

## NEW ZEALAND LOOKS AHEAD

*A General Survey of Problems of Reconstruction*, by H. Belshaw. *Health Services, or Doctors and Hospitals*, by D. Robb. *What of the New Order?* by A. Sewell. *Reconstruction Pamphlets*, Nos. 1, 2 and 3. (Co-operative Publishing Society for New Zealand Institute of International Affairs). 6d each.

(Reviewed for "The Listener" by PROFESSOR F. L. W. WOOD)

THESE three pamphlets are an attempt to sketch the shape of things to come, and to show what lessons New Zealanders can learn from the past as they prepare themselves to face the problems of the future. There is, however, no information here for those who want to know how to build an air-raid shelter, or who will not rest in peace till they have been authoritatively told the exact tactics to be adopted by Japanese airmen if they should attack this country. The bias of this series of pamphlets is economic and social rather than military; it deals with those political problems which we have not yet handed over into the keeping of the General Staff.

#### The Dilemma of Democracy

On this preliminary group of pamphlets the first and third deal with the future in broad and general terms. Professor Sewell is primarily an expert in English literature. He is also however a student of politics and economics with a capacity for challenging judgments and for stimulating dogmatism. His analysis of the New Order is a vivid personal statement which sets out clearly the dilemma facing the democratic peoples. The world, he says, is passing through a convulsion comparable to that which destroyed the Middle Ages in the 15th and 16th centuries. Hitler, in his view, recognises this fact and gives a clear answer to the questions of men perplexed by the destruction of the old world. Those who oppose Hitler must equally recognise the fact of change and resist the temptation to defend an outworn system merely because it once suited the times. Our task, says Professor Sewell, is to reconcile the human values on which our society is theoretically built with the inexorable demands of a world which has turned its back on 19th century liberalism. State control has not only come to stay but is bound to grow to proportions hitherto unimagined: and the task is to plan a form of state control which ordinary human beings will be able to work and which will leave genuine freedom untouched. As to what this freedom is, and how it may be preserved, Professor Sewell throws about some pungent suggestions but he is concerned to state a problem and point out fruitful possibilities rather than to draft a detailed plan.

#### Economics of a Changing World

So is Professor Belshaw. He approaches the future with the caution and accuracy of phraseology proper to an economist writing of economics, and at



DOUGLAS ROBB  
*The public is thirsty*

first sight his assumption that capitalist democracy is likely to endure is in conflict with Professor Sewell's belief in catastrophic change. But those who read the pamphlet closely—and it must be read closely or not at all—will find that it is a well-packed handbook to methods of coping with the economics of a changing world. Incidentally, it includes liberal indications of how not to do things, and of the danger of those kinds of plausible simplicities that win elections. Those, if any, who believe that we are fighting to re-create the world of 1939 (or 1914) should read Professor Sewell. Those not fully convinced that men of goodwill unequipped with economic science may do more harm than good should read Professor Belshaw.

#### The Problem of Public Health

The third pamphlet, that by Dr. Robb, steps from the general to the particular—if the vast subject of Public Health may be so designated. It will be welcomed by a public thirsty for information on a subject which has lately been discussed with a minimum of information. Dr. Robb writes briefly but clearly, and he is concerned not so much to tell us of achievements which must be accepted with blind gratitude by an ignorant laity as to show ways in which improvements may be made. The principles of planning referred to in general terms by Professor Sewell may here be seen applied to one of the most important professions in the community, in ways in which (in Dr. Robb's vision) they are as beneficial to the doctors as to the patients. Nor does it seem (to an outsider at least) that the changes suggested would involve an intolerable strain on the community, even in wartime. No doubt they would require careful consideration, by doctors and administrators alike; but this courageous little pamphlet will have served a very useful purpose if it helps to break down that atmosphere of silence and mystery which threatens to build a barrier between doctor and patient.

