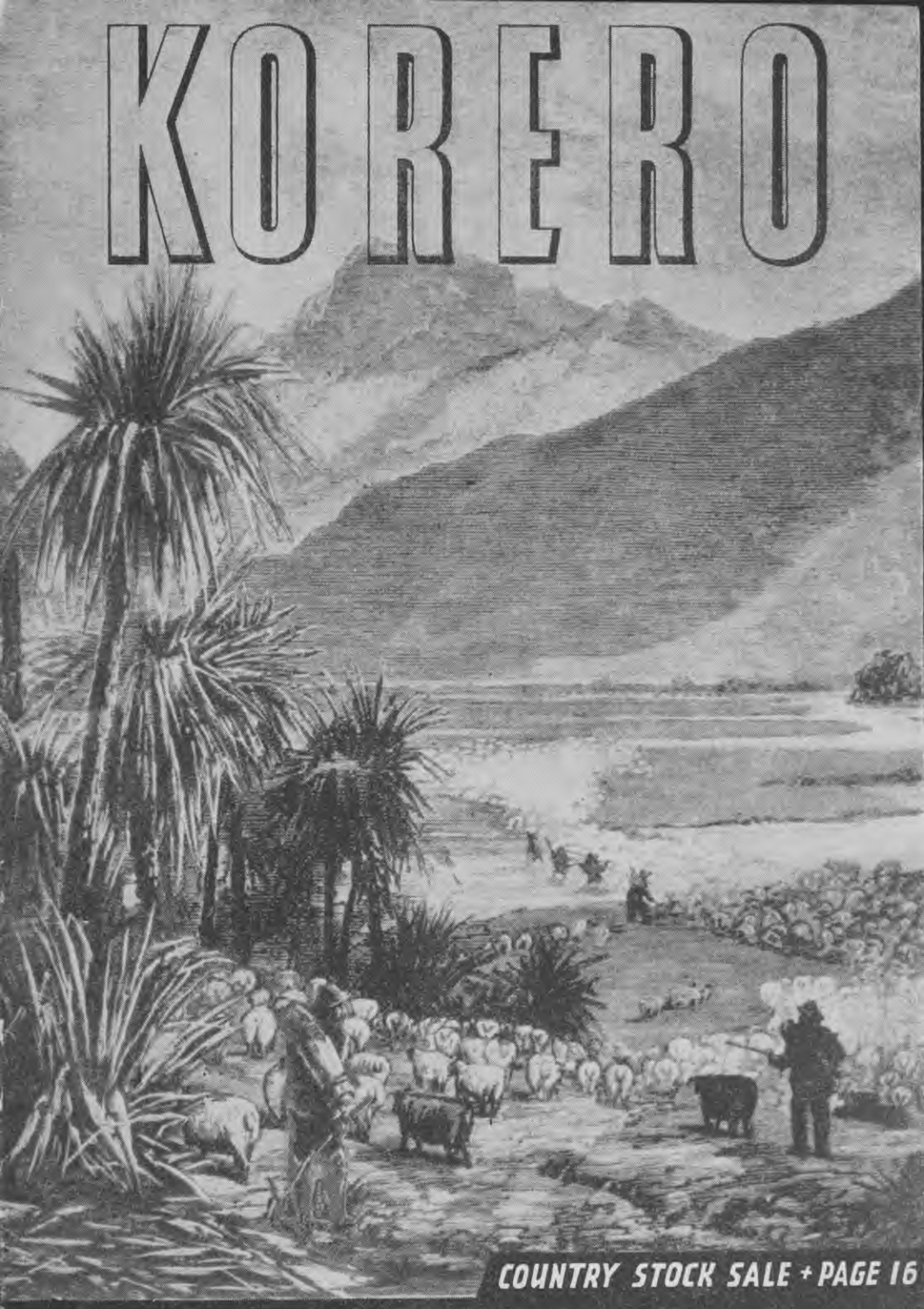
KORERO



COUNTRY STOCK SALE + PAGE 16

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KORERO

IN THIS ISSUE

Contributions to Korero

You are reminded that a maximum sum of £3, payable in canteen orders where there are canteens under New Zealand control and in cash where there are not, will be divided among contributors in each issue. It is necessary, therefore that all contributors should send us number, name, and full address. Remember, too, that articles are not the only contributions we are looking for. We would like to see also short paragraphs, black and white drawings, and verse. There is space, too, for your comments and inquiries, provided you keep them short. The address is: "D.A.E.W.S., Army H.Q., Wellington." Mark your envelopes *Korero* in one corner.

SOUTH WESTLAND

A KORERO Report

"YES," SAID the settler, "I suppose you could call me a pioneer. I was born in Jackson's Bay almost seventy years ago. Arawata they called it then. My mother and father settled there under a Government scheme, but it fell through. They needed then what we need now—access." He was off on his favourite theme—South Westland: its possibilities, roading, timber, minerals, farming, fishing, scenic attractions, &c.

He didn't look like a pioneer—no beard or corduroy breeches—but when you heard something of his history and saw something of the country where he had lived and worked for a lifetime you realized that he had fulfilled in every detail the primary condition of pioneering—he had made a living and a home in a wilderness. A very lovely wilderness, it is true, but one as difficult and as isolated as those settled by the earliest pioneers over one hundred years ago.

South Westland is no more than a name to many New-Zealanders: To most it means the lower part of the West Coast; mountains, glaciers, and bush. They would be amazed if they were told that Ross, the southern terminal of the West Coast railway, was third on the list of live-stock exporting stations in the South Island. They would be equally amazed to learn of the difficulties overcome by the settlers in bringing their stock to the railhead and of the romance and adventure of life in the last of New Zealand's backblocks.

South Westland really begins below Ross, an old gold-mining town which may know a modified revival of the rush days after the war, when it is thought that the flats around the town will be dredged for the gold which the diggers passed over. From Ross a good road winds south under the shadow of the Alps through magnificent rain forests to Paringa, a distance of one hundred and twenty miles. Where some of the larger rivers drop from the mountains the land has been cleared and settlements and farms established.

Harihari, Wataroa, Waiho, and Weheka are names familiar enough to any Coaster. Here on the river-flats there are cattle and sheep runs and life is not dissimilar to that of any outback farming community elsewhere in New Zealand. The service car goes through three times a week (daily in peacetime) bringing the mail, the newspapers, the meat, and perhaps a little shopping for the farmer's wife done in Hokitika by the driver, who is postman, messenger, tourist guide, and "friend of the family" all along the

route. In normal times private cars pass in and out of the glacier country by the dozen. There are first-class accommodation-houses at both the Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers. Large freight trucks carry in stores and supplies and back load timber, sheep, &c. And so the settler, though his life may be somewhat more exacting than that of a South Canterbury farmer, has this in common with him—ready road access to commercial centres.

Going to town has not always been so easy. Until 1937 the road went as far as Weheka, and because of the war it has advanced only forty miles since then. Much of the land around and north of the Fox Glacier was broken in when only a pack-track led out to Ross and Hokitika. At Weheka itself the fertile flats were first settled only about fifty years ago when, after the gold rush at Gillespie's Beach, some of the diggers foresaw the possibilities of farming the deltas of the Fox, Cook, and Karangarua Rivers. The heavy virgin bush had to be cleared from the land and homes established under conditions of exceptional difficulty miles from any of the amenities even then regarded as essential to ordinary existence

At first access was mainly by sea and very occasional because of conditions which still hamper shipping on the Coast. Because of this irregularity of supplies the settlers had to be almost self-supporting. Gradually the bush was pushed back until to-day almost the whole of this rich plain has been opened up for sheep-farming and cattle-raising.

The settlers were themselves of pioneering stock used to difficulties and isolation, but they were glad for more than economic reasons to see the road move slowly south. The fear of accident was always present, and the sick and wounded had to be carried out on a stretcher over pack-tracks for many miles before they could be transferred to a dray. Mothers carried their fortnight-old babies in from Hokitika on horse-back. One pioneer mother with a family of twelve never bothered about the Hokitika nursing home. And all this was not back in 1850, but after the turn of the twentieth century.

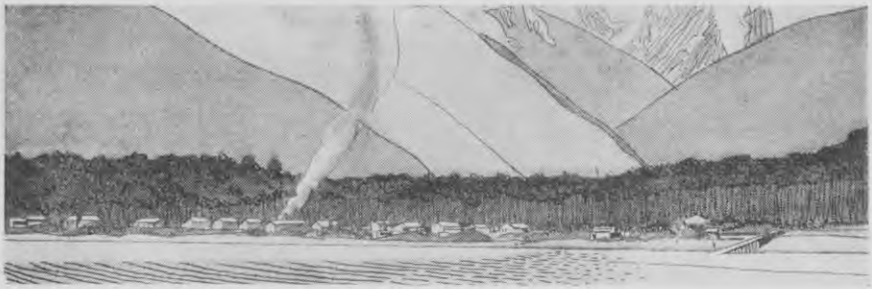
To-day there is a prosperous happy community at Weheka. The cleared flats with their plentiful shelter-belts run out from the foothills to the sea, and at the foot of the glacier a compact settlement clusters round the hostel. There is a school, a church, a hall, a Public Works office and depot, a Railways Road Services garage, a store, a butcher's shop with a freezing-chamber, an electric-power plant which supplies all the settlement—all the amenities and conveniences of a small township.

For this remarkable transformation in a matter of fifty years those who had the courage and foresight to develop this isolated area must be given full credit. Behind their homes rise most of the 10,000 ft. peaks in the main divide, with Cook and Tasman standing supreme. The bush runs down literally to the back-door. Yet, though Miss Kavan pities them because of " all the hoary, enormous, spectral trees standing massed against them and getting them down " and though she hates to think of " the huge mass of nature bearing down upon them," it must be recorded that they seem strangely unafraid of the " ocean, the ice-cap, and the antique, forest," rather proud of them in fact, and undoubtedly happy in their work.

