

JANUARY 14, 1944

Another Freedom

AT the end of the last war an attempt was made to have a clause inserted in the Peace Treaty guaranteeing freedom of the press in the countries of all the signatories. The attempt failed, though it was supported by Colonel House. Now the question has been raised again. Although the war is not yet over, and although, if fighting ceased to-morrow, peace might not be signed for two or three years, those who asked for the free press clause in 1919 are getting ready to ask for it again in 1945 or 1946 or 1947 or whenever the Peace Conference is finally called. The request is simply that news shall be free to circulate, and that this freedom shall be guaranteed by all the signatories. It is not so much free trade in news that is asked for as the free exchange of news—by whatever method exchange is effected. If the question were simply the value of news as a commodity, and who shall benefit from it commercially, it would be as sensible to ask the Peace Conference to guarantee the price of eggs. But the request is that news should be free in order that peace should be preserved, since one of the chief causes of war is the suppression or perversion of information. The newspapers of the world do not claim that they are the temples of truth. They claim that they hold open doors and windows through which truth passes. And they ask, not merely that they should be allowed to go on doing this, but that they should be compelled to do so, so far as that is internationally practicable; that there should be free access by correspondents to all the news of all countries, and facilities for circulating it; in short, that accredited newsmen should be given in peace something like the status of accredited Red Cross men in war. If it were possible to report freely on disputes as they develop, to report on them with something like the authority and impartiality of a neutral visitor to a prisoner-of-war camp, it can hardly be doubted that many crises which now lead to war would pass harmlessly.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

ACCOMPANISTS TOO.

Sir,—I think that there is a lack of courtesy shown to accompanists. When Peter Dawson was giving his recitals at our main centres, he insisted on his audiences recognising Henri Penn, and repeatedly said what a lot depended on a singer's accompanist. Good for Peter! After all, I expect very few singers play their own accompaniments. Why acknowledge only the famous? Little things like this would raise the tone of our broadcasting service.

SIDNEY BARRETT (Bay of Islands).

A FORGOTTEN BOOK.

Sir,—I would like to give expression to the enjoyment derived by me from O. L. Simmance's readings over 3YA. I enjoy the selection, and I enjoy his interpretation of the various characters. May I suggest that he be given the opportunity of reading *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures*, probably known to very few of the present generation, but appreciated by many 40 years and longer ago who were fortunate enough to possess a copy.

R. F. E. FILDES (Kelburn).

MORNING PROGRAMMES.

Sir,—After what we have had in the mornings from so many stations, it is a great pleasure to me to tune in to 3YA for the morning programme from 9 o'clock onwards, and there must be many other people who feel the same. Although

(Copy)

THE WHITE HOUSE Washington

November 3, 1943.

My Dear Mr. Brown,

Mrs. Roosevelt has asked me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter and the copy of "New Zealand Listener." She was interested to see it, and appreciates your thoughtfulness in giving her the opportunity.

Mrs. Roosevelt is so glad you feel her trip to the South-west Pacific was helpful.

Very sincerely yours,

Malvina C. Thompson

(Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt).

Mr. Howard C. Brown,
6404 Sunset Boulevard,
Hollywood (28), California.

Note.—The above - mentioned *Listener* was the issue of September 13, which contained a cover picture of Mrs. Roosevelt. Incidentally, this picture was one of the best ever made of Mrs. Roosevelt.—H.C.B.

(Representative in Hollywood of the Commercial branch of the NBS).

"Greetings from the New Zealand Forces in the Pacific Islands"

LISTENERS are asked to note that Greetings from the New Zealand Forces in the Pacific Islands will be presented as usual from the main National Stations on Sunday, January 16, at 8.0 a.m., but as from Sunday, January 23, "With the Boys Overseas" session at 9.0 a.m. will include Greetings both from the Middle East and from the Pacific Islands.

I have by no means a dislike of American programmes, might I suggest that the number of these productions be reduced now that the need for them is so much less than it was. One does get tired of the uniform style and production of these programmes.

MUSICAL EAR (Christchurch).

TENNESSEE JOHNSON.

Sir,—Your Film Reviewer classes "Tennessee Johnson" among The Ten Best Pictures of the year, for Van Heflin and for being the best sort of historical drama. As an American, I cannot refrain from adding my voice to the storm of public protest which this movie provoked from nearly every progressive organisation in the United States. They protested because of the blatant falsification of history which glorified a President who betrayed the aims of the Civil War, insulted Lincoln and Stevens, slandered the Negro people, and comforted the defeated in any war we win. A United Front of all progressive opinion proclaimed it outrageous and nauseating.

RUTH ELIZABETH SHIRE
(Auckland).

BASIC ENGLISH.

Sir,—It gave me great pleasure to see your account of "Basic English." The interest taken in this form of new language is full of hope for the cause of trade if not of peace. But I have this to say about the discussions of "Basic" in your and other papers: they would have more authority and interest if given in that language only. Ten years ago Mr. Ogden gave us a talk at University College, London, about Jeremy Bentham who first thought about a short form of English. Then Ogden said that he had kept his words to his "Basic" list. For this reason my first meeting with this language gave me a great surprise but—and this was more important than the sense of surprise and discovery—it made us see clearly that it might be of great use. But, though I took some interest in "Basic," your list is the first I have had in my hand and all the words in this letter are taken from it. You get an idea from it of the effect on us of Mr. Ogden's (rule not given) talk—the words if not the idea are like those of a baby.

—W.H.S. (Oamaru).

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

"Curious" (Greymouth): Thomas, born 1891; Robeson, 1898.