

JULY 2, 1948

Food Parcels for Britain

IT will be most unfortunate if doubts about the safe arrival of food parcels to Britain check the flow at the source. The statement issued a few days ago by the Aid for Britain National Council made it clear that there had been some pilfering on the way, but equally clear that an overwhelming proportion of parcels arrived safely at their destination. Pilfering is such an abominable offence that it is not easy in any circumstances to condone it—and least easy when it means stealing by the well-fed from the hungry—but in general we must regard it as satisfactory that most of the parcels we send to Britain reach the addressees within a reasonable time, and nearly all of them in the end. It has to be remembered that ships sometimes have insufficient space to take all the parcels waiting in our ports, and that the Post Office in Britain has now almost ten times as many parcels to distribute week by week and month by month as it handled before the war. The most useful thing we can do to insure our parcels against loss or delay is first to wrap them securely and second to give them a legible and sufficient address; the most foolish thing is to cease sending anything in case ours is the parcel in ten thousand that a blackguard steals or an accident of some kind destroys. We might as reasonably refuse to buy goods to send because some trading firms are exploiting the situation in New Zealand and doing very well out of it. We all know that this is happening, and many of us will remember the worst offenders at another time. But our duty in the meantime is to concentrate on the monotonously filled cupboards of Britain and add a little wholesome variety. The simple fact is—although some of us may try to think otherwise—that neither the exploiters at this end, nor the brigands on the journey, nor the black marketeers at the other end are delaying relief as successfully as our own apathy and selfishness.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

MUSICAL NOMENCLATURE

Sir,—Music lovers will join in thanking your correspondent, A. Christie, for pointing out the unfortunate misprinting of the word "Bebop" in a recent swing programme. Your rendering of this word as "Rebop" is, of course, quite laughable to those of musical learning, but for the sake of those who are perhaps ignorant of the finer points of music, I feel that more care should be taken to avoid such grossly misleading errors. I myself would like to bring to your notice an even more unforgivable error in a Swing Session recently advertised from Station 2YA when that superb orchestration, "My Baby's Back" was shown as being presented at 10.45 p.m. Not wishing to miss hearing this beautiful melody, I tuned to the station at 6.30 and sat eagerly until 10.45 waiting for those fine opening lines, "Don't miss that other baby, now my other baby's back."

Judge my terrible disappointment when I found that the number which had been advertised as "My Baby's Back" actually turned out to be that other famous composition, "Mah Babby's Back."

Now I am not decrying this other fine piece of music. It is simply that one has to be in a different mood to appreciate its beautiful lines—"Mah babby's back is getting black, since soap was rationed here." As everyone knows, "My Baby's Back" was composed by the great J. Macgregor Finkelbaum and the music of this master is of a subtly different type to that of the equally famous Carrington P. Guggenheim and Dimitri Murphy, joint composers of "Mah Babby's Back." I need hardly point out that your journal, in allowing typographical errors such as these to creep in, does a great disservice to those who seek to understand the works of these great masters of music.

JOHN McDUGALL (Wellington).

LUNAR HORTICULTURE.

Sir,—Someone who signs himself "Curious" seems to be in some doubt about lunar planting. As one who makes his living as a nursery-man, who has consistently planted by lunar methods for a considerable number of years, and who, by the way, has made a huge success of it, I would suggest to "Curious" that he should try to find out all he can about lunar planting, then try it out alongside haphazard methods, and he will be surprised at the difference in results. If "Curious" is really interested the Editor has my permission to give him my name and address.

GREEN FINGERS (Keri Keri).

JOSEPH SCHMIDT

Sir,—I was very interested to hear in the *For My Lady* programmes, one devoted to Joseph Schmidt. However, according to information which I have collected from time to time, some of the facts presented in the programme were not correct. May I be permitted to give them as I know them?

Joseph Schmidt was not born in Vienna (although he did live there), but in Cernowitz, or Cernauti in Buchovina province of Rumania. This province, before the 1914-18 war, belonged to Austria, but after the war it was given to Rumania. Joseph Schmidt, therefore,

became a Rumanian citizen. At first he studied to become an architect, but later gave it up in favour of a singing career. His visit to England to make films must have been in about 1934 or 1935, and not in 1937, because I saw his film *My Song Goes Round the World* here in New Zealand in 1936. Then in 1943, not 1946, I heard an announcement from Station 2GB Sydney to the effect that he had died from T.B. brought on as a result of sufferings in a Nazi concentration camp. A year or two later, I heard from the same station a few more details of the crime—he had been used for one of those dreadful Nazi experiments, and had been deliberately infected with T.B.! According to that announcement he died in a Swiss sanatorium, not a Labour camp. The sources of my other information are: an English pre-war film magazine; and a man, now living in Sydney, who grew up with Joseph Schmidt in Cernauti, living almost in the same street.

