

LISTENER

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New Zealand And New Britain

A CORRESPONDENT asks if our "slightly frivolous" reference last week to the Beveridge plan meant that we are not interested in social security or felt our "style cramped" by the fact that we are Government-controlled. It would be as sensible to ask if we lack interest in food, clothing, and shelter. Our subject last week was the fact that we have no history—nothing to forget, and very little to boast about; but we expressly named social security as one of the things that we *could* boast about, and should. We shall probably do a good deal more boasting about the New Zealand scheme when a full outline of the Beveridge plan comes to hand from London; but so far our excuse has to be what Sir William Beveridge himself said in his BBC broadcast — that New Zealand's was the only scheme he had thought worthy of imitation. He of course did not say, or suggest, that other countries had nothing to teach him. Neither do we say or suggest that. Social revolutions do not spring ready-made from the brain of one man or appear suddenly in the programme of a single government. Long before they emerge as a political programme they have been talked about, thought about, dreamt about by thousands of unknown people; and even when they take shape as practical proposals they are pruned, shaped, curtailed, or extended by public opinion. Sir William Beveridge is still in the blue-print stage. The New Zealand scheme, though it is operating far more smoothly than its authors in their most optimistic moments can have expected, will grow and change. But it justifies Sir William's faith in what he now calls New Britain. It was not so much a model he wanted as confidence, and New Zealand gave him confidence.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir,—I am annoyed by your slightly frivolous reference this week to the New Zealand social security scheme. Are you not interested in this great reform, or has the fact that *The Listener* is a State-owned paper cramped your style?

AGE BENEFIT (Wellington).

OUR MUSIC CRITIC.

Sir,—I agree that your music critic's remarks about the Beethoven and Mahler symphonies laid him wide open to attack. But those who take advantage of an opportunity of that kind give him no credit for the excellent column he produces from time to time. Myself I disagree with most of what he writes, but at the same time I find his article one of the most entertaining and stimulating features of *The Listener*, and I have the impression that a good many other people feel the same about it. I therefore plead for its continuance.

BEETHOVEN LOVER (Christchurch).

Sir,—The harsh criticism in your correspondence columns makes me want to express a little appreciation of "Marsyas". Sometimes certainly, he seems determined to provoke his flaying, but many of his criticisms, ideas, and suggestions seem to me so good, as well as being so interesting and helpful, that I am hoping very much that he won't be flayed out of existence. But I'd like to suggest to him that by antagonising people by criticism that is even a little unfair, he defeats one of his own best aims—the encouragement and guidance of New Zealand's own efforts. Also, by expressing himself less technically, he could help people more without in the least lowering his standard. Meanwhile the existence of a column where music is discussed seriously is a most hopeful sign.

M.A. (Eastbourne).

Sir,—In my opinion *Listener* readers should, and for the most part do, recognise your correspondent "Marsyas" as an informed and gifted critic who offers sound views in an interesting way. Readers such as "Bayonet" do themselves no credit in displaying so little ability to appreciate such excellent articles. —APPRECIATIVE (Ch.Ch.).

HITLERISM AND THE GERMAN PEOPLE.

Sir,—As Audax II. says, I have popped up again. But I notice that my friend with the 2nd-class audacity is still registering from the prone position. Quoting Priestley was a sad blunder. Protests against his broadcasts have been coming in from as far afield as Canada. (*Vide Nat. Review*, April, 1941). Priestley is the prophet of that school of soul-snobbery which is ashamed of its country and runs down the British Empire. His talks are offensive in the extreme to patriotic people of all shades of political thought. Here are his own words. "I am walking a tight rope every Sunday morning. I doubt if it will be possible to continue. I have had attacks from the Right, and not the slightest assistance from the Left, and not one word from the Labour or Trade Union Movement." A less vain man than Mr. Priestley who was criticised by his political opponents — as all speakers are — and who was not

supported at all by his own party, might ask himself in what way he had got out of step with his country.

E. A. W. SMITH (Christchurch).

Sir,—Some of your correspondents are horrified at the idea of holding the German people responsible for the crimes they have committed. I wonder if they are capable of realising that their opinions on this matter are not worth two straws, any more than mine are or even Churchill's. Only Stalin's opinions will matter when his armies march into Germany, and he and his people have bitter reason to know what Germans are like. Though I am not a Communist or even a Socialist, ever since June, 1941, I have been grateful to Russia not merely for giving us our only real hope of victory, but for making it certain that our ladylike humanitarians will not be allowed to jeopardise the next generation as they have this one. Of course your correspondents probably believe that it was severity rather than leniency at Versailles that led again to war, and likely enough it was both, but as I have said, their opinion here matters not at all.

XXX (Christchurch).

WITH GOD'S HELP.

Sir,—I listened with interest recently to the account from 2YA of the escape of the Calliope from Apia Harbour in 1899. But what thrilled me most was Captain Cain's acknowledgment at the end, after he had thanked the officers and crew for their splendid devotion to duty, that after all they owed their deliverance to God who by His good providence had blessed their efforts to get the ship out of the harbour. If there was a more ready acknowledgment of our Nation's need of God's goodness and help in this present awful War, we would the sooner be led to Victory.

RUHAMAH (Palmerston N.).

NO MORE LADIES

Sir,—I am a woman worker, and I write to object to the title of the series called, in the programmes published in *The Listener*, "For My Lady." I suppose this title is meant to have snob-value, but as there are very few titled women in New Zealand, I should think the persons responsible for the names of features would be better to choose names to appeal to a wider public. The interesting thing is, of course, that a lady, according to the Anglo-Saxon, is one who kneads or digs bread. So perhaps the series is planned for those women, mainly in the back-blocks, who make their own bread. Even so, I don't think those busy women would be thrilled with the title, directed at them; it smacks too much of lavender (or moth balls), and old lace. What is wrong with "For Women," "About Women," or "For the Housewife"?

A WOMAN (Auckland).

Sir,—I thought "We Work for Victory" was improving, but recently they excelled themselves: "We will now interview the Lady Car Cleaners." Lady car cleaners were mentioned at least six times. Please step in someone before we have post-ladies, milk-ladies, baker-ladies, butcher-ladies, etc.

A WOMAN (Kaikoura).