

# We New Zealanders

+ are we like this?

In the last issue of *Korero* we printed some comments by servicemen on Miss Anna Kavan's article on New-Zealanders, parts of which we reprinted in an earlier number. Here are extracts from more letters received—extracts only, because space doesn't permit us to print the letters in their entirety.

**A**N AIR FORCE corporal writes that he thought Miss Kavan's comments unfair. "As a New-Zealander myself," he says, "I feel I must raise my voice in protest." He continues: What knowledge of New Zealand as a whole has Miss Kavan? From reading her impressions I should think that the only place she visited was Auckland, which, though our biggest city, does not represent New Zealand or New-Zealanders as a whole.

New Zealand, being a long narrow country stretching from 34 degrees of latitude in the north to 47 degrees in the south, has a variety of scenery and climate. This variety is shown to a marked degree in the characteristics of the people. Those who live in the warmer North are a pleasure-loving, go-ahead crowd, while those in the South are more solid, hospitable, and, perhaps because of their Scotch blood, more thrifty. Thus the people who live in Dunedin cannot be judged by those who live in Auckland, just as those who are only familiar with the South Island climate and scenery cannot say they know the North Island.

Miss Kavan's statement "The country's good to look at with plenty of hills in the background and small mountains, some of them even extinct volcanoes" got my New Zealand pride below the belt. I was amazed, angry, and hurt when I read that. Did Miss Kavan see our mountains, our Alps, towering snow-clad peaks, that run practically the length of the South Island? Surely any one who has seen Cook and Egmont, for instance, could not allude to them, as "small mountains, some of them even extinct volcanoes"

I don't like, either, the references to New Zealand as a Colony and our supposed homesick longing for the "Old Country." New Zealand to-day is not a Colony but a Dominion, a junior partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations. To-day the country is populated mostly by people whose roots are firmly planted in New Zealand soil, whose ancestors for two or three generations back have been born and bred here.

Descended from hardy pioneer stock, these people are individuals with plenty of initiative, which has shown itself in the brilliant fighting qualities of our soldiers, sailors, and airmen in this war. The standard of living of the New-Zealander is high and the labourer is well paid. There is no class distinction; Jack is as good as his master. In my three years in the Air Force I have noticed, too, that New-Zealanders have amazing adaptability and resourcefulness. They are able to turn their hands to any job.

As a nation we are not particularly interested in art. We don't like high-class music, nor do we like swing. Probably this lack of appreciation of famous writers, composers, and artists is due to the fact that in the past we have been too busy earning a living from the soil to have time for the finer side of life. The pity of it is that if any of our people should be specially gifted they drift to other countries where, if they become famous, all we can do is claim them as New Zealand born.

Yet in material gain the people are more progressive than those in most countries and they have adopted modern