It is some fifty miles south of Weheka that the backblocks really begin. The road runs south to Bruce Bay and then on to the Paringa River, where it crosses a long white concrete bridge and comes to a halt in front of a wall of forest and a tangle of hills.

At Bruce Bay there is a settlement, a sawmill, a sheltered harbour, and facilities for loading timber. After the war the white-pine from this area may again be shipped north, but at the moment there is little for the locals to do except maintenance work at the mill, a little boat-building, and some black-sanding on the beach.

In the season Paringa is the head-quarters of the white-baiters who net the fish in this and other handy rivers.



The Settlement at Bruce Bay.

From Paringa south the road lapses back into a pack-track and for passengers and smaller items of freight the usual access is by air. From the air the difficult nature of the country is obvious. The Alps are only a few miles inland, and the tumbled hills that fall from the mountains are covered with virgin forests and split by creeks and rivers which are often unfordable in the springtime melt. For forty miles south from the end of the road there is only this wild mass of mountain and bush running right down to the rocky coast.

There is timber here in quantity, but on the extent of the worth-while forests the South-Westlanders and the State Forest Service differ considerably. Mica deposits have been found here and a track is being cut in through the bush. There are traces of other minerals, too, including gold and coal, but competent and extensive geological survey is needed to prove the location and extent of deposits. In such difficult country this would be long and arduous work.

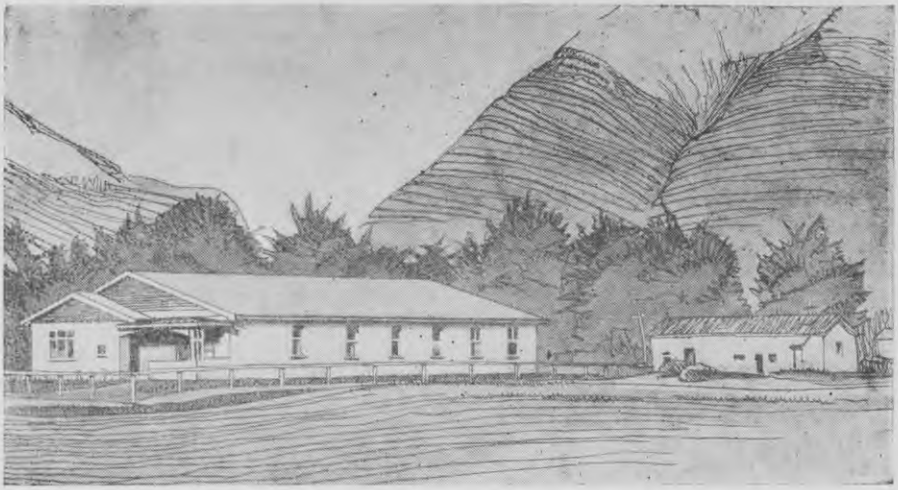
Suddenly the hills fall away into a valley which stretches back to the Alps. This valley carries the chief river of South Westland—the Haast. Beside the wide river-bed the aeroplane drops down on to a large landing-field, well drained and protected from river erosion. Beside the aerodrome is the home of one of the pioneers of the Haast, Mr. Cron. He has raised cattle here for many years and driven them out over a hundred miles of track and road to market.

Through the gap in the mountains at the head of the valley will come the long-awaited link with Otago, the Haast Pass Road. The Pass (1,840 ft.), is the lowest route through the Alps and the road is already over the top, though there remains about forty miles of difficult country down which the road must come to the aerodrome on the coast.

The country from the Haast south is less broken but still heavily wooded. There are patches of cleared land and swamp to break the fireside-rug effect of the variegated greens of the forest. Wider and more placid rivers frequently divide the enveloping carpet of bush. And there are rare houses dotted over the patches of cleared land.

On one of these clearings the plane lands, skimming in over the tall forest to touch down on good, firm turf and taxi round to the front of the homestead. It sounds somewhat of a contradiction in terms to talk of a pioneer with an aerodrome at his front door. This is a recent luxury. Until a few years ago the only means of getting in and out of Okuru was by horse or by boat. This isolation and the achievement of having made a living and reared a family in so remote a spot entitle Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Nolan and their fellow-settlers to a term usually reserved for those who opened up New Zealand about the middle of last century.

As the roads spread throughout the country, if not the earliest pioneers at least their families knew the comfort and safety of relatively rapid communications. But the settlers of South Westland still have no road link with the outside world, and but for the comparatively recent air service they would still be compelled to ride the long, uncomfortable, and often dangerous miles to the nearest motor road. Either that



Mr. Nolan's Home at Okuru.

or depend on the uncertain steamer. This was the way the sick and accident cases went out to Hokitika and the way the wives of the settlers carried their babies back. Air Travel, Ltd., of which the late Captain Mercer was the promoter, has brought the social isolation of South Westland to an end (on plane days you can read *The Press* at the lunch table), but to develop its economic and scenic possibilities roads are still needed.

The aeroplane brings regular mail and small but essential items of freight. It means that business trips can be done in reasonable time, that a holiday can be taken occasionally, that technicians and tradesmen can get in and out, and, most important of all, that the sick can be evacuated to hospital speedily or a doctor brought in when necessary.

Some years ago these people were their own doctors and dentists. Mr. Nolan, or " Dinny " as he is known the length of the Coast, has stitched up a gash in his own leg with a darning-needle and he has drawn many an aching tooth with a pair of forceps given him by a dentist years ago. Thus he can, and does, discuss the technical angle of tooth-extraction with some authority.

The aeroplane has changed all that. Now the settlement farthest south, Jackson's Bay, is within two hours flying time of Hokitika. Life is still fairly strenuous, however. The Nolan homestead was built from timber felled and sawn on the spot, and when there are any additions to be made to a building or a shed to be erected there is always the bush "just down the road" and the mill beside it. The homestead is big and comfortable, and has all the amenities of any city flat. A Diesel plant supplies ample electricity and there is every modern gadget to make the women's work easier. No one will deny that they deserve them.

Across the aerodrome is another homestead, the sawmill which can handle large-size logs, and a canning-factory which not only cans whitebait in the season but also makes the tins. Naturally there is a fair amount of complicated machinery about the place and naturally it breaks down on occasions. Then the farmer turns mechanic and, if possible, sets it going again. It's not much use waiting for an expert to get down from Hokitika two hundred miles away, even if you could get him in a hurry. You can't ring. All messages go out by wireless from Jackson's Bay. So these ingenious people become electricians, motor mechanics, sawmillers, Diesel engineers, cannery operators, fishermen, and farmers as necessity demands.

Cattle-raising is the main industry and some fine mobs go out to Wataroa sale and Ross railway-yards. It takes six weeks to drive them out from Okuru along bush tracks, across rivers, and finally by road to the market. But deer are menacing the pastures, and unless they can be culled satisfactorily the future of the cattle industry is not too bright, according to some settlers. They are menacing the stands of timber, too, by eating away the undergrowth about the trees. Some residents declare that the bush where it was once impenetrable is now more like a pine forest.

Roading will help to solve this problem. As the Haast Pass Road has climbed over the top of the pass the pastures handy to the road have become almost as lush as they were many years ago before the deer began to eat them back. Roading makes deer-stalking easier work, and the quarry have withdrawn into less accessible country.

There was a cheese-factory at Okuru fifteen years ago and its cheese was graded first quality in England. They milked one hundred and fifty cows there then, but lack of access crippled the infant industry and the factory closed down. Now some of the settlers are turning their eyes towards the sea rather than to the land. There is money in whitebait, both fresh and canned. One family caught and canned many tons of it last season. Admittedly the run of the fish was phenomenal last year, but the old heads think that there is a future in canning the blue cod caught along the coast and the crayfish of which there are thousands in Jackson's Bay.

Timber is the subject of much argument. The expert's survey of the amount of millable timber is far more conservative than that of the local enthusiasts. Still, what timber is available will be most valuable in industry (most of it is white-pine), and when the road is through to Jackson's Bay, where there is a wharf and the best harbour on the Coast, it can be felled and shipped out from there.

The roads were under way when the war began. Even now there is not a lot to be done to link the Haast with Jackson's Bay, a distance of thirty-five miles. The rivers have been well bridged (two bridges are yet to be completed) and the road links between them are almost finished. The work of bridging the Haast—a two-year job—and carrying the road through to Paringa along the surveyed route is more formidable. It is likely that the connection with Otago will be completed first. When both roads are open—and the settlers hope that this will be soon after the war—not only will some promising country be opened up, but the round trip of the South Island will be possible. From the scenic and tourist angle the new road will be amongst New Zealand's best and the indirect benefit to South Westland will be considerable.

" Nolan's Cooee "—a stick of gelignite used to attract the ferryman or anyone else hidden by the all-enveloping forests—is not heard in South Westland these days. When the new roads are opened that ingenious signal will be only a distant echo of the old days. But to those who pioneered the last of New Zealand's backblocks even such a distant echo will awake memories of flooded rivers forded on horseback. It will remind them also that dreams do sometimes come true.

the wind and the waiter

By Dvr. C. F. MILNE

Tents, buckets, oil-drum stoves, make-shift tables, and, rushing madly round them, me. I'm waiter in an officers' mess on a lonely wind-blown atoll in the Pacific. "Suit you," they said, "plenty of spare time." But my cot never sees me; always I am working. If only it didn't blow.

It blows — Lord how it blows! Morning, noon, and night! To-day, yesterday, the day before, the day before that; always has it blown. And always from the sea—Smack, right in my face!

