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Northern Ireland District, with the object of promoting the military efficiency of the force.

As I have said, our anxiety, as a Government, is to make the force the best possible weapon for its purpose, and to this end we are, and have been, ready and willing to facilitate in any way we can such steps concerning the control, the status and the organisation of the Local Defence Volunteer Force as the Imperial Government may consider desirable

And again on November 19th, 1940:

The readiness of this Government to agree to military control of and a military status for the Local Defence Volunteer Force has been made plain to the military authorities and to the Imperial Government, and, as I have previously indicated to the House, this Government is willing to facilitate any steps in this direction which the Imperial Government may consider desirable.

What is desirable in this connexion plainly involves military as well as other considerations. Meantime with the Volunteers themselves there is a lively realisation that what matters most to them and to the country is their proficiency in arms, and that the common enemy is not likely to pay much attention to anything else.—Yours faithfully,

Stormont Castle, Belfast.

J. C. MACDERMOTT.

### THE INDIAN DEADLOCK

SIR,—As one of the signatories to the letter criticised by Sir Herbert Kealy, may I answer some of his questions?

(1) "The offence for which Congress leaders in India are being arrested is for breaking the law." There are times when it is permissible to break the law and, since this law appears to Congress men unjust, they feel justified in breaking it. (2) Yes—I too think this law unjust. (3) The offences and the law in this case differ from those connected with the cases of Captain Ramsay, Sir Oswald Mosley and other political prisoners in this country in this important particular: the laws in this country are made by the people and should therefore be kept by the people. The laws in India are not made by the people. (4) I hope that the form of imprisonment now undergone by other political prisoners under the British Government is not like that under which the Indian leaders are suffering. "Detention" is certainly not "a fairer word" for what was intended in the case, for example, of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was condemned to "rigorous imprisonment" and his sentence was modified only under the pressure of public opinion over here. (5) Yes, Congress does desire complete and immediate independence for India. Does Sir Herbert Kealy suggest that they have no right to desire this? Why should they not? And why, if they do desire it, should that prevent us from giving them Dominion status? (6) The action of the Congress leaders is not "a form of blackmail." They cannot refrain from asking something which they have been asking for many years and long before the present situation arose. Even now, if India had been consulted (as all the great Dominions were) before being declared at war with Germany, this situation would probably never have arisen. (7) We cannot convince the world that we are fighting for democracy and at the same time refuse democratic institutions to India. Sir Herbert Kealy says, why not? I am afraid he must address that question to those outside this country who do refuse to be convinced. I can only say for myself that democratic countries ought to be governed by majorities and Sir Herbert will surely not deny that the Congress Party commands the majority in India. (8) No—these political prisoners have not "enjoyed complete freedom of discussion and conference" and to say that their freedom was only taken from them when they began to say things which the Government did not like, and could be released if they would promise to stop saying them, is to show that they have not had this freedom. I do not claim that freedom of discussion is invariably right; I point out that, whether right or wrong, Congressists have not had it.—Yours sincerely,

MAUDE ROYDEN.  
Nestlewood, Bayley's Hill, Sevenoaks, Kent.

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE FUTURE

SIR,—Mr. Lyon's proposal can be briefly summarised as a scheme designed to "cream" the elementary schools of the country for the benefit of just those schools which have hitherto set their faces steadfastly against accepting elementary school boys. In fact the public schools have come to believe in "extension of opportunity" to the working class just at that moment when economic circumstances have forced them to recognise that without recruitment from that class many of them are doomed.

Since in this way the public schools would take all the best boys, they would obviously become what Mr. Lyon rather complacently assumes they are—the best schools. There are grounds for supposing that some of the non-public schools are doing work at least as valuable as some of the public schools. Were the staffing ratio comparable it is reasonable to suppose that the comparison would be even more favourable to the non-public schools. Mr. Lyon wants to have all the best boys and the large public school staffs and the public money which would make his educational paradise possible. Further, whereas in present circumstances the grammar schools can compete with the public schools as institutions of equal dignity

though dissimilar status, the public schools would then make quite sure that they were the real home of the *Herrenvolk*. There is also one other unfortunate aspect of Mr. Lyon's proposal. The headmasters who have been so much opposed to accepting working-class boys in their schools would be able to select all the most gentlemanly little boys from the elementary schools at the scholarship interview. The inferior grammar schools would be left with the difficult educational task of making real citizens out of socially less desirable human material.

