



**"Floating
this enterprise
was fun..."**

said Uncle Chris

"When I was a young man my home-made boat was the only craft on the beach and boys came knocking on our door—asking to borrow her. At first I let them have it for nothing, but as the demand grew I charged a nominal sum to cover up-keep... and to help meet the cost of a better boat some day.

"Well—the boat-lending business thrived and before long I had a fleet of six sturdy dinghies, all earning good pocket money, and at the same time giving hundreds of people the pleasure of fishing, rowing and deep-water swimming.

"No, I didn't become a shipping magnate! But this little venture of mine taught me to recognize opportunity whenever it knocks. Under our system of private enterprise, services as simple as the hiring of boats can grow into major community assets with profit to the investor and benefit to the people.

"Free enterprise provides you with incentive."

Inserted in the interests of all sections of the community by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of New Zealand.

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Television and Journalism

THE opinions of a writer and journalist, Ivor Brown, on the functions of newspapers in competition with television, were given recently in *The BBC Quarterly*. After the success of television at the Coronation he came to believe that Fleet Street must be "anxious and perplexed" about the future of public reporting. Newspaper stories of great events are said to have little value for people who have been spectators. "Journalism," wrote Mr. Brown, "will have to adjust itself to new conditions, and probably the best way to do that will be to rely more and more on the journalist who gives, in a fresh and original way, what might be called a 'fringe' story, singling out the oddities which the television cameras have missed."

This, surely, would be to relegate journalism to an auxiliary and declining function. It might be true that interest is quickly lost in an occasion which, like the Coronation, comes after long preparation and expectancy and which, when it comes, takes sense and feeling to the point of exhaustion. But news is not merely the description of spectacles and ceremonies: it is most alive and urgent when it deals with what is sudden and unexpected. In that field, the newspaper's true competitor is radio. News of world and national interest can reach the public more quickly through broadcasts than through the printed word. Yet it has been found that newspapers, although beaten in the race, are by no means weakened: on the contrary, the years of radio have brought rising circulations. This may be partly because much of the information in newspapers, although deeply interesting to readers, is outside the scope of broadcasting. Local politics, district affairs of all kinds, court proceedings and sport are among the topics left to newspapers, or treated by them more fully; and

they are the substance of daily thought and conversation.

Every journalist knows that his readers are more interested in what the City Council has to say about an increase in rates or a civic argument than in what is said in the Security Council about a European dispute. Further, people who witness an event do not seem to lose their appetite for news and comment. The most avid reader of a report on a provincial Rugby match is the man who saw it: he wants to test his impressions against those of a trained observer, or he wants merely to renew the experience. Finally, a newspaper has the supreme advantage of accessibility. It is there when we want to read it. If a broadcast is missed, or is heard indistinctly, we must wait for another session: the news is taken when the radio gives it, or not at all. But a reader can settle down to study the printed word at his leisure. He can go back to the paragraphs which interest him most, stay with them as long as he likes, and get more accurate impressions.

Admittedly, the satisfactions gained in this way are possible because we have cultivated the reading habit: A generation which grows up with television may behave differently. Yet the evidence so far available seems to indicate that television has stimulated a wider demand for books, and there is no reason to suppose that newspapers which keep up with the times will die of neglect. Visual experience is incomplete. Man needs his five senses to keep himself alive and safe in his own environment; but he has learnt to think about the messages received along the nerves, and the processes of thought are inseparable from the use of words. The instruments which extend and amplify his faculties can enrich experience, but behind them he is still a thinking animal. His civilisation is supported by a web of words, and he must have them or perish.

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