

I expect many of you—especially ladies—would hear the broadcast, so well carried out by 2ZW of the opening of our new premises at Petone by the Prime Minister. I feel that in doing a thing like that the Prime Minister was honouring not us, not especially the English Motor Industry, but the Old Union Jack himself. The Right Hon. Mr. Forbes made us all feel proud of being able to be units of this wonderful Empire.

In connection with our new building, there is a little quiet road-side sward under a great spreading elm in the depths of the country, about 50 miles from London, which has a peculiarly intimate and interesting connection with those new works at Petone. And this is how it all happened.

About two years ago I was instructed by the Managing Director of our English company to investigate world conditions for export. After very careful and lengthy investigations in England and several European countries, I recommended New Zealand as being the most suitable place to put up a branch factory. My main reasons were, firstly—the preference granted to British goods both by tariff and by your essential goodwill towards the Old Country, and, secondly, because I felt then, as I feel now, that, in spite of all the world trouble, New Zealand was, is, and always will be, basically sound as regards finance. (I don't believe, and I never will believe that the pessimism that is being broadcast to-day is necessary.) Well, as I was saying, I put up New Zealand as our first Overseas Factory Home, and they said—Thank you very much, when do you start? Well—I was export manager—not overseas factory purveyor. I rather wondered what they were getting at, but they pointed out that if I thought it was a good scheme, it was obviously my pigeon to put it over. So I began furiously to think. It's one thing to put a lot of figures and ideas on paper and pass them over to a typist, but it's quite another thing to get a new factory going 12,500 miles away. However, I got going, and, with the help of Mr. Coe who talks to you when I can persuade him to—we managed to stick to our schedule.

In the midst of our preparations in the summer of 1930, I went up to a trade dinner in London one night—it's only 84 miles of billiard table road from my house, and even in the little 10-horse saloon I always reckoned to get up there in two hours. After dinner the usual speeches and musical items were perpetrated, and, in due course, I left for home about midnight. I hoped to be home just after two. However, about 50 miles out of

# ROVER

## MOTORING TALK

EVERY fortnight the Rover Motoring Company of New Zealand features on this page one of the motoring talks sponsored by them and delivered from 2ZW, Wellington, on Monday evenings. The interesting comments printed here were given by Mr. Lewis, Managing Director of the Company.

London, on the high ground, I ran into a very heavy mist—thick, blankety and wet—not a fog, but a real summer mist. For some time I plugged on at about four to five miles an hour, overtaking lorries dragged on the side of the road, and sometimes cars. I knew every yard of the road, but, even so, I had several near shaves, and finally was so utterly sleepy that I decided to snuggle down and have a snooze on the back seat in a rug which I carried for Sunday picnics. Those mists usually lift just after the dawn, and I thought this would give me time to slip on home, have a bath, change and breakfast, and so to the works—not too late. I slept for an hour or so then woke up bright and cheery and absolutely chock full of New Zealand. I began to think about all the details, and I'm darned if I could go to sleep again.

So I turned the light on in the car, found a pencil and the menu and programme of the night, before, which, fortunately was plain on the back. I sketched out a plan of the sort of factory I should like in New Zealand, and I put in the general layout, stores, assembly shops, offices, etc. Then, suddenly, the mist lifted, and I saw that it was nearly light, and I saw that I was on a nice, grassy sward under a great, spreading elm—one of the most beautiful and noble trees I have ever seen. I can see that beautiful corner now—I always think of it as New Zealand corner. I pushed my

menu card into my pocket, started off, and did the 30 miles home in three-quarters of an hour. But the interesting part of the thing is that the factory which the Prime Minister opened a few days ago is almost identical in general detail with that which I planned in New Zealand corner on that early misty July morning.

You know, in spite of the slump, and all other difficulties which one comes up against in a strange land, it is a thrilling thing. Of course it is always interesting and sometimes troublesome, but wherever we had gone we could not have had such a wonderfully kind and considerate reception as we have had in New Zealand. Everybody has been most helpful. We have had our technical troubles, of course, but I'm glad to say these have not been mechanical in any way. New Zealand roads are rather different from ours, and, consequently, English bodies are built more lightly than those you want here. We have got over that by building our bodies entirely in New Zealand, using stronger timber than is used in England—good Southland Beech and fine English and New Zealand materials.