I know that this letter does not do Mr. Lyon personal justice, but that is because few public school men who start with all the public school assumptions realise how impertinent their point of view seems to those who like myself have been educated at one distinguished old grammar school and have the privilege of presiding over another.—Yours faithfully,

N. B. C. LUCAS.

The Grammar School, Midhurst, Sussex.

### EDUCATION AND RELIGION

SIR,—Letters have appeared frequently of late in most daily and weekly papers stating certain opinions about Education and Religion. The writers agree that Post-war Britain should be a true, or truer than it has been, Christian State. Again, they agree that to carry this out, Religion must play an important part in Education but they do not seem to see that Religion should be the producer of Education.

Since I am a schoolboy, perhaps I should not claim a right to speak on the matter, or at least that is what some people would say, but I am sure that I, as a boy, can see better than most adults how young people look at Religion. I am sure that, not until children and adults realise that Christianity is not just one of the many divisions of life and means going to church on Sunday, but is a whole mode of life from which everything else is an offshoot (or should be), not until then will Britain or any other so-called Christian country fulfil those ideals on which they claim their Government to be based.—Yours very sincerely,

J. O. CANDEL.

### THE AIR DEFENCE CADET CORPS

SIR,—Honour ought to be given where honour is due. The existing, and most valuable, Air Defence Cadet Corps has now been absorbed in the more comprehensive Air Training Scheme, placing readily at the disposal of the latter all its records and all its experience. This is a moment for placing on record the immense debt which the Air Defence Cadet Corps has owed throughout its existence to its treasurer, Mr. Simon Marks, who when any financial problem arose was invariably ready to contribute cheerfully and liberally to its solution. Knowing something of the facts, I hope you may find space for these few lines of singularly well-deserved recognition.—I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

X. Y. Z.

### "CACKLE-PIE"

SIR,—Interest in wild birds, and in small birds especially, has been described as a modern phenomenon, and perhaps one of the oddest paradoxes of our age is that though civilisation has increased and has become apparently increasingly indifferent to the individual's chances of violent death, it has been able to show a continually increasing concern with the protection and preservation of the lives of birds. This phenomenon—inspired, of course, by sloppy sentimentalism—has been strong enough to put on the Statute Book a series of Acts known as The Wild Birds Protection Acts, to found such societies as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the International Society for Bird Preservation, and to cause scientists, biologists, ornithologists and others to spend months and even years in laboratories and on remote islands in order to study the miracle of individual and collective bird life. It expresses itself every year in hundreds of books, many of them the result of years of patient research, and thousands of articles; it is expressed in thousands of bird-baths and bird-tables in gardens and backyards everywhere. It is the joy of countless people, from Prime Minister to children.

To write an article advocating the shooting of small birds as food is to imply either that "The Writer of the Article" (I note his anonymity) is not aware of these things, or that he does not care a damn about them. Because I am aware of them, and because I do care a damn about them, is the reason for my criticism of him. Behind the article also lies the implication that the meat situation in this country is so desperate that we must now begin to eat bull-finches instead of beef. This is just nonsense. Even if it were true I can still hear the voices of thousands of vegetarians crying with great heartiness "It won't hurt you to go without." Nor will it. As Mr. Priestley remarks, it will hurt none of us to give up our chump chops and steaks. If "The Writer of the Article" prefers a diet of bull-finches, he is at perfect liberty to prefer it, but he may care to be reminded that the weight of a bull-finch is roughly seven drachms, or about half an ounce, and that the weights of even some of his larger birds are just as astonishingly small. For a tolerably satisfying dish he will probably need, therefore, forty birds. If the trouble involved in the capture of forty small birds seems to some of us stupidly uneconomic, he must not mind. Some of us, odd

though it seems to a writer who has considered his subject neither aesthetically nor economically, still prefer our birds alive.—  
Yours, &c.,  
H. E. BATES.