#### Value of the Series

This pamphlet series as a whole is a new departure by the New Zealand In-

stitute of International Affairs, but it is strictly in line with the original aims and methods of the parent body. The Royal Institute was born of the faith that human affairs go wrong more often through lack of knowledge than through lack of goodwill; a faith bitten into the minds of disillusioned men who watched the struggles of the assembled statesmen at Versailles to remedy the world's ills within the space of a few months. After the Peace men who shared this faith organised themselves—in Germany and Japan as well as in Britain, France, and America—and started the slow task of building up scientific knowledge of human politics. Knowledge, it was hoped, would be an invincible weapon for statesmen of goodwill, and it would equip a vigilant and intelligent world public opinion to curb the machinations of the evil. These three New Zealand pamphlets are among the latest progeny of this magnificent ideal; and the immediate future will be the testing time in this as in other countries of men's power to apply sound and scientific methods to the solution of political and social problems.

#### POET AND PACIFIST

*A DAY'S JOURNEY. Poems by Basil Dowling. Printed by the Caxton Press, Christchurch.*

IT is difficult to know what to say about Mr. Dowling, or rather how to start in at him. *A Day's Journey* demands consideration from two angles; to consider it solely as a "slim volume" of verse or solely as a passionate exposition of a Christian's attitude to war would be doing it an injustice.

Christ, the man of peace "doomed to be shot for cowardice at dawn," "the child Christ crucified," Christ in a court of justice, "mocked and thorny-browed," is the theme of several verses. It would not be the place here to enter into a discussion of the rights and wrongs of his message; it is enough to say that he pleads with irony, simple conviction, and some passion.

Many of the other poems, which are concerned with such subjects as "Hay time in Somerset," "My Son, Six Weeks Old," "Scenes of Childhood," and "Age," are uneven in quality. The description of a thunderstorm at night has laboured highlights and an ugly rhyme to round it off:

... A few stars unquenched  
Shine clear again, and people open  
shutters,  
While storm water rushes down the  
gutters.

But there is a sure touch in "Posting a Letter."

Conceived by love or not,  
Written in truth, or lied,  
This letter that I slide  
Into its narrow slot  
As final an act shall be  
As a stone dropped in the sea,  
or suicide.

And there is a depth and intensity of feeling that Wilde did not permit to come to the surface in the "Ballad of

Reading Gaol" in his reaction to the small square within a prison where men are hanged. The rain which falls there  
ne'er will sluice away that blood  
stopped, unshed,

By the looped, terrible tourniquet;  
or drown my pity and horror.

An uneven collection, not all of it maturely worked out; but an interesting one, and worth while for perhaps five poems.

—IBID

#### HOW TO WRITE RADIO PLAYS

*PLAY WRITING FOR RADIO. By Allan G. Sleeman, Christchurch. The Caxton Press.*

THIS is a useful and timely book in a land where opportunities for the brain children of aspiring radio writers are greater than ever, but where the mortality rate among such offspring is still high. The author approaches his task with obvious honesty, for in the very first chapter he says of his book: "It embraces no secret formula to kindle a spark of literary fire where none exists. It purports to do no more than direct a revealing beam of light upon the peculiar mechanics and considerable compass of the radio drama."

On this modest basis he has produced a compact little book which should be welcomed by aspiring radio writers in New Zealand, to whom there has hitherto been little printed information readily available on this subject of radio writing. The book covers the do's and don'ts that have become established as standard in the comparatively short life of this newest branch of dramatic writing: do's and don'ts which everyone who tries to write a radio play should assimilate before starting on his task if he wants to save himself and the broadcasting authorities a good deal of time. A knowledge of the factors governing the writing of acceptable radio plays should con-

(Continued on next page)

#### War Work

I got ergot,  
Black and crescent.  
Not so pleasant, picking, ergot.  
Too painstaking,  
Too back breaking,  
Too much shaking out of ergot.  
All that I got needed shaking.  
Fog and rye grass—  
That's not my grass.  
I found fescue.  
Fescue's tall and fescue's tough,  
Studded stiffly with the stuff  
They call ergot.  
Found some clover; looked it  
over.  
Thought that marram might be  
best.  
I got ergot in the marram,  
I got too hot in the marram,  
Picking ergot.  
Worked for days: the days were  
sunny.  
Wondered how to spend the money  
I would earn.  
Three and fourpence was my  
taking,  
Total sum of all my aching.  
I got ergot.

—M.D.W.