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WHEN George Eliot asked in one of her novels what we would do without the Calendar she was thinking of the hopelessness of life if we could not write our failures off and start over again. To many people 1946 has been a failure. Until its last few weeks it brought little but friction among friends and something close to open conflict among pledged allies. It is still difficult not to be cynical about it and natural to be sceptical of agreements reached at the last moment by bargaining in side-alleys and not on the highway of principle. While there must always be compromises in politics, and give-and-take adjustments, it is not easy to believe that the United Nations went no further than that this year in their attempts to end one war without starting another. Nothing can make 1946 a cheerful page in history, but we shall not think it hopeless if we "look before and after" and keep it in its context. To begin with, it could have been worse: the peacemakers did sit in conference to the end and are still friends as friendship goes in diplomacy. They could have broken off negotiations, as the nervous kept thinking they were going to do, and retired to the isolations and silences in which nations get ready for another appeal to force. We are safely through that; and if we can't point to other more positive signs of progress, we must remember the deep-rooted fear of high-sounding faiths in which the war everywhere ended. It was never called a war to end war, though it may in fact have done so by a diabolic accident of science, and if it was called a struggle for three or four freedoms, rough justice with some freedom was always the practical goal. We enter 1947 with that victory still in our hands. We have much to deplore in 1946 and a good deal to forget if we can, but we are still in a good position for starting again, and for that reason enter the new year hopefully.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

OFF HIS CHEST

Sir,—May I be permitted to voice my complaint about the standard and nature of wireless programmes in this country. First, serials—endless senseless American trash on the whole. I can recall numerous occasions when I have turned from one station to another in the hope of hearing music of some sort, anything from Wagner to Berlin, and have heard nothing but the inane and emotionless voices of various characters.

Almost as bad as serials for seven nights of the week are the Sunday programmes. Why must Sunday radio programmes be dull and boring and liberally interspersed with hymn-singing and Bible-reading. Everybody does not want to hear religion even if it is Sunday; and anyhow if the Christians are so keen to hear the word of God, why do they not go to church and fill the empty pews? Surely the prospect of a comfortable armchair, a fire and a broadcast church service does not in any way deter the zealous Christians from going forth to worship?

As for the advertisements heard from the Commercial stations, the only comment I can make is that if the New Zealand public tolerate them, much less take any notice of them, they must be morons.

DISGUSTED

(Christchurch).

(Our correspondent is entitled to his opinions, but we must challenge two of his statements of fact. His contention about American serials was answered on Page 31 of our issue dated December 6; and with the stations available to a Christchurch listener, music of some sort—"anything from Wagner to Berlin"—is not impossible to find, except perhaps occasionally during the daytime.—Ed.)

LOCAL ARTISTS

Sir,—I sincerely hope the NZBS will not be swayed by the views of H. E. Gunter, "A Timaru Reader," or "Ear-ache," except perhaps to react against them. For one thing, I don't think any one of them is fair to the local artists. These are not all guilty of the enormities mentioned, and many are even deserving of some slight encouragement. Even if the catalogue of vices were as evident as is suggested, the importance of these should not be exaggerated. In no country with musical aspirations can the bulk of the population afford to remain content at the receiving end. In all periods countries of musical eminence have been countries of music-makers; they have seen music made in the homes, and not passively heard occasionally in a concert hall. The important thing in New Zealand is that there are people prepared to make music. The quality of that music, to the importance of which I am quite alive, is however of an importance secondary to that of the desire and the attempt to make it at all.

E. de LACEY (Timaru).

HOW TO SPEAK

Sir,—Your correspondent C.E. (Wellington) should know by now that "curious, eccentric, unusual, or affected" pronunciation is one that we personally are not accustomed to. It is also worth while bearing in mind that accepted pronunciation is only itself another dialect, and that too much reliance should not be placed on, say, Daniel Jones's work, as this author specifically warns us that he is simply a "recorder" of pronunciations. Why C.E. mentions a special broadcast on September 21 is hard to understand, for all the words

he indicates are neither curious, eccentric, unusual nor affected, but they are the regular everyday pronunciation of the majority in New Zealand. Marlborough is really pronounced as Mahlborough, and in this case the announcer is aware that there are two accepted pronunciations, so he uses both and leaves you to take your choice. Canterbury, if one listens carefully, is actually pronounced as Canturberrie, so what can we do about it? Nothing at all: these are now the accepted pronunciations in New Zealand, and so it must be C.E. who is eccentric in these cases,

Explanation to South Island Readers

THE copies of "The Listener" dated December 13, which reached many of our South Island readers considerably later than usual, were much-travelled papers. They had to make seven sea journeys between Wellington and Lyttelton before they finally went ashore and were distributed. We are sorry for this delay, which was beyond our control.

in fact he might even be accused of being affected. Can he not recall the Yarmouth discussions lately? "When you live in Rome, do as the Romans do?"

