

tell us that the whole structure of Soviet foreign policy is based upon false foundations.

When it comes to the present terrible danger, I sympathise very much indeed with responsible ministers of the Crown, and with other public men as individuals. They dare not speak their thoughts, just in case they increase the tension. They must always keep that door ajar as long as hope remains; whereas private persons are left articulate and free to warn, counsel and exhort, sometimes wisely, often foolishly but always with less knowledge of the true facts so readily available to public servants at the highest level. It is I suppose as a result of these restrictive circumstances that ministerial indiscretions do at times occur. This leads me to think of our Minister of Health, Mr Aneurin Bevan, whose recent remarks to the Press about British rearmament have caused such a stir in Washington and London.

I remember meeting that fellow once, years ago, in a tavern in Chelsea at a time when he was in bad odour with his own party because of some flagrant act of indiscipline.

Just for the fun of the thing, I asked him a leading question.

"Where were you, Mr Bevan," I said, "on September 3rd, 1939?"

"In my usual seat in the House," he replied, "listening to the death knell of all vested interests"

So that was how he regarded our declaration of war on Germany. Well, well, wonders never cease, I thought. But still I'm not surprised he's been put into a corner like a naughty school boy by his own class mates.

Now that that same Bevan has reached ministerial rank, it is only natural that he commits an indiscretion or two from time to time.

Brilliant as a conversationalist, and in debate, only one voice was to be heard inside that tavern, and that voice was his own.

When he wanted to make his listeners laugh, he made them laugh. When he wanted to bring them near to tears, he did so, with the sheer magnetism of his personality, and from the imagery he drew from the labyrinthal depth of his Celtic imagination. I put him next to Churchill as an orator, although even to-day a great many people consider him the most dangerous man in the House of Commons.

I do hope you will forgive me for having written at such length, but it is only on the rarest occasions that I come into contact with anybody possessing even a detached interest in the subjects I have raised, which, I suppose, is because I am far too shy and sensitive a person to enter public life. How I envy the insensitive and bovine people of this world--the sort of people who are both unwilling and blessedly incapable of giving tomorrow a thought in these menacing times.

I must ask you to excuse the many typographical errors in these pages, but poets have very little use for stenographers, and I'm a notoriously bad typist!

I am taking the liberty of forwarding you three poems, one on the late Field-Marshal Earl Wavell which was published last May by THE SUNDAY TIMES, I enclose in this letter; the other two I shall send