

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

Price Threepence

SEPTEMBER 15, 1944

By Telephone and Radio

THE difference between next week's telephone appeal for war funds and those made previously is the fact that this may be the last. Perhaps we should say *could* be the last, since the decision depends on our enemies as well as on ourselves. As we write they are clearly enough on the run; but it is impossible to say how long that will last, and what sacrifices still lie ahead if they decide on a last-ditch struggle on their own territory. We do know that they are no longer capable of snatching victory from our grasp and delaying the war indefinitely; but the more clearly we see that, the more urgent we must think it to bring the fighting to its earliest possible close. To let it drag on for a single hour longer than it would last if we all did our best to end it is to have blood on our hands whether we see it there or do not. It is like neglecting to replace a plank in a bridge which we know people must cross in the dark: we do not wish to injure them; but pious wishes without the elementary decencies of kindness and helpfulness can leave us whitened sepulchres. So we shall not be told why we should use our telephones and receiving sets on the evening of the twenty-third. We know why; and we know too that three out of four of those who make no response at all will be leaving it to someone else to carry their load for them. It is after all never possible to adjust burdens equitably: the willing always carry the unwilling part of the way however unseemly that may be. It is in fact useless to complain of this or to try to shame the shirker into doing his duty: he is incapable of shame or he would not be in that boat. But we are all capable of self-interest, and although that is the lowest level on which to be fighting a war, the simple fact is that what we lend we get back and what we refuse to lend, and are compelled to surrender in taxation, we lose altogether. If we do not listen for decency's sake we shall perhaps do so for self-protection.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

LITERARY HOAXES

Sir,—J.C.R., in his article "Ern Malley Had Forebears" repeats an error which appeared in similar articles covering the Malley hoax. This is the reference to Chappel's *The Cruise of the Kawa*, published with the author's name as "Dr. Taprock." J.C.R. uses the suggestion that this burlesque deceived the National Geographic Society of the United States, but one cannot avoid the observation that if anyone connected with the society was deceived it must have been because he (or she) had not read any of the publisher's announcements nor the reviews of the book. *The Cruise of the Kawa* was published as a burlesque, and because it was so announced and reviewed, I ordered a copy. When I saw the work, it was so rough and blatant that I put small value on it. For a number of years it was in a quiet corner of my library and then was tossed out to make room for better things. To suggest that "Taprock's" work had any influence on the publication of traveller's tales is as nonsensical as the suggestion that "few dared to write in the *Trader Horn* or *Joan Lowell* vein again." As a matter of fact I think Taprock preceded both of them—certainly he was before Joan Lowell. The importance given to "Taprock's" burlesque is just another hoax.—J. J. W. POLLARD (Wellington).

P.S.: Has an Ern Malley ever happened in New Zealand?

BLARING RADIOS

Sir,—As a regular subscriber to your journal for a considerable time, I have often wondered that you have not established a "Listeners' Protection Society" to protect citizens from the blaring radio sets of inconsiderate neighbours. In view of the fact that practically every household has its own radio and its own preference in the matter of programmes, it is astonishing that any small inconsiderate section should be allowed to disturb a whole neighbourhood. There seems to be no local or other authority to deal with offenders, and surely there is nothing more exasperating than the distorted blaring of a radio two or three doors away. From inquiries made there are evidently very many people who have tried to get some local body or controlling authority to deal with their grievances, but in vain. Could you inform me whether there is any authority in Wellington which is responsible for the peace of the community so far as noisy radios are concerned? I believe the National Broadcasting Service would be performing a further great public service if it would institute legislation to deal with offenders.—HARASSED NEIGHBOUR (Wellington).

(There is the same protection against radio as against other noises: if it becomes a public nuisance, the aggrieved person may take action.—Ed.)

NEW ZEALAND SPEECH

Sir,—"Arundle" and Dr. Crompton are typical of the people to whom I referred, people who try to improve our language but stultify their efforts by concentration on some pettifoggish *bête noir* and so succeed merely in conveying an impression of conservative snobbery. New Zealand is a nation and the language spoken (call it New Zealandese or New Zealandic or what you will) is as distinctive as Australian, American, Canadian or South African;

and no attempt to induce the great bulk of the population to speak in the emasculated tones used by some BBC speakers or some of the "Lord Haw Haw" school will be successful. I do not know who the "educated New Zealanders" referred to may be, but I do know that much of the speech from New Zealand radio stations, including that of many announcers, is very good, and is representative of the speech of the average citizen of this country. At the same time, there is room for improvement, but not by the introduction of "English" forms which are alien to our make-up. To speak of "encouraging local shibboleths and differences within English-speaking nations" is just piffle.

Churchill himself speaks of the "Commonwealth of Nations which make up the British Empire"; everyone, except Dr. Crompton realises that they are separate nations; but there is no disunity despite the fact that 50 per cent of the people of the Empire do not speak English at all, and that each county in England has a different dialect. If the "better pronunciation" enthusiasts will realise these facts, they will have a chance of accomplishing something towards an improvement in the general level of our speech.

J.S.L. (Upper Hutt).

WHICH BACH?

Sir,—In a recent "Things to Come" paragraph you referred to a previous letter of mine about Bach's "Mass in B Minor," and you called attention to a programme from 3YL for July 22. By this programme 3YL has only partly answered me. You wouldn't say that seven minutes of an extract from that Mass was very generous, would you? If 3YA could broadcast Beethoven's "Mass in D" in two sections a little while ago, surely the same treatment could be given this one of Bach's.

Furthermore, the "Magnificat" you refer to is not by J. S. Bach but by his son Carl, and the "Sinfonia in B Flat" in the same programme is by his other son, Christian. I pointed this out to 3YL a few weeks ago, and suggested that the programme should be entitled "Music by the Bachs" rather than "Music by Bach," but evidently 3YL knows best.—H. H. FOUNTAIN (New Brighton).

[The Music Department of the NBS replies "There are only three excerpts from Bach's Mass in B Minor available on two recordings in the NBS libraries. There is no recording of the complete work available in New Zealand as in the case with certain other Masses. The Magnificat referred to by our correspondent is simply labelled Bach, with no initials. The Sinfonia in B Flat Major is by Johann Christian Bach, another son of Johann Sebastian Bach, and the record label in this instance gives no initials either.]

A BANNED SCRIPT

Sir,—The State Department vetoed the movie script of *Versailles Tragedy* on the ground that it would create disunity in the U.S.A. and among the Allies. The script writer was John Balderston, whose previous script was *Tennessee Johnson*. This is interesting in view of the controversy in *The Listener* as to whether some American liberals and trade unionists were justified in boycotting *Tennessee Johnson*.

K.O.T.F. (Remuera).

(Not so interesting as our correspondent's belief that he has proved something.—Ed.)

"TWICKENHAM FERRY"

Our thanks to 11 correspondents who have sent us the words asked for by "Richmond Hill."