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Talking It Over

THE news that Russia and the United States are going to sit down together and talk things over is, as we write this note, an announcement and nothing further. It is not announced yet when they are going to meet, or where, and even if we knew that we would not know how big the hope is on one side or the other that they will part better friends. It ought to be good that they are to meet at all, but there is at least a possibility that it is not. If they are meeting with a sincere desire for better relations, and a reasonable hope that these are possible, it is the best news we have had for many weeks. If the meeting was asked for, and accepted, not in the belief that it would bring harmony, but in the hope on each side that it would place the responsibility for a break-down on the other side, there is no reason at all to rejoice, and much reason for foreboding and gloom. There is of course no justification for accepting the worst of these two possibilities and refusing even to consider the best. No one believes that either Russia or the United States wants war: what each wants is to win a war if it comes: and that leaves the possibility at least that a conference which begins in black suspicion may end in suspicion less profound. It could in fact end in something like confidence (as that commodity goes in power politics), and it would be foolish in the meantime to nurse our fears to keep them warm. But it would be catastrophically more foolish to whoop with delight already over a miracle that has not yet come, and if anybody feels disposed to do that it will perhaps sober him a little to read another cable in the same issue of his newspaper reporting Moscow's method of celebrating VE-day.

(It has since been announced that the meeting will not take place.—Ed.)

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, MAY 21

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

DUNEDIN TOWN HALL

Sir,—In Dr. Findlay's interesting article in the current number of *The Listener* dealing with the acoustic properties of the Town Halls in Wellington and Dunedin, he speculates as to why the acoustics are so much better in the Dunedin Town Hall and says—"It may be the much higher ceiling or it may be largely luck." As architects for the Dunedin Town Hall, designed and completed almost 20 years ago, we would like Dr. Findlay to know that the satisfactory results acoustically are not just due to luck but to careful design. The interior was designed in conformity with the principles of satisfactory acoustics as set out by such authorities of that time as Professor Sabine.—MANDENO, FRASER AND GALBRAITH (Dunedin).

WILD IRISHMAN

Sir,—Sundowner's description of the Upper Waitaki country takes me back to an early holiday from south Otago. That grisly plain beyond Duntroon and through the gorge at Kurow always remind me of Kipling's pass of Jagai—"There's rock to the left and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between." Kurow was the first foreign country I ever saw.

The matagouri (or taumatakuri) seems the symbol of a hungry country, but on his Mount Cook Station T. D. Burnett cultivated it affectionately and it responded generously.

GUY H. SCHOLEFIELD

(Wellington).

POSERS, PENALTIES, AND PROFITS

Sir,—Something is wrong with a Broadcasting Service which rewards ignorance with costly prizes. I refer to the *Posers, Penalties and Profits* session. In the Christchurch broadcast on April 29, the compère ignored one incorrect answer (which was clearly audible to the listener) and repeated the question in such a way that the right answer became obvious. The candidate was rewarded with a vacuum cleaner. Admittedly the questions asked in these sessions are trivial, but this surely makes it even less desirable to give such a high value to a knowledge (and equally, it seems, an ignorance) of trivial details.

J. I. SLATER (Dunedin).

BRASS BANDS

Sir,—I must commend your correspondent R. G. Simpson, of Rangiora, for his suggestion that the New Zealand Government could assist the cause of music by granting a certain annual sum to be divided among Brass Bands affiliated with the New Zealand Brass Bands Association. It is true that the National Orchestra will not be able to visit all towns—and those that it can visit will be visited but seldom. Bands are with us always, that part of our community which we are inclined to take so much for granted. During the last nine years especially, bands have done a tremendous amount of work against great odds—depleted ranks, loss of experienced players and such causes. Bands mean music, so where better could the love of music—interest in good music and appreciation of music—be better fostered?

However I would like to draw the attention of your correspondent and your public generally to the work that has

been done and is being done by New Zealand Pipe Bands. Should such a grant become possible I feel sure that it could not be to brass bands alone. Pipe bands play a big part in our community life. At most functions one will find "pipes" present, and I am sure that R. G. Simpson will not mind associating pipe bands in his suggestion.

A. DOUGLAS STEWART

(Timaru).

SPORTS SUMMARIES.

Sir,—May I offer a little criticism upon the Saturday evening sports summaries. These are timed at 6.45 from the ZB stations and at 7.0 from the YA's. For any who wish to follow the results in more than two areas this creates a difficulty. I have lived in many parts of New Zealand and have followed Rugby and League wherever I have been. I am still interested in the teams in Auckland, Wellington, Palmerston North, Hawke's Bay, and Dunedin. There must be many who are in a like position.

