

# LISTENER

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## Papua

IT is impossible not to feel uneasy about the Japanese progress in Papua. If, as the cables say, they have "advanced to Kokoda and beyond", it is time to ask what this means, and we can no longer accept the comforting assurance that "beyond" means uncrossable mountains and impenetrable jungle. It does mean mountains and jungle, but the mountains, as an Australian expedition established thirty-six years ago, are not insuperable, and Burma and Malaya are the answer to all jungle barriers. As far as the Japanese have gone already—unless "beyond" means far more than we have been allowed to suspect—the going is in fact comparatively easy. The Kumusi River, which the soothsayers presented as a barrier five or six weeks ago, was never more than an inconvenience—the Australian expedition got across without difficulty in 1906, finding both a ford and a wire bridge—and even the "Divide", a perpendicular wall 250 feet high, was no obstacle to native carriers when the white population of Port Moresby was forty-one men, sixteen women, and twelve children. These facts are of course well known to General MacArthur and to the governments of all the United Nations, but they are not well enough known to the people of Australia and New Zealand to protect us against shock if the Japanese are reported one morning on the Port Moresby side of the central range. It must also be remembered that Papua is not a foodless country, even to Europeans. The plateau round about Kokoda the Australian expedition found "rich almost beyond belief", and the whole stretch of country back to Buna Bay was reported to be "magnificently watered, level, heavily timbered . . . and rich in cane, vegetables, and fruit". To the Japanese that is a land of milk and honey.

## 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 Correspondents must send in their names and addresses even when it is their wish that these should not be published.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.

### PATRIOTIC APPEAL.

Sir,—A paragraph in your last issue suggested that the "Radio drive" for patriotic funds was confined to the National Stations. My own listening has made it clear to me that the Commercial Stations are doing all that the National Stations are doing, and perhaps a little more.—ZB LISTENER (Wellington).

(It was not our intention to suggest that the Commercial Stations were idle. They are in fact co-operating fully in this drive.—Ed.)

### WHY CRIPPS FAILED

Sir,—Thank you for printing Professor Coupland's talk on the Cripps Indian Mission. I know I am far from being the only person who, when listening to those so clear, so fair, so balanced, so reasonable, so ingeniously honest BBC talks, has come to detect his subconscious quoting Shakespeare: "Me thinks the lady doth protest too much." Now having seen this talk in black and white, I can study it carefully to find why.

I note for example that Coupland says that the Indian provinces have just as much self-government as the Canadian ones. And my mind, not carried on willy-nilly and immediately into the next sentence as when I listened, comments, "Quite true. But if our New Zealand Parliament had had no more authority than Alberta's, would we be in the Empire still? Ask Mr. Aberhart." Or again after Coupland's reference to Moslem opposition to Congress policy, my eye marks time long enough to hear my mind recalling that there are more Moslems in the Congress Party than in the Moslem League, that the Rev. Dr. Azad, Congress President, stands higher among Moslems than does the lawyer Mr. Jinnah, and that all four of the Moslem provincial governments have so far "stood in" with the independence proposals of Congress. And so on . . . However, the most confidence-shattering thing about Coupland's talk was that it passed over in complete silence the most important and striking—indeed astounding—aspect of the present situation: namely, that Gandhi and the Pacifist third of Congress have reversed their tenaciously maintained policy of easing up the campaign for independence so long as the British people and government were struggling for life elsewhere—and have done so as the result of Cripps's visit or of something that happened in connection with it. What was it that happened so fundamentally to alter the attitude of one who acts always on moral principle, never on political exigencies? We whom it vitally concerns ought to know. Yet the BBC does not even admit that anything has happened.

Cannot the NBC pass the word home to them that after the French debacle, Singapore, Libya and the long-preparing,

long-hidden shipping crisis, the time has passed for propaganda by ingenuous silence? Or is it the job of the Campaign for Christian Order as a matter of national morality?

A.M.R. (Wellington).

### GOD IN NATURE.

Sir,—Your correspondent "Ps.27.13" says that "even an Australian Black can see God in nature." To which aspects of nature does the correspondent refer? Does the native see "God" in the dreary sunbaked wastes of waterless desert; in the crocodile infested rivers and streams; in the ubiquitous poison snake; in the destructive storms and lightnings that rend the sky? Nature as we know it is an unfortunate mixture of good and evil, with the various species, great and small, preying on one another. Man, lord of all creation, supposedly given dominion over all animals on this planet, in his journey through life negotiates a thousand hazards. He is attacked and killed by those minute animals, the microbes. To attribute to a hypothetical "God" all that is good in nature, and conveniently overlook the obvious evils is not only naive but illogical.

LIONEL COONEY (Auckland).

### HEARD ON THE AIR.

Sir,—A recent issue had a letter from a correspondent pointing out certain mispronunciations that have been heard over the radio. On Sunday last we had from one station (wild horses will not drag its name from me) Rienzi Overture as RYE enzi and, believe it or not, Sarasate as Sarassity!

I expect the various stations get a good many telephone messages pointing out these errors, and no doubt the station director himself notices some of them. I would suggest therefore that they be noted and that a list of them, with the correct pronunciation, be posted in the studio in a position where they could be seen by all the announcers. Also most gramophone catalogues devote a few pages to the correct pronunciation of many of these names which are in common use. A.A. (Auckland.)

Sir,—I, too, deplore the mispronunciation that we hear so often over the air. Every day between 11.30 and 12 we are told that if we are "wanteen any-teen" in the dress line we should go to so-and-so. We hear someone telling the children to go to the "De Lux." We are told about the condition of the "Wairapa" and we are told that so-and-so are "manufacturers". And three times a week at least we are told all about "cooking-g" and "washing-g" and "mending-g". Then there is the announcer who tells all and sundry that this is 2ZB "Well-n-tun". Is it any wonder that both children and adults speak so badly when we have these things drummed into our ears day after day?

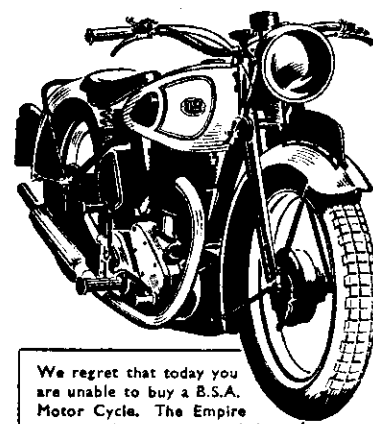
WHAT DO YOU THINK?  
(Wellington).

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

To several Correspondents: The only point at issue so far as we are concerned is the right of the followers of one church to say what we shall call followers of another church. We did not raise the question or bring in the Dictionary.—Ed.

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