

# TELEVISION FOR CENTENNIAL

(Continued from Front Page.)

And there, at least officially, the matter seems to rest. But it is apparent that circumstances may upset arrangements. It is obvious that the apparatus must be imported—presumably from England (though the United States, of course, should not be ruled out).

**IMPORTS REQUIRE CREDITS**  
... BUT CREDITS ARE NOT BEING LAVISHLY DEALT OUT—PRESUMABLY EVEN FOR A CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION. ELECTRICAL APPARATUS, TOO, HAS COME UNDER THE SWEEP OF THE IMPORT CONTROL ADMINISTRATION. WILL THE EQUIPMENT NEEDED—“ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST MODERN TELEVISION UNITS”—COME UNDER THE BAN?

Apparatus of the kind is expensive, and it may be on these grounds that the plan will meet with a premature death, for equipment not utilised after the exhibition might mean a loss for the importer.

Yet need it, when there is no dearth of radio-minded engineers and youths to whom a first-hand knowledge of television would be invaluable, not only for themselves, but for the future of the Dominion?

## Overseas

**THE** question arises, how much progress has television really made? In England it has become a recognised part of the activities of the BBC, and reports indicate that viewers far beyond the official service area have obtained satisfactory results.

A BBC picture has been picked up across the Atlantic, and it is no longer uncommon to receive in America the accompanying sound signals. This year the Derby was again televised with complete success; several plays have been presented, and a number of theatres regularly receive television programmes throughout the British Isles.

When Mr. Chamberlain returned from Munich, televisioners saw him hold aloft the famous new “scrap of paper” which the Fuehrer had signed.

By the end of last year both studios at Alexandra Palace were, with outside broadcasts of football, and other sports, providing a schedule of 16 or 17 hours a week.

It is confidently asserted that “the mystery has been solved,” the period of apprenticeship on the production side passed, and that England is in the forefront of television development.

America has taken the hint, and to-day, especially in the New York area, there is no dearth of experimental transmitters, though the Federal Communications Commission has so far declined to issue a commercial licence. In effect, the providing of a definite service along the lines of the BBC has not been attempted, though the companies operating the stations maintain fairly definite schedules.

Advertisements in radio journals invite the reader to “build your own television sight and sound receiver,” the kit costing 80 dollars without tubes or cabinet, or 190 dollars complete. A popular receiver sells for \$30 at Home.

Dr. Baker, of General Electric, Schenectady, U.S., recently paid a tribute to British progress, which had clearly indicated the path, as interesting programmes had been created at reasonable cost.

No other actual or potential industry on the business horizon to-day, he said, equalled television for tremendous profit opportunities. In the next five years hundreds of receivers would be built.

# This World of Ours

by  
**JOHN GUTHRIE**

**IT** is the odd, unexpected happenings that make London seem not quite real. Of course, it never is quite real to a New Zealander on the first visit. When he walks along the Strand he constantly has the sensation of being a person moving in a dream. He sees a notice leading to the old Roman bath, the Lyric where Irving acted, Simpson's restaurant where so many good eaters and drinkers have added nobly to their girths, and he is enraptured with the red and yellow buses that go thundering by.

He walks on to Trafalgar Square and sees Nelson on his tower and down below Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament and the Thames where Elizabeth sailed on the Royal Barge when St. Martin's in the Field was actually surrounded by lambs and buttercups instead of mighty stone buildings, and Golder's Green was actually green and, for all one knows, there might have been an elephant and a castle at the tube stop called Elephant and Castle near Waterloo station.

**IN** time, this sensation wears off. He no longer has to pinch himself when he walks down the Strand. He is more concerned with cursing a red and yellow bus because he has missed it than being enraptured by its novelty. He is more likely to pay attention to a man on a soapbox in Trafalgar Square than Nelson on his column. And if he looks at Big Ben, it is to see if his watch is right.

**IT** is like matrimony, like the girl in the sweetshop after she has made herself ill on chocolates in the first week, alas, a little like life itself. The novelty wears off a little.

**BUT** still the odd things happen, London yet has its surprises. One of them came to me casually last week. It came along the pavement by the National Portrait Gallery and it wore a grey suit, a grey hat, a beautiful green tie and a long beard that waved in the breeze. It didn't look real at first. It was George Bernard Shaw.

