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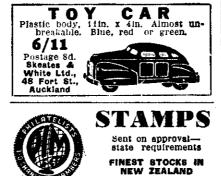
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Mention this paper



AS a prelude to the baseball game in Wellington last Sunday afternoon, Station 22B presented a programme, "The Ball Game" incorporating songs, poems, and facts about America's national sport. Here

game better reveals American temperament than does this great pastime which we, perhaps a bit enviously, sometimes call "glorified rounders." Baseball has given America many popular songs and poems. Thirty-five years ago, a young actor and song-writer named Jack Norworth dashed off a ditty that was destined for immortality, "Take me out to the Ball Game." This has become the theme song of America's national pastime.

Two years ago baseball celebrated its centennial. That makes it a mere infant alongside cricket, tennis, polo, boxing, wrestling and some of the other sports, but its century has been of such phenomenal progress that in America, it has outstripped practically every other pastime. It was not until the Civil War in 1861 that baseball made much progress as America's national pastime. Soldiers in the Union Army played the game behind the lines in their spare time, and when the war was over, brought it back home with them, thus spreading it all over the country. Its growth from that point on was phenomenal. To-day, baseball is a 500 million dollar industry, with one baseball property alone valued at well over a million pounds.

Baseball began to acquire a literature in the 1850's, but not until 1888, however, did the epic poem of the game appear. Working on the San Francisco Examiner that year was a young Harvard graduate named Ernest L. Thayer. One day he dashed off a verse for his column and called it "Casey at the Bat." Someone who knew baseball and recognised dramatic values saw in Thayer's effort a classic and sent it to his friend De Wolf Hopper, a leading actor of the day. At that time Hopper was appearing in a new show in New York and needed something which he could use as an encore number. Hopper was so impressed by the poem that he memorised it and recited it the same night before the footlights as an encore. The response of the audience was amazing. Throughout the run of the show Hopper recited the poem after every performance and the crowds continued to come, not so much to see the show, but to hear Hopper's dramatic rendering of "Casey at the Bat." For the rest of his theatrical career Hopper and Casey became synonymous.

## "THIS IS WAR!"

Monday, February 8, 7.30 p.m.:

From main National Stations: "Smith Against the Axis," featuring James Cagney.

Sunday, February 14, 8.5 p.m.: Station 1ZB, "Your Air Forces," featuring James Stewart; 2ZB and 2ZA, "Concerning Axis Propaganda," featur-ing Donald Crisp; 3ZB, "You're On Your Own," featuring Claude Rains; 4ZB, "Your Army," featuring Tyrone Power.