

# WELLINGTON ROUNDAABOUT

By "Thid"

## The Good and The Bad

WELLINGTON has been doing without me for a week. Not, you will say, that my absence has worried Wellington.

But consider: I left on a fine evening. I returned on a clear southerly morning.

While I was away, Wellington blew. Wellington rained. Wellington caught on fire, Wellington exploded, the Mayor made a speech which nobody heard, Wellington brought out a whole squad of police, Wellington got arrested and sentenced to hard labour, Wellington wrote to the paper, Mrs — in — Road had a baby, Mr. — of — Terrace went into hospital for an appendectomy, a yacht was wrecked, and internecine strife continued to disrupt the flow of

life in all Wellington's apartment houses.

These things I know. Your catalogue will also be full. If we could all meet somewhere this week and make a list of all the happenings of the seven days before, we should no doubt be astonished. How many people, for instance, have been to the doctor? How many to the dentist? How many have lain sick-a-bed? How many have found they cannot buy new clothing because clothing is getting too expensive? How many have had sleepless nights?

### All Important

All these things are important — as important, I should say, as the latest mood of Hitler, or Mr. Chamberlain's last deliberation. Seen with that excellent detachment of the view from the boat deck of the steamer express, the

sum of human misery or joy is only an addition of the digits.

The toothache of the individual is no less than the pain in the jaw of the nation. It is only that the individual takes his trouble into a corner while the nation puts it on the front page and blames it over the fence. We don't all get the same bodily ailments at once. But when there is something awry in our minds it spreads, doubles itself like a chromosome under Mendel's microscope, infects like a sneeze or spittle on the pavement, is caught like a banner to be waved about, and made much of. But to have a cold in the head is really just as bad.

### Yesterday, To-day and To-morrow

To-morrow, after a day's work in the city, this happy abstraction of mind will be gone. Already it is going. The typewriters are rattling. The telephones are ringing. There is no time to file all the impressions of the day. When evening comes it will have been a good day or a bad day as much because the luncheon grill has been tender or burned, as because the shortwave has been cheerful or pessimistic.

Yesterday life was good. To-day it holds back like water bulging at the surface tension of a tumbler's rim. To-morrow, I know it, it will spill over, and cascade in confusion.

Yesterday I stood alone and early, with wind in my hair and spray in my vision. Living was only seeing the green of the seas, the smother and surge of the crests of the waves, rose-pink on the new snow of the Kaikouras at sunrise.

To-day it is seeing the same faces, different as strangers of a week can be; standing against the window to see the fire engines go by, chromium shining, brass shining, helmets shining, eyes shining, noses shining.

To-morrow it will be dates, engagements, when is pay day? paying bills, paying taxes, listening to records, where is my hat? have I time for lunch? writing, typing, ringing up. How much in ten point? How much in eight? which page for that? what the — are you wasting my time for? Mr. Chamberlain, John Brown's Body, Mr. Churchill, Mr. Hitler, Mr. Mussolini, That Chap Stalin, Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Roosevelt, John Dos Passos, Bernard Shaw, Bertrand somebody-else-unmentionable, Hell, Helsinki, Tauherinikau, Tolvajari, St. Martin's in the Fields, London Black, Wellington Blue, up the shoot, down the spout, under the weather, five to six, can it, pull your finger, did I tell you, have you heard? they told me, they tell me, roll out the barrel, they know not what they do, even the sparrow, and the sparrow-hawk, four eighty kilocycles, no H in his name, cut the cackle, social security, round the bandstand, under the trees, God help you, and I'll help me.

### The Moment That Matters

But in these momentous days it is the moment that matters. To-morrow

can go to the devil. To-day is not bad. Yesterday — yesterday the ship came into Wellington Harbour leading a southerly sea. South by east a black sky carried the tale of the wet tracks at Addington the day before. The storm was travelling north, to wet the Wairarapa and send the drips running down all the trees and undergrowth and bobbing ferns in the soaking gullies of the Tararuas. South by west the Kaikouras held their high snows for the first colourful blessing of the sun. Over the bow an indentation in the grey-green coastline opened slowly up to become Port Nicholson, with the slumbry suburbs red and green and white and yellow among the weedy hills. Island Bay, Lyall Bay, Seatoun, were all asleep. At half speed, we were not off Eastbourne until the first fires were alight in Worser Bay and smoke curled up where the Butterfly Track climbed back towards the Orongorongos. Petone hid behind Somes Island as if afraid the ocean we brought with us would flow in upon its flatness.

To leeward the gulls sailed on the eddies. To port was Kau Bay, where the wind never blows. Then Point Halswell, where Maori women paddle in their bloomers with skirts upraised to hold the swelling catch of shell fish. We opened up Evans Bay, where a good yachtsman can hold the best wind, beating back against a nor'-wester, by keeping his nose pointed to the gap of Ngahauranga, where the smells come from.

### A Strange City

This seemed a strange city we were coming upon. The wind allowed no smoke to settle, or noise to reach us. The towers on Tinakori Hill were like lettering over a dead place. The pylons of the power lines marching across the hills to the west seemed more animate than the dolls' village drifting closer with every slow beat of the engines.

A liner lay sullen against Pipitea Wharf. Another leaned away from the contamination of a coal barge. Their guns cocked knowingly out of grey canvas breech covers. Their decks were empty. The wharves were empty. The sky and the sea were empty of all save clouds, and little waves and the harbour detritus.

We swung against the drag of a screw reversing. We backed. We slid a foot from the piles to a stop. People waved, but the wind made them silent. A rope slapped on to the wharf. A cable snugged over a bollard. The gangways curiously poked into the opened ports.

The wind was quiet. And over behind the Customs Building a tram's brakes squealed a welcome back to Wellington.

### PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE

#### STATEMENT FOR JANUARY, 1940

Estates of a value of £527,424 were reported and accepted for administration by the Public Trustee during the month of January, 1940. The total value of the estates and funds under administration by the Public Trustee on March 31, 1939, was £61,715,713, and the new business for the ten months ended January 31 was £4,919,316.

Grants of administration made by the Court in favour of the Public Trustee numbered 109 for the month.

During the month 675 new wills appointing the Public Trustee executor were prepared on behalf of testators and lodged for safe custody, and 336 existing wills were revised to provide for changes desired by testators. The total number of wills now held in the Public Trust Office on behalf of living persons is 96,684.



...avoid costly  
Litigation...

Many men often give permission to friends to name them as executors and forget the matter until suddenly called upon to act. Executorship requires, not only sound business judgment, but reliable legal knowledge too . . . Safe and competent administration at reasonable cost can be secured by appointing the Public Trustee as executor of your estate. Talk the matter over confidentially with one of the executives of the Public Trust Office. His friendly and sound advice may save your beneficiaries much money and worry.

The Public Trustee will prepare or revise your will free of charge, and hold it in safe custody, if appointed Executor.

Consult the Public Trustee or any of his branch officers.



The  
PUBLIC TRUSTEE

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