I wash dishes, they're dirty before I dry them; I wash tablecloth and tea-towels and the wind flings them through the air to the nearest mud pool; so I keep on washing dishes, tablecloths, tablecloths and dishes. Always washing: always dirty. I pray. I pray again, but still it blows. I shout hysterically: "Curse you, wind, go blow some other place!" It just blows harder, faster, fiercer. I give up. I throw slops over the cliff and they spray back all over me. Wild heavy waves bash against the cliff and boom and roar and make white foam—no beauty but anger, destruction, hate. Oh, cruel wind!

No sooner finish breakfast than morning tea upon me. I'm running late. I fly here, dart there, dodge myself going another way, trip, get up again; then lunch, afternoon tea—"Stop! Let me catch up," shouts my shadow. I can't wait. Everywhere I run—to the cook-house, to the mess, to the sink, to the table; serve the colonel, serve the major, serve the captains, serve all of them. "No, salt!" I look for the salt. Then they leave the table. Then they're back again; mouths open, watching and waiting like hungry young birds in the nest and me the bustled father-bird in a snowstorm. They're waiting, I'm supposed to be, I'm worried.

They eat; I run. They eat faster; I run faster. Inch by inch, always closer in race without finish. Pity poor fox hearing panting hounds closing in on him as he scurries blindly over rolling countryside, through ditches, brambles, ploughed fields, backyards; under fences, over banks; running, running, running: no time to breathe; no time to think—I know. And was the cursed wind gave hounds the scent!

Oh, wind, to think I once admired you, revelled in you, even loved you: waving through long grass, tearing over hilltops, tossing spray over the shoulder of tumbling breaker, swaying tops of tall pines, gliding white sails down the harbour, chasing clouds over the sky, tugging at children's kites, playing with laughing maid's pretty skirt and ruffled hair—and now this!

Curse you, wind. Blow—go on, blow! Blow dirt everywhere and my washing in the dirt; blow the tent down; blow the trees down; blow the black clouds down upon us; blow the sea all over the island to swallow us——

Well!—Blow me down—it's stopped!

NEW ZEALAND'S HEALTH in wartime

A KORERO REPORT

A high tribute to the progressive way in which New Zealand dealt with its health problems was paid by Dr. Edith Summerskill, a member of the recent Parliamentary delegation from the United Kingdom, in a radio talk.

"From what I have seen in New Zealand, there can be no doubt that your standard of medicine and surgery are high and your hospitals are very well run," said Dr. Summerskill. She has been most favourably impressed with her visit to the Otago Medical School and to note that the approach to disease was from the right angle—that of prevention. The training was very thorough and this was no doubt a vital factor in the low mortality rate. She had also been impressed with the conduct of confinement in hospital and to learn at the Queen Margaret Hospital that every woman in childbirth was given an anæsthetic irrespective of whether the case was normal or abnormal. "This is twentieth century approach to midwifery indeed," she said.

Dr. Summerskill described New Zealand's dental nursing service as "unique." Dental hygiene was of primary importance, but no other country possessed the services of nurses trained in fillings and extractions.—A newspaper report.

THROUGH FIVE years of war, conditions have arisen which might menace New Zealand health seriously. Thousands of people have moved to the cities for war-production work, often to live in cramped and difficult conditions. Homes have been broken up as their menfolk have left for the Armed Forces. Hundreds of women and older persons not used to factory work have for the first time entered industry to work at high pressure—many in night shifts and with overtime hours. Rationing has been introduced. There have been shortages of some types of food, shortages of fuel for cooking and for heating. Doctors have left their practices in large numbers for war service, leaving often only a skeleton group to carry on medical duties which the war has made more exacting than ever. For many people there is the constant emotional strain of war. How, in such difficult conditions, has our national health been keeping? The answer appears to be surprisingly good. A study of vital statistics and medical reports shows a position that at least is satisfactory. If there has been deterioration in some directions, there has also been improvement in others.

You have to be careful if you start looking at vital statistics. They can get you into trouble. For instance, with the discovery over the years of powerful curative drugs, increased medical knowledge, and improved methods of treatment, you imagine that people's chances of living longer, their lives freer from disease, are better. To substantiate your ideas you study the vital statistics of New Zealand. With surprise you find the death-rate has been increasing for more than ten years. The explanation is not that the population is becoming less healthy, but that it is growing older. Immigration of people in early adult age has kept New Zealand's death-rate perhaps the lowest in the world. Now these immigrants are passing into the older age groups. The death-rate, therefore, is increasing, and will continue to increase for many years. Also contributing since the war to the increased death-rate is the absence from New Zealand of many thousands of the healthiest young men. There is no need for worry—your chances of living to a greater age than your grandmother are improving with the passing of every day.

After the last war the worst influenza pandemic (universal epidemic) of all time caused more deaths in many countries than the war itself. There were thousands more cases than hospital

beds. At times it was impossible to recruit enough able-bodied men to bury the dead. After five years of fighting, a time already longer than that of the Great War, there has been no such epidemic. New Zealand, with other countries, is taking every precaution to prevent the start and to kill the spread of a pandemic, always possible when people with resistance lowered are living closely together in difficult conditions.

New Zealand has had, though, an epidemic of cerebro-spinal meningitis which was the most severe in the country's history. It followed a year behind a severe epidemic in Great Britain and the United States. In the Great War this disease flared up in New Zealand military camps and towns with high loss of life. In 1942 and 1943, the two years of the outbreak in New Zealand, the number of cases was the highest on record. But the case fatality rate was the lowest. Nowhere are the extraordinary advances which medicine has made in the last generation better shown than in the control of this infection. During the last war it killed between forty and forty-five of each hundred persons stricken. To-day, thanks to the sulpha group of drugs, only about twelve of each hundred cases are fatal.

The sulpha group of drugs, of which adequate supplies were obtained in New Zealand to meet such an emergency, have revolutionized the treatment of meningitis and reduced the danger of its complications. In other fields their miracle-working properties are as beneficial. Particularly effective is their use in the treatment of the streptococcal infections and of the pneumonias caused by bacteria. The death-rate has been halved. Virus pneumonia, however does not respond to sulpha therapy, and unfortunately has the effect of raising perceptibly the total mortality-rate from pneumonia.

Twenty years ago the maternal-mortality rate in this country was more than five deaths for each thousand live births. Last year it was little more than two—if deaths from septic abortion are not included the figure is reduced to slightly more than one and a half. In spite of a higher birth-rate (and an increase in the number of first-born children, a group in which maternal mortality is always higher), the crowding of hospitals and other difficult conditions, the work of saving mothers has, since the war, become even more effective. Last year such deaths were the lowest ever recorded in New Zealand. Here, too, the sulpha drugs have proved particularly effective, and together with the continuing of the obstetrical work of the medical and nursing professions are from year to year perceptibly reducing child-birth risk and infection.

New Zealand has the lowest infant-mortality rate in the world. Since the war the position has at least been maintained, and perhaps slightly improved. The figures for 1941 and 1942 actually are records. A great deal of the success achieved is from legislative and educative measures which are constantly being extended. New Zealand has a record to be proud of—its methods to reduce infant mortality are being studied and adopted in other countries to an ever-increasing extent. The control which has been gained over the communicable diseases of childhood has continued unabated. In the "eighties" New Zealand lost more than sixty children between the ages of one month and one year out of every thousand; to-day the figure is less than ten. No longer is diphtheria the problem it once was. Measles, whooping-cough, and scarlet fever are still common, sometimes their outbreak causes alarm, but no longer are they such serious causes of child mortality. In building the health of her babies and children to such a high level New Zealand has led the world. The work will continue.

War conditions have always provided fertile ground for the spread of tuberculosis. In the last war the gains made over the disease in the previous decades

were wiped out in many of the warring countries. New Zealand certainly was adversely affected. The figures of the present war years show a heartening contrast. In 1943—our fifth year of war—deaths from tuberculosis reached a record minimum with less than four deaths for each ten thousand of the population. Fifty years ago the figure was more than twelve for each ten thousand of population, a rate which has been decreasing gradually during recent years.

Since the war, however, the notifications of fresh cases of this disease have increased considerably. Conditions of war are only partly responsible. Medical examination of recruits for the Services has brought to light many cases that ordinarily would not have been discovered until they had reached a more serious stage. Also responsible for the increased notifications is the general practice, introduced in the last few years, of examining contacts of new cases. To determine to what extent the war is responsible for the increase in fresh cases is difficult, but, all things considered, it is more than likely that more active detective measures are responsible rather than war conditions.

Malnutrition in children in a country like New Zealand is surprising. It is also serious. Since the war, according to Health authorities, there has been a noticeable increase in New Zealand. There are several reasons. A greater lack of home control with fathers away with the Forces or else working long hours in industry. The result is more children on the streets, with less rest and less sleep. Many mothers have much of their time occupied with war work in factories, with less chance to give proper control and care. Some food costs, especially those of fruit and vegetables, have risen. Some types of food have been in shorter supply. These are the reasons thought to be responsible for New Zealand's wartime increase in malnutrition.

Venereal disease, always a problem in time of war, gave alarm in the early years of the war. Returns of new cases caused concern, hospital departments were crowded. Even more serious was the number of persons who contracted the disease but who failed either to take medical advice or continue with treatment. Legislation giving the authorities wide powers of control was passed and, where necessary, used. To-day, the position is being held : it is certainly no worse, and there are signs of improvement.

Analysis of the death-rate shows that there is an increase in the mortality from the diseases of middle life and old age. Cancer, heart-diseases, and other degenerative diseases are recording higher rates than ever before. But interpretation of the figures is needed. To a large extent the upward trend, which has continued for many years now, is caused by the growing age of the population—more and more people are passing into the age groups more affected by such diseases. For instance, the chance of ultimately dying of cancer is to-day probably no greater than it was fifty years ago—but the fact remains that every year more people *are* dying of cancer. However, it is true to say that the medical profession has not yet been as successful in meeting the serious disease problems of old age as it has been with those of youth. This in itself is a reason more people die of cancer and heart-disease than fifty years ago—they are now saved from the epidemic and similar disease that took such high toll at the beginning of the century and live into age groups more affected by degenerative diseases.

