

Olympic Games

THERE is a legend that the English don't like Olympic games, but don't like not to like them. There may even be people who believe it—who find it so much easier swallowing camels than swallowing gnats that they would sooner have any explanation of Wembley's crowds than attribute them to interest in the games now in progress there. What these mugwumps really mean is that England does not like what has occasionally happened at Olympic games and the use that has occasionally been made of them. But Hitler is dead, and one reason why the games are being held in Britain is that sportsmen are as anxious as politicians to turn their backs on him forever. There is as much mercenariness in Britain as anywhere else; as much vanity; as much interest by individuals in rewards. But of the 2¼ millions who have bought tickets for Wembley, two millions would leave their seats and go home again if the games degenerated, as they did in Germany, into a political scramble for glory. This does not mean that there will be no heart-burnings, no questioning of the judges, no jealousies, manoeuvrings, or sly tricks. It is impossible to assemble five thousand men and women from 50 or 60 countries, with all their backers and well-wishers, and pit them against one another for sixteen days without some friction and corruption. They are men and women after all and not angels and archangels. But they are also, without exception, amateurs. They are there to set an example and exalt an ideal; to be swift and strong even if they can't all be the swiftest and the strongest; to fight worthily whether they win or lose; and to learn to look generously across international boundaries. That is the goal; and if it is easy to be critical of the slightly ridiculous solemnity of some of the ceremonial, to wonder what some of the competitors made of Kipling's hymn, for example, and others of the Hallelujah Chorus, it has never been difficult to simulate the crackling of thorns under a pot.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

MUSICAL NOMENCLATURE

Sir,—Since reading John McDougall's letter in your issue of July 2, and having decided after a wordy battle that it was written with tongue in cheek, we have been waiting hopefully for someone to take it seriously. To our delight, in to-day's issue (July 23) appears a letter from I. Bragh, who apparently feels that Mr. McDougall's outburst was genuine.

It would be interesting to hear whether other listeners will own to having taken Mr. McDougall seriously.

GEORGE and MARY DIXON
(Nelson).

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Sir,—My daughter, aged nine, undergoes instruction in religion at a State school under the Nelson system. She has been taught the following verses:

We are going to the mansions on the happy day express
And the letters on the engine are J.E.S.U.S.
God calls out from heaven—we gladly answer yes
For we are going to the mansions on the happy day express.

The point I wish to raise is whether teaching of this kind has any value—I leave it to New Zealanders to judge.

OBSERVER (Wellington).

"IN A CHURCH"

Sir,—Who is this "Sundowner" fellow whose libel concerning the congregation of the church at Waiho occupies space in *The Listener*? Not only has he the gift for discerning at a glance the motives of his neighbours, but he is also able to perceive someone entering "for five minutes into communion with the saints." The "significance" of having to kneel to get a beautiful view, however, escapes him.

Would it be expecting too much from your contributor to suggest to him that the visitors to Waiho may possibly have attended on that windy night to worship their Creator?

"Sundowner" would do well, it seems, firstly, to confine his remarks to things he knows a little about, and, secondly, to apply a real reason to his own church-going.

C. B. MACMILLAN
(Palmerston North).

CHURCH BROADCASTS.

Sir,—*"Eglise,"* in your issue of July 16, referring to broadcast services, observes that "it is both pleasurable and profitable to feel part of the unseen congregation." Unfortunately, the majority of listeners do not share with him that desirable experience. In fact, because the broadcast services are not designed for broadcasting the majority of people do not find them convincing.

The listener is not analytical. He doesn't inquire deeply into the art of broadcasting, but he knows whether or not a broadcast is good and has an easy remedy for a bad one. It looks as though we have failed to see that a very different technique is required to bring church worship to a radio congregation—a technique as different from that of the usual service as the radio play is from the stage play, and the Correspondence School session from the classroom lesson. Imagine how much a pupil would learn from the relayed broadcast of a lesson given in a city

schoolroom, complete with the usual background noises. The Education Department, instead of setting up a microphone in a geography class, put their experts to work on the problem and the result is a broadcast of school lessons so efficient and convincing that its audience is by no means confined to children.

The first thing that should disappear from Church broadcasts is the congregation. The clergymen and their choir and organists (if these latter have sufficient ability for the task) are the only people required.

