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GEOGRAPHY IN COLOUR

**Life in New Zealand**

BY G. M. HICKMAN G.40

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Geography in Colour

LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND

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Published by Common Ground (1951) Limited  
44 Fulham Road, London SW3



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First published 1953  
Reprinted 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957  
Second edition 1958  
**Reprinted 1959**  
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## INTRODUCTION

New Zealand is rather smaller than the British Isles, or a little larger if Eire is omitted. Although antipodal, the climatic range is not the same (see note on Picture 5) for the main islands are nearer to the Equator than any part of the British Isles. Nevertheless, altitudes are much greater, for Mt Cook is over 12,000ft in height, and much of the country lies at a higher average altitude than the farmlands of Britain. Hence there is spectacular snow scenery for much of the year in mountainous areas. Spring is sunny but cold, and it is not an uncommon sight to see dairy herds with tarpaulin covers tied over their backs. So much of the sheep pasture is range country that shearing must be delayed until early summer or sheep would catch influenza and pneumonia and die. Nevertheless, summer conditions are brilliantly sub-tropical, tempered by the nearness of the ocean and the height of the land.

This land of natural beauty is occupied by about two million people, and they and their ancestors have, during the last century, made it a most productive land; for although over 90% of production is of farm products - pastoral, dairying and agricultural - many sections were not by nature good pasture, until man had cleared the forest. Now there are about 35 million sheep, mainly crossbred types, 5 million cattle and just under 2 million dairy cows in milk. The products of mining, forestry and fishing amount to approximately 7%.

Hence New Zealand, while possessing some fine cities, still gives the traveller the impression of being an under-populated land by comparison with European standards. Nevertheless, there is an atmosphere of great energy and initiative to set alongside the tranquil beauty of the countryside. Many roads, bridges, homes and other enterprises are being built; natural sources of steam are being explored for power, and new hydro-electric plants are bringing power to remote homes.

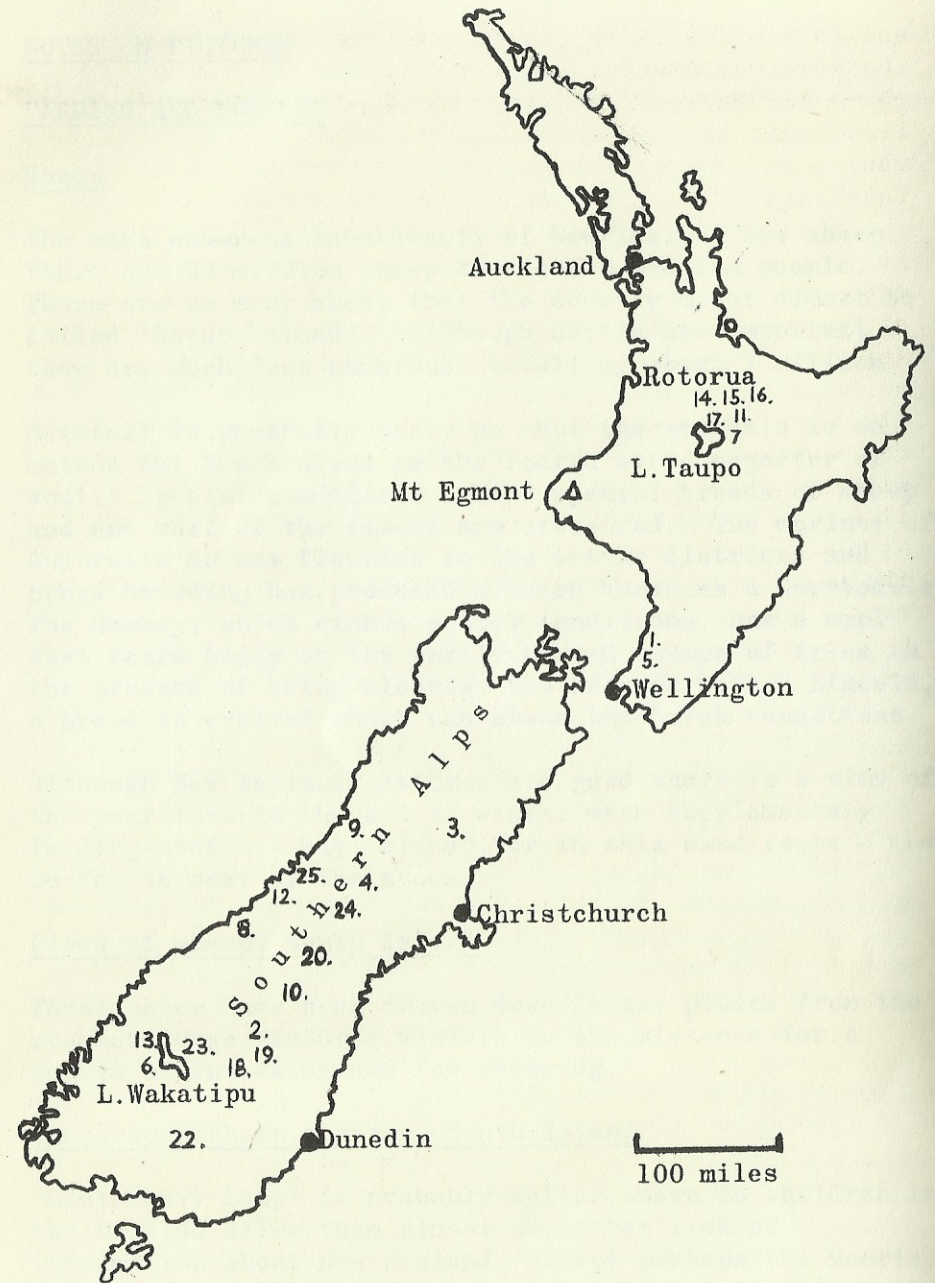
New Zealand has in some ways the atmosphere of expansion to be found in the United States of America and in Canada,