At present many thousands of our men are overseas fighting. When they return, especially from the tropics, it is possible they will introduce into this country diseases which at present are either non-existant or not a health problem. Already they are returning ; already steps have been taken that will meet the position. At present, for instance, the malaria-carrying mosquito

is not known in New Zealand. To guard against its introduction the Health authorities are working in close co-operation with the three branches of the Services. Quarantine regulations are rigorously enforced; and all aircraft to come into the country are fumigated on landing. With such measures there is likely to be no danger.

New Zealand's birth-rate has increased, at least temporarily, a trend that has continued since 1935 (when fewer babies per thousand of the population were born than ever before). And this is important—the increase in the birth-rate is not due to any marked increase in the number of first-born children. In 1938 first births accounted for 40·9 per cent. of the legitimate births. The percentages for the next three years are: 41·4, 41·7, and 40·2. Therefore, although the number of first births has increased considerably, the number of total births has increased to practically the same extent. Since the war the illegitimate-birth rate has increased, but only slightly.

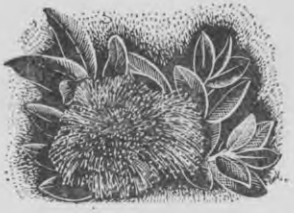
Deaths and injuries from road accidents perhaps should not come under the heading of health, but as they contribute appreciably to our death-rate a summary of the present position will not be out of place. Not unexpectedly, because of the great reduction in the volume of traffic caused by war conditions, there has been an improvement—the number of fatalities in 1943 (which was 9 per cent. higher than in 1942) has decreased by more than 40 per cent. since 1939. Last year 145 persons were killed and 2,746 injured in road accidents in New Zealand.

Many of the former general activities designed to reduce vehicular accidents have had to be stopped until after the war, but the safety courses of traffic instruction for school-children have been maintained and even extended. The effectiveness of this work is shown by the steady reduction in the numbers of school pupils injured (including killed) from 408 in 1938 to 106 last year—a reduction of nearly 75 per cent. It is hoped that, in addition to reducing the immediate accident-rate among juveniles, persistent instruction of the school-child will have a beneficial long-term result on the general road-accident rate in New Zealand.

Taken as a whole, wartime health in New Zealand is at least satisfactory (especially when it is compared with other countries—Europe in particular). With the peace it will be better. Doctors who return from war service will be familiar with new techniques and remedies. Wartime developments in the use of blood plasma and in surgery and anæsthesia will help. And in increasing quantities there will be available such powerful curative drugs as penicillin, which in certain fields has proved more efficacious than the sulpha drugs. To-day penicillin is available in New Zealand hospitals, but only in small quantities to be used only as a last resort. After the war it will be produced in greater quantities and with the other drugs it may well be that before many years diseases which are dangerous to-day will be relegated to the position at present held by such diseases as smallpox and cholera—one-time medical problems of the world. Health programmes will be continued and intensified; through the press and the radio education of the people will be carried on. Social security services, already in operation, will be of benefit to the people. New Zealand health will continue to be well served; it will continue to be as good as any in the world.

NEW ZEALAND TREES

The POHUTUKAWA



By Dr. W. R. B. OLIVER

THE GLORY of the Auckland coast, at least in midsummer, is the pohutukawa or Christmas tree. During December and January its masses of crimson flowers form a flaming belt along the shore. Like its relative, the rata, it is the brush-like stamens that give colour to the flower, the petals being small and inconspicuous. Although the home of the pohutukawa is the Auckland Province, it grows well when transplanted to more southern localities. It is, for instance, a favourite ornamental tree in Wellington.

Old pohutukawa trees grow to an immense size. One at Te Araroa, near the East Cape, consists of twenty trunks, each large enough for an independent tree. Some of these large trees were held as objects of special veneration by the Maoris. One of the most famous is the tree named Karewa at Kawhia, the very tree, according to the Maoris, to which the Tainui canoe was moored six hundred years ago. This massive plant must have been a giant at that time with long branches stretching out over the water; for it is narrated that at the end of its journey the Tainui's anchor rope was fastened to one of its branches. Another famous pohutukawa, now, it is said, no longer existing, was the one overhanging the sea at Cape Reinga. It was along one of the branches of this tree that the spirits of the departed entered the nether regions.

By Europeans the pohutukawa is one of the favourite trees used in public gardens and for street planting. The wood is reddish, excessively dense, and of great strength; but the tortuous habit of growth renders it largely unsuitable for planks. It has, however, been used extensively for ship timbers.

When you get back

We have tried to make the information given here as complete and accurate as possible, but it should be remembered that changing conditions may invalidate some of it. These articles can be regarded, therefore, only as a general guide. They do not bind *Korero* or any authority.

Engineering Draughting

The Public Works Department absorbs about six to eight draughting cadets annually, but outside the Department vacancies are few. The normal procedure is to take youths with University Entrance (drawing and mathematics with a high percentage of marks are necessary subjects) or equivalent qualifications, and train them in the Department. Adults do not enter the Service as cadets, the initial salary rates being low.

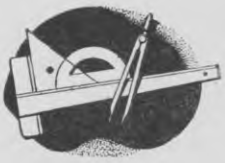
Adult draughtsmen are sometimes employed on the temporary staff, and if an opportunity of this nature is sought, study should be directed towards passing such examinations as A.M.I. Struct. E., A.R.I.B.A., A.M.I.C.E., and A.N.Z.I.A., but it should be remembered that vacancies are dependent on the activity of the Department, which is seldom predictable so far ahead. In a similar fashion, Bachelors of Engineering are occasionally employed at about £300 per annum.

Engineering draughting may be considered to cover any of the specialized branches of engineering, according to the course followed by the person concerned—mechanical, electrical, civil.

The work of the more senior draughtsman is highly technical and involves designing and computation with attendant proficiency in mathematics, while the preparation of specifications and estimates calls for a certain knowledge of contract law and familiarity with trade practices.

In the Public Works Department, draughtsmen, generally, may rise in salary from about £250 per annum to about £470 per annum according to qualifications and appointment rather than entirely on length of service.

Local bodies in the larger centres—*e.g.*, City Councils—and certain of the bigger engineering firms employ draughtsmen, but as a general rule the conditions of entry are much the same as for the Public Works Department. The number of ex-servicemen not already in the employ of the institutions concerned that could be absorbed in this occupation is extremely small.



Survey Draughting and Computing

This work is closely allied to the profession of surveying, but, unlike the latter, it is suited to disabled men, provided they have the use of their hands and good eyesight with no suggestion of colour-blindness.

Those who take up this work under normal conditions mostly join the Lands and Survey Department as draughting cadets. Appointments are made through the Public Service Commissioner's Office, the minimum examination requirement being Public Service Entrance. The training period lasts from five to seven years, during which time cadets are required to pass departmental examinations in draughtsmanship and computing. The work is skilled and interesting with good opportunities for advancement for the keen cadet.

The best draughting cadets in the Lands and Survey Department each year may become survey cadets, provided, of course, that they have the University Entrance

Examination requirements, including the subject of mathematics.

There is a normal recruitment by the Lands and Survey Department of approximately two draughting cadets per annum, the appointees being generally under the age of eighteen years. However, a limited number of temporary and casual employees are engaged from year to year, and such employees are not restricted by an age-limit, nor do they require to produce the same evidence of educational qualifications. Included in this category are temporary draughtsmen, draughting assistants, and map-mounters. This avenue of appointment gives an opportunity of limited advancement to appointees who have not passed the Public Service Entrance Examination and who are not required to have the intensified and advanced training of a permanent officer.

Moreover, although not part of the office staff, casual employees are attached to survey parties in the field in the capacity of chainmen and linesmen. These employees are on daily rates of pay and in many instances are continuously employed. They require to be physically fit and mentally alert.

The part that these varied occupations will play in the rehabilitation of soldiers is at present under discussion between the Department and the Rehabilitation Board. It is important to note in regard to rehabilitation that there are approximately seventy draughting cadets and draughtsmen serving with the overseas Forces who will be returning to the Department.

Salaries vary according to scale: £80 per annum for the cadet starting with Public Service Entrance, or £95 per annum if he has the University Entrance Examination; and the average adult may earn from about £155 per annum to an eventual salary of £300 to £350 per annum, although there are a few higher-paid positions than this. These figures are subject to an additional amount of about £26 per annum cost-of-living bonus.

FROM WAY DOWN SOUTH

Someday this hill will wake from tropic night
And show the sun to palms and native huts,
And trees alive with birds, and sparkling stream
But I will see the sun
From way down south.

Someday the natives singing at their work
The song that I hear now, with slash of knives
And laughing now and then, in harmony;
Will not be heard by me
From way down south.

Someday the moonshine, softly through the trees,
Will fall on native girl in scarlet skirt,
Her eyes a-dancing bright and fuzzy hair,
And I will dream of this
From way down south.

—Dvr. C. F. Milne

COUNTRY STOCK SALE

A KORERO Report

THE DAY is fine, but his boots are too dirty for description. They squelch when he walks. Weathered-looking gaiters keep out the filth and the cold, cutting wind. They are held up and in place with thick string and two 4 in. nails. Warm corduroy trousers bulge at the top of the gaiters. The belt he made himself from the best hide. The leather is thick and with no wrinkles. If you're in the crowd, the sun shining on the buckle catches your eye. His shirt is spotlessly clean, smoothly ironed, but the top button of the collar is undone and his tie is loose from the usual tidiness. His woollen cardigan is not fastened. It fills in the wind and gives you the impression of a greater bulk than is so. In his hand is a black-covered notebook, and you notice with surprise his nails are clean and carefully cut. When he's working, his hands aren't still very often. The wind blows his straight black hair across his eyes, and he smoothes it into place without thinking or appearing to notice. While he's working he doesn't seem to smoke much, and when he does it is with quick, impatient draws on a cigarette he soon throws away. You don't need to be close to hear his voice, which is strong and without harshness. At the end of the day his face is rather strained and weary but has lost nothing of its good humour, his eyes are still twinkling, his smile is as quick.

