

Arenas's — Cafe de Paris

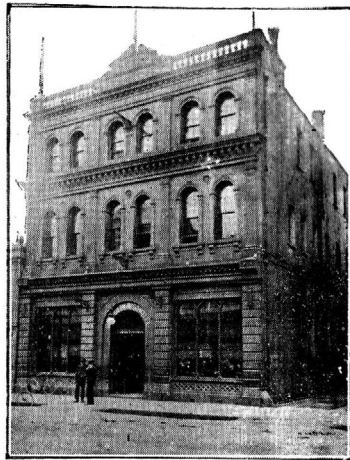
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I wish all the fighting boys both in New Zealand and in England had received cookery training before going into the field. What a number of lives it would have saved because the rations issued are plentiful and of splendid quality if only cooked properly, but alas if a man is no good at anything else they say "Oh" send him along to the cook house. And many of those men who know something about the principles of cookery are too lazy or indifferent to practise their knowledge, and so their comrades suffer. Marion Higgens, October, 1916

As a British colony, New Zealand was predominately settled by Protestant immigrants from the South of England and Scotland (less than 2% of immigrants were from Ireland). At the turn of the 20th century most European New Zealanders still considered England to be 'home'. New Zealand became a Dominion within the British Empire in 1907. Although virtually independent, its head of state remained the British Monarch, represented by a Governor General, and defence and constitutional amendments, and to some extent foreign affairs remained in the control of the British government. When Great Britain declared war on Germany on the 4th August 1914, New Zealanders did not hesitate to respond to the call to support 'Mother England'.

Within weeks of the declaration of war, sporadic military training camps were set up throughout New Zealand - those set up in the lower North Island of New Zealand, at Trentham and Featherston, eventually became the main training camps. Trentham was a 'canvas camp' and, theoretically, limited to 5000 men. However, by May 1915, the numbers had increased dangerously to 7000 men resulting in a serious epidemic of measles, influenza, cerebro-spinal meningitis, and an alarming number