

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

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American Close-up

ONE of the reasons given last week by Sir Howard Kippenberger why New Zealanders should do more for their own defence was the possibility that America might return to isolationism. Those who think it a remote possibility will perhaps change their minds when they read *The White House Papers* of Harry L. Hopkins*, now at last available without dollars. We all know that what ended isolationism was Japan's descent on Pearl Harbour; but not many of us realised before this book appeared that if President Roosevelt had declared war earlier he might have been impeached. It is both alarming and depressing to discover how often he thought it necessary to modify what he had decided to say in a speech, and in how many cases he ended by saying almost nothing. Even when he allowed himself "solemn warnings" he usually found it expedient to bury them in verbal wool in case the isolationists took panic and stampeded the others. All the way to Pearl Harbour he was "haunted by the ghost of Woodrow Wilson." He did in the end defy the ghost, but he never lost sight of it or turned his back on it. It is all such a painful story that only a strong and confident democracy would have let it appear so soon after the principal events. But it is a fascinating story too. The technique of speech-making; the private lives of Presidents and Prime Ministers; the new world's thoughts about the old world; fear for Britain, faith in Britain, admiration for Britain; meetings of great men, manoeuvrings of little men—you get it all, not as eloquently presented as in the Churchill volumes, but with less artifice, and sometimes with more effect.

*The *White House Papers* of Harry L. Hopkins. Edited and annotated by Robert E. Sherwood. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 25/-.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

BE BOP MUSIC

Sir,—In reference to a talk, or rather two talks (10 minutes) which I gave on Jazz. Your *Viewsreel* commentator has reported me as saying that Be Bop musicians make use of consecutive diminished fourths. The script reads consecutive diminished chords; not fourths. KEN AVERY (Wellington).

BRASS BANDS

Sir,—I was pleased to see that you felt called on to defend and justify your stand re brass bands. In my opinion you missed the essentials. A brass band is the only mobile instrument capable of leading singing at any public gathering, apart from any other of its arduous duties. It is an easily available method of teaching youth the rudiments of music quickly and well. Take a son and a daughter (as I did), put the boy in a band and the girl at the piano, and see who reads capably first and in a fraction of the time occupied on the piano. I doubt if there is an orchestra in New Zealand, and I have played in a lot, that is not indebted to the brass bands for a lot of their players. Give the children the grounding and they will go on to other instruments, or how do you account for so many that play two or three orchestral instruments? I grant that even for an ex-bandman a symphonic programme appeals more, but it is almost invariably composed of professionals.

Now that we have the records of at least four contests, Christchurch, Dunedin, Wanganui, and Auckland, would it not be possible, when the local bands are unavailable, to put on some of these? For anyone who has the slightest respect for sharps and flats, the pipes mean turning the radio off (I am of Highland descent).

"EX-BANDSMAN" (Hamilton).

FRIVOLOUS USE OF A NAME

Sir,—Complaint made by A. C. Barrington under the heading of "Frivolous Use of a Name" is approximately fourteen years late. The number concerned, as most people must be aware, has been broadcast many thousands of times since it was introduced in 1935 without adverse comment. No disrespect is indicated and in any case one can always switch the radio off. If the Broadcasting Service were to act on suggestions such as Mr. Barrington makes where could one draw the line? We might as well call the whole thing off and forget about radio entertainment.

JOSEPH G. BARON

(Grey Lynn).

CARDINAL MINDSZENTY

Sir,—The theme of Professor Wood's talk on the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty appears to be that people who oppose powerful thugs are likely to get hurt. He then proceeds carefully to consider whether in fact the opposition was such that the thug should have taken it seriously. He draws an odd parallel with the action of democratic governments taking unusual powers in time of war against citizens who object on conscientious grounds. He solemnly points out that the non-Catholic religious authorities have so far obeyed the thug in the matter of education of children. Now, sir, as I understand it, a great part of

this question in Hungary arises from the Cardinal's view (apart from his opposition to thuggery) that:

1. A Catholic parent has the right and duty to educate his children in the Catholic faith even if the State says otherwise.

2. If he delegates his right then the delegate or teaching authority stands in *loco parentis* (not in *loco civitatis*) to implement and protect this right.

Not to state this issue plainly in the commentary seems to me like producing *Hamlet* and cutting entirely the part of the ghost because some of the audience don't believe in spirits.

Professor Wood can of course readily recall instances of the same conflict in every civilised and uncivilised country in the world and from the period of Nero down to that of Calles and Hitler.

PATER FAMILIAS (Wellington).

