

of Kumarahou." This herbal remedy was later to have an important effect on Aunt Daisy's career.

In her broadcasts, Aunt Daisy also campaigned against a plague of fleas which then afflicted the Auckland Province. This, too, brought a curious reaction. A woman visitor raised the question one day, and Aunt Daisy prepared herself to hear yet another cure for fleas.

But the woman had a glitter in her eye like the Ancient Mariner, says Aunt Daisy. "A flea is one of God's creatures," she said. "Now do you think we have any right to kill them?"

"Oh!" Aunt Daisy was horrified. "But you must. Look at all these poor little children bitten all over. And their mothers worried to death about them!"

"Catch them, yes," said the woman, "but not kill them."

Aunt Daisy allowed the point to pass. Then, as now, it was a part of her personal philosophy to try to understand people, to see their viewpoint, and never, never to feel superior.

"When I see a flea," continued the woman, "do you know what I do?"

Aunt Daisy indicated limply that she couldn't guess.

"I pick it up between my finger and thumb," said the woman, "and I take it to the window. I drop it out and I say, 'God go with you.'"

"It goes to show," says Aunt Daisy, "how careful you have to be of people's feelings in broadcasting."

DAISY'S build—she is under five feet in height—made her the occasional butt for studio humour. Uncle Scrim would tell inquirers, "Yes, Aunt Daisy's about somewhere. You'll see her come in, a tall, rather massive woman, with a big bust." She took it all in good part, but one day when Scrim announced—"with an extremely wicked smile"—that a man in his office wanted to see her, she knew something was in the air.

"This man said there was an election soon," says Aunt Daisy. "Would I consider standing for election to Parliament? You know he never even asked me if I had any politics! He wanted me to stand for the Government party. I think it was. I said I'd have to think about it—ask my husband, and so on.

"The same day Scrim with another wicked grin told me another man wanted to see me. It was the other side! They had got wind that the National Coalition people were after me. They asked me to stand for Labour!"

Prodded by the horns of a sizeable dilemma, Daisy took her problem to Uncle Scrim.

"Go on, Aunt Daisy," he counselled. "It's worth £300 a year. Give it a go."

"That's all very well," she said, "but which side?"

"It doesn't matter which side," said Scrim. "But you want to be careful. They'll rake up anything you've ever done. Have you got a lurid past?"

At home, Daisy's husband also whooped with delight. "That'll be fine," he said. "I shall imagine you at Bellamy's, standing with your foot on the rail, having a quick one with Gordon Coates."

In the end it was a third party, so to speak, who made the decision. "I was then writing a page of recipes for the *Weekly News*," she says. "They paid about two pounds a week, which was a fortune. I got only one pound from the Friendly Road, plus, I think, four and sixpence for each sponsored announcement. I didn't want to lose the *Weekly News* column, and Dad said they might not want to be associated through me

with Scrim and his side in politics." Daisy decided to ask.

Henry (later Sir Henry) Horton, Aunt Daisy remembers as a blunt, opinionated man of strong and dominating personality. He greeted her brusquely.

"I understand," he said, "that you are looking for a Parliamentary honour."

The remark made Daisy so angry she lost her nervousness. "Not at all, Mr Horton!" she retorted. "I have no wish to go into Parliament, but I've been asked by both parties. What I want to know is whether it will make any difference to my position with the *Weekly News*?"

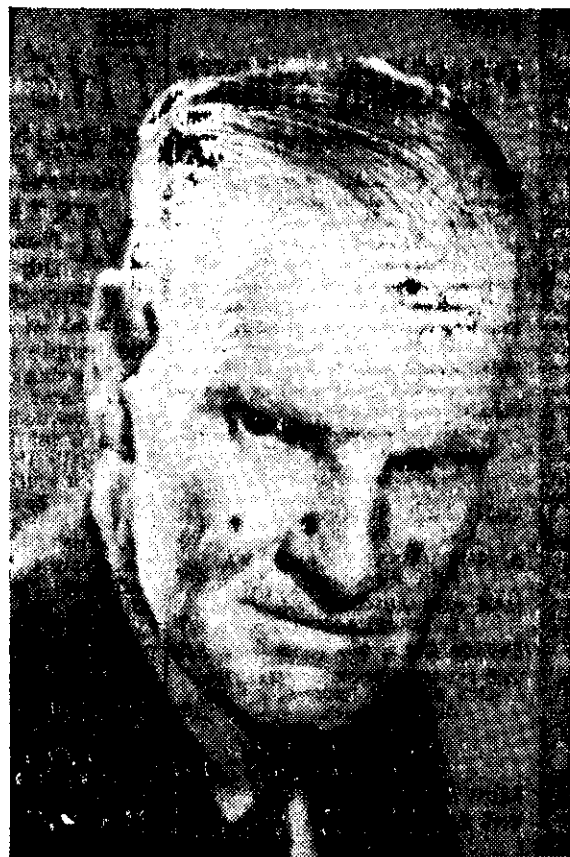
"If you stand for Labour," Horton told her, "it certainly will. I wouldn't have the paper associated with you."

"Thank you, Mr Horton," said Aunt Daisy. "That's all I wanted to know. I value being on the *Weekly News* more than anything. It's more important to me than Parliament."

So ended the political career of Aunt Daisy. Was she ever attracted by the idea? "Not at all!" she says. "I wouldn't be in Parliament for worlds! Scrim might say it was worth £300 a year, but what is there in Parliament? You can't do any good."

It was better, Daisy decided, to travel and improve one's mind. She chose a country where the clash of political ideas seemed less frenzied—where the parties had been likened to two bottles, one labelled Champagne and the other Burgundy, and both empty. She bought a second-class ticket to the United States.

(To be continued)



SIR HENRY HORTON:
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man of strong and
dominating personal-
ity"

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