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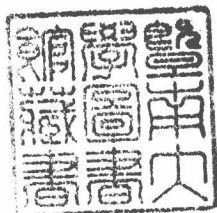
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NEW ZEALAND

Pacific Pioneer

BY

PHILIP L. SOLJAK



1946

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NEW ZEALAND

Pacific Pioneer



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To
D. S. and M. B. S.



KA U KI MATA-NUKU,
KA U KI MATA-RANGI;
KA U KI TENEI WHENUA,
MAU E KAI TE MANAWA O TAUHOU.

(I come where a new land is under my foot,
Where a new sky is over my head;
Here on this new land I stand,
O Spirit of the Earth! The stranger offers
his heart to thee!)

—CHANT OF THE MAORI VOYAGERS.

PREFACE

THIS short book was written primarily to introduce New Zealand to American readers. After years of neglect by schools, colleges and public information media throughout the English-speaking world, the Pacific has emerged as an area where the most vital social, economic and political issues of this century will be decided for good or for ill.

In the evolution of the modern Pacific, the small but progressive Dominion of New Zealand has played an important part, though its contributions to world security and advancement have at times been insufficiently recognized. For this the New Zealander's traditional reserve has been largely responsible.

In outlining my country's internal and external development, I have been guided by the thought that we cannot interpret the contemporary scene unless we see how it has come out of the past. The self-imposed limitations of so brief a survey are obvious and for the benefit of those who wish to continue along some particular line of study I have appended a bibliography which, I hope, will be helpful.

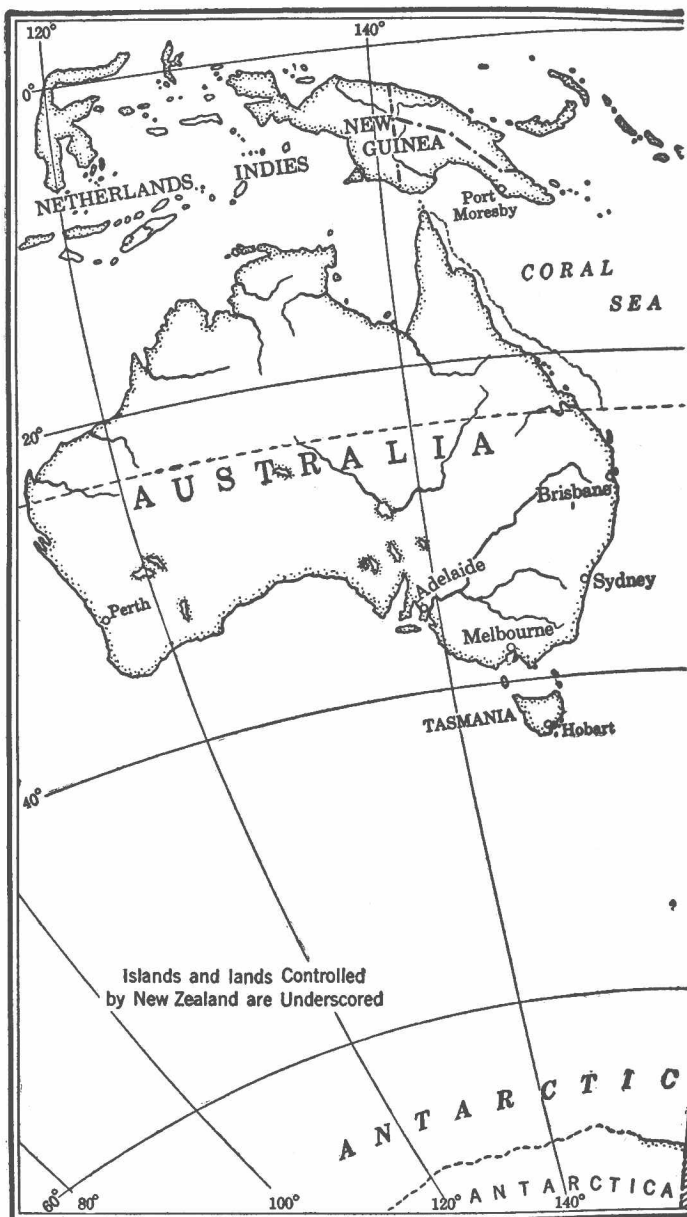
I take this opportunity to express my thanks to officials of the New Zealand Government, the Institute of Pacific Relations and the British Information Services, who have furnished data and illustrations for the work. Their co-operation has been invaluable.

