

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday Price Threepence

JANUARY 23, 1942.

The War Comes to "The Listener"

READERS will have noticed that we have been compelled to ask them to share with ourselves one of the minor sacrifices of war. Instead of returning to forty-eight or fifty-six pages now that the holidays are over we are forced to stay at forty, since there is no longer any guarantee of a regular supply of newsprint. We are in fact taking risks—as every journal in New Zealand now is—by continuing to print as many pages as readers are still getting; but to print all that we could comfortably fill would be unpardonable recklessness.

The war has of course reached our office in other ways as well. It has taken away man-power: out of a total male strength of ten we have six in uniform. It has coloured our pages: although we are a broadcasting journal, concerned primarily with problems of education and entertainment, every broadcasting station to-day is a war station, and every broadcasting journal, willy nilly, a war magazine to a considerable extent. And what it has done to our staff and to our tables of contents the war has done in other ways to our costs and our distribution problems. Everything that we do, whether it is done well or done badly, is done with greater difficulty than in times of peace. We are as definitely the victims of violence and aggression as the ship which has to sail a thousand miles instead of three hundred to make the next port, or the statesman who has to cross the ocean in a submarine instead of in a comfortable liner.

Nor do we mention such things to advertise ourselves or bring ourselves into the light that shines on soldiers, sailors, airmen, and nurses. We do it to show our readers why they can't get quite as much for their money as we would like to give them. We can't put as much into forty pages as we could into forty-eight, but a careful examination of this number will show that we have contrived somehow to retain all our essential features—the programmes of all stations for a week in advance, nearly all our reading pages, and almost the same volume of advertising. We are a more crowded magazine than we like to be—far too crowded to look well—but we know that our readers will accept that disadvantage as cheerfully as they accept the petrol restrictions and stocking shortages by which they are helping to win the war.

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.

ELIZABETHAN MUSIC

Sir,—I should like to add my request to that of "Philomathes" for more composers of the Elizabethan period. In the "Golden Age" of English music, England was in the forefront of the world both in composition and performance. It was considered an essential part of a person's education to be able to sing music at sight and take a part in singing whenever requested. It is appalling to think of the large number of educated people of to-day—even among those who are more or less highly educated—who would be unable to do this. But here I must mention the good work that is being done during the music sessions for schools both in music reading and appreciation. Unfortunately music is not considered an important enough subject for school examinations.

J.P.B. (Paeroa).

FIRST CHRISTIAN IN JAPAN

Sir,—In an article in your paper of December 21-27, Lieut.-Colonel Orde Lees states that Saint Francis Xavier was the first Christian missionary to land and preach in Japan about three hundred years ago. In his book *Brotherhood Economics* (page 18) Dr. Kagawa tells us that thirteen hundred years ago Christianity had reached the Orient, and that for more than eighteen years Christianity was the State religion of China. Missionaries were sent from there to Japan thirteen centuries ago. In Kyoto still stands a Nestorian Christian Church. To-day it is a Buddhist Chapel.

HUGH PATTERSON (Gisborne).

"LIKE NEW ZEALAND"

Sir,—We wish to protest against a statement made by Miss Nelle Scanlan from Station 2YA on December 30, 1941. Miss Scanlan stated that Ireland was like New Zealand in that the country districts were without electricity and were forced to rely upon candles for their light. We feel that this derogatory statement casts a slur upon the progressiveness of this country; and we know that any person who has travelled throughout New Zealand within the last few years can testify to the fact that 99% of New Zealand farmers are well equipped with electricity for lighting, heating, and farm machinery.—E. R. WEEBER (MISS), A. WEEBER (MRS.), A. J. MEGGETT (MRS.) (Stokes Valley).

FAST ONES IN THE SLIPS

Sir,—Cricket seems to be the only sport capable of defying the war. Here is a little diversion for enthusiasts which I read in a recent issue of *London Calling*. Can any *Listener* reader improve on these cases?—COBAR (Wellington).

"A famous cricketer, noted for his wonderful catches in the slips, was once asked how he had attained such proficiency in fielding. He replied, 'Oh, it's quite simple. I used to get the village lads to beat the hedgerows and then I caught the sparrows and any other birds that came out. It was ideal practice for fast ones in the slips.' Before you dismiss that as the joke it was no doubt intended to be, it may surprise you to learn that fielders have really caught birds instead of balls during actual cricket matches."

said Frank W. Lane in a broadcast to the Forces the other day. "During a match in Australia, some years ago, an out-fielder was taking it easy when he was suddenly jerked wide awake by a cry from the bowler. The fielder saw a dark shape coming towards him and made a wild grab. He caught 'it' all right; but it wasn't the ball, it was a bird. C. B. Fry has recounted another occasion on which a bird was caught instead of a ball. Fry says that W. L. Murdoch, the famous Australian captain, told him that during a match in the provinces in 1886, Tom Horan was fielding at third man when a batsman slashed at the ball and missed and the keeper took the ball close to the wicket. Tom Horan saw a 'something' flashing past his ear, made a sudden grab and caught a swallow. In this letter Fry adds: 'I fancy the swallow tale is also told of Vernon Royle, the famous cover-point, who played for Lancashire. I know it is quite possible to catch a swallow. I nearly did so once at Lord's.' In addition to acting as unofficial balls, birds and other animals have on occasion taken part in a number of other cricket matches. Roberts of Sussex once sent down a very fast ball which collided in mid-air with a swallow. The bird was killed and the batsman was clean bowled. The umpire, by the way, decided that the fact that the ball had struck the swallow did not constitute a no-ball.

"A magpie once took the offensive against a cricket eleven. The bird had its nest in a tree near the pitch and it evidently objected to the intrusion of the players. It attacked the fielders and bowlers and pecked their scalps with such severity that the game was in danger of being suspended. Another match was interfered with, not by birds but by a horde of frogs. It was during a match in South Africa. After the match had been in progress for some time the umpires noticed that the balls from a fast bowler were behaving in a most unorthodox manner when they came off the pitch. Investigations showed that the balls were pitching, not on the grass at all, but on the backs of a mass of green frogs that had invaded the pitch."

RADIO MAGAZINE

Dear Sir,—I think the Radio Magazine from the Middle East could be improved. It does not cover every aspect of a soldier's life—his friendships with his comrades-in-arms, South Africans, Poles, Free French, British and Greek. Also as there are thirty to forty thousand men over there to be thought of, why not have them file past the microphone, as opportunity offers, and give a call home instead of making a lottery out of it? I think many more boys would have a chance of calling their relatives if this were done. Their names could be kept in a book, so that the same ones would not call twice, and this book when full could be sent home and sold for patriotic purposes.

One other suggestion. It would be appreciated by many in both islands if instead of having the Radio Magazine from 9 to 10 on Sunday mornings we could have it from 2-4 on Sunday afternoons. Nine a.m. is a very bad time for farmers, as the work has to be attended to first and then church follows at 11, so that there is no chance of listening between nine and ten.

ETHELWYN SMYTH (Owaka).

POINTS FROM LETTERS

"APPRECIATIVE LISTENER" (Paeroa), writes to express her appreciation of the singing of Dilys Parry from 3YA on January 6.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT
"AUCKLANDER"—Phil. Shone.