

New Zealand a country of great scenery, people

Around the World in 380 Days

Third in a series

By STEPHEN FROST
Herald Staff Writer

It was hard for me to imagine that New Zealand, two "small" islands in the south Pacific could feature 12,000-foot mountains, large expanses of plains, volcanoes, beautiful sandy beaches and rolling countryside. We knew we had to work, but naturally, John and I wanted to do a little sightseeing before we settled down to work on farms.

One or two things should be mentioned about New Zealand before I go much further. In the late 1960s, New Zealand (NZ) had one of the highest standards of living in the world. In ten years, that standard dropped drastically as NZ's traditional markets for agricultural produce dried up with the formation of the European Common Market and trade restrictions imposed by other countries.

The severe lack of primary industry and the oil crisis has hampered the country's growth as well. Today, NZ has a minus population growth due mainly to young people leaving for more lucrative job markets in Australia. Despite all this, the country is struggling back to its feet again by finding new markets for its products.

When we landed in Auckland, we met a French exile, Denis Joannes and an Israeli, Isaac Halim, of "disreputable" looks but friendly personalities. Isaac was on his way back to Israel, but Denis had just

arrived and had an idea that he would like to walk the length of Ninety Mile Beach, which in reality is only about 55 miles long.

The beach itself is hard-packed sand and is located at the top end of the North Island. Just inland from the beach is a road along which bus companies drive people up to the tip of the island, where you can see the Pacific meet the Tasman Sea. On the way back, the buses drive the length of the beach, as long as the tide is right. If the tide is high in the afternoon, the buses will drive the beach in the morning.

Denis, John and I started our walk at noon on a Friday and walked 12 miles in the first afternoon. The first five were a pleasure, but the remaining seven began to take their toll, especially under a very hot sun.

At the end of the day we found Hukaterer Ranger's Station.

TWO STOREYS

The following description of the station is from my journal: "The lookout is situated on a 173-foot hill which is almost on the beach. It has two storeys, the upper one with 260 degrees of windows and a widow's walk. The view is spectacular in all directions.

"North and south, all one sees are vast expanses of beach, partially obscured by a fine mist of salt water blown from the incoming tide by a 20 mile an hour wind.

"To the west, the sun is setting rather dully while the east shows a darkening subsistent in the growing twilight. The ocean itself is turning grey like the clouds. This afternoon, it was a deep blue with blue-green breakers."

On thing I didn't mention earlier is that our companion, Denis, walked the entire 12 miles in his bare feet. None of us gave it much thought until Denis complained about blisters that night. They were rather large, but he insisted we go on.

The next morning we set out on what was one of the toughest walks in my life. It took us all day to hobble 19 miles to the Bluff. By then Denis' feet were so bad he could barely move.

The Bluff is one of the few disruptions on the lengthy stretch of beach. It is simply a large outcrop of stone which extends into the ocean. At the back of it, there is a small valley with a fresh water stream running through it.

THREE DAYS

On Sunday, we slept late, and went swimming in the ocean. Denis showed me how to body surf and, after being pummelled by waves on the first few attempts, I managed to catch on to it.

We did have one problem though: we had brought along what we thought would be provisions for a three-day hike. Unfortunately, we ate them in less than two days. Aside from that, Denis' foot was infected and he really needed to see a doctor, so we decided we could catch the bus on the beach in the afternoon.

We were lucky enough to get a ride, however, from a fellow who had decided to drive his station wagon down the beach to see what it was really like. He figured that if he got stuck, he had three extra hands to help push him out, but when you get right down to it, it

proves what travellers have been saying for years: New Zealand is the easiest place to hitchhike in the world.

There are many more areas in the North Island where we spent time: the Bay of Islands, made famous by the fishing articles written by Zane Grey. The area is visited by yachts from all over the world and is the site of New Zealand's oldest settlements, Russell.

Opononi, a seldom-visited fishing village on the island's west coast, has sand hills created by strong winds blowing sand over wooded hilly areas to such a depth that all trees are covered. It was here that young boys in the village adopted a dolphin that had floundered and brought it back to health only to have it killed in a fisherman net.

Down the coast from Opononi is a Kauri forest. The Kauri is a hardwood tree that grows up to 200 feet in height and often has a girth of well over 60 feet. Captain James Cook used the trees for repairs to his ships when he explored the country.

