

LISTENER

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Yugoslavia

YUGOSLAVIA came so suddenly into the news last week, and so sensationally, that it is still not safe to assume that the whole story has been told. It is however clear that Russia is very angry, that Moscow has been putting on the pressure and Belgrade resisting, and that the news came out only because Belgrade kept on resisting. The crisis is therefore important as well as interesting, but we shall not know how important until we have seen where Tito goes from here. It is just wishful thinking to suppose that every government which quarrels with Moscow draws nearer to London and Washington. All we can say is that it frees itself from one of the obstacles to a nearer approach—that it has one reason less for not drawing nearer. The meaning of the crisis is not that Yugoslavia is now looking west, or has suddenly become democratic, but that it remains tough, and independent, and nationalistic, and is not willing to play Russia's game unless it is Yugoslavia's game too. Its importance depends therefore on the strength of Yugoslavia's resistance—its strength and its permanence. We must hope that Russia's violence is a good sign—an indication that Moscow no longer expects Yugoslavia's leaders "to correct their errors," but is determined to "encourage the others." But it may just as easily be a bad sign—mean that Russia was sure of success before calling publicly for a recantation. The only sure comfort it is permissible to allow ourselves yet lies in the clear evidence the world now has that the Communist front is under severe strain. It would be better not to find significance in the *Time* report that Tito is learning English and is getting so fond of English verse that he can now recite Edward Lear.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, JULY 9

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

TO DANCE OR TO DA-ANCE?

Sir,—I was interested in "Sundowner's" reference (*Listener*, June 4) to the Lumsden Southlanders' rhyming of dance with stance. I believe that most country dwellers in both Otago and Southland use the short "a" in all words ending in -ance and also in words kindred to branch and plant. My own earlier experiences include a warning from quite an erudite Scottish schoolmaster in Southland that if he caught any of us pupils saying da-ance for dance or cha-ance for chance he would give us a taste of the taws. He maintained that the short "a" was not only good Scots but also correct Oxford English and that the long "a" stemmed mainly from Cockney and English as spoken in the Southern counties.

Although—perhaps a little illogically—I do not use the short "a" in bath and past, I have found since coming to the North Island that I have more than once been taken for an American. But that does not worry me in the least. I rather admire the American attempts at consistency. What does worry me a little is the fact that I am occasionally looked at askance (not ask-a-ance) when I conscientiously try to give full value to the Maori "a." On all sides I hear these da-ancing northerners talking about Waitematta and Mattamatta.

It seems to me high time our educationists made up their minds on the point as to how the vowel "a" is to be treated. If we are to go the long "a" way in English, Mr. Nash will soon become the Minister of Fina-ance. That, of course, will make no difference to his Budget. Still...

PUZZLED SOUTHERNER

(Gisborne).

RUGBY IN TOM BROWN'S DAY

Sir,—Recently when I switched on my radio to listen to the Broadcast to Schools session (a programme I listen to regularly) I was amazed to hear what seemed to be commentary on a football match by "Scotty" McCarthy. A quick glance at my copy of *The Listener* reassured me—it was the Broadcast to Schools, the particular item being a commentary in the present day idiom of the famous Rugby match from *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. My first thought when it had finished was that all School Libraries would have to supplement their stocks of this lovely book, as I'm sure every schoolboy who was fortunate enough to hear this episode will wish to read the book immediately.

May I congratulate the Education Department and the NZBS for the fine way in which the programme was presented, and also include the daily School Broadcasts. They are a definite "must" on my programme each day, not only because of their interest, but because they are instructive. I hadn't realised what a lot I'd forgotten since leaving school.

J. A. ARTHUR (Palmerston North).

SOUTH AFRICA

Sir,—In reference to your leader on the result of the recent South African elections, you are doubtless unaware of the very definite anti-British feeling there, that exists and grows with the years. The injustices of the Boer war

have never been forgotten and no display of Royal magnificence and charm will wipe out the memories of concentration camps and burnt homesteads. General Smuts was regarded by many as a traitor to his own people when he went over to the British at the close of that lamentable campaign. In recent years he has so often been away from his own land giving advice to other nations that consequently a strong feeling of grievance at his neglect of South African problems has been engendered.

I have recently returned from the Union, and when there noticed a decided trend in public feeling against Britain—what was in my childhood a small cloud

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in the distance is now a storm near at hand. New Zealand has no problems comparable with those of South Africa and is unable to assess the difficulties that arise from mixed races and past wrongs.

