

# in the WAIKATO

*A Korero Report.*



NINE MILES from Ngaruawahia, among the low, rounded hills of the Waikato, is the Paerangi Soldiers' Settlement. Here the 2,530 acre Paerangi Estate has been divided into five farms which are being taken over by the settlers on favourable terms and in very good order.

In part, at least, the servicemen owe their exceptional opportunity to a number of Hamilton business men, in particular to the former owners, Messrs. A. Miller and G. W. Vercoe, who accepted for the property a good deal less than the market price, and to Mr. D. V. Bryant, who financed the purchase through the Bryant House Trustees.

There have been other similar ventures in the district. Through the Waikato Land Settlement Society, during the slump of the "thirties," unemployed men were placed on once derelict land in three areas—near Whatawhata, close to Cambridge, and near Te Awamutu. The Maoris have been helped through by Princess Te Puea, who has a well-ordered farm at Ngaruawahia. And the farms of the Bryant Trust, established twenty years ago by Mr. Bryant, maintain Bryant House in which thousands of convalescent children have spent health-giving holidays.

All have arisen from the same impulse—that those who have received their wealth from the country must give something in return or the present system cannot continue. As Mr. Bryant puts it: "Under our present laws a man may possess 100,000 acres or £10,000,000, or both. This is bad. After my study of the continental countries I am convinced that we must alter all this or even the heads of the very rich will fall."

Similar views are held by Mr. Harry Valder, who has been associated with

Mr. Bryant in some of his enterprises. Mr. Valder has interested himself in the relations between employer and employee. To bring about better relations he has admitted employees into partnership in the Waikato Times Company, of which he was managing director, and has given £7,500 to the University of New Zealand to enable an investigation to be made into social relations in industry.

The proposals of both men have been written into the laws of this country in legislation which allows land to be held under the Bryant tenure, neither freehold nor leasehold but usehold, and allowing shares to be given to employees without a cash payment for them as in the case of the Waikato Times Company.

What these men have done in the past is important to-day because in the settlement of the Paerangi Estate, an interesting experiment in rehabilitation, the same principles have been followed. The basis of the scheme is that if men are to be placed on the land, particularly servicemen, they must be established on terms that will give them a chance to be successful. In the process some contribution may have to be made—as in this case—by well-to-do private individuals, but that contribution, in the opinion of Mr. Bryant and his associates is an obligation placed on the wealthy because of their position. In return for it they receive an indirect benefit as members of a prosperous community, since if the men were to be settled on less favourable terms they would probably fail, the State would lose the capital it had risked, and, with hundreds of bankrupt settlers needing assistance, the country as a whole would suffer. "It is not philanthropy," says Mr. Bryant. "I hate the word. It is good business."