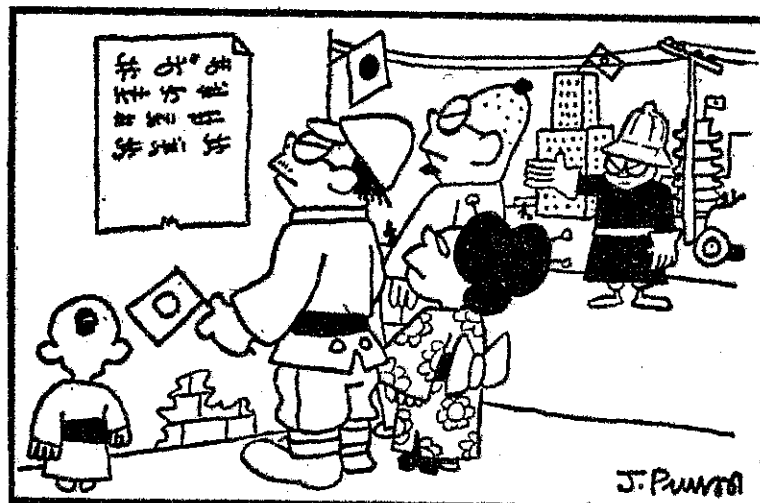
**NOBODY** was asking him for his autograph, he was quite alone. He was not preceded by a bodyguard, brass band or citizens' welcoming committee, or being dogged by an admiring crowd. He was just a nice old gentleman with that excessively clean skin that nice old gentleman often have, who was going for a walk. He might have been you or I, out for the afternoon. Nobody was asking him for an interview, he was not saying that he couldn't for the life of him understand why New

Zealand people should call England Home when they already had a perfectly good home of their own, he was not (so far as one could see) being witty, striking, wicked, rebellious, dramatic, iconoclastic, or Shavian. He was being a simple citizen of London.

**IN** a moment I felt rising inside me with almost overwhelming force the awful instincts of the journalist. I



wanted to stop him and ask him his views on the I.R.A., pasteurised milk, and modern plays. It was only with an effort that I crushed them down. London wouldn't let me.



**THE TOKIO COMMUNIQUE**  
Our troops have brought down 350 Russian planes and 255 British trousers.

London says that so long as they go their ways within the laws, no men must be molested. London says that men may go through the Park in shorts with a cat on a leash, and that women may wear plus fours in Piccadilly, and that youths may go about in beards that birds could nest in—yet, you must not stare at them or question their unusual ways or stop and ask them what is their trouble. London, in spite of its 8,000,000 people, is the most private, the most anonymous city in the world. So Mr. Shaw went by undisturbed, not aware of his escape, with no tribute beyond the quickened heartbeat of a New Zealand wayfarer and the gesture of a plain, middle-aged woman a short distance ahead of me who suddenly broke off her criticism of the Edith Cavell statue nearby to register amazement, stop short, and blow a kiss to the back of the head of the Twentieth Century sage after he had passed her by.

**ONE** can forgive London much. One can forgive, for instance, a great deal of flag-waving and letters to “The Times” signed Brig-General (retired), to a city which permits to be carved on the Edith Cavell monument the words that she wrote before she was shot in the last war: “Patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness to anyone.”

**NOR** is it difficult to forgive a great deal of ugliness to a city which can produce Shakespeare's “Midsummer Night's Dream” in the open-air theatre of Regent's Park, where the green turf is the stage and the quiet English trees make the backdrop scene, and you feel the magic of Shakespeare is matched only by the greater magic of

Nature. You hold your breath as the troupes of fairy creatures dance in pretty draperies under the open sky. The audience watch from the comfort of canvas chairs. Everybody is spell-bound. There is not a sound to be heard except the voices of the actors on this mild calm night. There is one scene which represents the coming of the dawn, the finest stage scene I have ever seen. Everything is in utter darkness.

Then, slowly, a pale hint of light appears and as one sits in utter silence the light grows stronger, very gradually beginning to touch the outlines of the trees and give them shape and meaning. There is no haste in the coming of this artificial dawn. “The light steals in so imperceptibly that one can only tell its coming by the greater clarity of the objects on which it falls. Ages seem to pass, for no sound is spoken, and all one can hear is the twitter of waking birds. At last, the whole scene is lighted with the lovely soft light of the early morning. You feel you have been taking a hand in the Book of Genesis.

**UNTIL**, inevitably, a bombing plane flies low just overhead, drowns the voices of the actors and sends illusion flying, while above the drumming of the engine come the words of Puck, queerly appropriate: “What fools these mortals be!” The audience gave a short, satiric laugh.

**THE** queer moment passed, the play went on. As Peaseblossom, Oberon, quaint Bottom and the rest played out the pretty comedy in the fairyland of lights, one could almost forget that down in White-chapel there were seven children and their parents sharing two rooms, that in a great town house a Duchess was spending £2000 that evening in champagne to launch one daughter, that in thousands of rooms in the city, lonely people were eating their hearts out in misery, that only one Briton in five uses the toothbrush.

**ONE** forgot, or remembered only with a smile, that down in the country a prosperous gentleman of one's acquaintance had proudly exhibited the air raid shelter trench he had built. It was in two sections, each with a separate entrance. One entrance was for the family. The other, so to speak, was the “tradesmen's” entrance. It was for the maids.