

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

Price Threepence

MARCH 23, 1945

## Learning History

WHEN, as reported on page 11, Dr. James Hight told students of Columbia University in a radio message that American history is now compulsory for first year history students in New Zealand university colleges, he was not announcing any radical change or innovation in our university syllabus. American history has, in fact, been part of the prescription of Stage I. history in this country for a good many years. But what Dr. Hight said would probably be news to a good many of his American listeners, and it is to be hoped that they regarded it, as they were intended to, as evidence of a desire to "promote better understanding between our two peoples." Ideally, of course, understanding should always be mutual, but while there are doubtless many Americans who are now interested in New Zealand history, we can scarcely in this case demand full reciprocity: it would clearly be unreasonable to expect U.S. freshmen to devote as much time to studying our national story from Grey to Savage as ours must devote to swotting up America from Jefferson to Lincoln. Indeed, one of the greatest virtues of historical study is that it helps the student to get his own national importance into international perspective—always provided that the history he learns is as objective and impartial as it is possible to make it. Some theorists have, in fact, suggested that a good start towards world peace would be made if the citizens of each country were compelled to learn their national history as written by somebody belonging to another nation; so that, for example, the Japanese history taught in Japanese schools would be written perhaps by Scandinavians, and German students might learn their national story from a pen of a Hindu. And, indeed, it may very well turn out that something along these lines will be included in any plan for the "re-education" of the Axis peoples. What is being done in our own University in teaching American history is, obviously, nothing quite like this. Nevertheless, although it is a move from a different direction, it is a move towards the same end: better international understanding.

## LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

### CLASSICAL MUSIC

Sir,—I agree with "Arco" that jazz, swing, and crooners are "tripe." "Level with the Times" (Riversdale) says "too much of one and not enough of another would result almost in a riot." At present we get far more "tripe" than music, and, if the proportions were made even, listeners of your correspondent's type would no doubt start a riot. It would be their nature to do so. Jazz, swing, and crooning are just jungle noises, and only caught the fancy of some listeners as an escape from the strain of war news. Anyone with the least musical taste will agree that the discords of jazz resemble the angry cries of baboons and apes. (The ape is, I believe, the most intelligent of the monkey tribe.) A number of lusty boys armed with tin cans, sheets of metal, and football whistles would, if they all played different tunes, make as much "music" as the cultured "ape" or jazz band. Has your correspondent ever looked at the craniums of the alleged "bands" on the screen? Any physiologist would tell him that there is a remarkable absence of "brain" in them, and the "conductor" is, as he should be, the most ineane of the lot. The stupid barbarism of the bandsmen is also shown in their method of standing up in groups to let forth a blast or bellow of discord. This is almost as silly as the Nazi goosestep.

H. E. LAWRENCE (Stratford).

Sir,—"R.M.N." seems to be barking up the wrong tree when he attacks "Arco" in your last issue. "Arco" does not condemn swing addicts, but merely expresses his sorrow at the deplorable lack of taste which the average listener appears to show. Seventy-five per cent of the youth of to-day has the mistaken idea that anything new is good. I am sufficiently old fashioned to reserve judgment until a tune or song has proved itself. How many popular recordings of nasal crooners last more than six months? The music "Arco" prefers has lasted through generations. My advice to "R.M.N." is to get together with some of his cronies, preferably in a large paddock, and play his music on a portable gramophone to his heart's delight. As "R.M.N." himself says: "Everyone to his own taste."

"SWEET YOUNG THING" (Auckland).

Sir,—Why do we have so much classical music from 12M? When it was taken over by the New Zealand broadcasting stations again I looked forward to some good variety programmes. But alas! I was disillusioned. From 7.0 to 9.0 every evening we get classical music. Could we not have a programme of the latest song hits and dance music say at least two evenings a week from 7.0 to 9.0? When one has worked all day it is very tiring having to listen to a lot of heavy music.—VARIETY (Auckland).

### LORD REITH ON DEMOCRACY

Sir,—There may be some reasons for Democracy's distrust of governments and leaders, but there is no reason at all for the attitude so common in New Zealand which induces men to thwart and evade the government at every turn. The idea that it is a clever thing to "do" the government is a result of a childish, schoolboy mentality, of a piece with attempts to outwit the "teacher"

at school. Many people never outgrow it. This is a kind of petty sabotage for which there is no excuse. If we are to wait for leaders of more than human perfection we shall never get them until we learn to govern ourselves.

