

GISBORNE LAD HAPPY!

SAPPER STAN WHITE who never omits an opportunity to get in a sly piece of propaganda on the charms of his native city, Gisborne, says he is as happy as a lark in Works Service - in fact, happier than he has ever been in the army before. In our present camp he finds, he says, all the minor charms such as quietness, twitt ring birds, rain, rough roads and few pictures. If only the girls round these parts as beautiful as the ones at home, he would be content to stay here as a coloniser. Well, Stan, you never know your luck.

Reading books in New Caledonia while not altogether frowned upon, is regarded as a waste of time.

DOLLAR DIFFICULTIES.

DIFFICULTIES arising out of appreciating the dollar standard on which 3rd. Div. Kiwis have been working were emphasised today by Electrician Sid Diamond who remarked that every time he spent a dollar - bang went six shillings, something he is just beginning to realise. "A man goes to the Canteen to buy a carton of cigarettes, and with a salesman like Don Hollaway behind the counter, a chap comes away with ten dollars worth of stuff" said Sid, and he continued, it is not till we stop to think that we realise that ten dollars is over three pound. We rate the dollar as no more than a couple of bob, whereas we have a pretty good idea of the value of a ten bob note which has a definite buying value. But the dollar seems small time," he concluded. This point of view is fairly common among Kiwis, and only now are beginning to realise that they have paid more than "ceiling price for a good many articles in the course of the twelve months.

"I'm looking forward to the day when I shall be called 'Mr. Radisich'" says Tony. Incidentally, ask him how he enjoyed cooking at the Kiwi Club.

Leo Inns nightly serenade is reported to be most soothing - to Leo.

HOUSING SCHEME IN NEW CALEDONIA

PRIOR to the arrival of the French in New Caledonia the natives lived in conical huts which only survive today as exhibits in the various native villages. They are pictured on the pre-war New Caledonian stamps of pre-war days and were constructed on a circular butt, say twenty feet in diameter with a steeply pitched thatch roof. The better examples were well constructed with a solid centre pole as thick as a sailing ship's mast and about 18 feet high.

THE CEREMONY.

THE raising of the centre pole was a ceremony in keeping with our laying of foundation stones and the whole tribe assembled, feasted, danced and in spasms worked. For ropes strong vines or aerial roots were used, and the around the centre pole sturdy uprights six to eight feet high were placed at intervals of about five feet in a circle of twenty feet diameter. Th these uprights were lashed horizontal braces, and the rafters were in turn fastened to the horizontals and joined to the peak of the centre pole.

MORE VINES.

The spaces between the rafters were interlaced with tough vines and the roof was thatched, first with a raupu-like rush and then with thatching grass. The peak of the roof was usually finished with some ornamental shape in woven grass, or a carved figure.

NO WINDOWS

THE walls were made of several thicknesses of naiouli bark fastened with thick vines and the roof was made overhanging the wall by about three feet to keep the weather from beating directly on the walls. Windows were not provided, and a low square doorway was covered with matting hangings. The raised door sill was crudely carved to represent an upward fiery figure to guard against strangers entering with concealed weapons of offense.

DRY AND DARK.

THE completed structure was dark, but snug, and if a fire was needed then it was just inside the doorway and smoke was left to find its own way out. (see page II)