

JULY 9, 1943

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Excuses Are Not Reasons

IT is neither surprising nor disturbing that some of the propagandists for the Liberty Loan have been pushing it with the wrong reasons. That was bound to happen. Some people support the war with the wrong reasons. Some give the wrong reasons why we should keep on the straight and narrow path. But that is not a reason why we should leave the path; neither a reason nor a plausible excuse. Nor is the fact that some advocates of the Loan talk nonsense a reason why the Loan itself can be forgotten. It means simply that sales talk on a national scale is apt to wander from wisdom and truth. There are never enough people anywhere to bring all the reluctant pounds out of our pockets without a little violence and deceit. But who are the real deceivers—those who are giving us the wrong reasons why we should subscribe or those who are twisting those reasons into an excuse for giving nothing? Most of those ardent propagandists believe the foolish things they say. None of those who listen to them believe that it makes no difference whether they subscribe or do not. The more clearly they see the absurdity of the "bonds for bombers" argument, say, the more clearly they see what the true argument is; and detect also the half truth even in that short-circuited appeal to the emotions. They can't help seeing it. For however easy it normally is to find an excuse for selfishness, it is beyond the wit of anybody at present to think why he should not contribute if he can live on less than he earns. So the bad reasons occasionally given just do not matter. They are not even an excuse for shooting the pianist when he is plainly doing his best. If there is any shooting to be done the targets should be those of us who know how the music goes and who run away in case it moves us.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

APPEAL TO WOMEN

Sir,—May I express my appreciation of your editorial "An Appeal to Women," which appears in the latest issue of The Listener? At the same time, however, I venture to suggest that everyone has to "face the music," as the following extract from a letter recently received from a one-time headmaster of one of our secondary schools, now principal of a college in Wales, points out: "The fact is," he writes, "that the world is in a terrible mess, and we are going to need every possible man to secure the future. There is abroad a very shallow interpretation of the issues of our age. The real fact is that there is a revolt all over the world against the principles of our Christian civilisation, and Germany being what it is, has broken out first, and worse of all, but don't make any mistake about it, it is everywhere. It is in this country (Great Britain), and in New Zealand: the growth of irrationalism, irreligion, immorality, and all sorts of subversive ideas. All I want people to do is to have the courage to think and not become sheep led by the nose by the shallowest propaganda."

I consider this a very excellent summary of our present trouble, especially in the light of Archdeacon Bullock's address broadcast from St. Peter's Church this evening, and it gives us a very clear idea of what we have to fight against at home as well as at the front.

M.G. (Marton)

NEW ZEALAND OR OTAGO?

Sir,—I read with interest the views of Dr. J. N. Findlay, of South Africa, and as Dunedin is my hometown, I feel I can agree with him—but only as far as Dunedin is concerned. I may be wrong; but to me it seems very obvious that Dr. Findlay is living in Dunedin, has not spent very much time anywhere in New Zealand other than in Dunedin, and is making the mistake of judging all New Zealanders by the southern standard. After living a few years only in the northern cities and districts, I have come to realise, and quite rightly, I think, too, that the average New Zealander in the north has a very different outlook, and displays decidedly different characteristics, from the southerner from Dunedin in particular. So perhaps Dr. Findlay is hardly yet qualified to offer criticism of the general characteristics of New Zealanders; and perhaps also Dunedin is seeing herself as others see her.—OTAGO (Lower Hutt).

NOT ENOUGH OF US

Sir,—No, there aren't enough of us, but how can there be with prices as they are, and help too hard or too expensive for the average mother to obtain? And what about when the mother comes out of the home—on the twelfth day now—and has no help of any kind? There's hardly anything more tiring than feeding a baby. A cow in a paddock rests and eats all the time it is making milk. What can the average mother do? A new-born baby takes a lot of time up. But that's nothing. There's the house, not modern, there's the husband, not always amenable; there's young three and a-half to be kept off the road.

There's a garden calling out for attention—the husband hasn't as much time now with Home Guard. And above all, there's the fact that there's not much left out of £5/10/ after 37/6 a week has gone out for rent and insurances started in better times, and that must be kept up, and for food, clothing and education for four people.

Anyway, it's easy enough for a man, M.P. or not, to condemn birth-control; let him go through the first three months after conception and see how he likes it. Mrs. J. Pearce certainly has said the right things in the right way.

My own second child arrives soon—not a mistake—but it is certainly going to be my last. Where would be the money for a third? Even now there arises before me the spectre of good education—not every child can get scholarships.—P. (Christchurch).

DIVERSITY OF TASTES

Sir,—It has long caused me amusement to observe how persons with grievances consider that their views on the subject are shared by the bulk of the people. These persons further seem to consider that they and 99 per cent of the community are being victimised by the tastes of a few influential specialists. This is particularly noticeable with regard to radio programmes. I, too, on many occasions, have almost fallen into the trap, but prudence and reflection have each time convinced me that the effect of such letters on the administrators is, rightly, negligible. In due course, I found that a little exploration, admittedly coupled sometimes with much patience, endurance and tuning, would bring me the programme I sought. Further, I found halcyon periods with the radio turned off. This does not infer that the radio arrangements in New Zealand have reached ultimate perfection, but merely that tolerance is called for rather than facile letter-writing. So long as there is human nature, there will be injustice and diversity of opinion. Even with a population as small as ours, every taste can not be catered for at once.

UNPREJUDICED (Epsom).

BEFORE THE NEWS

Sir,—Would it be possible to vary the music before and after the recordings of the news? The persistent band tunes become rather monotonous when heard so many times a day.—"NEWS LISTENER" (Hawke's Bay).

POINTS FROM LETTERS

YB Flat (Titirangi), found relief in the Session for Women (June 16) from "one of the most slicky, murky, nor-easterlies Auckland has had for a long time," and asks why "no one ever seems to go around 'skiting' that he can't bear, in literature, anything higher than books of Standard 1."

"Straight Drinker" (Dunedin), "Another Hopeful" (Wellington), "Music Lover" (Wellington), and S.G. (Christchurch), write in support of the protest of earlier correspondents against the way in which words and music are combined in "Music from the Theatre."

"Interested Listener" (Claudlands), would like the opportunity to congratulate Mrs. Dennistoun Wood on a recent camp concert, and regrets that listeners did not get the whole concert.

R. G. Smith (Christchurch), would like "more of that Maori music which we all, Pakeha and Maori, love so much."

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT
M.B.S. (Wellington): No.



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