and this mixes oddly with a quiet traditionalism. In just the same way American cars mix with British makes on the roads but whereas in U.S.A. and Canada it is unusual to find a car that is more than 3-4 years old, in New Zealand many cars are just as old as the pre-war cars of the mid-thirties that still find a place on British roads.

It is interesting to study the names shown on an atlas map; one can recognise the names of exploration, the area of Scottish settlement, the English home towns of many settlers, and of course the strain of the Maori.

It has been almost impossible to give adequate representation to all aspects of life in New Zealand within the framework of a strip of 25 pictures. Similarly, it has been more difficult to maintain the photographic standards in colour, and certain frames have been included in spite of the difficulties of colour reproduction, because no story of New Zealand would be complete without them.



The numbers on this map show where each photograph in this strip was taken.



## NOTES ON PICTURES

### FARMING AND FORESTS

#### 1 Sheep

The most numerous inhabitants of New Zealand are sheep. There are 35 million sheep to about 2 million people. There are so many sheep that the country might almost be called 'Sheep Island'. Although cattle are important they are much less numerous, totalling about 7 million.

Rainfall is generally heavy so that the emphasis is on mutton but New Zealand is the fourth world exporter of wool. Special conditions demand special breeds of sheep and now most of the flocks are crossbred. The merinos of Australia do not flourish in the wetter districts and cross breeding has produced a sheep known as a Corriedale. The Romney, which stands wetter conditions, has a wool that tears badly on the partly burned stumps of trees in the process of being cleared, but crossed with a Lincoln, a breed is evolved which can stand the harsh conditions.

Although New Zealand pastures are good there is a time of the year towards the end of winter when supplementary feeding stuffs - hay, clover, or in this case roots - must be fed to most of the stock.

#### 2 Flock of sheep, South Island

These sheep have been driven down to the plains from the rougher range pastures visible in the distance for a period of fattening and for shearing.

#### 3 Canterbury sheep station, South Island

'Canterbury Lamp' is probably better known to children in the British Isles than almost any other item of information about New Zealand, except perhaps the Maoris. The Canterbury Plains are situated in South Island to the east of the Southern Alps. As the Westerlies, which have crossed the Tasman Sea and brought heavy rain to the west



coast, traverse the Alps and descend towards the east coast, the increased pressure and temperature reduce condensation, so that rain-fall is only about 20ins in the plains proper, 30ins in the foothills, and very low indeed in some of the sheltered basins of Otago. The pebble and alluvial Plains provide well drained natural pasture; many farms now have considerable arable sections, so that wheat and fodder crops including roots are very important.