It is Tuesday. It is the day of the Levin weekly stock sale. And it is the auctioneer we are looking at. You wouldn't like his job: it is no wonder he looks weary about four o'clock in the afternoon. The yarding has been small, the prices high, but it is that auctioneer's job to make them high, to raise bids if necessary against the better judgment of the buyers. He works on commission, and so does his firm. High prices pay the two of them. Questions are asked if there are too many bad days.

Stock firms will tell you an auctioneer's life is hard, that they often crack under the strain. Selling in the ring and in the pen is only a part of their work. These days especially, farmers ask them for advice and help in culling their flocks and herds, mating their animals, buying and selling—they are expected to be authorities on a hundred different subjects. The auctioneer himself says he likes the work, but that he supposes it is rather hard. More than anything he wishes his telephone wouldn't ring so much. It means that practically every night he can't get to sleep until after midnight. It wouldn't be so bad if only they would leave Sunday quiet, but they don't.

The stock sale at Levin supplies most of the meat for the Wellington market. Business is always brisk. And such a noise as you never heard in your life. Boots. Talk. Bidding. Dogs. Pigs.

Cattle. Trains. Sheep. A lost lamb. Wind and trees. Cars. Trucks. Squeals. Laughing. Even a horse. Squelch of mud. Teacups. Knives, forks. A cold engine. Hoofs. Especially the pigs. Banging gates. Such unaccustomed noise if you're from the city. The smells are as varied. The language is stronger but more cheerful. Go to a stock sale, if you haven't been already, when you have the chance. It's fun. But be careful when the bidding is flying from mouth to mouth that you don't move a finger, even twitch an eyebrow. You mightn't have room in your house for the pen of fine fat lambs—" all good, bright, and healthy. The Best "—that you find you have bought.

" O.K., boys, over we go." The auctioneer swings from one pen to the bars of another. The crowd moves a pace or two. " Right oh ! Buyers. Say how much and Away We Go. Tell me what I've got for a start." His voice is quiet With the bidding it swells forcefully, but never so as to lose its tone. " Right, what've I got ? What do you say ? 35 bob, 35 bob ? 30 bob, 30 shillings ? Right, I've got 26. Twenty-six. 26."

He cracks out the first bid. There is nothing quiet about him now, nothing still. There isn't until those thirty-four fat lambs have a new owner. The crowd nudges closer. The prices are good to-day —not that you'd think so from the ton of the auctioneer. The bids follow each other, as thick, as fast, as sharp as hail-stones on an iron roof.

" 26 bob 26 26 26 26 shillings, 26 and sixpence 26 and a half 26½ 26/6 and a half a ½, an' 9 an' 9 9 9 9 9d. an' ninepence 26/an' ninepence ninepence ninepence three-quarters 26 and three-quarters 26¾ an' ninepence an' ninepence. Come on men, I'm not going to dwell, I'm going to sell, I'm going to cash 'em, and they're beauts." The words come rushing, but with smoothness, with power to sell.

There is no doubting the interest—except of the " beauts " : they stand there, the thirty-four of them, looking only as thirty-four prime fat lambs could look, or would want to look. They show every sign of growing into thirty-four fat sheep. But they won't. Are they concerned, even interested ? They are not. They are prime fat lambs. Meantime, it's . . .

" Thirty bob one sov. and a half sov. and a half 30 shillings 30/- 30/- 30 bob 30s. 30 bob bob bob 30 shillings 30 30 30, thirty and three and three an' three an' 3 an' 3 an' three thirty shillings and threepence did I hear six ? Are you judges or aren't you ? They're going cheap. And threepence. I'm not going to dwell ; shake it along, who's in for their chop ? " A nod from the owner

—referred to as the squire or the governor —the price is right. "30/3 30/3 an' threepence. They're on the market, I'm a seller, even at this price they're on the market, they're . . . 30 and six and a half and six an' a half a half a half a half a ½ a ½ a half. Last call, I'll take a penny, you've got me by the short hairs; last call, last bid, a penny over 30 and a half a half a half. Last call. And they're gone. To Mr. James Standish, his call. Thank you, Jim." The thirty-four prime fat lambs have their owner. There is scribbling in notebooks, dabs of paint. And it's O.K. Boys, Over We Go.

"I'll take a penny."

For the hours of the day it goes on. No relief from that strain, the pace, the effort for that last penny. And during the week there are perhaps other markets, clearing sales, valuations and advice, the ringing of that telephone. The men who are auctioneers often find it too tough. You notice one sometimes with his notebook held to his ear, held to catch the calls; constantly working amid the din, making most of it, listening through and above it has affected his hearing. If he's lucky, his years to superannuation are not far away; if he's not, it means another job, another type of work. It happens often.

Pens with concrete floors and stout railings. For some reason those holding the pigs were under an iron roof. The others were open. Concrete paths. The sheep and the pigs are sold in the pens; the cattle all go under the hammer in one yard. On the sides of that yard are two structures, two miniature grandstands, facing into each other, the yard in between—the smaller is for the auctioneer and his assistants, the larger to seat the buyers. Each lot of cattle is driven from the pen to this yard for its sale.

To the front of the saleyard are the offices of two stock and station firms, beside them a cafeteria selling tea, pies, sandwiches, and cakes. For six days of the week the yard is deserted, its bareness orderly with straight railings and concrete paths, square buildings; for the seventh, a Tuesday, all is confusion of men and beasts and movement, of noise and smell, of busyness.

Waiting their turn.

Horses, their reins half-hitched through swinging stirrups, wander for their grazing untethered. Dogs—you can't help noticing how many have a glassy, a blind eye—make the most of this weekly playtime. A lamb, its mother lost, bleats pitifully, making your heart jump in your throat; a second later you're laughing and wondering at its frolics on legs as long as poppy stalks, as rigid and as fluffy. A "tin lizz" catches your eye. Over its bonnet it has three grubby tea-towels. You wonder why. The rail car to Wellington

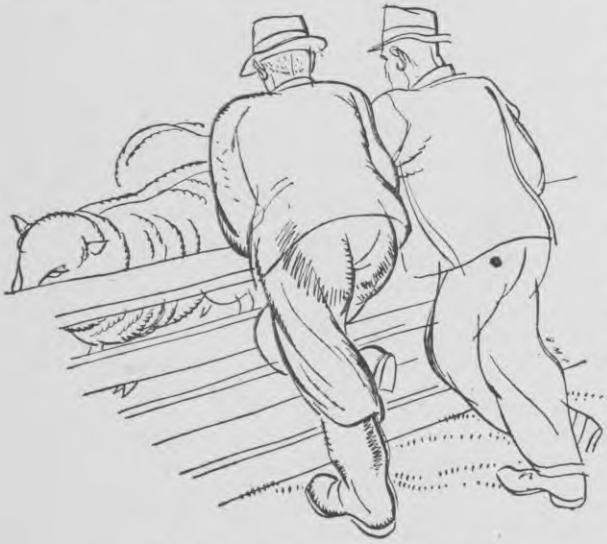
sleeks smoothly, quietly past. The line is only 50 yards away. Often there are trains; nothing quiet about those fearsome engines—some of the cattle especially are disturbed.

Above it all is the sound of pigs continually squealing. Until the passing of the regulations prohibiting the sale to the public of pork, Levin each week had a very large yarding of pigs; these days the numbers are much smaller. Butchers miss the business, but there is no squealing.

Six hundred fat sheep; fifty fat cattle, forty dairy cows, fifty store cattle; forty fat and store pigs; and sundries. The yarding was small, below average, the day a *Korero* representative listened to the din and looked at the confusion. The prices, though, were excellent, the best of the season. Fat lambs, 35s.; fat wethers, 41s.; fat ewes, 34s.; vealers and runners, £8 12s. 6d.; heifers and cows, £10 12s. 6d.; dairy cows, £14; heifers, £5 17s. Top prices, but the averages weren't much below.

Butchers made up most of the buyers; farmers, of course, were calling, especially for the dairy cows; but a farmer doesn't have to be a buyer to attend a stock sale. He doesn't have many other chances to meet his friends and neighbours, to discuss all the subjects affecting his livelihood. Values, of course, must be known in all their variations of sale to sale, of different districts, of changing seasons. To see for himself is much more satisfactory than a lifeless newspaper report of figures. So many of the farmers close round the pens are not buyers, but they are no less interested in those ewes and those "fine bodies of beef." And they'd probably tell you those auctioneers have to be known, watched for their tricks.

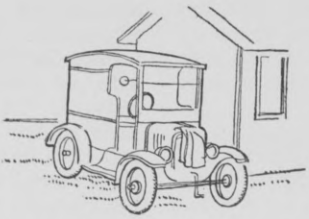
Tricks of trotting the bids—of taking a call that hasn't been made, so that a keen but innocent buyer will follow with another. Tricks of quick talk that cause a buyer to think he has raised a bid by a penny or threepence, only to find when he comes to square his account that it was a shilling, perhaps half a crown. Auctioneers' assistants often act as buying agents; sometimes, too, they estimate what they think is the buyer's limit, trotting the bidding along with false calls. And sometimes it's not their bidding but their judgment that is false; they are left with the final bid, often a fairly high price. There is no guarantee they will get their money back by putting their purchases under the hammer again. However, shrewdness is the virtue not only of auctioneers; those farmers know more than a thing or two. And auctioneers know that if they get a bad name, a reputation for trotting, for tricks that sail closer into the wind than good business allows, they may as well put their own job under the hammer. They know it doesn't pay.



