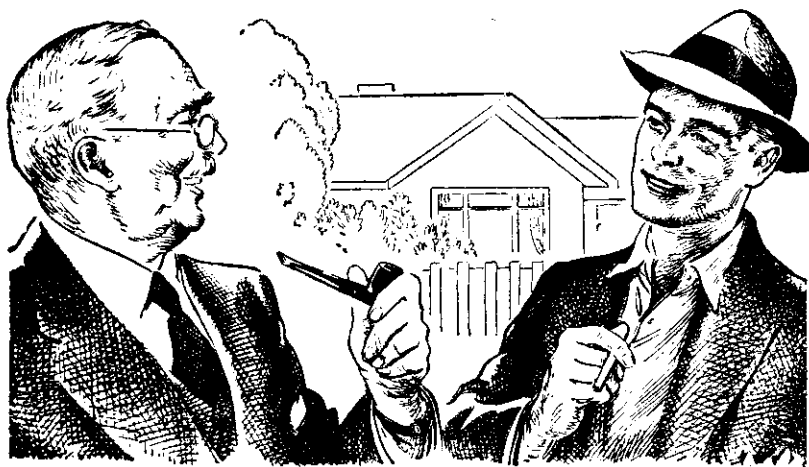


"More dividends for shareholders — more bargains for my wife"

— said Uncle Chris.



"It's this way..." I said to Jock (who likes to think himself a little pink, politically).

"Say a firm starts out to manufacture a better type of kitchen chair. The individual shareholders of the firm, having sunk a lot of money in buildings and plant, sit back a little apprehensively and watch how things go. They're apprehensive because if the firm folds, their savings go. And usually they're 'small men' like us with no great resources.

"Well, their kitchen chairs come on to the market at a competitive price. In a couple of years production is stepped up to meet an increasing demand.

"So the firm declares a dividend to shareholders (they deserve it, they took the risk); the firm boosts the wages of its workers: is able to lower the price of the chairs to make them even more desirable to the public.

"My wife buys the chairs. Yours too, Jock" I said, "And many of the neighbours.

"All this can only happen under Free Enterprise", I reminded Jock. "It's the healthy profit motive Free Enterprise promotes that makes for progress and better conditions all round.

"It's Free Enterprise, Jock", I said, "that brings benefit alike to shareholders, to workers, to my wife—and yours!"

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Giving Us Our Daily Press

TALKS to be given in a series announced on page 7, *The Press in New Zealand*, will be mainly historical and descriptive, though towards the end there will be some speculation about the future. Listeners will see more clearly, as they follow the talks, the extent to which newspapers grow out of a free community and reflect its needs and outlook. Even when monopolies are gained, and dailies are safe from competition, their security cannot be taken for granted. The leading newspapers are old: several of them are nearing their centenaries, and in their long experience they have acquired standards and traditions. It is, however, misleading to think of a newspaper as if it were an institution. The life of a paper is very much in the present, and its true functions and influence are in the hands of the men who work for it.

Newspapers are frequently criticised, and it is right that they should be, for they need the checks and pressures of public opinion if they are to avoid the dangers inherent in any sort of monopoly. But the criticism would often be better if more were known of the ways in which news is collected, distributed and published. The process is a co-operative effort which has to be made under heavy pressure. Six days a week the deadline is fixed inexorably. And a news item must pass through many hands before it is printed. Reporters obtain information, write their stories and pass them on to sub-editors, who prepare them for the space available, write headings, and arrange the layout. Meanwhile cable and district messages are being received through the Press Association. Copy is being set up in type, galley proofs are read, and pages are made up and sent away to be stereotyped, while in the basement the rotary press is ready for the plates which later will leave their

imprint on the flying spools of newsprint. All these interlocking functions are drawn into a system which works smoothly because long and specialised experience is behind it. But the system is tied to the clock, and it feels strain when important news comes late. Time and human fallibility are the constant enemies.

Allowance is seldom made for the speed with which a newspaper has to be produced. A heading which seems to give the wrong slant to a news item can be studied at leisure by the reader, but it may have been written in a few moments, with no time for second thoughts. The selection of news may seem easy enough when the results are on a printed page, and often the emphasis appears to have been dictated by bias or superficial values. It is less simple when the pages are in flux, when judgment has to be spread widely and used quickly. The conditions under which journalists work can explain much that offends readers; but they do not excuse all failures and weaknesses, and they leave untouched the obligation to deal scrupulously with fact and opinion. New Zealand dailies are said to have integrity above that of the Press in most other parts of the world; and this is true. It is true partly because the papers serve a nation which lives quietly and prosperously at a safe distance from the zones of tension. The Press is formed by its environment. Journalists share the values and standards of their neighbours. They know that they could do better if their papers had more space, larger staffs and greater technical resources. But they take pride in their work, and in few other occupations can men nerve themselves to greater efforts when the demands upon them are sudden and urgent. These men are the Press—a fact worth remembering when we are tempted to see it as a machine or a monster.

N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 28, 1952.