

## Control And The Controllers

TO let every consumer know what is happening to him under price-control a member of the tribunal has issued a little book.\* He points out to begin with that price control is as old as civilisation and has had almost as chequered a history. There was control in China in the time of Confucius—three thousand years ago. It was tried by Rome and by Greece, and even by ancient Egypt. Diocletian, for example, issued an edict in 303 A.D. fixing the maximum prices at which food and clothing could be sold, and the wages that could be earned to buy them. Although death was the penalty for those who offended, the "net result was failure." So another attempt was made, and then another, until some wit no doubt pointed out that the way from the market to the soup-kitchen was paved with good Roman intentions. But as most of us know to-day, price-fixing is one thing and price-controlling another. If prices are fixed, and unforeseen circumstances unfix them—as they do inevitably in the course of a long war—the last state of the community is worse than the first. It is not possible in a free community to put a barrier between the consumer and the commodity that nothing short of gunpowder will disturb; and what is not possible in practice should not be laid down in theory. But it is possible to regulate the force at which the pressures will be applied, and that is control. The controllers of control are of course the public. The powers they delegate to Parliament they inevitably take back again when the pressure on them becomes too painful, so that it is the consumer himself in the last resort who says how much or how little he will pay. He speaks last, and necessarily therefore speaks loudest. But if no one else spoke at all, and we all from the beginning indulged our greeds and alarms, six months of a world war would precipitate something like a civil war at home. Control prevents all that.

\*WAR-TIME PRICE CONTROL IN NEW ZEALAND. By H. L. Wise, M.Com. Member of the Price Tribunal Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd.

## LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

OH! OH!

Sir,—Your correspondent "F." (Christchurch), does not go far enough in his condemnation of the recently adopted method of announcing the time on the radio. I agree with him that there is something to be said for the 24-hour clock, though I don't care whether the announcer says nineteen-forty-five hours or one-nine-four-five-hours. But there is nothing to be said for the senseless and quite incorrect practice of using a letter of the alphabet to express a number. In this the BBC (which certainly ought to know better), is as much at fault as our New Zealand stations. The Post Office was, I believe, the original offender. The authorities will, of course, have some explanation; but I doubt if it can be anything more convincing than the admission of a silly caprice based on the similarity of outline of letter and figure (like a full moon and a Dutch cheese). If that is ground sufficient for saying "Oh!" instead of "nought," why not say "ell" instead of "one," the printed forms of which are identical. It would be good fun to hear the announcer say "Twenty-one-Oh-Ell!" I, for one, should be inclined to murmur "Them's my sentiments."

J.W.B. (Wellington).

### CHURCH SERVICES

Sir,—Your correspondent "First Things First" is rather indiscreet to bring up the subject of Church services. The people responsible are well aware of the time allowed, and it is their duty to see that they keep within the specified time. Your correspondent has the choice on Sunday evenings of Auckland, Wellington, New Plymouth, Napier, Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill. As a free thinker I do not have the choice of one station even, although I have appealed to the Broadcasting Service several times to allocate one station on Sundays to meet the needs of those who can be included in the term "free thinkers," but so far without success.

"ARGOSY" (Te Awamutu).

### HUMOUR, PLEASE!

Sir,—When tired business men and war workers settle down for the evening the "lowbrows" look for a few items of humour in the evening programme. And what do they get? A whole programme of Mozart's 25th Symphony in A Sharp Major or E Flat Minor or similar digres. "Krazy Kapers" is now cut out. The trouble with you birds is that you cater for the highbrows who can sit round the radio all day and listen to that stuff, while the real workers are on their jobs. For Heaven's sake put some humour into it!

And how about staggering the programme a little? How can we listen to *Tradesmen's Entrance* and *Search for a Playwright* when they are on at the same time?

JIM DOUGLAS (Masterton).

### BYWAYS OF MUSIC

Sir,—If "A.W.T." will look up the 1942 H.M.V.-Columbia gramophone catalogue he will find under the heading Columbia History of Music Volume V., Duo for Two Violins by Haba, and Octandre by Varèse. I will leave it to him to look up the record numbers. I will not waste *The Listener's* space by asking "A.W.T."

to trot out according to his "challenge" 12 composers mentioned by "Marsyas" but unknown to "A.W.T."—any music library will help him—but would suggest that if his interest is as great as his letters he would do better for himself and for music by making the most of the stimulation that critical writings such as "Marsyas" can give. Anyhow, when are we going to have some more "Marsyas"? Soon please!

I.A.M.S. (Titirangi).

### 2YA CHILDREN'S SESSION

Sir,—Occasionally when listening to the Children's session from 2YA I have experienced so much pleasure that I have been moved to write to the Director of Broadcasting commending contributors. Some of the items in my opinion should be recorded for a more extended enjoyment. I also desire to say through your always interesting columns that Aunt Molly put over a Joyce Taylor programme recently that had more thrills to the minute in melody than have ever come to my ears in a given 40 minutes at such a session. The pity is that so few knew about it. Do the arrangers of 2YA programmes realise that they are "entertaining an angel unawares"? For here is one who is original, is versatile, produces delicious melody in every composition, yet apparently goes undiscovered and unheralded on the air. That seance in sweet sounds got me excited. Hence these lines in tribute.—TOM L. MILLS (Feilding).

### MUSIC AND MIND

Sir,—In contradiction of C.M.L., permit me as one of Voltaire's fools to uphold a little the progression of the modern mind even in the field of music. Admittedly the outcome of the last world war was an accelerated development of jazz, and subsequently, swing music by radio and screen. This instilled appreciation in those who previously did not receive an education in the great masters. Irving Berlin has given us compositions conceived by the modern mind which are a contribution to culture and beautiful music. Players require years of ardent practice before attaining positions in first-grade orchestras, so C.M.L. must not be unduly influenced by many of these would-be exponents of the art. On the other hand, I have heard considerable misinterpretations of the classics.

EIGHT TO THE BAR (In Camp)

### POINTS FROM LETTERS

M.N. (Auckland) thanks those responsible for "the magnificent recording from IZB on Good Friday of *Macbeth*." She adds that the radio "gives us far too little Shakespeare."

P. D. L. Hudden (Motu) asks if many people get as irritated as he does when the National Anthem is played during the evening transmission and not at the end of it.

H. Alexandre (Auckland) has been annoyed by a "ghost station which smugly, and occasionally defiantly, announces itself as Station One Way." He would like it to be some other way.

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

"Mean Well" (Te Puke): Thank you for letting us share the joke.

W. Maltby (Sandringham), and several other correspondents: We know that there is a better way, but the Army finds the present way convenient.

"Puzzled" (Dunedin): So are we.

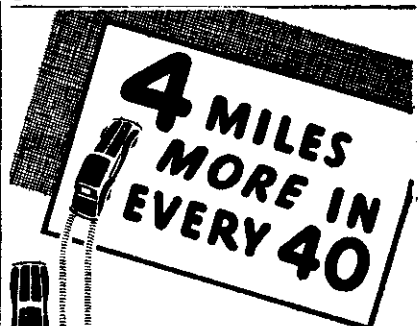
"Le Mo: Bateriaque" (Auckland): Audited and found correct.

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**SO THICK AND LONG**  
**LASTING! IT'S A**  
**TREAT TO SEE HOW**  
**RINSO SAVES OUR**  
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