

## Ears And Eyes

THE events in our sketch on Pages 4 and 5 did not take place exactly as they appear there. They did however happen, and they have been reported with reasonable accuracy. We record them because they are important, and because they raise questions to which it is difficult at present to see the answer. For radio is changing us. It is changing our way of life, and it is changing our way of thought—and we may wake up one day to find that it has changed our method of government. So far of course it has not done that, but it did something during the election campaign that has not been done before. It made a large number of electors stay at home to judge of candidates and policies instead of going to meetings to make up their minds. In that respect it gave us the strangest election campaign we have so far had—a greater concentration on the speeches of leaders, and a more deliberate effort on the part of the leaders to get their whole argument into a two hours' speech. It was also the case with very many listeners that they could not quite make up their minds whether to sit and listen or to go and see and question. But the real problem was how to use the microphone at the speaking end. It is a problem that has worried preachers and listeners ever since the microphone was taken into the churches, but the election provided the first big-scale test in the field of politics. The length of the political speeches was one difficulty, since no candidate can be expected to be brief before the microphone if he is not going to get another broadcast; but the chief difficulty is the fact that broadcasting calls for a special technique which very few political candidates at present possess. In any case it is not possible to use two techniques at the same time—to harangue a meeting and simultaneously speak quietly to the listener by his fireside. Before another Genby his fireside. It was to start people thinking about these problems that our reporter went round the booths.

## LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

### BROADMINDED

Sir,—I have just read your kind and sympathetic remarks about Italy. It is broadminded of you to forget Abyssinia, Greece, Yugoslavia, and so on. When I read your death notices of the Duke of Kent, Gordon Coates, and so on, I thought you were cold and hard and narrowminded. I apologise.

ENZEDDER (?? ?).

(Our brave satirist does not sign his name, but we shall not be "broadminded" about him, too.—Ed.).

### A WORD FOR MOTHER

Sir,—Even though the world burns, we mustn't let home affairs slip; so a word of protest against the portrayal of Mother in the North Island gardening talk of September 9 as a dumb foil to Father's efficiency. As Mother these days often not only plans but carries out the family gardening, I feel it is a little harsh to treat her as a semi-moron hardly to be trusted with sixpence at the seedsman's.—J.S. (Wellington).

### IMPROVED VOTING PAPERS

Sir,—I think each voting paper should make provision for the voter to register the fact that he could not vote for any of the candidates, and that the number of these votes given in each electorate should be published. It would not do much for the voter, but it might have a restraining influence on the successful candidate if he had a certain percentage of these votes in his electorate. And think of the handle for other members criticising him: "Why, 20 per cent of your constituents preferred to forgo their votes rather than vote for you!"—FEMINA (Green Island).

### AMERICAN-ENGLISH

Sir,—It is impossible for a schooner to "scoot" for the simple reason that the word refers to the arrangement of the sails and not to the hull. The Dutch were the first to use the rig, and the English copied it and introduced it to America in the 17th century. It has always been spelled with an "h" wherever English is wrote, and I was once told that it is derived from a Dutch word meaning "dainty"; but as I know as much about the Dutch language as "Kay" does of the English, I am unable to confirm this.

"Kay" seems to be unaware that the chief difference between American and English is this: the American speech remained stationary while the English progressed so that the Americans retained many archaisms which were dropped by the English. These were later re-introduced to the English as novelties. An example is the spelling of "honor," etc., which clever people regard as superior to the "our" ending.

Kay's argument is rather ridiculous when it is examined. He says, in effect, that because Mrs. Roosevelt used no word that couldn't be found in the Oxford English Dictionary, we should use American words which are not in the O.E.D. He quotes American slang to prove the superiority of the American speech, and the slang he quotes is old-fashioned and already half-forgotten. Actually more lasting and trenchant phrases or words are continually introduced into the language from foreign

languages and the English dialects than from American slang.

SPITFIRE (Wellington).

### THE VITAMIN BANDWAGON

Sir,—In her article on "Soil and Vitamin Values" in *The Listener* of August 20, Dr. Muriel Bell quoted experiments in which foods grown with artificial fertilisers were not found to be deficient in vitamins as compared with those grown with organic manures. She instanced the Broadbalk experiments and others made by her own department. Why did Dr. Bell omit to state that other experimenters had found foods grown with artificials to be deficient in vitamins? Sir Robert McCarrison found "grain grown with farmyard manure to be rich in vitamins while that grown with artificials was deficient in vitamins" (*Journal of Indian Medical Research* 14,351, 1926). McCarrison also found that there was an increase in cropping value, higher germination and a better and thicker crop from the soil with farmyard manure. (Mem. to Dept. Agric. India, 1927). Rowlands and Wilkinson (Knightsbridge Laboratories), in actual feeding tests found that rats suffering from a vitamin B deficiency grew steadily worse when fed with seeds grown with artificials. Rapid recovery and normal growth followed a change to seeds grown with animal manure (*Biochemical Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1930). Again, has Dr. Bell proof that the tree tomatoes tested for vitamin C and allegedly grown by hydroponics and on compost were actually so grown? If so, has she proof that the compost was properly made? If she has not such proof, Dr. Bell has made an extraordinary departure from scientific practice for materials for such tests are almost invariably grown by or under the direct supervision of the research workers making the tests. Failing such proof, what reputable scientific body would accept Dr. Bell's results?

E. SATCHELL (Auckland).

[Comment by Dr. Bell: "I happen to have read in full the original papers referred to by the Correspondent—not merely the summaries; unfortunately, they do not prove what is claimed for them. I am sure from my knowledge of both McCarrison and of Rowlands that each would have been prepared to admit to-day the limitations of the technique of experiments done 15 to 20 years ago, and of the conclusions that they drew from them."]

### MORE PLEASE.

Sir,—It would be ungracious to allow one of the best programmes of recent times to pass unnoticed. The weekly series "Chopin and his Music" broadcast from 3YA combined some of the finest piano music ever written with a well-balanced and unsensational commentary spoken in a singularly pleasing voice. It is gratifying to notice that this programme has been replaced by "Tchaikovsky and his Music" which promises to be of equal value and enjoyment. Would it be asking too much to request an hour of this programme—say from 8 to 9—instead of the half-hour? Also would it be possible to publish the names of the works to be presented in *The Listener*? I think the extra expenditure of space would be well worth while. On Friday and Saturday nights the music lover is not very well catered for with the exceptions of 3YA and 3YL respectively, so that one's choice is somewhat limited.—R. O. DAVIES (Wigram).

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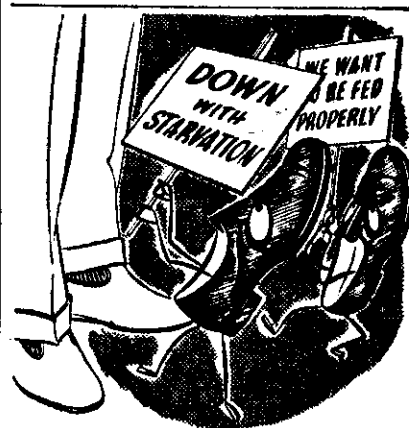
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