

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(continued from page 5)

## THE NEWSPAPERS

Sir,—Unfortunately, I did not hear the 12B Citizens' Forum discuss the New Zealand Press, but if the account given by S. G. Gapper and B. A. Melville is in any way accurate I suggest that the "second-hand and shop-soiled knowledge" of Dr. Musgrove and Mr. Laird can still do with plenty of airing.

Even if it can be proved that the newspapers are providing what the public "wants" we can still ask: is this a Good Thing? And how far does the presentation of the news condition us to want what the newspaper wants us to want? Now that universal literacy and swift communications have made it possible for the Press to make and unmake mass attitudes within a matter of days, it is all the more urgent that we should have constant reminders of the necessity to read our newspapers with critical judgment. The spate of now-it-can-be-told books by such newspaper correspondents as Beverley Nichols, Douglas Reed, Vincent Sheehan, van Paassen, and others, even allowing for the personal foibles of the writers have given ample evidence to support the charges made against the Press, and I suggest that research into New Zealand newspaper files would do the same.

Your correspondents attack the restriction of advertising by arguing that this would raise the cost of the paper, but surely if the present cost of lavish advertising were chopped off the price of goods, the reader would have so much more cash to buy his paper at the increased price. Moreover, those at present engaged in the parasitic advertising industry would be released for more socially useful work.

A final point: Is modern man any happier for looking on his daily newspaper as a necessity? Do we live any the better for eating our breakfast every morning to the accompaniment of the latest diplomatic hand-outs and café gossip of the world's capitals?

NEIL SMITH (Otorohanga).

## WHITE MAORI

Sir,—Your leading article "White Maori" shows that you did not know what you were talking about in your last few sentences, and did not take the trouble to find out the various editions of Maning's *Old New Zealand*. The first edition certainly was a difficult book to read, being published in New Zealand in 1863, with its small print, and I believe originally in paper covers; but there have been very many editions that could be, and were, afforded by

many. You say "it has never been possible to buy him well bound and finished at a price that every reader could afford." You add: "The new issue is as pleasant to read as earlier issues have been unpleasant."

In 1898 Macmillan and Company issued this book in their famous "Colonial Library" bound in black cloth boards, beautifully printed in large clear print; which sold here for 3/6. Any second-hand shop of note in Wellington will show you a copy of this library—or should be able to—although not this book perhaps. So that explodes both your statements.

HENRY G. SMITH (Auckland).

("Never" was a bigger word than we should have used. But our correspondent has not helped his case by citing Macmillan's Colonial Library. The books in this were certainly cheap, but it is bold to suggest that they were pleasant to look at or read.—Ed.)

## RETURN OF A NATIVE

Sir,—Guy Marriner asks himself what is going to happen to keen musicians in New Zealand—whether something can't be done to give them greater opportunities. I suggest that churches give opportunities to modern composers, poets, painters and craftsmen, as well as choirs. Why not Cathedral orchestras? All public buildings and schools should be decorated with murals and sculpture, metal work, and wood carving. Let the Maori artist be given the opportunity to

develop his own heritage. Taxation would probably be a little more per head but the pleasure received infinitely greater. There must be other ways of full-time living for young musicians, poets, writers, painters, sculptors and craftsmen without the "undeserved frustration and disappointment" that Guy Marriner realises might be the fate of the keen musicians.

"FAITH" (Christchurch).

## CHURCH BROADCASTS

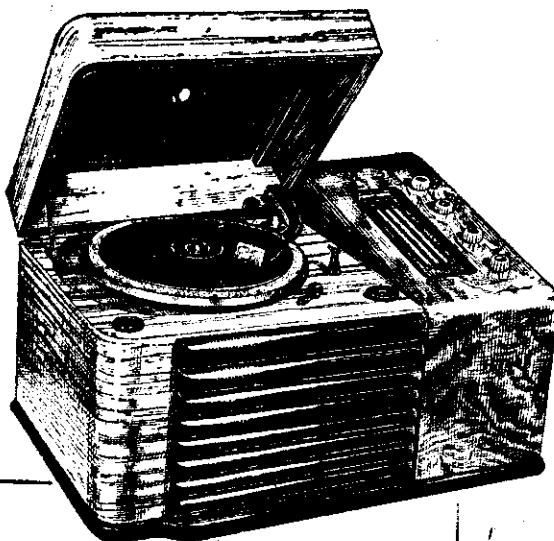
Sir,—In reply to questions asked by "Eglise" I wish to state that my remarks on the above subject were made mainly as the result of observation and questioning of patients in a hospital for a period of eleven months. Of a floating population of sixteen patients only two have had the perseverance to listen to church broadcasts, although many of them listen, or at least do not switch off during the morning devotional sessions and the semi-religious broadcasts designed to exploit the medium of radio and presented by the Commercial stations. I don't think my assertion was unfounded.

Let us not forget that when a church building is wired for broadcasting it becomes, technically speaking, and whether we like it or not, a broadcasting studio, and that the church broadcast is influenced by technique to the same extent as is any other broadcast. Piety is surely no excuse for inefficiency.

R. I. PHILPOT (Dunedin).

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