

QUESTIONS TO THE PUBLIC

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land much closer to us. I, at any rate, don't expect an invasion for the next six months, so I'm not worrying about it at all. It's silly, I suppose, but I shan't start to worry till the invading forces are about 100 yards away. I think there's a reasonable possibility of an air-raid. In that case, I shall go to my first-aid post. I was in England last war during the raids, and after the first one or two I never noticed them. During the London blitz, there seems to have been very little civilian panic, so I don't see why there should be any here. The main thing is for everyone to know what he's going to do beforehand, and then there's little possibility of muddle or panic. I don't think one's personal safety is worth wasting sleep over.

"I haven't made any personal preparations for a raid or an invasion. The family silver's going to stay just where it is. And I'm not collecting tinned food:

"No, I haven't given up any of my pre-war activities. They're the things (Plunket Society, Child Welfare, etc.), which have to be carried on, war or no war."

Domestic Help

"WHEN I first heard of the fall of Singapore, I couldn't eat for days. I was terribly upset. But I really am trying to be calm, because I realise it's no use getting panicky.

"No, I won't worry about my own safety. I try not to think about it. What I always say is 'What is to be will be.' So it's no use worrying.

"No, I wouldn't know what to do if the bombs started falling or the Japanese came. But I'm trusting to Mrs. — to look after me. She's always calm, and she always knows the right thing to do.

"Yes, I go out and mind some children two nights a week. No, I wouldn't tell them what was happening if an air-raid came—they're too young—one is three and the other eighteen months. I'd just say 'Don't take any notice of the nasty noise.'

"And what would I do myself? I'd try to protect them. No, I don't know quite how, but I'd do something. It all depends what had happened. Poor little mites!"

Mother With Two Children

"WHEN I heard of the fall of Singapore, I was too distressed for personal reasons (my brother-in-law was there), to consider how it would affect New Zealand. I suppose it does bring an attack nearer home, for New Zealand is on the line that can bring support to the East Indies, and hence is of strategic importance.

"I live in Karori, and I think that would be as safe as anywhere during a raid. If bombers are overhead, I'll take the children into our concrete garage, which my husband thinks is safer than a trench. Yes, I shall certainly tell the children what's happening, but I'll be quite calm and matter-of-fact about it, and explain that after all there's only perhaps one chance in 10,000 of their being hit. My sister's children lived with her in London all through the blitz, and it didn't seem to have had a bad psychological effect on them—they

were never panicky, and they regarded all the dodging about as an exciting kind of game. My children are both school-age (one's five and the other seven), and they get E.P.S. training at school anyway, so they're bound to know what it's all about. In fact, my son came home the other day and almost confounded me by his detailed knowledge of exactly what he was going to do in an air raid. I wouldn't know exactly what I was going to do. I don't think you can predict your behaviour as closely as all that.

"No, I'm not taking an active part in E.P.S. or Red Cross. All those things take up your evenings, and I'm never free in the evenings. But my friends and I have been discussing the formation of a women's corps to do some vegetable growing in the day time. We feel that in the case of an emergency this would be a valuable contribution."

"Simply Disgusted"

THE owner of a small bookshop and tobacco stall told us that he and his wife were not alarmed; they were simply disgusted. The two of them sat at home in the evenings, and friends only occasionally came round, so they could not speak for other people.

"Well, then, do you discuss your own personal safety?" we asked. "Yes, between ourselves, you know," he said. "How?" we asked him. "In a wise way!" his wife answered smartly.

They were in no uncertainty about what they would do "if trouble came."

"I'm going to stop right where I am, I'm not going to make a song about it. That's no use," said the husband. "I'm not going to move—you might be jumping out of the frying pan into the fire."

As for "giving up private interests," this bookseller had done nothing like that. "You can't give up a one-man show," he said, "and we're too old for games!"

Professor's Wife

"THE main question is what to do with the children," said the wife of a University professor. "Once the children are arranged for, then there can be no more uncertainty. We cannot rely on our children to make their own arrangements in an emergency, but we can rely on ourselves to know what is best to do in a moment of danger. Where children are at school, arrangements must be made for them to be sent home by back roads (in the case of a warning) or else shelter must be provided for them at the school (in the case of a sudden alarm which leaves no time for them to get home). And once arrangements have been made for them—we have arranged for ours to use a very good shelter next door—then we are no longer uncertain about what to do if trouble comes?

"To the last question—do we hide the danger from the children?—I would say no. They are aware that there might be air raids—we have prepared them to expect loud bangs and lots of fireworks; but they are not aware of personal danger, because that is the way children's minds work, and we have not pressed it home to them that there is any. We allow them to go on thinking—'It wouldn't happen to me, though.' Because if it did happen to them, they would not know anyway.

"We find that the best way is to enlist their co-operation, make them feel they are important and that they will be able to help. Every child wants to be a fireman, and my elder one has been running round the garden with a spray-pump, dousing 'incendiaries.' They have a sense of responsibility, and we hope to make use of their stimulated co-operation at times when they are not actually in shelter. And for times when they are in a shelter, we have some new games stowed away which we could use to keep their minds occupied."

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Nursing under fire

Lady Doverdale has taken up nursing during the war. However, Lady Doverdale's complexion looks just as lovely to-day as before the war. She says, "Life is so busy just now that I simply haven't time for beauty treatments, but I find I don't miss them one bit. Pond's two creams keep my skin beautifully soft and smooth."



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