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LISTENER

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Facing the Facts

IN his speech in Auckland last week, Mr. Fraser emphasised the necessity of "facing the facts" in the war situation. But most of us are shy before facts. Instead of facing them we try to slip past without looking at them, and in extreme cases deny their presence.

There are, however, three war facts that it is useless to try to forget.

The first is the fact that a German victory would mean worse things for Britain to-day than it meant to France seventy years ago. It would mean worse things for New Zealand than any New Zealander has ever known or can easily imagine. It would mean worse things for freedom than any democracy has known since the French revolution.

The second is the fact that victory for Germany is a possibility. To-day, as twenty-five years ago, we are fighting an enemy whose courage and skill are equal to our own and whose preparations are at least a year further advanced. We have greater resources, but neither our man-power nor our material strength can be fully employed at short notice. They can in fact only be marshalled for use behind the ceaseless watch of the Navy. That watch will be maintained at a cost. But if, while it is being maintained, the rest of us slack, our peril will be greater than it has ever been since August, 1914. And let us not forget that twice at least between the beginning and the end of that last war we were within two or three days of utter disaster.

The third is the fact that the victory we seek, and the result we must never cease to aim at, is the liberation of all nations from brigandage. Mr. Fraser, as we have pointed out before, takes risks. He says what he thinks and expresses what he feels. But if it is dangerous to say that we seek a victory, not for one nation but for all, and settled peace and happiness for all, it is dangerous to believe our eyes in clear daylight.

There is no need for alarm if we do our duty. There is almost no ground for hope if we shirk.

CRUSADE OF PRAYER

National Eucharistic Congress

This Special Message to "The Listener" has been received from His Grace Archbishop O'Shea

THE National Eucharistic Congress which is being held in Wellington, February 1-4, is intended to be a profession of Faith in Almighty God and a public acknowledgment of the Kingship of His Divine Son. It was originally intended to be the contribution of the Catholic body in New Zealand to the Centennial Celebrations to show our gratitude to God and the civil authorities and our goodwill and co-operation with all our fellow citizens in honouring the first hundred years of our existence as a Dominion in the Commonwealth of Nations.

As Catholics and Citizens we have much to be thankful for; a wholesome toleration amongst the people of the country; freedom to live our own lives; a rich and beautiful country called a "terrestrial Paradise" by one of my Episcopal brethren in France, who, alas, cannot be with us for the Congress because of this unhappy war.

The outbreak of war after our preparations were well begun, afforded another motive for deciding to go on with our project, and to make it a Crusade of Prayer for World Peace before the work of spiritual and material destruction has gone too far to save Christianity and Civilisation, both in the Old World and the New.

May the Congress serve to bring home to all New Zealanders, no matter their religious affiliations, that it is the supernatural alone which counts and that all the frantic striving after the material things of life and the neglect of the spiritual, leads to social injustice and its consequences as seen to-day can end only in general despair and ruin.

May the Congress and the faith that inspired it, bring peace and happiness not only to New Zealand but to the great world beyond!

+ Thomas O'Shea.
Archbishop of Wellington.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

MESSAGE FROM BURBLETON

To the Editor,
"The Listener,"

Sir,—Some time ago I wrote to you re a BBC recording from 3YA: "An Hour in Burbleton." Part of the recording was a rendering by a concertina band from Tottington, which is in Bury, in Lancashire, and you will remember that I wrote saying how I remembered that band. (By the way, I haven't heard that record since. I would like to).

Well, I wrote to the conductor of this band, and he forwarded me a photograph, and also a very nice letter. You may publish a copy of the photograph if you wish.

Wishing "The Listener" every success,

Yours, etc.,

J. Phillpotts.

Wanganui,
January 10, 1940.

(A reproduction of the photograph appears on page 27).

MORE WAGNER, PLEASE!

To the Editor,
"The Listener"

Dear Sir,—I'm not writing these lines to complain about yodellers, crooners or swing; I don't really care what you put on the air, or whether your baritones sing of legs and the woman or arms and the man—my request is for only one thing: Please put a little more Wagner on, I like to have Richard on tap. Some people, I know, wish he'd never been born, but I'm not that kind of a chap. My wife hates "Tanhauser," and "Tristan" annoys her, but I love the noise and the blaring, and surely some others must feel much the same, so why not give Wagner an airing?

It's true, I can listen to Brahms and Beethoven—They have rhythm and substance and colour—I'm surely not fussy, I quite like Debussy, Mozart, Cesar Franck or Fats Waller. But I must say I like some red blood in my meat, so kindly attend when I holler: Please put a little more Wagner on, I like to have Richard on call. It may not be loyal to love him so much, but can I be blamed if I fall? I know he's a German, like Adolf and Hermann, and may have been morally rotten but, please, for the sake of all listeners like me, keep Wagner from being verboten!

Yours, etc.,
IRIDEUS.

Auckland,
January 9, 1940.

TALL STORY

To the Editor,
"The Listener"

Sir,—Would you please extend to me the benefit of your advice on the following?

A short time ago, I was spending an evening with some newly wed friends. As is almost inevitable, I was proudly shown the handsome clock presented by the hubby's firm. This led to a conversation on the subject of time pieces, and eventually the company got to discussing the age of venerable old clocks they knew of.

One apparently honest looking man eventually rocked the whole gathering by saying his grandfather (in England) had a grandfather clock which was so old that the shadow of the pendulum moving backwards and forwards had worn a distinct mark on the wall.

Is this likely?

Yours, etc.,
SUSPICIOUS

Fairlie,
January 4, 1940.