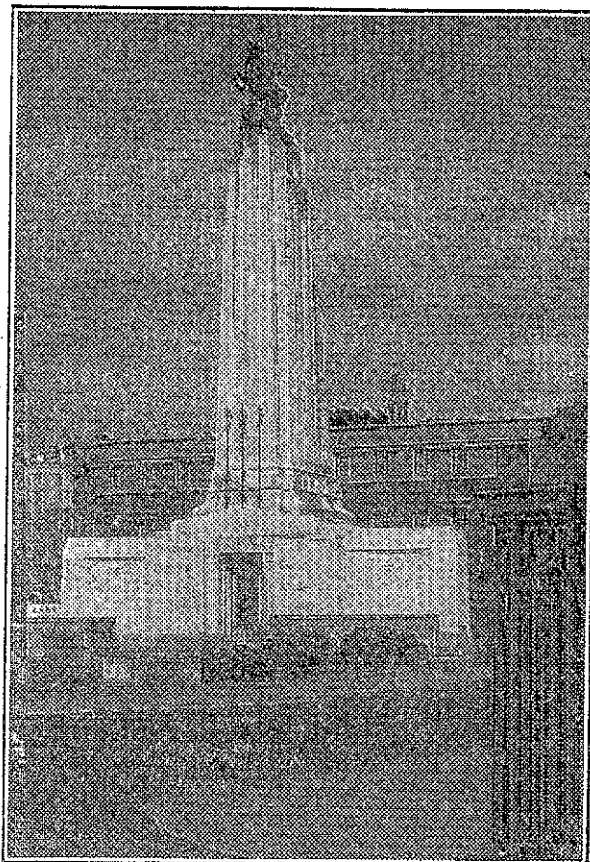


I DID NOT GO ON ANZAC DAY

AT dawn there came over the radio a remarkable stage effect. It was the sound of the marching feet of 60,000 Anzacs in Sydney. The sound came steadily closer, with no words spoken. The tramp grew more distinct till you could hear the ring of heel-plates on the bitumen. It lasted what seemed a long time. But to what destiny are men's feet marching to-day?

By
Will Grave



"... Their ideals seemed irreconcilable to-day."

ALL over New Zealand last week men and women, in cities and in small settlements, met together at memorials in stone. They gathered to pay homage to men who gave their lives, so we are told, for the cause of peace.

And while they were bowing their heads in the silence of remembrance for the men who died in the cause of peace, guns were thundering in China and bombs falling on cities in Spain.

Armament factories in Britain were working all night to meet the rush of orders which will take two more years to fulfil.

Naval experts in the United States of America were poring over plans for battleships of a displacement never built by man before.

So this year I did not go to any ceremony on Anzac Day.

There Was Hope

ONCE I went every year to the ceremony. It seemed then that everyone could rightly take a share in it.

The day was often a still autumn morning, with a thin, but still-warm sun filtering down its rays over the immense crowd of silent people who seemed to one to stand quiet with hope in their hearts and a mute prayer on their lips.

GOD knows it was still a troubled world in those days. In many ways it was as unsettled as it is to-day. But there was still hope in it.

At the back of all the hate and the fear and the muddling there was still some sort of lip-service to the ideals of disarmament and the League of Nations. Though nations mocked the ideal of peace with their deeds, they paid it the tribute of apologies.

One could still manage to believe that the men who died at Anzac had fought to make the world "safe for democracy." The autumn sun still had a touch of warmth in it.

But this year there was no sun. There was no light and no warmth. There were just steel grey skies the colour of battleships and soldiers' helmets.

I THINK it is time we gave up Anzac Day. Not for the returned men themselves. They find some rich meaning in it that we others can never know. They have a peculiar and intimate bond with the dead and they have still strong ties with their living comrades. But their ceremonies should be their own.

There is a woman in a certain street in Wellington who has had workmen in her house lately. They have been busy with bricks and mortar building her a bomb-proof shelter.

It seems it would be better for us if we spent our Anzac Days in building bomb-proof shelters.

No Irony

THIS is not written in bitterness nor with any sense of irony. But there is a vain hope among many English people, and especially among New Zealanders, that the slaughter in the last war has made the world a better place to live in.

That is both foolish and visionary. Peace is portrayed with wings, and now she has taken to them.

IN Britain the ideals of disarmament and a strong practical League of Nations have been discarded. Over there, they are next door to the march of events. Now, having failed to draw the teeth of the mad dogs of Europe, they are taking care to arm themselves against them.

The idealism of Mr. Anthony Eden, which did not work, has been replaced with the realism of Mr. Neville Chamberlain, which does work.

It is a lamentable commentary on life that Mr. Eden got the wrong things with what seem the right methods and Mr. Chamberlain is getting the right things with what seem the wrong methods.

No logic can dispute this. It is not right that danger of war should have retreated before the threat of British rearmament. But it has retreated.

To me it seems illogical to try to reconcile the ideals for which the Anzacs died with the practical facts of things as they are to-day.

So I did not go to Anzac Day.