

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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## War And The Land

ONE of the discoveries of the war, depressing to some and exciting to others, has been the inadequacy of go-as-you-please farming. In spite of the fact that millions of acres have been brought into production in Britain that had not known a plough for generations, the food situation is causing deep anxiety. It is only a few days since the Minister of Agriculture declared that "the harvest of 1942 might well be a critical factor in the future not only of Britain but of the whole world." Though increases had been recorded in every direction—a third more wheat, fifty per cent. more potatoes, and nearly twice as much oats and vegetables—the Minister found it necessary to say that this was not enough, and that those farmers who "could not raise their standards" would have to make way for others or submit to more drastic control.

It may, of course, be argued that the same story could be told of all forms of production, secondary as well as primary, and that the average farm has stood up to the demands of total war quite as well, so far, as the average factory. It probably has. It may have done better, relatively, than the factory, since Britain has been an industrial country for a hundred and fifty years, and during all that time has neglected agriculture. But relative merit does not win wars. There is almost no limit to the possible expansion of industry, if materials can be found for the machines and food for the men and women who operate them. British tank production, for example, has increased by 500 per cent. since Dunkirk. Shipbuilding is up 400 per cent. since the battle of the Atlantic began. But agriculture cannot yet show an all-round increase of 50 per cent. in spite of the fact that six million acres of old pasture have been brought under the plough and we know that the war will be lost if Britain's forty million people cannot be adequately fed.

The position is, in fact, so serious, and the prospect of improvement so uncertain, that one of the most cautious agricultural authorities in England, the veteran Sir A. D. Hall, has recently joined the ranks of the land nationalists. So far as we know, the book in which he develops his case has not yet reached New Zealand. But it is reviewed in several of the most recently arrived periodicals, and these reviews leave no doubt at all that for British agriculture at any rate he sees no economic escape from the State ownership of all land devoted to primary production.

## 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.

### POET AND PACIFIST

Sir,—In his review of Basil Dowling's *A Day's Journey*, "Ibid" takes exception to the rhyming of "shutters and gutters," dubbing it an "ugly rhyme." But surely a poet is not concerned with such questions? He writes of the things he sees, and feels, because he must, and if thereby he increases our awareness, he has done us a service. The poet leaves "pretty" rhyming to those versifiers whose precious writings delighted the Victorians. And the gulf between a poet of Mr. Dowling's calibre and the versifier is deep and unbridgeable.

R. J. SCARLETT (Christchurch).

### "JAPAN AGAINST JAPAN"

Sir,—May I take the liberty to state that radio short-wave station KGEI gives his news at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. New Zealand time and not at 7.20 as your page states. He transmits on the 6, the 7, and the 10-megacycle at these times. Of the three, I find only one readable. The 7-megacycle, and this position finds him very powerful between 5.30 and 7.45, at

which hour he goes over to Hollywood. It is rather a pity to miss him just now, for this last three weeks he talks on "Japan Against Japan" at 7 p.m. and "Victory for China" at 7.30. KGEI is extremely clear and strong on the 42 metres, as too is the BBC at the same time, with a French-speaking station between them in the background.

TAIHOA (Lower Hutt).  
"Audio" replies as follows: "(1) KGEI has not been listed as at 7.20 p.m., but its frequency has been given as 7.20 mcs. 'Taihoa' has perhaps confused these two. Now, however, the frequency of KGEI is 7.25 mcs. (2) KGEI is only occasionally clear and strong on 42 metres. (3) The French-speaking station is probably Berlin on 7.24 mcs."

### HONOUR WHERE DUE

Sir,—Congratulations on your commendably straightforward "Editorial" of March 6. "Honour to whom honour is due" should be our watchword and many men might well follow your example to be better Editors. Let us all be quite honest and admit without prejudice that Russia is still saving us—not because we deserve it, but because her people have something solid to fight for. So she selects her best brains for leadership and her war effort is made in perfect national unity. Kipling gave us a well-deserved criticism when he wrote:

*"It's Tommy this, and Tommy that,  
And Tommy go away,  
But it's 'Thank you, Mr. Atkins,'  
When the guns begin to play.*

Frankness at any price, Mr. Editor, and let us really get somewhere!

