

A NATIONAL PROBLEM.

Issue No. 1063..6..5..1941.
Title: If I Were King.
Track: The Light That Failed.
Discs:
Lines: Stagg.
Voice: Do.

Winston Churchill's genial presence reassured the sorely tried inhabitants of Plymouth. Upon this comparatively small town the Nazis struck with their new reiterated fury. Britain's fighting Premier radiated a confidence, that our own increasing might will shatter the enemy of free mankind.

The Guildhall is a ruined shell. In nine nights, five raids on the scale of Coventry - three in succession - tested the spirit of Plymouth as perhaps no town was ever tested before. Censorship policy which we consider misguided - and to which we shall return in a minute - will not allow us to use pictures showing all the damage, but it is admitted that the deathroll was heavy. There is hardly a family which does not know someone who has been killed.

Food Ministry flying columns rushed canteens to the town. Two hundred thousand people live in Plymouth - a relatively small area where almost everyone was in the bull's-eye of the target. Food, soup, tea, brought help to badly frayed nerves.

Communal feeding centres, now called British restaurants, rose to their new responsibility, and at nine-pence a head put dinners before homeless thousands. They faced conditions approaching earthquake dimensions, which few authorities had foreseen, for which there was no large-scale provision. That is another point to which we shall refer again.

A church outside the town opened its crypt as a dormitory for victims of the blitz. They slept with thin mattresses between themselves and the floor - but it WAS sleep, away from the hell-on-earth they had just escaped. In sleep you can forget you have lost all. You can speak again to those who are not really here.

There were some very old women, some over eighty, ~~one past~~ ninety. At their age, on the fringe of the next world, death had sported with them and mockingly passed on. They are very old women who have trespassed into the great age of aviation and progress.

They carried these old women to a bus, waiting to take them to

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take them to a nerve hospital, where they can recuperate and start again.

Not only the very old - those not on duty queued up to get well out of the town before darkness came. Night was a threat to Plymouth - a threat that had been carried out. Paramount went to this town seeking the truth behind the thick censor's veil. We found that in the absence of arrangements to cope with blitz-conditions not foreseen, bombed people were getting out of the town, up on the moors, taking a chance of any shelter, getting anywhere away from the hell that was almost bound to return that night.

One family commandeered a holiday caravan... The lesson of it all is this: that the blitz is not a problem for bewildered town-councillors. It is a National problem and must be shouldered by the Government. Regional planning is inadequate...The not-so-heavenly twins objected to being photographed.

A BBC sound-van recorded Lady Astor, who is Lady Mayoress and a Plymouth M.P.

To Winston Churchill we say: all round you is evidence that British moral is first rate. Let us show the pictures of what Plymouth suffered. Paramount pictures of London and Coventry told Americans the facts which helped to swing them round to pro-British opinion.

Francis Drake finished his game of bowls, as the Armada swept up Channel. That won't do now against an armada flying at 300 miles an hour, there must be total effort. Tell English-speaking countries the facts, and you will shorten the war.