The picture shows a general view of a Canterbury sheep station; the foothills of the Southern Alps are in the distance, and the sweep of cloud in the sky suggests the strong winds. The station itself is protected by a belt of trees as a windbreak; the low altitude of the windpump suggests that winds are strong even near ground level.

#### 4 Foothill grazing: Rakaia River and Mt. Hutt Range, South Island

Sheep fattened at sheep stations similar to that in Picture 3 often have their first grazing on the rougher foothill pastures. The pastures are poor (hence several acres serve one sheep) and over-grazing too often leads to soil erosion.

The riverbeds are wide and filled with rock pebbles and gravel. During periods of heavy rain and snow melt they are rushing torrents difficult to bridge. Where there are no bridges, cars cross the shingle bars and shallow channels during periods of low water only.

The Rakaia River flows eastwards from the Southern Alps. A tributary has formed a gravel fan-cone on the far side of the valley.

#### 5 Sheep station, North Island

The Cabbage Tree in the foreground is an immediate reminder that we are not looking at England. It is also an indication that whereas the British Isles are situated entirely to the north of 50°N no part of New Zealand is

as far as 50° from the Equator, its nearest point being only 35°S (the same distance from the Equator as Gibraltar). Hence it would be a sub-tropical country but for its position in the ocean, and it therefore possesses a varied and unusual vegetation.

The picture summarises many features of the wool industry in New Zealand - the extent of the hill pasture, the large wool shearing shed and the sheep station. On the whole the sheep in North Island are found on the rougher hill land while the rich plain and valley pastures are used particularly for dairy cattle. Sometimes young cattle are pastured on 'range' country in order to keep the grass short enough for sheep to crop, but they are brought to the plains for fattening.

The well-marked terrace in the picture may be an indication of a change in sea-level.

#### 6 Transporting wool bales by lake steamer, South Island

A few miles up Lake Wakatipu from Queenstown lies the sheep station of Walter Peak, which is run by the McKenzies, and this picture shows bales of wool from this station being loaded onto a lake steamer. Throughout North and South Island there are sheep stations in remote places. The problem is always that of moving sheep and wool and of bringing in supplies. In South Island some of the long glacial lakes are used for transport as there is no direct access by road; it may take two weeks to drive sheep down from the upper valleys; roads where they exist in the lower valleys are often extraordinarily bad.

Where pasture is good in the accessible sections of North and South Island there may be eight sheep to an acre; where the pasture is very rough, it is more likely to be eight acres to one sheep. Hence some of the stations are very large. Two actual examples illustrate this; one station of 72,000 acres rears 12,000 sheep; another of 40,000 acres, 5,000 sheep.

Shearing starts earlier in North Island because it is



warmer and spring comes sooner; gradually shearing moves south where the season is later; in many places the ewes are sheared before lambing. In North Island shearing is already in progress in early September; in the south it starts in mid-November and goes on over Christmas - the warmest time of the year.

Where meat is the main product, the flocks are moved from September onwards to the meat freezing works. Often men who work as shearers go into the works from December or January to April or May. The shearers clip an average of 100 to 110 sheep a day, getting paid about £5 per hundred, but some outstanding shearers can clip 200 sheep a day.

#### 7 Cattle near Lake Taupo, North Island

The dairy industry of New Zealand is of comparatively recent development and had to await the coming of refrigeration. Since then it has progressed rapidly.

Much of the original forest (bush) has been cleared to add new pastures to the rich plains of New Zealand and this land now offers improved grazing.

The photograph shows bush on the hilltop in the background, rougher grazing on the slope in the middle distance, and the improved pasture in the foreground. In this instance, the bush is the scrub that grows on the pumice deposits of North Island near Lake Taupo rather than the intensely dense forest of South Island.

The plains are richer still. One of the foremost and most typical dairying regions is the Waikato Valley. Here extensive swamps have been successfully drained to provide rich pasture for well-known breeds of dairy cattle. Cream from the farms is collected by factory lorries and made into butter, cheese, and condensed milk, much of which is exported.

