



A KORERO Report

ONE of the first things you will notice on entering Tauranga by car is a street sign which reads "Fifth Avenue." It seems a little incongruous, because you immediately think of skyscrapers and penthouses and overhead railways, and see instead pleasant bungalows with lawns and flower-beds and trees, all very tidy and flat and peaceful, and not at all like New York. It makes you think, though, that Tauranga must be a prosperous place. The homes are modern and sit comfortably on large sections. The streets are wide and tree-lined. The lawns and shrubs, and not only those inside the fences, are well barbered. There is no bustle or hurry; but an air of comfort and security, of prosperous ease. "That's why," said one of the residents, "we say that Tauranga is made up of two classes—the tired and the retired."

The weather has a lot to do with the first division. A sultry sub-tropical summer and a mild winter with few frosts is not the sort of climate that encourages excessive activity. You want to laze about and take things easily; to swim in the warm waters below the Mount; to sunbathe on Ocean Beach or to stroll somewhere in the shade.

And it is certainly the climate that attracts the retired people. Just warm sun to sit in and quiet gardens in which to make things grow.

There are other classes however: people who go to Tauranga for their holidays and, in a peacetime summer, make the town one of the brightest spots in New

Zealand. And business people who make a good living, and who make it in shorts and shirts for most months of the year.

We went to Tauranga just before the beginning of the summer season—a season now not quite so hectic because of the war. It was peaceful enough then. You could have held a duel in the main street of an evening without danger to any one's life or limb except your own. But when you read the town's history you found that Tauranga, like many of its residents, had earned a rest; earned it as long ago as the Maori Wars.

For Tauranga has a history that contrasts strongly with its present prosperity and peace. Nowhere is that contrast brought home to you more strongly than at "The Elms," a fine old house in wide and well-kept grounds from whose front windows you can look out across the harbour to Mount Maunganui, green against the skyline. Almost one hundred years ago Archdeacon Brown built this house as the central building of his newly established Mission Station, and although the natural beauty of the scene was not impaired in those days by a railway reservoir and a fish-factory, it was apt to be often interrupted by "wars and rumours of wars." This house, which was one of the first wooden homes built in New Zealand and which has been as carefully preserved as the grounds surrounding it, has retained inside as well as out the atmosphere of last century. This is because of the care taken of it by Miss Alice Maxwell, niece-in-law of Archdeacon Brown and present owner of the property.