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Children From Britain

IT is clear that there is still some doubt in the public mind about the implications of the child migration scheme from the United Kingdom. The interviews reported on pages 6 and 7 of this issue suggest that, if there is no real opposition to the scheme, there is a desire for more information, and that even where interest has been aroused, few decisions have been made that will start children on their way to New Zealand. In itself that is not disturbing. But it will be unfortunate if the desire for fuller information settles at last into an excuse for doing nothing at all. Most of the questions put to our investigators were natural and reasonable questions which it would be foolish just to brush aside. But there is one strong answer to them all. New Zealand needs more children, and many thousands of children in Great Britain need a better chance in life than Britain can at present offer them. If they are difficult children, most of them will cease to be difficult when they find themselves in a new country with new and exciting experiences. If their parents are irresponsible, that is a very good reason why they themselves should get another chance. New Zealand has room for them, health and happiness for them in at least nine cases in ten; and the tenth will often surprise us pleasantly too. But they can't come unless we show that we want them, and if we think that we are too old or too poor or too crowded or too complicated to answer their call—as some of us in fact are—we should ask ourselves a question or two before we close our ears. It is proper to ask the questions about them that most of us are asking; but they arise only when we have put some questions to ourselves—beginning with this: In what other country to-day in the civilised world is there so wide a margin of ease and plenty?

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

PROBLEMS OF THE PACIFIC
Sir,—In *The Listener* of October 8 your book notes contain a two-sentence acknowledgment of *Riptide in the Pacific*, a pamphlet issued by the Auckland University College Labour Club. The aim of the club (implied, if not stated in so many words) in issuing this pamphlet is to draw attention to the serious problems of the Pacific—problems of which the majority of New Zealanders are abysmally ignorant. The six articles are written by men whose status in the community demands a respectful hearing: they all have master's degrees and they all hold appointments in our highest educational institution—the university. Two of them are former Rhodes Scholars and at least two know the Far East from first-hand observations, as well as, like the others, from study. What they have to say may not be palatable to some and may be disputed by others, but it is worthy of being considered seriously. Therefore it is regrettable that *The Listener*, which appears to make some effort to maintain a sense of real values, should see fit to dismiss this publication with what can only be described as a cheap sneer.

ROHAN BELL (Grey Lynn).
(The important point surely is whether the comment was accurate or not.—Ed.)

Sir,—I feel that I must take you to task for your remarks on *Riptide in the Pacific*. You say that the writers are "generally more sympathetic to the new democracy of Eastern Europe than to the democracy that has permitted publication."

This is a direct affront to the liberal tradition which *The Listener* and most New Zealanders wish to uphold. Do we not regard unfettered freedom of speech and writing as one of the essential features of that tradition? Do we wish to submit to censorship? The implications of these remarks, are, I fear, undemocratic and to be condemned.

J. H. HANHAM (New Lynn).
(We must suppose that our correspondent read us standing on his head or that his copy by some accident was printed upside down.—Ed.)

A YANK AT THE BBC?

Sir,—To one who had looked forward to the Scriptural readings by one Stanley Maxted from the National stations it came as a distinct and unpleasant shock to realise that we were listening to the accents of America. If this assumption is incorrect, some who tend to deprecate the intrusion of American influence in New Zealand life would be glad to learn that they are mistaken.

KENNETH THOMAS (Orakei).
(You are, Stanley Maxted is a Canadian of mixed Kentish and Scottish ancestry who joined the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1933 and was seconded to the BBC in 1940. He went into Arnhem with the 1st Airborne Division on September 17, 1944, and came out with the remnants of that force nine days later. During these nine days it was his voice which described the changing fortunes of that action.—Ed.)

M. KAY-EE

Sir,—When I first read the name of the newest French Premier I set to work to find out how it should be pronounced. I seemed to find that the eight letters produced five sounds, which resolved themselves into three agreeable syllables. Quite comfortable and agreeable. Try it. K with the vowel in *her*

plus the vowel in *bean* plus consonant with the vowel in *hat*: Keiya. It is quite impossible to express the sounds in the English alphabet because we use e for three sounds, i for two, perhaps three, y for two, and a for four. That merely by the way. What a shock I got when I began to hear the announcers on the radio pronouncing the word Kay-ee. Surely, I said, the announcers are wrong for once. Surely the first vowel should be that in *her*. Presuming, I further argued, that the announcers are correct, how will they pronounce amateur and liqueur. I consulted a dictionary of repute, but perhaps of old date, and it gave me the choice of saying either *amatyure* or *amatayr*, but said definitely that the final vowel in liqueur was that in *her*. Up to now I had hoped to find that the French language, however tricky, still had a regular system of indicating sounds—that letters or combinations of letters had a constant value—that wherever they were found they always indicated the same sound. Am I to be disillusioned as regards this comfortable doctrine? Without tears I abandon my third syllable, knowing well how the French, like others much nearer home, delight to clip their words, but I will need convincing that French combinations of letters have variable value. However, I would get a good laugh if somebody were to prove that the combination *eu* has one sound when used medially and another sound when it is used finally. **ALPHA** (Stratford).