#### 8 Tree ferns, South Island

Although in some sections the forest has been destroyed,

there are still hundreds of miles of apparently impenetrable bush, as thick as any tropical jungle, and quite as frightening. The densest areas today are on the west coast of South Island where the rainfall averages 110ins and torrential rains often make roads impassible; before starting on a journey the motorist is always wise to telephone and enquire whether the bridges are down or sections of road washed away.

The bush varies from place to place. In higher mountain sections it is birch or beech forest; nearer sea level the giant forest trees are linked by creepers and all spaces are filled by bushes, tree ferns and palms. The air is so humid that young trees germinate from seeds dropped into the branch-angles of other trees, and grow out of them; mosses hang in festoons from branches. The bush drips with its own humidity even when it has not been raining, so heavy is transpiration.

#### 9 Burned forest, South Island

It is out of such country as this that many New Zealand farms have been made and are still being made. There are seasons of the year when rain is slightly less general, and then a limited amount of burning is allowed by the Government. Individual trees are burned year by year; the intervening bush is burned and cleared; occasionally a bulldozer is brought in to clear the tree stumps, but these are sometimes left. During the burning season one can scarcely look anywhere without seeing the smoke of fires and smouldering trees. Gorse makes a brilliant sight when in bloom, but it too has to be burned as it has become a pest. Introduced to form hedges, it has now established itself over miles of mountain side, ruining the pasture.

#### 10 Erosion, South Island

Although New Zealand rainfall totals tend to be high, there are places where it is fairly low. In attempting to improve the pasture by burning unwanted species of plants man has sometimes destroyed almost the whole



vegetation cover, so that soil erosion has resulted. One of the grasses that has been burned is the bright yellow, wiry tussock grass, in order to give more room for smaller pasture grasses growing between tussocks. Farmers still burn tussock but the Government is prohibiting this because its destruction very quickly leads to soil erosion. If all other vegetation disappears, but the tussock survives, the other, better, pasture grasses can re-establish themselves, but if the tussock goes as well it is very difficult to colonise the slope again; tussock is a 'nurse plant' for better pasture plants.

Whole areas are now covered only by scabweed, a flat lichen-like growth, but even that, although useless for pasture, is valuable, because it is helping to restore the soil which can then be colonised by other growths.

In some areas the Government is trying to re-establish pasture by sowing bare slopes from low-flying aircraft.

#### 11 Forest reserve, North Island

One of the greatest enemies of forest is uncontrolled forest fire - hence the precautions taken against too extensive burning at danger periods. New Zealand has been so pre-occupied with obtaining pasture for her great pastoral industry that the tendency has been to destroy forest wherever it seemed that good pasture could be made.

Now the potential wealth of the forests is recognised so that not only is excessive burning controlled, but in North Island particularly there is a programme of Government afforestation and industry.

The picture shows young conifers growing up between the burned trunks of older trees. When conifers are burned natural regrowth may occur because the seeds lie dormant in the cones which protect them in the deep undergrowth, and enough survive to give a natural growth without artificial re-seeding. The density of this new growth can be seen here.

#### 12 Small saw mill, South Island

There are also a great many small lumber mills cutting timber for local needs; this is because of the demand - most homes in the country are built of timber - and because of the difficulty and expense of carting materials in many remote areas.

Here is a typical saw mill on the west coast of South Island. In the background are the ranges of the Southern Alps.

#### 13 Transporting timber by lake steamer, South Island

Just as wool and sheep are moved by lake steamer in places, so is timber. The location of this picture is again Lake Wakatipu; in the background, stretched along the lake shore, are the cabins for shearers at one of the sheep stations.

#### MAORIS AND HOT SPRINGS

#### 14 Pohutu Geysir, North Island

If South Island is best known for mountains and glaciers, North Island is renowned as the island of volcanoes and hot springs. Evidence of thermal activity is very extensive, and large areas where there is at present no activity are marked by former cones and by a landscape of volcanic ash and pumice; some of this is brilliantly coloured, some of it almost a desert. Lakes have filled former craters and lowlands and the magnificence of the scenery attracts many tourists.

