

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD.

Every Friday

Price Threepence

MAY 31, 1946

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## The Road to Peace

THE road to peace is proving long, but not longer or rougher than we should have expected. It would have been long and rough if the victors had been united in all their purposes and not merely in one. But the only major issue on which there was unswerving agreement from the beginning was the defeat of the axis powers. Nothing that our enemies could do while they were on their feet divided us or confused us, but the moment they collapsed we ran inevitably into collisions among friends. If it is depressing that these are continuing, it is certainly not surprising or alarming. But it would be alarming to be complacent about them; to think that we shall somehow or other muddle through; that the world has no stomach for further fighting; and that things will necessarily get better because they can't get worse. In fact they could get worse in a day, and almost in an hour; so horribly worse that provocation of any kind just now is an international crime. But it is not provocation to face the facts squarely. It is provocation *not* to face them—not to see, and not to say, that what is holding up progress on both sides is deep-rooted suspicion about the future. There can be no lasting agreement while Russia believes that Britain and America are trying to manoeuvre her into a "safe" position from their point of view and while Britain and America believe that Russia is determined to make herself so safe from her own point of view that she will be able to snap her fingers at the whole world. It is not so much a case of making material concessions as of reaching a state of mind in which concessions can be discussed without these paralysing doubts. Time is on the side of safety if we use it properly, but irresponsible writing and talking have never been more dangerous.

## LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

### THE SOUNDS OF LONDON

Sir,—One of your Radio Viewsreel commentators discusses in *The Listener* for May 17 the "London" Symphony by Vaughan Williams. The trend of these remarks might lead some readers to imagine the London pictured in this work was not 20th Century London, but a city of more remote times. Your commentator writes that in a broadcast from 3YA the "introductory remarks quoted at some length the views of 'the composer's friend Butterworth' on various sounds and pictures of the sovereign city which the composer, like other composers, had incorporated in his work. Mr. Butterworth gave a longish list of which I can at the moment only recall 'the cry of the lavender-seller.'" This is an example of careless listening and making a mountain out of a molehill. The introductory remarks to the presentation of the "London" Symphony did not quote Butterworth at length—one sentence was quoted. There was no "longish list," but just four items, as follows: "The chimes of Westminster, a lavender-seller's call, the tinkle of the bells which used to be carried by the rubber-tired hansoms, and a hint of street music, like a mouthorgan's." These four sounds were all of them sounds of 1914 London. "Who'll buy my lavender, sweet blooming lavender?" was still heard in London and, occasionally, even up to the 1930's. Westminster chimes and the mouthorgan are still heard, but the hansom cab has disappeared.—"EBOR," Wellington.

### RADIO'S ROUNDTABLE

Sir,—The widespread popularity and interest in the "Roundtable Brains Trust" (Off Parade—at Radio's Roundtable), proves conclusively that the listeners to the Commercial stations are capable of appreciating educational programmes when they are provided. 3ZB is doing very good work with these sessions. But we can do with a whole lot more of the same thing.

J. WILSON (Christchurch).

Sir,—The Roundtable talks are deservedly popular. But why don't we get more guest speakers? I think they make the programme. I don't suppose any feature on the air is listened to more than this, so let us have a guest every week. This is no reflection on the regular speakers. I doubt if they could be greatly improved upon, but variety is a good thing.—"REGULAR LISTENER" (Christchurch).

(We have had several other letters commending this session.—Ed.)

### NEW ZEALAND LITERATURE

Sir,—It amazes me that Frank Sargeson should be presented, as he was recently in *The Listener*, as New Zealand's foremost short-story writer. In fact, most of our modern New Zealand writers amaze me. Frankly I cannot understand them and, I feel sure, after making a number of enquiries, that the average person feels as I do. At first I put it down to my ignorance of literary affairs but, slowly, I have come to the conclusion that literature in New Zealand is a very snobby affair. Somehow a few

such as Frank Sargeson, J. C. Beaglehole, Anton Vogt, and their like have managed to get the front seats for themselves, and the public, sheep as they always are, have silently acquiesced—or just as silently ignored the whole thing and turned to outside literature.

