

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

Price Threepence

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Skies Over the Anzacs

THE sea-journey to Australia used to take a week. Then for a long time it filled four days. Shortly before the war, the time was cut to two days and a-half. Now the few who still cross take breakfast on one side of the Tasman and dinner on the other side. We are not yet one community, but science has brought us so close together that politics can no longer keep us apart. And that, in brief, is the meaning of the Anzac Pact. Whether we call it, with the *Chicago Tribune*, a "pipe-dream," an "act of statesmanship" with the *London Daily Mail*, or "greater strength for the new international order" with the *Manchester Guardian*, it began to be inevitable the day Kingsford Smith arrived in the *Southern Cross*. Japan of course hurried it. Hitler injected some clauses into it. But the origin of it, the meaning, the prime purpose and increasingly clear significance will be found in the air. Enemies who have to approach by land must come slowly. If they come by water their approach is slower still. They may still come, both ways, and conquer, but they will not often overwhelm us by surprise. The air is twenty times faster and therefore twenty times more dangerous. A squadron of bombers could leave Sydney in the morning, destroy Wellington during the lunch hour, and be grounded safely in Sydney again before the blackout. Therefore whatever is safe for Sydney is safe for Wellington, and everything that threatens Wellington threatens Sydney and Melbourne at the same time. And for those reasons and a hundred others it is natural that New Zealand and Australia should be asking now how to make the air serve their people instead of threaten them. It is natural that they should be asking such questions, and encouraging that the solution they at present propose would mean open skies all over the world. A few hours spent over sky maps will show what the alternative would be.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

NBS ORCHESTRA

Sir,—As a keen lover of chamber music, I would like to voice my appreciation of the quality of the service given to the Dominion by the NBS String Orchestra, and especially the quartet under Vincent Aspey's leadership. From time to time we hear broadcasts of recordings of the finest music rendered by the world's most famous groups of performers, but I venture to say that the work of our local musicians suffers little if anything in comparison; it is always full of character and individuality, confidence and technical skill. These remarks apply also to the NBS Light Orchestra, whose programmes are always delightful to listen to. All the artists concerned are doing more than merely giving pleasure to many thousands: they are raising the standard of music throughout the Dominion, and with every performance add to the number of people who can appreciate the best in classical music. New Zealanders have every reason to be proud of this service and grateful to those who render it.

LISTENER (Gisborne).

Correspondents Please Note

Letters sent to "The Listener" for publication should not exceed 200 words, and should deal with topics covered in "The Listener" itself. Correspondents must send in their names and addresses even when it is their wish that these should not be published. We cannot undertake to give reasons why all or any portion of a letter is rejected.

WHERE WAS THE CENSOR?

Sir,—In common with a few others of my sex I plead guilty to listening in occasionally to the Health and Beauty session from our ZB station. I do so, not for education but for relaxation. Some of the suggestions made therein seem to me to be rather impracticable, but after all, I am only a mere man. Imagine my surprise and slight amusement, however, on hearing the following just a few days ago: "To ensure freedom from nervous disorders, you need an ample supply of vitamins. You should, therefore, include in your diet plenty of good dairy products—plenty of milk, cheese, butter, and cream. . ."

Surely, sir, further comment is superfluous. But, may I ask, who censors these programmes? Not the Minister of Marketing, I'll be bound.

A. N. D. HOWE (Gore).

APPRECIATION

Sir,—I wish to add my appreciation of the morning programme from 3YA. This programme is a sheer delight, and it is a relief to know that at that hour of the morning one can tune in to something satisfying.—THELMA E. CAMERON (Dunedin).

"HE THAT SHOULD COME"

Sir,—I wish to express thanks for Dorothy Sayers's play "He That Should Come"—and to congratulate the NBS on the production of this wonderful historical and imaginative work. If ever a theme was made to come alive, it did in this play, and for the time we were transported back 2000 years and heard and saw the happenings on that momentous night.

M. R. WALLACE (Wanganui).

GENIUS AND MORALS

Sir,—In the talk on Rachel in the "Famous Women of the Theatre" series, we were bidden, I think, to overlook the moral lapses and to remember her early gutter environment (the exact words escape me). Humility seems to me our only attitude in regard to genius. It seems an impertinence to apply to such a world figure the standards and measures appropriate to the average schoolgirl. So reference to early "gutter" influences is as unseemly as if the story of the Nativity were likewise embellished with deprecating and genteel comments on early stable-boy influences or stable and manger environment. These great souls who come, and come so seldom, to be a light in our darkness, seem to consume experience with a blazing urgency quite unknown and unnecessary to the neat majority of us. It's not for us to moralise neatly on a tiny patch of a life too great for us to comprehend.

Apart from good taste, which would compel us to step very warily and softly indeed, in laying down laws for the greatest of mortals to follow, there is also a scientific reason for holding back from saying "What can you expect my dear, with the home she came from!" It is suspected that the abnormality of mind called genius is in some cases related to and dependent on other abnormalities, quite distinct from degeneracy. A most unsuitable subject for a mothers' meeting, of course, or the sewing guild, but we don't all go there to-day.

FARMER'S WIFE (Stoke).

RACING AND THE REST

Sir,—Your correspondents who complain that the commentary on the races at Riccarton was interrupted by the War News have no doubt reason to be annoyed. But there is another point of view. To many New Zealanders old and young, the war is the most important thing that has happened in their lives, even apart from the fact that they may have sons and brothers fighting in it. Some even go so far as to consider that this war is the most tremendous event in scope and importance that has happened since the beginning of civilisation.

Some, too, are shamed and humiliated that racing goes on so much as usual. They do not understand why so many hundred men are absorbed in the business of carrying on racing while in every form of primary and secondary industry, transport and everything else, there is such a desperate shortage of labour: why so many thousands of gallons of petrol and so much rubber in tyres is wasted every week in moving horses and going to race meetings: why when ordinary railway travel is restricted, there should be 16 special trains run from Wellington for one morning's racing. But these people are too solemn and serious about it all. Of course the first race at Riccarton is vastly more important.—K. E. CROMPTON, M.B. (Havelock North).

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

H.D.B.—Beyond our control. Write to your station director.