Rotorua, south of Auckland, is heated entirely by thermal power from underground fissures. A great amount of the city's electricity is also generated by thermal means. One thing that put me off about the city was the constant stench of sulphur which escapes in the steam through blow holes.

If you can get used to the smell there are a number of thermal parks in the area which feature geysers, boiling mud baths and mineral formations created from water seeping through rock faces.

At Rotorua, John headed for the South Island to look for work while Denis and I struck out for the west coast and the beaches of Gisborne and Napier.

Aside from beautiful beaches and girls, the only thing that

Continued on page B11



Wellington, New Zealand's national capital, is located at the southern tip of the North Island. Ferries run between here and Picton on the South Island. Often, treacherous weather in the volatile Cook's Strait closes down

ferry service. This is one of the few days it wasn't raining, making the city quite pleasant.

(Photo by John Pladdy)

Denis G. Beauchesne, D.D.S.

Announces that he has assumed
the Dental Practice of

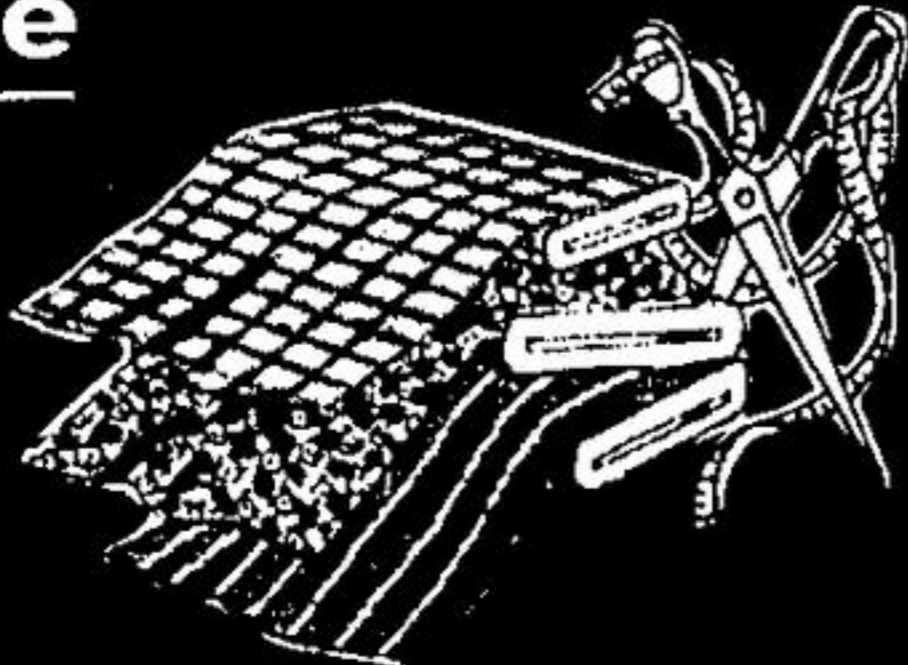
G.L. Lovas, D.D.S.

Telephone 877-7232
10 Mountainview Rd. S.
Suite 202
Georgetown, Ont.

MOVING SALE SAVE NOW!

