

**Charlie Chaplin**

**T**HE most distressing item of news that came out of the U.S.A. in the past week had nothing directly to do with the war. This was the report from Washington that a measure had been introduced in the Senate directing the Attorney-General to determine whether Charlie Chaplin should be deported as "an undesirable alien." It was distressing because it was a reminder, of a rather spectacular kind, that democracies are not immune against stupidity and that witch-hunting and heretic-baiting are still popular pastimes among people with little minds. That the threat to Chaplin will almost certainly not be carried out does not alter the fact that it has been solemnly made in one of the two most august assemblies in the United States. In one sense, of course, the very suggestion that Chaplin should be turned out of doors by America is a fantastic joke—a joke from which only he could extract the fully irony and pathos. To say this is not in the least to justify Chaplin's private life. Yet his public life has been such that surely much can be forgiven him. Not many men in this century have done more for their adopted countries than Chaplin has done for the U.S.A. Of the few real geniuses that the movies have yet produced he is still the greatest. He was the first of the big stars to stand up against Hitler when appeasement was still profitable in Hollywood. And to millions all over the world he has become the symbol of the little man who survives oppression. None of this, however, gives anybody cause to be self-righteous at America's expense. We have recently seen something of the same sort happening in France and Italy, where ignorance, malice, and hysteria combined to bear false witness against Maurice Chevalier, Sacha Guitry, and Beniamino Gigli. War always produces an overcharged emotional atmosphere which makes some members of the pack more ready to lead the rest in harrying and pulling down any who show signs of running alone or whose coat is a different colour from the normal. That is why the others—the liberal, sensible people everywhere—should be on their guard against the temptation to join in this kind of hunt.

**LETTERS FROM LISTENERS****SHEEP FOR CHINA.**

Sir,—Your recent article on the sending of New Zealand stud sheep for the assistance of China raises only one point—are we in New Zealand going to do anything to help the people of China raise their standard of living from the means at our disposal? If so, I feel that most New Zealanders would agree with me that a campaign to send stud sheep to the Chinese should be started.

New Zealand is a rich country and I am sure that many of us would be willing to contribute to a fund to buy stud sheep, while there are farmers who would no doubt be willing to contribute a stud animal from their flock.

W. B. SUTCH (Wellington).

Sir,—I have just read in the latest issue of *The Listener* the story of a mob of sheep—"Lyttelton to Lhasa," and was deeply moved as I'm sure many of your readers must have been, on hearing of that amazing journey. So stirred, that I feel impelled to burst into print and ask other readers whether they feel as I do, that if some organiser, or prime-mover would start a campaign for the raising of funds to send more stud sheep to China's great northwest, he would have the backing of all thinking New Zealanders. Even if every subscriber to *The Listener* gave 2/6 each, I'm sure money enough could be raised to send another flock of sheep to Kansu, the moment it is possible to do so.

Rewi Alley says it is a gamble. Would the sheep reach their destination? Would they stand the climate? Well, this sort of gamble should appeal to anyone with a heart and brain and a love of progress. The people of New Zealand have a marvellous opportunity of extending a helping hand to a great nation in dire need.

May I quote from "One World" by the late Wendell Willkie:—

"In Sanchow I visited some of China's industrial co-operatives. I met there the quiet, sincere New Zealander Rewi Alley, who has made Indusco an international word and a symbol of what can be done by a people determined to lift itself by its own bootstraps. Alley was having difficulties when I saw him; it is my guess that he will continue to have them. But I have no doubt that he and the Chinese Industrial Co-operative Movement I saw in China's north-western provinces are accomplishing an enormous change in the world's economic geography by opening up the heart of Asia.

"This economic struggle in which China is now engaged has been less written about in America than China's military struggle against the Japanese invaders. But everything I saw made me believe that it has been no less heroic. If we Americans were blasted from our sea-coasts by a hostile force, we could retire into our great interior and find there the machines and skilled labour to fight on.

"But in the vast interior of China there were no such facilities. The Chinese had to carry their factories inland with them; not on freight cars, not on trucks, not even in carts, but on human backs, piece by heavy piece."

Sir, these are the people who deserve our admiration and help. Rewi Alley is helping them build a new and greater China. Let us help him to help them, by sparing a few of our shillings and sheep.

JAY-BEE (Upper Hutt).

**THE FRENCH AT AKAROA.**

Sir,—Ruth France, in her very interesting radio talk on the "Women of the French Settlement" discredits the story of the Britomart and Aube contest. It was natural that the French commanders should be disappointed, but they

accepted the inevitable. D'Urville, on his arrival at Akaroa on his third visit to New Zealand, expressed his keen disappointment when he learned that the English had taken the whole country.

MARGUERITE (Wellington).