I'm not saying that Frank Sargeson is—or is not—New Zealand's best short story writer. All I am saying is that if he is, then heaven help us! No wonder our writers get little support from the public. I am not saying, either, that some of our writers are not clever. What I object to in the main, I think, is their distorted viewpoint. They seem so determined to present the odd view, the odd character. I won't go so far as to say that their characters are not life-like. In a lifetime of moving round New Zealand I have come across many queer characters, but I feel that the New Zealand

More letters from listeners will be found on pages 28 and 29

scene is not made up of oddities, and is therefore definitely not fairly represented in their writings.

Is there no writer who can present the present New Zealand scene without oddities, distortions of character and language, or too much introspection? I'd like to read something that would make me feel it was alive—something that would make me say, "That might have been me," or perhaps "How like my neighbour." I'd like to read a book whose people I should leave, on the last page, with great regret.

Actually I enjoy *The Listener* very much, and read it fairly thoroughly, but I feel that if we had fewer writers who strain for a clever effect, and more who write fiction that rings true and is normal, I should enjoy it still more.

W. F. R. ATKINSON (Uriti).

### ANONYMOUS LETTERS

Sir,—I would like to say in your columns how I despise the people who write to you anonymously. They apparently want the world to know their opinion but not their name. I feel especially strongly about this as twice friends have asked me if it was I who wrote certain letters. I think it would be a good idea if you did not publish letters unless the writers were willing to have their names in print also.

Y. K. ROBERTS (Lower Hutt).

### OUR SHORT STORIES AND VERSE

Sir,—I agree with your correspondent W. Oliver that it is time *The Listener* printed better samples of poetic art. I cannot agree that either Hervey or Mulgan are leading lights but at least they make an attempt at rhythm and sense. The day of skeletal modernistic bits and pieces is done. T. S. Eliot is empty enough, but it is even worse to have to read the cynical and silly imitations of that emptiness in every magazine corner. There is no reason why *The Listener* shouldn't publish real poetry; surely such a venture would not damage its journalism value? Sincere

writings always have a rightful place and, where verse is concerned, the genuine variety must be honoured again as minds become more evolved. Why are not real poets sought out—Douglas Stewart, Eileen Duggan, Charles Brasch, Bridgman, and one or two more—writers whose work is rarely seen out here now because there is no magazine, since *Art in New Zealand* degenerated, which has a cultural standard up to theirs?

B. S. BLACK (Lower Hutt).

### 2YD PROGRAMMES

Sir,—Please allow me to reply briefly to your correspondents "Homey & Co.," who in *The Listener* of May 17 cite several names of features from 2YD which, they claim, proves their assertion that this station's programmes are mainly, or solely, of a rubbishy nature.

Homey & Co. conveniently overlook the following items, regular features that have raised the artistic status of 2YD above the average: "Orchestral Nights," "Stars of the Concert Hall," "Hall of Fame," and the series of "Famous Composers" comprising the entire recorded output of Chopin (20 broadcasts), Mendelssohn (14), Sibelius (20), Grieg (18), with Schubert, Schumann, etc., still to come.

L. D. AUSTIN (Wellington).

Sir,—Mr. Austin is right. "Homey's" condemnation of these programmes is more than wrong, it is unjust, because the people responsible for 2YD cannot answer accusations levelled at them. I am a constant listener to Station 2YD and sometimes eliminate programmes or sessions that do not suit my taste. But the rest I find good and interesting.

Homey & Co. claim that from 3YA they hear such artists as Albert Schweitzer, E. Power Biggs, Edwin Fischer and Webster Booth, such composers as Handel, Bach, Franck and Tchaikovsky. If they listened to 2YD (which they obviously do not do) they would have heard programmes of Handel, Tchaikovsky, Chopin, Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Vaughan Williams, Weber, Sullivan, Grieg, Sibelius, German, Elgar. In a programme called "Orchestral Nights" they would have heard major symphonic orchestras: American, Continental and English. They would have heard as guest artists the greatest names in the world of music. They would have heard the greatest operatic singers, and so on.

Of course they would have heard *Krazy Kapers* too, but they are on YA stations as well.—"KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT" (Seatoun).

### FORGOTTEN LINES

Sir,—I am hoping that among your many readers someone will be able to give me the author and complete poem, of which this is the first verse:

O'er weyward childhood wouldst thou hold  
firm rule,  
And sun thee in the light of happy faces,  
Love, Hope and Patience, these must be  
thy graces,  
And in thine own heart, they must first  
keep school.

I shall be very grateful if you will publish this request.

MARY ALLEY (Auckland).

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

"L.N." (Hamilton): Inquiries are being made in Australia.