

A Word

A Number Of

THERE'S a meaningless expression that the papers like to use.

We hear it on the wireless when we tune in for the news.

It's always on the telly when the pundits air their views.

A number of.

How big's this nameless number? Why won't they be precise?

If they thought before they used it, we'd know more in a trice.

How many times have we been told it's cheap at half the price?

A number of.

How many bumps on icy roads? How many people died?

How many permutations have the problem-solvers tried?

How many times has television caused me to deride?

A number of.

But is it three or thirty-three? Five thousand-and-eleven?

Or is it fairly little, like two or six or seven?

How many times have preachers pointed out the way to heaven?

A number of.

A foolish phrase needs sharpening, to *several* or *a few*.

It rarely means ten thousand, though it's vague enough – that's true.

How many times have I been caught, about to throw a shoe?

A number of.
