

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

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Pigs is Pigs

WITH his gift for arresting phrases Sir Patrick Duff told a group of farmers the other day that they were "the shock troops in Operation Vitamin." If we may be as up-to-date as Sir Patrick, the remark must have "rocked" them. They happened to be pig farmers, and if they are not already carting the swill to the troughs with a jauntier air it is because pig-farmers don't do as much with swill to-day as they did once, and in any case probably have the swill business mechanised. Sir Patrick could, of course, have borrowed from the American classics and reminded his audience that "pigs is pigs," as they still is; but the trouble is that they don't pig it any longer. If they are going to win prizes on the hooks, their journey to the hooks must be clean and orderly, and planned before they are born. It must be a journey that keeps their hind-end before their fore-end, stuffs their hams and starves their heads, and only occasionally, when the weather is very warm, permits a little compassionate wallowing in reasonably clean mire. It is vitamins, vitamins all the way and never a pause for mere padding. For it is the simple truth, as Sir Patrick pointed out, that a peremptory call has come. What he described (in another arresting phrase) as "the continuous epic of the soil" includes the producers of pigs as well as the growers of wheat, all who "serve the business of the earth," and responsibility lies heavy on each one of them. On one hand a hungry world—hungrier for quality than for quantity. On the other hand, sunshine, milk, and mangels, and half-a-million Tamworths in New Zealand waiting to do their stuff; or Berkshires or Saddle-backs or Large Whites. When pigs was just pigs they sometimes paid the rent. Now they have to insure the family against hunger, weakness, and disease.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

MUSICAL NOMENCLATURE.

Sir,—I trust that you have recovered from the onslaught of your correspondent John MacDougall. A more heinous offence than misprinting "Rebop" for "Bebop" I can hardly conceive. As one of "those of musical learning" I have been laughing ever since (like hell). Personally, I think you are both wrong. The word is "Bellhop."

As for mixing up "My Baby's Back" with "Mah Babby's Back," I feel that the whole of my future has been hashed up and frustrated. Just imagine keeping a listener waiting over four hours for "those fine opening lines," "Don't miss that other baby, now my other baby's back." Are you, sir, unable to appreciate those "beautiful lines," "Mah Babby's back is getting black since soap was rationed here?" Let me repeat these gems, and I would ask you to relax, lay your ears back and imagine some husky-voiced female crooner blurring out those fine and beautiful lines.

Is there anything finer or more beautiful in the English language? Don't they stir your deepest human emotions? Don't they tear your soul apart? They do mine. I was apparently not on the air when this second "famous composition" came over, or if I was I reached for the knob and strangled it at birth, as I do all such nauseating nonsense.

As for Messrs. Finkelbaum, Guggenheim and Co. "I never hoida ya." I have often waited deep into the night with the old family blunderbuss across my knees loaded to the muzzle with rusty nails listening to learn who perpetrates these atrocities on a peace-loving community. Now that I know, let your correspondent warn Finkelbaum, Guggenheim and their ilk that only several thousand miles of ocean saves them from a violent death.

This will, no doubt, bring on a spate of abuse about the intolerance of high-brows, but if your correspondent represents the musical or literary taste of the majority of listeners, then the sooner someone drops an atomic bomb on us the better.

I. BRAGH (Wellington).

FINEST VIEW IN NEW ZEALAND.

Sir,—Left alone for hundreds of thousands of years, Nature produced in New Zealand a beauty than which there is probably nothing finer in the world. Nature knew what she was doing and the type of vegetation she evolved is eminently suited to the soil, climate, etc., of its habitat.

In the old world the acclimatization of exotics took place slowly and piecemeal over the centuries in countries with a sparse population who had only primitive tools and Nature was able to assimilate them owing to their gradual invasion, but in New Zealand within a little over a century modern men with modern tools and the modern worship of mammon has stripped off roughly 90 per cent of the forest cover and what replacements he has planted have been almost entirely exotics. Only in a few isolated instances here and there throughout the country have a few devoted patriots replanted small patches of native bush.

Almost, but we trust not quite, too late the urgent need for the replanting of native, Nature's own trees is entering the conscience of the country and this need should be pressed home with ever

increasing force to the minds of those who have any part of the soil in their hands to make or mar. Native trees replanted where Nature planted them are safe, but who knows, or will know for a long time to come, whether the ultimate effects of exotics in an alien soil will be good or otherwise.

