

MARCH 22, 1946

Japan

THE purpose of the series of articles begun on Page 6 of this issue is to make our readers think about Japan. If they are male readers, single, and of military age, a further purpose is to suggest that they at least ask themselves whether they should not volunteer for service with the occupying forces. But Japan is a challenge to all New Zealanders and not merely to those young enough to bear arms. To begin with, it is crowded, and when its deportees return from Manchuria, Formosa, and Korea, there will be 70 or 80 million people living in a country not much bigger than New Zealand and originally no more productive; living there in an age that has abolished distance. But it is not the pressure of material things in Japan that it is most necessary for New Zealand to understand: it is the way of life, and the attitude of mind, that this pressure has produced in the course of centuries. It is not sufficient to say that the Japanese by our standards are poor or even very poor; that we have never reached, or tried to reach, their standards of diligence; or that what we mean by frugality would to most of them be reckless luxury. All that would be true; but the foundation truth is that they are neither changed nor capable of change this year or next. They may be capable of changing themselves in a generation. But at present the great majority live as they have always lived, working from daylight till dark for food, clothes, and shelter. Defeat does nothing to people like that but change the direction and purpose of their labour. Even the destruction of their homes is an upset rather than a shock, and in a year or two is almost forgotten. The people themselves remain; their toughness and patience remain, and are even, in some respects, accentuated. When earthquakes devastated Japan a generation ago the survivors buried their dead, rebuilt their homes, and went on where they had left off. To-day they go on where the war left them mechanically but with the psychology that is the inheritance of ages.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

LATE ARCHDEACON BULLOCK

Sir,—The late Archdeacon William Bullock, who was for fourteen years vicar of St. Peter's Church, Wellington, was well and favourably known to many of your readers through his broadcast sermons and religious talks. They will be interested to learn—particularly those who subscribed to the fund to perpetuate his memory—that the memorial, in the form of a beautifully carved Altar Rail, is to be dedicated by the Bishop of Wellington at the evening service on Sunday, March 24. The service will be broadcast by 2YA.

The fund was also in part for the purpose of a presentation to Mrs. Bullock, and opportunity was taken at a social gathering to hand her a bag containing a substantial cheque.—CECIL T. COX, for St. Peter's Vestry (Wellington).

EXPERIMENTS AT BIKINI

Sir,—The article "Co-operation or Chaos" and others you have published on the atomic problem constitute a challenge to thinking people. The United Nations outlawed atomic war weapons, but with cynical indifference, the U.S.A. goes ahead with atomic bomb manufacture; Britain follows suit, and Russia claims to have outdistanced others. The U.S.A. plans for experiments at Bikini for the purpose of "training army and air force personnel in atomic attacks against ships"—declared by Admiral Nimitz to be "difficult and unprofitable targets for atomic bombs."

The Governments concerned are deliberately betraying the principles they have adopted as United Nations. It is a scandalous and revolting exhibition of international hypocrisy. We are on the way to the third world war—the atomic war, and nobody much seems to bother about it. But as the common people will be the eventual sufferers they should raise a clamour for the immediate stoppage of this costly and dangerous amusement of the war play-boys.

—J. MALTON MURRAY
(Oamaru).

SEVEN O'CLOCK NEWS

Sir,—It has puzzled me to know why the authorities have cut out the 7.0 a.m. News. I believe I am one of many thousands who enjoyed listening to the News each morning at this time. Most of us have to be at work by 8.0 a.m., so are denied the privilege of hearing the News until 6.30 p.m.

WHA FOR (Hastings).

THE "DARK" AGES

Sir,—In an article on broadcasting for schools in your latest issue we are told that children are being taught that "during the Middle Ages there had been a black-out on education, art, science—even thought, and everything making for progress. Then, about 1,400 people in Europe began to realise they were missing something." Well, I'm a constant reader and I've read a good deal of nonsense in my time, but this beats anything I ever read before. No Art? Then who built the cathedrals? No Education? Then who founded the Universities? No Thought? Then who were the Schoolmen? A great modern philosopher, Professor A. N. Whitehead, describes the

Middle Ages as a period of "unbridled rationalism" and all the standard historians of philosophy describe S. Thomas Aquinas as one of the greatest thinkers of all time. I see that I have not mentioned Dante. Would it be possible to draw up a list of the four greatest poets of the Western World that did not include him? He too flourished during the black-out. It looks as if there is something to be said for living in the dark.

HAROLD MILLER (Wellington).

