



URBAN SPRAWL

Sir,—Newspapers have a difficult role to play when they attempt to summarise interviews, but I imagine that on the whole your journal does this more successfully than most. In your issue of March 29, however, you attribute to me some remarks about urban sprawl that are not only a very serious distortion of what I said, but are, in my view, senseless into the bargain. As mine were the only sceptical opinions you report it is important that the impression they convey be corrected.

In this interview I was asked to comment upon the sociological effects of urban sprawl, an ugly, inaccurate and unduly emotive term that is being used here to describe a movement towards the suburbs that has been accelerated in all predominantly urban, industrialised countries during the past 25 years. This phenomenon is the product of two population movements; one the continuous, unrelenting drift of people toward cities (so much the concern of previous generations in this country, but now apparently not newsworthy); the other, proceeding contrariwise, a movement from the centre of cities outward to the suburbs, and in other countries and I suspect in New Zealand, too, much further than that. A sociological assessment of these changes is surely concerned with their effects upon patterns of life, values and personal aspirations. From this viewpoint I do not consider that so-called "urban sprawl" is necessarily a bad thing. Suburban development has, in my judgment, given opportunities for many people to have modes of living, pleasures and values that they might not have otherwise enjoyed. At the same time the suburbs have created new social problems. Some of these might, I think, have been diminished by wiser planning, but some, such as the significance of the separation of places of work and home life, have only come to our notice recently as we have begun to perceive the social implications of life in the suburbs. This is certainly the case in education where, almost unwittingly, we are now evolving some interesting solutions. I expect it is also true in some other sections of our social and cultural life. On balance, and from a strictly sociological perspective, I think the good things of suburban life at the present time outweigh the bad.

This is not to deny that the economic issues are serious. I agree they deserve very earnest consideration, although I would welcome a more critical approach to them than usually prevails. It will be a pity, however, if we allow the emotionalism about urban sprawl that sometimes arises from this viewpoint to divert our attention from the real problem: how to create in cities and suburbs alike the conditions that give all citizens opportunities for rich, meaningful and satisfying lives. So far I do not see that the present plans for blocks of flats in the centres of cities that have been announced here promise more in this respect than single-unit suburban housing. It has been my impression that elsewhere students of this

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question are much more likely to be concerned with this larger issue than the segment of it that is becoming the subject of so much vituperation in this country.

JOHN WATSON
(Wellington).

(We gladly allow Mr Watson to explain his views more fully—or more exactly; but after examining our reporter's notes, and checking them against what was printed, we cannot agree that there was "very serious distortion." Opinions attributed in our articles to Mr Watson are amplified in his letter, or expressed differently. But they are the same opinions.—Ed.)

UN INTERVENTIONS

Sir,—While finding much of truth and interest in J. Malton Murray's letter, I found also that two of the realities which he offers are far too partisan to be acceptable. To the Russians, Western military might is undoubtedly a fear-some obstacle to universal disarmament. We must not forget Russia suffered aggression by Western Powers in 1941, 1915, 1812, 1709 and 1610. The ravages of the most recent invasion will most certainly be a bitter memory, and it is too much to ask that Russia drop her guns first. There is no proof that the Communists are opposed to universal disarmament, but the hostile attitudes of both camps make any agreement difficult. It is still undecided whether or not the combined resources of the Western countries could remove the "obstacle" of Russian military power, without being obliterated themselves in the process. Almost certainly, the result would not be written by human hand.

If the United Nations is to be a world power, it must be given executive powers. All countries must be represented, and they must accept its decrees. If force is to be the final arbiter, then a majority decision in UN must decide when, and against whom, to wield force. If delegates are human in their weaknesses, we must be patient and ensure that our own country is represented by the best men available, men who are not restricted by national or Commonwealth interests. If they fail to support a just intervention against aggressors, friend or enemy, then we should not criticise United Nations justice. We cannot expect the United Nations to be any better than its delegates. But we must support it wholeheartedly, and assist its evolution though certain of our partisan interests are sacrificed. Now, more than ever, it is one world or none.

N. M. ROE (Tauranga).

UNITED NATIONS

Sir,—Your correspondent J.G.G. writes: "Some international body of jurymen should be set up to which all disputes between nations should be submitted in the first instance. . . ." Such a body, while it might represent the core of an effective world security system, could not by itself produce the order or justice that we find within British nations. British juries are able to administer justice principally because they function as part of a government which can create laws and has the means and the recognised right to enforce them.

We have an International Court of Justice, but neither this body nor the

United Nations has the right or power to compel nations to take their disputes to court. It is doubtful if even British juries could be effective if those who violated or threatened to violate the law could not be compelled to go to court. A British court has a body of recognised law upon which to base its decisions, but there is no corresponding body of world law upon which a world court could base its decisions and neither is there a world legislature empowered to create such laws.

