

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

Price Threepence

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Tribute to Britain

GENERAL SMUTS was perhaps the only man in the British Commonwealth who could safely remind the world last week what it owes to Britain. He was certainly the best man to do it, and he did it with great dignity and plainness. He did it because it was right to do it, and necessary; and Britons must not be squeamish about accepting his tribute. Nor should any one in the British Dominions have felt sore if it had been the people of the United Kingdom rather than the British nations overseas of whom at the time General Smuts was thinking. We know what we have done ourselves. We know what Australia has done, and Canada, and South Africa. But we can't know fully what the English, and Scots, and Welsh, and Irish have done, and endured, unless we have been in Britain during the last four years and worked and suffered there; as very few of us have. General Smuts did not in fact exclude the Dominions: he spoke of the contribution of the whole British Commonwealth of nations. But we in the Dominions know who has suffered most, who has given most, and who has made the biggest sacrifice of material and spiritual possessions. We know it, but we do not say it: and because we do not say it we often forget it. We even forget sometimes that gratitude to our allies can drift very easily into ingratitude to our own kith and kin; into neglect of them if we do not slip so far as to be ungrateful; and into something short of active remembrance if we avoid gross neglect. This is unworthy of us and unworthy of them. It is something that America and Russia do not do to their own people and do not expect us to do to ours. They know far better than we think they do how difficult Britain's position has been, and how magnificently in general her difficulties have been overcome. But even if they did not know we still should, and there are times when truth as well as charity should begin at home.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

Sir,—A certain tendency to wanton and irrelevant carping which I have noticed of late in your book reviewer I dismissed at first as temporary indisposition on his part; but now that this state of mind (or body) has become chronic, I am moved to protest about his so-called review of *A National Health Service*, which is unfair from beginning to end (including the heading). As your reviewer has not gone so far as to discuss the merits of the scheme put forward in the book, I shall also brush that little matter aside. But the book, to my mind, certainly does not give the impression that these eight doctors cannot reach agreement on the fundamentals of the fairly definite scheme they propose. Moreover, I find it refreshing, rather than a ground of complaint, that the authors invite the opinions of such as myself, who will not only be financing such services, but providing their raw material.

And if eight doctors are prepared to put some time and trouble into evolving plans for an adequate medical service, which would remove a major nightmare from the average family, I'll consider it a better half-crown's worth than most articles that coin will buy these days. Just under fourpence per doctor. Your reviewer should be thankful it's not guineas.

FRANCESCA (Auckland).

(Our reviewer says in reply: "If Francesca believes that the authors of *A National Health Service* agree about the scheme she has more knowledge than is conveyed in the book itself, since the authors distinctly say in their preface (1) that their plans and proposals are provisional; (2) that not every member of the group would identify himself or herself with the statements and opinions expressed; (3) that agreement has been reached only upon 'the general direction approved and marked out.' They then ask for suggestions and criticism.")

MELODY-MAKERS

Sir,—The hunt for indigenous New Zealand radio talent goes on painstakingly, like the quest for a Cinderella to fit into the crystal slipper. And sometimes string quartets give us of their best, and those who go for that sort of music say, "Well, it isn't so bad, but a good record is better." Yet in the Rainbow Rhythm session from 2YA every Thursday night, New Zealand has a dance band which is right up to recording standard. They run from ballads to solid swing; Jean MacPherson makes Vera Lynn sound like a rusty crystal set; and the band's arrangements are original, bold, and what's more, good. Maybe they are not up to Harry James's class, or Jimmy Dorsey's or Artie Shaw's, but they play their own work from the heart, and sincerity in jazz counts for more than it does anywhere else.—A.P. (Blenheim).

BACK TO THE LAND

Sir,—Might I also add a word of praise for the very fine article on "Agriculture And Modern Life," by Professor E. R. Hudson. It is well worthy of attention by those who are striving to get the people back on the land. Nevertheless, the question one asks is, how are the people to get on the land if some authoritative person does not make this objective his special mission? It seems to me we must shed the old idea of large-scale farms when thinking of farming in the present age. In

the past, the pioneers secured the land cheap because there was plenty available; they worked hard, and built up large holdings. To-day, our thoughts must turn to the small farm or small farm communities if we are going to put more people on the land, and engage in progressive farming.

While we are waiting for the boys of 16 and over to get suitable training for the land, I would suggest that a scheme be instituted such as was in operation in Denmark before the present war, under which town school-children were exchanged for several weeks in summer with country children. This system would soon break down the prevailing dread town people have of country life, besides giving country children a taste of the amenities of the city. It would also give both groups of children a better chance of understanding the dependence industry and agriculture have on each other.

If small farm communities were peopled with young couples, the question of increasing population in the country would solve itself. It is in the crowded cities where housing is scarce and living is high that the natural increase falls. The land girls are breaking down the prevailing idea of the drudgery of farm life. Let us extend the privilege to the younger children and make them eager to start their life's work on the land.

A.K. (Christchurch).

MUSIC FOR SCOTS

Sir,—I heartily endorse the letter "Scotts Wha Hae" wrote to *The Listener* about bagpipes on the air. We have in New Zealand some very fine pipe bands, also some A-grade solo players, whose music on the pipes could be listened to with pleasure (by Scotsmen), in any part of the world. Could not some records be taken of these and interspersed with the usual band programmes?

SKIRLING CHIEL (Waikari).

TIME WANTED

Sir,—I wish it were possible for stations to give us the time more frequently. With the shortage of clocks, and the time that repairs now take, this would be a great convenience and, I am sure, appreciated by many listeners. Perhaps instead of announcing a certain feature would be on the air again "at this time to-morrow," the time could be given. This would provide the information and still not take up broadcasting time.

"TIME PLEASE" (Wellington).

POINTS FROM LETTERS

"Farmer's Daughter" (Tatunui) supports the request for "a return of the Country Church of Hollywood." This she says, with the "Hymns of All Churches," were broadcast "at an ideal time for farmers."

"Pakeha-Maori" (Te Araroa) welcomes recent letters about the Maori language, but can think of no reason why announcers who are "so good at pronouncing Russian, French, German and Italian names" make such a hash of our own much easier language.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Synonym" (Feilding): Not Professor.
T.A.F.S. (Auckland): Vitamin Bandwagon off the road in the meantime.
Mrs. G.H. (Matatoki): Tim Holt.



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