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Essay Competition
Class B. 1941
Special
Prize.

or
Lotham Secondary School,
Lotham Lawn Rd.,
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Age. 14 yrs 26 months on November 30th 1941

Class "B"

How has the War affected (1) The Press (2) The Wireless System in your neighbourhood? Has it been a gain or a loss

B4

every little helps

In our free modern world, the two important, - in fact almost the only two news services, are the wireless and the press. Of these two, the most widely used service in England is the press.

The chief effects of the war on the press were, paper rationing, its results, and the necessary war censorship.

The paper rationing has caused much smaller newspapers and magazines, and furthermore no new ones may be started during the war. The supplements issued by some papers, are no more, ordinary news has been cut down, few of the miscellaneous articles, plentiful in newspapers, are now published, but gardening news, has, in most papers, no small amount of space. News of British wars has again attained prominence after 20 years of uneasy peace.

To make way for the war news, very few miscellaneous articles are printed, descriptive articles, stories, poems and children's sections having all been cut down or abandoned. It is true however that stories descriptive of life in Allied countries are popular, also any having bearing on the war situation in past, present or future. Now, instead of poems to Spring, lurid headlines proclaim 'Greek Army Surrenders' or more cheerfully, 'Addis Ababa Captured', and in lieu of articles on 'The stately homes of old England', the best methods of growing fine cabbages, or theories on how to get the best out of gardens and allotments are set forth.

The main causes of paper rationing were; - the difficulties entailed in trying to reach North Baltic countries, the occupation of Norway and the lack of shipping space.

It was, even at the beginning of the war, impracticable to send Allied ships through the Baltic of which Germany was struggling to gain control, especially as Finland became involved in a war with Russia. Later, with the occupation of Norway, the only Baltic wood-producing country with an easily accessible sea-board was placed under partial German control. Almost the only remaining

source of supply for wood-pulp was Canada, three thousand miles away from Britain. To reach this country meant using convoys, having to face all the dangers the Germans could make, and having a permit for the importation of wood-pulp, as being an unnecessary product when all war supplies possible were needed.

It is known that advertisements pay a large proportion of the paper's expenses, and the number of advertisements is generally proportional to the size of the paper. In the local papers the personal column and small advertisements take up one eighth to one quarter of the paper, while a whole page is devoted to cinema and entertainment advertisements. Many papers are still bought merely to ascertain what enjoyment may be had on one evening, to find who is dead, decide to whom to sell an old wireless or car, or only to light the fire.

The importance of startling headlines and those needing explanation has not been neglected. eg. If 'Hattan general captured' is seen on placards one wants to know who it is, whereas if, 'Bergangoli captured', appears, there is little incentive to buy a paper.

One thing missing from most papers which often appeared in peacetime is the 'humanitarian headline'. Papers used to make much of, 'Pets imprisoned without food, or some such story. In wartime little of this is seen.

New features introduced in papers are, extracts from the editorials of the leading national 'dailies', and little religious texts or thoughts for the day.

The war censorship introduces new difficulties, for besides the paper having to pass its legal expert, to ensure that no actionable, libellous statements have been made, it has to pass the censor who will delete all statements which may help the enemy. The importance of this is seen at once, when it is recalled that details of British aeroplanes were got out of Britain by an

American correspondent and printed in an American magazine. The enemy was thus enabled to make use of them. Censorship, even of prevailing weather conditions is very necessary, for it is important for the enemy to have some idea of prevailing weather conditions before planes are sent over Britain.

Another effect of the war, is the number of maps to be found in newspapers. By now, the public has got accustomed to them; but the thick arrows, black or dotted lines and squares covering them, were at first very strange. The Ministry of Information informs the newspapers which pictures and maps of weather and war conditions and damage may be issued, and when. The specified articles are issued to the national press. The particular aspect of the war that it is wished to emphasise, is explained to the press, which is required to print official views. In this way news is fed to the nation. The church magazines are strictly controlled, and express their own views on the situation, only to a certain degree. They are not allowed to hint at weather conditions.

The severe raids on Bristol have not been without effect on the local press. At least two papers have had, for a time, to be printed outside the city owing to time bombs or bomb damage. One paper, printed at Bath for some days, was in its first edition, a great novelty. It was bought mainly as such, being only one sheet in size.

The effects of the war on the press have been a loss to the public in the stoppage of many of the amusing and descriptive articles, which made the paper pleasant to read. However this is offset by the fact that a united front has been placed before the Nazi's, in the wholesale denunciation of their evil system, to both the British people and the rest of the world.

5

The second great news and pleasure service, the B.B.C. was evacuated from London to Bristol at the outbreak of the war. Many of the vacant halls were taken over as studios, and the four or five houses adjoining the B.B.C. main property were annexed. The Colston Hall, Bristol's remodeled Concert Hall has been used many times for musical concerts. 'Music Hall' and the previous variety shows are, or were broadcast from one of the city's church halls.

