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# HOLIDAY WEEK

## Conversations at Random

**I** DON'T like this Aussie idea. I say let the kids enjoy themselves while they're young and stop talking about Austerity Campaigns. How would you have liked it if you'd never had your stockings filled? You've got to admit that it would make a big gap in your life, you'd feel a bit like an orphan. When my kids ask me what Father Christmas brought me it certainly gives me a kick remembering my sleeping doll and those lolly carrots—remember them? Haven't seen them for years. I can tell you I'm going to have great fun filling those stockings to-night and I'm going to make a better job of it than usual to make up to the kids for their Dad being away. Oh, I know there's all this talk about having an economical Christmas, staying at home because of travel restrictions and petrol and all that. And if you're going to try to tell me that the boys overseas want their kids to go without their fun this Christmas, well you can try telling it to the marines.

"And as for grouching about staying at home this Christmas, well what I say is if you stay at home you can spend more on other things—I might even buy myself a new bathing suit—and I can tell you my kids and I are going to have a great time at the beach every fine day.

"Oh, yes, it's a busy time. But you've got to keep your pecker up, you know."

MISS R. sat behind her ledgers.

"No", she said, "the travel restrictions don't worry me much. Of course there are places I'd like to go to, but it's quite nice to have a few days at home for a change when you work all the week. Anyway, I find it perfectly easy to conjure up a vision of holiday places I've been to in the past and you'd be surprised what a restful feeling it gives you. I read about an American business man who was too busy to go away for

a holiday so he just read a lot of tourist booklets and felt quite rested when he'd finished."

**STREET conversation:** "Oh no, we cut all that out two years ago when Jim was in hospital and we've never got back to it. Everybody's got families coming on now and you simply can't give something to everybody."

"Besides it isn't only the expense; it's so hard to find anything these days."

"Yes, and when you do get something you never know whether they'll be pleased with it. Mostly we just send cards."

"Well, I'd better trot along. I must pick up the ham. Merry Christmas!"

"Same to you."

**"I WISH** it was this time next week."

That was Christmas Eve and the girl behind the counter in Fancy Goods had spent 25 minutes not selling a cloth flower at 2s. 6d. to one woman who wasn't quite sure and would come back to-morrow and selling a great variety of other articles to a great variety of girls and women from offices which closed at 5 o'clock.

So I told her, at 25 minutes past five on Christmas Eve that I hoped she would have a Merry Christmas and that was what she said.

Now it's New Year's Eve and I just popped in on my way home to buy a couple more handkerchiefs to send to Margaret and Miss Wilks (whom I had unfortunately overlooked). The astonishing thing was that the counter was absolutely crowded. About 23 women seemed to be in the same fix. When at last it was my turn I told the girl I hoped she'd have a happy New Year.

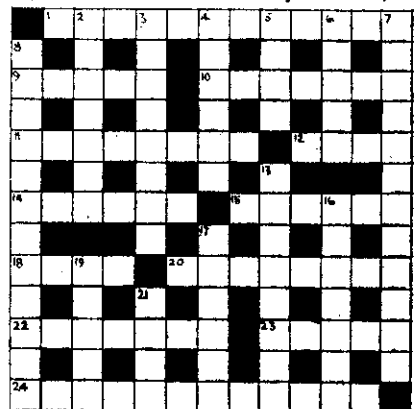
"Happy New Year", she said bitterly.

"I wish it was this time next week."

—S.E.D.

## THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

(No. 124; Constructed by R.W.C.)



- Clues Across**
- An action song in which the King once took part; perhaps the village smithy will give you a clue.
  - Range of temper?
  - Sea snails concealed in new silk.
  - Aspects.
  - Spindle found in 6 down.
  - A statue of this pioneer is situated in Cathedral Square, Christchurch
  - Set jam (anag.).
  - Speed found in 8 down and 19 down.
  - Lower shell of turtle.
  - No tears for treachery.
  - Ann, do be a lady—even if a Spanish one.
  - What I wish you all

## Clues Down

- Hard gag for a writer—this clue should have a rider to it.
- Small fish—found in a dress?
- The opposite of old age? (Two words.)
- Peripatetic fort.
- Abate.
- It falls on April 26th this year.
- Mrs. Wiggs will give you the clue for this part of the vegetable garden.
- Stay deaf for the festival
- Sweet scented white flower.
- Gamble recklessly.
- Inexpensive peach?
- Deathly pale.

(Answer to No. 123)

