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To-day And To-morrow

THE Prime Minister's report on his mission to London raised more questions than any man can answer. To begin with it was a war mission, and no one can pretend to know the answer to the problem of war—how soon, if ever, brigandage can be banished from the earth, and by what methods in the meantime the peace-loving nations of the world can most hopefully combine for self-protection. If anyone knew the answer to those questions Mr. Fraser would be the last Prime Minister to present such a report, and the millennium would be here. In fact it is not in sight; but Mr. Fraser was able to report some things that reasonable people will find deeply encouraging. The most encouraging of all, of course, is the fact that the war is being won, which some of us seem to forget or under-estimate: we will be satisfied with nothing but a brave new world, ignoring what kind of a world it would be for us if we lost. But it was encouraging also to have so clear an indication that it is world peace we are fighting for and not regions of security or of control. New Zealand is a small country, which could not stand alone if it so wished; but our allies include nations with the resources and strength of continents, and it would be a depressing thought if alliance with them meant co-operation to the point of victory and no further. Mr. Fraser made it clear that in all his discussions and conferences his aim was to work New Zealand into a world pattern in which it would have responsibilities as well as safeguards, and that this was the spirit he found everywhere. Reduced therefore to a couple of phrases his report was victory first and then the boldest possible attempt afterwards to maintain peace by mutual aid: giving as well as receiving. The first without the second would be folly; the second without the first dangerous humbug.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, AUGUST 18

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

"A FANTASTIC SPEECH"

Sir,—I do not agree with "Square-head's" description of Mr. Churchill's speech as "fantastic." I am not one who clings to tradition unless it has some utility. The question of the shape of the chamber is controversial, but there is good psychology in Mr. Churchill's contrast between crossing the floor of an oblong chamber and moving round the perimeter of a semi-circular one. The other matter in the speech is sound. Mr. Churchill is, I think, England's greatest parliamentarian, and I do not exclude the two Pitts. His opinion, therefore, must carry great weight. With 40 years' experience as an outstanding figure in the House, Mr. Churchill gives it as his opinion that the House should not be big enough to hold all the members because of the need for intimacy and for a sense of urgency in crises. The lack of room, and desks, in front of the benches prevents too copious use of notes and encourages shorter and better debating speeches, which are necessary if the business of the House is to be concluded expeditiously.

I think we may legitimately point a contrast between the House of Commons and our own House of Representatives—a contrast which lends support to Mr. Churchill's views. In N.Z. that sense of intimacy and urgency is lacking to a marked degree. Members have sufficient room in which to spread themselves to read the evening paper or to write a letter while they ignore the recitation of a written speech which is not delivered from the floor of the House, but behind the comforting support of a desk. Our M.P.'s do not use the House as a place in which to hammer out policy by intimate and vigorous debating, but as a rostrum from which they can read to an unseen audience long and discursive orations. If our members had less room in which to make themselves comfortable, especially when a bench-mate is absent, and were deprived of the moral and physical support of a desk on which a written speech can be hidden, then our House might aspire to the heights which the "Mother of All Parliaments" has reached.

PETER E. DEMPSEY (Auckland).

APPEAL TO AMERICA

Sir,—If the Americans seriously desire a better understanding of their country on the part of New Zealand (and I believe that they do), then they must give us some art. It is useless putting before us "Pistol Packing Momma" and certain other "shows" with super-imposed applause if they desire to earn the admiration and respect of the people of this country. America is a powerful nation (we have a mighty lot for which to thank her and her soldiers and sailors), but I am not yet convinced that she is a great nation.—MAC DEE (Palmerston North).

THE SHAPE OF THINGS

Sir,—I read with interest the article on the new House of Commons (July 7) which you say had been previously printed in the *New York Times*; also your editorial on the same subject. I beg to disagree with some of your comments. Mr. Churchill is neither freakish nor irresponsible in his public utterances, but a person of obviously shrewd judgment, whose every word seems carefully chosen. It is probably his

mental make-up which often leads people to think he scoffs at logic and puts custom before reason. Your correspondent "Squarehead" describes Mr. Churchill's speech in the House of Commons as being fantastic. Personally, I thought the speech was full of sound common sense, and apparently the members of the "House" thought so, too, for there have been no adverse comments—or at least I haven't seen any—in the home papers I have received. I did see one article by Professor Joad in the *Sunday Dispatch* of October 31 last, which I enclose. Apparently he agrees with Mr. Churchill's fantastic reasoning.—JOHN J. GILBERT (Whangarei).

[We reproduce part of Professor Joad's article: "Some members have recommended that the new House should be circular. I think not. Circularity would facilitate the formation of groups representing different parties and interests, shading one into another by imperceptible degrees as in the French Chamber, and making effective Government impossible because of the continual manoeuvring of the different groups to obtain temporary shifting majorities. In an oblong Chamber, Left is Left and Right is Right, with the Liberals amorously tucked away somewhere in the middle, and the Government is either of the Left or of the Right, and is, therefore, a clear-cut Government which, because it is clear-cut, can govern. The party system works very effectively with two parties each sitting visibly on its different side, so that you know which is which and where you are."]

WHAT PRICE A LAUGH?

Sir,—What price a laugh? I think the NBS would be rendering a real national service by providing a recording of good belly laughs to begin the day with. Everyone knows that a hearty, spontaneous laugh is most contagious, and is the best cure for that liverish feeling so many people suffer from before breakfast.

I would like to see a composite record made of some laughs we hear over the air; but not those vapid, artificial "ha ha's" of some of the Hollywood lovelies. By their laugh ye shall know them for what they are. I grant them beauty and talent, and I admire their elegant facades on which they lavish so much care, but the laughter of many of them betrays their shallow, vain little souls. But give us a record of such genuine rib-ticklers as Charlie McCarthy's wickedly sardonic laugh, the hearty "ha-ha" of Fibber McGee's wife, Molly, the bubbling chuckles of Jack Warner (is it?) who "can't 'elp laughin'" the helpless giggles of "Marge," Jane Ace's friend, the silly little burble which belongs to "Bessie," Bing Crosby's wholesome, boyish-sounding laughter and, best of the lot, some of Gracie Fields's exuberant shrieks would probably have a better effect on national health and workers' efficiency than all the lectures by professors.—LAUGH AND THE WORLD LAUGHS WITH YOU (Seddonville).

GLASGOW IS NOT SCOTLAND

Sir,—Listening to-night to the story of "Wilkie" in "Those Who Serve" I was amused to hear a native of Broughty Ferry speak with an accent like a native of Glasgow. Evidently players think that accent belongs to all Scotland, and forget that Glasgow isn't all Scotland. It was the same with Prince Charlie in a story "Halliday and Son." He had a decided twang. "Dr. Mac's" accent is more like Broughty Ferry, and is understood.—ONE WHO KNOWS BROUGHTY FERRY (Dunedin).