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## 615 Into 437

SIX into four, we learnt at school, will not go; nor will 615 into 437. But that is not a worry at Westminster. A little over a year ago Mr. Churchill explained to what we thought at the time would be an astonished House of Commons why he wanted the new building to be a copy of the one the Germans had destroyed. Now it is announced that work on the new House is about to begin, and that the seating accommodation will be "437 members and about 500 other persons." There are of course 615 members, and 178 will either have to stand, stay away, or sit on the steps and fellow-members' knees; which is precisely what the architects would be instructed to plan for. A House big enough to accommodate all the members would often be half-empty, and that, Mr. Churchill argued, was too depressing to be faced. House of Commons speaking, he insisted, should be conversational; conversational speaking required a fairly small space; and great occasions demanded a sense of crowd and urgency. So it was not an astonished House after all that heard this speech, but a broadly approving one. The new House will be like the old because the old met the requirements of the average member—gave him what Mr. Churchill called an indispensable sense of intimacy, lifted the nation's affairs "above the mechanical sphere into the human sphere," and gave Parliament itself a "collective personality." It was a fine example of the special pleading that is at once accepted as wisdom where it is spoken and folly everywhere else. Except for some simplification in the decorations, some worldliness in the windows, and the shattering precedent of the loud-speakers, Westminster in a year or two will be precisely what it has been for 100 years or more, and there may even be significance in the colour of the seats and the carpet. It would certainly be reckless to assume that such things are accidents.

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

## "WHAT I LIKE"

Sir,—I would like to say how much I and some of my friends enjoyed the programme provided by "a freezing-works hand" in the session "I Know What I Like." I have nothing to do with freezing workers—I don't think I know any—so this is genuine appreciation. When one comes in tired after a big day's work that type of music is restful and really refreshing—not heavy-brown, not cheap and common, just some very beautiful pieces of real music; and the only two women who sang, sang quietly and well—you did not want to rush and turn them off before they split your head open. They sang to please—not to show what they could do with their vocal organs, which is the cause of so much turning off.

"A FARMER" (Palmerston North).

## 2YC DANCE SESSIONS

Sir,—One man's meat is another man's poison" as I was reminded on reading "Anon's" remarks commending 2YC's dance session. At times radio gives great pleasure to a household such as ours—an elderly couple and their middle-aged daughter—but on occasions it lets us down. One of the times we would most enjoy some entertainment is the hour or two between tea-time and the old folks' early bed-time, but, for reasonable reception, the only alternative to the main stations (from which we are assailed by such a battery of words at this hour) is 2YC. At one time we could turn to this station and find something likeable, but now, alas, the reverse is the rule, and if as a sort of endurance test we try it out for half an hour we are thoroughly jaded at the end of that time.

Incidentally, the obvious enjoyment of the announcer during these sessions of Dance Music, Songs for Sale, etc., make one wish to be able to throw something at him! Despite such sentiments I am

GENTLE ANNIE (Nelson).

Sir,—According to "Anon" Silvester and Bradley are gutless. He is pleased that their music has been omitted from the 6 o'clock dance session from 2YC. I like this session also, but in my opinion with the addition of Silvester and Bradley this session would be of a higher standard. Perhaps "Anon" has never danced to the bands of the gutless. He should try it. Many happy hours have I spent listening to Silvester and Bradley and I feel rather indignant when their style of music is described as gutless.

I will take this opportunity of congratulating Henry Rudolf and his players. His style of music is similar to that of Silvester and Bradley. I look forward to their monthly session from 2YA. Hats off to the gutless.

C. J. WHITE (Kerikeri).

## EDITORIAL MANNERS

Sir,—While the wisdom, the eloquent sanity, of your editorial column remains a stable and most welcome feature of New Zealand writing to-day, many of your replies to "Letters from Listeners" on the same page seem strangely out of touch with the breadth and mellowness

of the neighbouring territory. My own feeling is that the urbanity and directness which distinguished your replies until about a year ago have largely been replaced by jests which side-step the issue, and that, far from suffering fools gladly, you have resolved (for aught that appears) to let the correspondent's annoyance dictate the tone of your reply. For some time I assumed that it was I who had become irritable, but letters which have appeared in the last six months lead me to wonder whether the Editor is not the only one now in step.