E. M. PERRY (Wellington).

### OBJECTION TO A WORD

Sir,—I write to ask if it is necessary for your film reviewer to use, and you as Editor, to print, such a repulsive and filthy expression as the one used in describing Bette Davis in *The Little Foxes* and Vivien Leigh as Scarlett O'Hara? The writer was a bit ashamed of using it, as he screened himself by saying it was the description used by some other reviewer. Anyway, to me, it is one of the most disgusting epithets one could use, and I would be grateful if its use could be put out of your paper.

E. J. ROBERTSON (Whakatane).

[If our correspondent will supply a more elegant word that conveys as much, we shall apologise to the dogs. Meanwhile we can think of no reason why the female of the species should be more repulsive than the male.—Ed.]

### DID SHE DREAM TOO MUCH?

Sir,—Some weeks ago I read with indignation "G.M.'s" account of how some person had ruined that fine picture *Our Town* by indiscriminately cutting out several thousand feet. I remember your article was headed "Who Destroyed Our Town?" To this query I would add another, "Who attacked Tom, Dick and Harry?" When I saw this excellent film I noticed that although the general thread of the story was quite clear, it was obvious that in one or two places incidents had been cut out. For instance, Janie dreams about Tom and Dick, yet her dream of Harry had obviously been omitted. At first I put this down to the censor, but I discovered recently that on the night the film opened in Wellington it was shown in its entirety. Yet on the second and following nights the third dream and certain other portions were omitted. Perhaps you are in a position to make inquiries and to find out whether the Government censor, the film exchange concerned (R.K.O.), or the manager of the theatre was responsible for this unwarranted mutilation.

In closing may I thank "G.M." for his valuable film criticisms. The only film about which I have disagreed radically was *My Life With Caroline*, to which I would give top rating.

G.M.H. (Wellington).

[The explanation given us by the film exchange is that this particular print of *Tom, Dick and Harry* was badly scratched in the sequences mentioned, and therefore had to be cut, as the print could not be replaced. The deletions had no other purpose.—Ed.]

## Big Money

(By WHIM-WHAM)

["There will be no more rich men after the war," declared Sir Victor Sassoon. Asked if it were true that he was the third wealthiest man in the world, Sir Victor replied: "If China goes, I will be away down. If India goes, I will be looking for a job."—Cable message from New York.]

ON hearing Sir Victor Sassoon,  
I cannot conceal my Distress  
At the thought that the War will deprive me  
of All  
The inordinate Wealth I possess.  
My Millions, the Few I have got,  
Are going to be scattered like Dust,  
And if Griqualand goes—why, the Lord alone  
knows  
Just what I shall do for a crust!

BUT I know it is All for the Best.  
I'm ready to take up my Place  
In an Order in which there's no Room for the  
Rich,  
That rapidly vanishing Race!  
I'm fully prepared to accept  
Quite different Duties and Scenes,  
For nothing's more sure than that I must  
endure  
The Horrors of moderate Means.

IT'S All for Humanity's Good.  
The World will be happier when  
I am one with the Crowd and there's No-one  
allowed  
To make so much Money again:  
And, apart from the Fact that no Law  
Has ever been framed to forbid it,  
And my Instinct to shirk any heavier Work,  
I really can't think why I did it.

WHEN Victory smiles on our Arms,  
Spare a Sigh, be you yom never so glad,  
For me and Sir Victor, Lord Nuffield, and  
Ford,  
And the Nizam of Hyderabad.  
Oh, look on our Works while you may,  
Before they have vanished from View  
Like the Riches of Croesus, the Power of the  
Caesars—  
The last of the Privileged Few!