BOOK TALKS

Sir,—A very slight addition to the programmes which would be welcomed by many listeners would be the insertion under the heading "Book Talk" of the titles and authors of the books which are to be reviewed. If the musical public is accorded an itemised programme there can scarcely be any reason for refusing a similar service to the reading public. Such detail would allow a more discriminating use of the programmes by the intelligent listener.—READER-LISTENER (Christchurch).

THE VOICE OF AMERICA

Sir,—As soon as our *Listener* arrived we marked with a cross 7.30, 1YA, Monday, February 25. "The Pageant of

More letters from listeners will be found on page 16.

"Music" is one of the highlights of the week for us. Just before Mr. Luscombe was to commence, the whole family, knowing there was a treat in store, dropped everything and gathered round the radio. Nor were we disappointed when Mr. Luscombe shared with us his own knowledge and delight in Chopin's Ballade (4).

But as we approached the final cascade of lovely sound, our enchantment, before its awaited consummation, was shattered by "This is the Voice of America."

As we sadly switched off the radio, our usual dislike of the Voice turned to utter loathing.

How long, oh Lord! How long?
M.B. (New Plymouth).

HELP FOR BRITAIN

Sir,—Recent references in *The Listener* on the subject of help for Britain remind me that I read the other day that Joseph P. Kennedy had advocated that the proposed loan from the United States to Britain for the purpose of fostering British purchases of American goods, should take the form of a straight-out gift of 3,750 million dollars.

The idea of assisting Britain is doubtless a worthy one; but for the moment I am not concerned with that. The feature which really intrigues me in the whole affair is a certain idiosyncrasy of finance.

From the American viewpoint, to be quite frank, the paramount motive is to keep the wheels of American industry turning; with the objective that the receipts from Britain for goods supplied should recoup Americans for labour expended and resources exported, and provide a profit margin essential for the

fostering, if not for the flourishing, of American industry.

This being so, the question that strikes one at once is, would it not be better for the Americans to give this money directly to their industrialists, workmen, farmers and miners, who would then possess it, and be in a position to flourish to their hearts' content, and without having to sweat or to deplete natural resources?

In other words, why is it, that in order to flourish upon money which you already possess, it is necessary first to part with it—either by way of gift or by loan which possibly would never be repaid—and to re-possess it gradually at the cost of painful labour and loss of resources?

Is it that the world's financial system is what we have so often been told that it is—an utter farce?

"RUHTRA" (Wellington).

CHRISTIAN ORDER CONFERENCE

Sir,—J. M. Bates' reply to Ormond Burton's review of the above Conference Report is neither generous to the reviewer, nor just to himself. For the main portion of his letter is used to remind your readers that Mr. Bates' views are those of the minority. What on earth has that to do with the matter at issue? Truth is correspondence with fact, and cannot be determined by the numbers who accept or deny it. The Presbyterian Church, of which Mr. Bates is an honoured minister, has made some great pronouncements upon matters of religion, but no reasonable critic of that great Church would dream of stating first that the Presbyterians are a small minority of the religious people of the earth. And should a sceptic open an attack on Christianity by the main point that Jesus, in His day and ours, represented only a minority, Mr. Bates would be the first to deny the admissibility, or logic, of such argument. In short, if this is the best answer an official of a Committee of the Churches can give to your reviewer's criticism, then Mr. Burton can reasonably conclude that such criticism is difficult or impossible to gainsay. I do not, however, believe that this is the case.—H. RYAN (Napier).

RADIO READINGS

Sir,—May I express my approval of the suggestion by your views reel commentator that more worth-while readings should be included in programmes?

Conrad is certainly a good choice and there are many other literary giants, whose works would provide a much more satisfying fare than the average serial. I should like to suggest that such readings be given from a Wellington station. Christchurch and Dunedin have been fortunate indeed in the possession of Messrs. Simmance and Adams for so long.

The inclusion of the Shackleton expedition in the "Scrapbook" of Sunday morning gave me unqualified pleasure. What an influence on a nation the Broadcasting Service could be, if it provided more of such programmes, which create in the listener the urge to make of life something more heroic than an existence punctuated by cheap and sensational entertainment.

A WELLINGTON LISTENER.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT
"Slide Rule" (Napier): Inquiry makes it clear that you have hit several nails on the head, but that the facts are well understood by manufacturers. If we said that they are all doing their best in difficult circumstances we would label ourselves as simpletons; but some are; and *The Listener* is not quite the place for a campaign against the others.—Ed.