

Trans PACIFIC by W. A. WILSON

SAN FRANCISCO:

AFTER more than two months on United States soil, in Hilo, Hawaii and San Francisco, the first terrific impact of the great American way of life is beginning to wear off for us.

No doubt our accents have already changed considerably and certainly our speech has altered. There is no point, for example, in continuing to call gasoline petrol, or pliers wharfs, or biscuits scones, or giving words like castle, or tomato or banana a long "a" because you simply won't be understood.

We don't eat tea any more, but dinner or supper. As a matter of fact we hardly even drink tea any more. A fortnight is not understood, and we don't reckon anything but guess it. Worst of all we have to pronounce Auckland Ockland or they wonder how it was we spent seven months sailing from Oakland across the Bay in San Francisco.

We have become blasé about such gadgets as television, gas cigarette lighters, schnorkel pens, drive-in theatres, eating houses, milk-bars and motels no longer excite our curiosity, and we accept fibre glass, dakron and orlon without comment.

It may well be that we have not been entirely on the receiving end of this impact with the United States. For instance we caused a sensation the first evening we strolled down the main "drag" in Hilo—a town about the same size as New Plymouth but with about 10 times as many motor cars (automobiles).

Erica declares it was because Dave and I had been growing beards for two months since Moorea, but I am sure it was chiefly because we were wearing shorts—unheard of even for little children and on the hottest days in Hawaii.

People there stared at us as though we had come from another planet.

Youths leaned out of car windows to take imaginary movie films of us as they drove past, and everyone crowded round to listen whenever we spoke. Yes, the stories you hear are quite true, although I had been in Hilo 24 hours before a Japanese-Hawaiian counter-jumper said to me: "Sir, I think you are speaking quite good English considering you are all the way from Australia."

The idea is that New Zealand is a small town near Sydney.

"Say, bud . . ."

DURING the pleasant two-day trip to

same when we got there except that the very fact that we were on foot on the streets made us curiosities. I finally stopped wearing shorts after a man who picked me up asked in all seriousness: "Say, Bud, you from the Foreign Legion?" Yet the atmosphere was humid and the temperature well over 80 and everyone we spoke to agreed it was most uncomfortable wearing longs.

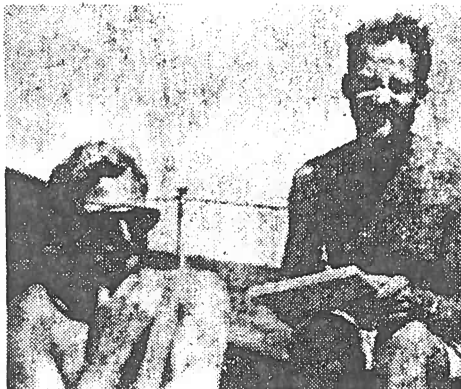
In Hilo the people are mostly Japanese and they were more curious than friendly, but we began to sample real American hospitality when we reached Honolulu.

We also met Sun Dance there, the New Zealand yacht we had last seen at Nukualofa at the start of our cruise. The Auckland sloop Ghost had left a few weeks before, and Faith, an ex-New Zealand yacht, was moored in the yacht harbour.

Other well-known yachts there were Dwight Long's Idle Hour and the Crowes' Lang Syne, which had recently finished a four-year cruise round the world.

San Francisco

BUT all the interest the boat aroused in Honolulu was nothing compared with the attention she has attracted here in San Francisco. We received quite a lot of publicity,



"We had been growing beards for two months since Moorea."

what with two appearances on Tv., a long radio interview and articles and pictures in two of the four local papers. From the moment we landed at the Golden Gate Yacht Club we have scarcely had a moment to ourselves.

A constant stream of visitors has come down to the boat. Nearly all ask if they may come aboard and end up by asking us out to their homes—for a meal, for the day, for a week-end or for a week. We have been invited to a chinchilla farm in Santa Cruz, a ranch in Texas, another in Oregon and a university in Illinois.

We have stayed at Palo Alto, Atherton and Berkeley and spent the day at Alameda, Saratoga and Sausalito. Of course, we have been taken to the universities and to Nob Hill and have had drinks at the Top of the Mark and back to back at the

THE Americans are certainly great talkers and listeners and in these last few weeks even Erica has just about talked herself out. We have discussed most things, from the McCarthy menace to yachts and back to the Communist menace.

Frequently and earnestly we have been assured that American economy is based on spending next year's income in the current year, and that lending institutions own everything in the country. Yet no one will admit even the possibility of a depression.

We have been assured that New Zealand must be one of the finest countries in the world and so much better than America with its advertising, high-pressure living and time payments. Yet people cannot understand how we live there without T.V., home gadgets, such things as artificial smoke flavouring to put on your steak, and 75 different substitutes for a small vegetable garden.

One man earnestly put forward the theory that few people throughout the world would lose any sleep if the United States and Russia knocked themselves out with cobalt and atom bombs, but he looked surprised when I did not immediately disagree.

I shall not forget his hurt look when I jokingly remarked that there was only one man more unpopular in New Zealand than a Limey and that was a Yank!

Undoubtedly New Zealand could learn much from America, including many good things. For that matter even the smallest island we visited in the Pacific could have taught New Zealand something.

The four B's

I HAND New Zealand the palm over America on the four "B's"—bread, butter, bacon and beef.

American bread, except what they call French loaves, always reminds me of Marie Antoinette because it is more like cake than bread. Even at 7/ per lb, American butter cannot compare for flavour with New Zealand's. The bacon here appears to consist of artificial lard with a veneer of coloured meat, and the steak, although excellent, is well out of our price range.

But there is no denying that the American standard of living, measured in motor cars, washing machines and wages, is way above New Zealand's. Certainly they all live on borrowed money and at this very moment the whole fantastic structure appears to be tottering towards collapse, but they have the goods, the money keeps going round and round and they are the most grossly overfed race I have ever seen.

We have met several New Zealanders here and few of them would agree to swap home countries. We have not