Mr. Churchill likes to have his name pronounced Chur-chill, although there is no doubt that the name came originally from the two words church and hill, and I understand he is often referred to as Kirkbrae, in Scotland. In countless cases in the United Kingdom, place-names and surnames are never given their correct pronunciation but only their accepted one. Be sure and always call Cowper Cuper, but for heaven's sake never call a cow a cu.

"ARGOSY" (Te Awamutu).

Sir,—Your correspondents on the subject of pronunciation, with their clumsy attempts at phonetic notation and their uninformed dogmatism on the subject, may be interested in the following quotations:—

I wish to state that I have no intention of becoming either a reformer of pronunciation or a judge who decides what pronunciations are "good" and what are "bad." My aim is to observe and record accurately, and I do not believe in the feasibility of imposing one particular form of pronunciation on the English-speaking world. I take the view that people should be allowed to speak as they like.—Daniel Jones in the preface to his "English Pronouncing Dictionary."

The ambition to do better than our neighbours is in many departments of life a virtue; in pronunciation it is a vice; there the only right ambition is to do as our neighbours . . . while we are entitled to display a certain fastidious precision in our saying of words that only the educated use, we deserve not praise but censure if we decline to accept the popular pronunciation of popular words. . . . The broad principles are: Pronounce as your neighbours do, not better; for words in general use your neighbour is the general public.—H. W. Fowler under the heading "Pronunciation" in his "Dictionary of Modern English Usage."

These extracts speak for themselves and it is to be presumed that the status of Jones and Fowler needs no explaining to correspondents who feel themselves sufficiently well versed in the mysteries of phonetics and pronunciation to be able to hold forth at length in your columns. Perhaps it would be better if

they all gave it up as did the Frenchman learning English when he saw a poster proclaiming "Noel Coward's Cavalcade—pronounced success."

J. E. BLENNERHASSET (Remuera).

Sir,—In your issue of November 22 is a letter by "Wellington" giving correct pronunciation of Maori words, which I found very interesting, especially his quotation from Williams's *Lessons on Maori*, which was new to me. I would be very pleased if "Wellington" would give the correct way to pronounce Paekakariki. Most people call it Pie-kokariki; to me the sound should be Pay-cakariki. I have altered the spelling to make it phonetic.

JOSH BILLINGS (Havelock North).

"LILI MARLENE"

Sir,—In connection with the NZBS Production, "Lili Marlene" which came over the air the other evening, it may be of interest to listeners to know that a copy of the melody of this now famous song was received in Sumner on July 1, 1944. It was posted from 6th Field Ambulance, then with the 8th Army in Africa. It was sung, probably for the first time by a New Zealand audience at the Christchurch community sing at the Civic Theatre on Fridays soon after its arrival, and became very popular. The returned men in the hospitals repeatedly asked for it.

There was much difficulty at first in getting the words. The music shops did not know it. Months afterwards, however, they discovered it under the title of "Marlene," and, soon the shop windows were full of copies resurrected from unsaleable stock.

With the Civic Organ accompanying, and Norman A. Carson as song-leader, the singing of this number gave much satisfaction to friends and relatives of the lads who had sung it after Rommel's army had ceased to do so.

G.F. (Sumner).

NEW ZEALAND STATESMEN

Sir,—I hope that Dr. Scholefield will consider W. Downie Stewart's suggestion that he devote a separate volume to each of the twelve premiers dealt with in his *Notable New Zealand Statesmen*. It is a remarkable fact that we have no satisfactory life of Mr. Seddon. But I would like to see Mr. Stewart himself write the life of his hero Atkinson. We know far too little about the struggles of this brave man. Mr. Stewart's political and financial experience should enable him to treat Atkinson's thankless task with sympathy. Such a volume should form a welcome addition to his excellent life of Rolleston and life of Sir Francis Bell.

H. T. A. MCGAHAN (Matamata).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Anti Daisy (Auckland): You start off on the wrong foot—Aunt Daisy's trip was not financed by the taxpayers.

C. Higginson (Waikanae): Joan Hammond sang "Elegy" (Massenet). The other singer was Norman Allin, his item being "Think On Me."

"Fourth Commandment" (Palmerston North): It is not possible to make time available for all religious denominations irrespective of the number of adherents. The Central Religious Advisory Committee therefore allocates the available broadcasts on a proportionate basis to those denominations having a reasonably substantial number of adherents.