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Your social legislation has aroused the notice of the whole world. Let us in on your secrets there, and if there is anything we can offer you, anything we may have done a little more successfully than you—shall we say the organisation of our libraries and museums? — our experience is at your service. But don't think that I came to teach you anything. If I am anybody at all in that line, it is a learner."

It was my turn to be plain, so I asked point-blank if America was still the land of adventure. "Does the average boy in America still believe that there is a fortune for him somewhere if he is bright enough? I gained the impression from your soldiers that it is unusual in America to worry about the future."

"Yes," he said, "that is still our mood. Life is still an adventure. We don't worry too much about social security. But don't think that dollars are our only aim, even when we are after them."

"But you don't despise dollars?"

"No, we don't despise them, and some of us of course worship them. With us, as with you, the love of money is deep-rooted. But I think our love of adventure is deeper-rooted still. It is the excitement of the game rather than the reward that keeps us going, though we are not indifferent to the reward. Americans are no more interested in moneymaking than any other people in the world, and less interested than some."

"Are you indifferent to the fate of the man who loses?" I asked, a little rudely.

"No and yes. Some of us are go-getters and nothing else. It would be ridiculous to pretend that it is otherwise. But it is no less ridiculous to think that the dollar is America's god. We are not saints. In our scrambles for wealth and power we are often ruthless. But we do a lot of things besides making money."

### The Influence of Hollywood

I asked if one of the difficulties in the way of a better understanding of America was not the films. His answer was a little startling.

"Not merely the films, but the something in so many people everywhere that makes the undesirable film acceptable. You are entitled to complain of many of the films you see. I wish you would complain more about them. But you don't. You pay money to see them. If you did not welcome these things the producers of them would not send them to you. But you do precisely what we do at home; precisely what Japan does, and Singapore does, and Sydney and China. You let bad films drive out good films."

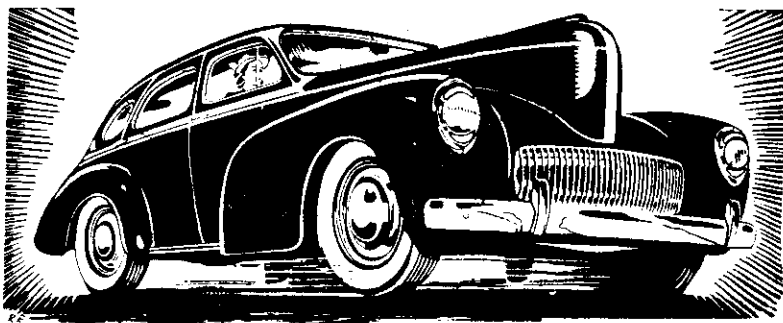
I asked him if we had any choice—if there were better films available to us.

"There are many, and there would be more if you demanded them," he answered. "But don't think I am now complaining. The number of people in America who want better films is at least a hundred millions; but there are 20 or 30 millions who are content with what they get, and the others, of course, don't stay away. It is the money of the careless majority added to the money of the delighted minority that makes Hollywood possible. You will, I am sure, agree that to complain of bad and still support them is a little weak—in Wellington as well as in Washington."

### Generalisation is Dangerous

I did agree. I agreed, too, with his further remark that the correspondent

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