**DR. BRADSHAW'S RECITALS.**

Sir,—It has caused great pleasure to the by-no-means-small body of Organ-lovers to have the privilege of hearing recitals by Dr. Bradshaw included in the Friday evening programmes. Outside of these, the opportunity of hearing an organist approaching his brilliant beauty and finish is impossible here. Station 3YA is therefore to be congratulated in its Friday's programmes. There seem to be a lot of records made by lesser artists; could we not have some made by our great organist here, to ensure that a permanent record of his mastery of the king of instruments lives on.

FRANCIS CLARK (Papanui).

**PORTRAIT OF COMMUNISM.**

Sir,—Is it possible that you do not realise that you are having your leg pulled? The little insignificant band of professed Communists are certainly getting more propaganda space than their importance warrants.

I note with despair that you say in a foot-note that more will appear. Well, for heaven's sake get it over and done with as soon as possible. The great bulk of the people have these "birds" in their right category, and remember, *The Listener* goes into many New Zealand homes. COMMONSENSE (Waiuku).

Sir,—What does the *Observer's* correspondent mean by "political rights return" to the Balkan people? Was there universal suffrage and secret voting, both theoretical and actual? Were not many Labour leaders and Trade Unionists in concentration camps or in exile? If you would give us some facts about the previous record of such men as General Plastiras you would be helping the people "to understand what games are being played in their name."

MOTHER (Dunedin).

**"WORLD OF PLENTY"**

Sir,—Having just arrived in New Zealand from England, I was very interested to read, on picking up an old copy of *The Listener*, G.M.'s remarks on "World of Plenty." I should like to congratulate you on publishing his article. I was particularly glad to read "... there are signs that many picturegoers are fed up with the 10-minute dance-band-cum-crooner items, the fatuous cartoons and comedies ... etc." This paucity of good second feature films would appear to be world wide. Last November I saw in England an American "gap-filling" film that dealt with the mending of blinds, refrigerator fittings, taps, etc. In nearly every case the article described was either non-existent in the average British household or else was of a totally different design. And yet this was quite hopefully shown along with a series of equally nonsensical "shorts."

Ever since the days of "Drifters" the British film directors have been past masters at the art of the documentary and semi-documentary film. These have a high entertainment value but are not

"box-office draws" because of the lack of the stars to attract the audiences that have been educated to judge a film by the name of its actors. If some of these British films were introduced as second feature items in the cinemas both in Britain and in the Dominions a considerable following would probably develop.

If "World of Plenty" is considered to contain too many home truths to be shown to the democracies that are supposed to be fighting for freedom of speech and freedom from want, why not start with something a little less revolutionary—"The Harvest Shall Come," for example, which describes the shabby treatment meted out to the farmer after the last war, asks for better treatment after this war, and does so with a harmony of brilliant photography, acting and direction. If this is still too radical, how about "Spring on the Farm," which would be interesting to New Zealand audiences as to those at Home. Then there are a whole collection of films, made chiefly by the Crown Unit and G.P.O. Film Unit, e.g. "Ferry Pilot," "Night Express," "These Are the People," "Fires Were Started." If the public wants escapist films what could be better or more entertaining than "Turn of the Tide," "Song of the Plough," "Edge of the World," all of which are photographed in various localities in the British Isles and are so much more natural than many farcical American attempts to portray both English and American life in a series of "quickies."—ROACH (Wellington).

**CLASSICAL MUSIC.**

Sir,—"Arco" seems to think everybody should like his type of music. Every person has his own taste. I myself like swing and would like to know what Christchurch stations cater for the swing fans. Maybe once in two or three weeks 3YL will put on a "Swingtime" session on a Wednesday at 9.0 p.m. "Arco" has his classical music from 3YA at 9.0 a.m. and "an hour of it" at 3.0 p.m., and once a week at 10.0 p.m. "The Masters in Lighter Mood"—not counting what he has throughout the evening programmes. 3YL has classical music from 8.0 p.m. till 10.0 p.m. on Tuesdays and Saturdays. So I think "Arco" should be satisfied with more than his share. Give others a chance.—R.M.N. (Christchurch).

**EVERY NIGHT AT NINE**

Sir,—After reading "Matselot's" letter, I am filled with disgust and wonder—wonder at any man writing such drivel about his wife wanting to shoot an announcer for having the impudence to interrupt "On Wings of Song" for such a trivial thing as one moment of prayer out of 24 hours, for men giving their lives in this war. Surely there can't be many apathetic women like this in New Zealand, or in the world for that matter. No, I am not a flag-waving hypocrite, I am just a soldier's wife with a constant prayer in her heart. The boys in camp will tell you that wherever they are, when Big Ben chimes at nine o'clock every night, there is a silence observed by one and all no matter what his rank.—JUST A SOLDIER'S WIFE (Masterton).

**ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT**

D.D.D. (Warepa): An expert in this matter assures us that "Dave" married "Mabel" just before Christmas, but what happens to "Mum" will not be revealed for a long time yet.