

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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Better Health

WE print to-day the first of a series of articles written for *The Listener* by two senior officers of the Health Department, Dr. Muriel E. Bell and Dr. H. B. Turbott. These articles, which will be brief, popular in style, and generally related to the problems of the times, will continue throughout the winter, and, we hope, through the summer as well. They will be independent of the series of talks broadcast by the Commercial Broadcasting Stations, but will of course not conflict with those. If the subjects happen to overlap, our articles will in fact supplement those talks by presenting the same information from a slightly different angle. But a talk of even ten minutes fills more space in print than we shall be able to spare while the war lasts, and more too than most people would find time to read. On the other hand everyone has time to read five or six hundred words, especially when it is known that they are the words of authority.

We are, of course, extremely fortunate to be able to offer such a series by two authorities whose qualifications not only make each complementary to the other, but, taken together, cover so wide a range of daily health and diet. For it is necessary to say plainly that much of what goes by the name of instruction in health is quackery and superstitious nonsense, which, though it usually does no positive harm, does harm negatively by perpetuating and reinforcing ignorance. Our readers need hardly be told that while the prime purpose of this series is to help them as individuals to better health, the secondary purpose is to explode common fallacies and correct some gross popular errors.

Nor will anyone question the need of better health during these critical times. While there is no special season for good health, which is necessary always, bad health is never so costly as it is in times of danger and stress. Apart altogether from winning the war—and this applies especially to mothers of families—we need all the physical resources we can command to endure the daily strain without exhaustion. Total war is a war first of all on the human spirit, and the best reinforcement of the spirit—apart from those spiritual consolations which it would be outside our duty to discuss—is a body reinforced by sunlight, fresh air, and intelligently chosen food.

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 in 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.

A READER'S WARNING

Sir,—Correspondence in recent issues regarding the pronunciation of the language can be taken as a warning that we will have an outbreak of pedantry on our hands if we are not careful.

These outbreaks have been endemic since the advent of broadcasting but in no case was anything achieved, nor can anything ever be achieved so long as the language belongs to the people as a whole and not to a few idealists who wish all words pronounced according to their particular authority.

Our language is a live, everchanging thing, and the masses will persist in pronouncing words the easiest and most commonsense way, BBC lists and Bernard Shaw notwithstanding.

Furthermore, the average New Zealander has such a distaste for anything approaching the "Oxford accent" that he is immediately suspicious of the reformer.

If the advocate of "better" pronunciation would concentrate on making it easier he might get somewhere. The classic example is "centenary" which we all pronounced with the accent on the "ten" from our schoolboy days because it was the easy and obvious way, but just because a Duke pronounced it differently at the Melbourne Exhibition the purists have been driving us to an enunciation which is both difficult and foreign.

Then we have the correspondent a few issues back who wanted BBC announcers taught Maori just because one of them pronounced Otago incorrectly, the joke, of course, being that "Otago" is not a Maori name but a pakeha corruption.

There is nothing much wrong with the speech of our announcers. We understand them and if they were to adopt one of the "pure" forms of speech they might have difficulty in getting their message across.

I think that there are many much more important things to be discussed just now.—J. S. LYNCH (Upper Hutt).

AN EMPIRE BRAINS MEETING

Sir,—When the war is over we shall want to do something on a large scale to celebrate victory. I suggest that New Zealand should once again show originality and set an example, by the form our celebration takes. We have had Empire Games meetings; indeed, about the only way for a young man of limited means to see the world in peace time has been by excelling in hitting a ball, in running or swimming one or two hundred yards, in propelling his body to an alarming height. Let him—or her—do this and he has been sent, at others' expense, to the far ends of the earth. In early days men went to the Crusades or sought the Holy Grail; now they seek the Davis Cup, the "Ashes," the Olympic or Empire Games. Brawn and muscle have relegated brain and intelligence to the background.

It is time the men, the forgotten men and women, those who work only with their heads, asserted themselves against this domination of athletic prowess. I suggest that New Zealand should hold an Empire Brains Meeting. Who should attend, and what competitive elements do I propose, as it is this which draws participants and spectators? Well, with modesty, I suggest that first journalists be invited from all parts of the Empire; then representatives of the Civil Service, doctors, accountants, business executives, teachers, all who shine in any way except through muscle and sinew. As for competition, the sight of 50 editors from London, Cape-town, Port-of-Spain, Toowoomba, Wellington, all

engaged in writing the best leader on a given topic; of 50 lawyers competitively re-drafting a chaotic clause in an income tax act; of a heat in the competition for accountants who have to elucidate the true position of the Government's guaranteed price scheme—to me and to thousands of others such a sight would bring unalloyed joy. There is endless scope in my suggestion for a highly successful and novel gathering. Farmers claim to be the backbone of the country; perhaps the athletes are the limbs and muscles. What is the value of backbone and limbs without the controlling brain?—JOHN DOE (Auckland).

BROADCAST ENGLISH

Sir,—One wonders whether John Doe is as great a stickler for English grammar as he appears to be for English pronunciation? If so, wouldn't it be more correct to say—"With these I am not concerned," instead of—"These I am not concerned with"? English pronunciation is a difficult matter, as every county seems to have its own. Take the word "castle." Northerners use the short "a"—Southerners the long. Which is right? (I belong to the north).

One thing is quite certain, whatever the pronunciation the English language makes itself understood in most parts of the world.—MISS PRO-NOUNCE (Auckland).

AXES AND ORCHIDS

Sir,—I am always intensely interested in what critics of the stations have to say. Some folks like to throw axes while others tip-toe along with orchids—anyhow, I think your magazine is very nice, but don't you think we could have the drawings a little more modern? It is rather tiring to pick up *The Listener* and be confronted with old-world types as on Page 39, April 11 programme page. As for the People in the Programmes, they are very good indeed, because everyone likes to see who is in the broadcasts.

This is the first request I am making: please can we have a photo of the entire staff of Stations 12B and 22B? "The Voice of Manawatu" photo is an excellent example: it appeared in January 10 *Listener* and you guessed correctly for we did keep it! The signatures improve it, too. Here is my idea of CBS programmes:

Orchids: Secret Diary, Fairy Tales at 5.30, Racing in Retrospect, Hit Parade, Chuckles with Jerry, Detective Problems, Health Talks, Imperial Leader, Amateur Hours, Film Session, and Fred and Maggie.

Axes: News from London (we can get that from any YA station, so why do the ZB's waste time?), England Expects, Peter MacGregor (we had enough of Pete in the last few months of 1939). Well, that is all: there is a shortage of iron, so I won't throw too many axes, besides, the CBS does not deserve more!

"It Happened to Me" is a very good feature in *The Listener*. Keep it going. The Auckland Commercial Station needs a tuning up on its time bell; it is sickening when it ticks on that dumb note. Give them one like 22B, 32B and 42B. For the announcers: Keep it up, boys, we like to hear you signing on and off, for knowing our announcer makes the programmes worth listening to!

On the whole, a big bouquet for the National and Commercial Stations!

—JOY MACINDOE (Hikutaia).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Miss Olga Stanley (Te Awamutu):—Both the matters you raise are being looked into.

E. M. Prince (Timaru):—We regret that we have not the space to publish the poem, but it was published in the *Christchurch Press*, from whom you could almost certainly obtain a copy.

"Precaution":—You omitted to give your name and address. As a precaution?