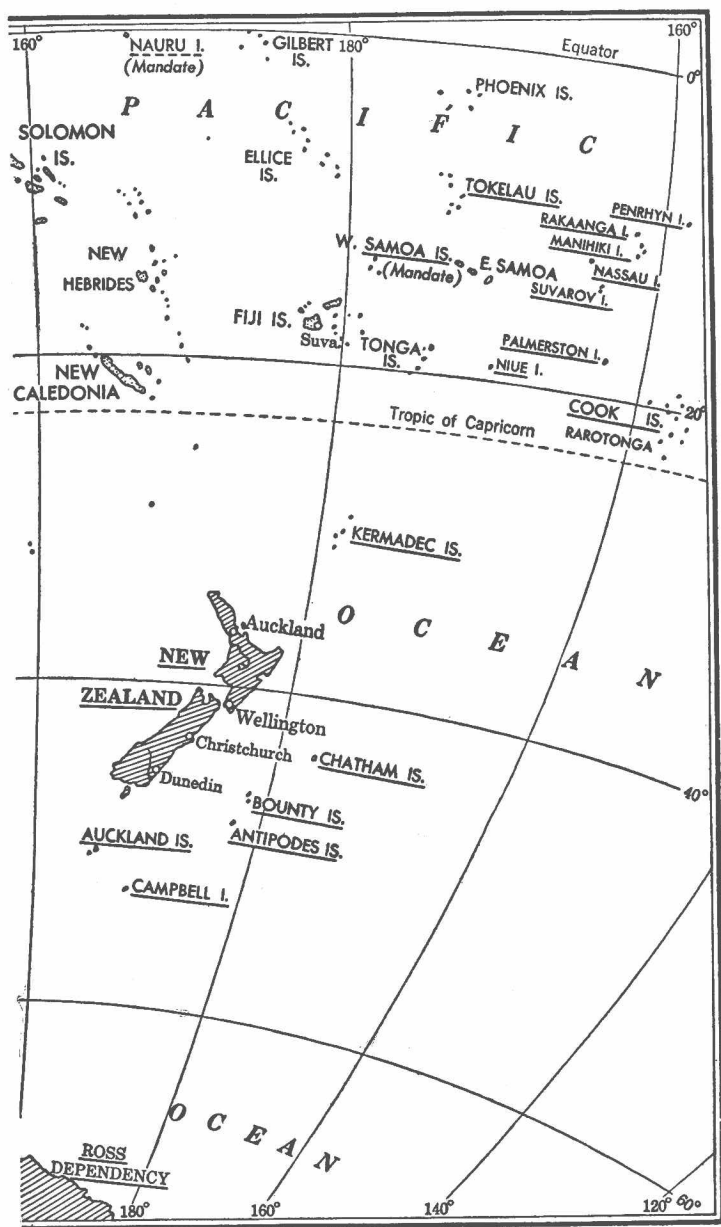
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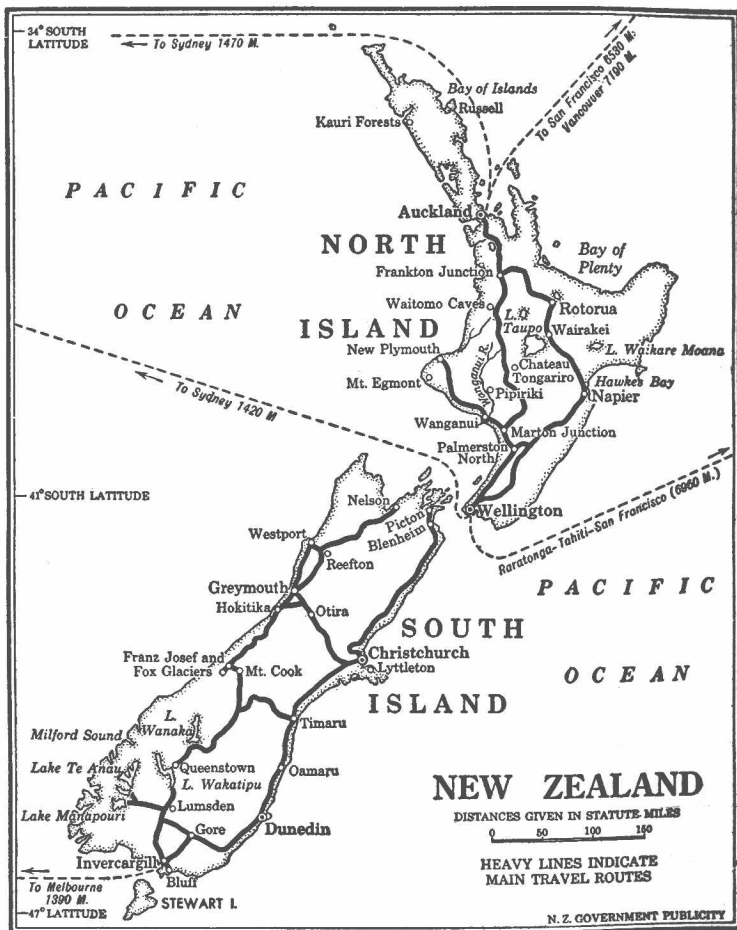
PHILIP L. SOLJAK

ILLUSTRATIONS

Wellington, Capital of New Zealand
Eastern Suburb on Wellington Harbor
Lake Matheson and the Southern Alps
Mitre Peak on Milford Sound
Queenstown on Lake Wakatipu
Queen Charlotte Sound on Cook Strait
Off the Punakaiki Coast Road
Fern Track to Franz Josef Glacier
Mt. Egmont, "New Zealand's Fujiyama"
Auckland, Largest City in New Zealand
Pohutu Geyser
A Sheep Station at Hawke's Bay
Drop Scene on the Wanganui River
Maori Girls
Maori Church at Ohinemutu
Signalman, Second N.Z. Expeditionary Force







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THE LONG BRIGHT LAND

WHEN United States forces landed at New Zealand ports in the critical days of May-June, 1942, they were welcomed by the people of a green and pleasant land which within a century had been transformed from primitive wilderness into one of the most productive and progressive democracies in the world. Dominating the strategic line between the United States and Australia, New Zealand was now summoned to play a vital role as southern headquarters in the first phase of a vast Allied campaign to arrest the Japanese advance into the Pacific and to drive the invader back to his homeland.

