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Culture for Agriculture

THE correspondent (A.M.G.) whose letter appears on this page, has perhaps not seen enough of New Zealand yet to know either our miners or our farmers. It is possible, too, that no New Zealander ever quite realises what life can be like in the mining and industrial areas of the Old World. If it will sound a pretty good joke to New Zealand farmers that they must not make outcasts of New Zealand miners—especially in the Ohai-Nightcaps area that was the subject of the criticised article—this is such a comfortable country for both that laughing is easy. And we must not laugh too long. Our correspondent is right in pointing out that the farmer needs the miner's purchasing power as much as the miner needs the farmer's produce; needs his company; and needs the better facilities for culture that both can obtain if they co-operate. But the boys who leave home in Southland don't—if it is the mines that call them—leave the district. They just change their occupation—cut their hours in halves and double their wages by refusing to milk cows. And it is not helping to solve the problem, but by-passing it a hundred miles, to urge farmers to "teach miners to value peaches and mutton and milk and butter" unless you tell them at the same time how to produce these things without labour. Nor is it greenness that most of our small towns lack. It is greyness—sealed roads and formed streets to keep us out of the dust in summer and the mud in winter. They would also in most cases have to enlarge their gutters a good deal to make room for miners or anyone else, and while all such things can be provided more easily jointly than severally, it is not realistic to tell farmers with 60 cows to milk every day, and no milkers, that they still have time to save New Zealand from the fate that overcame England when it neglected to provide culture for agriculture.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

WHY BOYS LEAVE HOME

Sir,—Your article "Why Boys Leave Home" prompts me to answer, Do you want them kept in apron strings? Further, do you want New Zealand kept in apron strings?

I am not anxious to see more than one or two large towns developing in New Zealand. I have lived in England where one seldom gets out of a large town without queuing among the thousands. But I am anxious to hear of healthy small town life where the farmer's sons and daughters can go and try whether there is anything better than farming. Some education; some evening classes or technical demonstrations (ranging from time to time from dress-making to how to construct a wind pump); some dancing, amusement and fun.

Let me say this to the farmer. Don't make the miner a pariah; don't let him make you one. Go yourself, and your wife too. Insist on your shopping requirements being considered and your votes about the new road counted. There is a local market developing there for some of your produce, a suburban middle class likely to grow up with whose children your sons and daughters like to mix. Teach the miner to value your peaches and mutton as well as your milk and butter and there will be money to pay for extra help for your wife or you—a little easing of the wheels of work. Be there in time; if you don't watch out the miners' wives won't cook or darn or keep a pig and your pockets will be emptied to keep him out of the gutter in hard times. You don't really like being lonely. He doesn't want to miss all the good things you've got.

England didn't try in time. It is not too late for New Zealand to win culture for agriculture, greenness and dignity for her small towns. Then your grandchildren will have a fair chance.

A.M.G. (Dunedin).

(We refer to this letter in our leading article.—Ed.)

ORGAN MUSIC

Sir,—I wish to support your correspondent "Lover of Organ Music," who is, in my opinion, too easily satisfied to want only a quarter-hour of organ music per week. Organ music is very poorly represented in New Zealand radio programmes; indeed it can hardly be said that it is represented at all in Auckland. There are regular broadcasts of piano-forte, orchestral, and band music. Could not a similar programme of organ music be commenced?

"RUSTY DIAPASON"

(Remuera).

FIRST NEW ZEALAND-BORN PRIME MINISTER

Sir,—In the course of the ZB Quiz session on Friday, February 25, one of the questions asked was "Who was the first New Zealand-born Prime Minister of New Zealand?" There was a good deal of guessing on the part of the team and finally the name of Rt. Hon. J. G. Coates was mentioned, and the question-master said "that was right, Mr. Coates was the first New Zealand-born Prime Minister of this country." At the time I said that I did not think the answer was correct, but did not think more of it until I was asked by a friend the

same question. I then consulted the Year Book and there I find that Hon. Sir Francis Bell was Prime Minister from May 14 to May 30, 1925. Mr. Downie Stewart in his book "Sir Francis Bell, His Life and Times," says Sir Francis Bell was born in Nelson at the residency of the New Zealand Company on March 31, 1851." So I think it is clear that Sir Francis, while he did not hold the office for long, was the first New Zealand-born Prime Minister of this country.

TOM BLOODWORTH (Auckland).

RABBITS IN OTAGO

Sir,—Your issue of January 21 contains an article by "Sundowner" in which he mentions the almost total disappearance of rabbits from Central Otago, during the decade 1900-10. The cause, he says, was unknown.

