

its invader. On March 21 we announced the sending to Egypt of a New Zealand Broadcasting Unit; on April 5 we had a memorial number to the Rt. Hon. M. J. Savage; the same issue contained the first appearance of *People in the Programmes* (but in a different form from now); May 31 saw the beginning of a long-running feature called *Did You Hear This?* consisting of extracts from radio talks; on June 21 all readers received a copy of Our National Song, "God Defend New Zealand," and on the same date we marked the entry of Italy into the war with an editorial entitled "Now the Vultures."

On August 9, with Issue No. 59, our editorial face was redder than it has ever been since, because of an article—and particularly a poster—about the American elections and the symbols of Ass and Elephant used by the two main parties in it. A good many people probably by now know the reason for our embarrassment, but the time has not yet come to tell the story in full in public. We have, of course, had many other causes to blush in retrospect—when we suggested that Gamelin was the greatest general since Napoleon; the article headed "Singapore is Impregnable"; the time we sent Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-tail to bed, along with Peter for being naughty little rabbits, and, more recently, the "Seddon" photograph.

Our circulation in 1940 was 40,000 (compared with approximately 90,000 to-day); we had already had to come down to 48 pages in size and been forced to drop several features, including the programme chart in the centre; there was a new make-up for the programme section, incorporating the 2B stations with the Nationals; on October 25 Ignaz Friedman was with us; and on November 15 we presented a gift portrait of Winston Churchill which a good many of our readers liked but some didn't. Film notes by G.M. had appeared regularly since our seventh issue, of August 11, 1939, and the heading *Speaking Candidly* was also being used, but it was not until November 29, 1940, that the Little Man made his debut in this feature. From this time on and for a fairly long period, the cinema was a good deal in evidence in our pages, with special pictorial features from time to time for such films as *The Great Dictator*, *Fantasia*, *Gone With the Wind*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *World of Plenty*, and *Henry V* (Sir James Shelley wrote for us his personal impressions of the last-named).

PORTRAIT PERIOD

SIMULTANEOUSLY and to a very much greater degree, of course, the war was making an increasingly marked impact on our pages. There was the coming of conscription in New Zealand, the beginning of our *Citizen Into Soldier* series (on February 14, 1941); the Lessons in Morse and the Lessons in French; the arrival home of the first casualties, Hess's flight to Scotland, and a gift portrait of Major-General B. C. Freyberg (all on May 23). On July 4 we took notice of Russia's entry into the war, and the same issue contained a gift portrait of Roosevelt. (This was what might be called our Portrait Period, because we had another, of Mr. Fraser, on September 19 of the same year, and one of Her Majesty the Queen with Princess Margaret Rose in our Christmas number of December 12.) And more and more at this time this aspect or that of the war came into our pages through the BBC talks which we printed. . . . talks by Vansittart (the

Black Record controversy raged in the correspondence columns for weeks), Laski, Hugh Walpole, Dr. William Temple, Wickham Steed, J. B. Priestley ("our propaganda is simply terrible"), and many others.

Still, it was not all war. Noel Coward was in New Zealand and talked to us; contributors deluged us with a series entitled *It Happened to Me*; such names as D. O. W. Hall, H. C. D. Somerset, F. L. W. Wood, F. L. Combs, and J. C. Beaglehole were starting to appear fairly regularly in our book review columns; Professor F. Sinclair wrote for us; in 1941 there was a Children's Page with a serialisation of Stella Morice's *Book of Wiremu*; and Dr. Muriel Bell and Dr. H. B. Turbott had started to give us Advice on Health.

WAR IN THE PACIFIC

IN our issue of December 19, 1941, we recorded Japan's entry into the war, and on January 23, 1942, it was noted editorially that "The War Comes to *The Listener*." . . . "Everything we do, whether it is done well or done badly, is done with greater difficulty than in times of peace," the specific occasion for this comment being a newsprint crisis and a drop to 40 pages from the accustomed 56 or 48. We were to fall still lower later—to 32 pages only—and it may be as well to notice at this point the contortions which the war forced on our shape as well as our size, three times reducing us to narrow-gauge by cutting a column off our width.

But the war was affecting more than our physical appearance; as it crept closer to this country it was more and more overshadowing the daily lives of all New Zealanders, and this was being shown in our pages. We started printing E.P.S. talks and advice; and round about May 8 *The Listener*, as well as the public, was reacting sharply to the presence of American marines and sailors in our midst without (in our case) actually saying that they were here—for security reasons. "Our Girls and the Americans" was an article from this period which attracted a good deal of notice. A corresponding interest by



America in us was testified to by the increasing numbers of American journalists who visited New Zealand to accumulate background and who were interviewed by *The Listener*.