Mount Egmont in the west is a volcanic peak, as well as Tongariro, Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe, cones to the south of Lake Taupo. The two best-known thermal centres are near Lake Taupo, and further north round Lake Rotorua. Geysers are fountains of boiling water and steam pushed into the air periodically by the underground pressure of steam.



A warning that Pohutu is about to blow up is the upwelling of boiling water in Te Horo, a nearby pool; then Pohutu itself shoots up a fountain of boiling water and steam 60 or so feet into the air.

It is with the Thermal Region that the New Zealand Maoris are traditionally associated. The wide distribution of Maori names all over New Zealand is out of all proportion to the size of the Maori population. Most of the names have meanings and it is interesting to interpret the nature of a place from its Maori name. For example:

Wai means water, found in many river names

Kato means flowing: hence the name of the river Waikato

Roto means lake

Rua means a hollow: hence Rotorua means the lake in the hollow (old crater)

Ao means cloud

Tea means white

Roa means long: hence Ao Tea Roa (the name given by the Maoris to the snow-capped Southern Alps), means the Long White Cloud

Nui means large, hence Wanganui means large harbour

Kia Ora means good health

#### 15 Maori women washing clothes, North Island

The Maori population of New Zealand shares in most of the aspects of life in the country. No colour bar exists and intelligent Maoris are members of many professions. Hence they are found in many towns as well as in the countryside but most live in the Thermal Region of North Island. While preserving Maori traditions they have also adopted many amenities of modern life. Nevertheless one very good way of making a living is by catering for visitors, who are interested to see Maori ways, so that in some cases Maori customs and methods have been preserved when they might otherwise have disappeared.

The Maori is quick to show how skilfully he adapts the wonderful natural stores of heat to modern living. For example, babies' feeding bottles are sterilised in the boiling water of hot springs, the milk itself is heated to the appropriate temperature by standing the bottle in the hot water; steam ovens have been built which really cook the food so that all the vitamins and mineral salts are preserved. Every family has access to a naturally warm bathing or swimming pool.

The women in the picture are laundering clothes in a hot pool, and one of the amusing sidelines about this picture is that they arrange between themselves a rota of clothes washing, so that there will always be someone operating when tourists are shown round; this even if all the Maori clothes are impeccably clean! Notice that the women wear ordinary European dress. The famous traditional dresses are kept for ceremonial occasions.

#### 16 Maori home, Rotorua, North Island

Examples of Maori carving and the small 'tiki' (carved figure) in the centre are typical of the decorations on most homes and meeting houses; so is the porch of 'mahu' in front, which is a favourite gossiping place. It reminds us that it is often rather wet in New Zealand, but that it is pleasanter to sit outside, though under cover, during the warmer seasons of the year.

Most Maori homes are a combination of old and new. The traditional home has only one room, but in many places there is a communal way of life, so that there is a large meeting house, where every family has a share of the room, a dining room with indoor cooking arrangements as well as the natural outdoor ovens. In many places there has been a natural transition to a modern bungalow. In the older homes oil lamps are still used; elsewhere electricity is becoming commoner, but it is not yet available to most rural homes in New Zealand. There are less than 100,000 Maoris in the total New Zealand population of just under 2,000,000.



## 17 Steam jet, Wairakei, North Island

New Zealand is so short of coal and the means for generating the electricity she needs that there are frequently power cuts in some parts of the country. North Island is particularly in need; hence the government is experimenting in the sinking of bore-holes down through the surface rocks to tap the underground reserves of steam responsible for the activity in the Thermal Region. When one of these sources is reached it blows off rock fragments, mud and finally steam, very much as an oil well gushes before it is capped.

The picture shows one of the steam jets which has been capped but is being allowed to blow for experimental purposes to find out just how much power there is. Later, the more productive bores will be harnessed to generate electricity and the power will be distributed by cable to many sections of North Island for industrial and domestic purposes. This has been successfully accomplished in Italy and Iceland, but the steam in New Zealand is much wetter than elsewhere and this is presenting problems. There is no doubt that this power resource will be developed.

The question arises as to whether this will affect the wonderful displays of geysers and mud pools which attract so many visitors. Part of the development is in the very beautiful Wairakei Valley, where there is a first class Government Tourist Hotel.

