

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

Price Threepence

APRIL 16, 1948

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## Free Thinking

IT is almost as dangerous to-day to call a man a free thinker as to call him a free liver or a free lover. Words are no longer what they used to be, and even our freedoms are changing before our eyes. If the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University had announced the other day that the Prague party was off because living and loving in its 600-year-old University were no longer free, he would have been regarded as a bad old man. But he did in fact say that in different words. He said that Oxford would not join in the celebrations because the University of Prague was now under political control—was told what truths it must love and from what knowledge it must turn away its eyes. The Oxford view was that communion of minds was impossible if truth had any price at all. He could of course have added that this is the view of British universities everywhere, but instead of saying that he added something a little more dramatic. He said that two-thirds of the cost of maintaining Oxford came from the Government, and that the day the Government presumed to say what should be taught or who should teach it Oxford (he hoped) would "fling their money back in their faces." We have probably forgotten in New Zealand that what has happened this month in the case of Prague happened 12 years ago in the case of Heidelberg; but we had better never forget that it could happen nearer home. It is at once the good fortune and the daily peril of the University of New Zealand that it is maintained more and more by the State without (so far) coming further under State control. If it can't be said that the Government has never interfered at all, it has not interfered often or very successfully, and has not done even that without arousing deep public uneasiness. But the danger is always there, and the only defence against it is to keep it constantly before our minds.

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

## VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE OFFICERS.

Sir,—In a letter published in your issue of March 25 over the signature of C. N. MacLean (Wanganui) there are three major errors of fact:—

(1) The positions to which he refers were advertised as "Assistant Vocational Guidance Officers"; i.e., junior positions normally held by people training for promotion.

(2) The possession of a Diploma in Education is an optional, not a compulsory, qualification, and some (not extensive) teaching experience was called for.

(3) The salary scale (£315-£415) is the range within which such junior officers are paid. The commencing salary is determined by qualifications, as in the case of entrants to the post-primary branch of the teaching service. There are three grades of positions above the level of Assistant Vocational Guidance Officer, for the highest of which there is a maximum salary of £565. In practice, a well qualified person entering the Vocational Guidance service as an Assistant would be eligible for promotion within two years. Your correspondent appears to have confused the qualifications possessed by experienced officers with those required of entrants to the service. A careful reading of the advertisement in the *Education Gazette* would have corrected your correspondent on points (1) and (2); he could have obtained details concerning (3) by application to the Public Service Commission or the Education Department.

For your information, I enclose a copy of the advertisement to which your correspondent refers. I shall be glad if you will publish the correction along the lines set out in the previous paragraph, as the misstatements in the original letter are likely to prejudice the Vocational Guidance service in the eyes of the public.

A. F. McMURTRIE

(Acting Director of Education.)

(The relevant passage from the advertisement reads as follows: "The Public Service Commission invites applications for the positions of Assistant Vocational Guidance Officer (Female), Auckland and Christchurch. Salary, £315 to £415 per annum, commencing salary according to qualifications. Applicants should have good educational qualifications, preferably a University degree, including psychology and/or education as subjects. Possession of a Diploma in Education an advantage. Some teaching experience is desirable."—Ed.)

## PAYING FOR TALENT

Sir,—What is the main objective of decent men in all walks of life? Surely it is to provide for themselves, their wives, and their families a reasonably good standard of living. The standard to which a man can attain in this respect depends upon the amount of remuneration he receives on account of such services as he may render to the community. One of the most noticeable features in this connection is the inequality of a very wide range, which prevails so far as the remuneration paid for different kinds of service is concerned. Strange to say, those who are engaged in the more desirable and attractive occupations receive from three to six times as much remuneration as do those in much more arduous and less desirable jobs. This, as a matter of course, implies that the wives and children of the latter are, in some

way not very clearly defined, regarded by society as a whole as being unworthy of the happier economic conditions enjoyed by those of the former.

