

IMPRESSIONS
OF A FRENCH CAMP.

(By G. F.)

MY first visit to the camp was at night, but there was light enough for me to discover that the barracks were of the long, narrow, adobe type. Passing by, one could see by the dim light within that the sleeping accommodation was the familiar bed-cot with the inevitable mosquito net. There appeared to be twelve beds on each side of the barracks. Gear is not placed on the beds during the day but is neatly and uniformly arranged on shelves above the beds. : : : THE barracks and administration buildings are aligned around the brow of a slo slope with cook house, ration store and garage on the flat below. : : : RATIONS are supplemented by vegetables grown in two large gardens in the camp. Lettuce, cabbage, onions, tomatoes and other vegetables appear to do all. : : : REVEILLE is at 0500 hours, fifteen minutes only being allowed in which to have a tumbler of coffee and a slice of bread before going on parade. Shaving at this time, however, is not compulsory. The first meal of the day is not until 1030 hours and is followed by a siesta period until 1400 hours. Work ceases for the day at 1730 hours. Coffee and a slice of bread only for breakfast is not the rule in civilian life, but the Frenchmen say they have become used to the army way.

" OEUFS MIMOSA ".

THIS is the name given to a dish which was being prepared by one of my French friends when I arrived on another occasion for lunch. Hard boiled eggs had been ~~boiled~~ and cut in half, the yolks carefully extracted and, after being whipped up with tinned salmon were being replaced in the whites. These were placed on top of sliced tomatoes, below which were lettuce leaves. : : : THIS was the first course and was followed by fresh fried mackerel with the juice of lemon to taste. : : : THE third course was fried beef steak, potato chips and lettuce leaves, the latter being soaked in oil. : : : BREAD and dry wine were taken with the meal which was followed by New Caledonian coffee. Milkless but mild and very sweet; unlike the coffee we sometimes have here. To finish off the meal a bottle of New Caledonian imitation " Curacao " was opened and this like the meal was " Tres Bon " : : : A variation in the meal is that the eggs are hard boiled, but in

a white thick sauce and was equally good. This was followed by large crabs which taste very much like crayfish, but are sweeter. Fresh fried mullet with the juice of lemon preceded a well fried beef steak, with very good potato chips and salad. The evening meal was " Fish Sausage " This was fish cooked in a very rich gravy and had an elusive sausage flavor. Ox tongues were also on the table and were followed by bread, cheese and marmalade.

WHAT YOU DO NOT SEE IN NEW ZEALAND.....

SEA snakes at the beaches that vary in length from two inches to two feet. The body white with black rings like thick bands round the body.

SPIDER webs that stretch between trees from ten to twenty feet apart. How the spider reached from one tree to another kept all hands guessing until it was discovered that the spider hangs on the branch of one tree and releases several strands of web. Caught by the breeze the strands of web are carried to a nearby tree to which they stick. Some webs diamond shaped and stand four feet high; usually attached to the ground.

TREES that go on fire to get rid of old bark.

HILLS with enough mineral wealth in them to make you a millionaire several times over if you owned them.

A winter which fits the dry season.

INSECTS of all shapes and sizes fluttering round your candle at night. Little we codgers with backs as hard as nails and long thin wings.; small moths that creep in your ears and down your neck; mosquitoes that stand on their hind legs and hiss at you through the net.

WILD pigs that look like maori dogs

MEN and women who have never known what it is to wear boots - even when working in quarries.