

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(continued from page 5)

WEATHER REPORTS

Sir,—As one to whom the weather forecasts mean a great deal I am writing to voice a complaint and suggestions regarding this service. I have just (20.9.47) been awaiting the 9.0 p.m. forecast from 1YA and failed to receive it. I switched quickly to the other YA stations to try and get it, but without success. I waited till after the news with no luck and no reference to it. I would now like to make the following suggestions. I realise that there are a lot of people who are not interested in the question, but to those that are it is vital. I would suggest therefore that a schedule of hours be drawn up for the various YA and ZB stations in New Zealand so that it would be possible to obtain a Dominion weather forecast every hour during the hours of the broadcasting service, and if this schedule was published in *The Listener* and adhered to it would not cause a great deal of inconvenience to other listeners, but would be a great boon to those who are interested. There are four YA stations and four ZB stations and if each station put out two Dominion forecasts during the day instead of three as at present I should think that everyone would be happy.

One great drawback to the present system is that a special concert or something of the kind is not interrupted for the forecast and one can easily be caught unawares. T. MARTIN CLARK (Kawhia).

(We have been supplied with the following official reply: "The 9.0 p.m. weather report on Saturday, September 20, was broadcast by the usual stations with the exception of 2YA, which was engaged in broadcasting the Isaac Stern concert at 9.0 p.m. The present times for broadcasting weather reports were chosen in consultation with the Weather Office and other interested parties, and it is felt that the staggering of reports, as suggested by the correspondent, would not be so practicable as appears on the surface. For instance, all stations are not receivable by all listeners. Also each weather report would have to be separately issued by the Weather Office and this would involve a greater amount of work than is at present involved, and can at present be undertaken.—Ed.)

"DIVIDING SEAS"

Sir,—Max Harris asks how many Australians have heard of Frank Sargeson, Greville Texidor, Allen Curnow, Denis Glover, and A. R. D. Fairburn. I ask how many New Zealanders have heard of them. The average New Zealander does not read the literature of his own land mainly, I think, because so much of it does not appeal to him. There are a few of us who consider it our duty to wade through as many of the local efforts as we can, but even we, at times, find the going very heavy and the verbosity very great.

New Zealand is said to be known for its lack of social snobbery and social caste but its intellectual snobbery is disgusting. To bridge the Tasman—or any gap—we must overcome that. It would seem by the many references to it in *The Listener* that "That Summer" is the only worthwhile story F. Sargeson has ever written—simply, I presume, because it was printed in England and France. More snobbery! I bought three copies of *Penguin New Writing* so I could read it and, when I had finished, agreed with a friend who said, "Frank Sargeson's writings smell like rotten ensilage." I had an ensilage stack, once, that was built between my house

and the prevailing wind, and after reading a good deal of Sargeson I knew what he meant. Sargeson is said to write of the typical New Zealander. I consider myself quite an ordinary member of this class but I do not frequent pubs, commit strange sex crimes, revel in petty pilfering, or mix with strange low-down characters. Nor do my average New Zealand friends. As for Denis Glover, does anyone but the Caxton Press (which is his "baby") ever print his writings?

So you want the Tasman gap bridged? Ask Australians if they know Ngaio Marsh, Joyce West, Dorothy Eden, and probably Nelle Scanlan, and you'll get more response. Yes, I realise that they write mystery yarns, silly little love yarns and such "tripe" but they are being read. (And if you want to gush over English publications three of them at least have had books printed there, too!) New Zealanders may read their own literature because they should, but Australians will read it only if they like it. And if it's rotten ensilage they want, they can stir up a good smell of their own and with far more vitality.

RITA ATKINSON (Egmont Village).

"BEETHOVEN LIVES"

Sir,—May I extend grateful thanks to the NZBS for the inspiring Beethoven programme from 2YC on a recent Sunday. Those two hours of uninterrupted beautiful music were a highlight not to be easily forgotten. Dr. Bruno Walter in his autobiography *Theme and Variations* concludes his preface with: "Napoleon is dead, but Beethoven lives." I wonder if in a hundred years or so someone will feel the same and say "Hitler is dead but Beethoven lives."

R. J. ROWE (Hawera).

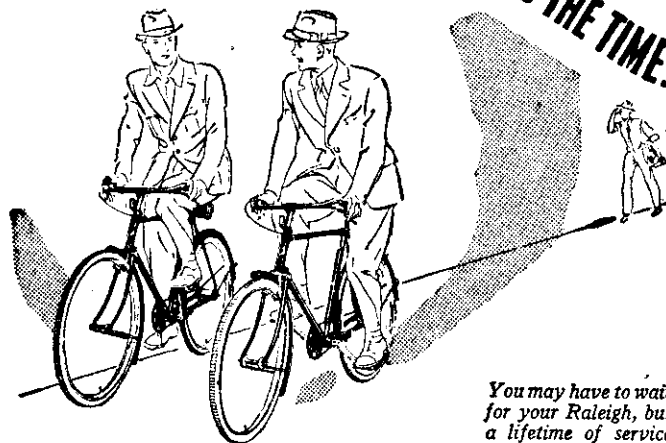
LIMITS OF DEMOCRACY

Sir,—The principal weakness in the organisation of UN is the reluctance of any nation to sacrifice its sovereignty. When considering the theory behind this organisation—that delegates are representative of governments, which are representative of the world's peoples—one cardinal point must always be borne in mind: that complete democracy does not and cannot exist anywhere in the world. I give three reasons: (a) The representation of a large number of people by a very small number necessarily results in a general policy only extremely broadly executing the will of the man in the street; and the larger the population the less the representation of the individual and the more approximate the execution. (b) The policy of an elected government is always susceptible to influence by on-the-spot sectional interests, with their more immediate pressure than the scattered electors; and the larger the population the greater this susceptibility. (c) A corporate body always tends more to conservatism and tardy action than the average member of it (and even more so in the case of a parliament, than the average elector); and larger population, of course, aggravates this tendency.

There is a limit to the size of population among which a democracy is reasonably practicable; and I think this goes a long way to explain various anomalies found in such a large democracy as, for instance, the United States. Democracy is a compromise; ideal representation can exist only on an island with a population of one. E. de LACEY (Timaru).

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