*The Granary, Little Chart, Ashford.*

## MR. PIPER'S HERESIES

SIR,—In the course of his kindly attack on me Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis advocates the removal of as many as possible of the Wren churches "to less boorish and less menacing surroundings, where neighbourly good manners might, one hopes, be guaranteed in perpetuity by some measure of civilised restraint of building." I still feel that any good city church would look foolish in an open space, and worse than foolish as part of modern development schemes as we know them. We have not yet found out how to "develop" open fields without obliterating them by sham Tudor villas, super-cinemas and service roads.

In his defence of what he calls "that most efficient custodian, the Office of Works," he has given such a beautiful description of early nineteenth-century scenes in mediaeval churches depicted by Prout and Cattermole that anyone can see he is as deeply moved by old buildings that have rich pictorial texture as I am, and just as "incurably sentimental" about them. When I spoke of the tidying-up, the levelings and re-roofings by the Office of Works I was simply pointing out that this body has by now filched most of our national monuments from the artist and handed them over to the historian. They are no longer incipient pictures, they are museum exhibits. Their iron notice-boards with politely embossed words imply as much, as well as spoiling the view.

It is no use for Mr. Williams-Ellis to pose as an archaeologist. He knows that what he likes about a Cotswold manor house is that it is beautiful, not that it is old. He knows that a fifteenth-century manor house like that at Minster Lovell in Oxfordshire could be measured, drawn and wholly incarcerated in a learned work within a month at a thousandth of the cost in money and trouble of the "protective" work that the Office of Works has been doing there for years. He knows that to the historian with no eyes these records would be as useful as the building itself, and that any historian with eyes prefers a real ruin to a mummified one. He knows, too, that a couple of cows grazing form a more sensible foreground for such a ruin than a couple of motor mowers inside an iron fence. Every guide-book writer is wise to the folly fifty years after the wholesale "restoration" of our parish churches has been finished. Let us be a bit wiser about the wholesale "protective" work (equally misnamed) that the Office of Works is doing under our noses.—Yours, &c.,  
JOHN PIPER.

## A SHERBORNE DEPORTEE

SIR,—The letter which you published some time ago from Mr. S. J. Benham on a Winchester College boy describes treatment in some respects similar to that received by a Sherborne boy, particulars of which have come to my notice; and it clearly indicates that arrangements for dealing with interned refugees have been most unsatisfactory. This boy of just over 16 is personally known to me; he was sent first to Canada and then to Australia. An account of the voyage has been received by a member of the Victoria International Emergency Council, Melbourne, who states that 3,500 men were crowded into a small ship, called the "Dunera," 11,000 gross tonnage, fitted out to carry 1,000. This boy with 130 others were somewhere aft with neither bunks or mattresses for the entire voyage, which lasted eight weeks, and during that time the internees had half an hour each on deck.

There were three deaths and one suicide. When the men came on board the soldiers ripped open their luggage with bayonets and tipped the contents either overboard or into the hold. Over 1,000 watches, all their money and valuables and most of their clothing were stolen by the guards, there was great brutality and a lot of the men were injured. A number of the refugees are utterly destitute in Australia without even a brush or a comb and with only the clothes they left England in, now ragged.

Sworn statements are being prepared, and it is hoped to secure justice and prevent the sailing of further prison ships with a similar guard. It is expected that a question will be asked in the House. Such treatment would be unjustifiable for prisoners of war, but when it is remembered that the majority of these internees are friendly victims of Nazi oppression, it seems that, in spite of the urgency of affairs last summer, the Government has been seriously negligent in staffing their ships.—Yours faithfully,  
E. H. PEASE.

*Okeford Fitzpaine, Dorset.*

A committee has been set up on the initiative of the London and National Society for Women's Service and its Junior Council, the Women's Employment Federation, the Council of Women Civil Servants and the National Association of Women Civil Servants to promote the establishment of a memorial to the work of the late Mrs. Oliver Strachey. It is suggested that this memorial should take the form of a fund for the preservation and development of the unique library on women's life and work of which Mrs. Strachey was one of the founders. Donations should be sent to Lord Cecil, c/o Miss Watts, 13-14 Dartmouth Street, Westminster, S.W. 1.