Closing date

Saturday
May 31st
1980



Georgetown
Fabrics

MOORE PARK PLAZA

OPENING SOON IN OUR NEW LOCATION:
GEORGETOWN MARKET PLACE

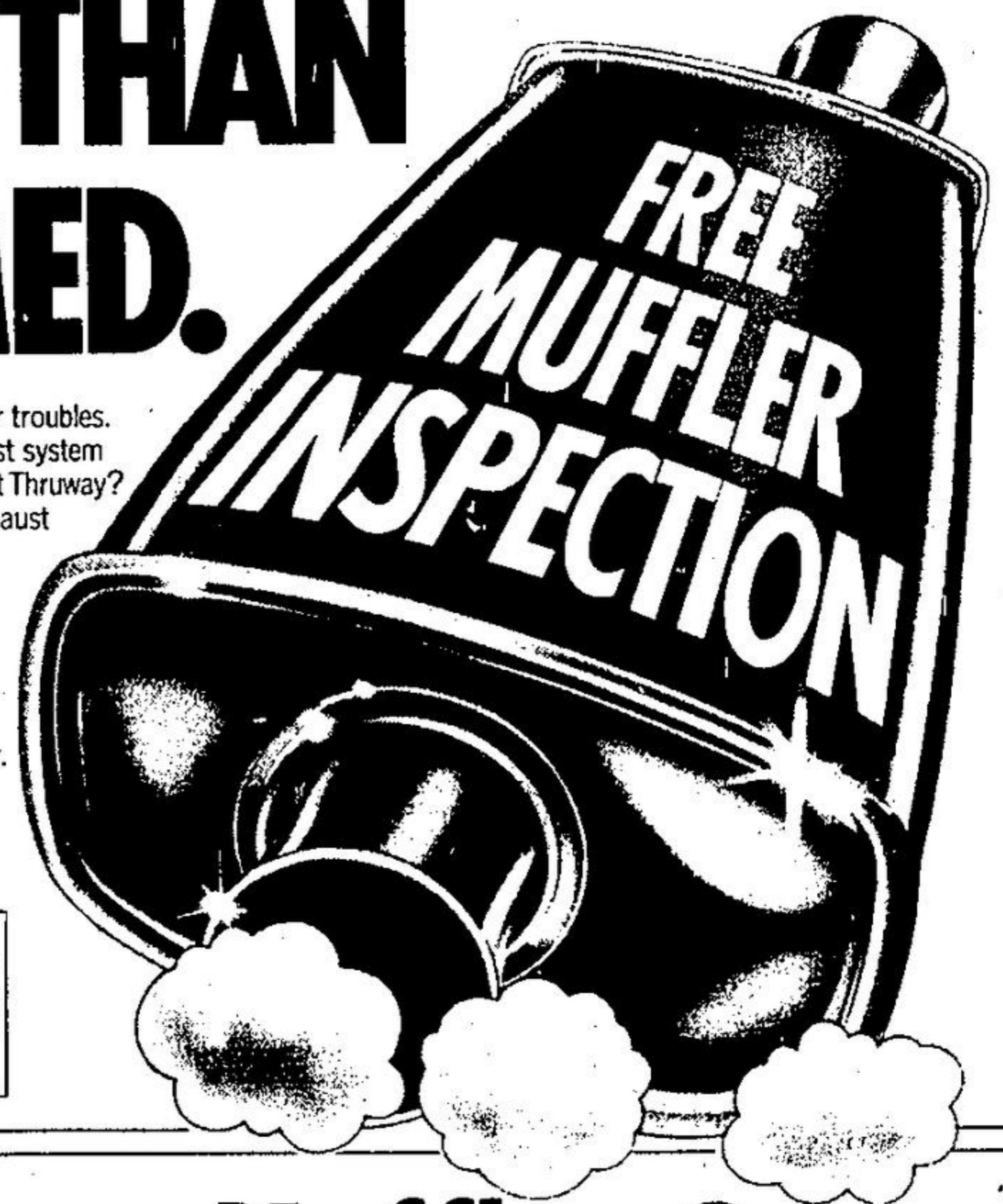
THE MUFFLER DEAL THAT MAKES YOU FEEL MORE THAN WELCOMED.

A noisy muffler is only one indication of serious muffler troubles. So why not get the straight goods on your car's exhaust system before the trouble starts with a free muffler inspection at Thruway?

This inspection will enable us to locate small exhaust system problems before they become dangerous and costly.

If your car gets a clean bill of health, you'll be back on the road in minutes. If your car needs work, we have the tools and the talent to do the job right. And at Thruway, you get an original-quality replacement muffler, guaranteed for as long as you own the car.

Don't wait for your muffler to tell you there's trouble underneath your car. Come and take a little free advice from the pros.



Halton Thruway Muffler Centre

348 Guelph St., Georgetown
877-7042

ART BOUWMAN
NURSERY

R.R. 3, HALTON HILLS
LOCATED ON THE 6th LINE -
1 MILE NORTH OF STEELES AVE.
JUST EAST OF MILTON
878-2142



FEATURES

Large clumps of Birch,
Austrian Pine, Shade Trees

ANNUALS now available
Large Geraniums, Petunias,
Tomato Plants, Fuschia, etc.

Full line of Evergreens and
Flowering Shrubs

OPEN: Monday-Friday - 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Saturday - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Closed Sundays