

# A LETTER FROM ERETZ ISRAEL

(From Our Own Correspondent).

Jerusalem, May 24, 1937.

## KFAR SHMARYAHU.

On a height near the coast, overlooking the village of Herzlia and a great part of the Sharon north and south of it, the foundations have been laid of a new settlement to be known as Kfar Shmaryahu, so named in memory of Dr. Shmaryahu Levin. On the second anniversary of his death a few days ago the first trees were planted in what is to be the village park, the major part of the cost of which is being borne by the High Commissioner, who has contributed £1,000 for the purpose. Sir Arthur Wauchope has few personal friends among the Jews of Palestine, but the closest of them was Dr. Levin. His gift on this occasion, therefore is a contribution not only to the beautification of the country, but to the honouring of the memory of a friend. In the course of his remarks at the inaugural ceremony the High Commissioner said: "Two years have now passed since the death of Shmaryahu Levin, but the example of his life and the inspiration of his spirit have not passed and will never die. If love, honour and the profound regard of all who knew him or ever felt his inspiring force—if these be of value, then high indeed are his earthly wages." The manner of their representation, no less than the words themselves left no doubt in the minds of his hearers that Sir Arthur on this occasion mourned not only a great citizen of the land he administers but one whose passing was a personal loss to him.

Kfar Shmaryahu is being established by "Rassec" (Rural and Suburban Settlement Company), a semi-official organisation for the settlement of German Jewish immigrants. In selecting the name of the new village, the settlers have sought to commemorate the Zionist leader who more than any other worked for the awakening of the Jewish national consciousness among what was formerly the most assimilated of the Jewish communities, the German.

## THE WIRELESS.

Every few months there is a wave of criticism of the Palestine Broadcasting service in the press and cafes. During the disturbances, when life for a great many people was a series of pauses between the official communiques read three times a day by three different announcers, little attention was paid to the other features of the programme. The station opened then at 2 p.m. with the first communiqué and closed at 2.30, opening again at 5.30 p.m. with another communiqué, continuing with the three programmes until 9 p.m. when the last communiqué was read. With the need for these frequent announcements happily past, the station opens now only at 5.30 p.m. with children's programmes lasting half-an-hour each. Then comes Art in three official languages. The Arabic programme usually consists of wave upon wave of music no non-Arab has yet been convinced is not the same piece played over and over again, and singing, sometimes by a man who sounds like a woman, and sometimes by a woman who sounds like a man. Occasionally there are short plays and stories in the Arabic programme, and in spite of the ostensibly strict censorship it is not infrequent that oblique references to the political situation—from the Arab leaders' viewpoint—is introduced.

In Hebrew we must listen to endless speeches. The wireless, incidentally, is being exploited by purists to introduce into Hebrew certain guttural sounds which have not been pronounced by Jews for the last two thousand years or more. Hebrew folk-songs are appearing more frequently than formerly in the programmes, but many would still willingly have two speeches sacrificed for a single set of songs.

The British programme director is always anxious to please the sporting population and gives long accounts of the sport results in England and Palestine, which interests about one-tenth of one per cent. of the populace, the overwhelming majority of the rest not knowing the difference between a cricket bat and a polo pony. In between all this, at 8 p.m., the local and foreign news is read, the former being limited to outrages or

calamities. The English comes first, and then Arabic and Hebrew, with every detail of translation completely accurate. The guttural nature of Arabic is probably the cause of the apparent anger and haste to finish his job that characterises the Arab announcer. The Hebrew announcer always begins with a bright greeting of the day and season. He tries to sound very official, but soon becomes almost intimate.

Having survived all this the listener can hear some good chamber music and some individual talent ranging from the unbelievably bad to the surprisingly good. Once a week dance music is relayed from the King David Hotel. When all else fails, there are always the gramophone records with the numbers of each record repeated conscientiously in the three languages. The week's *Haftarah* on Friday night, a chapter from the Koran on Thursday, and an occasional Bible-reading in English are concessions to the three religions.

Although the programmes have no doubt improved in quality in the past year, the Jewish section of the population, with high art standards brought with it from the art centres of Europe, is impatient at the mediocrity of the service; hence its recurrent clamour. The vastly differing levels of culture and interests in Palestine render particularly difficult the choice of a common programme that will satisfy Jew, Briton and Arab. But within the programme of each of the three communities it should not be insuperable to provide each with a programme to meet with its demands.

## JERUSALEM'S NOISES.

Every city has its itinerant peddlers and vendors, and therefore its own peculiar street noises. In Jerusalem, these noises are now reaching their peak with the summer. To the all-the-

(Continued on Next Page).

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*(Continued from Previous Page).*

year-round cries of brazen-lunged newsboys with their amazing facility for abbreviating and distorting newspaper titles, we have the Arab *busa* and Jewish *glida* (ice-cream) vendors, whose calls, repeated in cadence and reinforced by a musical invitation of clinking cups and brass plates to partake of the cooling stuff, is a paying advertisement of their wares. Then there is the seller of sand whose morning intonation of "rena, rena" recalls the circus-arena of old Rome and the combats of gladiators. The call of the coffeeman with his brightly polished, quaintly wrought vessels producing melodious symphonies from clinking brazen bowls is eminently pleasant. "Toot, toot," is the cry of the mulberry sellers, and "yerako-o-o-oth" of the vegetable vendors. The pedlar who sells ties and boot-laces has as raucous a repertoire as a London coster, while the Arab who dispenses balloons does so in a quiet monotone. Three other sounds that are heard, which only the irreverent could place in the category of street cries, cannot nevertheless be passed over in silence, for they stand for much of that pervading "religiousness" which summons to prayer and summons to rest; the arresting voice of the muezzin at the close of day from the minaret of the mosques, the variety of Church bells that peal for hours on Saturday night and Sunday, and the blast of the trumpet that ushers Sabbath in late on Friday afternoon.

**HEBREW SHORTHAND.**

At the conclusion of the meeting of the Zionist General Council held last month in Jerusalem, the Chairman, Mr. M. Ussishkin, remembered to thank the man who was responsible for the committal to shorthand, and their transcription on the same day, of the lengthy addresses and discussions that had been heard. Elsewhere that success would hardly form subject of comment. But in Palestine Hebrew shorthand is still new enough an achievement to call for special recognition when it successfully carries out a formidable task such as this.

The system of Hebrew shorthand was evolved in 1924 by Mr. J. Maimon, an official of the Keren Hayesod, who based his theory on the international Stenography of Major-General Felix von Kunowski, a system that has already been adapted to such differing languages as Polish and Japanese. First Mr. Maimon created the new Hebrew stenography for his own purpose, to record the proceedings of meetings of the Jewish national bodies. Within three years he had worked out the full practical application of his system and then began to work out its exact theory. In 1930 he issued a short primer of Hebrew shorthand and in 1932 a list of grammalogues, consisting of one thousand different word combinations. One feature of the Maimon system is that it is written from left to right, and not like Hebrew script from right to left. This characteristic enables the student to utilise his knowledge for other languages besides Hebrew, an advantage of especial importance in Palestine where a typist is occasionally called upon to receive dictation in two or three languages in addition to Hebrew.

From his primer Mr. Maimon went to opening a school, from which nearly three scores of pupils have since graduated. A number of these have in turn become teachers, so that the Maimon system is steadily gaining ground throughout the country. At present, efforts are being made to induce the Government to recognise the system as obligatory on its Hebrew typists. When that object has been achieved—and it probably will be, for Mr. Maimon is one of those quiet but preserving crusaders—the next goal will be to popularise it abroad.



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