Since the war began, the times of transmission have been altered. Instead of programmes commencing at 10.0 a.m., 'Forces' begins at 6.30 a.m. and 'Home' at 7.0 a.m. There are now only these two programmes each with separate broadcasts. An 'Overseas' service which serves German, and occupied, as well as neutral and allied countries, continues both day and night.

The war has brought into prominence variety shows like 'Qi', especially produced for the forces, which have their own programmes, - 'Ack Ack Beer Beer' and Sandy MacPherson's organ solos. The civilian or civil services have a special programme in 'Under Your Tin Hat'. In the Children's Hour, request records and childrens scrap-books are broadcast periodically. 'Five-to-One' on the land is a new everyday for farmers' feature on subjects likely to help them.

News is on the air six times each day at 7.0 a.m. 8.0 a.m. 1.0 p.m. 6.0 p.m. and 9.0 p.m. on both 'Home' and 'Forces'. At midnight after a final news both services close down. On Sundays, instead of 8.0 a.m. news it is broadcast at 9.0 a.m. and before the 9.0 p.m. news the national anthems of the allies are broadcast. To commemorate the Emperor's entry into his capital, the Abyssinian national anthem was broadcast for the first time, after the 9.0 p.m. news on the 6th May. Welsh news is on the Home service each day before the children's hour, part of which is some times relayed in Welsh. The Prime Minister's

4

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stirring speeches are usually made before the news. His heartening, and often humorous, words are very welcome. Before the news each morning a religious talk is given, the object being to help us in the coming day. The leaders of many religious sects speak on the radio, and the Archbishop of Canterbury has been heard. Services are often broadcast from the Lady Chapel of Bristol Cathedral, which is of special interest to Bristolians. Educational children's broadcasts are made each schoolday. They are 'For the schools', English, history and varied subjects. A special news commentary is made each week, and, when given by such a well-known man as Commander Stephen King-Hall it is of special interest.

The Radio Times, after contains a report or article on foreign broadcasts and how the Nazi lies are answered. They help one to understand how the enemy propaganda efforts are being countered. The British wireless has a very important task in the effective prosecution of this work. More than thirty different languages are spoken in the course of talk. The importance of this service cannot be overestimated, as it is the one quick method of imparting information to countries enslaved by the Nazis. Rumour spreads the truth, and may give some cause for the long-hoped for revolt by the Germans against Nazi principles. During heavy raids on the district, the local station usually "goes off the air", but once while listening in, there was a loud crash, and for about ten minutes the station went dead. It was later announced that the crash had been a bomb. Though little is heard of enemy 'jamming' it has been attempted, but proved too weak to make transmission inaudible.

The Bow Bells interval signal has been stopped, as church bells are the invasion signal. Now

Ernest Luch may be heard practicing B.B.C!

Most of the male members of its staff have joined the Corporation's own Home Guard, forming their units throughout the country's radio stations, to be its first defenders in the case of invasion.

The musical broadcasts vary from 'St Matthew Passion' and symphony concerts to jazz and crooning. Whether the B.B.C. are of the opinion that twenty years of intensive education have lowered the British mentality or that soldiers have little or no intelligent interest is a matter open for debate; but, if they think that the average listener enjoys programmes in which vulgarity, - which is not humorous, and horrible meanings are present, they are offering, perhaps unconsciously an ugly insult to the British people. When it is announced, for instance 'That famous star Betty Woodlum' (of whom, probably no-one has ever heard before) 'will now sing to you that popular melody so-and-so', the usual result is a noise which puts any Tom-cat to shame. The variety programmes which, before the war, did at least make one smile, are now a collection of unmitigated vulgarities which are not funny. Why is this so? Can it be that the B.B.C. no longer knows what is good, or is it an attempt to please the so-called popular taste? This seems to be the only explanation. Most of the men of Her Majesty's Forces are of the opinion that their own (!) variety shows are the nearest back.

There appears to be a general complaint that there is not enough good music on the wireless. This should not necessarily be classic for there is much pleasant modern music of which too little is heard.

While talking of music, a tribute is laid at the feet of Sir Walford Davis whose music talks were

greatly appreciated, and whose death is regretted throughout the nation.

The gardening talks by Mr. Middleton continue during the war, not on the cabbage rose but on the edible plant itself, not on the sweet pea but on that nutritious seed of the same family. It is hoped that gardeners will benefit by his wisdom.

Though the war has altered the 'tone' of musical broadcasts, this is in some way compensated for by the little proper music, and the occasional really humorous plays help to blot out painful variety memories.

Whereas in days of peace, the press and wireless were independent services, in the present days of warfare, their restricted news and use is counterbalanced by the united front they present against the common foe.