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What Listeners Want

No politician looks in his mail-bag for public opinion. The more letters he receives the more conscious he is of those he never receives. He represents, and knows that he represents, people whom an earthquake would not make articulate.

For precisely the same reason we do not suppose or wish to suggest that the competition we have just conducted proves anything about broadcasting. It does not even prove anything about programmes. If we had been foolish enough to expect such a result we should not be able, in the face of the seven winning answers printed on this page, to pretend that we had achieved it. Two of the seven vote for news, one for classical music, and one for dinner music, one for Parliament, one for children's voices, and one for a serial. And if the seven winners express as many opinions as this, it is not necessary to add that there is the same diversity among the hundreds of losers—not to mention the tens of thousands who say nothing at all. Some are more skilful than others in expressing themselves, some more vehement, but the only opinion running like a thread through the whole series of answers is one that very few consciously intended. It is certainly one for which we did not ask.

But it is plainly there. Listeners may not know what they want, and they may refuse to be happy till they get it. But they do know, and they have said, one or two directly, nearly all indirectly, that they want broadcasting. It has been impressive, and touching, to hear so many people saying in so many different ways that their receiving sets are spiritual meat and drink to them, church, school, and playground.

NEWS WINS BY A HEAD

Listeners Say What They Want—And Why

We print below the seven winning answers in our Favourite Session Competition. Those who are interested in such questions may find material here for an essay on the influence of geography. And they may not

History on the Way

I like the parliamentary session. It amuses, it enlightens, it maddens, but it safeguards. I can't be helplessly precipitated far towards a red ruin while I'm at the keyhole so to speak. I'm in the doings. I'm keeping my check on them.

I like symphonies, but one can have a gramophone. I like plays, but one can go to the cinema. The parliamentary session is something I can get honestly only over the air. Oftentimes it gives me nothing except gentlemen cracking hearty, but there's always the chance that some night I may listen-in to history being made. And that's irresistible.

—Ngaire Gibson, Cambridge.

As a Country Dweller

You ask what Broadcast Session I like best. If you mean what session gives me most æsthetic pleasure I would say the Classical Hour, but if you mean what session do I value most, speaking as a country dweller, I would say the News Session. The newspaper comes twice a week, and life has been revolutionised by daily contact with the world outside. What joy would there be in a Beethoven Symphony or the revels of Dwarfs if there was a lurking fear that we were at war and did not know it? So I give News Session first place.

—(Mrs.) J. M. Williams, Otane.

The Thoughts of the World

News and Reports! That session is an avenue to the thoughts of the world. It reveals the trend of things, big and small, in this and other countries, takes me away from my own cycle of affairs; outlines for me something of the minds of leaders in many spheres, in some of which, frankly, I am not a bit interested, but which go to make up this complicated, lovable—sometimes wearying—thing we call life, to keep up with which we must know what the other man is thinking. No more varied, authoritative and instructive session is, in my opinion, sponsored by the Service.

—J. Halket Miller, Ashburton.

In a Quiet Garden

Whenever I have a chance in the afternoon, I tune in the Classical Programme from 4YA, take up my knitting, lean back and relax thoroughly, allowing myself to be entertained by "concord of sweet sounds." I've no knowledge of classical music and usually haven't the faintest idea of what I'm

listening to, but hearing this type of music after modern jazz and modern ballads, is like walking in a very quiet, sweet-smelling garden after being jostled in a noisy fair-ground. I find this hour snatched from a busy housewife's day a real mental tonic.

—(Mrs.) J. Hall, Dunedin.

Help in Forgetting Age

I like the children's sessions for the same reason that I like the buds of spring, those young growths that are so full of youth and vigour, and of possibilities.

I like their sincerity, when sincerity is at a premium; their lack of sophistication, when that attribute has so much to answer for; their simplicity, when life to-day is so complex; their very irregularity—they seldom work to schedule; their delightful little surprises and their touches of unconscious humour; because they are relaxation to the mature, and stimulating to the juvenile; because they help me to forget my age.

—W. A. Given, Whangarei.

Music to Dinner

For me, no hour in the radio day can compare with the Dinner Music session.

This is because the music selected is essentially for the "middle-brow," and is always soothing and refreshing. There is but little announcing, and the music of the masters speaks for itself, delighting the ear and calming the spirit. This helpful interval not only completes a working day, but fortifies and strengthens the mind for any evening task or engagement. Then, indeed, does radio exert to the full an influence of help and solace—an education, too, giving inspiration to human endeavour and blessing all honest effort.

—Norman Stringer, Auckland.

Give Me a Serial

Serials are my choice. And why? What other radio feature can bring you a thrill equal to a really good book? A book so effortless to read, and with all the tonal inflections inserted for you. And who has left his childhood so far behind that he cannot respond to the appeal of high adventure, which, for a space, carries us from our rut to another sphere of life?

At any rate, give me a serial and I will sit with the youngsters: ears pinned back and a baleful eye ready to transfix any inter-rupter.

—W. H. Ritchie, Havelock, Marlborough.