"Farmers close round the pens."

It's mud and filth and too much noise. You wonder at the vigour, the quickness, the rushing talk, the sallies of the auctioneer. You see the strain on his face towards the end of the day, you watch him laughing loudly, hands on hips, body swayed back. You're glad when you catch occasionally a quiet smile in place of that laughing; it shows the man, not the agent

of the stock firm. Round you are the buyers with their talk and their interest, their country clothes. And you don't have to be an expert to judge the quality of some of those animals. With so much to look at, to listen to, to wonder about, so much that is different from anything



else of either city or country, you can't help be surprised the time has gone so quickly. It has been pleasant in the sunshine. And you'll appreciate a couple of handles in that country bar to wash all that dust out of your throat before tea—before you eat your roast beef.

LAMENT

Dvr. C. F. Milne

While drowsing in the tropic sun
Of waking city I did dream—
Thin streak of smoke in clean blue sky,
Sun-tipp'd buildings, sharp and high,
In chilly air,
Everywhere
Typistes in costume gay,
" Good-day "
From clerks they meet along the way,
Cheery hustle,
Always bustle—
Then I slowly roused from idle dream
And curs'd the drowsy tropic sun.

While looking up at tropic moon
I thought I saw the fairy lights
Of many windows ; heard within
Music drowned in merry din
Of wine lit glee,
Night long spree ;
Billowing skirts and eyes
Did rise,
The men folk there to tantalize ;
Love and laughter—
Who cares after ?
But too soon my thoughts of fairy lights
Were drowned by glaring tropic moon.

While slaving sunny hours away
At dreary desk in drab, dull room ;
Or breathing stuffy atmosphere—
Crowded halls and smoke and beer ;
I long to laze
All my days
Carefree neath tropic sun ;
Or come
The night, to lie neath tropic moon—
Never worry,
Never hurry :
But I'm doomed to work in this dull room
And waste my weary life away.

A PEOPLE ADRIFT

By Sgt. J. A. Evans

THIS WAR has now brought large numbers of New-Zealanders into contact with the peoples who live in that part of the Pacific north-west of Fiji and Samoa, which are places fairly well known to us. However, few of us knew much about parts farther afield when we left home with the Third Division, but after nine months spent in the Solomons and farther north opinions have begun to form, and we understand a little of the situation in which these neighbours of ours find themselves.

Before European culture influenced them, the primitive people of the Pacific lived in accordance with complex economic and social patterns. Their pagan ways were not haphazard, as one might think, but had been evolved slowly over very many generations, as environment reacted on the genius of their race.

We found that the native of Vella Lavella had possessed in former times a comprehensive system of religion. It endowed every natural object with a spirit, and formulated customs associated with birth, death, and all the major events of life. When he was confronted with a problem, custom told him what he should do. Some of his old social institutions, such as headhunting or widow-strangling, are repulsive to us, but they were part of a rounded system of life, by which the native had worked out for himself a defined place in his surroundings.

To him the human race was grouped in clans, which were quite small in size. His own life was practically confined to a group of hamlets. He cultivated his gardens and caught fish, and he did not have to go on long journeys to supply the needs of life. He had a well-developed system of currency, for which he used objects which were scarce, but had no intrinsic value, such as shell rings ground with laborious care, or whale's teeth.

Since these small communities were self-sufficient, the standard of culture was maintained by handing down unimpaired from one generation to another the skill of the craftsmen. These skills were often of a high order by our standards. A technician in an American Construction Unit said that he admired the skill in woodwork employed by the natives of Nissan when they made their simple houses. This was in the Bismarcks, north of the Solomons, and the general level of culture had seemed lower to us than that of the Vella natives of the New Georgia Group.

When the native built a dwelling he used only the materials in the bush around him, but there was no slipshod work, and he did everything so neatly that often at the same time the effect was highly decorative. He did not use much conscious ornament, and he seemed to have an instinctive eye for good proportions. In Vella the natives built a chapel to honour our dead, and they put their finest work into it, so that we

saw some of the old crafts employed. Great pains were taken to get the best of materials, and, if need be, the smallest item was brought a long way, even when something nearly as good stood at hand. In this instance the natives did employ a modest amount of ornament, but they did it, as the work proceeded, in the manner of the medieval craftsmen who built cathedrals. For instance, as soon as a pillar was set in place, it might be carved in relief with some simple symbol from daily life, such as the image of a crocodile. This decoration then merged with the structure, and did not have the appearance of something applied as an afterthought, as our ornamentation often does.

The comparatively recent arrival of European influence was a sudden blow to this age-old way of life. Their system, which fused all aspects of the human span into a closely-welded whole, has now vanished. The coherence of their living was destroyed because European life did not present itself to them as a rounded alternative system. European influence arrived in three main ways, at different times, and the separate institutions which brought it never really co-ordinated their policies. The Missions influenced religion; commercial interests influenced economic affairs; and the Government, last in the field, and, in the case of the Solomons, remotely controlled from the Colonial Office in London, took over administration, with nominal control over all aspects of native life. It was impossible for a simple people to adjust itself to such a radical change, when the alternative was presented in such a disjointed manner.

Now the native no longer has an integrated way of life; his problems tend to confuse him, and he has no single body of custom to tell him what he should do.

In the sphere of religion, most of the natives have been converted to Christianity, and they have adopted their new faith with impressive fervour. Especially at Vella we had opportunity to observe that their new beliefs play an important part in daily life, and that their religious outlook is now positive and enlightened.

It was in the economic field that degeneration was most marked. Many natives possessed treasured relics of ancient workmanship, but could no longer make such things themselves. When a small party visited an ancient burial-place in the hills of Vella, we saw lying broken among the mouldering skulls an ornament which had been carved from a slab of white shell of the giant clam. It had a delicate fretwork pattern of great felicity, with dancing figures arranged in rows. We asked a native who the craftsmen were who had done this beautiful work, and he replied that this thing had always existed, because no man could possibly have made it. It was clearly unbelievable to him that his race had ever possessed such skill, which had vanished with the old beliefs which it adorned.

The old system of currency has also largely broken down. Shell money, pigs, and other ancient currency still seemed to have value, but the common medium of exchange and store of wealth was the Australian shilling piece, which was a labourer's hire for one day. Thus, so far as we could find, shell money was no longer manufactured.

Evacuation.

The South West Pacific.

The old tools had mostly disappeared. Conventional European articles such as axes and knives are now bought or traded, and they are not always specially adapted to the particular needs of the native, as were usually the ones which he used to make for himself. European building materials and methods had penetrated to some extent, and have tended to destroy the sense of functional design.

War has intensified this process of disintegration in some cases. For example, over a period of about six months the unfortunate natives of northern Guadalcanal had tens of thousands of troops fighting fiercely over their land. They were apparently a hybrid race, not of the highest type, but those we saw there, a few miles from our camp, were an extreme example of social breakdown. Their ordinary way of life had disappeared temporarily, and they were wearing cast-off military clothing, and eating canned rations. They were dejected in appearance, and lived in squalor.

What, then, must be done ? What is already a geographical fact seems likely to become a political one in the near future—these people will be living in the sphere of the influence of Australia and New Zealand. It will be necessary for us in this event to develop a national sense of responsibility for the Pacific-Islanders. Clearly the old order was unenlightened in many respects, and with our knowledge, resources, and superior social experience we are able to do a great deal to improve their life.

Our first thought might well be that the native needs more of the material things of life, and should have cheap goods made available to him in abundance. If a well-intentioned policy were based on this assumption, it would probably prove a disaster for the native before very long. Its effect would be that which we saw in an exaggerated way in Guadalcanal. These fertile tropical islands will readily supply their inhabitants with a simple, natural living as a reward for moderate effort. This kind of life should not be disturbed fundamentally, nor should native culture be disintegrated by letting the natives learn to rely on our manufactured articles, which have superficial advantages for them. At present the need of the native is not so much for wealth, as for some-

Nissan Natives.

Medical attention from a New Zealand doctor.

thing more intangible — racial self-confidence. Perhaps discretion and wisdom are more required of us than generosity.

If we can, we must help the native to build up a new life which will be as well-knit as his old pagan one. This will require a professional service of enlightened administrators, freed, if possible, from a policy which places the interests of the native in a subordinate position. The process of reconstruction should be fostered from within the native races, rather than imposed from above.

Medical care and education are major needs. The aim, however, should be to make an educated native, not a European. The mild controversy as to whether natives should be admitted to New Zealand colleges probably misses the point. A native educated for years in New Zealand might be unfit to resume the simple life of a Solomons village. It is unlikely that white people in any number will ever wish to live in such a climate, so no problem of colour discrimination need ever hamper progressive plans. There should be a gradual and tactful introduction of scientific improvements into native agriculture, and old handicrafts which could still have a useful function should be revived. New crafts which would assist the rise of living standards could also be introduced. It seems unfair, and is probably unwise, to leave education to the privately financed missions.

At Vella we knew an intelligent youth from Choiseul who had been educated in mission schools, and now wished to be trained at Suva Medical College as soon as conditions would permit. Every ambition was subordinated to this desire. When we who knew him wished to give him little things, he gently refused, and said in his charming English : " I need nothing but education." These islands where we have been stationed are populated with childlike people, of whom many are talented, like this boy. As a reward for their loyalty, if for no nobler reason, they deserve our utmost consideration.

Going aboard a barge.

Lay that pistol down

by Gordon Kahn

From the *Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1944

AT THE bar of the Silver Dollar Saloon the boys from the Tumbling-T Ranch are watching Black Dalton and the Pecos Kid. They know that only death can sunder the chain of hate between those two.

"Black Dalton," says the Kid evenly, scarcely parting his thin lips, "draw!"

