilian population."—A portion of Napier's business area.

heroics—only a wonderful spirit of determination to see things through, and help those less fortunate. At Napier and Hastings food, shelter and companionship were at hand for the taking, and money lost its meaning. One of the queerest experiences when returning from the stricken zone was in seeing how money gradually began to mean something again. In the devastated towns, and in many of the other small towns in Hawke's Bay, men and women worked day and night providing meals for those men, women and children who were being hurried away from the horrors of the quake, and the fact that these unfortunates were penniless mattered not at all, for everything was free.

THOSE of us who witnessed the work of relief being carried to the stricken population realised that it was a triumph for disciplined action.

Those who achieved most were they who had been trained to subordinate their own interests for the common weal, the nurses, doctors, sailors, marines, policemen and firemen, all of whom succeeded most because they were used to discipline. No one group could be looked on as the heroes of the day, for, with the exception of those unmitigated skunks who looted, all were heroes, and by no means the least were the women and the children. (Contd. on page 29.)



The ruined buildings of the National Tobacco Company at Port Ahuriri. This firm has already restarted operations.