

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

Price Threepence

JUNE 11, 1948

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## In South Africa

**D**R. MALAN'S defeat of Field-Marshal Smuts was one of destiny's ways of keeping us humble; like Holy Willie's sins. What purpose it serves when folly beats wisdom and weakness brings down strength is not for man to say; but it is for man never to forget that it can happen. Dr. Malan is no doubt a dogged and passionately loyal South African with courage and a kind of tough competence. There is no reason to suppose that he is not sincere or that self-interest is a bigger factor in his attitudes than it is in leaders generally. But Field-Marshal Smuts is one of statecraft's giants; as penetrating intellectually as John Stuart Mill, as resolute and shrewd as David Lloyd George. No one ever called Dr. Malan a philosopher or even a philosopher's shadow. Although it is as easy to be wrong about him as about anyone else in a distant country, he has so far been presented to New Zealand as a cantankerous doctor of divinity with a genius for quarrelling with his friends. Yet his countrymen have voted this little man in and that big man out. They have done so, the cables say, for two reasons: because he is a republican, and because his attitude to coloured men is something like Oom Paul Kruger's—that they should serve and obey the whites. Even if none of the things happen that the newspapers say now could happen—separation from Britain, persecution of the Jews, stricter segregation and harsher repression of Kaffirs and Indians—the path has been cleared for those who wish to go that way. It may even be that democracy in South Africa is now holding a coat for fascism.

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

## CHURCH BROADCASTS

Sir,—Thank you for publishing the letter concerning the Church Music Society's recommendations on Church broadcasts. There are two mistakes however (purely typographical errors) that I should like corrected. First, paragraph five should have read: "That no relays of actual services should be made during the choir recess period between Christmas and the New Year." Secondly it is not the Wellington Branch of the Church Music Society, it is the N.Z. Church Music Society which meets in Wellington. Wellington has no branch of the Society as yet.

JOHN H. BOOTH (Wellington).

Sir,—It may interest Mr. Booth to know that, in spite of the decision come to at a discussion recently held by the Church Music Society regarding Church broadcasts, there are many who listen in to a Church service as devotional worship, and this aspect of the broadcast is where its value lies, not the extra polish up because the service is going over the air. After all, it is the service and not the presentation of it that really counts, though naturally anything offered to the Highest should always have the greatest effort towards perfection. So please let us continue to have our Church services relayed in the spirit of worship humbly offered to Almighty God and not as a concert given in a Church. We can get plenty of concerts given in their right place, which to many minds is not a Church.

"PICTON LISTENER."

## WEATHER REPORTS

Sir,—Time was when a keen though ill-informed interest sent me each morning to tune in to the 7.15 weather situation, in the hope of obtaining some picture of the probable future happenings in Otago, and in particular in Dunedin. While the novelty lasted, it was possible to sustain interest all through the south-westerly Odyssey which began with such recognisable landmarks as National Park-Taihape, and worked gradually in the general direction of the approaching weather to my own private area.

But after the first week, it was no longer possible to follow this meteorological fugue. The toast, or my attention, suffered, and I returned to earth, or air, to hear martial strains making the best of whatever weather there was and had perforce, to do likewise.

I do not of course propose that anything so radical as a re-arrangement of the accepted order should be considered—as soon suggest that the habit of putting North at the top of the map be changed. All I should like to know is—how on earth did it start that way?

CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON

(Dunedin).

## LOSING THE LEAD?

Sir,—It was one of New Zealand's proudest boast that, per capita, she was the highest purchaser of books in the British Commonwealth. It seems doubtful if the claim can be still sustained. Even in 1945 (the last year for which I have been able to find statistics) Australia was importing, per capita, nearly as many British books as New Zealand. Australia's home production was probably greater and she imported more American books. Now for this year New

Zealand is apparently to be restricted to importing fewer books than last year, whilst Australia has no such restriction on the import of British books.

This restriction is being made in New Zealand at a time when the British publishers have been asked by the Board of Trade to increase their 1948 exports by 50 per cent. on those for 1947. It is quite true that New Zealand has been asked to live within her income. But books are our main cultural import and require less than 1 per cent. of the total income. The whole basis and justification of import selection is surely that

## THE FIRST TEST

ARRANGEMENTS for an extended coverage by 2YA of the first cricket Test, Australia v. M.C.C., were in train at the time of going to press. Details of these special broadcasts were not available in time for publication in "The Listener," but they will be announced from the National stations in time for all cricket enthusiasts to take advantage of them.

essential and worthwhile things shall be given preference. Books in all their variety must rank high on any such list.

