

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER

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EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES:

115 Lambton Quay, Wellington, C.1.
Post Office Box 1070.
Telephone 46-520.
Telegraphic Address: "Listener," Wellington.
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Thinking Ahead

IT is an accident, so far as we ourselves are concerned, that so much of the reading matter in this issue comes from people who are dreaming about a new world. But it is not an accident so far as these people are concerned. The world, with most of its systems and philosophies, is being remade. Those even who may wish to do so—and they will not be able to return to the world of the nineteen-thirties. They will be lucky if they find any part of that world undamaged when the fighting ceases; and much of it will be damaged beyond repair.

It is, therefore, natural and in itself encouraging that more and more people should be asking themselves, and asking one another, what kind of a world they want, and what kind they think they can get. It is at least partly true that we are fighting the present war because we did not know how to use the opportunity that came to us in 1918. Not enough people had thought about the new world, and not enough had talked about it. Above all, not enough had reached the stage of mental and moral adjustment to the new demands of peace. We could not make up our minds whether to destroy our enemy or to lift him again to his feet, so stood awkwardly and foolishly, and in the end fearfully, resting one boot on him. We had no plan for dealing with him, or with any other disturber of our peace, but an idealistic re-arrangement of the world for which we were at no time prepared to pay. So the more we think now, and the more realistically we plan, the better chance we have of meeting the enormous problems of peace when it comes.

But there is one fact more encouraging than all this planning. It is the almost universal belief of all sane and decent people that the war must first be won. Whether we are capitalists or socialists, liberals or conservatives, we know that nothing can be done till Hitlerism is annihilated. Unless we keep that forever in our minds, planning is mere moonshine and talking a waste of air.

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.

OUR FILM REVIEWS

Sir,—I think it is high time you received a bouquet for the film reviews. To the best of my knowledge yours is the only paper in New Zealand with the courage to print an unbiased criticism of the films offered to the public. May I say that my family and most of our friends are in complete agreement with "G.M.'s" criticism—we are still kicking ourselves for not believing him about "Call a Cop." Let us hope that this really excellent department of your magazine will continue for many a year.—FILM - FAN (Wanganui).

Sir,—I apprehend from *The Listener* of July 4 that a correspondent under the pseudonym of "C'rect Card" is perturbed by the number of expressions of an American origin or derivation which are to be found in your pages devoted to the cinematograph. It is his suggestion that you should substitute for my poor efforts those of "an Australasian or British writer." If it will allay your pedantic correspondent's doubts I shall produce documentary evidence of my British citizenship.

But say, chief, before shooting off his mouth like that, this guy should sure take a gander at what some of the more classy scribes of British and Australian periodicals get away with regularly when putting over their dope about the movies. Here's the result of a brief check-up:

"A swell stroke of business."

"A flurry of cuties."

"He finds someone has muscled in on his territory."
(C. A. Lejeune, London "Observer.")

"She is in danger of being bumped off."

"This is her answer to those who have panned her as a looker and nothing else."

("News Review," London.)

"What gives the show its zip?"

("Australian Wireless Weekly.")

"... As glamourised in the film."

("The Australasian.")

So what?—GORDON MIRAMS ("G.M.")

SERIALS BEFORE NINE

Sir,—I ask the radio management to give the question of earlier serials due and careful consideration. Many of the best serials are at 9.30 p.m. after the newsreel. I live in a very isolated area and the wireless is my sole amusement. To-day I find myself without maids and petrol—part of my war effort. Every morning I am up at 6 o'clock and by 9.30 many times feel utterly exhausted and unable to listen in. There are hundreds of country women in the same position. I pay rates and taxes, radio licence, subscribe to *The Listener* the same as the city people, and we, the country folk, should be considered. When a radio appeal is made for money, who is it subscribes the most? The despised country-bumpkin every time. Please give us a fair deal, and serials before nine. — ISOLATED AREA (Lake Wakatipu).

A CHILDREN'S PLAY

Sir,—I have just listened to a play in the 3YA Children's session, "The Navy's Here" which admirably portrayed the magnificent courage of British prisoners on board the German prison ship *Altmark*, who were ultimately rescued by the *Cosack* off the coast of Norway. It was presented by two boys, "The Rovers," whom I have often heard on the air, and I am sure that they, and "Major" too, would like to know that it was much appreciated. All of their plays that I have heard, both in theme and style of presentation, compare very favourably with many of the productions broadcast in

the evening sessions, for their appeal is directed mainly towards the adolescent and adult listeners.

When one considers that many of the imported serials and plays heard are of doubtful educational value, it seems a pity that more play-writing contests are not conducted by both Broadcasting Services to exploit such talent to the full. I have not yet heard from any other station plays of a serious nature which are both written and acted by boys, or girls, and produced regularly in the Children's Session, so "Major" is to be congratulated on his enterprise.—"YOUNG PEOPLE" (Christchurch).

BIG BEN.

Sir,—Replying to the complaints of your correspondent T.P.M. regarding the chimes of Big Ben, I would like to point out that they are popular with quite a number of listeners. Nor are the chimes, if received by an efficient wireless set, harsh or discordant. To many listeners they seem to serve as a definite beginning or end to a programme; also as an accurate and unmistakable time-signal which can be recognised even if one is at some distance from the loud-speaker. This is more than can be said for the time announcements which T.P.M. refers to. Finally the chimes have a sentimental value for many listeners.—CHIMES (Mount Albert).

Sir,—T.P.M. (Taihape) criticises what he calls "the long drawn-out strokes of a very toneless clock" (i.e., the Wellington G.P.O. chimes), and suggests that they be discontinued. I do not agree with him, although he is right in saying that sometimes a good record is interrupted for them.

Thousands of people check their watches and clocks by these chimes, however, and they are not what he calls "toneless." He recommends the Commercial Stations's procedure of announcing the time. Frequently, from 2ZB anyway, the time they give is as much as two minutes out, which is disastrous if one has to catch a train every morning. When we hear the chimes from 2YA we know that we get the exact time, as the Wellington G.P.O. clock varies about only half a second during a year. Also I'm sure many people such as aviators and ships' captains understand that it is most important for them to have the exact time, though admittedly, a ship does carry a chronometer. Trusting that the chimes will still ring out and give exact time to many.—J.K.S. (Petone).

Sir,—In answer to T.P.M., Taihape, who wants to cut out Big Ben, I quite understand a New Zealander not appreciating the time lost while Big Ben strikes. But if he were London-born I feel sure he would feel a thrill to know that while Big Ben still strikes Britain still holds her own in this terrible struggle. As a young fellow I had to pass Big Ben every day to work, and used to think what a note of security he sounded every hour—a note that could be heard all over London within a certain area on a still night. I feel myself, having brothers, sisters and other relatives living in the heart of London, that while good old Big Ben still strikes the hour London and good old England will carry on, and T.P.M. still sit and listen to his wireless without fear.

—LONDONER (Rotorua).

Sir,—In those few tense moments after the evening prayer when we await the night's war bulletin, do you, as I do, suddenly relax when you hear the booming voice of Big Ben? To me, Big Ben seems to be the very heart throb of London herself and symbolic in its sonorous chimes of her great leader and statesman Winston Churchill; and of her people—strong, reliant, and ready to meet any emergency.

Perhaps like many others my imagination is too vivid in these times of stress, but to me Big Ben keeps saying: "I'm still here—I'm still here—All's well!"—A. M. DAVIN (Wadestown).