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A National Orchestra

THE Prime Minister, whose statement appears on page 16, has said all that it is necessary to say about the assembling, training, and organising of a national orchestra. The question is: What do we, the public, expect from the orchestra? The fact that it is a national organisation, financed out of the public purse, of course gives everyone the right to make demands on it. It belongs to the man in the street and to the woman at the kitchen sink as well as to those to whom music is not merely bread and butter but the very expression of their beings. Because it belongs to everybody, everybody will push and pull and squeeze it to some extent, and the more true it is that there has been what the Prime Minister calls "a quickening of interest in good music all over the world," the more certain it is that these pressures will be felt. They ought to be felt. If music means anything at all to us we are entitled to protect what it means whether we are being starved by highbrows or assaulted by vulgarians. But most of us don't know what music means to us, and that perhaps is where safety lies for the orchestra. Any one who has sat through a classical concert and made critical but humble observations of the audience knows how difficult it would have been to say why about 60 per cent bought their tickets. But they did pay their money, they did attend, and they will attend over and over again. They will be no nearer to understanding at their tenth than at their first concert, but they will be there, and it is for that 60 per cent as well as for the musically more intelligent 40 per cent that the orchestra is being brought into being. It is an attempt on a national scale to make art at once popular and selective, and can succeed only if we learn quickly enough that, if climbing is safer than descending, there is no upstairs without the ground floor.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

NBS PRONUNCIATION

Sir,—I heartily endorse E. Russell Nolan's comment on the pronunciation we hear daily on the air. May I suggest that criticism can also be applied to enunciation, which is usually as slovenly. Within a few hours the other day I heard Showpang, Pukini, Sibelius, Moizywitch, and Chuckoffsky. Most of these gems were achieved by the same announcer. It is extremely unfair to the younger generation that this is allowed in a service that possesses more potential education value than any other modern entertainment facility. I have heard it said, in defence, that New Zealand is developing its own accent ("accent" itself being invariably mispronounced "ack-sent"). To that I reply that accent is intonation and lilt, not dialect. A Scottish professor can have a strong Scotch accent and yet speak perfect English. By all means develop a New Zealand accent, but so long as English dictionaries are used in New Zealand schools that must remain the standard of pronunciation, and should be adhered to by radio announcers until a standard New Zealand dictionary is produced.—H. M. BRACKEN (Auckland).

WELLINGTON CATHEDRAL

Sir,—The letter of your correspondent (Lorna Rogers) is full of inaccuracies.

When did our Lord preach from the synagogues? Where is the record of Jesus referring to the synagogues as "My Father's House"? The only reference I can find to these words are in John 14, 2: "In my father's house are many mansions." The poverty of the people of Italy could be very much eased if the wealth in the Vatican was sold and the money used to build homes, feed the poor, and clothe those insufficiently clad; and if the Cardinals, instead of wearing robes costing £7,000 to £8,000 were content to be garbed like "The Man of Sorrows." CYMRU (Devonport).

Sir,—I am disgusted by all the excuses upholding building a cathedral when people are dying for want of food, warmth, and the necessary things to enable them to start finding for themselves. We in this country have had none of the really dreadful conditions of this war to contend with. Would it hurt us to wait a year or two longer for our cathedral? Think of how much £30,000 would provide, let alone £300,000, for the little waifs and people who are needed to care for them in the future. Surely the poor and needy are God's children, to be helped by His churches? I thought our churches would have their working bees as busy as possible making warm things for the needy, their collectors raising as much as they could, all to help the stricken.

Let us build after this terrible starvation is fed. We need beautiful things, but let them be built upon respect and love of our fellow-men. The site will still be there. New Zealand is a prosperous country and will still be able to subscribe. Most likely many more would do so. M.L. (Wellington).

SPLITTING THE INFINITIVE

Sir,—I was distressed to see that G.M.'s usually well-balanced judgment was influenced by such a small matter as a split infinitive, as occurred in his

review of *I Live in Grosvenor Square*. It apparently so unnerved him that in the last line of his review he split an infinitive himself.

D.A.B. (Wellington).