If the present wide range of inequality of pay is to be maintained surely it is only reasonable to suggest that those who are engaged in the most essential services should receive the higher rates. Among these would be included those who are engaged in the production and distribution of food, clothing, shelter, and the many amenities necessary to the enjoyment of a high standard of living. Our professors and scientists have, of course, a useful but not absolutely essential

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function to fulfil, but society could far better dispense with their services than it could with those of the other class referred to. If essentiality and arduousness decided the issue so far as rates of payment for services rendered are concerned professors and scientists would be well down towards the bottom of the list. Those who think that the present unequal rates of pay for different services rendered are justifiable might be asked to put forward some moral, ethical, or even legal justification for their attitude in this respect. They will have a somewhat difficult if not an impossible task.

R. S. MACKAY (Auckland).

Sir,—In answer to "Graduate" I feel that I must make the following comments: (1) Like all those who criticise a professor's long vacations, "Graduate" shelters under a nom-de-plume. I challenge him to come out into the open and investigate my working hours. He can shadow me at any time he chooses. I am quite sure the surprise would be all on his side. Since coming to New Zealand I have never worked fewer than 60 hours per week for 49 or 50 weeks in the year and a good 10 in the other two. This includes research, which is the most important part of a professor's duty.

(2) During the two years here my "extra" earnings have been well under £100 but I have spent over £100 in typing, books, and journals made necessary by inadequate facilities here. I still subscribe to as many journals as the department does.

(3) I want to make it clear that any efforts to secure better pay for those at the top of the profession automatically create a precedent, if successful, for raising the salaries of all other academic workers in universities and allied institutions.

(4) In fairness to my homeland I must make it very clear that England did not "fail to retain me." The same is probably true of all of us who have come. In my own case my income in England from all sources was very nearly the same as it is now. Indeed, I came to New Zealand two years ago at a small financial loss. My superannuation, research and clerical conditions were far better than they are here. I came because New Zealand offers unique opportunities and experience to botanists; not because of Social Security or any other man-made facilities, but because of natural gifts that were here

before professors or graduates. In addition, British Universities have always encouraged experience abroad and the fact that graduates are prepared to come to get this experience does not mean that New Zealand should not make her conditions (and these include more than salaries) attractive.

(5) There are two remarks of Mr. Childs that I cannot pass without comment—(a) There may be a world-wide tendency towards greater equality of rates of payment, but in the one country where this has been carried to the extreme, namely the U.S.S.R., I believe that it is true to say that academic persons still receive more favoured treatment than others; (b) Whilst it is true that scientific knowledge made by New Zealanders abroad will benefit New Zealand, nevertheless, unless she can retain a percentage of her more distinguished brains, indigenous and imported, she will not be able to maintain flourishing schools of research, nor will she attract other distinguished scholars.

(6) I fail to see why the ever-popular subject of New Zealand State education must make its way into a controversy on salaries for academic workers, but as "Graduate" makes the point I feel I must take him up. He has obviously not kept in touch with developments in England during the last 10 years. It is a very common occurrence for boys and girls from State secondary schools to win major scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge every year. I would without hesitation challenge any boy or girl of 17-18 from a New Zealand State secondary school to sit these papers and acquit himself well. I would be the first to withdraw all my criticisms if I were proved wrong. But until education here can compete with that at Home I do not feel it fair to throw it out as an attraction to workers here, and most of our "imports" after all do come from England.

V. J. CHAPMAN

(Professor of Botany, Auckland University College).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

## GATHERING CLOUDS.

Sir,—Your leader starts off well with a cry of impatience with those who speak of war. But when you say that nearly everybody knows why the clouds are gathering you over-estimate either the wisdom or the credulity of most of us.

Unless we are brainless, you suggest we shall keep our heads. What, by your own criterion, are we then to think of your concluding remark that resistance to preparation for war is certain to hurry on the calamity? Since even talking of war is dangerous, as you point out, can preparing to wage it be less so?

Or are we to understand your message (in spite of your commendable sense of "the folly of provocation in public utterances") to be: "Praise God—and pile up the atom-bombs!"

R. GOODMAN (Auckland).

(Our correspondent will find the answers to his questions if he gives a little more attention to what we said and a little less to the attempt to score a point against us.—Ed.)

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

"Grandfather" (Wanganui): Thank you for the expression of your preference. However, the world news is considered to be more important to the listener without special local interests in the United Kingdom.

"Sufferer" (Auckland): Announcer no longer in the service.