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**Sir James Hight**

**L**EICESTER WEBB, who wrote the fine tribute to Sir James Hight that appears in this issue, told us that he could not get on with the job as long as his subject was "Sir" James. He had to forget the title and think of the learned, simple, and wise man before he felt at ease. Our own position is a little different, first because the chief purpose of this article is to direct attention to Mr. Webb's, and in the second place because we cannot, as he can, claim a close personal association with Sir James as teacher as well as friend. We can however feel as he does that James Hight belongs not only to Canterbury College and Canterbury but to the whole Dominion; that he is one of New Zealand's worthiest sons; and that while no title was ever better deserved by a New Zealander or gave satisfaction to more people, it made no difference at all to the place the recipient already had in public estimation. It is in fact almost an offence to assign public estimation to such a humble man. To estimate him at all is to embarrass him, and to praise him something that will come very near to paining him. It is better to follow Mr. Webb's example of fixing his place in the history of our university, to ask what he has contributed that has been essentially his own, and to consider what the contribution would have been if he had taught history and economics out of a less full mind. Mr. Webb supplies the answer: information rather than knowledge, knowledge rather than wisdom. What we owe Sir James most of all is the example of a long and useful life lived studiously and humbly. In other words he has been a good and wise man in the sense in which those two words can still occasionally be used. Happily too his goodness and wisdom have been displayed where they could most influence his contemporaries and successors.

**LETTERS FROM LISTENERS****12B PROGRAMMES**

Sir,—For some time I have been meaning to write to you complaining of the programmes put on the air for morning listeners from 12B. The children's programmes are full of interest and of quite a high intellectual calibre, and the whole family looks forward to hearing "The Story of Flight," "The Junior Naturalists' Club," and "Kidnapped," etc. But when it comes to the so-called adult programmes it is another story. Stupid drivelling serials which seem to last for ever are turned on and although I am an optimist, and turn on the radio in the morning in the hope of finding some bright entertainment to help me through the household chores, I never seem to get it. Imagine my delight, therefore, on Friday to find my hopes at least partially fulfilled, when I listened to the opening episode of "Pride and Prejudice." This is a good step in the right direction and I am looking forward to other programmes of the same merit.

I feel sure that other morning listeners feel the same.

JOAN SMITH (Henderson).

**MORE MIRTH WANTED**

Sir,—What is the reason for dropping the "Music, Mirth and Melody" programmes that were heard each week from 1YA and 1YX? Each week I look through the programmes in *The Listener* with hope in my heart, but evidently those responsible for drawing up the programmes do not feel like laughing. Nor do they want to encourage listeners to cultivate a sense of humour. Certainly in the "Music, Mirth and Melody" session, there was more music and melody than mirth, but one was thankful for what little there was. Let us have Gert and Daisy again, Clapham and Dwyer, Gracie Fields, Harry Tate, Stanley Holloway, Horace Kenny, just to mention a few.

It is true that 2YA has for some weeks been broadcasting a Tommy Handley programme on Saturday evening. But why should the broadcast be reserved for 2YA? ITMA was heard for part of last year from 1YA. Why not this year? Tommy Handley's show is one of the most popular features of the BBC programmes, and New Zealand could do with him also. Probably few listeners know that Ted Kavanagh, who writes the ITMA scripts, is a New Zealander. I have tried every Saturday to pick up the broadcast from 2YA, but the static is so bad that it is impossible to listen in to that station. Are laughter and mirth rationed?

P. H. DAWSON (Auckland).

**NATIONAL ORCHESTRA**

Sir,—In a recent issue of *The Listener*, I read a letter dealing with the difficulty the writer said was being experienced in maintaining the Orchestra's present membership. The writer was of the opinion that if the Orchestra's members were given a fair salary there would no longer be any difficulty in keeping them.

I know, personally, no one of the players, nor anyone connected with them; nor do I know whether these people receive £5 or £500, per annum, or per concert. I am simply one of the Orchestra's admirers, and had the great good fortune to strike their first

concert in one of the main centres. I do not profess to be a musician, but I shall never forget their rendering of "The Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 2," on that occasion.

All I wish to say is that it seems a very real calamity if it is true that such a courageous scheme, that has so obviously proved itself amazingly successful, should now be in danger of losing some of its members simply because they are inadequately paid. If they are underpaid then I do hope that some fair-minded person, and all musically-minded people, will see that trouble rectified. We must, whatever the method, keep them playing!