MAORI ON THE AIR

Sir,—I agree with those correspondents who hold that the majority of Maoris are not concerned to keep their language in its original purity. As a schoolmaster in a certain school I used to appeal to a big Maori girl in Form II for the correct pronunciation of Maori place names. I could get no authoritative answers. One day I asked her why, and she said, "I can't speak Maori at all. We always speak English at home."

"You ought to be ashamed," I said. "You have a poetic and expressive language and you don't bother to speak it." I went on with my lessons; but interrupted it shortly to say, "I owe you an apology, Mary. I cannot speak my language, which is Scottish Gaelic. We both need somebody to scold us."

A worse feature is the speaking of "Maori-ised" English common in many settlements. Airing my scant stock of Maori phrases to a Maori youth, I used the word "pirangi" which I understand to mean "like", or "enjoy." He didn't know it, and when I asked what word he used, said, "raika"—just a Maorified form of the English word.

At the same time I cannot see that we pakehas have any right to take liberties with the language.

E. H. MACKAY (Sandringham).

Sir,—I was surprised to see what irrelevant indignation was aroused by my request for better pronunciation of Maori. Your correspondents are obviously unaware that the term "Pakeha Maori" implies sympathy, interest, and understanding towards the Maori people. One correspondent says that Maoris habitually Anglicise their own place names. That is very true, in that their innate tact will not permit them to appear to correct the Pakeha in his

atrocious pronunciation. But let your correspondent overhear Maoris talking together, and he will find the names given their tone value.

To draw a parallel between New Zealand and U.S.A. is not only a false analogy—it is an insult to our Maori people. The American Negro has never had a language, let alone any culture. However, this whole point is totally irrelevant.

PAKEHA MAORI
(Havelock North).

PROGRAMME PATTERNS

Sir,—That radio is still in its infancy is shown by the fact that programmes so often jump from one type to another with no attempt at consistency or continuity. Individuality as between stations does not exist. There should be more high-powered stations each with an individuality and each different, so that listeners would get to know their type and tune to their choice. We have a right to expect consistency just as surely as when we attend a picture theatre, vaudeville, concert, ballet, play or wrestling match. The confused mentalities of those who imagine they want all these things mixed should not be allowed to make policy.

G. BLAIKIE (Invercargill).

"RIDERS TO THE SEA"

Sir,—In his criticism of *Riders to the Sea* your commentator obviously missed Synge's purpose in writing the play: to portray in dramatic fashion the terrible tragedy that is life on those windswept, waveswept, almost barren islands off the west coast of Ireland. Had Synge added the story of a whole hooker-full of young emigrants for America being lost in a bay a little further north when the boat capsized through their eagerness to see the ship that was to take them overseas he still would not have over-painted the picture, which lost nothing other than necessary shortening in its presentation in the Belfast studios of the BBC.

"Too much agony"—that is the story of the wild west of Ireland, and it is well told in *Riders to the Sea*.

"BLAZER" (Bombay).

REQUEST ITEMS

Sir,—I wish to protest against a habit which some stations have of "cutting down" on a listener's request item, and only playing part I. Very often it is part II. which is most enjoyable, or even contains the end of a tale, etc. This habit is especially noticeable at Commercial stations, and during humorous items. There is little enough humour in life, and not nearly enough on the air, so why have it curtailed? One friend in hospital wrote to me and said "we love request sessions, and if only there were more humorous items we would all forget our troubles."

CHEERLESS (Eketahuna)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Tui (Mt. Eden) and **Irate Tui** (Hamilton East): Radio New Zealand transmits daily from 0700-0900 GMT and has these call signs and frequencies: ZL2 on 9.54 mc/s., in 31-metre band, ZL3 on 11.78 mc/s. in 25-metre band, ZL4 on 15.28 mc/s. in 19-metre band.

Mamie Hall (Christchurch): You may be right. Our article was based on a feature in the *National Geographic Magazine* written by Anton Lang Jr., and on references to the play in *The Times*. We find on further investigation that in 1935 there were more than 30 families of the name of Lang (and in them several Antons) living in Oberammergau.