Dalton, his hand cautiously distant from his hip, shakes his head. "I ain't swappin' lead agin' the Pecos Kid—not Black Dalton."

"Like I thought," rasps the Kid. "More like you to dry-gulch a waddy, yah yaller-gilled dehorn!"

Dalton, goaded to the quick, gnaws his mustache and fingers the diamond horseshoe in his cravat. The Kid, his cold gaze never veering from the shifting eyes of his adversary, rolls himself a smoke, completing the operation with one hand.

"Yer wastin' yer time, Pecos," Black Dalton snarls. "I know that one. Yer temptin' me to draw, but I ain't doin' it."

Baffled, the Kid half turns to the bar and pours himself a moderate hooker (four fingers). He picks the glass up with his right hand, but like lightning he wheels in mid-gesture. The Colt in his left hand blazes once and Black Dalton staggers back, a bullet between his eyes. A derringer clatters out of his treacherous hand, limp in death. He is cold as a smelt.

The Pecos Kid, his cigarette dangling from his lower lip, picks up his glass and holds the fiery rye up to the light.

"This'n," he says, "this'n is on the late Mr. Dalton."

He swallows the drink in one gulp and smashes the glass against the back bar. Then with easy grace he turns to the door, his lithe back a target for any cowardly ball. But none dare shoot. The fear of his swift, deadly guns is still upon them.

Those who have witnessed that scene or its equivalent in the movies are well advised to treasure its memory. Its like will not be seen again, for it is now the Gotterdammerung of the centaur who spoke with a six-gun in each hand and never gave an order twice. It is the hour of twilight for the Western Hero. And the bicycle racks in front of the Little Gem and Bijou theatres throughout the land are empty in token of adolescent lament for his passing.

The Pecos Kid has been succeeded by a milk-fed man of parts—one part Sir Galahad, one part Chevalier Bayard, and two parts Model Youth. This one has yet to pistol his first man, drink his first tumbler of anything headier than lime coke, utter his first cuss, or, for that matter, embrace one female who is not his mother.

He is not a refined version of that nonpareil of sagebrush derring-do, but an entirely new specimen from the soles of his eighty-five-dollar custom boots to the crown of his fifty-dollar dove-coloured Stetson. He is the Singing Cowboy, a laboratory product, designed jointly by the Producers Association (otherwise called the Hays Office), the Congress of Parents and Teachers, the American Legion Auxiliary, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Legion of Decency, and forty-four State Censorship Boards.

When the Pecos Kid strode the screen, evil was not mere mischief and its perpetrators were double-dyed scoundrels. There was no shriving for their sins except bloodletting, and the Kid was there to administer. When they committed robbery, they did it with pistols and invariably left gory and incontrovertible evidence upon the floor of the First Drovers' and Cattlemen's Bank. When Black Dalton (or Ace Simmons or Hole-card Beaucaire) lusted after Florabel, the Prairie Nightingale, he panted, pawed, and knocked the furniture over. He was pressing kisses that carried a 125-pound head of steam on her throat when the Kid let him have it, from both guns—not without, of course, the punctilio of calling upon him to draw.

The Pecos Kid was often launched upon the screen at the working end of the Vigilantes' rope. The devotee of the Western knew that there were two methods by which he could denoose himself: a confederate could shoot the rope apart with a bullet at the instant of the Kid's strangulation; or the Kid would ask the final solace of a condemned Western hero—a dram.

"Pass him up a flask of mouth-whiskey," the Vigilante leader would direct. The Kid swigged to the count of nine. His cheeks puffed out like an ape's. Suddenly he'd expel the whiskey in a stinging spray. There were flurries, howls, and curses, reaching for guns, and a random fusillade. But the Kid was well away, pouring leather into his cayuse.

Try that with a lemon phosphate.

The Pecos Kid, weary, dusty, and unshorn, having traversed a trail strewn with the skulls of buffler, would enter a settlement. He was never indiscreet enough to inquire, "What's the name of this town, pardner?" because the invariable reply would be, "We don't ask names hereabouts, stranger. We stay—or we ramble." Nor did he ever give his name. Instead, he was recognized, usually by the fleetness of his draw in his first encounter with a henchman of the villain, who in turn was advised of the advent of the Kid into these precincts. The plot began to simmer with the villain's invocation, "Hmmm. So it's the Pecos Kid. Ridin' a apron-faced bronc, Huh? Well, I'll fix his wagon!"

The Kid would be found eating ham and eggs in The Chinaman's. Why always ham and eggs and always in a restaurant operated by a Chinese, the deponent is not prepared to say. But that's the way it was.

Not always was Black Dalton the proprietor of the Silver Dollar Saloon. Sometimes he was Lafe Dalton, Indian agent; Si Dalton, the crooked banker; Hank Dalton, sheriff of Lop Ear County; or Lame Elk De-Aw-La-Ton, leader of a bank of marauding Navajo that had busted off the reservation and were taking a census of the white settlers by scalp. In some pictures he was Ponsonby Smythe-Dalton who swore by his hypothecated coronet that, damme, he was going to run sheep on land hitherto sacred to horned cattle, egad.

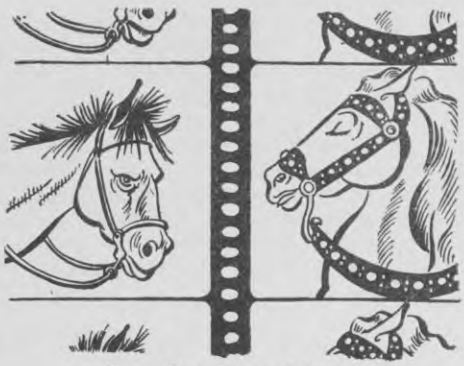
The villain in the piece.

Organized lawlessness was an essential ingredient of the Western movie for a generation. When the industry and civic agencies realized that the audiences for these films included millions of Mexicans, British, South and Central Americans, they abolished criminal conspiracy by manifesto and directive. A sheriff could no longer, under any circumstances, work in concert with a theiving band. At worst, he could only be honestly mistaken. Indians took the warpath only up to 1879; hence any picture in which the aborigine takes up arms must make it clear that nothing like that happens now; that the Navajo peacefully weaves rugs for the Fred Harvey tourist trade and the Apache handles a wholesale line of prime mutton.

A speech such as this serves to make the point more than amply lucid: "Me friend to Crazy Dog people. Me travel many moons to say to Chief, put um pistol down chief, put um pistol down! Smoke calumet with Paleface brother. If not do, Great White Father Rutherford B. Hays send um long rifles. I have spoken."

Crime can no longer be done in concert; but it is still permissible in a duet—one villain, one henchman. Neither of these may be a Mexican any longer, for obvious good-neighbourly reasons. Pablo, Jiminez, or Ildefonso is frequently cast, in the modern Western, as the ally and devoted friend of the hero, a model of dignified conduct and elegant deportment.

After the picturization of high crime had been thoroughly bowdlerized, the movies found to their confusion that the hero himself was no meekling. He still shot to kill and never missed. Something had to be done about that. The lag between the reformation of the villain and the continued bloodthirstiness of the hero had to be taken up. Then for a period the hero had to content himself with merely getting the drop on his adversaries, disarming and sometimes whipping them. However, the frequent show of pistols and the infrequency of firing them was a recognizably false note in a proper Western.



"——four legs and hair."

It were better, the producers reasoned, if the hero carried no guns at all. They gave him instead, a guitar (pronounced "gitter"). They tailored him to the nines and barbered him until he glowed a cherry red.

The Pecos Kid would have shot him on sight.

The Kid in his day rode anything that had four legs and hair. Occasionally when it was fractious, he'd growl, "Whoa, yah jughead! Stan' quiet, or I'll let yuh have one on the honker." But it was obvious that the new hero couldn't ride a common hoss, a bronc, or even a critter. It had to be a Sunday hoss, caparisoned in a thousand dollars' worth of saddle and tack, resplendent with silver filigree. This photogenic animal, like his master, now has a double who does the more perilous riding for him. He arrives on location in a padded van and eats nothing but irradicated barley soaked in sherry.

Upon this palfrey, the latter-day Western hero, accompanied by a comic aide, rides into the picture. He no longer enters that Xanadu of the horse-opera, the Western Town, but a flourishing prairie village complete with a handsome placard: "Welcome to the Incorporated Town of Happy Valley. Lions Club Meets Tuesdays 12.15 at Himmelfarb's Cafe." Nobody calls him "Stranger" or snarls at him, "Better keep movin', cow-prod. Nobody in Singing Skull asts to see Cameo Dalton. If it wasn't he sent for you, bust brush and save yer pelt whole."

There is a saloon, of course, in Happy Valley, but the drinking is done with genteel sleight-of-hand, so that the audience never sees the passage of glass to lip. The Singing Cowboy knows that this is the cocktail hour and it is here that he finds J. Pedley Dalton, banker, realtor, and secretary to the Junior Trade Council. Dalton has been identified by a kindly citizen as receiver-in-bankruptcy of the Rancho de los Quantros Ladrones.

The Pecos Kid would have asked for a job by simply stating that he'd hung his poncho on a vacant nail in the bunkhouse and is willing to let it hang there for the customary forty dollars a month and chuck; otherwise he'll drift, and no harm done. The Singing Cowboy, however, after properly declining a drink, a smoke, and the blandishments of a

nearby siren, introduces himself as "a graduate of the Kaupocks Institute of Animal Husbandry, Class of '39, more concerned with future prospects than size of starting salary."

"A model of elegant deportment."

Naturally, J. Pedley Dalton sees in this newcomer a tool in the scheme he is even now brewing to gain possession of the ranch and its secret vein of high-test gibonium, an essential ingredient in the manufacture of tooth-paste. The Singing Cowboy arrives at the Rancho just as the fiesta is beginning. It is apparent that this is what's wrong with the Rancho de los Quatros Ladrones—too much fiesta and too little work.

