

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday Price Threepence

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As History Sees Us

THE author of a recent anthology for English soldiers says that in his search for a single book for all moods he was tempted to fall back on *The Sentimental Journey*. In New Zealand a better case could be made out for a pocket edition of the recently issued *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. After all nothing is quite so interesting, so stimulating, and so reassuring as the company of men and women who can talk to us when we want them to talk and never in any circumstances contradict us.

The three thousand men and women of this *Dictionary* are all, without exception, dead. But they all, without exception, did something during their lives to save them from early oblivion. In one case at least it was to commit a crime; but whether they stole sheep or begged for votes they contrived somehow to keep themselves out of time's dustbin. Here they are still, and they are remarkably good company. There is excitement even in their names. Who was Charles Thomas Ick? Could you write an essay on William Gittos? Did you know that one of our early magistrates was William Powditch? Every South Islander knows of Cass. But who was Cassius? Have you heard of Krippner, born in Staab? Of Lowe and Lowes? Of Luck as well as of Luckie? Of Chaffers and of Chew Chong? Each of these has a place in our gallery of fame, and has earned it. But if you had heard their names in Egypt or on Salisbury Plains would you have realised that you were among your own countrymen?

And we have not begun yet to look into individual records. Take Alfred Saunders, Vincent Pyke, Henry Sewell, Scobie McKenzie, William Lane, and Robert Andrew Loughnan—to select half a dozen at random. Study those careers one by one, noting the variety and pondering over the actual achievement, and ask yourself whether you have not been walking too low on your heels. Wander through this gallery with Dr. Scholefield and you will come away walking on your toes.

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 Correspondents must send their names and addresses even when it is their wish that these should not be published.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.

ANNOUNCERS' VOICES

Sir,—I chanced to listen to the Daventry News at 12.30 p.m. last Saturday. The impression received was that at last announcing has taken a turn for the better. However, this pleasant anticipation was not fulfilled, for there immediately followed the irritating "Wan Way Aeaeae" from the local station.

One does not wish that our announcers should cultivate the condescending cadences of the gentlemen of the biBBY c, or even that our information should be presented in vaudeville fashion. But presentation of local news in accents similar to those of the 12.30 p.m. Empire announcer, or of our own too-rarely-heard National Director, would be a decided improvement in a field where the room for it is limitless.

In spite of your would-be devastating footnote to the reasonable requests of H. Francis (19/7/40), listeners have a right not to have inflicted on them an official voice which sounds as though its owner is either a lisping infant or a male impersonator.

D. BAKER (Mt. Roskill).

BETTY AND SOME OTHERS

Sir,—And so poor Betty has been obliged to reply to her critics because a disgruntled person who is lucky enough to have £250 a year cannot bear to think of someone else having more than she has. Possibly "£250 a year" is one of those who would be jealous of others, whatever her income. She should try living on £3 a week.

Frankly I consider that to make a diary interesting one would have to live a much more vivid life than just the daily humdrum existence of shopping and entertaining occasionally — unless one's guests were real celebrities — and with the material on hand I consider that Betty makes quite a good job of it. After all, our affairs are only of interest to ourselves. How many of us have been bored stiff by people who would tell us all their doings?

And now for my own grouch. Couldn't someone explain to 12B that we are heartily sick of hearing their advertisements before, after, and in between the sessions? The sickening regularity with which we hear of cold cures and all the rest, is enough to stop us from buying the stuff. The sponsors would be surprised if they heard how many "Oh, shut up!" appeals went from the listeners. If advertise they must, let us have more of the cheerful wholesome food and drink stuff and not people coughing or groaning with indigestion, of which we get enough in our homes without hearing it over the air.

Let the time be spent in giving us better music — less cowboy stuff, crooning, and that most awful of all horrors — the female crooner. We held out against having a radio after hearing from others — and incidentally finding out from the neighbours for ourselves — of the poor programmes put over the air. However, two months ago we succumbed, but I seem to spend most of the time switching it on and off.

LOVER OF GOOD MUSIC (Mt. Roskill).

MODERN MUSIC

Sir,—I should like to join issue with Mr. L. D. Austin, who wrote to you recently on the subject of modern music; and also to make a plea for greater tolerance by these "musical" men for the views of others. Surely it must be agreed that the reason for the present state of the world is because of this

lack of tolerance of other peoples'—and nations—views.

Mr. Austin doesn't like modern music. I personally care nothing for Bach, Beethoven, et al., but do I write scathing letters about it to the papers? No, I try to find a bright programme to suit my taste (though on Saturday night this is difficult, and on Sunday well-nigh impossible). I realise that there are people who like high-brow music, though to my mind most of them are musical snobs, who express a liking for it because it is the correct thing to do. If this is not so, will Mr. Austin please explain why practically all the great composers died in abject poverty, unlettered and unsung? Their works appear to have been "discovered" long after they were dead.

Mr. Austin states that the appeal of dance music is a sensual one! Surely this is an insult to the thousands who like good light music, and get genuine enjoyment from it.

I would advise Mr. Austin if he wishes to hear a bright programme—how necessary cheerfulness is these days—to tune in at 8 p.m. every Friday night to 2YA, to hear the best programme of the week: "Every Friday Night at Eight." It may help him towards a more tolerant outlook.

HONI (Wairoa).

POPULAR SONGS

Sir,—A little while ago you issued a copy of "God Defend New Zealand," words and music, and sent it out to the public in one of your weekly issues of *The Listener*. Myself and very many people here have greatly appreciated this action, and we would consider it a very great favour indeed if it were possible for you to publish further public favourites, such as "There Will Always Be An England," "The Army, Navy, and the Air Force," etc. This would bring popular numbers into all homes, and particularly into the schools, and I am sure all householders would be thankful to you.

P. GALWAY (Reefton).

(We thank our correspondent for this compliment, and should like to earn another from him. But (1) there is a paper shortage; (2) the copyright of most popular songs belongs to the publishers; (3) music is expensive to copy and print.—Ed.)

More "Letters from Listeners" will be found on Page 24.

AUCKLAND PROGRAMMES.

Sir,—We all appreciate the programmes from the National stations. But why are the Auckland station programmes so poor on Sunday nights? Wellington and Christchurch have serials and plays on Sunday nights. Why not start giving Auckland some?

L. MEREDITH (Auckland).

NATIONAL ANTHEMS.

Sir,—Can you give me any reason why there seems to be an attempt to make "There Will Always Be An England" into a national song to be sung in schools? We have two National Anthems: surely they should suffice. Yet it appears that a number of our people seem almost ashamed of them. Why should not the Education Department circularise all schools and give instructions that both our National Anthems be sung before school starts every morning. Let the Department give a lead, and let the children learn to sing our National Anthems with all their might, and away with this other nonsense.

A LISTENER (Tutira).

("God Save the King" is our only National Anthem.—Ed.)

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

"Grandma".—Not so simple as it sounds. What you ask for is not our property. But we shall oblige you if we can.