

NEW ZEALAND
LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

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EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES:
115 Lambton Quay, Wellington, C.1.
G.P.O. Box 1707.
Wellington, C.1.
Telephone 46-520.
Telegraphic Address: "Listener," Wellington.

Trees

EVERYONE who has a receiving set knows who made the trees; and who in New Zealand destroyed them. We know that what it took God millenniums to create foolish men destroyed in a couple of generations; and that this folly must now be repaired. So we have Arbor Days, tree-planting campaigns, lessons in schools, articles in the newspapers, and talks over the air. Not without difficulty we are getting it into our heads that a tree is more than firewood and an obstacle in the path of the plough. We are learning too that our forests, as we first found them, were unique — something that Nature had adapted in millions of years to our winds and rainfall and soil and temperatures — and that our civilisation might disappear if we left it to Nature unaided to restore them. We have had to replant with trees that grow quickly, and have in fact planted many thousands of acres, but that is only the beginning. Trees are as necessary to the New Zealand scene as roads and bridges are. If they disappear our present way of life disappears, since Nature would need thousands of years to bring stability to our steep mountains and scoured-out hill-sides and plains if there were no forests to arrest erosion and mitigate floods, no birds to protect the forests, and no green growth to control evaporation. We might not return to a waste of shingles and rock, but we could get a combination of Persia and the Aleutian islands, and while life, even civilised life, might still be possible, it would be a civilisation quite unlike anything we have so far experienced — harsh, and bleak, and often brutish. So the South Island run-holder who set up a rock on the roadside inscribed with an appeal to the men of "the misty gorges" to "plant trees for their lives" was a realist and not a romantic. It is a case of life or death if we follow the argument to the end — and life in New Zealand is still worth fighting for.

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LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

THE ATLANTIC CHARTER

Sir,—The Atlantic Charter has been acclaimed throughout the world as a solemn undertaking of the principles to govern the post-war settlement, and the world will expect Great Britain to be true to these moral obligations.

For this reason the Executive Committee of the Society of Friends regrets those passages in the statements recently made by the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs which seem to imply a departure from the spirit of the Charter.

The essential value of the Atlantic Charter lies in its emphasis on the common needs of all men, whether victor or vanquished. It also provides that there should be no territorial changes which do not accord with the freely-expressed wishes of the people involved. These declarations were felt to constitute a fresh advance in international standards, and like all moral declarations have constituted a moral pledge. It is that moral pledge which now appears to be in jeopardy. Peace can only be built on moral principles applicable to all men and on practical steps to mutual co-operation of all peoples, whether victor or vanquished.

ARTHUR J. EDDINGTON,
Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings.
London, April 4.

PRONUNCIATION

Sir,—In the Webster's Dictionary era into which some of us were born and brought up, only the illiterate said Monday and again. The word "got" crops up surprisingly, where one would never expect it. Even Professor Joad has caught it . . . or never snapped out of it. Painful hiatus! Four of my dictionaries make no mention of our little pet word. (Yes, I have discovered it snuggled in with get and gotten.) But Collins' has succumbed to it. No doubt someone will presently discover that "got" is "a fine old English gentleman."

SO WHAT? (Titirangi).

*INTERRUPTED OPERA

Sir,—A first-rate performance of Verdi's *Il Trovatore* was relayed from the Wellington Town Hall the other evening. At a moment of great dramatic interest when radio listeners, like the audience itself, must have forgotten all about Big Ben and Silent Prayer, the chimes boomed in and the organ arpeggiated out in the usual way.

Are we getting into the same plight as Butler's Erewhonians, and if we are isn't it time to do something? When a mere mechanical routine stultifies its original purpose in such a senseless way, it is surely time to rise up and destroy the Machines before they overpower us. Or will we let a gramophone record of a clock on the other side of the world make fools of us all? For those who had thoughts of prayer at that moment, three other local stations were to be had for the twist of a knob.

MISERERE (Wellington).

VICTORY SOON?

Sir,—During the dark days the people of Britain maintained a dignity and poise beyond all praise, which makes it the more pathetic that so many of the leading men there (and here of course) have so completely lost their heads now. One of the worst seems to be MacDonald

Hastings of *Picture Post*. As one of several instances, when the schoolgirl who was assisting in his latest "London Letter" broadcast said that she thought the war in Europe would end in about nine months, he replied, "My word, you are a pessimist!"—and actually meant it!

It is amazing that anybody can imagine the Germans surrendering without having tried every weapon. What for example would be the effect if the flying bombs, and perhaps the giant rockets still in preparation, were used to drench London and other centres with poison gas? Nobody knows, even if the Germans had only the gases used in the last war, which is unquestionably not the case. Even if it failed the Nazi leaders have nothing to lose by it, being already for trial as war criminals. And just conceivably it might not fail. Nobody knows; but we shall know, and soon, Germans being what they are.

X.X.X. (Christchurch).

DANCE MUSIC

Sir,—At last the dance music sessions by New Zealand studio bands are being given some publicity, but why so half-heartedly? In your last issue you have photos of three North Island artists and only one South Island artist. You have not even mentioned the leader of "Fashions in Melody." Why not give us a full-page article on all these bands and programmes and photos of all the bands? I might mention that I am a constant listener to all these programmes and I think they compare favourably with some of the recorded dance music. But why should we not have a studio band or a relay from every station? There are bands in the small centres just as proficient and capable as those in the large centres—in fact the majority of soloists and leaders of the main YA bands received their tuition and grounding in the small centres. I appreciate very much the classical programmes from our studios, but after all, variety is the spice of life.—"ONE WHO KNOWS" (Invercargill).

"WILD LIFE"

Sir,—I should like to suggest that the feature "Wild Life" at present given over the ZB stations at 9.15 p.m. should be placed at a more suitable time for the children. Here is a series of talks in humorous and arresting style, presenting natural science as a fascinating and approachable subject for old and young alike. Who, having listened to the talk on life in a rock pool as watched through a glass-bottom box (which any boy could make for himself) did not long for the next seaside holiday when enchanted hours could be spent observing the habits of underwater life. But all good children are in bed by 9.15. Could not this series be incorporated in the "Children's Hour"? Our children are not taught to understand and love Nature, and are appallingly ignorant of its lore. Here is one way of increasing their general knowledge, and of suggesting a satisfying and enlarging hobby.—RONA M. SMEETON (Mount Albert).

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

F.L.T. (Auckland): Station 2YA, each Monday afternoon. See also Correspondence School programmes printed in a panel each week.