

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday Price Threepence

FEBRUARY 20, 1942.

What Mr. Churchill Meant

THREE weeks after Mr. Churchill warned us that the bad news we had then had was going to be worse we begin to understand what he meant. We begin to realise too how much misery lay behind his confession that until America joined us he had been compelled to appease Japan with British humiliations—the closing of the Burma road, the Shanghai insults, the encirclement of Hongkong, the open and impudent strangling of British trade. Mr. Churchill endured all that because he could not, without criminal recklessness, have started a war with Japan while Britain was still alone. He endured what it cost him personally, and he resisted the temptation to defend his policy publicly until silence could be maintained no longer. Then he told us with devastating frankness what the war facts had always been.

To-day we know. We know why Malaya was not held, why the defence of Singapore was a gamble from the attack on Pearl Harbour, why Japan has captured or neutralised every allied base in the East but one. We know that Russia has not succeeded in breaking the German armies, or in clearing the Crimea; that the R.A.F. has not been able in the meantime to disrupt German industry; that we have lost most of our gains in Libya; that we have not been able to clear the Mediterranean, make our convoys safe in the Atlantic, or maintain unbroken supply lines anywhere in the Pacific. We all know these things now, and the knowledge should keep us silent and humble. But any newspaper, in almost any part of the world, can start a hue and cry for scapegoats and be sure of strong support.

And that of course is not war, and not strength. It is nerves and short sight. It is an invitation to all the latent tyranny and bigotry in every community to cry out for an end to democracy; to all the fanatics and conspirators to start subversive movements; to defeatists to demand a negotiated peace; to our enemies to double their efforts on our home front. Mr. Churchill made a mandate from Parliament a condition of his continued leadership. It ought to be as plain that a united nation is a condition of his successful leadership. Which does not mean that there should be no criticism. There should be criticism whenever the facts justify criticism—of persons, and also of policies. But there should also be courage. And courage means accepting bad news at home as bravely as the soldiers accept the blows that make the news.

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.

BBC ANNOUNCERS

Sir,—Could you explain why several BBC announcers are so poorly instructed on the art of announcing? This morning's 8.45 (January 27) announcer failed to give us the last word in several sentences, yet these last words are generally most important. Altogether he dropped his voice 37 times at the end of his sentences so that his announcing was ruined by this elementary neglect. Several ex-actor BBC announcers may be good actors but they are very poorly trained announcers. We are thankful, indeed, to have the BBC news but do wish the BBC announcers would have more resonant clear voices and a better idea of the art of broadcasting.

W. K. BOWDEN (Nuhaka).

FREE EDUCATION

Sir,—May I congratulate 22B on the excellence of their session, "Free Education?" Being associated with the Wanganui Technical High School I cannot but be struck with the apathy shown by many parents to the future of their children. In many cases they sacrifice the future of the child for the few shillings they might earn for a brief time and

then wake up to the fact that they are in a position which offers no prospects and no chance of advancement.

The thought of school fees may deter some from inquiring about a secondary education, but the 22B talk showed clearly to parents that fees are not necessary.

The fact that only about 3 per cent. of those scholars who gain their matriculation examination go on to University shows the real need for a spur to the parents to consider the future of those committed to their charge.

A. E. BALLINGER (Chairman Board of Governors, Technical College, Wanganui).

NEW ZEALAND AND IRELAND

Sir,—May I trespass on your time and space to defend a friend? I was listening (as usual), to Miss Scanlan's talk the morning she mentioned the shortage of candles in Ireland, and yesterday I was amazed to hear that some people thought she said "Like New Zealand the country people had only lamps and candles." As I live on a particularly isolated farm, and have enjoyed the comforts of electricity for three and a-half years, I couldn't possibly have overlooked such a ridiculous mistake.

MAUD A. DALGETY (Mangaweka).

Sir,—I was surprised to read in a letter about Miss Scanlan's talk on Ireland that three of her listeners said they heard her use the expression "Like New Zealand" when comparing this country with Ireland regarding electricity. I feel quite sure that she used the term "unlike New Zealand," as I happened to be listening at the time, and felt grateful for the electricity I enjoy so far from a town centre.

E. BREWER (Mangaweka).

SPEAKING AND LISTENING.

Sir,—In your current issue your correspondent Nelle M. Scanlan states that she said in her broadcast: "Unlike New Zealand, electricity is not in general use in the country." If she has quoted herself correctly the statement she made was that in the land of which she was speaking (Ireland), though New Zealand was in general use in the country districts, electricity was not.

She says—"Careless listening can be a serious matter in times like these." I would remind her that careless speaking is a matter that can be immeasurably more serious.

R.R.M. (Cashmere Hills).

NON-VIOLENCE AND ALL THAT.

Sir,—Your optimistic correspondent "Remember Amritsar" has opened up a subject which could lead to lengthy argument but paper is scarce and I will confine myself to one point. He alleges that "the early Christians, with their non-violence, converted their conquerors." To what, may I ask your correspondent, did they convert them? To Christianity? Surely it would be ridiculous to suggest that anything of the kind occurred. To non-violence? I can almost hear old Constantine chuckle in his grave at our friend's naivete.

SURREALIST (Auckland).

POINTS FROM LETTERS

A. N. (Feilding) is prepared to "take our word re the shortage of newsprint" but thinks we should not have "cut down on the gem of the whole piece, namely Ken Alexander's contributions." As "a constant reader" she "begs for a little more humour."

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

"REALIST."—Why so shy?
E.M.S. (Wellington).—Referred to our experts. Meanwhile our thanks.

"PODGER" (Nelson).—No room for the dog. Thank you for offering him.

Entertained To Death

(By WHIM-WHAM)

When I was born they turned it on,
My Children's Session then began.
No Interference marred my Growth,
And now I am become a Man,
I need no other Recreation,
Being contented with my Station.

I'M up at Six to hear the News
(If any) from the BBC.
The Strains I breakfast to impose
No Strain of any Sort on me:
Brass Bands and Vocal Gems unite
To keep my Disposition bright.

THE various Women's Hours afford
Both Food for Thought and Thoughts on Food.
"Devotions" and a Talk induce
By Lunch, a slightly chastened Mood.
Ah, then Lunch Music soothes my Breast,
So light, so easy to digest!

THE Classics pay a formal Call,
Sonatas grace my Afternoon,
Though such fine Company may be
Supplanted by a sterner Tune
When Parliament performs its great
Symphonic Poems of Debate!

OH, when Life's Evening Session ends,
No "Local News" no "Dad and Dave,"
No "Music, Mirth and Melody"
Will reach me. Then above my Grave
Write: Here's a Listener, sleeping fast,
And glad to be Closed down at last.