

established to carry on permanently the work C.E.M.A. did in the war) is already subsidising opera at Covent Garden to the extent of more than £50,000 a year and no revolutionary change in the management will come of the new decision.

The building was owned by Covent Garden Properties Ltd.; it will now be owned by the Government. The present five-year lease was held by Boosey and Hawkes; the next lease will be held by the Arts Council. Opera has been presented there since the war by the Covent Garden Opera Trust (and ballet also); it will continue to be so.

Opera and ballet in the theatre will go on being supported by public money, and it would not be consistent if the ownership of the building remained in private hands. The thing seems as clear as day—except to the hysterical *Evening Standard* which howled: "The people of Britain do not want subsidised opera" and asked what was wrong with the man who had been trying to acquire the next lease when the Government stepped in.

"Does he run a chain of dance halls, or stage indifferent variety? Or does he import American musical comedies for mammoth runs? Not at all. His name is Mr. Jay Pomeroy and he is the man behind the highly successful subsidised seasons of opera recently produced at the Cambridge Theatre amid general critical acclaim."

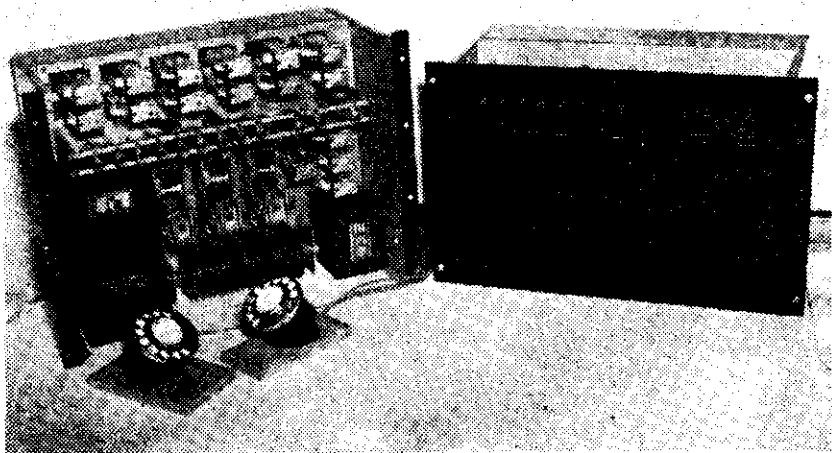
The news of the move was a scoop for the *Sunday Dispatch*, and the *Dispatch* has a columnist who answers questions that are in the public mind—Professor Joad. A week after the story came out, Joad said he did believe in "nationalised drama and opera" for "Since the public taste is not good enough to make high-class music if presented in an expensive form like opera commercially profitable—and the same is true of first rate drama—Covent Garden would go the way of many other theatres and become a cinema, if it were left to stand on its own feet."

Mr. Pomeroy has been left standing, while a social change marches ahead. The high quality of his Cambridge Theatre opera productions, which took a holiday recently after two years' continuous and successful work, does assist the argument of his sympathisers, but if times change for opera and the boom on which the Cambridge Theatre run was thriving should pass, he may be glad he was left standing; and it is for changing times that the Arts Council is intended to provide, for good opera has to be continuous, and not sporadic. It takes many years to work up the standard that is wanted, and this was recognised by Leslie Boosey, chairman of Boosey and Hawkes, when he said, "It would have been disastrous after all the work which has been done and all the money which has been put into Covent Garden, to find the Arts Council pushed out and somebody else installed."

SO much for Covent Garden Opera House. Back to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, but another one this time. Dr. Vaughan Williams, who has written four operas (*Hugh the Drover*, *Sir John in Love*, *The Poisoned Kiss*, and *Riders to the Sea*), is said to have nearly finished a fifth, based on *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The idea has been in his mind for many years, but he has put it aside to concentrate on symphonies, and has even used some of the proposed themes in his Fifth Symphony (1943) of which the last movement is prefaced with a quotation from the book. But one section of it is already complete—"The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains," which has been performed in London—and this will presumably form a part of the whole.

The composer is reticent about it, but says he is adapting the story pretty freely, leaving out Faithful and Hopeful, and joining together some scenes. When it will be finished, he says, "depends on how many other things I have got to do."

—A.A.



THIS is the remote-control unit, designed by the Engineering Section of the NZBS and built by a Wellington firm, which will be used to control the unattended transmitter planned for 2XN and 2XP and the projected stations at Whangarei, Hamilton, Wanganui, and Timaru. As each operation is dialled, one of the small bulbs seen on the cabinet front (at right) lights up, and the completion of the operation is signalled by the single bulb at the right of the row

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