

LISTENER

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Soldiers Off Duty

THE purpose of our feature article on Pages 6 and 7 is to prepare the public for a situation that might otherwise catch them off-guard. It is unnecessary to say that we have, and can have, no opinion ourselves about the more controversial issues raised. We merely state the issues and print some representative opinions about them. Although it is not always true that to be forewarned is to be fore-armed, it is usually true that to be taken by surprise is to be taken at a disadvantage. Our purpose is to make surprise impossible.

The situation is of course unprecedented. It is giving no information to the enemy to say that till the end of the war, and for a little longer, New Zealand will provide accommodation for thousands of overseas troops. That became inevitable the day New Zealand was announced as the headquarters of a Pacific Command. It is not something that may happen but something that must, and the sooner we all begin thinking about it the sooner we shall adjust ourselves to the new set of conditions it inevitably brings with it.

Soldiers have been soldiers since nations first began to fight; they have lived unnatural lives, passed violently from excitement to boredom, and seldom escaped some friction with civilians. We cannot expect that it will not happen here. Biologically there is no difference between MacArthur's armies and Wellington's, as there is none between our division in Syria and the legions that made the roads our sons and brothers are now using. What has changed is the social and political background, and that, as soon as we begin to think about it, is the key to all the problems the war may create for us on the home front.

The first point is that eighty per cent. of the soldiers, sailors, and airmen quartered among us were, until the other day, civilians themselves. They are ourselves socially, whether they come from Canterbury, N.Z., or from Colorado, U.S.A. The second point is that they are still interested in most of the things that we ourselves are interested in, and do not wish to be regarded either as toughs or as innocents abroad. They are not mercenaries or brigands, but patriot companies of ordinary citizens called to the defence of their normal way of life.

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.

PRONUNCIATION ON THE AIR

Sir,—That "Marina" has decided to give "Pronunciation Talks" to children from 12B is indeed welcome news, but why only to children? In Auckland city pronunciation is abominable, and quite a few announcers (male) at 12B have deteriorated very much in the past twelve months. A refresher course would certainly do no harm. If those interested would listen to Professor Arnold Wall, the Rev. B. Kilroy, the Rev. Father Bennett, the Rev. Bower Black, and to Messrs. Pat Butler and Lindley Fraser of the BBC they would hear English as it should be spoken.

"SHORT A" (Papatoetoe).

A LONDON SYMPHONY.

Sir,—Those who read "Philomathe's" criticism of Andersen Tyrer's notes on Vaughan Williams's "London Symphony" may be interested in this comment by Ralph Hill in the BBC Radio Times (January 30, 1942):

"Vaughan Williams does not intend his symphony to be descriptive. He has said that it is intended to be self-expressive, and must stand or fall as 'absolute' music. The life of London possibly including its various sights and sounds, was the poetic source of his musical inspiration and there-

Win And Place

(By WHIM-WHAM)

[On reading the commentaries of some commentators on the state of morale in Axis countries, and its bearing (if any) on the duration of the war.]

ARE Berliners bold and unshaken?

Is Munich's Morale on the Wane?

Has the Grip of the Fuhrer grown feebler or surer?

Do Germans rejoice or complain?

OH, No-one has asked me these Questions,

No well-informed Quarter am I,

I've not had the chances of learning the Answers

Such Quarters so glibly supply—

BUT, making my own Observations

(One Guess is as good as the Next)

I've come to Conclusions—no wishful Illusions!—

To comfort and guide the Perplexed.

THEY'RE sick of the War, I feel certain,

In Hamburg, Cologne, and Berlin,

But don't be elated, because (it is stated)

They're not sick enough to give in!

OH, Hunger (the Harvest is meagre)

Must weaken the Herrenvolk's Will;

But Teutons can tighten their Belts and keep fighting—

They'll have to be hungrier still!

AND Hitler? He's not the Dictator

He was—but that isn't to say

There's Room for surmising a popular

Rising

Is likely to sweep him away . . .

I HOPE that by now you have gathered

The point up to which I am leading?

The War, so to speak, won't be over this Week,

Because it will still be proceeding.

fore he considers that it would be no help to the Listener to describe this source in detail. We are supposed to consider the suggestions of such things as the 'Westminster Chimes' or the 'Lavender Cry' as accidents 'not essentials of the music'."

Mr. Tyrer states that the British Musical Society has approved the notes. This is interesting as a commentary on the society's judgment, but is not a reason for perpetuating them.

NEW ZEALANDER (Wellington).

MENTAL ABERRATION?

Sir,—I must enter my protest against the inanities of your columnist in his "Things to Come" paragraph, "Solomon Comes Second" (issue 17/4/42). It is crystal clear that the purpose of the writer on the various subjects is to provide "light" reading for your subscribers. Accepted that there must be times of difficulty over subject matter, it is none the less discouraging to wade through the witless diatribe of the paragraph under review, to finally decide that it is pointless and without aim. To quote a Lancashire comment on a similar journalistic adventure, "E'd nowt to write when 'e started and 'e wouldn't knock off when 'd writ' it".

The 3YA garden expert does at least know what he is talking about, and maintains both a humorous and an informative contribution to thousands of listeners through his session. I therefore trust that he will at least treat the "pointer" to his talk as a period of mental aberration on the part of your columnist.

"JONAITCH" (Christchurch).

(The writer of the paragraph replies:

boss, this may be a brick bat but at least you will admit that it is concrete evidence that somebody reads some of my stuff sometimes in witness whereof i hereby apply for another five per cent. raise in salary bracket make it net not gross will you close bracket what i always says is if i may coin a phrase the customer is always right and after all in a big business like ours dash our audited circulation figures may be inspected any time in business hours at the head office of the company dash you're bound to come across a few queer customers)

THE CITY SISTER.

Sir,—Last evening I listened into a talk from 2YH by Mary Scott, and though full of sympathy for our backblock sisters I feel impelled to state the case for the city or suburban woman. Unless we practise strict self-denial, how can we save for our holiday in the country? The lure of the shops is our daily temptation, that continual dropping that wears away the petty cash. Not so disastrous is the one day in town every month. Even if we stay home the salesman comes, or the lorry from the farm with cases of early apples and windfalls.

It was a sad tale of muddy highways Mrs. Scott had to tell, but sometimes when descending our road to town, gingerly stepping on the slippery concrete, facing and expecting any moment to be sitting or lying with a fractured skull, I long for the muddy road it used to be, and wonder what will happen when rubber heels are unprocurable.

"NEAR TOWN" (Napier).

ATLANTIC CONVOY.

Sir,—A cover of a recent Listener shows an Atlantic Convoy about to sail. How is it that the engine room telegraph registers "Finished with Engines"? "SEAFARER" (Remuera).

(Perhaps to confuse the Quislings?—Ed.)