

2nd Prize 1944 Class B

Excellent
B+++

Royal Empire Society Essay 1944

Radio as a link between the Peoples
of the British Empire?

2nd Prize

Class: Junior (B)

Name: Pamela de Jongh

School: The Collegiate School, Hobart

Age: 15 years, 2 months.

Birth:

Home Address: 17 Augusta Road, New Town,
Hobart, Tasmania.

"Radio as a link between the Peoples of the British Empire."

An explanation of the subject - "Radio as a link between the countries and peoples of the Empire", naturally falls under various headings, four of which may be stated as:-

Military,
Economic,
Cultural,
Personal.

Radio has played a gigantic part in this present upheaval as it has been necessary to acquaint the peoples of the Empire with the progress of battles and the manner in which the Mother Country and her allies are standing up to the fierce onslaught which has been thrown against her shores during the last four years. Naturally while the "Battle for Britain" was raging at its peak, the daughter nations of the "little impregnable isle" were anxious concerning the final result of the aggressor's attacks. Yet they knew instinctively that it would take more than bombs or cannon to cause the disintegration of the protective cloak surrounding the island.

It was with great relief and

renewed hope that those radio messages from the Mother Land were received by her people, advising them not to despair but to keep faith and pray for her in this - her darkest hour. Britain's daughters certainly had cause to be proud of the way the people of that island endured those great attacks - how they never gave in or grumbled even if their homes were bombed into a thousand atoms: and throughout these anxious times radio was the link which flashed across the world, instant news of attack - and its repulse.

One of the greatest battles in history is now raging, and by the stubborn fact of radio we are continuously in contact with those brave men fighting in Western Europe. We are knit together with these same men in sympathy and understanding by realising the sufferings they have to endure. It was a unique event for the people to have heard the epic landing on "D. Day" on the coast of France from the mouth of one of the Australian war-correspondents, witnessing the battle and broadcasting to his homeland. In this way we never feel far from those men fighting for us, and even though we

are a great distance from them, radio forms a link.

Considering the part played in the economic life as between nations of the Empire radio has had a vast effect in speeding up the time, that may be occupied in these negotiations: the broad outlines of bi-lateral, or multi-lateral agreements may be discussed by radio and arrangements made, for the meetings of delegates, at which meetings, discussion, argument, and compromise take place. At the final stages of these discussions delegates may be instantly in touch with the competent heads of the relevant departments, in their homelands, report progress and receive final instructions for the completion of instruments of agreement.

An instance of this was afforded recently, when an Australian Delegate to an international conference in America was the only one of forty-four nations represented who had not authority to sign on his nation's behalf. The Delegate was however, able to discuss the matter with his Cabinet Minister in Australia, from whom authority was received to sign on this nation's behalf.

Thus in the economic sphere valuable time may be saved almost instant contact made and negotiations of an almost infinite variety, conducted in many cases to the point of completion, through the link of radio. So even though success may not always attend these radio conferences, the fact that contact of a personal nature has been made in many cases helps very largely to an ultimate success.

A final instance of radio contact is afforded by what have now become historical conferences, between the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the President of the United States, who before their first meeting, had on many occasions, spoken with one another by radio telephone, and so had laid the foundations for that amity and cordiality which has marked their relations in all the momentous conferences on the world-wide conduct of the war.

Under the cultural aspect of radio music plays a most important part as an example, every week a programme - "music of the British Isles" is broadcast, thereby creating a specific link between ourselves and our motherland, for we hear the songs which are beloved by the homeland, and these we

too, can learn, - with profit to ourselves.

Those people who have once lived in the British Isles, whether in their childhood or in recent times, recall tender memories from these familiar times. Some who think they are losing touch with their beloved country, are soon again brought into contact by hearing literature and music, which is to them dear. Especially in these times, when thousands of children have been evacuated from their homeland, and who, even though they are treated with every kindness in reality may be homesick for their parents in their native land. Some of this feeling disappears from their hearts when they hear familiar strains and voices. These days, a great deal of entertaining is done by the famous stars in camps and battle areas. The Pearly Lane Stars, always in the limelight, are being repeatedly heard by radio. We appreciate the great stars of other parts of the Empire and I am sure they appreciate ours. Some of our greatest contemporary musicians have in the early days of their careers travelled to England where they have been tutored by famous teachers. Notably may be mentioned Peter Dawson, Harold Williams, Marjorie Lawrence,

and these distinguished artists have been heard in their homeland, so that distant though Australia be from Europe and America we have been able to appreciate in our own homes, the quality of artistry from these sojourners overseas.

Not many years ago, two eminent conductors - Sir Thomas Beecham and Doctor Malcolm Sargent paid visits to Australia, where they conducted many concerts with Australian Orchestras, and soloists. These programmes were naturally relayed to Britain, where no doubt many lovers of music were eagerly listening in to hear how our players, re-acted under the stirring baton of their conductors. I am sure they were not disappointed, and heard with pleasure how perfectly the orchestra and conductor were in harmony with each other, in soul as well as music.

Here we have another link supplied by radio.

There is an interesting session on the air - "Book Reviews" where titles of new books are given the authors of which books may be native to any part of the British Empire. Then follow short criticisms by able critics of these books, and although they may not yet be available to us we hear of them in advance and eagerly await their arrival, into our literary world.

Literature is one of the avenues by which people of the Empire may be linked and another avenue is by the broadcasting of well-known and/or contentious plays, throughout the Empire.

A nightly popular weekly feature is a news review by Wickham Steed - former editor of the "London Times", by which peoples of the outer parts of the Empire are acquainted with outstanding aspects of world happenings - peaceful as well as military, concrete as well as abstract. Without the link of radio it would be impossible for these reviews to reach the hearers in some cases until many weeks later. Thus the radio puts people, thousands of miles apart in countries distant one from another in constant touch with many and varied aspects of life in the Mother Country.

The personal aspect of this discussion is a wide and important one. Every Christmas Eve His Majesty the King broadcasts a goodwill message to the peoples of his realms. On this festival night, every being of the Empire who loves his country and respects his King, listens eagerly if radio is available drinking in his every word. If the facilities are there all may listen irrespective of race, colour, or creed. In this period of war it is not an uncommon occurrence to hear the voice of the King, sending out messages of encouragement

to all his people, messages charging them to keep up their war-effort, to never slacken in this vital struggle. Her Majesty the Queen too, speaks to the Empire from the B.B.C. telling us of the bravery and determination of the British people - a people with whom their Majesties are akin in blood, in spirit, and in feeling, and a people who will never let us down. Their daughter - Princess Elizabeth heir-presumptive to the throne of the greatest Empire in history broadcast on her eighteenth birthday to the people of the Empire and I doubt not that the voice of our future Queen, was eagerly heard.

A British Prime Minister of whom we may be proud is Mr. Churchill, and proud of him we all are. He is a great orator, and often speaks to the British Empire.

The radio is a blessing to the parents whose children have been evacuated to the dominions and the Commonwealth, for they are able to speak to their children from Britain, and be certain they are well and happy. This is also the case in the session "Angels Calling Home", in which boys in the services may speak to their loved ones at home, and tell them of the hospitality and kindness extended to them, so far from their homes. Here again radio forms an instant and vital link, tending through the news transmitted between loved ones, to draw together in closer bonds, the peoples of the countries between which space is spanned.

Inevitably linked with radio is the thought that in the future perhaps not too far distant will be television, so that we may have our news of military events of opera, and concerts, of momentous conferences, and of personal friends illustrated by pictures on the television-screen, in our own homes.