At the same time, the symposia type of article was becoming more and more frequent, with the emphasis increasingly on the post-war world; we collected opinions from all and sundry on such topics as education and reconstruction, the United Nations, the Campaign for Christian Order, the effect of war on shopping manners, *The World We Want* and *The World We Expect*, and so on. Russia, too, was more and more a subject for description, comment, and argument (to mention a case at random, on August 28, 1942, a regular contributor A.M.R. wrote an article about Stalin-grad which showed that we were not always wrong). India also, and particularly Gandhi, was of interest — *The Listener* probably did more than any other New Zealand paper to present little-known aspects of the man and his philosophy. And from about the end of 1942 dates our considerable interest in China (with some concentration on Rewi Alley).

Life continued to be not wholly serious; there were verses of Whim-Wham, and Music Notes by Marsyas, Simple Stories and Listening While I Work (the forerunner of *Radio Viewsreel*). And overlooked in this survey until now but a very old companion—it started a year after *The Listener*—the Crossword Puzzle of R.W.C. was pleasing its devotees every week.

Highlights of 1944 were the Free Supplement on The House of Representatives on March 31: four pages on April 28 devoted to A. P. Gaskell's football story *One Hell of a Caper*, and from June onward, D-day and its repercussions.

PEACE BREAKS OUT

WE must press on. The next year was notable, on February 16, for our story about the Sheep That Went to China (but didn't get there that time), for "Back in My Tracks: A Native Returns to Central Otago" (a foretaste of the *Sundowner* series), for our Victory Issue on May 11, when we threw out all

advertisements except those on the programme pages, and for the visit of Gracie Fields in August. That same month the Atom Bomb hit the world and *The Listener* then and thereafter tried to estimate what it meant. On August 24 we published a short story, *The First Leaf Falls*, which we had rejected a month or so before as being too fantastic; it was about an atom-bomb raid.

On October 12 we interviewed Robert Gibbings; on November 16 James Bertram started a series of articles about Japan; the name of UNRRA, and its local subsidiary CORSO, figured often in interviews and articles. Then on February 8, 1946, *The Listener* went to Tokio in the person of its Editor, and on March 22 began publishing his impressions of Ten Days in Japan; on May 10 we made a deal with *The New Yorker* which, for a time, added something to the gaiety of the nation: so did A.A.'s interview, on June 28, with Professor Allen, the Chocolate Nightingale and Human Submarine. On July 5 there was the official announcement of the formation of the National Symphony Orchestra, and by March 21 of the following year the Orchestra was a reality: in that issue J. C. Beaglehole's review of its first performance caused something of a flutter.

RECENT HISTORY

THE rest is such relatively recent history that it is not necessary, even if it were possible, to do more than skim through the files and notice a few highlights . . . such as the start of the *Sundowner* series (on October 11, 1946), Beatrice Ashton's American Impressions, and J. H. Sorenson's notes on the wildlife of the Sub-Antarctic. The celebration of Otago's Centennial in 1948 was marked by a special issue, and with "Sundowner" himself then on the right side of Cook Strait the South Island continued to figure regularly and prominently in the pages. "Sundowner's" wanderings continued to be chronicled until March of this year, but even after the New Zealand journey was completed, *The Listener* continued to reflect that interest in the land, and in New Zealand life, which so strongly characterised "Sundowner's" journalistic odyssey.

To complete this survey with a few general impressions drawn from the post war issues; one notices a continuing interest in education (many articles and talks on the University, UNESCO, etc.), a growing preoccupation with science, and a good deal more space devoted to the facts and personalities of radio (due to some extent to the opening of several new transmitters). At the same time *The Listener*, having early established itself as a forum for ideas, has maintained that reputation. One cannot mention all the names, but through our pages thousands have heard for the first time of McCormick, Holcroft, Combs, Henderson, Beaglehole, Fairburn, Gordon, Wadman, Sargeson, Vogt, Mulgan, Somerset. We may perhaps be allowed to repeat what was said some years ago about us by a contributor: he pointed out that, in *The Listener* "there is often a question-mark at the end of a statement in the heading—*Training Society to Think?* is the name of one such article. It seems to be the aim of the whole staff."

A Message from The Director

IT is no mean achievement for a weekly journal to have established in the short period of 10 years a reputation as high as that held among its readers by "The Listener."

Born in the shadow of war and nurtured under difficult wartime and post-war conditions "The Listener" has had no easy upbringing. Wise editorial direction and a devoted staff have, however, successfully steered the paper through these difficulties and to-day we in the New Zealand Broadcasting Service are proud of this member of our family.

On this, "The Listener's" tenth birthday, the New Zealand Broadcasting Service records its intention to do all it can to enable "The Listener" to continue on the same high plane its service to the listening and reading public of New Zealand.

WM. YATES,

Director of Broadcasting.