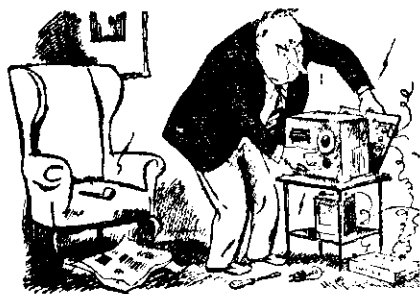


IS THE BBC DOING ITS JOB?



IN five areas in the North and South of England, *News Review* interviewers recently sampled public opinion on the British Broadcasting Corporation.

By grouping interviewees according to sex, age, and social class, *News Review's* quiz experts gathered the reactions of all classes in proportion. Surprisingly, 21 per cent of people approached proved to be non-listeners, who enjoyed neither possession of nor access to a radio set. This percentage was much the same in all towns for all classes, but was highest in London.

Some explanations: Absence from home; no settled abode; never bothered about wireless; have got out of the listening habit. One said: "It was a strong habit with me until about a year back, when a valve went. Never troubled to have it mended. Felt lost at first, but get to bed earlier now, and don't miss it."

From a mechanic came the reply: "No spare time, these days."

Question 1: Do You Think the BBC Does Its Job Well?

MOST answers to this question came swiftly and spontaneously. "Yes," answered 58 per cent. "No" came from 42 per cent.

Grounds for satisfaction were: Between them, the Home and Forces programmes cover a wide range of tastes. The BBC uses the best talent in every field. Absence of commercialism. Radio is cheap at the price. BBC news is honest and reliable.

"Yes, very well. A really democratic institution," remarked a doctor.

A publican: "Beats me how they keep it up . . . 18 hours a day for seven days a week. Who could grumble at ten bob a year?"

The "Noes" vigorously accused the BBC of staleness; of foisting its own highbrow tastes on the people.

Repetitional programmes, pandering to active minorities with influence, such as the Church and privileged classes; propaganda and half-truths in the News, were common grumbles.

A Manchester moulder grouched: "What crabs is Lady Fundumkum, who can't even boil a kettle of water, tellin' my Missus how to run our home."

"Aloof, up in the air," was another remark. "Why don't they get down to things and let's have it straight?"

A housewife: "Can't say what it is, but it's rotten."

"No!": 42 Per Cent—"Yes!": 58 Per Cent

THE BBC is not the NBS. It is, however, so like the NBS in so many ways that what is true of one service is likely to be at least partly true of the other. Therefore, the following article from "News Review," a London paper, will be read with almost as much interest in New Zealand as it must have aroused in England

Question 2: Which Programme Do You Especially Like?

Question 3: Which Programme Do You Especially Dislike?

BLASTS of opinion from workers for bright, snappy, cheery broadcasts swept variety features to first place in the "likes."

These listeners grumbled at Symphony and Chamber music, but their aversion was expressed logically and with tolerance.

A dockerman said:

"Dessay I'd like it misel' but I've never been 'edicated' to posh music. I don't understand it. Can't stand it."

An analysis of Likes and Dislikes showed:

	Like. Ques. 2. Per cent.	Dislike. Ques. 3. Per cent.
Variety (Music Hall, Tommy Handley, etc.)	38	9
Plays - - - - -	18	0
Light music (Opera; Light classics)	15	0
Dance Bands, Crooning	13	27
Highbrow music (Symphony, Chamber)	4	58
Others (John Hilton, Bing Time, Brains Trust, etc.)	12	6

Most listeners were enthusiastic over BBC plays, and said the present ration was insufficient. Light music got firm support, coming through the Dislikes unscathed.

"I love a good straight play, and so do my friends," was a frequent remark made by those who admitted to a great deal of listening.

A long-distance lorry driver observed: "I'm tired when I get home. Not Symphony or Swing: them's all right for week-ends. Give me something soft and quiet for my nerves."

Violent and general was the condemnation of Crooners, though some girls confessed to being late for work because of "Bing Time" (Crooner Bing Crosby).

Six per cent. of listeners named the Brains Trust as their favourite broadcast. Three per cent. disliked it most.

"I can't make head or tail of it," complained an old miner, "stuttering them big words out."

Lancashire folk liked "John Hilton talking."

"He doesn't use high-falutin' words," said a housewife.

"Messages from the Forces" was very popular, and three per cent. gave it first choice; workers' lunch-time items were also rated highly.

Theatre organ music seemed unpopular with a small number of people. A large number did not like it, but disliked other items more. Some listeners objected that religious programmes took too much time.

Results showed that listeners' tastes are narrow: Light entertainment is demanded by workers; classical music is appreciated by only a very small percentage; plays and light music are a safe bet with all classes.

Question 4: To Which News Broadcast Do You Listen Most Regularly?

THE answers to this question were over-whelmingly in favour of the evening bulletin:

	Per cent.
Nine p.m. News - - - - -	44
Eleven p.m. European News -	19
Six p.m. News - - - - -	13
Eight a.m. News - - - - -	8
Seven a.m. News - - - - -	7
One p.m. News - - - - -	3
Never listen to News - - - -	6

Most listeners said they were generally at home by nine o'clock, which may account for the nine p.m. bulletin's popularity. Other listeners said they turned on the morning bulletins to keep check on the time.

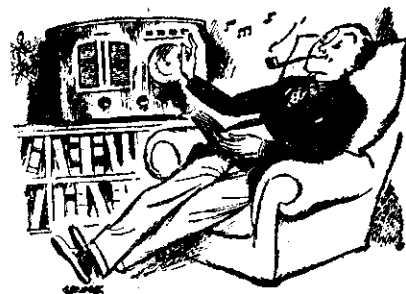
By all who heard it, the BBC European News bulletins were voted best of them all. Clarity and conciseness were the reasons given for its popularity.

Many listeners confessed that they made a point of hearing both morning and afternoon News on this Service, because they felt censorship was less stringent.

Listeners "bored with news," and others acting on a disinclination to hear bad news, represented about six per cent. of those interviewed. This ostrich affliction infects whole families.

The Weekly News Letter enjoys wide popularity. Reasons stated: The significance of events and the shape of things to come are easier to understand this way.

"Sums things up without a lot of rigmarole," explained a farmer.



Question 5: Have You Confidence in the Honesty of BBC News?

"YES," came from 40 per cent; NO, from 42 per cent; and DON'T KNOW from 18 per cent.

Trust in the BBC was 23 per cent. higher among middle and upper middle-classes than among workers.

Curiously, several interviewees thought the BBC was "too honest" and suggested the News might be "Goebbelised" to make facts more palatable.

The "No Confidence" brigade grumbled at "propaganda," "half-truths," "suffocating censors," "delayed action news."

"I've confidence in the honesty of nothing these days," said a weary shop-keeper.

Many expressed the view that the BBC didn't seem to have confidence in the people. For instance:

"Why can't they understand us? Tell us everything; we're all together then, and know where we stand."

"The BBC is making a big mistake. Let's have one thing or another, News or dope."

An A.R.P. Warden despaired: "Why is the BBC so often behind with the News? That's what shakes my trust..."

"The Barham was sunk in November, and the BBC announced it in January."

The BBC's methods of putting News across found few supporters. It was frequently charged with being "uninspiring," "dull," "stale," "lifeless."

"Just like they were talking in a field to dummies, not people. Y'know what I mean . . . cold and hollow."



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