Here is an answer. About 1905-06 a terrific snowfall occurred (June 9). At Bannockburn and Cromwell the snow lay a foot or more deep for six weeks. At Naseby it was four or five feet deep;

OXFORD v. CAMBRIDGE

STATION 2YA will remain on the air following the 11.0 p.m. news on Saturday, March 26, to rebroadcast commentary on the Oxford and Cambridge boat race from Putney to Mortlake.

at Nevis five to 10 feet. Nearly all rabbits were destroyed. Later there was a big rise in the price for rabbit skins.

I was born near Cromwell and lived the first 30 years of my life entirely in that district, and was there during that snowstorm.

LOUIS F. PARCELL (Stoke).

BRASS BANDS

Sir,—There are certainly musical occasions when brass instruments can be used to good effect. But the objection many people have to brass bands is that they usually lack taste, preferring sheer noise, or the treacly sentimentality of the tenor horn, to music proper, and showing a satanic virtuosity in their choice of "pieces." I am told that the playing of Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik" at the recent band contest had to be heard to be believed. It was like a rhinoceros chasing a butterfly.

My own view is that brass band playing really has little or no relation to music. It is a rather boisterous form of athletics. There is no reason in the world why all-in wrestling, tug-o'-war, ring, bear-baiting, pole-squatting, beating one another over the head with sticks, or riding the greasy pig should not be indulged in by people who like doing these things. The difficulty with brass band playing, as with broadsiding, is that it makes such a noise.

A. R. D. FAIRBURN (Devonport).

THE MAORI LANGUAGE

Sir,—Why are we prohibited from investigating the origin of the Maori language? Surely it is well known that the early missionaries had it constructed in England from vocabularies supplied by

Kendall who took Cook's vocabularies as a base. All those early vocabularies are no more than English words pronounced as Maori and linked together with *ki, ka, ko, te*, etc. Marsden never had any difficulty in making his wants known in simple English. For 70-odd years I have lived amongst Maoris and always found that they spoke a corrupt form of English interlarded with words derived from this missionary tongue, such as *tongater, wai-hine*, etc. To credit them with originating our place-names is absurd, because in charting the coast the names inserted are names created by the surveyors, missionaries and explorers. Marsden created the name "Manakau," it being the phon-

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etic sound of "Main Cove." We likewise created the name "Waitemata" or Wydimatta by a phonetic rendering of "Wide Isthmus." Otago received its name from a phonetic rendering of "Outer Harbour," Outakau. Wellington also was known as Poriki—a phonetic rendering of Port Nicholson. Porirua was probably derived from "Poru Louis in Mauritius; Paikakariki, to give it its original form, appears to have been named after the beautiful creek that springs out of the rocks there; the water was apparently excellent for voyages and probably became known to early whalers as "Paikask-creek" hence the missionary-Maori name of Paikakariki.

If we would only face facts instead of attempting to build up a fable of native ancestry founded on greed and a misconception of who originally owned the land we all claim as ours then there would cease to be any divergence of opinion on native subjects.

KI ORA MAUI (Auckland).

(We submitted this letter to the Very Rev. J. G. Laughton, Whakatane, who discussed it with Sir Apirana Ngata before replying as follows: One cannot escape the impression that your correspondent has written with his tongue in his cheek. One could scarcely believe that anyone with even a scant knowledge of the Maori language would have written seriously in the strain that he has done. The Maori language was a highly developed vehicle of thought before ever the first white man sighted these shores. If Marsden and his assistants had been able to express themselves adequately to their Maori listeners in simple English, why did the missionaries engage in their great and laudable labour to master the Maori language? Your correspondent evidences his ignorance of the language he professes himself qualified to discuss by his mis-spelling of such basic Maori words as *tangeta* (man) and *wahine* (woman) which he calls *tongater* and *wahine*. "Manukau" (not "Manakau") should be "Manuka," the name of the widely known New Zealand shrub, otherwise known as tea-tree. The name has no possible connection with "Main Cove." "Waitemata" means "water of obsidian." It is ridiculous to connect the name with a possible transliteration of "Wide Isthmus," which would be "Waite Ihimaha" or something similar, bearing very little resemblance to the real name. "Otakou" is the historic Maori designation of that locality and the English appellation "Otago" is a transliteration from the Maori. The only name coined from English in the list presented by your correspondent is "Poneke" which, as he states, is a Maori phonetic rendering of Port Nick. It should be noted, however, that this modern designation has replaced the real Maori name of Wellington Harbour which is "Te Whanganui a Tara," "the Great Bay of Tara." The full name of Porirua is "Te Awa Rua o Porirua." Porirua was a legendary reptile (*taniwha*) stated to have been driven from the East Coast. The name is clearly as old as antiquity. "Paikakariki" (not Paikakariki) is the settling place of parrots, a very natural appellation to appear among the place names of a people expert in bird snaring. If, as he advises, "we would only face facts" your correspondent would scarcely have propounded the theory put forward in his letter.—Ed.)