## COUNTRY LIFE

### "A Shaming Record"

The countryside, I think, can supply a comment or two on "the shaming record" of the appalling road-accident figures for December. One of those comments concerns that most persistent road offender, the country workman on the bicycle. Knocking off in winter just before twilight, he can invariably be found, in the deadliest period just before darkness, trying to make home without any kind of light on his machine at all. Later, in darkness, the cyclist on remote country roads has another lamp-saving trick—that of riding without a light so long as the road is empty and of switching on suddenly at the approach of a car. Both practices are highly dangerous, both can have the most unnerving effect on the motorist, and both are everyday occurrences in the country. But country roads are now filled with an entirely new class of motorist: the Army driver. Using fast vehicles, independent of petrol rationing, travelling mostly in strange country, the average Army driver sets a new low standard of driving. Every day one sees examples of Army driving on narrow and dangerous country roads that make the civilian driver despair. Is it possible that Army standards of road responsibility are not high enough? In a recent case a soldier allowed his lorry to be driven, in the black-out, by a civilian; the civilian promptly knocked down a lamp-post, four people, and killed a child. The soldier was "severely reprimanded."

### Raasdonders

A Dutch correspondent (or a correspondent with strong Dutch sympathies) sends me details of a "highly nourishing, well-flavoured food" of which, at least as a food, I have not heard before. This is none other than tares, which is described as having been used as human food in England "perhaps even less than a hundred years ago," when "the Dutch imported them from this country and grew them for human consumption." All this is news to me, but my correspondent goes on to tell how "any naval man of the Konin Klyke Marine will tell you they are eaten on board the Dutch warships twice a week (*raasdonders* we call them) and that they are found to be a treat for any visitor who is invited to have lunch in their mess." This sounds convincing enough, but whether the conservative English public can be persuaded to emulate this naval cud-chewing is perhaps another matter. My correspondent omits to say how *raasdonders* are cooked. In the hands of Dutch cooks I have no doubt some tares are excellent, but in the hands of the English here is a good chance that they might remain, I fear, just a basinful of fodder. There are many Dutch folk in England now—perhaps one of them can give us a recipe for *raasdonders*?

### Wild Daphne

Reports of the localities in which *Daphne mezereum* grows wild have been few—but rather because of the rareness of correspondents, I fear, than of localities. But it is interesting to hear of it from three counties: Wiltshire, Hampshire and Staffordshire. In the first it is evidently so rare that its station is a hushed secret between natural history societies and a few local enthusiasts; in the second it was found in 1935 but, alas, had disappeared three years later. Only in Staffordshire does it seem to be at all plentiful. There, in certain districts (which for obvious reasons I shall not name) it grows "wild all through the woods." Only one correspondent gives any idea of the type of soil in which it is found. This is the Wiltshire correspondent, who describes it as growing in "very wet ground." To my surprise there are no new reports of it from Kent, which is reported to possess more species of wild flower than any other county.

### In the Garden

If onions are once again to be the scarcest winter vegetable it is a fairly safe bet that tomatoes will be the scarcest of all market produce during the coming summer. At this time in 1940 excellent Canary tomatoes were selling at eightpence a pound; this year the only tomatoes available are English hot-house at one-and-sixpence each. This is a clear warning, I think, that every gardener should plan to grow at least six times, and if possible ten times, the quantity of tomatoes he grows in a normal year. Even this is not too much. Tomatoes are absurdly easy to raise from seed (an average sixpenny packet should produce about fifty plants) in a temperature of 60 degrees or 65 degrees; or seedlings (quite commonly sterilised) are already available at eight shillings a hundred. These are, of course, only for those growers who can maintain an indoor temperature of about 65 degrees. But later there is no reason at all why tomatoes should not be grown outdoors, in rows, like beans or potatoes. Fifty per cent. of the fruit of such plants will ripen on the plants, and will be of finer flavour than those grown indoors; the remaining fifty per cent. may be ripened, in successive batches, in boxes of hay. Handled correctly, they will continue ripening until Christmas. Thus it should be possible for even the most modest grower to produce fruit from July to December. Incidentally more fruit is obtainable by using the twin-stem method of culture—i.e., of allowing two main stems, instead of one, to every plant.

H. E. BATES.