

"On the golf course," said another, "you are careful to call 'Fore' when within striking distance of the party ahead. That tubby little chap in the green plus fours who is always in the bunker might be the Governor of Nyasaland." It is a town full of such possibilities, and the residents feel that there is no better camouflage than "that holiday feeling" and "that holiday dress."

How does Rotorua look to-day without the crowds and the gaiety of peace time? It might be a little unfair to compare it with a movie star without her make-up, but your first impressions bear out the simile. There is none of the grandeur that you may have expected, and no bush. Afforestation has clothed the hills behind Whaka with alien trees, but the land to the north, through which the road and railway enters, is gently rolling farming country. It is pleasant and prosperous but in no way inspiring. The town itself squats beside the lake in a basin of low hills over which you've climbed—crawled in the train—for the last few miles. And you haven't dropped back to sea-level. A sign-board on the station tells you that you are about 1,000 ft. up, a fact which, together with its inland location, accounts for Rotorua's biting frosts and blistering summer days.

The main shopping street running up from the station might be that of any inland town. But if you are in any doubt as to whether you've come to the right place, your nose will reassure you. Especially if it is a dull day. The heavy smell of sulphur is Rotorua's trade-mark.

Two other things will further convince you. The older Maoris sitting on the low fence in front of the Native Land Court seem to be very much at home. Talking smoothly in Maori, greeting each other with the traditional "ongi," or rub-noses, sitting and smoking or just sitting, they seem to fit very easily into the scene. And you'll hear more Maori spoken in Rotorua than in any other town of comparable size in New Zealand.

Final and no less emphatic evidence will be the accommodation problem. Rotorua has four public houses, thirty-two registered private hotels, and innumerable other houses offering rooms,

full board, or bed and tray. Yet even now, when the tourist traffic is small, accommodation is not easy to find. One hotel was booked out by August for the summer months. Admittedly some of the guest houses have closed down for the duration and others have been taken over as convalescent homes for servicemen, but, though it is better served with boardinghouses than most cities, Rotorua still can't find room for everyone. So it's no use planning that furlough for Rotorua unless you book well ahead.



You may, of course, get in at Crowther House, a soldiers' hostel given by a resident and furnished by the townspeople, but from the standard of its comfort it will be pretty popular also.

As in any business where customers are plentiful and goods are few, accommodation standards are sometimes hardly in keeping with the price or Rotorua's position as New Zealand's chief tourist attraction. The Mayor favours municipal control—something the same as in Invercargill. He has other ideas for Rotorua, too.