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# MORE LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(Continued from page 5)

## OLD-TIME DANCE SESSION

Sir,—May I make a plea on behalf of the older listeners for the resumption of Henry Rudolph's Old-Time Dance session from 2YA? To many old people this session, with its lovely old waltzes played as they should be played, without any modern improvements, was the highlight of the whole broadcasting service and they looked forward all the month to hearing again the favourite melodies of their youth. As one old lady living alone put it—it was her "one night out" in the whole month. There being so few pleasures left to the aged it is a great loss for them to be deprived of one they were able to enjoy so much.

SYMPATHETIC (Clevedon).

## AUTHOR AND REVIEWER

Sir,—In his letter, appearing in your January 10 issue, David Hall maintains that his review of my book was not completely destructive, and points out that in the review he described my style of writing as "brisk" and "wise-cracking." He mentions also that he said the whole book was "entertaining," but Mr. Hall's original words were "Entertaining it is, often in ways the author little suspects," which seems to me to be something in the nature of a superior snigger at my expense. It is good to learn now that Mr. Hall considers my liveliness of style to be my chief claim on the attention of readers, but I do not regard his letter as a corrective to the pronounced acidity of his review.

PAUL H. SIMPSON (Auckland).

## "COMMON MEN"

Sir,—In reply to the letter of "Bed Ridden," I doubt if the term "common man" describes the crowd. A common man is one who has the common attributes of humanity—not stupidity, cruelty, greed or lust, because some of the best humans are entirely lacking in all four, but what to save argument could be called the Divine Spark (each can let that term serve what he will).

I see three divisions of common man—the common man inarticulate (this not necessarily dependent on education or position); the common man made articulate, this is the great man. And between these two divisions, causing an intercourse between the two, are the interpreters.

Unfortunately for mankind there is a break away from the interpreters—the politicians. By politicians I mean those who use their fellow-beings for gain; power, or even ideals. (It's not the aim that is the sin but the using of their fellow-men.) The influence of the politicians produces a division among the inarticulate, of those who become partially articulate by the loss of their human integrity, the gulled.

I think "Bed Ridden" will agree that it is by and for these two uncommon divisions of men that in the main, papers and journals are run.

A STAMMERER (Dunedin).

## THIS CORWINISM

Sir,—I am glad that another reader ("Mere Listener," 24.1.47) has broached a subject I had thought of writing on for several weeks. I, too, think Norman Corwin has been over-publicised by the NZBS and *The Listener*. One of the average New Zealanders' most obvious failings is a tendency to fall for the flamboyant and exotic while neglecting

to note the sounder and more stable presentation of ideas or talent just because the promulgators are our own folk.

We display a deplorable lack of sense of values and balanced judgment when we accept persons or philosophies on an overseas evaluation without waiting to judge for ourselves after due consideration and comparison. In publicity it is an axiom that the label sells the goods; in the case of this young American the label has been affixed by a community with a culture and sense of values very different from our own. It was therefore inevitable that, in spite of all the "plugging," he did not go over as some folk seem to have expected. There are still some of us left with critical faculties and powers of discrimination. Mr. Corwin seemed to me to be too obviously impressive and overwhelmingly assured of his mission to be convincing. He impressed me (and I find that many of my friends were similarly impressed) as striving for effect with too liberal laying on of oratorical verbosity.

Moreover, there was too much weighting for good measure with the God idea put into flamboyant phrases; however dressed this no longer is accepted by the thinking and adult-minded among listeners as having anything whatever to do with world betterment. Mankind's huge and pressing problems call for a humane and realist approach, for man alone can solve them and the sooner that fact is accepted and acted upon then the sooner we will have the one world which will satisfy the idealist and the realist alike. Consideration of Mr. Corwin's message, together with signs and portents in world affairs as presented in the daily news, suggests that we may, for our sins, be given his One World—an American one. From that fate may the powers of reason deliver us.

M. B. SOLJAK (Auckland).

Sir,—I am glad someone has made a mild protest about the build-up which *The Listener* has been giving Norman Corwin over the past few months. I agree with "A Mere Listener" that it is much the kind of publicity that one might expect in a Hollywood film magazine. I liked his talks and there can be no doubt that he has a most effective broadcasting technique, but I, too, could not help comparing his talks with that of James Bertram. I had no difficulty in placing Mr. Corwin second. Mr. Bertram did not have the same facile technique, but he did communicate a greater sincerity and depth of feeling. And I know he made me think more about "one world." He did not assure me what a wonderful little world New Zealand was (we've heard that enough anyway), but he took me to the bigger world where millions of people starve and die before they are young.

J.W. (Dunedin).

## "IMPERFECT PARADISE."

Sir,—For the unorthodox, the social non-conformist, the eccentric and the solitary, there is probably less scope here than in Britain—thus Ian Stephens in his commentary on New Zealand's Imperfect Paradise. In my view the scope for individuals in the foregoing categories is mainly a matter of population. You can be as eccentric as you like in, say, London, where seven million people are congregated, and very few of them will take any

(continued on next page)