AFRIKANER (Christchurch).

FOLK SONGS

Sir,—In answer to L. Etherington, the following definition was given to me nearly 50 years ago: "A folk song is a song originating among the people, and passed down by them traditionally from some more or less distant time." Personally, I hope a better definition may be forthcoming.

Take that beautiful group of songs known as the "Songs of the Hebrides," largely collected by Madame Kennedy-Fraser and Kenneth MacLeod. The collecting of these gems was a great achievement, but neither of these two enthusiasts would claim to have composed the words or the tunes of any of these songs! Therefore, we may safely assume that neither Ben Jonson nor any other could be said to compose a "Folk Song," although some have very successfully imitated their style.

J. WALL (Makarewa).

THE AUTHOR AND LIBRARIES.

Sir,—I have listened to IYA's broadcast of the Lee-Fairburn-Musgrove-Duggan discussion, "Should the State Patronise Literature?" While I fully share Mr. Fairburn's abhorrence of the idea of State-aided authorship (and for much the same reasons) I cannot help but sympathise with Mr. Lee's contention that the author has to live and is entitled to a decent reward for supplying the public with entertainment and knowledge. Regrettably, Mr. Lee points out that, owing to the growth of the lending library system, every year more books are being read while, alas for the writer's income, fewer are being sold. The author is understandably chagrined to find that for one of his novels, purchased for the pre-war price of 5/- and rented out for a fee approximately 200 times, he received a miserable 6d, four-and-sixpence was divided among publisher, printer, wholesaler and retailer, all of whom have operational costs to meet before putting a penny profit in their pockets, but (supposing the book to have been lent out 50 times for 6d and 150 for 3d) there was £3/2/6 for the owner of the library—not a bad

return on 5/-, even allowing for rent, wages and incidentals. Rather obviously the author—to say nothing of publisher and the rest who seem to be completely overlooked—is being exploited. But should the State have come to the rescue with a subsidy? Surely writers and publishers could organise themselves to collect a fair share of the profits when musicians, composers, dramatists and singers have already shown the way—not even an amateur company may stage the public performance of a play without paying the dramatist's agent a royalty of at least a couple of guineas, gramophone companies pay royalties to recording artists and in return receive them from broadcasting systems, why then should the commercial lender of books (who after all is a purveyor of entertainment) alone escape such an obligation?

The State has only three obligations to perform for literature—to aid research and the production of works of erudition (one of Mr. Fairburn's points), to guarantee the imaginative writer freedom to gang his own creative gait with as little restriction as possible, and to see he gets a fair share of the profits derived from his labour.

CLARE MacALISTER WARD
(Whangarei).

THE ANCIENT DULCIMER

Sir,—While listening to the *Challenge of the Cities* programme from Christchurch on May 15, I was interested in the playing of the dulcimer and the comments by the performer on this rarely-heard instrument. That the dulcimer is an ancient instrument can be gathered from Biblical records. For example, it is mentioned among other instruments in verses 10 and 15 of the third chapter of Daniel. The dulcimer is also referred to in English literature from the end of the 14th Century onwards, though by the 17th Century it had dropped largely out of use, probably owing to the competition of keyboard instruments. Then and later it was mainly played in the streets, at puppet shows, and for entertaining waiting queues at doors of theatres. However, it is in eastern Europe that the dulcimer is best appreciated, and the gipsy bands of Hungary, Rumania and Bohemia play a developed form of this instrument with marvellous execution. The Hungarian composer Kodaly included the dulcimer in an orchestral suite in 1923.

G. R. HILL (Auckland).

(According to the *Oxford Companion to the Dulcimer* can still be heard occasionally in the London streets.—Ed.)

CHURCH BROADCASTS.

Sir,—I am very pleased to read "Picton Listener's" reply to my article on "Church Broadcasts." If I thought that the motive behind the suggestions for improving the broadcasts was to create a concert, then I should be the first to oppose such ideas. Surely, however, "Picton Listener" must realise that the only spiritual uplift some people can get is through the broadcast services, and I venture to say that with the standard of some of the present broadcasts, that uplift is negligible. The idea behind the suggestions was primarily to improve the spiritual tone of some of the present broadcasts. It is a pity "Picton Listener" cannot attend the Society meetings, for we need consecrated people as active members.

JOHN H. BOOTH (Wellington).