

The Price

IT is natural that questions should be asked about the fighting in Greece and Crete. Questions are being asked. People wish to know in New Zealand, they are demanding assurances everywhere, that the cost of these battles has been properly incurred. Was defeat foreseen? Was the action taken justified by the results? These are not merely natural questions—they are necessary; and the Government has shown its appreciation of the situation by calling Parliament together this week.

But it is one thing to ask questions, and another to indulge in recriminations; one thing to be sore, another thing to complain of the pain, and blame others for it. It is not merely astonishing, but pitiable and depressing, that anyone should think such thoughts as those expressed by the correspondent on this page who complains that New Zealanders have been given the "roughest stuff" in the Middle East and British troops the easy places. If it were permissible to argue such questions, it would be found that the facts lie all the other way. In Greece and Crete New Zealanders have been in rough places, gone to them proudly and endured them gloriously, but they did not go alone to them, they did not remain alone in them, and for nearly the whole course of the war previously they had remained in comparative safety. If there is one thing that would worry them more than anything that has yet happened to them it would be a suggestion that they should be given any kind of preferential treatment but the honour of being first into the "roughest stuff" and last out.

Let us not forget what war is; what happened to our division on the Somme and at Passchendaele; and what has happened to so many other divisions during the present war. Above all let us not forget the work of the navy, of the air force, of the mine-sweepers, and of the merchant marine, without which no New Zealand soldier would ever have arrived in Greece or Crete, or even have come safely out. We are fighting one of the great battles of history—perhaps the greatest of all. For weeks and months yet the tide may flow against us, as it flowed against us almost without a pause for nearly three years after 1914. Instead of thinking that we are taking more than our share of the misery, we should realise — and the overwhelming majority do—that there can be neither fair nor unfair shares in a struggle into which everybody should be putting his last ounce of strength.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

Letters sent to "The Listener" for publication should be as brief as possible and should deal with topics covered in "The Listener" itself. Correspondents must send in their names and addresses even when it is their wish that these should not be published. We cannot undertake to give reasons why all or any portion of a letter is rejected.

TWO SERIALS

Sir,—May I offer congratulations on your publication having passed the century? I have appreciated every issue and consider that your layout scheme now leaves very little to be desired. (I have noticed that occasionally the ZB's steal a march on you by changing to a new feature while you still have the old one listed.)

Would it be possible to publish a write-up about *Those We Love*? I consider this the best serial ever presented on New Zealand radio, and would like to know a little about the story, the actors, and the production. Also could you tell me if there is any possibility of *The Crew of the Maud Woodlock* making a re-appearance on a main station? We used to hear it on 4YZ, but reception was indifferent, and we were delighted when it appeared on 2YA's programmes. Unfortunately it ran only three weeks and was withdrawn without any explanation. Since then there has been one isolated appearance on 3YA. Hilarious comedy up to the standard of this production is very rare, and I feel that it could well stand presentation again as a complete series.

—S.J.S. (Christchurch).

(*The Crew of the Maud Woodlock* has been presented in the past year or two from practically all the stations in the NBS except in Auckland, where it will be heard shortly. Each of the ten episodes is complete in itself, so that they do not need to be presented in consecutive weeks. All the episodes except one have been presented from 2YA and from 3YA. Unfortunately we have no information about *Those We Love*. —Ed.).

APPLE QUEST

Sir,—Along with many others we have thoroughly enjoyed the "Apple Quest" session, and have been duly impressed by the announcer's assurance that the list is sealed and secret until (with full sound effects) it is opened at the microphone. But in *The Listener* of May 23 we read this: "One of the articles recently specified by 3ZB was the signature of O. M. Prentice, Secretary of the North Canterbury Hospital Board. Mr. Prentice had been warned what to expect and had written out 52 signatures in readiness." Now, sir, what are we to believe?

—CURIOUS (Christchurch).

(The Commercial Broadcasting Service informs us that the *Apple Quest* for which Mr. Prentice's signature was required was broadcast before the method now employed to ensure secrecy was put into effect.—Ed.).

