

AUGUST 29, 1947.

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Help for Britain

THE purpose of the Conference in Parliament Buildings last week was to consider how to help Britain, not how much to help. No New Zealander doubts that he should help to the limit of his resources—now, and until the crisis passes. But no New Zealander will help as recklessly as that. If it had been at all likely that we would help to our last penny and our last ounce of energy it would not have been necessary for the Prime Minister to call people together at all. But we are nearly all foolish and selfish. It requires all that the Government can do, all that preaching and example can do, to switch our minds away from our own immediate comforts and needs. Further, until we had it from Mr. Attlee himself what Britain's most urgent needs were, we could give ourselves reasons for doing very little. But we now know, not only how grave the crisis is, and how long it is likely to last, but what things we should do first if we are really going to fight by Britain's side. They are not unexpected things, and not one of them is beyond our present capacity: more food, food at the lowest possible price, a quicker turn-round of shipping, and no more imports than we can pay for as we go. We can do everything that Britain asks, and a good deal more, without endangering our own economy at a single critical point. On the positive side we have to work harder and produce more; on the negative side to live harder and consume less. Both of these contributions we can make without an approach to the austerity Britain has accepted every day since the beginning of the war. Therefore we must make them. The message from Britain was sent at our request. It was subdued and diffident, but entirely steady and calm. There was not a word of criticism in it, not a note of complaint. But the dullest among us knows that we would be permanently disgraced if Britain called and New Zealand did not answer.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

AUTHOR WANTED.

Sir,—Can any of your readers tell me who wrote this well-known passage: "I wholly disapprove of what you say but will defend to the death your right to say it?" "INQUIRER" (Wellington).

WHEN IS AN OBOE?

Sir,—You state that the oboe can be heard to advantage in "The Swan of Tuonela." It is some time since I listened to that work, but my recollection is that the main woodwind solo is for cor anglais. Off-hand I would suggest the introduction to Schubert's "Rosamunde" or Rossini's "Silken Ladder" overture as better examples.

A. M. FINLAY (House of Representatives).

WILD LIFE

Sir,—I strongly support R. H. Carter's letter on deer destruction. New Zealand bush is unsuited to the maintenance of herds of deer or of any game of that type. We either keep our forest and its natural bird life or we allow deer and goats to ruin the bush by killing off the protective undergrowth, rubbing the bark off the trees, or even chewing the bark and ring-barking the trees. Farmers who are interested in the preservation of the bush know how much harm is done by domestic cattle eating and trampling the undergrowth, and the harm done by domestic animals is much less than that done by deer, because the deer rely on the forest for their food. I know of farmers who have fenced off bush to keep their stock out and to allow the undergrowth and trees a chance. Mr. Wendell Endicott is no doubt used to a different type of forest in his own country where deer could do little damage. Photographs such as Mr. Carter supplies could be taken in almost any forest in New Zealand, since goats are to be found in those where deer are absent. Why should deer be allowed to ruin our forests just because a few sportsmen like to take a shooting trip once a year? A live stag is a much finer sight than its poor decapitated head, and a fine native tree the most soul-satisfying sight there is. It seems only common sense that the flora and fauna indigenous to a country should be preserved and encouraged and foreign importations restricted or strictly supervised. I am a lover of animals, but think that the deer and goats in our forest country should be killed off. Venison is good food and even the young goats would provide good food for Europe's hungry people.

DOROTHY H. SMITH
(Auckland).

Sir,—I have read Wendell Endicott's article on deer extermination in your July 11 issue with disgust. Here is revealed a visiting "sportsman," glorying in the large total of animals he and his fellow slaughterers might have been able to kill for "pleasure," had it not been for the extermination policy. . . . I've been a trumper in my time, and have years ago observed unmistakable damage done to the Wakatipu forests by deer, in barking and killing trees, eating the undergrowth, and so opening the bush—which leads to slips and erosion. Proof of this erosion is seen in the rapidly increasing deltas of the two rivers at the head of Lake Wakatipu. Those who see most of our virgin country testify most to the soil erosion that is going on.

The Internal Affairs Department must have had a vast amount of evidence of the destruction wrought by imported game before it could have been induced radically to change its former policy of conservation to one of extermination. Had the threat to our forests and our soil been foreseen when the deer species were first brought here to give lovers of killing something to kill, they would surely never have been imported. All honour to the Minister for Internal Affairs if he sticks to his present policy of "culling." The economic benefit arising from the deer-killing-for-pleasure "industry" is as nothing when compared to the economic loss from soil erosion.

