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Living It Down

IN the opinion of some of the English newspapers it will not be long before Dr. Dalton is back in the Cabinet. His offence, they argue, was an indiscretion only, and his ability is far too important to his Party to be wasted. But that is over-simplifying the issue, and in one respect clouding it. No one has suggested that the offence was moral, but on the level on which it was committed folly is sometimes harder to forgive than sin. There is the difference too between words and deeds on this level. The public will forgive almost any enormity in a leader if it is verbal only, as Mr. Churchill has more than once proved. They even like him to be a little foolish now and then. But let him do something foolish—cross the floor in the wrong direction or go into the wrong lobby—and he is usually damned forever. It was not what Dr. Dalton said that mattered, since no one gained advantage from it. It was the fact that a Chancellor could so far forget the rules as to open his mouth at all. No Chancellor had ever done a thing like that; no Chancellor was thought capable of doing it; and although as they count political years in Britain Dr. Dalton is still young, he will be lucky if he lasts long enough to live it down. For it is not quite true, though it is very often said, that Parliament is a friendly place. It is friendly to a point and no further. Beyond that point it is as friendly as a Cardinal is to a Communist or as John Knox was to the Pope. It has lost the power to forget, the desire to forgive. That newspaper was right which said that what was involved was not the fate of a statesman, but the inviolability of a principle. The captain who loses his ship may get a collier, but he will not once in 20 times go back to a liner. Confidence comes back only when he disappears.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

BANDS AND MUSIC

Sir,—See it as I see it? Every Sunday morn in *The Listener*, 2YA shows 10.10 For the Bandsman, 10.30 For the Music Lover. Personally, I'm a Band Lover.

And why does the NZBS persist in wasting our time and their own in the vain repetition of the BBC's introduction to the broadcast following the 6.30 News?—the latter is news, but the intro. is noisy. T.L.M. (Feilding).

ANTI-SEMITISM

Sir,—I.L.H. (Ohinewai) is to be congratulated on his eminently sane letter on anti-Semitism. I hope there are many more New Zealanders of like mind, but I "ha'e me doots."

JOHN R. BEST (Wellington).

"WHO STEALS MY PURSE?"

Sir,—Would someone of superior intelligence be so kind as to explain the plot of the story that occupies so much valuable space in *The Listener* for November 14—"Who Steals My Purse," by A. P. Gaskell. We cannot see the point.

"THREE DUMB CLUCKS"

(Tauranga).

WAS IT BLOOD?

Sir,—May I reply to F. C. Campbell's question, in which he enquires whether blood had been used as a red pigment for those rock drawings. The red pigment used was in every instance iron oxide, applied in many different ways, sometimes powdered and rubbed with the fingers mixed with a fatty substance or more often in its natural state. I have found neat stacks of this material in several caves. The mineral varies in colour in each district, and corresponding material was used. Blood takes a brown-black colour on limestone.

THEO SCHOON (Pareora Gorge).

CLASSICAL MUSIC BROADCASTS

Sir,—Over a period of years, the classical music broadcast has shown a steady decline in quantity and a degeneration in quality. To-day we are getting more of the second-rate compositions of non-Continental Europeans and American composers. We are getting more local plays, more tiring descriptions of pieces to be played, more studio presentations, often with low vocal standards, more chamber music, more talks—all at the expense of good classical music previously given. I notice the weekly 12M Classical Request session has now been cut down to one hour. This session is a good indication what lovers of classical music prefer, and like the programmes of visiting overseas artists, rarely, if ever, includes the music of non-Continental European composers.

I. D. WALKER (Auckland).

THE BALLAD FOR AMERICANS

Sir,—I was astonished to find Beatrice Ashton, in the midst of her enlightening and discerning articles on American life as she saw it, referring to the *Ballad for Americans* as "a gallant vision of an integrated people without reference to the actual situation." Can the American steam-roller have tried to draw the sting from the *Ballad* by

adopting it and making it too familiar, as an alternative to hauling its composer before the Un-American Committee? For the thing is revolutionary! And it extols, not the present set-up, but what Jean la Touche felt to be an underlying spirit of democracy which would eventually triumph—a wider democracy which many, doubtless, believed was winning through during the Roosevelt era. Hence the assertion that all races and creeds are equally American, and the recalling of a revolutionary past (the work of "nobodies who were anybody" while "everybody who was anybody they stayed at home") which the Un-American Committee would bury if it could. These words from the finale are often not heard clearly in recorded versions:

Our country's strong, our country's young
And her greatest songs are still unsung,
From her plains and mountains we have sprung

To keep faith with those who went before.
We nobodies who are anybody believe it,
We nobodies who are everybody have no doubt.

