

We concluded that the only reputable American ones came from the studios of Mr. W. Disney.

The Customs Department told us that for 1944, £677,536 (N.Z.) had been spent in importations under the common classification of "books, papers, magazines, and music, printed"; £450,520 was spent in the United Kingdom, £122,746 in Australia, and £102,079 in the U.S.A. But they had no idea (or record) of the quantity and cost of comics imported amongst that reading-matter last year.

Anyhow, we knew, out of the forty booksellers and stationers in Wellington, most of them were selling a minimum of 100 alien (or alien in thought and atmosphere) comics each week. One chap was selling 500 a week: "I could get rid of 400 on Friday alone if the stocks weren't limited. And for every 500 rough-stuff, cheap-jack comics, I get one, two, or three decent English comics. There's a racket in it somewhere."

Nobody seemed to know how many "yellow" comics were entering New Zealand. A lot of people didn't seem to care. Some were becoming perturbed, others thought something was wrong somewhere. Booksellers said they didn't like selling them, but—Should children read, repeatedly, all about gangsters, gun-play, murder, and violence?

Next we questioned a regular subscriber.

He told us that people who called themselves grown-up made him tired. He and his schoolmates only read their comics for seven years. Grown-ups had forty-nine years of being grown-up—seven times longer than children—to read what they liked.

The child glanced round the playground where we were standing, selected a stone, threw it at a passing cat, missed it, then said that he understood there was a time when children read Grimm and Andersen and Beatrix Potter and liked and believed in the stories they told. Grown-ups, he said, with their newspapers, picture-papers, radios, and wars every twenty years, had knocked the bottom out of romance. "Then you turn round and growl at us and our comics. And you grown-ups, you read frightful murder books, too, about detectives and crooks, and magazines like *True Romance* and *True Detective* and *Wild West*, and most of the films you see are just plain awful." He then asked if we had seen a recent advertisement for a horror film: "If you like your mental beef-steak underdone, here it is . . . Gory, Ripe, and Red! In 'They Met in the Dark,' weird horrors and unspeakable terrors! A chilling thrill in every scene!" "Arr!" said the child, "you make me tired." He reached for another stone.

# GOING THE PRINTING WAY

A KORERO Report

AT THREE o'clock in the afternoon of June 20, five men looked with pride upon a rectangle of paper measuring 4 in. by 6 in. Coloured in red and blue inks, it read:—

From—

THE DISABLED SERVICEMEN'S  
TRAINING CENTRE

M.....

.....

.....

Lloyd Street - Wellington E.1.  
Telephones . . 51-506, 51-318.

Just ten words, ten figures, and three letters, yet they meant a great deal to those five men. Here was an achievement: the first step taken in a new career.

That blue and red parcel-sticker was the first piece of work produced by the Printing Department of Wellington's Training Centre, where war-disabled New Zealand sailors, soldiers, and airmen learn new trades before returning to civilian life.

Here's how the Printing Department began.