The tourist industry flourishes in New Zealand. At most seasons there are tours of the Thermal Region, to swim in the deliciously warm open air pools; in winter there is most spectacular ski-ing on wonderful snow slopes of former volcanic cones or alpine glaciers; in spring, summer and autumn there is the wonderful scenery of mountain or coast, and excellent swimming and other sports.

## SETTLEMENT AND TRANSPORT

### 18 Gold dredger near Cromwell, South Island

Although New Zealand is best known now for her farm produce, a good deal of the early settlement in remote places resulted from prospecting for gold and other minerals. The picture shows the broad valley of the Lindis River, to the north of Cromwell, in Otago. This valley is very much as the early prospectors for gold must have found it, with mountains in the background, and a remarkable natural terrace in the middle distance to the right of the river. Now, in the centre of the picture, is one of the great gold dredgers. These are very different methods from those used by the pioneers in their search for quartz lodes and alluvial gold in the middle of the last century. Mining for gold has been stimulated recently by the improved price on world markets.

New Zealand's most important minerals are coal, tungsten ore, pumice and sulphur, manganese and asbestos, but quantities are really very small. Sulphur and tungsten ore are, however, in good demand in the world markets.

### 19 Cromwell, Otago, South Island

This is the main street in Cromwell, an early mining township which has scarcely grown at all since its early days. Cromwell is situated in Otago which is mainly to the south east of the great ranges of the Southern Alps. Hence it has lower rainfall totals than many places in New Zealand.

Nevertheless, like most New Zealand towns it has verandahs built out in front of the shops, to cover the sidewalk, so that if it rains, shoppers are sheltered. These verandahs are typical even of the main thoroughfares of the large towns - so important are they, that if a new shop is built between two existing shops which have verandahs, the new shop must have one too. This law was passed because it was found that if one side of a street had verandahs and the other had not, people would not shop on the side of the street where they got wet. This serves to remind us



of the heavy rainfall in New Zealand, e.g. Auckland has 45ins a year - more than twice as much as London - Rotorua 55ins, Wellington 47ins, Hokitika 114ins. Only in Otago is it as low as 15-20ins; the bare brown hillside in the background is due to a combination of factors - the lower Otago totals, the sheer nature of the rock, and a most unusual drought that had already lasted for eight weeks when this photograph was taken.

#### 20 Small township near Tarras, South Island

After many miles of sparsely populated country marked here and there by the homestead of a sheep station sheltered behind its windbreaks, the traveller comes to a typical small township. There is always a garage and repair shop for cars and farm machinery, a few bungalows, occasionally a one-room school, a general store, and a cafe rather than a public house. The cafe will often be the meeting place of the Young Farmers' Club and used for any other celebration.

Roads are very rough in New Zealand; only the more important of the main roads are 'tar-sealed' i.e. they have a tarred, smooth surface. With less than two million people in the country there is not a sufficiently dense population to raise the necessary money for very good roads. In any case the terrain is so rough, that it is surprising that roads are as good as they are.

#### 21 A suburb of Auckland, North Island

All the major New Zealand cities are ports; all except Christchurch are built round harbours where hills or mountains approach the sea. Hence all have interesting sites, each one quite different from the others. The centres of most of these towns are Victorian. The newer houses are all modern in type and are built to take advantage of slope, view and sun.

The photograph shows the beautiful setting of part of Auckland. It is taken from Mount Hobson looking over part of Waitemata Harbour. In the distance the even profile

of Rangitoto, an extinct volcanic cone, marks the horizon.

#### 22 Transport, South Island

Road, garage and store, a car, and a typical sight - a man on horseback with a second horse to carry his gear. The man may very well be a shepherd, though only one sheep dog is in sight and usually a shepherd has a 'family' of three or five. A horse is still the easiest way of getting about for all except long distances; there are no automobile roads to many sheep stations, and on the station itself, which may be of 30,000, 40,000 or even 70,000 acres, horses are indispensable.