"LISETTA" (Wairoa).

GHOST HUNTING.

Sir,—Your correspondent "Argosy" seems to regard the Society for Psychical Research as not to have proven anything. Does he know that among the past presidents of the Psychical Research Society, London, are the late Earl of Balfour, William James, Sir William

More letters from listeners will be found on page 9

Crookes, Richet, Bergson, Driesch, Lord Rayleigh, W. McDougall, Camille Flammarion, Schiller, Sir William Barrett, and Sir Oliver Lodge? Was that great crusader Sir Arthur Conan Doyle mistaken? Are Air Chief Lord Dowding, Shaw Desmond, Hanner Swaffer, now lecturing to thousands; mistaken? Will "Argosy" deny the findings of each of these distinguished men? *The Listener* is to be congratulated in publishing the article on Harry Price by "A.M."

E. H. FIRTH (Wellington).

Sir,—I gather from "Argosy's" letter that he has not read the books on ghost-hunting by the late Harry Price. I suggest that before he concludes that Harry Price "sold me a pup" he should do so.

A.M. (Wellington).

THE FINEST VIEW

Sir,—Thank you for A.M.'s appealing article dealing with New Zealand's finest views. It was an inspiring reminder to all New Zealanders of the rich store of beauty that surrounds us in this country. How often do we forget to "lift our eyes to the hills" to behold the loveliness there?

The finest view? Who can say? Each one of us cherishes some sight, some spot above others. . . . the Waikato reflecting spring-green trees along her banks; Cambridge town aflame with autumn fire; the hills encircling Taupo lit by the radiance of a stormy sunset; the incredible blueness of Lake Hawea; the magnificence of the Southern Alps from the air and the vivid colours that splash the plains and mountains in late afternoon on the road from Christchurch to Hanmer. It's all a matter of mood, says A.M.—the mood of the beholder as well as the mood of the weather. Both are important. For instance, when this writer saw Queenstown for the first time

it was swathed in rain and mist—dismal, dreary, grey. Yet it has been said that on a fine, clear day this is one of the finest views in New Zealand.

He who wakes to the sight of Mt. Egmont each morning of his life would not see the same beauty in the sharp cone thrusting up into the clouds as a casual visitor. For him the sea beating in wild freedom against black rocks at Piha would provide a finer view; while he who dwells in sight of the sea longs for a glimpse of the mountain heights. So, too, it is a matter of contrast and constant longing for that which lies beyond.

Thus we can argue back and forth, South and North, each with his own cherished spots, each with his favourite view. May we add, each year, each day, to our precious store and never lose sight of the fact that our's is a rich and noble heritage of which we should be proud. NOELLE MACDONALD

(Auckland).

FOLK-SONGS.

Sir,—L. Etherington raises an interesting point. The beautiful love lyric "Drink to me only" is, of course, not a folk-song at all. It cannot strictly be said that anyone ever writes a folk-song, as such; they are the songs that have arisen with constant repetition among an illiterate people; they commemorate some person or event that has laid hold of popular imagination and has been, as one might say, gradually woven into their present form by some singer or reciter, much as the old traditions of Maori and other races have been preserved.

The very title, coming from the Anglo-Saxon "Folc," a people or nation, at once places the folk-song in a class by itself; it is not a solo effort, but the combined song-spirit of a people expressing itself for ages, perhaps, without a written medium. It would be interesting to hear what a Brains Trust had to say about folk-songs, their origin and persistence.

MALCOLM FORRESTER
(National Park).

ZIEGLER-BOOTH RECITALS.

Sir,—I would like the Broadcasting Service to know how much we have enjoyed Anne Ziegler and Webster Booth in their all-too-short sessions over 2YA and 2ZA. Their singing alone would make their sessions good listening, but they both have a charming personality which captivates listeners' hearts. It is a tonic to hear a husband and wife who so obviously enjoy singing together.

JOY L. BOOTH (Blenheim).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Tuapeka Churchman (Roxburgh): Passing your reproof to "Sundowner," but can't make space available for a discussion of "Catholic" and "Roman Catholic."

"Justice-in-the-Light" (Wellington): Owing to an emergency appointment, one member of the panel was not available at the time required. The discussion has been postponed in the meantime.

S. and O. (New Plymouth): They were both alive when last we heard about them (they were then visiting the United Kingdom), but we have no news of impending productions or of any visit to this country.

Joan Mulcahy (Wellington) and D.W.C. (Morrinsville): The Head Office of the Commercial Division advises that in its original form the session became unwieldy and lengthy. Experiments, directed towards discovering the best form of presentation, are continuing, but it is emphasised that the aim is primarily to entertain and provoke discussion among the radio audience.