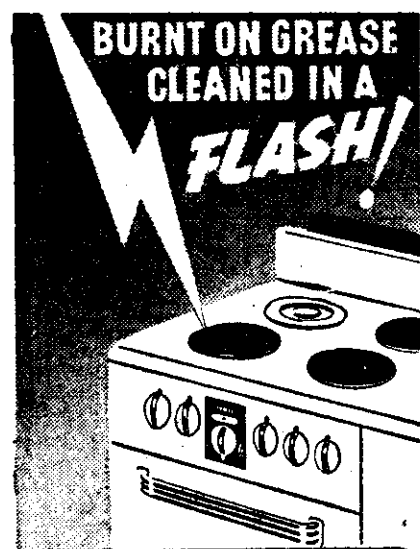




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LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

REHABILITATION OF WOMEN.

Sir,—After reading your interview with Lieutenant-Colonel Baker it occurred to me that I have read or heard little of the plans of the Rehabilitation Board for dealing with ex-servicewomen. Certainly the R.S.A. and the Home Services' Association have made it clear that their organisations are open to women as well as men, but that appears to be as much as has been done. I have never belonged to any one of the services, but my work has brought me into contact with women in every branch and one of the most noticeable, and most serious of the difficulties in this connection is that most of them seem unaware that any problem of rehabilitation will exist for them. The very fact that so many women enjoy service life would seem to indicate a desire to escape from the monotonous realities of their previous existence—which is not so much a reflection upon them as upon that existence conventionally expected of New Zealand women—but they have formed no definite plan of making constructive future use of the knowledge, if any, which they have acquired during the war.

Do the authorities assume that all these women will display meek gratitude at being permitted to return to their former spheres, usually all too narrow, until they slide into the "proper" status of wife and mother? Having made a brief excursion into what has in the past been erroneously regarded as exclusively male territory, most women, consciously or unconsciously, will resent any attempts which may force them to forgo their newly-found approach to genuine equality.

—JUANITA (Morrinsville).

BRAINS TRUST.

Sir,—What is wrong with this "sanctified imported English article" as one of your correspondents describes the BBC Brains Trust? I think it is a privilege to hear the opinions of noted men and women of the United Kingdom, as well as those of other countries: for instance, Mayor La Guardia and the Polish Foreign Minister.

"Stupid" asks why New Zealand cannot produce the equivalent. I think New Zealand has, in that excellent session the A.E.W.S. discussion group presents weekly, and although they have not discussed more than one subject in an evening, I think they compare very favourably with the BBC Brains Trust.

But have other listeners noticed the deep tone of the Brains Trust broadcasts? This often makes hearing difficult and a strain. I have wondered whether the fault has been in the recording, or whether 2YA produces a deeper tone in all of its broadcasts than 1YA.

—C. A. READ (Hamilton).

Sir,—I am glad to get the BBC Brains Trust direct from 2YA—and could we have less "Americana"? I know it is to cheer up homesick servicemen, but many Americans approve of a good BBC programme. MARTHA (Hastings).

RUSSIA AND POLAND

Sir,—I deeply regret to see Soviet-baiting à la Mode sneaking into *The Listener* in the cunning disguise of "interesting sidelights on the position and influence of women in pre-war Poland."—A. McLEOD (Remuera).
(Too cunning for us.—Ed.).

RADIO ADVERTISING.

Sir,—Can a listener do anything to improve the standard of advertising announcements to which he is compelled to listen from the Commercials? Most announcements are far too long. Nothing can be more exasperating than listening to an announcer wading through a half foolscap sheet of blurb, with a monotonous repetition of the sponsor's name, address, and description after every sentence. If an advertiser cannot get his message across in 15 to 20 seconds he should get a new copywriter. Long-winded announcements are not only tiresome, but are poor sales policy.

Some advertisers greatly underrate the mentality of the average New Zealander. If a sponsor quotes the high-sounding formula of his preparation, most people are at once suspicious, not impressed. Most people know the symptoms of constipation, without having them shouted at meal time. Smokers will never be convinced that such-and-such a cigarette is so much better until it has improved a little in quality.

Nor should advertisers try so hard to be patriotic—it doesn't become them. A blurb about so-and-so's model hats concluded by a squander bug admonition just doesn't ring true. Listeners are tired of being told that "our factories are engaged on work of national importance"—the advertiser is probably making a good thing out of it anyway.

I made similar complaints to an announcer friend of mine recently. He said: "You only have to listen—try reading the goddam things, and more-over with enthusiasm."

—"PAINED" (Christchurch).

MAORIS AFTER THE WAR.

Sir,—After reading your article dealing with rehabilitation of soldiers I offer a couple of suggestions for consideration. With regard to Maori soldiers why not offer to the Imperial authorities a permanent force of, say, 1000 men for duties in the Pacific, India, or wherever required? The Maori regiment would have great traditions to live up to and would give a good account of themselves as soldiers in any field. Another idea that might be investigated would be the manning of a small cruiser with Maori personnel. In olden days the ancestors of the Maori proved themselves great sailors—recall the voyages of Kupe. A warship manned by a Maori crew would be something to be reckoned with.

—HUGH PATTERSON (Gisborne).

LONGER BROADCASTS.

Sir,—Why are we given such small doses of the BBC Brains Trust? Obviously some of the programmes are broken off in the middle. This 15-minute limit seems to apply to most things—about the duration of a good kindergarten lesson. Only musicians are apparently deemed capable of listening for more than a quarter of an hour at a time to one thing. It is perhaps understandable for serials, but for listeners to other things I think the NBS might experiment with longer programmes. For instance, Professor Gordon must have felt his limitation of time very severely in his Winter Course this year. With so many stations to provide variety, could we not occasionally have a whole half hour in which to think of one subject? LINDA BENNETT (Palmerston North)