PRONUNCIATION AND SPELLING

Sir,—It is possible to give thousands of examples that are not surnames or place names, that we spell one way and pronounce another. These are a few taken at random from a small pocket dictionary, all beginning with A. Apostle (sl), Accept (aks), acknowledge (ij), Almanac (awl), Almond (ahm), Almost (awl), Among (mu), Ankle (ang-kl), Another (u), Answer (ser), Any (en-i), Appreciate (shi), Area (ér), Assuage (sw), Attorney (ter), Aunt (ant).

Professor Wall has been telling us about the diphthong AW, but there is also a host of words with OU, such as Mouth, Mouse, House, Louise, etc., etc. Why not replace the U with a W (Mowth, Mowse, Howse, Lowse) and so avoid spelling a word as "Hoose" and calling it "Howse." Actually we are told this should be "Hows," but if we listen carefully we can always catch the "eh" at the end.

On the shortwave we often hear about Buckingham Palace and usually it is pronounced as "Beckingham Palace."

The AU sound in Maori is really not ow but "ah-oo." Ra-u-pár-a-ha. Hau is a Maori surname pronounced Hah-oo, but not How.

Let me quote the following: "The spelling of modern English was largely conventionalised by the

scribes of the late 14th Century, and their habits, made more rigid, were followed by the first English printers of the late 15th Century. It is unfortunate that the printer's spelling ignored the large number of vowel changes which had taken place in the early 15th Century, since this fact has thrown Modern English Spelling out of gear with all the other European Countries which use any form of the Latin alphabet."

Not many people really say "Oh-revoir" or "frow"; the great majority say Aw-revoir and Fraw, and "vaudeville" not "vohdeville." When it comes to fraulein, even the Germans say froilin and not frowlin. John Doe says: "It is sheer ignorance of the correct pronunciation. They don't know, I do." I also know what is called the Scotsman's prayer, "Oh Lord, gae us a guid conceit o' oorsels." Let us not be pedantic.

—"LAPSUS LINGUAE" (Te Awamutu).

NEW ZEALANDERS IN THE EAST

Sir,—I hope you will lift your voice against the injustice of the fighting in Greece and Crete. Why should the New Zealand troops have been given the roughest stuff, and British units kept safe? Some of the men now missing had been in Egypt only a short time. If General Wavell has half a million troops, surely that was enough to provide a garrison for Crete without sending worn-out New Zealanders from Greece.

—MOTHER OF MISSING SOLDIER (Devonport).

(This letter, which has been considerably abridged, is referred to in our leading article.—Ed.).

THAT TROUBLESOME DIPHTHONG

Sir,—In your issue of May, Professor Arnold Wall says that the word "Mauve" is a French word which has resisted any tendency to anglicization, for we pronounce it as in French "Mohve." I have an English dictionary which is nearly 60 years old, and says the pronunciation is "Mawv." Prior to coming to New Zealand, I lived in England for over 40 years, and never once did I hear the word pronounced other than "Mawv." My dictionary says "Mauve" is a purple dye, a mallow colour. (French *mauve*, a mallow, from Latin *malva*). — ENGLISHWOMAN (Lower Hutt).

MORE BRICKS AND BOUQUETS

Sir,—You printed recently a letter from a listener criticising the ZB programmes, and throwing a few bouquets and also bricks. After listening to our local commercial station pretty regularly, I feel I must add both bricks and bouquets.

Here are my bricks:

(1) "The Harleywood Noos Reporter" with his rubbish about Bing's breakfast parties.

(2) "Beddy and Barb" (at least that's how it sounds), with their continual and never-ending struggles with their souls. Apparently the routine is for Barb to plonk his soul on the breakfast table occasionally and for Beddy to apply first-aid to it. Do people go on like that in America?

(3) "Secret Diary." That woman's struggles with her conscience and her "Dear Diary"! Why doesn't she burn it, give her obnoxious daughter a hit over the head with the ashcan and go down town and see somebody else.

My bouquets are, among others, these:

(1) "Easy Aces." You can picture Ace and Marge and (if your women readers can take it), even Jane.

(2) "Tusitala"—nearly always good.

(3) "Lost Empire"—although it's starting to drag a bit.

(4) "Chuckles with Jerry"—although Jerry is inclined to become a little crude at times.

(5) "Enemy Within."

The bouquets are really much more numerous than the bricks, and our radio very seldom leaves ZB, but those three features I have complained about are awful.

Hoping you can find the space for this little complaint-cum-compliment.—ANTI-MUSH (Wellington).