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# MORALE AND PRICES ARE HIGH IN PARIS

## I.L.O. Delegate's Stay in Preoccupied Europe

"SEE this? I'm proud of it. I've wanted something of the kind for years and I picked it up in a small London shop. Just a fluke. I was browsing about in the shop while a friend was looking for some music. On the way back to New Zealand I read one volume and now I'm on the second."

In this way Valentine Duff, employers' representative in the New Zealand delegation to the International Labour Organisation's conference in Paris in October and November last, and secretary of the Taranaki Employers' Association, explained his acquisition of a complete set of Robert Burns' works. The volumes, three of them, contain Burns' biography as well as his poems and deal with the circumstances leading up to the writing of each piece of verse.

We asked him on his return what he thought of gay Paris. "Not so gay," he

said, and then he told us how rapidly financial ruin could overtake the visitor to that romantic city.

### Costly Leg of Mutton

A leg of Parisian mutton sets the visitor back £5. A glass of cognac runs out at 6s, and a slice of beef and a wafer of very dry bread about the same price, with tea extra, when you can get it. But the Parisians still enjoy their famous night life, though minus much of the gaiety of pre-war times.

Every cinema and café is packed, but all there is to drink in the cafés is beer and wine—awful stuff. Still, the people sit there, sipping and chatting. Lunch of a so-called soup, a piece of German sausage or something like it, and a little stew with one potato, costs £1.

To return some kindnesses, Mr. Duff asked two friends to dinner, but suggested that they name the place. The dinner was soup, crayfish, some duck, and a sort of sweet, a bottle of red wine and two liqueurs. That cost him £15.

During a stroll with two other delegates he went into a shop to price some wristlet watches. When the price was announced he expected to see his companions stretched out on the floor. The price asked was about £460, New Zealand money. But worse than that, the purchaser—if there had been one—was asked to deposit, in addition, 25 grammes of gold, a scheme, presumably, to check gold-hoarding. Certainly the watches were very beautiful, but they stayed in the shop.

### No Sunshade for the Wife

One delegate decided to buy his wife a sunshade. After a search he found one with a tortoiseshell handle and studded with stones. But the price was £270; so, like the watches, the sunshade remained where it was. A tailored suit brings £150, and prices for other goods are in proportion.

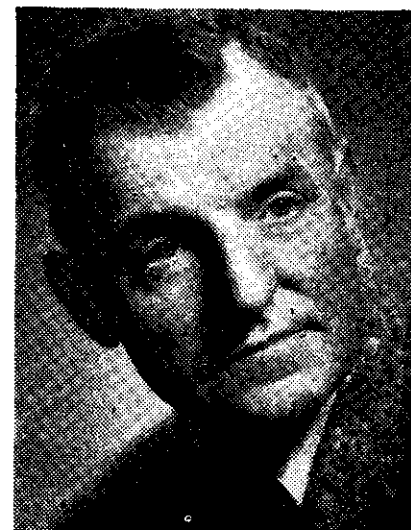
But the morale of the Parisians is high, though sometimes the lights are put out in the city from 6.30 till 9.30 p.m. as a power-conservation measure. Dinner often takes place in semi-darkness. There are no candles because there is no fat, so, in some places, a sort of metal gas-tube is used for light.

The love of the theatre has never waned. Beautifully-staged shows are presented at the theatres. The city itself shows little sign of war damage, apart from some evidence of street fighting, but one big motor works was completely demolished.

### Backward in Cultivation

The countryside struck Mr. Duff as being not unlike the New Zealand scene. But the land, he says, has not yet returned to full cultivation, though a certain amount of work is being done. There are a few sheep, a few cattle and a few geese about, but that's all.

Last November, in London, Mr. Duff attended the Armistice Day celebrations. He summed them up by saying that, though Marseilles is beautiful and Paris



Spencer Digby photograph  
**VALENTINE DUFF**  
Courtesy cost more than usual

is marvellous, the Armistice Day service in London stands alone as the most impressive thing he has ever seen.

Before the war we occasionally heard stories of New Zealanders when visiting other countries being duped, to their subsequent sorrow, by confidence men. Mr. Duff, therefore, was a little put out when three of his own countrymen suspected him of belonging to the "con" brotherhood.

With a friend he was looking over Edinburgh Castle. Three New Zealand airmen came by, wearing the familiar shoulder flash, so, with the usual greeting, Mr. Duff said, "Hello, New Zealand!"

"These chaps," he said, "seemed very reserved and unresponsive. Eventually one admitted that he was from Waitara and another from Dunedin. Meanwhile, my companion had wandered a little way off and the boys watched him furtively. They questioned me closely about New Plymouth when I mentioned it and I managed to pass the test. They thought I was up to an old dodge and that my friend and I were working it together."

As he had been prominent in Automobile Association affairs in Taranaki for several years, Mr. Duff met officials of the Royal Automobile Club while he was in England. He was specially interested in the Child Safety Education Service in the English schools.

English manufacturers, he says, are receiving plenty of orders—many of them from foreign countries—but the difficulty at the moment is to transfer machinery back to peacetime production. Until such difficulties have been solved, the people of Britain are likely to remain on short commons.

"Backstage of Life"—complete plays in each episode—is now playing at 12B, 22B and 32B on Fridays at 7.15 p.m. Soon this feature will go to Dunedin and Palmerston North.

\* \* \*  
Local talent is presented from 22B on Tuesdays and Fridays at 8.45 p.m.

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