Of course there is a psychological explanation. Since the dawn of history the government has always been the conqueror to whom tribute was paid and the racial memory leaves us with the slave complex; we are too mean spirited to realise that we are free if we choose to be so. Our freely-elected government has the right to our willing support.

J.F. (Christchurch).

### Letter from Listeners

Sir—Editorial comment with a reputation for insouciance has surprised itself by lumping the pants fascist vigilance of liberated Europeans with the gossip peddling, mud-slinging of the assassins of the character of a great anti-fascist, Charles Chaplin.

—Sensible Liberal.

### "JEKYLL AND HYDE"

Sir,—As you say, and as the announcer says, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Now, who wrote the current programme on 4ZB? Did he need to smirch the fair name of a master?

FIVE EPISODES (Warrington).

### "COLONEL BLIMP"

Sir,—To continue the quotation at the top of G.M.'s criticism of *Colonel Blimp*... "I'll grind his bones to make my bread." Doesn't G.M. think he might vary the flavour of his bread occasionally? It would seem that the name "Islington" or "Denham" on a film always inspires him to repeat the same recipe. Again I quote: "Silly, maybe; but Gad, sir, we've got to be careful."

NEW ZEALANDER (Wellington).

### HELP FOR CHINA

Sir,—Your recent documentation of the attempted sending of stud sheep to China has raised many generous impulses. I would suggest that the most practical and at the same time the most personal way for New Zealand people to help lift Chinese living standards, would be to raise and maintain an entirely unearmarked fund to be placed at the disposal of Rewi Alley for the purchase of whatever supplies from the Dominion he should find his work needs.

Mr. Alley's name should surely have been included in the list—Rutherford, King, Mansfield, Low—discussed in the

article "Truby King" in Canada in your last issue. It has been claimed that he is personally known as a helping friend to more individuals than anyone else on earth, and for the people of his home country to strengthen his hand would be an encouraging act in the building of the post-war world, an example of going beyond co-operation between governments to direct acts of goodwill between peoples. In the meantime, please let us have some articles on Rewi Alley and the Industrial Co-operatives.

J.H. (Wellington).

### DR. BRADSHAW'S RECITALS

Sir,—It was gratifying to see the letter by Francis Clark suggesting that records be made of the music played by Dr. Bradshaw in Christchurch. The artistry and refinement of these recitals by this musician not only give pleasure to his listeners, but are of high educational value also. I know many people who, like myself, make a point of remaining at home on Friday evenings to hear these recitals, and records of the music would be welcome to all.

C.M.L. (Christchurch).

### "NOT FOR SOCIAL CREDITERS."

Sir,—I did not rub my eyes with any surprise on reading the one-sided comment appearing under the above heading in "Viewsreel." It would naturally catch a Social Creditor's attention. "The Safest Place in the World" (for bankers) might very naturally find a place in a BBC programme, and the trend of the item would be a foregone conclusion. The BBC could be depended upon to pleasingly spotlight the historical milestones of the Bank of England—how it averted a financial panic in 1745; how it withstood a siege in 1780; and so on. But if the Social Crediters listening to the programme impatiently switched off with "savage clicks," as your commentator imagines, it would be quite understandable to Social Crediters the world over. They remember that no one would be given a chance by the BBC to mention over the air that the Bank of England had suspended payment from 1797 till 1819; that it had closed its doors four times, including in 1914, when the British Government had to rush to its desperate need with a deluge of resuscitation "Bradburys"; or be allowed to repeat a statement by William Paterson, the founder of the Bank of England in 1694—"The Bank hath benefit of interest on all moneys which it creates out of nothing." The BBC shuts out such ungarnished, and to them, unpalatable truths, as it also does those who can tell them.

THE NAKED TRUTH (Christchurch).

### GARDENING TALKS

Sir,—Some time ago a letter was written to *The Listener* protesting against the very short time allowed for the Gardening Expert's talk. May I add a plea that at least half-an-hour be set aside for these talks. Considering the importance of the subject, and the interest it holds for a large percentage of listeners, quarter-of-an-hour seems quite inadequate. There are hundreds of home gardeners throughout New Zealand who will agree with this. Those who do not care for gardening talks could perhaps turn to another station for half-an-hour.—"PETUNIA" (Nelson).