#### 23 Steamer on Lake Wakatipu, South Island

The SS 'Earnslaw' plies on the long glacial lake Wakatipu, South Island; she was built on the Clyde and taken in sections overland from Dunedin to be assembled on the lake about 50 years ago. Her captain still speaks with a Scottish accent and the names of families and townships in this part of New Zealand in particular reflect the Scottish origin of the settlers. Many have been sheep farmers in Scotland and have helped to make the country famous as a wool and meat producer. When necessary, sheep are shipped on the SS 'Earnslaw' as well as passengers, mail and general cargo.

The car on the right is perched on a pile of sacks containing superphosphate for delivery to an uplake station. Car registration in New Zealand is very like that in the United Kingdom - the first group of numbers (not letters) shows the district of registration, the second group the actual registration number. Hence New Zealanders can tell where cars have originally come from.

#### 24 Moraines of the Tasman Glacier, South Island

The photograph illustrates the nature of the broader sections of the glaciated valleys of South Island. The bus and car are standing at the side of the road which is built on the non-glacier side of one lateral moraine -



notice the pitch and the size of this moraine.

On the left, the hummocky debris and scattered snow mark the position of the vast terminal moraine of the Tasman glacier. This is 'dead' ice covered by rock and dirt. It extends for about eleven miles near the snout (end) of the glacier, and indicates the amount of glacial erosion and the enormous load of material carried by the ice. The area of 'dead' ice, slowly melting, is constantly fed by the downward movement of the Tasman glacier ice proper, and of its tributaries.

## 25 Fox Glacier, South Island

The Southern Alps are typical 'Alpine' type mountains, with deeply glaciated valleys. One unusual and attractive feature is that the glaciers in South Island reach down to sea level and cut through typical New Zealand bush. The Fox Glacier shown bears characteristic moraines, and where the rock floor changes level, breaks into magnificent ice-falls and seracs. The valley shape is typical.

New Zealand has some of the most magnificent and varied scenery in the world, so that the attraction to tourists is understandable. The New Zealand Government Tourist Department has opened delightful hotels in spectacular locations; there would otherwise be nowhere to stay as the country is so wild and remote. Hence there is the attraction of staying in the depth of completely unspoiled country. There are also climbers' huts and refuges, where walkers and skiers may stay overnight. There can indeed scarcely be a more beautiful country in the world.

## BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

<u>Author</u>	<u>Title and Publisher</u>	<u>Date</u>
Belshaw, H. (Editor)	New Zealand (United Nations Series, University of California Press)	1947
Condliffe, J.P.	New Zealand in the Making (Allen and Unwin)	1930
Morrell, W.P.	New Zealand (Benn)	1935
Schofield, G.H.	The Pacific: its Past and Future (John Murray)	1919
Suggate, L.S.	New Zealand (Harrap)	Out of print
Wood, F.L.W.	This New Zealand (Bonds Printing Co., New Zealand)	1946
	Farming in New Zealand (New Zealand Government Department of Agriculture)	
	New Zealand Official Year Book Annually	
Cumberland, K.	This is New Zealand (Whitcomb and Tombs)	1949



Other Common Ground filmstrips include:

Geography in Colour

AUSTRALASIA

- CGA:B130 A Journey through New South Wales by  
Jean Garrett  
CGA:B790 Irrigation in South East Australia by  
Joan Battersby  
CGA:B512 South Sea Island by G. Milner

EUROPE

- CGA:B785 Farming in the Paris Basin by Alan B. Mountjoy  
CGA:B786 The Rhone Valley by Alan B. Mountjoy  
CGA:B696 Village Life in Northern Italy by R.C. Honeybone  
CGA:B643 Life in the Lofoten Islands by Tom Weir  
CGA:B689 Introduction to Spain by Henry E. Beissel  
CGA:B647 Rural Life in Central Sweden by C.H. Sporle  
CGA:B795 Across the Yugoslav Karst by H.J. Savory

ASIA

- CGA:B772 Co-operative Farming in China by R.C. Honeybone  
CGA:B440 Farmers and Boatmen of South China by  
E. Thorndike  
CGA:B771 A Journey in China by J.A. Lauwerys  
CGA:B787 Oil in the Middle East by G.H. Dury and  
T.J. Chandler  
CGA:B517 Mountain Life in High Asia by Tom Weir  
CGA:B426 Village Life in India by A.D. Uppadine

AFRICA

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