

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday Price Threepence

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## New Zealand Speaking

IN normal circumstances, the death of Guthrie-Smith would have been felt to be a public calamity; as it in fact was. For although he had reached his eightieth year, he was so much a part of New Zealand that no one ever remembered his age. He was not so much a man as a voice—a voice expressing the sorrows and joys of the earth that we in New Zealand know.

He was also in the deepest sense a man of science, if science is knowledge, and not merely information. All his life, he told us in the first edition of *Tutira*, it had been his habit to "note small things"; but "note" was a very inadequate word. He noted things as Darwin and Fabre noted them—looked at them, examined them, brooded over them; looked below, above, and around them; got them into focus; established their connexion with other things; found what they meant, and still would mean to himself and to generations who would come after him; and not till he really knew what he was saying did he put his knowledge into print. That is what Mr. Heenan means when he says on another page in this issue that *Tutira* is a scientific treatise, a textbook, a succession of learned papers, a departmental report, the findings of a Royal Commission, a geological, botanical, ornithological, ethnological, and sociological survey, and "miraculously something more." That is why he so boldly calls it not merely New Zealand's greatest book, but one of the great books of the world.

That may be a reckless claim, but if it is, he is a bolder man still who will make it of any other book written in New Zealand. And the book was the man as the man was the book. The book is New Zealand; not all of it, perhaps, and not any part of it for ever; almost as fast as they were written, some pages were history—history that can never be re-enacted. For although it is possible to describe a dead thing, and feel that the description will stand, a living thing goes on. Guthrie-Smith followed that living thing. His field was one small patch of land on which *homo sapiens* was no more and no less interesting than the weasel or the rabbit, so that *Tutira* is literally New Zealand speaking.

## 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.

### SWITZERLAND AND GERMANY.

The Editor,  
"The Listener."

Sir,—In your issue of June 21 you have an article entitled "Threat via Switzerland." May I reply on behalf of the many Swiss residents in New Zealand?

That article has a paragraph about the nationality of three million Swiss that requires a strong contradiction, more especially in these times of stress.

Three million Swiss are not of German origin. Most emphatically not. There can be no greater insult levelled against the Swiss people than to say they are German. They never have been—never will be. To the last man they will fight to retain their Swiss nationality.

There are many hundred Swiss (or people of Swiss descent) in this country — mostly in Taranaki and the Waikato. In fairness to them all, will you please print this protest. Those who do not personally know any Swiss are led to believe that we are in sympathy with the Germans. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many Swiss have enlisted in the New Zealand Forces. In the team of footballers who beat the R.A.F. in Egypt at Easter the two Arnolds are sons of a Swiss who settled here nearly 40 years ago.

Would Switzerland spend millions on defence every year if she had no fear of Germany? Certainly the French are not feared—nor were the Austrians. In August, 1291, three Swiss swore to gain freedom for their people from Austrian rule. Sixteen years later that freedom was won in battle, and by 1481 Fribourg and Neuchâtel cantons were added to the eight already in the union. These are French-speaking districts. Only in 1803 was Ticino added to Switzerland as we know it to-day. In Ticino (Tessin) the language is Italian.

We speak a language like the German, but the dialect is so marked that it is hard to understand the German speech. My father left Switzerland 37 years ago and became naturalised in 1908. To his death, like all true Swiss, he remained a loyal subject of the Empire. Our own family history can be traced back several hundred years, and there is no German blood in our line.

I ask again to print what I have written in fairness to the Swiss who live here.

Yours etc.,

(Miss) JOSEPHINE WERDER.

Hawera,  
June 21, 1940.

### A NATIONAL ORCHESTRA.

The Editor,  
"The Listener."

Sir,—The suggestion put forward by your correspondent, A.A., that a broadcast may be given of a popular (or not so popular) violin concerto with Maurice Clare as soloist in conjunction with the Centennial Festival Orchestra, before the orchestra is dispersed, will find an echo in the hearts of all music lovers who listen in.

But must this remarkably successful orchestra be dispersed? In your Editorial recently it was pointed out that a levy of 1/- yearly on each radio licence subscriber in New Zealand would adequately support this orchestra as a permanent National Orchestra. Surely a simple and practical means of maintaining what is a necessity in our national music life.

Also, if this was an accomplished fact, the orchestra when touring could reasonably be expected to visit, not only the big centres, but some smaller towns such as this one (Blenheim) where comparatively few of the people have ever had a chance to hear and see a fine orchestra in the flesh. Think, too, of the aesthetic and educational value to older children if a performance suitable in character could also be arranged with perhaps some simple demonstration given to acquaint them with the instruments,

many of which simply are not to be found in smaller town communities. And not only the children would benefit from such a demonstration! To have such an occasion as this to look forward to, even but once annually, would make untold difference to the musical life of the small town. I feel certain too, that the financial considerations involved could be successfully overcome.

I trust that sympathetic pens will take up the matter so that all helpfulness may be shown in bringing to actual fact New Zealand's National Orchestra.

Yours etc.,

MEMBER OF BRITISH MUSIC SOCIETY.

Blenheim,  
June 25, 1940.

### SOME QUESTIONS

The Editor,  
"The Listener."

Sir,—Will you grant me space to ask some questions?—

(1) Why must we be afflicted of a morning by an announcer saying Wan Way Aeaeae for 1YA, and even worse? Should not the very first essential of a radio announcer be a reasonably distinct voice?

(2) Why are so many of the loud selections and vocal items put on so late in the evening when most folks are trying to get to sleep?

(3) Why is Wellington selected for the re-broadcasting of Daventry news when it is so difficult, owing to atmospheric conditions, to hear 2YA even under normal circumstances. With a modern set it is possible to get Daventry and European stations direct, very clearly on most occasions and without using much volume; but the relays from 2YA give us the extra local static both coming and going.

Yours, etc.,

H. FRANCIS.

Mt. Albert,  
June 29, 1940.

(If our correspondent will turn to Dr. Johnson he will find all his questions answered in one famous sentence.—Ed.).

### WELSH RABBIT.

The Editor,  
"The Listener."

Sir,—With regard to the letter in your last issue by G. H. Jones on the subject of Welsh Rabbit, you might be interested to have Chambers's Definitions: "Welsh Rabbit, melted cheese with a little ale poured over a slice of hot toast—jocularly formed on the analogy of Norfolk Capon=red herring, Irish apricots=potatoes, etc. Sometimes written 'Welsh Rarebit' by Wiseacre."

Yours etc.,

M.J.

Auckland,  
June 25, 1940.

The Editor,  
"The Listener."

Sir,—I have read with interest the discussion on "Welsh Rarebit." I don't think G. H. Jones was querying the spelling of "rabbit." The cheese dish called "Welsh Rarebit" is spelt "Rarebit," meaning a Welsh rare bit or dainty morsel. I also have seen it spelt "rabbit" in many books. "Rarebit" is in all dictionaries.

Yours etc.,  
SUBSCRIBER.

Dannevirke,  
June 30, 1940.

(Our correspondent will find that "rare bit" is not favoured by the Oxford English Dictionary, our highest authority.—Ed.).