Were the summaries to be given at different times, e.g. 2ZB at 6.15 p.m., 1ZB at 6.30 p.m., 2ZA at 6.45 p.m., etc., then anyone requiring results could be sure of hearing all or most of what is wished. I should also suggest that there be a standard order of announcing such results, say Rugby, League, Soccer, hockey, etc. Racing results are heard regularly throughout the day. They usually take the most time. These could be left until last.

"SPORTS RESULTS" (Rongotea).

MUSICAL FAMILIES

Sir,—I read with interest the comments in *Radio Views* on a session which I arranged for 4YZ, called *Music Runs in the Family*. Far from being in despair, as your commentator suggests, "at finding in classical music a famous son to equal his famous father," I had no intention, at any time, of venturing into the classical field for that session. Your commentator is perhaps unaware that stations allocate a certain percentage of their time on the air to various types of musical entertainment, and, if this is the case, one can dismiss his unsuitable suggestion of my ignorance as merely the arrogance born of his own, because I am engaged for the purpose of arranging light, or "popular" programmes.

I do thank him for the compliment he paid me in calling the title "an original inspiration," but I am concerned lest this type of criticism of radio programmes should spread. Should it do so, one can look forward to seeing Winston McCarthy reproved for not giving sermons from Athletic Park, and racing commentators criticised for neglecting the works of Shakespeare.

FRANK BEADLE (Dunedin).

COLIN McCAGHON'S PAINTINGS

Sir,—I did not see the exhibition of Colin McCMahon's paintings in Wellington recently, but I saw some of his work at the Group Show, Christchurch, last November. The Annunciation and Deposition paintings were shown. I was glad "J.C.B." wished there were a church in New Zealand alive enough to buy some of Colin McCMahon's paintings. He is a courageous painter who renounces honestly what is not essential to him. Artists, as Colin McCMahon is in relation

to New Zealand, expressed themselves powerfully before Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt, and others in later centuries. Colin McCMahon lives to-day, a traditional painter in his way in a different era. There is plenty of correct drawing in New Zealand. When shall we know, with a simple vision, what Colin McCMahon portrays, humility and devotion in time and space sense?

RITA ANGUS (Christchurch).

PHOTOGRAPHING AT CONCERTS

Sir,—The sympathetic plea of your correspondent R. Hutchens, who pities the poor photographers for not receiving credit for pictures published in *The Listener* is very moving, but there is at least one other Dunedin photographer who should be happy to remain anonymous. I refer to the individual who makes a practice of letting off flash-bulbs—usually directed at the audience—at almost every concert here by the National Orchestra. It is not conducive to concentrated listening to serious music to see the photographer setting up his fearsome apparatus during an item and to know that one will be blinded by a dazzling flash that will drive away all thought of the music. Surely, if these pictures of the musical intelligentsia are really necessary, the setting up business could be done in advance and the exposure taken at the last bar of the music, if only someone would tell the poor photographer when to expect it. Then the audience might be spared the diverting spectacle of his elaborate manoeuvring over choir stalls and into the organ console.

A. F. MANNING (Dunedin).

ISOBEL BAILLIE

Sir,—I wish to thank the NZBS for the many chances it gave us to hear Isobel Baillie sing. Here we heard not only a cultured singer with a pleasant, unforced tone and wide range, with an extensive repertoire of always high standard, but—what is almost unique nowadays—a singer who practically never wobbles.

I wish all our New Zealand vocal broadcasters, and all the singers who make records that are broadcast would follow her example and cut out the eternal wobble that usually puts them all out of tune. I noticed with pleasure that she always gave us the shake where Purcell or Handel indicated it. Such shakes were recognisable and pleasurable, because the rest of the song was quite without wobble. I prophesy that Isobel Baillie, like Sir Charles Santley, will carry her voice into old age, unimpaired, because she never forces a note.

F. K. TUCKER (Gisborne).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

A. T. Newbigging (Milton): The contest in which you are interested closed some little time ago.

L. J. Freed (Upper Hutt): There is no "conspiracy of exclusion" in *The Listener* office against any artist.

L.W. (Christchurch): We are informed that Miss Wigley's talks "The Sport of Queens" will be broadcast from 3YA later.

A. Sharp (Christchurch): What you hear is the standard and accepted rendering of the National Anthem. The recording is by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, under Sir Adrian Boult.

Wm. R. Gordon (Wellington): We are informed that the circumstances of the two performances have a fundamental difference which cannot be set out here, but if you call at the Head Office of the Broadcasting Service the whole matter will be discussed with you.