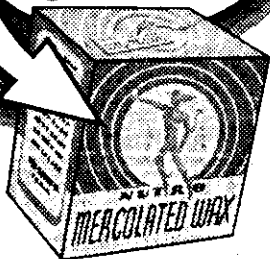


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SHE'S NOT NERVOUS— Except In An Aeroplane

"I HAVE been so long in public life that the change isn't so great as it might seem," Miss Mabel Howard, M.P., in an interview with *The Listener* recently. "So far, it has not seemed more than my ordinary work. For years now I have been secretary of a large industrial union, one of the largest in New Zealand, so I have had plenty of experience of working with men. This experience should be valuable for handling the problems of my electorate. Also, I worked for 20 years in close co-operation with my father in Christchurch South, helping to organise his elections and attend to the duties of the electorate. So the work of a Member of Parliament will not seem altogether novel."

A Woman's Viewpoint?

"Do you think that there is such a thing as a woman's point of view which should be specially represented in Parliament?" we asked.

"I think that women should stand shoulder to shoulder with men, and be prepared to take responsibilities as well as share privileges with men. This war has shown that women can do this, and the fact should be generally recognised. The Labour Government stands for the equality of the sexes. My selection as Labour candidate from nine nominees, of whom I was the only woman, shows that. But I do think there is such a thing as the woman's point of view. It is impossible for a man to have quite the same outlook as a woman. Although I have worked far more with men than with women, I know my point of view is different. I can't eliminate the feminine part of me whatever my surroundings. I have not yet got down to thinking about special women's problems in Parliament, but I hope that women's organisations will keep in touch with me with things that they think need doing. If they do, they will have my co-operation."

Quite at Home

Miss Howard made her maiden speech in the House when Parliament re-assembled a fortnight ago. She seconded the Address-in-Reply motion and spoke for 40 minutes with the ease and fluency that long practice has given her.

In her room in Parliament Buildings, she certainly gave the impression of being quite at home. When we remarked on this, her eyes twinkled. "Yes," she said, "I came into the House in an atmosphere of great friendliness. I think I have been especially welcomed for my father's sake. I felt at once that I was among friends. The messengers especially, can't do enough for me. They have, in fact, made me feel that I have been here forever. My women colleagues have been very helpful, too, and have made me wise about things which I would never otherwise have known."

"In such circumstances, one could hardly expect even a new woman M.P. to be nervous," we remarked.

"Nervous? I have never been nervous at the thought of addressing any meeting in my life. I don't know what it is."

"No, I'm wrong," she added. "I do know what it is. I nearly gave up my seat in Parliament last Tuesday; for a moment I felt that I would gladly have done so. I got a ring to say that I must be ready to leave by 'plane for Wellington at 3 p.m. Well, I can tell you I was terrified. My heart was pounding, and my knees were shaking with fright, but I have never run away from trouble yet, so I obeyed. The others must have laughed to see my terror, and the very least I expected was that I should be sick. Fortunately, I have only one meal a day, and I hadn't had it." She glanced



MISS MABEL HOWARD, M.P. Her one meal a day saved her dignity

down. "Yes, you can see that my shadow is by no means small. But thank goodness that one meal a day saved what was left—and it was not much—of my dignity."

Miss Howard is one of the people who find a 24-hour day rather too short for all there is to be done.

FROM BIBLES TO BULLETINS

"ANY book on any subject" is the motto of the War Library Service, which is now getting into operation after tidying up the stocks of books received in the recent drives all over the country. Vans are already on their regular trips to military posts of all kinds—small concentrations of men who are tied to coastal defence installations, anti-aircraft batteries, and so on.

THE *Listener* recently sent a representative on one of these trips. At the headquarters of the Country Library Service huge piles of books are being repaired and gradually made available for distribution. Mountains of old issues of weeklies are kept as wrapping and packing material, and most of them, therefore, will be read again. Though it is still using Country Library Service equipment and facilities, the War Library Service will soon have its own home and machinery.

Long shallow boxes of five-ply, strengthened with metal bindings, and filled with an assortment of fiction, travel and general reading, plus a number of "papers"—small books bound in paper but not necessarily periodicals—were loaded into an Army truck and put in the care of two W.A.A.C's, former library assistants.

Requests Are Encouraged

At each stop the cases were unloaded and placed somewhere convenient for the soldiers to gather round and choose their next fortnight's reading. They may take one book and two "papers." A special box contains request books, usually of the "heavier" type, for those whose taste is not in the ordinary line.

One, a Bible, had been asked for by members of a unit on behalf of one of their number who was always in trouble. He appreciated the joke when it was handed to him, but soon had his nose buried in a periodical called "Better Business."

Those men even whose posts provide them with some of the best views in the world, who can gaze out over hills and sea and clouds most of the day, find the need of something else to do in their spare time. At one bleak spot where, if you liked, you could get out of the sea breeze and lie on a sun-warmed grassy slope and watch flocks of sea birds shifting about on the waters below, men crowded round the truck in a bitter wind—some of them without anything on above their trousers, and asked questions about *Beau Geste*, *Cappy Ricks*, *Prisoner of Zenda*. One asked if James Joyce's *Ulysses* had turned up yet. Another claimed his request copy of Gunther's *Inside Europe*.

Wherever the library truck goes, the men are told that War Library Service wants them to make all the use they can of the request service, so that the distributing assistants can help them in their choice and help the service to grow in scope and usefulness.