When he has finished the second verse of "My Pearl of the Purple Sunset," Senorita Caramela de las Pimientas Negras is nigh aswoon. The tide of her Castilian blood ebbs and flows with love—and fear. Can it be? She, the daughter of the hidalgos, and this simple cowboy?

No, it cannot. For five more reels he rides and he sings. He talks, too, but more than two lines of dialogue in one speech leaves him somewhat dished. He uncovers the plot and restores to the Senorita Caramela the yellowed parchment grant in perpetuity to the Rancho, with the signature of His Most Catholic Majesty, Ferdinand, upon it. He has shot at nobody, and no one has shot at him. His weapon was bel canto, and with it he softened the heart of the villain to contrition. Black Dalton has confessed so convincingly and with such fervour that Senorita Caramela consents to marry him.

The Singing Cowboy sings again. The music follows him out to the corral where he mounts Old Paint. Caramela, her nuptial mantilla whipped by the zephyr of her flight, runs to him.

"Shore, miss," he says.

"Shore. I ain't got no objection to kissin' the bride."

He rides west. Always west. Into the sunset, singing for the last time—a dirge, slightly on the hot side.

TELEVISION IN POST-WAR SCHOOLS

Large numbers of British schools are being supplied with television sets, reports the London *News Chronicle*. This will be the first step in the revolutionary post-war educational scheme planned by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the British television industry and aiming to promote instruction by television throughout the country. Sets supplied to schools must comply with a number of special requirements, necessitating considerable research and advanced experiments. The British television industry, thanks to the lead it has established in this science in pre-war years and maintained during the war, is in a unique position to supply these advanced models. It will be remembered that pre-war Britain was the only country to broadcast finely developed daily television programmes. During the war, although television broadcasts have been suspended, the industry itself has made enormous progress in the field of radio-location, which is closely linked with television.

ROUTE MARCH

By Sgt. J. GUNDRY

This narrative poem was awarded first prize in its section in the recent Services literary competitions.

Out before Reveille
Crying Hallelujah to the sun,
With the ogres of the darkness
Giving ground to dawn of day :
Cursing if the water isn't hot
To shave the whiskery stubble.
(To skip it doesn't pay
When the Sergeant's on the blitz.)

I was born a freeman with a mind of my own, and along comes a war that snatches me up and carries me in its wake like a piece of boxwood ; tossing, inanimate, ersatz boxwood . . .

Till I forget I ever loved one woman
Lived in one home ;
Worked for a living,
Learned not to roam,
Because a rolling stone
gathers no moss,
and anything you own
you sell at a loss
to eat, to love
the starry sky above . . .

So along comes a war
that snatches me up,
makes me an automat
with parades to attend——
Present, Sir :
Yell it out louder, yes, sir.
——with a country to fight for
while the tarts
on the streets
sneer
and the moaning loungers
leer
and moan the more
like an underpaid whore
because they've been called
in the ballot.

But shave it is
and clean your web
and shine the brass
till you wish you were
dead
dead
dead ;

for we are the boys from way down-under
sons of the Anzacs are we !
. . . .
The crickets in the blue-gums
behind me
sing,
and the birds in the nests
in the blue-gums
behind me
wing their way freely, freely . . .
as the Chaplain prays
monotonously as a jews-harp
our father which art . . .
And then we turn,
regiment will form column
of route
us leading
and we march
Up through the campground,
(de-e-e-eep Ri-ver,
I wanna cross ol' jordan)
straight through the gate
past the guard
turned out
and onto the highway
our way—my way
if I and my mates have paid
our rates ;
with the automobiles
swishing by
using gas,
while my soul sings
in thankfulness
for liberty

and my spirit wings
its way freely
in happiness
as I march.

Change direction left, left wheel
along a Class III road,
into a farmyard
ankle deep in the dung.

I dream of the days when I did as I wished,
wrote and said my will, but still I know
deep down, I would not change my
place . . .
Cow dung on my boots
cow dung on my soul.
March while your feet are cold,
march while your eyes can see
trees and rivers,
skies and mountains ;
drink your fill
because they'll soon be gone
these things . . .
March while the wind trembles
past the columns ;
march ! march ! March !
sing, you beggars, sing !
This is the life that makes us men,
not the drudgery we knew.
Up at seven
ham and eggs,
work by nine,
tea at ten
at the " Corner House "——
working to speed a nation
on its way
to glory.

Standing on the curbside
chatting to your mates :
popping in at five,
handle, Jim ? I'll take Speights.

Sticking pennies in slot machines
to see your true LOVE's face ;
squeezing through a friday crowd
giving way with easy grace.
Sticking pennies
in slot machines
to see your true-love's face ;
looking at the pretty girls
mincing down the street,
nosing the shop windows . . .
Oh Christ ! The memory
of it all !
Oh Christ ! Don't make me weep !
Ou sont les neiges d'antan ?

. . . .

I talk to my neighbour
about anything that comes,
and he grunts.
That's all you can do
when your spittle gets dry
as dust
and even Wrigleys
tastes like gall.

Grunt-grunt-grunt.
Halt ! ! ! What's the trouble ?
A fence to climb ?
Old boy, how bloody fine !
And another ?
It really doesn't matter
if you tear your leg
wide open
on the barbs.
Let the blood spatter
down your leg.
You're a man, now !
Yes Sir !
You're a soldier, now.
Yes sir !
You'll see more blood
than that
before you're through.
Yes sir !
Yes sir !
Yes sir !
Roll out the barrel :
only one or two sing.
It's a thirsty song
at any time
but now
it's hell
and they fade into the nothingness
that is Absurdity.

What should soldiers sing
on a march——right,
left, right——route march ?
Bawdy ballads—Love songs,
Ditties ?
Oh, my God ! Peace !
For pity's
sake,
don't rake
through all the past !
there's too much
of it to remember . . .

Peace time . .
peace time
with trees and bulbs and picture shows ;
squeezing hands in darkened parks :
kiss me quickly——
let me go——
love me truly ?
let me go !
Oh, darling——
Dear God,
Pater Noster,
Ou sont les neiges d'antan ?
. . . .
Land of Kauri
Land of Coprosma,
Land of Manaia,
Land of Maui
Land of Grey
and Whaka-Nene,
Sunshine, rain
and sparkling, adult snow.
Land of the fighting men
of Anzac and Gate-Pa
Maleme,
Thermopylæ ;
Land of the peaceful men
who work from eight to five
and live and work and die for you.
I greet you.
With mine eyes
cast
down
to watch my step
through the slough
of boggy earth,
I sing alone
to bolster up
my spirits
lest they
fall
to eternal damnation
in the agonizing abyss
of despair
and thirst
March while your feet are cold,
march while your eyes can see :
March while your feet grow boiling hot,
march though your eyes cast down
are blind,
but march !
Cover off from front to rear,
watch your dressing in threes !

They expect me to
regiment
my mind
to conform
with the strophy
of the gutter ?
They expect me to
qualify
as a fighting man
when my soul cries nay ?
Who said " Blame is on Hitler " ?
Whoever said it is wrong !
wrong !
He's just a Man——
Ecce Homo,
in trouble
in high places :
an agent-provocateur
for a fallen Lucifer.
Watch the jackals close.
March
march
march
though your boots are squeezing in.
(I wish I'd brought
a second pair
of sox.)

We have our rests
ten minutes to the hour,
but they are not enough
to reinforce our weakened power ,
mere offerings to the Army's
God of Conscience
and to let the M.T. through.
Well may I sneer
stuck back in the rear,
with a Sergeant years
my junior
snarling like a whelp
at my heels !
. . . .
Once I dreamt of Lands beyond the Seas
where folk
like you and me lived without fear and
blood and war :
can it be that no such state exists, that the
Kingdom of Heaven, too, is but a fable
together
with the allegorical Clausian Xmas ?
. . . .
Ake, Ake-Kia Kaha !
Remnant Maori
forts
stand aloof
in their immensity
and utter
destruction.
Where are those souls

that kept watch by night
for foes unknown,
undreamt,
and mused awhile
of far Hawai-iki ?
Are they gone,
destroyed
forever
as yet may I be
Or do they Live
and march
rank on rank
beside me yet ?
spears brandished,
carven visaged,
joy of battle in their veins ?

Grow cool, my feet——
my brain, be calm——
you are shoulder
to shoulder
a friend allied
to tremendous
posterity ! !
Up I lift mine eyes
To the very skies
rested my feet——
strengthened, my soul——
calm, my brain——
Quicken the pace,
shoulders back !
Okay, Sarge,
have your day,
I'll have mine——
Glory—glory hallelujah !

. . . .

" Una Voce Poco Fa..... "
I wish I were a soprano
to match the bird's
clear-bell notes :
my spirit soars
as far as Galli-Curci's trill
and further.
I am glad
I am One ;
a complete entity
one above
not absorbed
in the sponge
of Martial regimentation——
a suicide.

. . . .

Back before five
to stand
again
rigid at attention
for retreat.
Into the showers
to wash off the sweat.

Any fresh rumours ?
What does H.Q. say ?
We sail—to-morrow,
next day,
next ?
Who said the Army's lousy ?
Douse him, the skate,
Wet canteen blown down ?
Who cares ?
We'll pull it up
and have a drink :
blast the German army.
let's see how fast a Wop can run !

Feet sore ? You bet !
Who cares ? Not me !
Drink it up, and sing a song,
for we are the boys from way down-
under
sons of the Anzacs are we !

. . . .

Where are the Snows of Yesteryear ?
The joys—the loves——
ambitions and desires :
awhile yet
and they'll return
with ever-increasing
clarity ;
clean, austere,
beyond
the callous grasp——
the vicious domination
of Man,
and we shall live
whole and complete
and entire
in the World we know as Heaven,
Utopia,
Shangri-La,
Home.

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