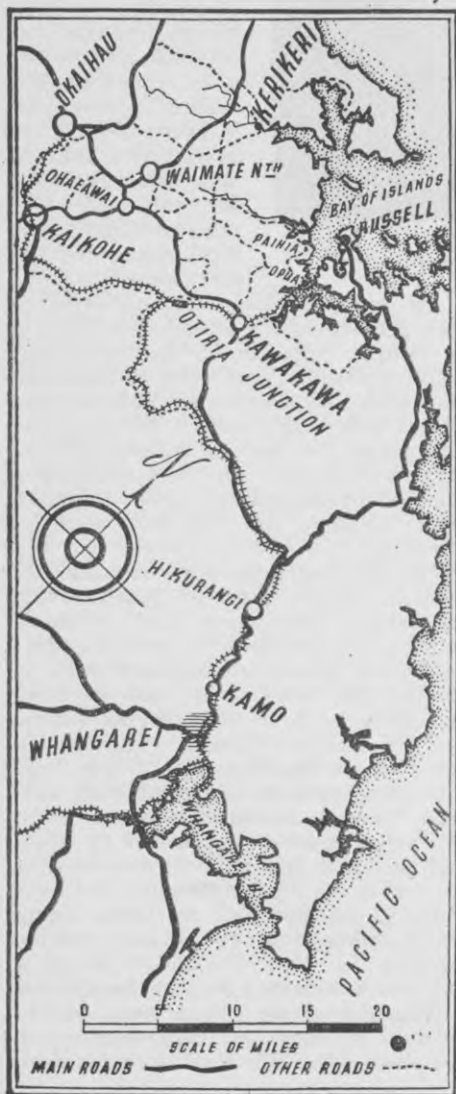


# KERIKERI

## A Koroero Report



FROM AUCKLAND to Kerikeri, on the east coast 170 miles north, is a full day's journey by train and bus. You spend most of the day in the train—it's round half-past four when the 8.40 a.m. from Auckland pulls into Otiria Junction. And so, at this time of the year, you complete the last stage of the journey, the bus ride over the 20 or so miles from Otiria to Kerikeri, in darkness.

You may be inclined to feel that the impression you gather of the country on this bus ride is an exaggerated one. The bus lights fall on roads which seem to be a strong red. They sweep over red banks at the sides of the roads. Above the banks they show you the green and gold of long lines of gorse in bloom. When there are no banks by the roads, all you see is the outline of masses of trees, most of which look like blue-gums and pines. Here and there the bus stops to set down a passenger, and you wonder why, for you can't see any houses, or even a light from a window. Only trees, and gorse, and the red road ahead.

It's not until the bus is belting down the straight stretch of road that leads into Kerikeri Central that you do at last see a light. It comes from Kerikeri's one street lamp, which hangs over a cluster of shops. This light and the half-dozen or so shops are practically all there is to tell you you have reached the end of your journey. Perhaps a handful of people meet the bus. But you're still asking yourself where they and the rest of the people of Kerikeri live, for beyond the shops and round them all you can see is trees.