J.G.G. suggests that the judgments of an international jury should automatically carry sanctions. This raises the questions of who is to apply the sanctions and how they are to be applied. The United Nations as presently constituted can deal only with nations in their corporate capacity, and therefore sanctions applied by it must be brought to bear upon an entire nation. This is unjust to the point of being indecent and unworkable to the point of being ridiculous. In this atomic age punitive wars against nations even in so noble a cause as world justice must be ruled out. Individual responsibility to British law makes the British jury system practicable. Individual responsibility to world law is an equally essential prerequisite of a practical world jury system.

The British jury system works because we have British Governments. A world jury system might be made to work if we first make the United Nations a world government. With a UN Charter Review Conference on the agenda of the next General Assembly we have an opportunity of doing just this.

G. C. TITMAN (Auckland).

MICROPHONE MISTAKES

Sir,—It was pleasing to note that J.C.R. found it infuriating to hear the announcer call Joyce Grenfell "Joyce Grenfield." I also found it so. But that's only one of the many mistakes announcers make. Couldn't someone ring up the Russian Legation and get the right pronunciation for Tchaikovsky? Or ask Odnosopoff? But what about the announcer I have twice heard say "celloist," or the one who put the stress on the third syllable in "irrevocable"? Incidentally, I heard the Chairman of a Parents' Association make the same mistake last year. What about the Scots (bet I get a bite) cricket commentator who always leaves the "g" out of "length," and the Scots weather forecaster whom it is actually hard to understand? Not that the others are much better when they talk of "districks." Then there are those two constant Americanisms creeping in, "boquet" and "rowmance." Can't some of the teachers in the schools get on to these two abominations?

The other night I rang our local station and asked why the speaker said "fertill" for "fertil," and was told that Daniel Jones put it first. Well, this is never heard in New Zealand, and I can see no sense in using it. Then there was the announcer two or three weeks ago

who, when announcing Band Contest results, nearly bust himself saying "Fwha-naganui," and then in the next breath put the emphasis on the third syllable of "municipal." I notice most primary school children say this, and it's time the teachers noticed it also, unless they all say it themselves.

Finally, I cannot understand why the Broadcasting authorities take perfectly good announcers off the air and make them local managers. Surely the announcer is much more important than the manager, and should be paid higher. He's in direct contact with the public and makes or mars a station.

TOUCHY (Palmerton North).

WRITING FOR RADIO

Sir,—I write to express my appreciation of the witty and perceptive series of talks given lately by Joan Stevens: *The Prevention of Cruelty to Words*. It gave me great pleasure, amusement and profit to listen to them.

I think my favourite was the last one, because it seemed to me that Miss Stevens was right when she said a new form of writing was needed for broadcasting, and also when she said that Dylan Thomas was a supreme master of the new technique. I have never greatly enjoyed reading Thomas from the printed page, but have always been moved when I heard him reading his own poems. We must then, I think, share some of the original emotion that caused him to write the poem in the first place, and if we cannot understand all the words it matters as little to us as, apparently (from what he said in "A Few Words") it did to him. The poetic impact is the same.

However, I do not write to join in the now closed Dylan Thomas discussion, but to thank Miss Stevens for very enjoyable listening.

MARY LOVEL (Hamilton).

A. R. D. FAIRBURN

Sir,—Allow me to pay a brief tribute to the memory of one whose contributions have for so long been an outstanding feature of *The Listener*. Unfortunately, I never met the late A. R. D. Fairburn, but I do know that he was a man of unusual distinction in several fields—his cultural versatility was remarkable, and comparatively few people are aware that his artistic gifts could have placed him in the forefront of contemporary painters, had he chosen to follow that career exclusively. I have seen pictures of his that would grace any gallery in the world.

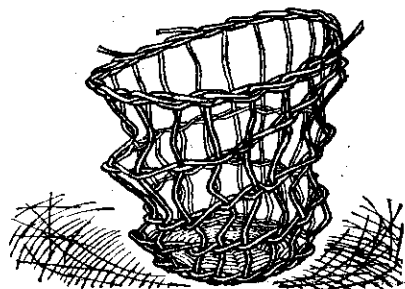
New Zealand has lost one of the finest minds of recent times in the passing of A.R.D.

L. D. AUSTIN (Wellington).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

A.F. (Nelson): Afraid no space for outside contributions in those pages.

Hi Fi (Wellington): The oversight which resulted in the use of an old tape for dubbing and in a consequently faulty presentation is much regretted.



FOR HOME GARDENERS

NEXT week's issue of the "New Zealand Listener" will contain an article of interest to home gardeners. The subject is winter preparations, with special reference to the planting and care of trees and shrubs. The spread of holidays will make it advisable for readers to secure their copies as soon as possible after publication.