

restaurants mostly closed, the theatre crowds all away home. They've completely changed their ways: the night-life begins at half-past six and finishes about half-past nine, ten o'clock at the latest. Quite different, very quiet, a little subdued, that's the way London night life is now—of course there will be the exceptions. In my eight months I saw long evening dresses just once. People are building up their reserves; they've come through a long and desperate struggle and it isn't all over yet. They don't grumble. I was there when the bread was cut. Why don't you complain, I asked them, because I found this really outrageous. But quite as a matter of course they explained that this was nothing in comparison with what was happening 'over the Channel.' You see, they feel so close to the more intense suffering of Europe that it never occurs to them to grumble. They simply keep on building up their strength, not using it in useless and wasteful effort. And dear me, how those New Zealand and Australian food parcels have helped them."

"What would you say they most badly need or want?"

"Oh sweets. They crave for sweets of all kinds. When I left sweets, beautiful ones and quite a variety, were beginning to come on the market again, but in very small quantities. The ration is half a pound a month—just imagine how far *that* goes in chocolates! Sweets and dried fruits in parcels are the magic things. Fresh fruit was on sale on the barrows for the first time for six years when I was there. But the prices were extraordinary—25/- a pound for grapes, 8/- a pound for peaches and so on. I wanted a tiny marrow to take to friends. The price: 7/6! Perhaps the worst thing about their diet has been the lack of variety. Monotonous starch with the cheapest kinds of greens, vegetable tops and so on; yes, they certainly need everything that we can send them from our overflowing Australia and New Zealand."

#### Oslo with the Lid Off

For three weeks at the end of her tour Miss Helmrich was invited to Sweden and Norway to make some records and to give radio and public recitals.

"All the rest of the time I was so busy organising and talking and observing that I had no time for music, music just for itself. But now I had three wonderful weeks just for music. It was so beautiful to go back to my old haunts and my old friends in Stockholm and Oslo—and it was such a contrast to England, the lights all on, the life very gay, all the food in the world and all the goods in the shops, things we had forgotten ever existed. In Stockholm there was nothing very special about the studios and the broadcasting arrangements, rather shabby if anything. But in Oslo! It was Oslo with the lid off—Oslo out from underneath the occupation, brilliant and gay and alive and shining new everywhere. The most beautiful studios in the world, the newest and best of equipment and arrangements. Really an amazing city to see."

"And after this tour you will go back to continue your work for CEMA?"


"Among other things. There is now a representative of the British Council in Australia—this is really a great triumph. Really, with scholarships and exchanges of exhibitions and artists coming out on tour the outlook is very bright indeed. I look forward to a lively merry-go-round of the artists of the world."

—J.

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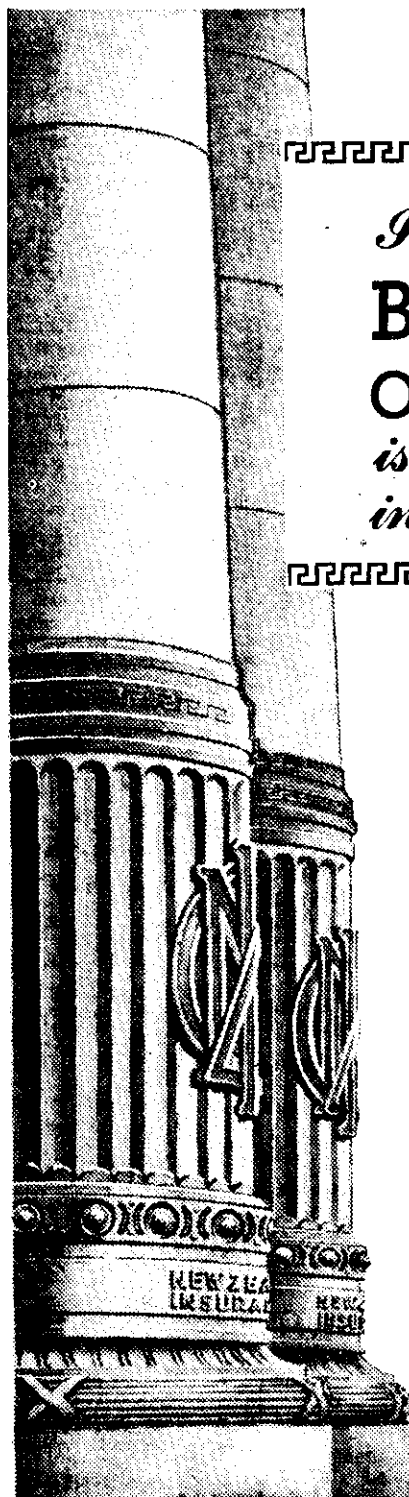
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