

JULY 21, 1944

Tribute to London

THERE is a sense in which saluting London by invitation is like cheering the headmaster on the call of the senior prefect. The more emphatic the call is the less hearty the cheer is likely to be. Obviously, too, the fact that Edinburgh thought such a gesture necessary would be an encouraging piece of news to Hitler. It might not increase the shower of bombs but it would discourage any slackening off. But Edinburgh was right. London can take this too—our greetings as well as Hitler's. It will not lose its courage or its composure: but we must not think, on the other hand, that what it is going through is putting no strain on its people. If there is nothing in the news to suggest that the attack is comparable with the 1940 blitz, it is clear that it is a far more disturbing thing than the first reports indicated, more trying to the nerves and more destructive to life and property, and of course indirectly disturbing to the offensive in France. If it were otherwise salutes to London would be an empty and foolish gesture whether they began and ended with words or arrived as blankets and boxes of butter. London would have no more need of them than Coventry or Cardiff or Portsmouth or Bath. But those other places are beyond the range of the robot bomb while London is such a target that it can hardly be missed. Probably too it will remain within range for three or four months, since the real counter to the new attack is the capture of all the country from which it can be launched. That is proceeding, and will proceed faster. There will be developments in our air screen and in our defences from the ground. We may even be given a scientific answer as decisive and simple as the answer to the magnetic mine. But in the meantime the terror is falling on London day and night. Seven or eight million people are going on with their work by day, and to their beds at night, knowing that they are exposed to a danger which they have no means of removing. We need not be afraid, if we send them our sympathy, that they will not know how to receive it.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

PRONUNCIATION

Sir,—Your correspondent "E.H." is extremely angry with the BBC announcers who say *Mondee* instead of *Monday*. He also claims to speak on behalf of "most listeners." As an Englishman, I am therefore at a disadvantage, since modesty reduces my claim to speak only on behalf of two persons. When his anger is abated, maybe he will inform *The Listener* how he has harvested such a consensus of opinion. In the meanwhile, not being able to boast of an "average education," I, too, must fall under his castigation, because in common with 40-odd millions in the United Kingdom, I also plead guilty to the unpardonable offence of saying *Mondee*. He "feels hotly" because a number of people refuse to adopt colonial speech which he terms English. His temperature would reach astronomical elevation if he resided in England. The spectacle of the New Zealand Babe with an evangelistic desire to teach Mother England how to speak her native tongue is almost worthy of *Punch*.—ALBERT E. YOUNG (Rotorua).

RETURNED SOLDIERS

Sir,—May I congratulate "The Kea" on his article "Understanding the Returned Soldier." It was absolutely first-class. I hope that the Taranaki Union Secretary whose reported remark, "Are you going to live (or trade) on that for the rest of your life" has read it, too.

Please tell "The Kea" that, from experience of a last war husband (unwounded, except in mind and spirit), and of lots of soldier patients, I know a cure for most of their unhappiness. Make it possible for such men to live among many happy, well-brought-up children, especially little ones, and it is amazing how that black cloud of depression, and the gulf of dreadful memories that bring it about will disappear. I have had the joy of watching this happen in more cases than my own. Little children can work this miracle where perhaps nothing else in the world would.—"KEA II." (Hawke's Bay).

[We have received several letters expressing appreciation of "The Kea's" article.—Ed.]

"GOT CONSCIOUS"

Sir,—I was very much interested in the "got conscious" article by J.L.H. When I attended school the word "got" simply didn't exist. I have often wondered if it was the pet objection of one teacher or of all teachers and schools of the district of my home town. Your first paragraph made me think the speaker must have been at the same schools as myself. A month or two ago, while listening to the BBC, I was surprised to notice how often the announcer used the word. I haven't noticed it so much lately, so must have "got" used to it.—E.A.M. (Central Otago).

CHILDREN ON THE AIR

Sir,—As a voluntary helper in one of the Children's sessions, may I say that I agree with every word of your article "Sessions for Children." Experiments among children for 35 years have proved to me that there is not much we can teach them: we can only help to develop what they already know. In the field of music for broadcasting I discovered that they think in relative terms of sound and space. This, I am sure, is due to the music broadcasts to

schools, which are excellent. An example was the boy who sang from *g* to *e* instead of *g* to *d*. At his request I showed him his mistake on the piano. "I see, you drop four inches instead of three," he said. "I have been dropping three."

He then went to the microphone and sang his number perfectly. Another child, when I played her accompaniment in the wrong key, sang it in the right, and I had to do a quick change. Most amazing was the group of children who broadcast a part song perfectly after one rehearsal, and refused copies of the words, saying, "We know them." When we hear singing from the studio that sounds "canned," it is because it lacks imagination of sound, space and colour.

J.T. (Wellington).

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Sir,—No speech of Mr. Berendsen's, no matter how wise or eloquent, is sufficient to interest the ordinary man in the League of Nations at this stage of the World conflict. The ordinary man has long ago formed the opinion that the League of Nations was only such in name and, to the majority of its members, a league of the governing-classes who had the temerity to assume that they represented the interests of all sections of their nations.

The fundamental reason why the League of Nations failed was because it was political. The only means of preventing further world war is to have a world authority with real power based on principles which do justice to peoples, large and small. Such a world authority must have an economic basis as well as military power. It must be put in a position to organise international transport on land, sea and air; to extract, refine, and distribute oil, and arrange for the world marketing of important commodities like wheat, cotton, wool, and metals.

If the citizen of the future is to live in peace, he must evolve a world political organisation backed by real economic power. Science has given him the technical instruments with which he can found such a world order, and modern history is teaching him the penalty that will follow if he does not do so.

R.S.W. (Timaru).

(Abridged.—Ed.)

NEW ZEALAND SPEECH

Sir,—J.S.L. (Upper Hutt) refers to complaints about the bad English heard over the air, and suggests that "it is time these people realise that English is not spoken in New Zealand." It seems to me that the way the educated New Zealanders speak is far more restful to listen to than what J.S.L. calls "New Zealand's own idiom and pronunciation." I would quote a few lines from the now famous poem of Alice Duer Miller's *The White Cliffs*:

*Oh English voices, are there any words
Those tones to tell, those cadences
to teach!*

*As song of thrushes is to other birds
So English voices are to other speech
Those pure round "o's"—those lovely
liquid "f's"*

*Ring in the ears like sound of sabbath
bells.*

"ARUNDEL" (Wanganui).

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENT

Health Fiend, (Wellington): Please send us your address.