LAND GIRL ADMIRER (Fairlie).

**SPOKEN PARTS WITH MUSIC**

Sir,—I should very much like to know the reason for all musical interludes in "spoken parts" being unbearably loud. One adjusts the control to hear the voice clearly but must rush to lower it every time the music comes again. The fault seems to be world-wide, but it is none the less aggravating for that.

L.B.B. (Christchurch).

**WORN RECORDS**

Sir,—It is time the National Broadcasting Service replaced some of its classical gramophone records with new ones. Many of the records of the major symphonic works are of pretty ancient vintage and the listener's enjoyment is marred by surface noise and excessive vibration in the lower register. An example is Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique" symphony, of which the Service appears to possess recordings by three different orchestras. The one by Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam must be anything from ten to fifteen years old. More recordings by the Boyd Neel Orchestra would also be very welcome.

W. L. SIMS (Auckland).

**"THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS"**

Sir,—As an admirer of Alice "through the looking glass" and elsewhere, may I protest against the indignities to which recordings force an astute and well bred little girl to submit. Anyone who allows her to sing nursery rhymes and be sung to by the other characters in similar vein, abuses the poor child shockingly. The whole essence of Alice's and her companions' remarks is that they should be in their own way completely logical. As she points out to Humpty Dumpty, etc., she already knows his story; hence why sing it? The premises are that she knows his story and all other logic follows from there. In order to retain her full character, Alice must be allowed to remain serious and questioning and all her informants must reply instantly and faultlessly to her questions with their own type of logic. The timing of the remarks is most important as they must be delivered so seriously and uninterruptedly that they appear to make sense; which is the chief charm of all of Alice's adventures. The only legitimate excuse for music is when the text demands it in such cases as the Mock Turtle's Song. Here, it is in character as part of his general verbosity and does not hold up the action any more than the reminiscence addict ever

does. Academic attempts to turn "twas brillig and the slithy toves" into dog Latin merely amused Lewis Carroll but I am sure it would have pained him to hear his intelligent little Alice singing "Humpty Dumpty," etc., and joining in with even more foolish songs as she did from 3YA on a recent night. Let recorders give the poor child a break to be her age and pursue her alert and civil inquiries without frivolous musical accompaniments.

FRABJOUS DAY (Timaru).

**LOCAL TALENT**

Sir,—I agree with "Still Hoping," of Feilding in the very interesting letter about local talent. It is a matter greatly to be deplored that more notice is not taken of, and encouragement given, to our own artists. After all a local artist is a national artist, being one of New Zealand's own.

I, too, like my favourites. I get used to certain voices; others I just switch off. I would like to hear more of certain local artists so that I could grow with them and feel with them in their work of giving pleasure to others; and I put the same question as "Still Hoping," why cannot we have recordings of our talented artists' works so that we can hear them over again and become more familiar with their works? At present, like the "Passing Parade," these people step out to do their bit, and then fade from sight, back into the Passing Parade of talent neglected.

MUSICAL LYRE (Christchurch).

**INTERRUPTED MUSIC**

Sir,—On several occasions recently, I have been disappointed when music to which I was listening and greatly enjoying has been rudely interrupted. Some time ago, the Bach violin concerto in D Minor was interrupted at a crucial point. No doubt the talk that followed was worthy, but it seems a pity to commence such a beautiful work and not play it to completion. Surely the programme organisation will allow time for the complete playing of bigger works. (The Bach Suite No. 2 has been presented in several parts with other items in between, on more than one occasion.)

My second suggestion is that a more edifying type of music be presented in the breakfast session. Cheerful light music would benefit most people at the beginning of the day, but our reaction at present is to switch off the radio in disgust a few minutes after the 9.15 a.m. weather forecast.

"MY WIFE AND I" (Hamilton).

**BEETHOVEN AND BACH**

Sir,—May I comment on the letters from correspondents about Bach and Beethoven. To me, the "aural mathematics" is right, but is it not more a case of, maybe, two near equally great composers with different outlooks—one an idealist and one a realist? To me, with the idealism there is too much purity of form and expression. Let me have realism with those blacks and whites that nature so obviously intended man to have—man in all his moods as we know him, or life in all its moods as we know it, or nature unrefined in all hers—an infinity of moods from the depths to the exultant. For me Beethoven—not the "purist" J. S. Bach.

"ONE OPINION" (Taupaki).