I want to thank everybody who has sent us good wishes in our works, and to invite any and all of you to visit us at Petone to see what is being done in the English motor industry in New Zealand. Please drop us a note asking when we

have an inspection party going round, and we will be pleased indeed to see you. The afternoon suits us best. In particular, we shall be pleased to welcome parties of older school children or students.

Now, a few minutes ago, I smote the pessimists hip and thigh. By that I do not wish to infer that we must not be careful. But there is a difference between care and panic. There is more accumulated spare money lying unused to-day than there has been for years. Everybody is nervous of any kind of enterprise and private purchases are unnecessarily cut down. You laugh at England for the dole—yet Mr. "Higho" tells you that children are going starving to school in Wellington, and I believe it. The Smith Family is gallantly trying to close the gaps in the multitude of official and unofficial organisations for relieving distress. Your leading morning paper is pleased to draw attention to England's folly in granting the dole, and yet cheerfully accept your Hospital Board as a proper channel for distributing relief. Isn't it doubtful whether the Old Country system isn't better—at any rate I haven't heard of any starving children there recently, and if there are abusers of the dole, can you expect anything else amongst 2½ millions of workless people. Probably 1/100 of 1 per cent. are swindlers, but they are not starving and all tax payers pay equally. It isn't left to the willing to carry the whole burden.

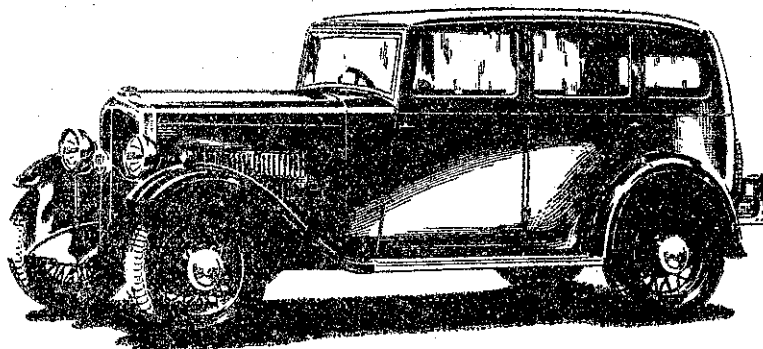
I believe something could be done by all unions and employers in the way of a general reduction of weekly hours, so as to make the work available go further. It would mean ever such a little less to the hundreds of thousands in work in order to keep the 50,000 who are not. I know there are various objections—but times are extraordinary now.

I have never been able to appreciate the arguments against this scheme, and, if anybody would be good enough to tell me any particular objections to it in New Zealand I would be extremely obliged. I know that it will be said that it is against the best interests of labour, and it is expensive from the employers' point of view. But times are as exceptional now as in 1916. When Jerry popped up in front of you with a hand-grenade in 1916, you didn't stop to discuss your aversion of homicide—you put him to sleep if you were lucky enough. So now, if we could drop pessimism and bickering, and get together as we did in those dark years of 1914/1918, we should emerge, not only more prosperous, but all the better for going through the refiner's fire—that is what matters I think.

**11/- in the £  
of the price  
Now remains in N.Z.**

In the new Rover factory at Petone, Rover chassis are assembled from components imported direct from England, and the bodies built to English patterns on frames of Southland Beech. Altogether, 55 per cent.—or 11/- in the £—of the moderate price of a Rover remains in New Zealand.

# ROVER



The Rover Ten Saloon is now £24 lower in price—£295 complete. Improvements include, wire wheels with large chromium-plated hubs, improved tubular-framed adjustable seats, cushioned arm rest to rear seat, stronger chassis-frame, heavier rear springs, bodies built in New Zealand.

For fuller particulars, and the address of your nearest distributor, write to, The Rover Company of New Zealand, Limited, Box 1185, Wellington.