You may treat this protest in the cavalier manner you have perfected of late, but this will not remove the cause of writing. I believe there are others like myself who, proud of *The Listener* and of the glowing humanity of its editorials, are ashamed to read replies that are hardly more than cheap wit—ashamed, for we had come to feel that *The Listener* was our own, expressing our own feelings, though with aptness far beyond our range.

Is this mere wistful longing for a past which exists only in my own imagination?

I. D. CAMPBELL (Wellington).

## A WEST COAST BROADCAST

Sir,—Last Friday I saw that our station 3ZR was to broadcast a talk by J. D. McDonald, M.A., M.Sc., entitled "A Burning Question," and being curious, I tuned into Greymouth. I heard one of the finest talks it has been my pleasure to listen to. The information imparted by Mr. McDonald was something that every man, woman, and child in New Zealand should know, and it occurred to me that the talk was worthy of being made a Sunday night feature from all stations. Could this be arranged? The limited coverage of 3ZR meant that only a handful of people were able to listen, and then on Friday night numbers of people are at their work. It was announced that Mr. McDonald was to broadcast at a later date from 3ZR and Friday too. Could not arrangements be made for that talk to be made on some other night when the people are at their homes? —INTENSELY INTERESTED (Greymouth).

(The NBS say that as Sunday evening talks are broadcast by all Stations it would be bad practice to broadcast in that period a talk that had previously been given at one of the stations, but it has already been arranged for Mr. McDonald to speak about coal at 1YA, and this talk will be recorded and broadcast later in other centres.—Ed.)

## EQUALITY

Sir,—In his talk on heredity published in your issue for August 20-26, Professor I. L. G. Sutherland writes: "The American Declaration of Independence stated that 'all men are created equal': that is, are equal by inheritance." I submit, sir, that the professor has misinterpreted this famous document, which reads: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights." Although, as the professor says, "since Thomas Jefferson's day, a great deal has been learned about inheritance," this does not affect the truth of Jefferson's statement, which has

nothing to do with inheritance. Jefferson was obviously concerned with the essential equality of men, an equality which is based on their possession of a common human nature which all have received from the Author of Nature. This essential equality is compatible with such inequalities as the hereditary ones which the professor has described and which Aristotle would call accidental. This distinction between the essential equality of men and their accidental inequality is extremely important, for on it rests the doctrine that man is endowed by nature with certain inalienable rights, and this doctrine is the only rational ground on which to take a stand for individual liberty against totalitarianism. Beyond telling us that equality is "a big, significant word," which "has a most significant meaning" Professor Sutherland does not even hint at this distinction. He could have made it briefly and, I submit, should have made it, so as to make it clear to the reader that his statement "all men are unequal" is only half the truth—or less. A full statement of the matter is: "All men are equal in essentials; all men are unequal in non-essentials."

G.H.D. (Greenmeadows).

## FUNCTION OF FILMS

Sir,—Bruce Mason, in a letter on "Function of Films," makes some rather dogmatic statements. First he takes Mr. Goldwyn to task for saying: "A picture's first function is to entertain"—yet himself goes on to say that without entertainment, no audience, no profit! And in that order! Certainly Sam Goldwyn did not put it that way—but a film must entertain to be profitable—therefore entertainment must be its first function.

Further, I do not agree that "whatever is truly and artistically rendered through any medium must of its nature be entertaining." I think that "amusement or diversion" is a far better definition of entertainment and I don't think one must necessarily be educated and entertained simultaneously. For instance, it is understandable that one might be amused and/or diverted by, say, the Marx Brothers—but never educated. Again, the "true and artistic" rendering of some famous composer's masterpiece by a good orchestra may be an education to a fellow composer, able to appreciate the technical excellence of such a rendering—yet the average appreciator of what is so loosely and in my opinion often wrongly called "Good music," may derive amusement or diversion from the same rendering—and even get education to some extent. Yet another will get nothing but a headache.

No, sir—I feel sure, that the ordinary "bloke" who, having seen a film—or listened in, and who is subsequently glad he did so—in short, who enjoyed himself—has been entertained in the fullest sense of the word. Education does not enter into it.

JACK SHERIE (Mt. Maunganui).

## OPERA AUDIENCES

Sir,—A writer in *Radio Viewreel* (August 3), speaking of the broadcasting of operas, suggests that these be put on the Auxiliary stations now and again "where they will be heard by those who wish to hear them—for the opera audience is in the cities, not the country." Well! Well!!—COUNTRY (Kaikohe).