No one suggests that there are not many exotics which cannot equal in beauty our native trees, but why was it necessary in your issue of June 18th under the above heading to give as the competitors for the title of the Finest View

More letters from listeners will be found on page 14

in New Zealand two views, one of Lake Taupo and, on the cover, one of Lake Wakatipu, in both of which the trees are exotics? What would an Australian, looking at one finest view and seeing gums, or an Englishman looking at the other finest view and seeing willows, think? What would you think of any other country showing as its finest view one in which only totara or kowhai appeared? Would not the answer be "They must be hard up for beautiful trees—the rest of their country must be pretty drab."

R. H. CARTER,

Secretary, Forest and Bird Protection Society of N.Z. (Inc.)

ART ON ENVELOPES.

Sir,—Though I have no particular knowledge of stamps I would like to take the liberty of offering a criticism of the "two outstanding examples of good design" reproduced in your issue of June 25. These excellent designs are marred in my opinion by the lettering, which is technically referred to as "bastard style." This censure cannot, however, be applied to the New Zealand stamp showing the "V" with St. Paul's in the background. I am writing this in the hope that Mr. Berry will not perpetuate this error in his design for the forthcoming Royal Visit series.

NORMAN L. SAMSON (Trentham).

COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

Sir,—Is not the difference between Communism and Christianity this—that Christianity tells us to love our neighbour while Communism tells us to love the State? The first is admittedly very difficult, but the last is impossible, since we cannot love an abstraction. I quote a modern novelist, Graham Greene: "One can't love humanity. One can only love people." I also quote one of the best-known modern poets, W. H. Auden: "There is no such thing as the State And no one exists alone. . . . We must love one another, or die."

Isn't this the core of Christianity? And isn't it poignantly applicable to the world to-day?

MARY LOVEL (Hamilton).

Sir,—I am inclined to the opinion expressed by Dr. Coleman that Communism and Christianity are not so incompatible as some people would have us believe. I think however if Dr. Coleman had qualified his opinion by placing the word practical before Christianity, he would have been much nearer the true definition of the two beliefs. Some years ago, a preacher of the Church of England, in a talk over 12B, likened the Russian way of life to practical Christianity, by quoting the parable

of the two sons. He said, "If there is any country in the world to-day which is near Christ, that country is Russia. I do not know whether they regard God as we do in this country, but I feel sure that either wittingly, or unwittingly, the Russians are carrying out the practical teachings of the Christ." He then illustrated his remarks by the parable referred to above, which I thought a most apt illustration. The talk gave me food for thought, and I began to look into the question of Communism, and see for myself where the resemblance lay, between that ideology and Christianity. In my search for the truth I read the three books by Dr. Hewlett Johnson, and the reading of those books confirmed the truth of the talk given over the air.

G. F. HOLIBAR (Titirangi).

HACKNEYED CLASSICS.

Sir,—Listening to Ngaio Marsh in her talk "Defending the Hackneyed Classic" it occurred to me that there is an essential difference between the hackneyed classic in music and that in literature. Whereas the former can lose its appeal utterly through repetition, the literary classic never will because even for the ordinary listener or reader it has intellectual as well as emotional content and can thus stand up to the test of endless repetition. Music, on the other hand, being to most of us a purely emotional experience, cannot be repeated after a certain point with the same degree of response and appreciation on the part of the listener: our sensibilities become blunted and we find ourselves indifferent to the work in question. Somerset Maugham says, "It would be no less tedious to hear Beethoven's Fifth Symphony every day than it would be to eat caviare." It is unfair, therefore, to dismiss as intellectual snobs all those people who avoid listening to hackneyed musical classics: they have merely had a surfeit, which is not surprising in these days of recorded music.

N. D. LOEB (Palmerston North).

COST OF LISTENING.

Sir,—May I write in appreciation of the many excellent programmes we hear from the YA stations. As a country listener isolated during the winter months I often think of our forebears and of the completely isolated life that was theirs. Now we have the Correspondence School sessions that make our children feel they really belong to a school, the world news, many excellent talks, musical recordings, and so on. I am sure that many must agree that the wireless is indeed an education to those who look for it. And all this for less than a penny a day.

LOIS ARMSTRONG
(Banks Peninsula).

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENT

"Constant Listener" (Tai Tapu): We have nothing to do with the preparation of the programmes.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Takaka" (Nelson): (1) Yes. (2) Temporary appointee.

R. R. Turner (Ongerue): The mistake was made by the announcer. The winner of the bout was Turpin.

"Tabulate" (Dunedin): Grateful for suggestion, but we tried and dropped that arrangement eight years ago.

A. Mackie (Tauranga): As bouts did not take place on the nights you mention, musical programmes were substituted. Announcements that there would be no wrestling were made in the programme summaries and also at 9.30 p.m. when the bouts were scheduled to start.