This British Dominion had been fighting in the war against fascism for nearly three years when American forces arrived to establish a main base for the Pacific offensive. Its seamen had shared in the destruction of Nazi naval forces, its airmen had fought in the battles of Norway, France, Britain and Greece and its soldiers, after fighting rearguard actions in Greece and Crete, were entering the final phases of the long-drawn campaign to oust Rommel's legions from North Africa. Yet surprisingly little was known in many countries overseas of New Zealand's people, resources, history, social and political system, or even of its geography.

Few nations, including those which pride themselves on their educational facilities, had given anything like ade-

quate attention to the South Pacific lands "down under," the Cinderella of school atlases and geography books. New Zealanders visiting America are frequently asked questions which strike them as astonishing, amusing, or both. Of these the following are typical examples:

Aren't you part of Australia?

Who is king down there?

How long have you been able to speak English?

How do you like belonging to England?

Do you pay taxes to Britain?

Hasn't King George complete power over you?

Why do New Zealand and Australia tolerate British domination?

Won't you demand complete independence after the war?

Little short of devastating was the comment of a Wisconsin farmer whom a New Zealand friend of mine met on the train to Milwaukee. As is almost inevitable when a man from Wisconsin meets one from New Zealand, the conversation drifted to dairy production. The farmer, apparently impressed with my friend's knowledge on the subject, asked him from which part of the country he came. "Oh, I'm from New Zealand," my friend replied. "New Zealand? That's around Australia somewhere, isn't it?" the farmer asked with a puzzled frown. The New Zealander took out his notebook and drew a rough map of the South Pacific, showing New Zealand's location, 1,400 miles* from Australia and 6,000 miles from South America. "D'ya mean that little strip of land, with all that water around it?" exclaimed the farmer incredulously. "Why, what d'ya do when the tide comes in?"

Apparently we New Zealanders have failed to make ourselves adequately known to our friends and Allies.

* Distances given here and elsewhere are in statute miles.

The tendency to confuse New Zealand with Australia has been encouraged by use of the term "Australasia," which Australians naturally favor but New Zealanders dislike intensely. Fortunately this word is now passing out of fashion.

WHAT IS A DOMINION?

New Zealand was in fact separated from Australian control one hundred years ago, has had self-government for ninety years and is today a free, independent nation within the British Empire, which is being transformed into a Commonwealth of Nations. Of this diverse association of Dominions, Crown colonies and protectorates King George VI is titular sovereign, with limited powers.

None of the British Dominions "pays taxes" to Britain, and under the Statute of Westminster of 1931 may adopt an independent policy on any issue, as Eire did with regard to the war. On the other hand, New Zealand's racial, cultural, political and economic ties with Britain are so strong that the Dominion would enjoy as little advantage in "breaking away" from the British Commonwealth as California would in seceding from the United States.

Like the other Dominions, New Zealand has a parliamentary form of government based on the original British system and outlined in a written constitution which the British Parliament passed as an act in 1852. The New Zealand Parliament has power to amend the constitution and has done so on several occasions.

Parliament consists of two houses, the House of Representatives and the upper house or Legislative Council. The House of Representatives has eighty members, all of whom run or (to use the British expression) stand for election every three years. All citizens over the age of 21 have the

right to vote and are required to register on the electoral rolls.

The party winning the greatest number of seats in the House of Representatives forms the Government, the victorious party leader becoming Prime Minister. From his party colleagues the Prime Minister forms a Cabinet of about twelve other "Ministers of the Crown." All Ministers are directly responsible to Parliament, and Parliament to the people. Ministers are therefore required to attend Parliamentary sessions to submit legislation, answer questions and participate in debates. This system is known as "responsible self-government."

The Legislative Council functions mainly as an advisory body and has very limited powers. Several members of the present Labor Government favor its abolition. Council members are appointed by the Governor-General for a seven-year term on the advice of the Cabinet.

Despite his title, the Governor-General does not govern and has few, if any, of the powers enjoyed by the governors of the former American colonies. He is a representative not of the British Government, but of the King and performs the same duties as the King does in Britain. The Governor-General acts solely on the advice of the New Zealand Cabinet, his main duties being to sign legislation passed by Parliament and to preside at official ceremonies. The present Governor-General is a New Zealander, Lieutenant General Sir Bernard Freyberg, who won fame for his leadership of Dominion forces in Crete, North Africa and Italy.

Politically, therefore, New Zealand enjoys more real self-government than many nations which pride or used to pride themselves on being absolutely independent of other national groups. So much for government. What of the land itself?