Out of the cheating, out of the shouting,
Out of the murders and the lynching,
Out of the windbags and the patriots spouting,

Out of the uncertainty and doubting,
Out of the carpet bag and the brass spittoon

It will come again,
Our marching song will come again!

Doubtless this democratic heart of a people is not as aware of itself as Jean la Touche conceived it. But that song doesn't belong to J. Parnell Thomas and William Randolph Hearst, and the liberals and socialists of America, minority though they be, are the heirs to it.

ELSIE LOCKE (Christchurch).

MUSIC IN NEW ZEALAND

Sir,—Miss Bessie Pollard's review of *Hinrichsen's Musical Year Book, 1947-48* seems, in reference to my article on New Zealand Musical Activities, to have been written in that spirit of parochialism which still at times colours New Zealand critical writing. Ignoring the sections in the article devoted to Maori music, music in schools, music in the university colleges, the teaching profession and broadcasting, any or all of which might conceivably provide targets for a well-sharpened pen, Miss Pollard seizes on the accidental omission of one name as the chief evidence of an undesirable inter-island partisanship. It is indeed regrettable that Dr. Bradshaw's name was omitted from the list of University Professors of Music, for his is one to be respected and remembered, but the article was intended to be a record of trends and movements rather than of personalities. The list of names, partly compiled in England, was added as a postscript at the suggestion of the publisher. (Incidentally, of those names included as specifically working in one part or other of the country, six are from the North Island and eight from the South!) Any other special cases mentioned are, in the main, examples to illustrate the general proposition. Obviously, in so short a survey, even though the writer made a sincere attempt to give a complete picture of the New Zealand musical scene, it were impossible to give credit to all the individual effort that has contributed to our cultural development. The essential criticism of Miss Pollard's review, however, is that she should forget that we have outgrown the

childishness of North v. South controversies. More important than who initiates a movement or where it originates, is where it spreads to and who benefits by it. If Miss Pollard cares to bring to my notice any important musical activity not included in the article—remembering that the article was written more than a year ago—I shall be glad to pass the information on to the publisher for inclusion in any further reference to New Zealand's music.

OWEN JENSEN (Auckland).

"CHALLENGE OF THE CITIES"

Sir,—I listened the other night with disgust to the programme *Challenge of the Cities* and the awarding of points to the various contestants. Whoever the "Voice of Judgment" is, I think he falls down in the method of his choice.

A recent episode from Dunedin was in my opinion worthy of the "super score" of four points instead of Auckland. Is not the care of infants more important than elephants, etc., and isn't it also a challenge that could not be equalled by the other centres? I write this solely as a listener who takes an interest in the above programme.

"JUSTICE" (Picton).

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR ARTISTS

Sir,—The commentators on "Back to the Attic with Art" strike me as a rather comfortable section to speak on the topic of struggle. How about some opinions of New Zealand Picasso's, Klee's, Miro's and Bragne's? Are there any who have made a contribution important enough for the world to take notice? Or a Bourgeoisie to be infuriated?

THEO SCHOON (Pareora Gorge).

Sir,—Artists require criticism, of which there are complementary types—self-criticism and the criticism of others. The more there is of the one, the less there is required of the other.

J.H.T. (Palmerston North).

"LIVE" BROADCASTS

Sir,—I have just been listening to a broadcast discussion on New Zealand by an English immigrant, and, hearing her mention the lack of "live" programmes on the air here, would like to enter my plea for more "flesh and blood" shows. I am sure that a great many listeners would far rather hear local people (perhaps their own friends) than even the cream of records.

A. CHRISTIE (Wanganui).

POINTS FROM LETTERS

"32B Listener" (Christchurch) asks if it would be possible to have the "One World Flight" broadcasts presented again, adding that this type of broadcast is educational and entertaining, that the New Zealand broadcast in the series was excellent, and that Norman Corwin chose an interesting cross-section of the community in his interviews.

K. M. Hunter (Ashburton) writes appreciatively of the items in Maori given by Phyllis Williams, and asks for more.

"1914 Anzac" (Paiaha) says he was "surprised and extremely disappointed" that the reunion of the Main Body, N.Z.E.F., 1914, was not broadcast, because many of the Old Brigade would be unable to travel to Wellington to attend the gathering. He also complains that many have been unable to hear the "Diggers' Session" by Rod Talbot because Station 12B is not strong enough to reach parts of North Auckland.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

E.S. (Taupo): Many thanks. Our artist will be grateful.

Larry Pruden (New Plymouth): You were right. The records have been amended.