It was the task which I began with, to show that no nation or well instituted state, if they valued books at all, did ever use the way of licensing.—Milton (*Areopagitica*).

R.G.P. (Wellington).

## "BEBOP"

Sir,—May I point out what is perhaps only a printer's error? In a Swing Session from 4YZ you have the word "Rebop" where, obviously, "Bebop" was intended. "Rebop" is a fancy word used only in the song "Hey Baba Rebop." The name of the music is "Bebop," or simply "Bop."

A. CHRISTIE (Wanganui).

## SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir,—Your collection of opinions on the working of the Social Security system was very interesting, but as one who prepares a large number of returns, it seems to me that the system is grossly unfair in one respect, namely, for the man with a small income. For instance, a farmer by hard work makes £100 a year, as many do. His tax, about £7/10/-, goes to a fund from which another man who does no regular work is paid £117 per annum, and is allowed to earn £52 per annum without affecting the amount of his age benefit. Surely no one earning less than £120 a year should be forced to pay tax at all. Of course the man with a small income can get relief from the tax by pleading hardship, but many do not like to do this. The Act badly wants amending.

H. E. LAWRENCE

(Stratford).

## ORCHESTRAS AND CONDUCTORS

Sir,—It is rather irritating when radio announcers omit to mention the conductors when playing orchestral records, especially when the orchestra is playing under a guest conductor. Recently we heard "Mozart's Overture to *The Magic Flute*, played by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, H.M.V. recording," and no

more. That the conductor was Toscanini didn't seem worth mentioning. Also with Weber's *Der Freischütz* Overture played by the London Philharmonic, and Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto, with the same orchestra, most people would be giving Sir Thomas Beecham the credit, which belongs to the young American conductor Erich Leinsdorf. This sort of omission occurs nearly every day.

And one other point: why both in *The Listener* programmes and over the air, is the Philharmonia Orchestra referred to as the Philharmonic? One enterprising announcer once called it the London Philharmonic!

LARRY PRUDEN (New Plymouth).

*The Listener* uses the name that correctly identifies the orchestra—sometimes Philharmonia, sometimes Philharmonic.—Ed.)

## "QUIRES AND PLACES"

Sir,—I was glad to read that "Quire," of Kilbirnie, is satisfied with *In Quires and Places Where They Sing*. Unfortunately I have always found the words very inaudible, so that it was a pleasure and inspiration to hear the "Gospel Singer." I hope his future records will be advertised in *The Listener*. Distinctness of words and tone is preferable to volume of musical instruments, when harmony is lost.—"ANOTHER REGULAR LISTENER" (Nelson).

## BYRD AND ELGAR

Sir,—I do not know who was responsible for the presentation from 4YA on a Sunday afternoon some time ago of the Byrd five-part mass, but I should like to congratulate him on an original venture accomplished in a highly interesting and yet authoritative manner. Not only was an attempt made to elucidate the unfamiliar style of this music by showing it in an historical perspective, but at the same time its sociological relation with the times was dealt with most fittingly. It was encouraging to hear a programme in which the educational value was combined so inconspicuously with entertainment of the highest order; and the excellent propaganda thus produced should open the way, if adequately followed up, to a wider appreciation of a period in musical history which is both unsurpassed in achievement and practically unknown to the average listener to serious music.

More recently, an equally meritorious presentation of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* from the same source has been broadcast. The comments provoked both thought and interest; and there is one small point I should like to take up. It was asserted that the weakest point in the work was (after the opening stanza) the chorus "Praise to the Holiest." It seems to me that there is no flagging here: such phrases as "... the field of elemental war," and the stanza beginning "O generous love!" are set most movingly. If it be necessary to look for weak points, I suggest the aria "Sanctus fortis"; it is on the whole the most conventional and unconvincing part of the work.

E. DE LACEY (Timaru).

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

A. de L. (Timaru): We have no definite address for Allen Sloane, but the Radio Writers and Authors' Guild of America, 6 East 39th St., Manhattan, New York, should find him.

Socialist (Palmerston North): Wrong address. The Cardinal was not reported in *The Listener*.

A. L. Jesson (Wellington): You were right. Someone was asleep, but woke just before you shook him.

"Quix Kid" (Wellington): Your solution of the difficulty was the same as that adopted by the compiler.