

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday Price Threepence

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Salute to France

IN this issue we pay a tribute to the genius of France as it has expressed itself in music, letters, art, and graceful living. Twenty-five years ago the people of France met, and with the assistance of their allies broke, a wave of political barbarism. To-day they are standing beside our own people a second time in defence of civilisation. No nation has risked more, or suffered more, for the decencies of life. Without its aid liberty would hardly have survived.

But the world's debt to France dates from the Dark Ages, and almost from the dawn of history. The French have had their ugly days as we have had ours, but they were civilised before the Roman conquest, and very soon after the conquest were teaching their masters manners. Nor did the light which shone for the Romans ever quite go out. We must not be extravagant or sentimental, or pretend that it is possible to look back to the days of chivalry and beyond them and see nothing but a gleaming line of light. The truth is not quite so radiant as that. But we can say that France throughout most of her history has been a light shining in a darker place, and still is that light in the shadows enclosing Europe to-day.

If Britain's contribution to civilisation has been political and religious liberty, the contribution of France has been the art of rational living. The French are intolerant of bigotry, but suffer fools cheerfully enough when they are nothing worse than fools. Even when charity fails them they turn ironical rather than violent. In other words, they have learnt how to live. But they have also learnt how to die—the supreme achievement by a race to whom every moment of life is precious.

It is because they know how to live and know how to die that we salute them from New Zealand. The barbarians who have driven us together are working day and night to separate us, and wasting their time. The French know, as we do, that their light would go out if they were isolated and overwhelmed.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

Letters sent to "The Listener" for publication should be as brief as possible and should deal with topics covered in "The Listener" itself. Correspondents must send their names and addresses even when it is their wish that these should not be published. We cannot undertake to give reasons why all or any portion of a letter is rejected.

THE CLASSICAL HOUR

To The Editor,
"The Listener."

Sir,—The only programme through the whole day that I really enjoy is the Classical Hour. Why should this so often be cut into by Educational Sessions for the schools? It's very disheartening to tune in at 2 o'clock and hear "Good afternoon, girls and boys." Perhaps the Classical Hour has not a big following, but I know of numbers who look forward to it.

Recently a census taken in England showed that there were 1,000,000 listeners to the classical music session. I'm sure there must be the same proportion in New Zealand. Surely the morning could be utilised for this purpose. Sometimes the lunch hour is. Would it not be better and fairer to cut into that, as it is only the same kind of music as we hear the rest of the day.

Also, couldn't the breakfast hour be livened up a bit at 2YA? Marches get very monotonous. Before the Commercial Stations started, the breakfast music was mainly of current songs, etc., but nowadays we hear very little of that. It's a long way easier to eat to than a blare of brass.

Yours, etc.,
Y.

Palmerston North,
March 5, 1940.

HOW TO WIN THE WAR

To The Editor,
"The Listener."

Sir,—Why not broadcast to the Germans from our front-line trenches the wailings of those people of neuter gender who moan about stars above, love, soon, moon, heart, hart, etc., in various combinations, accompanied by nigger music consisting of kerosene tins, tom-toms, cat-calls, and donkey brayings? Whatever the shortcomings of the Germans may be, they are a very musical nation, and I feel confident that should these noises be put over to them for 24 hours continuously, they would either go mad or hoist the white flag.

Yours, etc.,
ANZAC.

Otorohanga,
February 25, 1940.

(The Germans unfortunately are as familiar with them all as we are.—Ed.)

FREEDOM OF SPEECH.

To The Editor,
"The Listener."

Sir,—I agree that nowhere in your editorial did you say that freedom of speech was of secondary importance, but I submit that no other inference could possibly be drawn from the phraseology which you used. You said, I admit, that freedom of speech was precious, but added that it was "not precious in itself," and that it was a "dangerous superstition" when it destroyed other freedoms. The only possible inference which rational people can draw from such statements is that there are other liberties transcending in importance the liberty of free speech. The only other freedom you mention is freedom of thought and what possible good is freedom of thought without freedom of speech? Even the meanest private in the German (or Russian) armies enjoys freedom of thought, but what good does it do them, or us?

War, as you rightly point out, is a balancing of risk against risk, yet we must be careful what it is that we hazard. One of the cardinal principles of

British law is that it is better that many guilty persons should escape punishment than that one innocent should be unjustly convicted. I submit, with respect, that the same principle should hold in the case of freedom of speech. I refuse to believe that the majority of those who desire to express themselves on subjects of national importance are would-be saboteurs or traitors. Further, where freedom of speech is abrogated, the governing authority is in the position of being the judge in its own cause—a state of affairs which is repugnant to the principles of common justice, as I apprehend them.

I am, etc.,
AUDAX.

Auckland,
March 15, 1940.

[The only permissible inference from our article was what it plainly said, viz., that free speech is precious, and not to be lightly curtailed, but that it is fanaticism to argue that in no conceivable circumstances may it be curtailed.—Ed.]

S.O.S.

To The Editor,
"The Listener."

Sir,—Save our stomachs! Is there nothing you can do to protect harried husbands like me from the depredations of the dietitians? I have been so pumped full of roughage that my unfortunate colon is now little more than an inverted comma; daily I turn pink or blue as I hover from the acid to the alkaline side. My breakfasts are one unending vista of spinach and nuts. Nuts! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? And stale wholemeal bread — is thy servant a dog? And your journal is in part to blame. Through a mis-read direction, I now learn that for the past week I have been existing on a diet designed for slimming shop-assistants and business girls. Will Aunt Daisy not take pity on us and feature some recipes for soggy steamed puddings and satisfying roasts?

Yours, etc.,
DOWN WITH DIET.

Auckland,
March 1, 1940.

CHURCH SERVICES APPRECIATED.

To The Editor,
"The Listener."

Sir,—Just a line to express my appreciation of the sacred session put on by 12M every Sunday morning at 10 a.m. It is a tonic after having to listen most of the week to mental degenerates bleating about a girl in the Police Gazette, or their "Broken Arts," etc. To an "Old Timer" like myself, camped in a hut in a desolate and unlovely part of New Zealand, the sound of the bells and the boys' voices in the choirs bring back memories of the village churches in England long ago. I am hoping to hear 12M put on one Sunday morning that fine record by Ernest Gough and the Temple Choir, Mendelssohn's "Hear My Prayer," and "O for the Wings of a Dove." What a pity the New Zealand churches cannot give us something better than tinny dinner bells and screeching, grating women's voices. I suppose the population is not large enough yet.

Yours, etc.,
"SCROOGE."

Ngatea, Hauraki Plains,
March 10, 1940.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

"Timaru Listener."—You charge us with lying, cowardice, stupidity, and humbug—though you are not able to be as concise as that—and hide bravely behind all the other residents of your Borough.—Ed. N.Z.L.