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PLAIN TALK FROM AN EDITOR

“ANY British news-paper editor worth his salt should see as much of the British Empire as possible and that's why I'm here; that, and because of a long-standing desire to see the world, with special emphasis on New Zealand, for I met many of your men during the war in England.” Stuart Campbell, Editor of the London *Sunday Pictorial*, thus explained his 2,200-mile tour of the South Island, and his present trip through the North Island, when *The Listener* interviewed him midway in Wellington. He agreed that New Zealand had had its visitors who glanced at Mount Cook and Rotorua and returned home persuaded that they had seen the country. But Mr. Campbell takes his visiting seriously, making a point of talking to farmers, mayors and industrialists on the way.

He started by saying that New Zealand was, to him, an amazing place. “Here you have all Europe crammed into two islands,” he said. “In a hundred miles there are Devon, Surrey (my own county), Scotland, and Switzerland. But the country is treated better by Nature than by man. Why on earth do you allow these ugly advertisements to be placarded all over your scenic spots, in the bush and along highways? I have travelled a fair bit in the last few days and made the resolve that, as long as I live, I shall never use the products advertised on hoardings mangling the New Zealand countryside.

“But haven't you got them in England too?”

“Not nowadays. There are no hoardings on the main highways in our beauty spots; they're absolutely prohibited. Even petrol pumps in some rural counties have to be painted green to tone with the landscape. By knocking down a few men with selfish desires we give pleasure to 45 millions.”

Problems for Planners

Mr. Campbell said that as far as he could see we had little in the way of town - planning except, perhaps in Christchurch, where there seemed to be a conscious effort to present a pleasing appearance. England had the same problem and it would cost several millions to clean up the industrial mess. Individual desires must be subordinated to the desires of the community. “Man,” he said, “is not the owner of land; he is the custodian. He has no right to disfigure it with ugly buildings. Pure ownership, without improvement, is anti-social and must be curbed. We don't want aggravating restrictions of liberty, but I think education in the right use



STUART CAMPBELL
“Pure ownership is anti-social”

of Nature's gifts would go a long way towards solving these difficulties.”

“How does that square with modern concepts of democracy?”

“Perfectly well; it's a matter of the greatest good for the greatest number. People who build excrescences or mar Nature in any way, or who leave land unimproved must be told about it smartly. But I suppose people here will think this rank Communism. That would be rubbish. It's not Communism, nor is it Socialism; it's

common sense. In England, farmers are directed what to grow for the country's good.

Nonsense in Farming

“I gather that in some parts of New Zealand it has been a practice for generations to put a bit of superphosphate on the land and lie back, thinking it will improve. That is scientific nonsense. People are apt to think that we in Britain are subject to all sorts of restrictions and controls, and that we accept them docilely like sheep. But some of them are very necessary. We accept restrictions — which are called controls—because they are for the good of the people as a whole.”

Prices for meat and butter which New Zealand charged Britain would be too high if England struck an industrial slump. “I don't say it will happen, but it could,” he went on, “and then we would not be able to buy from you. Instead of taking your butter, costing us about 2/- a pound now, we would buy margarine at 10d. Your prices are all right now, but you must strain every nerve to get them down in the future by more intensive farming, in case a slump does come to Britain. That is the only way New Zealand will be able to keep her British market.

Britain's Eye to the Future

“We are exporting as hard as we can because we are at war right now for our bread and butter. There are all sorts of things you can't buy in England to-day, but this amounts to good planning for the future. It all boils down to the fact that if a man has any sort of conscience, he will work for the community, taking his share of limitations and restrictions in the meantime. To talk like this in New Zealand may be regarded as utter blasphemy; still, it's the truth and it's true democracy.”

Journalists in Parliament

“What is the effect on the British Parliament of the inclusion of so many journalists? Aren't there more now than there have ever been?”

(continued on next page)