



PROF. ARNOLD WALL

WHEN DOCTORS DISAGREE

(Written for "The Listener" by Prof. Arnold Wall)

should expect them to observe and follow. One or other of the gentlemen mentioned is not doing this.

Appeal to History

Perhaps it will be best, in order to know how we stand in respect of this very "doubtful" word, to consider the historical evidence, noting first that the BBC recommends the stressed "-lies" in "allies"; the stressed "-ly" in both the noun and the verb "ally"; and the stressed "-lied" in "allied"; but prescribes the stressed "all-" in the expression "allied forces," so that it is, at the moment of writing, the morning (our morning) announcer, with his "allies," who is the good boy.

The best eighteenth century authority, in my judgment, is John Walker, whose "Critical Pronouncing Dictionary" was published in 1791 and ran through more than fifty editions. Walker was not only a good authority but a very careful scholar, and he saves the inquirer a world of trouble in the case of words which are in doubt by quoting the opinions of all his predecessors in this field and balancing the account. Here is what he has to say upon "allies" and "ally" as pronounced in 1791: "a few years ago there was an affectation of pronouncing this word, when a noun, with the accent on the first syllable; and this had an appearance of precision from the general custom of accenting nouns in this manner, when the same word, as a verb, had the accent on the last: but a closer inspection into the analogies of the language showed this pronunciation to be improper as it interfered with a universal rule, which was, to pronounce

the y like e (he means short i as in "fully") in a final unaccented syllable. But whatever was the reason of this novelty, it now seems to have subsided; and this word is generally pronounced with the accent on the second syllable, as it is uniformly marked by all the orthoëpists in our language." From this we learn that the recommendation of the BBC has tradition behind it, and that all the eighteenth century authorities were agreed upon the correctness of the stressed "-lies."

When Speakers Rebel

Now comes the question: what happens when the great majority of speakers insist upon some "new" or unorthodox pronunciation in spite of the prescriptions of authority? The answer is not easy. When, indeed, the majority is overwhelming, as has happened in very many cases, authority has to give in, and the "new" pronunciation becomes the standard. This has happened, for example, with "Rome," which we pronounce to rhyme with "home," whereas our ancestors called it "Room," and Walker, in 1791, thought that "Room" was "irrevocably fixed"; and with "satire," which was pronounced in four different ways, of which our way is not one. The difficulty arises when, as in the case under scrutiny, the two pronunciations, the traditional and the innovation, are more or less equally favoured by two parties of speakers. It is of no use to insist on the old if the new seems bound to be victorious, and I am regretfully compelled to admit that the stressed "all" in "allies" has now very strong backing, though the

BBC will not countenance it. I have noticed, as no doubt many others have done, that many public speakers in England now use the stressed "all-", so that the BBC Committee in seeking to discredit it is perhaps only leading a forlorn hope. Time will show.

Insubordination in BBC

I may add that this is by no means the only case in which the announcers of the BBC, or some of them, disregard their instructions or recommendations. Among these acts of insubordination, if that is not too strong a term, I have noted the following: "accomplish" as "accumplish"; "negotiation" as "negoss-"; instead of "negosh-"; "bulletin" as "bulleteen," instead of "-in"; "three-pence" as "thripp-" instead of "threpp-"; and "launch" as "lahnch" instead of "lawrch," which last is in much the same position as "allies" in that it was pronounced as "lahnch" by the late King George V. who perhaps gave the old-fashioned pronunciation a new lease of life. In all these examples the recommendations of the BBC have been disregarded by some of their own officers, who, by ignoring them, are making confusion worse confounded instead of giving the public a clear lead in such difficult circumstances. I am not suggesting that the announcer who says "lahnch" or "accumplish" should be sacked, but it does seem a pity that the desirable unanimity cannot be achieved by some milder means.

A recorded talk by Professor Arnold Wall on "The Meaning of Words" will be heard from 4YA, Dunedin, on Friday, July 12, at 7.30 p.m.

"ALLIES" or "allies," that is the question. Are we, ought we, to stress the "all" or the "lies"? Listeners, we say, never hear good of themselves, but what about announcers? Everybody has a radio set now, and everybody, I suppose, listens to the broadcasts from Daventry at least once every day; many listen to them, or may do if they like, every time they come. And all those listeners who take an interest in the pronunciation of English must have noticed that the announcers of the BBC are not of one mind with respect to the stressing of "allies." Just now the man whose broadcast reaches us in the mornings usually stresses the word on "-lies," but the one whom we hear in the evenings stresses the "all." Now this is greatly to be regretted, for many reasons, not the least weighty of which is the fact that the BBC provides its announcers with instructions as to the pronunciation of doubtful words, which instructions we

CAN RADIO COMPETE WITH THIS?

Advertising That Smells

YOU can listen to radio, and before the war you could look at the artists in your radio set, if you lived in London. The movies started as "lookies" only, and became "talkies." Radio started as a "talkie" only, and was graduating to the "lookie" stage in the years B.H. (*)

But neither the cinema nor the radio has yet managed to compete successfully with the latest idea in newspaper advertising.

The story comes, of course, from America, where the great newspaper-buying public of the U.S.A. is now smelling its advertisements as well as seeing them.

*Before Hitler

Here is The News

The facts are substantiated by a statement in a recent issue of the English publication "The Advertising World."

On November 1, 1939, the "Indianapolis Star" carried a half page advertisement for a brand of perfume, and started something new in daily paper advertising. Over a picture of the perfume's container appeared the sentence:

The illustration in this advertisement is scented with ——— Perfume.

Readers duly sniffed, and found that cold print was perfumed for the first time.

On December 14, the second scented advertisement appeared in the "Rochester Sun." The advertisement carried the headline:

Right on this page of paper we bring you the ACTUAL SCENT of the romantic new ———

Next came the Oklahoma "Tribune," giving 70,000 readers a whiff of the advertiser's wares.

Finally, to prove that sniffy advertising had come to stay, the "Chicago Daily Tribune" printed the scent of roses into an advertisement reaching a circulation of 1,000,000.

An Original Idea

The "Advertising World" acknowledges that the use of perfume in ink had been developed some years before, but that its application to newspaper advertising was entirely original.

The three newspapers mentioned are believed to be the pioneers.

It was found when the first experiments were made that the addition of perfume to the ink thinned it down too much. So they thickened the ink and then added the perfume. When the ink was thickened, it was found that the colour had been altered, so an intermediate process had to be introduced to counteract this.

Although the perfume oil could just as easily be added to black ink, there remained the problem of confining the scent in the newspaper to the single advertisement to which it applied. This was overcome by the printers using the perfumed ink in a separate feeder foun-

tain on their presses. To distinguish it further, coloured ink was used.

Cost Not Excessive

Another difficulty was the fact that the best of perfumes lost their advertising value (to put it politely) after going through the presses. Experiment soon found means of avoiding this however, and it is claimed now that the process has come to stay.

Cost had not been found to be excessive. On a run of more than one million papers the Chicago "Tribune" found that the extra cost was not more than £40.

When *The Listener* advertising staff was shown this announcement they asked us to be careful to say that advertising that smells does not find its way into our columns. "It shtinks" is all they say to that sort of material; but they don't mean quite the same thing.

Perhaps some day we may do without a poster and rely on customers' noses for our sales. Meanwhile, if you sniff, you will smell only ink and paper, and the NBS engineers assure us that no wavelength at present in use will put perfume through your loudspeaker. But these days, of course, anything might happen.