R. I. PHILPOT (Dunedin).
(Abridged.—Ed.)

12M REQUEST SESSION

Sir,—I have been a listener for the past three years and have always looked forward to the 12M Request Session with great pleasure. However, I would like to protest against this session continually being cut short by an hour, on the average of approximately two out of four weeks. Recently I was listening with great appreciation to what I hoped to be three hours of request recordings when the session was ceased at 9.0 p.m. to allow a relay on the boxing match at the Town Hall to be broadcast. Could not one of the other stations have broadcast this match (1YX or 1ZB)? Sometimes I know other stations have important programmes which cannot be suspended, but on a great number of occasions this is not so. I am sure the majority of 12M listeners would rather listen to request items than to a boxing match. However, if it is unavoidable that 12M has to cut its Request Session short, why not commence the programme at 6.30 p.m. instead of 7.0 p.m.?

"FISHNECK" (Epsom).

AUTHORS AND LIBRARIES

Sir,—The letter of Clare MacAlister Ward in your issue of July 9 was of deep interest, especially to those authors who did not hear the broadcast from 1YA, "Should the State Patronise Literature?" I have written books from 1890 to 1947, a very long period under varying conditions of library control. I have made as much as £90 out of a book, which gave me a start in life. Books were much cheaper in the pioneering days, but settlers bought them to build up a library. A lean time came to authors, however, when publishing charges increased and booksellers wanted bigger profits. Good books which got favourable reviews still have a large sale and reach a wide circulation. It is really a wonder that so many books are written in New Zealand because the rewards are so meagre.

W. K. HOWITT (Stanley Bay).

NEW ZEALAND VIEWS.

Sir,—I was interested in your article headed "The Finest View in New Zealand." I have not seen all parts of New Zealand, but I have moved round somewhat, and I can call to mind three outstanding views and of the three, I would place Christchurch City from Cashmere Hills with farm lands beyond, and the long range of snow-capped Southern Alps as a background. Again, looking down on Christchurch City and suburbs on a clear, calm night, with thousands of twinkling lights, takes a lot of beating. My next selection would be "sunset from the Esplanade, Raunui South," in which can be seen the most

northerly part of the South Island with the line of small islands to the north. Given a clear day, this is a sight that once seen will never be forgotten by any lover of the beautiful. Another view which is firmly impressed on my mind is sunrise at Rotorua, from what was originally known as Ohinemutu; and looking towards Mokoia Island with several Maori canoes in the foreground was a particularly fine sight. The wildest scene I have known was the Otira (north branch) in flood, which was caused by a cloudburst in which I was caught on the old coach road, on one occasion. The rain-drenched bush-clad mountains and the raging torrent completed a scene of awe-inspiring wildness.

C. R. CAVERHILL (Raumati).

ANGRY LISTENERS.

Sir,—Thanks are due to *The Listener* for reprinting the very interesting talk by Miss Ngaio Marsh on "The Angry Listener." I found a great deal of the talk to be very much to the point and hope it has the desired effect on the "far-flung correspondents."

But has not Miss Marsh answered herself in her second to last paragraph, where she claims greater tolerance for the highbrows? She cites "The highest musical brains imaginable" and the "loftiest brows in the world of letters" as being tolerant in these matters. It seems she has overlooked that vast number of not-so-lofty brows who, it seems, think it would be lowering to their self-esteem to admit a liking for anything regarded as lowbrow.

There seems to me to be as great a proportion of low-brows who concede the virtues of the classics as there is of lofty-brows who confess they think some jive and boogie-woogie ingenious and interesting.

I would like to take a guess that there are as many angry letters written by the not-quite-so-high-brows as by the croon fans, a number of whom, as Miss Marsh suggests, are probably inspired by a subconscious grudge. If members of both factions would "read and inwardly digest" Miss Marsh's article the number of angry letters to *The Listener* should drop considerably.

TRYING TO BE TOLERANT
(Murfara).

HOURS FOR PLAYS

Sir,—To-night I would like to listen to *Riders to the Sea*, a radio version of J. M. Synge's play, and to the musical comedy *Bless the Bride*; but the first is timed for 9.45 and the second for 9.58. Also on Friday, July 9, at 10.32, was a comedy, *The Banns of Marriage*, but those programmes of cultural interest are too late for country listeners. Might I suggest to the programme organisers that plays be scheduled much earlier in the evening.

G.E.N. (Matiere).

THESAURUS PROGRAMMES

Sir,—Each Saturday at 6.0 p.m. 12M features the Thesaurus Programme. I looked it up in my dictionary and found that Thesaurus is a treasury of knowledge, so tuned in expecting something out of the ordinary. So far I have heard nothing but Tin Pan Alley stuff played by American dance bands. Can anyone explain the title?

LISTENER (Hawera).

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS
"Ave Verum" (Dunedin): We do not print letters which criticise the conduct of religious services.