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EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES:
115 Lambton Quay, Wellington, C.I.
G.P.O. Box 1707,
Wellington, C.I.
Telephone 46-520.
Telegraphic Address: "Listener," Wellington.

Sir Bernard Freyberg

THE selection of Sir Bernard Freyberg to succeed Sir Cyril Newall was one of those happy decisions that democracies should not expect too often. To begin with, it was a violent break from tradition: a break that has been made once in Australia but never before in New Zealand. In the second place it was a departure that had to appeal to the King himself as well as to the Government and people of New Zealand (who in a case of this kind could not be consulted). Therefore it was a bold decision politically. For democracy means consultation before anything else—free decisions by a free people after free and frank discussion. It requires that no important steps should be taken in its name without its knowledge and approval; and it would be artificial and false to say that this was the King's appointment and not the Government's—that the King still chooses his representatives or wishes to. He accepts the recommendations of his advisers who, almost in this case alone, may neither consult the people nor publicly fly kites. Obviously, therefore, it is easier to follow tradition than to make history, since no one objects to the first course and no Government in 105 years has taken the second. Historically—let us say it again—New Zealand had no right, and no ordinary reason, to expect such an appointment and must still count itself lucky that its Government decided to risk an experiment; for experiment it is at both ends of the Empire chain. Not to see it in that light is to lose the truth in platitudinous moonshine—the constitutional truth, for we of course say experiment in that sense only. To call Sir Bernard an experiment personally would be to call our Second Division an experiment, and to forget that the two will go down together in history.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

DUNEDIN R.S. CHOIR

Sir,—The Returned Services Choir's attention has been drawn to a paragraph in *The Listener* for August 17th under the title of "Onward" in the Radio Viewsreel column. The Choir is not at all concerned with your commentator's effort to "damn us with faint praise." We welcome constructive criticism. Like every other musical society in the Dominion we often deserve but seldom get good constructive criticism. Your commentator takes us to task for our choice of items, however, which is a very different matter. New music has been unobtainable during the war years and an order placed in 1942 has just come to hand, sixty pounds worth in fact, the average cost being 1/6 a copy. Four of these new numbers (including "Smiling Thru") were on the programme under review and were arrangements by Doris Arnold, who is recognised as outstanding. To suggest that they are hackneyed and that "Hallelujah Power and Glory" was the only item of musical worth is just pure nonsense. The composers of all the other items are world-famous, although they may not be known to your commentator. It should be mentioned too that the harmonies in Doris Arnold's arrangements, of popular songs are very modern and much more difficult to vocalise than "Hallelujah Power and Glory." The items in the programme were chosen for their special significance, as for instance "The Road to Mandalay" (as a tribute to the 14th Army).

P. F. HARRE (Dunedin R.S. Choir).

TROTTLING OR FOOTBALL?

Sir,—I was amazed when listening in to the broadcast of the Metropolitan Trotting Club's meeting at Addington to find that the broadcast during mid-afternoon was switched over to Station 3YL in order that 3YA might re-broadcast a football match at Auckland. Anyone interested in the football match could have tuned in to 1YA, but very few sets outside Canterbury are capable of getting 3YL. I know that here in Westport we receive 1YA much better in the daytime than 3YA, and I feel sure that this applies to most other districts in New Zealand. If it was necessary to broadcast the football through 3YA, then could not the broadcast have been interrupted at appropriate intervals to broadcast each race? There were only three races involved, and surely the re-broadcast of the football could have been interrupted for, say, six minutes for each race.—"TROTTLING FAN" (Westport).

(We have been supplied with the following reply:

"The decision to rebroadcast the North v. South Rugby Match through 3YA was arrived at after numerous requests had been received from listeners in the southern part of the North Island who were unable to receive 1YA during the day. All our southern stations, too, were requested by many listeners to arrange a South Island broadcast of the match as daylight reception of 1YA in most South Island districts was also not possible. To meet these requests it was

necessary to transfer the Trotting commentaries to 3YL. After all the first five races were broadcast by 3YA and to have interrupted the football description for say 20 to 30 minutes in order to broadcast race descriptions would have brought a storm of protests from the huge number of football fans who were desirous of following the progress of this most important football fixture.")

