

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

A CRITIC CRITICISED

Sir,—With reference to a criticism, in your issue of May 19, of A. R. D. Fairburn's book *We New Zealanders*, I would suggest that the reviewer demonstrates some of those typical New Zealand qualities that reduce thoughtful people to despair and Mr. Fairburn to protest. If one sees the mechanical structure of Western civilisation as comparable to a high-powered and complex arrangement, in the hands of peoples incompetent to handle it, one begins, I would suggest, to see a good deal of what happens in this world in about the right perspective. Simplifying this simile one may, perhaps, consider New Zealand as a country town, athwart a highway, through which irresponsible adolescents, with little sense of discipline, morals or ethical behaviour, race in powerful motor-cars to the detriment of laws, property and the local inhabitants. The town itself contains a good proportion of people who behave in much the same fashion. The quite logical results are "smash-ups," accidents, bribery, corruption, (including a vast amount of lying), fatalities, neurosis, clamour, "rackets," and limited chaos.

The surprising thing is not that a Fairburn should arise to protest at what goes on, but that every sensible, decently-minded citizen doesn't do likewise. Fairburn's greatest difficulty must surely have been to so water the contents of his book down that our local population had a reasonable chance of being able to assimilate much of its documents at all. Your reviewer says "If, heaven help us, we take it lying down. . ." Heaven shows no inclination to help us, and we would be well advised to do some sensible things about our neglected matters without celestial intervention.—THIRD GENERATION NEW ZEALANDER (North Auckland).

[This letter has been considerably abridged. We have tried not to change its argument.—Ed.]

NEW ZEALAND SPEECH

Sir,—Right from your first issue various well intentioned writers have broken out with complaints of wrong pronunciation and bad English heard over the air. I suggest that it is time these people realised that English is not spoken in New Zealand. The language we speak is New Zealandese, with its own idiom and pronunciation, and this is just as distinctive as the language spoken by Americans, South Africans, Australians or Canadians. All the efforts of purists to persuade us to pronounce according to the Oxford Dictionary are doomed to failure. But their labours will bear fruit if they are concentrated on securing a standard pronunciation within the framework of the best New Zealand practice.

J.S.L. (Upper Hutt).

POWER SAVING HOURS

Sir,—I am disappointed at the time arranged by the broadcasting authorities for saving power: 8.15 to 8.45 a.m. Women staying at home can have it on all day, but workers going out are only able to have it at certain hours, and now even these are curtailed. Why penalise the workers? There must be some

time during working hours that could be cut out and so let the working people have this little bit of pleasure when they are at home. Often the morning session is the only one we can listen to, especially with so much overtime to do. We hardly ever hear the radio. Anyway, I cannot turn off my wireless at this time as the quarter to nine war news is the signal for me to leave for work, watches and clocks being now unprocurable.

"BADLY HIT" (Wellington).

[The official reply is this: Stations are closed to save power, and to achieve this object to any satisfactory extent, they must be closed at a time when large numbers are normally using their radio sets. The time between 8.15 and 8.45 a.m. is one of those periods.]

BACH'S CHORAL MUSIC

Sir,—I have been listening to the classical music broadcast by the YA and subsidiary stations for four years, and I do not remember ever having heard the great Mass in B Minor by Bach nor any extracts from it. I would have thought that 3YL when giving half an hour of Bach's music for three evenings last week would have included something from the Mass in B Minor, which is assuredly the noblest music ever composed. You may remember that when you asked representative musicians for their lists of 20 records for a desert island sojourn, two of them headed their lists with this work, and yet it is conspicuous by its absence from the programmes in *The Listener*. We get plenty of the inferior masses of Mozart, Verdi and Faure, and nothing by the greatest master of them all.—H. H. FOUNTAIN (New Brighton).

KARITANE NURSES

Sir,—I was interested to see in *The Listener* that the conditions of Karitane training have been brought to the notice of the public. I had always wanted to be a Karitane nurse, and was bitterly disappointed when my parents were unable to pay for the training. I left school when fairly young, and worked until I had saved enough money, but throughout my training the difficulty in making both ends meet was always an embarrassing problem. I found the training interesting, however, and most essential to the community, and few people realise what excellent work is being done in the Karitane hospitals, especially in the teaching of mothers and the saving of premature babies. Surely this work deserves more recognition, and should be open to any suitable girl, irrespective of means who wishes to become a Karitane nurse. This particular branch of nursing is considered an essential employment, and at the present, when the cost of living is so high, why are the trainees not paid even a small wage, and so made equal with those of other professions.—"KARITANE NURSE" (Napier).

Sir,—It is obvious that the writer of the article in *The Listener* of May 26 was totally ignorant of the work done by Karitane nurses during and after their training. To say that Karitane nursing is one of the last things a girl should wish to become shows that the writer considers the health and well-being of little children to be of no importance whatever. For a girl who can-

not afford Karitane training, four years of general nursing would be very tedious if she were keen to look after babies only. In general hospitals the nurses are so busy that they cannot give the babies the careful, patient, handling that can be given in Karitane hospitals. The fact that premature babies born in general hospitals are transferred to Karitane as soon as possible proves this.

That most girls take up Karitane training to "fill in time between school-days and marriage" is untrue. Not one of the 26 Karitane trainees in Wellington has taken the training for this reason.—HELEN M. MCKENZIE (Wellington).

[The inadvertent dropping of a word in the last line of the first paragraph of our article confused the issue a little. The sentence we sent to the printer ended with these words: "But that is one of the last things such a girl should wish to become." The "such," unfortunately, was lost in transit.—Ed.]

MORE PLAYS WANTED

Sir,—I wish to express appreciation of an item in Sunday's broadcast, the play *Cupid and Common Sense*, by Arnold Bennett. A full-length play by a world-famous playwright is one of the few radio items which hold the attention of all the family circle, including visitors. Well-spoken dialogue in a good play displaying character and wit rather than action is eminently suitable for radio broadcasts, and from the success of our repertory societies and play-reading circles there would be vast numbers of appreciative listeners if it were possible for a series of first-class plays to be broadcast from our New Zealand station.—H. M. HELM (Pongatara).

ART IN NEW ZEALAND

Sir,—May I thank you for the article, "Artists cannot Afford to Be Slack." This is a subject that needs more public attention, and your paper can give it. Art taste in this country is truly on a very low level. Why should this be in a country so beautiful and with so many people aching to draw? I meet them all over the Islands. If they could only paint, they say, if they could only paint, but there is no lead to be had. No one can tell them a few absolutely necessary structural laws; and so they give up in despair. We have the material but we lack the knowledge. Some years ago Mr. Reginald Ford, then president of the Auckland Art Society, offered a five pounds prize to the society for a new design for a chair. There was not one entry. Why is our craft knowledge so poor? Is it not the fault of the Art Societies? They are chiefly composed of people with little practical training. The members who struggle to learn painting as a technical accomplishment have no power in New Zealand, and till they are completely in control things will not be better. The vote of an honorary member equals that of a working member at all times. In Australia the membership is entirely of working painters and they have created a local market. I hope Professor Findlay will again speak on this subject of a better taste in New Zealand. Let him contemplate the average furniture in the average home and the terrible things called pictures on the walls, and tell us how to remedy this failure in New Zealand education.

ONLOOKER (Wellington).