

Seventy-Three Men And A Notebook

WITH the passing of the years, those who were once radio fanatics—who listened-in because it was a radio—have merged this miracle with the host of other inventions we now accept as part of our daily lives.

But in camp it is different. There are no diversions just around the corner (unless it is visitors' day). So the men stay in their huts and listen-in. In a recent article I described to you how, for the first time, many of us really listen. But I gave only the scantiest details of our favourite listening tit-bits. Yes, they are tit-bits. One never knows when he is going to be rudely interrupted and ejected to some cold, cold job, such as guard or sanitary fatigue.

The habit of listening-in—because by common usage it has become a habit—takes on a strange new complexion in camp. One concentrates in a new way, a revealing way. Men get a perspective on life, and what is more important, on themselves. Some find new fields to explore; others discover that, after all, they have wasted their time. With radio, a listener has the whole world explored for him. All he has to do is listen. A soldier was listening to a talk the other evening. He said, "Gee, I wish I was intelligent." I suggested to him that intelligence is what we know, and that radio was telling us what other people knew. Therefore intelligence was the absorption of an exchange of ideas and subjects. Not quite right, but . . .

(Written for "The Listener"
by TAM MCKINLEY)

The Listener has commissioned me to ask a hundred of our camp personnel what exactly they prefer in radio programmes. I am afraid that I have not seen one hundred men—I have interviewed 73, by my notebook. At the end of this article is a tabulation of likes and dislikes. But before that I would like to tell you of some of the reactions I have encountered.

There is a definite section scared off by anything—musical or literary—that smacks of highbrow. That word conjures up a mental picture of hairy pendants—something rather objectionable to the young and virile. This is due, in the first instance, to non-knowledge of culture. Symphonies, chamber music, talks on Picasso and Dame Nellie Melba (excuse me, Mr. Nicholls), and a recital "By the famous contralto, Lula Myrz-Gmeiner" (excuse me again, but I have never heard of her), are presented unblushingly, with not so much as a hint of the difficulty of pronunciation. Men want to know what a symphony is. Why not tell them that it has four movements (unless William Walton decrees otherwise), that there are two intertwined themes to listen for in the first movement (invariably), and that the obvious enjoyable bombastics of the last movement are a climatic synthesis of the foregoing movements? But put it clearly, so that there is no touch of the un-homely about it. If this is put into operation, about half of the complaints we have in camp about "unlistenable music" would be eliminated.

Swing and Sentiment

Next come the swing fans. They are so powerful a body, in numbers and volume, that their voice must be heard. I like swing, too. All radio programmes,



I believe, are good to everybody, at some time or other. The "swingers" want a programme by "Turntable" from 2YA on one evening a week, but starting at 8 o'clock, so that they can hear it before "Lights Out." The lovers of sentimental music, ranging from Vera Lynn right up to Mascagni's "Intermezzo," are numerous. But they are quite satisfied. Look up the programmes in this journal and you will see that they are very well catered for. It is on-the-fence music this, not quite high-brow, nor — well, what shall I call it? "I think the 'Music for the Middlebrow' is quite the funniest session I have ever listened to", said an ace radio fan.

An intellectual pal of mine considers that most of these period plays we get are not only an insult to our intelligence—if intelligence comes into it—but are completely foreign to our conception of life. Horrors, imperialistic pomp, and Middle Age tyranny are "out", he says.

"The Real Use of Radio"

Last, but most important, is the real use of radio in camp. It is firstly, a means of escape. Escapism is the true reason for a person listening in. Therefore if, for instance, as much information was given with the presentation of good music, by the Nationals, as is given by the Commercials about American band music, most of us would be happy. Aunt Daisy is very entertaining—to the housewife safe within the confines of Domesticia. But the soldier wants a realistic escape from soldiering, and doesn't want to go home. That brings on home-sickness. Intelligently presented, made interesting by keen-voiced announcers, the best of time with the radio would be achieved. But this is comment. Below are tabulated our likes and dislikes:

	Like	Dislike	Not sure
Symphonic Music	27	11	35
Talks	43 (32 War Talks)	20	20
Dance and Swing	67	6	
Sentimental Music	71	2	
Serials	3	70	
Short Plays	64	8	1
Amount of News	60	8	5

Best Hated: Screeching foreign singers of lieder, arias, and songs generally.

Current Favourites: Vera Lynn, Carmen Miranda, Peter Dawson, hot swing bands, and the Andrews Sisters.

Also Hated: "Long winded piano pieces and unannounced pieces generally." (By this is meant fill-up music, and major works that convey nothing, if the composer's conception is not made known. For example, an un-annotated broadcast of Stravinsky's "Sacre du Printemps".

Tremble!

(By WHIM-WHAM.)

[Mr. Edgar Thrupp, an earthquake expert, predicts an unusual series of destructive earthquakes next year, mostly within two long periods of continuous risks, from March 25 to April 10, and from October 6 to November 5. Mr. Thrupp said he could not say where the earthquakes would occur, but he had sent particulars to the governments of countries subject to such risks. —News cable from Vancouver.]

THIS Earthquake Expert, Edgar Thrupp,
Predicts a violent Shaking up
Of various Portions of the Earth.
Just what the Warning may be Worth,
It's hard to tell
Although we well
May wonder on what Grounds unnamed
Such seismic Prescience may be claimed.

IF Thrupp with Reason cries "Be-ware!"
I hope his promised Shocks will spare
New Zealand, with an extra wide
Berth to the Part where I reside;
And, better still,
I trust they will
Expend their Force on Japanese
Bases and vital Industries.

I KNOW I should not entertain
Wishes so blasphemous and vain;
The Earthquake Shock, in any Case,
Considers neither Time nor Place,
Nor Peace, nor Wars,
Nor Creed, nor Cause,
And is as liable to fall
On Us as Them, or not at All!