F. K. TUCKER (Gisborne).

Sir,—H. Wendell Endicott has got hold of the wrong end of the right stick. He is rightly concerned about our wild life, but does not seem to be aware that New Zealand has its own beautiful and interesting birds and plants, without deer, chamois, etc. Most of these introduced animals are in any case so well established that it is unlikely they will

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ever be exterminated. Shooting because they have become a pest is necessary; shooting for sport is open to doubt.

If they are not kept down as much as possible what remains of New Zealand's forest will be either destroyed (helped by fire and careless milling) or so altered as to lose its present individual character. It was never intended by Nature to support browsing animals.

There is abundant evidence that deer do damage bush; young trees with all the shoots eaten, older ones with leaves stripped and branches broken. On hill country the effects of pigs and goats are more spectacular, the pig rootings starting small slips, which inevitably grow while animals remain to trample the soil and destroy young plants.

These things may have no immediate serious effect, but in the slow-growing New Zealand bush they will have for the future if deer and other introduced animals are not checked.

The Acclimatisation Societies no doubt pride themselves on having made New Zealand a "sportsman's paradise" with imported game, but the judgment of the future will be quite different if New Zealand thereby loses its own wild life.

N. ATKINSON (Wellington).

LATE ARRIVALS

Sir,—Under the above heading recently appeared an article apparently designed to scarify a considerable proportion of the music-lovers who attended the recent Boyd-Neel concerts at the Wellington Town Hall. According to the writer of that article, the fact that numbers of patrons were late in arriving was a most reprehensible act; he made no allowance at all for the delays and hold-ups almost inevitable when a large concourse of persons converges upon a single point; nor did he consider the human element which by long custom has acquired a certain latitude in the observance of punctuality.

There are those who deem it a fault on the part of concert-givers to be too punctual in commencing their programmes, and in my opinion during

the whole of his tour of New Zealand Mr. Boyd Neel was unduly and quite unnecessarily precise in this respect.

Other artists have shown, and continue rightly to show, a kindlier tolerance towards those patrons whose tardiness may be due to no fault of their own: and who, moreover, having paid for their seats, are entitled to occupy them before the music begins. This business of shutting people out and compelling them to kick their heels in draughty passage-ways during the pleasure of the conductor, savours too much of autocracy and dictatorship: while to expect such unfortunates to remain mute in their exile adds insult to injury. There is a point at which strict punctuality becomes an offence, and in my opinion Mr. Boyd Neel was guilty of it on several occasions.

L. D. AUSTIN (Wellington).

THE PARSLEY IN THE BUTTER

Sir,—Alan Mulgan is regrettably hypercritical in his dim opinion of Dr. Watson's standard of intelligence. He finds difficulty in believing that documents deposited by Dr. Watson in Cox's Bank at Charing Cross in London could find their way by 1922 to a bank at Crowborough. Actually, the solution is simple. Dr. Watson, as an ex-army officer, naturally dealt with Cox's Bank. But Cox's Bank was absorbed by Lloyds Bank in 1923. Therefore, towards the end of 1922 all valuable documents would be transferred from the London Branch of Cox and Co. to the Crowborough branch of Lloyds. Elementary, my dear Mulgan?

The Parsley in the Butter is a somewhat more difficult problem. Nevertheless I think it may be solved. If Mr. Mulgan cares to experiment with his butter ration and a sprig of parsley, he will find, on heating the butter, that the parsley will not sink into the butter. Therefore, we must deduce, as did Holmes, that the "butter" was not butter at all, but must have been some synthetic substance—probably an early attempt at margarine—which caused the sudden and dreadful demise of the Abernethy family.

FRANK BIRKINSHAW
(Auckland).

GISBORNE LISTENERS

Sir,—Are any listeners in New Zealand as poorly served as the residents of Gisborne? There are 16,000 of us in Gisborne proper, plus a large country population. Often reception of the main National stations is impossible and occasionally 2YH is completely obliterated by static, power noise and fading. We admittedly have two local stations, but the recordings are (from 2ZJ) at least seven or eight years old and I have actually heard two sound recordings which were more ancient than most presented in a session from 4ZB noted for its historic interest. We are to have a new station during the next ten years, but what till then? 2ZM is undoubtedly doing a good job under the existing circumstances, but it is obvious that private stations can not offer services comparable with the CBS.

A. E. GEORGE (Gisborne).

(We are informed that the New Zealand Broadcasting Service has had plans prepared for a number of years to improve the radio coverage of the Gisborne District. Owing to the war the Service has been unable to proceed with these plans as rapidly as would have been otherwise possible, but when materials and labour are available for building construction, it is intended to establish an up-to-date station to serve East Coast listeners. —Ed.)