



With Youth Upon

*Rustle the tussock, and the birds are calling,
The sea below
Murmurs, upon its beaches, rising falling,
Soft, soft, and slow.*

In other words, Banks Peninsula—calling with all the might of its rocky peaks, its rolling grasslands, sheltered valleys, glistening bays—paradise for the tramp, and for the lazy man, too.

Canterbury counts itself fortunate in the possession of the peninsula, and each week-end sees hosts of young folk (and some who are not so young) settling out, packs on backs, for the hostels which are now dotted about at convenient points. Let us go back to the beginning of the youth hostel scheme and see how it originated.

When organised tramping was first taken up in Germany and England the young people who were anxious to "see their own country first," found that the charges of the ordinary tourist hotels exhausted their slender weekly incomes at an alarming rate. Schemes were discussed and soon youth hostels were opened—large buildings in the Black Forest, along the banks of the Rhine, in the Cotswolds, down the leafy lanes of Sussex—and beds and meals made available to the youth of the country at very small charges.

The admirable arrangement of these hostels was looked into by Miss Cora Wilding, of Christchurch, during a visit to Europe, and by Miss Carol West-Watson (now Mrs. Leicester Webb, of Christchurch), who spent a year or two on the Continent and returned to the Dominion last year. The result was that a meeting of enthusiastic trampers was called early last year and the Youth Hostel Association of New Zealand was formed, of which I was a member of the committee. We could not afford, of course, to build elaborate hostels all over the Canterbury countryside, but we approached householders at various bays on Banks Peninsula asking if they would consider accommodating trampers for a small sum.

That outstanding pioneer, Sir Arthur Dobson, consented to become the president of the association, and his knowledge of Canterbury has helped the body out of many difficulties. A committee was set up and the

questions of rules and costs were discussed. At almost every bay of note on the peninsula some land-owner was willing to accommodate trampers who carried the association's membership card.

The idea was that the various tramping clubs in Canterbury should affiliate with the association and that the members could become members of the association by buying Youth Hostel cards for one shilling each. This entitled them to seek accommodation at the various hostels—one shilling for a bed and one shilling for a meal. The scheme worked splendidly from the start. The tramping bug had just taken a firm hold of young Christchurch and soon the hostels were in use every week-end. The list was gradually extended—there are now more than a dozen hostels at different points—and the tramp has come to accept them as part of his week-end tour.

To enter fully into details of the tramps which may be undertaken on the peninsula would require the whole of this paper. There are many charming walks within easy distance of the Cashmere Hills—Kennedy's Bush, the Sign of the Kiwi, the Mount Pleasant track, Cooper's Knobs, Governor's Bay—and there are the walks where a week-end, or even a week, is necessary if the tramp is to see any of the beauties of the country through which he is travelling—Akaroa, Long Bay, the Akaroa lighthouse, Le Bon's Bay, Scenery Nook, Mount Bossu—but every trip is thoroughly worthwhile.

Nowhere in Canterbury can one hope to gain such glorious views as the peninsula offers. Little bays set like emeralds at the foot of steep cliffs, rolling grasslands, farm-

houses beneath high hills, wonderful panoramas of sea and land, a thin wisp of smoke cutting the distant horizon—a vessel from the Chathams or perhaps from the East—vista after vista, satisfying, wild, fascinating!

From his observations made while off the coast of Banks Peninsula Captain Cook computed the circumference as 24 leagues, remarkably near the actual measurement. "It is probable," writes Johannes Andersen, "that an old land surface stretched eastward, perhaps as far as the Chatham Islands, and that the volcano of the peninsula was formed in and on this land surface. The extinction of the volcano resulted, probably, in the formation of large crater hollows and the radiating

The article on this page, written specially for the "Radio Record" by a former member of the committee of the Youth Hostel Association of New Zealand, touches on the growth of the movement which was started in Canterbury last year, and has now spread its net wide. Radio has played an important part in bringing the work of the association before the public, and, on Monday next, Sept. 11, at 7.15 p.m., Mr. W. A. Hammett, secretary to the association, will speak from 3YA on "Tramping on Banks Peninsula."