

OCTOBER 23, 1942.

Age And All That

IT is a good thing for Father William when the young man reminds him that he is old. If it does nothing else it may check the old man's inclination to do things that in age are hardly right. But it is not good for the young man to be sure that wisdom lies infallibly below black hair. Father William had at least discovered that standing on his head was not dangerous. It was when he was the young man that he was afraid of injuring his brain. So when the *Manchester Guardian* a few weeks ago, and the member for Tauranga a few days ago, used the age argument against the British and New Zealand Labour Parties, the members of those Parties no doubt decided to "do it again and again". It may be true that here, as in Britain, the youngest party is the oldest. But the oldest members may still be the youngest. The oldest Prime Minister England ever had was William Pitt, who entered Parliament at 22, became Leader at 24, and died at 47 leaving the nation to liquidate about forty thousand pounds owing to creditors. He did of course leave something else—a brilliant record as a leader, a reputation for courage and skill that no one in Parliament has ever surpassed, a grateful country, respectful enemies, and a few other things; but we are talking about age, and he was old before he was twenty, since he never went to school, entered Cambridge at fourteen, and when he should have been bleeding noses and kicking or hitting a ball, was sitting in a library reading Latin and Greek. Similarly the oldest members of Parliament New Zealand has yet seen were the three New Liberals who about forty years ago opened fire on Mr. Seddon and the world and disappeared a year or two later in a blaze of solemn farce. Birthdays are just about as foolish a test of political capacity as University degrees, monocles, or whiskers. It is doubtful if they are even a safe test of military capacity, though that is partly at least a physical matter, since the only resounding British success to date was won by a general who is now in his sixtieth year, since every successful German general with one exception has been over sixty, and since Russia has recently called on a man of sixty-two to direct the biggest and most critical battle in modern history. We hear of no young Japanese generals and admirals, and the most astute politician in the whole world to-day had his seventy-third birthday this month.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

GANDHI

Sir,—In view of recent articles and letters about Gandhi and the Indian situation in *The Listener*, you may be interested in the following statement on India from the 274th yearly meeting of the Society of Friends in Great Britain, at York, on August 1. Copies of this statement have been sent to Mr. Gandhi; and to Mr. Amery, Secretary for India: "The Society of Friends, at its annual meeting at York, has considered the grievous situation now threatening a con-



SUB-LIEUTENANT J. C. MORRISON who has just been awarded the D.S.C. Before he left the Dominion in June, 1940, with the first draft of New Zealanders, to train for the Fleet Air Arm he was a member of the Head Office staff of the NBS for five years. The citation with his award states: "For great bravery, skill, and determination in torpedo and dive-bombing attacks on enemy shipping and aerodromes." Sub-Lieutenant Morrison made all his attacks from Malta.

flikt in India between the Congress Party and the British Government. We are convinced that such conflict could and must be avoided by a further effort at understanding. As a religious society, we believe that with the help of God there is no limit to the possibility even when the political limits may seem to have been reached. We appeal to each side to make further efforts to reach a mutual agreement."—M.H.G. (Wellington).

CHRIST AND SOCIALISM

Sir,—I cannot agree with the statement of a correspondent in this week's *Listener*, that Jesus Christ was a socialist. I fail to find in the Scriptures any evidence of this fact. St. Matthew depicts Christ as a King; Mark, as a servant; Luke, as the Ideal Man; John, as the divine son of God. There is not an atom of socialism in His teaching; in fact, there is no room for it in Christianity, nor was it thought of in His day. The Sermon on the Mount is the policy of His Kingdom. He came not as a reformer, nor as a Robin Hood, but as the world's redeemer. He did not drive the money-changers out of the temple because they made money, but because they abused

the house of prayer. Nor was this the reason why the Jews crucified Him. They crucified Him because He declared himself to be the Son of God.

Christianity is the great beacon light for all men, of all nations. Socialism is a flickering match.

CHRISTIAN (Auckland).

NEWS COMMENTARIES

Sir,—Your correspondent "Don't Talk," considers BBC commentaries should be dropped altogether or largely cut out. Why deprive interested listeners of expert analysis on the news when all the correspondent has to do is to operate his switch if he is displeased. Cyril Falls, Major Hastings, H. C. Ferraby and others speak as "voices of authority"; they are certainly not "ignorance speaking" as described by our correspondent. As for "telling that to the Marines," in reference to General MacArthur's successful offensive in the Solomons, I have no doubt that the Marines who did the job would definitely say "Sure it was successful!"

LISTENER (Tolaga Bay).

ANY QUESTIONS?

Sir,—As one who has often enough felt critical about ZB programmes, I would like to pay tribute to the quality of the Sunday evening session, "Any Questions?" I have found it most stimulating and I am sure many hope, as I do, that the CBS will find it possible to continue this type of broadcast and extend its scope to include secular as well as religious topics.

INTERESTED (Auckland).

KIPLING PLAGIARISMS

Sir,—May I through your columns ask "Inquirer" (Wellington) to be good enough to let me have a list of "Kipling's manifold plagiarisms?" I should like to pass it on to the Kipling Society which is always interested in manifestations of "Kiplingophobia."

C. F. HULL (Auckland).

COMMERCIAL PROGRAMMES

Sir,—Being full of appreciation of your paper, I find it rather difficult to haul you over the coals. Why on earth have you reverted to the custom of placing YA's in one position of *The Listener* and ZB's in another? If you can advance some reason, such as a war measure, all well and good; if not, I feel sure the majority of your public prefer both stations together.

STANLEY V. JENNINGS
(Christchurch)

P.S.—My apologies to your swing enthusiasts—while we have two services we others can Chop off and so to Chop-in, or such-like.

(So do we. But with our reduced space for programmes—10½ pages as against 14—we can't place them together without confusion, since the National stations fill a whole page and the Commercial a little less than half a page a day.—Ed.)

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENT
K.M.E. (Palmerston North).—Referred to Controller, NCBS.

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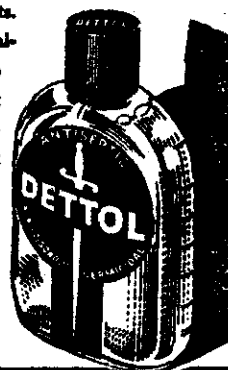
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