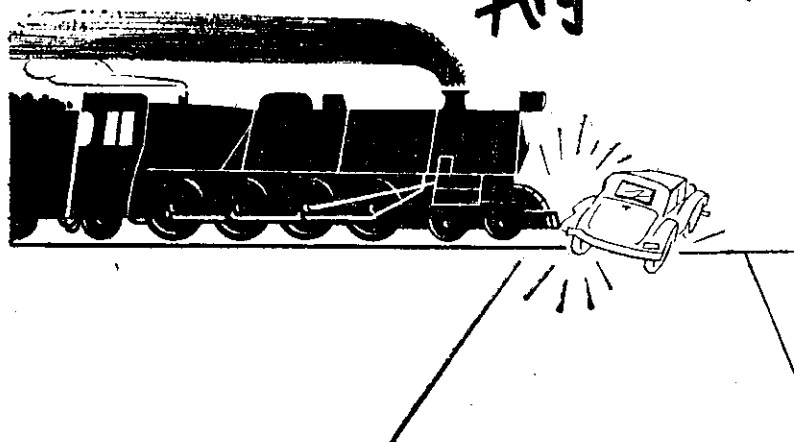


Weighty
Argument!



You haven't an "earthly" against such a solid fact as a Railway Engine—it has the right of way—it cannot stop quickly—and it has the **WEIGHT!** Look out at railway crossings—don't be tempted to give it a go—64 people tried that unsuccessfully last year—don't you be the next one to fail.



You are required by law to slow down to 15 m.p.h. when within 100 yards of a railway crossing.

Issued by the Transport Department

8.0c

WE ARE OBSERVED! English Cameraman Looks at N.Z.

AN English director-cameraman, Peter Hennessy, arrived in New Zealand the other day to spend three or four months looking objectively at this country through the view-finder of a movie camera. From what he sees he will produce a 20 minutes' film for the J. Arthur Rank review, *This Modern Age*, a monthly documentary which is designed not only for British audiences but for exhibition all over the world. Since it first appeared in 1946 *This Modern Age* has turned out many films on a diverse collection of subjects ranging from housing to coal, from Palestine to Australia, from jet-propulsion to whale-hunting.

"It is a fact that the film's part in the spread of news and information is of great importance, because of the enormous numbers of people who attend cinemas, and because of the ease with which people accept the combination of word and picture," said Mr. Hennessy in an interview with *The Listener*. "*This Modern Age* makes 12 films a year and the producers have found that facts, when presented accurately and picturesquely, can be excellent entertainment. They attempt to be fair-minded and impartial, but as they have to deal from time to time with matters which are political, social or industrial, it is not expected that they can please everybody or that they never tread on anybody's toes."

Asked if it was the British film industry's answer to the *March of Time*, Mr. Hennessy said that it was intended as no such thing and no description annoyed its creators more. Rank decided upon it when he saw a *March of Time* film about the world's merchant marine which omitted reference to the some few vessels flying the Red Ensign. On his representations the *March of Time* undertook to alter their film, but when Rank discovered that they proposed to show the original version in Britain, he refused to allow his cinemas to present it. *This Modern Age* worked under a

different code, but in fact it owed much to the *March of Time* idea, just as it owed something to the wartime documentary films which kept up morale in England and bolstered British prestige abroad, particularly the short films made by Paul Rotha for the Government. But its producers insisted that it was different from either. They saw in the best of *This Modern Age* productions something which the present mediocre run of British documentary films might even emulate.

Logical Scheme

Explaining the groundwork of the scheme, Mr. Hennessy said that *This Modern Age* films were made upon a line of argument, a chain of reasoning rather than a general description illustrated by photographs. The narrator developed the theme; the film sequences followed a logical scheme, illustrating, but above all lending suggestive power to the unfolding exposition. There was a statement of the problem, a thesis, sometimes an anti-thesis, and a summing up. The evidence for the thesis was presented visually, the audiences were left to draw their own conclusions and they became a jury. The writing staff was led by novelists and dramatists and included journalists and trained research writers. Directors were seldom employed. The cameramen were trained both as camera technicians and as reporters, and in their approach to the subject they were nearer to the feature photographers of the pictorial magazines than to the ordinary cine-cameraman.

The method was to decide the theme first, then to conduct the fullest researches and lastly to shoot the film evidence. Though older shots might be used to provide flashbacks to the past, the bulk of the film preserved strict authenticity of time and place. The films seldom took less than three to six months to make; some had occupied a year or longer. They were the product of teamwork and it was hard to say

(continued on next page)

Grasslands Conference

THE Grasslands Association was formed in 1931, with the broad object of fostering grassland knowledge among everybody interested in grassland. A better known name could hardly have been found for the first President than Cockayne, in this case A. H. Cockayne, then Director-General of Agriculture, and a son of Dr. L. Cockayne, who did so much of the early work on New Zealand grasses.

A. H. Cockayne was President from 1931 until last year when he was succeeded by F. R. Callaghan, Secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. That Mr. Callaghan and the Association take their mission seriously has been demonstrated by the amount of organisation put into this year's annual Conference, which starts in Rotorua on Monday, November 21.

The Association's officials feel that although it is important for the scientists among them to get together for the exchange of ideas which so often makes further research progress possible, it is even more important that people whose

way of life is the land should also have access to the exchange of ideas, and be able to contribute their own. So the Executive Committee have been very thorough about the publicity given the Conference, and the NZBS, recognising the importance of the occasion, has given a good deal of broadcasting time from several stations to particular subjects dealt with by the Conference. A series of preparatory broadcasts—five-minute summaries of papers to be given at the Conference—has already been heard on the air. Stations 1YZ and 1YA will broadcast short reports of the day's proceedings at 6.0 p.m. on November 22, 23, 24 and 25, and these will, with the exception of the last, be rebroadcast later by 2YA. At 7.15 on Tuesday, November 22, 2YA will broadcast part of Mr. Callaghan's Presidential address.