(To effectively split an infinitive is apparently easier than to successfully make a joke of it.—Ed.)

GOD DEFEND NEW ZEALAND

Sir,—Why does the National Broadcasting Service neglect to propagate our own National Anthem over the air? Are they ashamed of the song or are they merely unconcerned? I wonder if they realise that only a few people can recite the first two verses off-hand.

It is surprising to realise just how little this song is played. We never hear it in the picture theatres, hardly ever at public functions, and seldom over

"THE LISTENER" AND THE TAXPAYER

IT was stated recently in the radio notes of the "Otago Daily Times" that "The Listener" "until recently was heavily subsidised by direct money-grants taken from listeners' fees" and is "at present still subsidised by indirect grants such as free postal services."

Each of those statements is completely inaccurate.

"The Listener" is not subsidised directly or indirectly. It lost money for a year or two, as most journals do when they are first established, but it has long since repaid those early deficits and contributed a good deal in addition to the public purse. Nor does it receive any concessions from the Post Office, to which it pays exactly the same postage rate as other publications of the same weight, plus a commission on the subscriptions collected over the counter.

The only burden it has ever imposed on any taxpayer is the sum of threepence a copy paid by the wise taxpayer who buys it.

the air. Is there nothing the authorities can do about this state of affairs? Surely they can manage to play "God Defend New Zealand" at some time during the day when it can be heard by everyone.

NEW ZEALANDER (Greymouth).

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

Sir,—Of all those interviewed by your reporters not one remembered that "equal pay for equal work" is primarily the demand of the men in industry. To-day, when goods and labour are short, the threat of cheap female labour to the security of the family man tends to be replaced by an artificial discussion of sex equality—a wholly unreal question. Most of the reasons against "the rate for the job" are laughable. Three highly respectable gentlemen suggest that women need to be starved into motherhood—surely unjust to the women and slighting to the men. I, and most men who have yet to

marry, would prefer to go on believing that sex attraction is biological rather than economic. Others object on the grounds that girls have fewer responsibilities than men: true enough, they simply cannot afford them. Yet we can all remember a time when cheap girls were working, more expensive men were semi-idle on the dole or in camps, and mothers of families had to assume responsibility for finding nearly enough food for the kids. How many of them did it is a mystery; and probably had best remain a mystery.

"The rate for the job" is primarily a man's demand. For the majority of girls paid employment is just a brief transition from dependence on one man to dependence on another, too rapid and too much filled with illusory independence for them to grasp the significance of the wages question, to realise that the further they undercut the price of labour, the longer they must wait for a man to rescue them from poverty.

R. GILBERD (Okaihau).

Sir,—It would appear that some of the contributors to your discussion on "Equal Pay for Equal Work" have failed to take into account many things. Mr. Hearnshaw says that under the "present social and economic set-up he is not in favour of equal pay for equal work." Then it would seem that, to be fair, Mr. Hearnshaw and others agreeing with him should advocate a differentiation between the prices that women must pay for food,

More letters from listeners will be found on page 23

clothes and amusements, and the prices paid for these things by male workers. As far as the job is concerned it is the work done that matters, and the responsibility entailed in the contract itself which should be paid for; what is important is the job that is done. Has Mr. Hearnshaw concerned himself with the fact that many highly paid Government officials, bank officers, all types and kinds of executives, have few or no dependants and what they are paid for is the job they do and the responsibility entailed in that job—their social responsibility is only incidental in the viewpoint of their employers. Even if it were true that female workers both in the economic and social spheres have generally less responsibility, is there any virtue in such a position that Mr. Hearnshaw should see little or no reason for its discontinuance.

Strangely enough marriage and nursing are the only jobs that women are propagandised into—one has to be born to either of them to "make a go of it." All women desire a happy marriage; marriage is the one job in which we feel we attain true dignity. When we cannot attain to that dignity, would Mr. Hearnshaw and others like him deny us the solace of a well-paid job and a spur to our economic ambitions for fear that we, in our independence, might prove a shocking example to young women who might otherwise marry and become mothers of the race?

NADA MARTIN (Christchurch).

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENT

"Prunella" (Dunedin): Suggestions passed on.