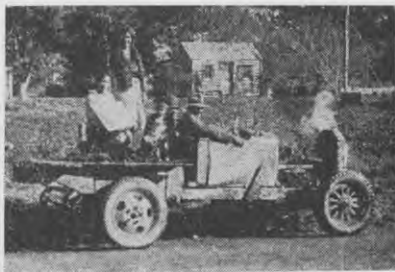


On beyond the school well-kept farms border the road with good houses and bad sitting in their patches of cultivated garden. Where the river has been eating into the land a gang are hard at work strengthening the bank with heavy pine branches sunk and weighted to the river-bed. Willows are planted along the top of this embankment.

Cutting across country to one of the houses built by Maori labour you find it well cared for and surrounded by a colourful garden. They have a custom amongst the Tuhoes that once you have been introduced to a family you never knock on entering their home. An hospitable custom, but apt to be an embarrassing one. The few pakehas of the settlement usually call out "Any one home?" from a distance to give warning of their approach. The owner of this home has been adding a room or two to house his expanding family and has proved himself no mean carpenter. The home is well furnished; a sitting-room and bed-room suite, sewing-machine, radio, and rugs on the floor. Photos everywhere; many of men in uniform.

Around and around a nearby paddock chugs an old lorry with no engine cowl nor any rim to its steering wheel, towing a machine that scatters fertilizer. At the "wheel" sits a one-legged Maori who is a genius with engines and who is usefully employed in this and similar work.

Some of the houses around the *maraes* are the homes of the old people. Many of these are neither well built nor well preserved. Some seem to have been built when the moa was a chicken, and they still house a number of people.



Leisure is no problem at Ruatoki. A *korero* will always pass the time. *Tangis* and *huis* are always well attended. Too well, at times, the supervisor fears. There are pictures down the road at Taneatua. A mild gamble is always popular, one child at school even being known to gamble all the buttons off a new pair of pants. But the week-ends provide the men folk with their opportunity for recreation. The foot-hills of the Urewera Country are alive with pigs, and here the Tuhoe has a chance to indulge his hereditary passion for adventure. With his horde of pig dogs he often collects enough wild pork to feed the family for a week.

Little reading is done, but the radio is popular. Electric light serves some homes handy to the factory, but most depend on kerosene lamps.

Ruatoki is a compact and happy little settlement with a better chance for community life than many of the more scattered development schemes. It has its problems. Nevertheless, it is an example of the successful settlement of the Maori on his own lands and of the wisdom of the policy originated by Sir A. T. Ngata and carried on by the Native Department. It is also a remarkable example of transition of a warlike, suspicious people to a peaceful agricultural community. Another transition will probably take place soon after the war.

Then trucks will replace the primitive but useful spring carts of the "Milk Cart Derby." Though mechanization may detract from the picturesqueness of the procession, may the contents of the cream it carries never grow less.