COMPLAINT FROM THE COUNTRY

Sir,—The standard of reading and appreciation of good drama is high in New Zealand. Broadcasting seems an excellent way of fostering this taste in the rising generations. I appeal with "Farmer's Wife" and "Farmer" ("Complaint from the Country") for more good drama and standard readings—either serials or short stories. It should make for good housewives, too, as the endless mending and handwork time could be looked forward to as a time of pleasure in listening to good literature.

HOUSEWIFE (Richmond).

A SOCCER BROADCAST

Sir,—Although not a Soccer enthusiast I happened by chance to listen to the broadcast of the Chatham Cup final last

More letters from listeners will be found on page 18.

Saturday afternoon. I am not aware of the name of the announcer, but he made his broadcasting commentary so realistic that I felt constrained to say how much I appreciated his efforts.

His vivid description and enthusiastic comments were both an entertainment and an education. He certainly made one feel the spirit of the game, the excitement and the personalities of the players taking part.

Knowing some of the difficulties associated with broadcasting a game of any nature, having been interested in one or two other sporting organisations, I could not let this opportunity pass without saying how much I appreciated this excellent use of radio time and I am sure it was enjoyed by many others.

K. A. FALCONER (Wellington).

FREEDOM OF THE AIR

Sir,—I endorse the sentiments and complaints raised by Messrs. Hulbert and Sherie against the recent attack on Evolution. The well-established truth of Evolution is strongly confirmed by many clergymen, including Bishops in Britain. The following extracts from sermons show the ever-increasing belief in Evolution.

"Evolution now stands on an irrefragable basis. The evidence is largely inductive, but supplemented by a vast amount of observation and experiment, so that any alternative is at the present day unthinkable." — Rev. Professor George Henslow.

"The principle of Evolution is now firmly established. Man is not merely in his physical conformation one of the

mammals, a developed offshoot of some ape-like stock. It is recognised that his mind is an evolutionary product of interaction between his ancestry and his environment. The intelligence of civilised man is the outcome of something like one or two million years of human and sub-human growth."—Bishop Barnes, in "Should Such a Faith Offend?"

"Darwin's assertion that man has sprung from the apes has stood the test of more than half-a-century of critical examination; increasing knowledge and careful inquiry have but confirmed its truth. As a result, the stories of the creation of Adam and Eve, of their primal innocence and their fall, have become for us folklore. Darwin's triumph has destroyed the whole relevant theological scheme."—Bishop Barnes in a sermon in Westminster Abbey.

P. H. BROMELL (Mapua).

FANTASTIC STORIES

Sir,—I wish we could have more stories of the type of "The First Leaf Falls." Whether an atomic bomb had been perfected or not there is excellent matter in that story. The world would have lost some good stuff if publishers and editors in the past had rejected "fantastic" material.—FAN OF THE FANTASTIC (Wellington).

MUSIC IN SERIALS

Sir,—I agree wholeheartedly with the complaint of F.T.V., in connection with the unnecessarily loud music featured at intervals in so many radio plays. Surely these strident outbursts could be avoided in the recordings or at any rate moderated at the studios during transmission over the air. As an example of pleasing moderation throughout I would cite the presentation of the serial "Owen Foster and The Devil," from 4YA, which is one of the few items in the category not necessitating a constant attendance at the volume control.

While on the subject, I wonder if other listeners to 4YA have been troubled by the periodic distortion of programmes, particularly in the evening sessions, with occasional periods of blasting suggestive of a station completely out of control. Then all the ZB Stations heard in Timaru suffer from interference emanating from Australian stations. I wonder if steps could be taken by the NBS to overcome this.

H. B. ALLEWAY (Timaru).

NEW CROSSWORD

Sir,—I would like to thank R.W.C. for the mathematical "crossword" puzzle which she gave us for a change. Probably, because it is a long time since I was at school, it took me many hours to solve, but it was good fun, though exasperating at times, and I would be glad if she could give us turns of this type occasionally. The ordinary crossword puzzles which she contributes are also much appreciated, though from practice, they take less time for a solution.

R. S. W. HUNT (Tauranga).

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R.S.T. (Rangiora): Our thanks. Requests carried out.

Interested (Kerikeri): Not in New Zealand, we are told.

Bryth Isl (Mt. Albert): Unsuitable.

"Armchair Critics" (Wellington): Local affairs not our pigeon. Try Wellington papers.