Sir,—My compliments to the speaker in the "Mainly for Women" session from 3YA on Friday morning, February 11, for his frank and refreshing viewpoint on the Mindszenty trial. During the past few weeks public opinion has been subjected to the pressure of the arguments of two main lines of thought: first, that trial by a Communist court is, ipso facto, abominable, execrable, revolting to every human conscience, a comedy of Red justice, etc.; and, on the other hand, the allegation that the trial of an ecclesiastical dignitary for high treason and black market financial dealings is, in itself, the trial of the church represented by him. Well let us wait to see if those who were loudest in their condemnation of the conduct and conclusion of the trial in Budapest will be as quick in sympathy with the victims of another form of condemnation without trial—excommunication. E.P. (Wellington).

ART HANGOVERS

Sir,—Mr. Fairburn obviously writes out of extreme disillusionment and distress of mind. One feels sorry that this is so. Culture is a hateful word, and "Culture-Conscious" worse than hateful. I feel that we should not be aware of becoming a cultured race because the things which make us so should attract us for their own content of truth, beauty, and goodness. Of course Mr. Fairburn must be some years older than I am, and he has had the opportunity to meet a greater number of unpleasant people who purvey culture, but to me it matters only that their work can please my eyes, or mind, or hearing.

Your contributor should remember that such "Culture Diffusionists" are normal (nasty) human beings first and artists only incidentally, unless of course, they can be classed as geniuses, in which case, we know very well, they are artists first and even more difficult. The important point is that these people give us glimpses of truth, beauty and goodness with varying degrees of skill, and for that we should be profoundly thankful no matter how sarcastic, malicious, or parsimonious they might be.

Money is well spent on material which can give us all an uplift of the spirit. I know it well, as I am one of those overworked young mothers who have roused Mr. Fairburn's compassion. If a portion of the funds raised to maintain the Symphony Orchestra could be obtained to provide me with a home-aid

or a nurse, someone might have to go without a favourite piece of music, but at least I could have proceeded without endless interruption with this inquiry into the Distressed Mind of a Critic. ETHEL PERRY (Auckland).

CRICKET BROADCASTS

Sir,—I have for some time past been wondering whether any steps have been taken to relay a ball-by-ball description of the forthcoming test matches to be played against England by the New Zealand cricket team. It was considered worth while to broadcast over 2YA the tests recently played for the Ashes by Australia and England.

I feel sure that many followers of cricket would, like myself, be wholly in support of such an idea.

I. H. NICOL (Khandallah).

(The position is still the same as we set out in our issue of February 18, page 11. It is probable, but not certain, that Station 2YA will remain on the air all night to cover the test matches. In addition, the NZBS hopes to broadcast reviews of play by the Rev. O. E. Blamires.—Ed.)

"MEMORIES OF ITALY"

Sir,—My many friends would expect me to correct Mr. Mills, of Feilding, in his statement regarding the selection "Memories of Italy" played by the Wellington City Salvation Army Band recently. This is not my work, but the work of my son, Dean of Timaru, who often gets the discredit of my "stuff" while I get the credit of his composition. I must also correct Mr. Mills regarding my (Salvation Army) rank. I am not a Colonel, but just a humble Brigadier. HENRY GOFFIN (Wellington).

A CORRECTION

Sir,—May I be permitted to correct an error in a recent broadcast, due to the perversity of A. H. and A. W. Reed in having, not only similar pursuits and interests, but somewhat similar initials. We are variously presumed to be brothers, father and son, uncle and nephew and, on occasion, a dual personality. It was A.W., not A.H., who was recently awarded the Esther Glen Medal for his *Myths and Legends of Maoriland*. A. H. REED (Dunedin).

RADIO ADVERTISING

Sir,—What help does a regular listener receive from radio advertising? That the only Soap for him and/or his family is at least five brands; that he should smoke three brands of cigarettes, use several makes of tooth paste, take several brands of tonics for his nerves, and three different bed-time drinks for a good night's rest.

I have tried them all, but found it necessary to complete with a double Scotch chaser. Surely the bright lads in our ZB Stations should be in the position of saying that they have had tests taken by the Department of Scientific Research and can recommend products in a certain order.

BUYER BEWARE

(Christchurch).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

R. S. Mackay (Auckland): Far too long. "Sport" (Tauranga): Not possible at present, we are told.

T. A. Farrow (Mt. Eden): Sound, but not new. Well known to Production Department. "Much Puzzled" (Taihape): Write to the Director of Adult Education, Victoria College, Wellington.

Mrs. H. Ash (Balclutha): Thank you for your interest, but there is a limit beyond which we can't go in repeating ourselves.