

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

Price Threepence

APRIL 14, 1949.

The Chicken and the Egg

IT is a good rule in life never to be too sure; in journalism a fundamental rule. It is in fact a *Listener* rule not to be sure at all. We remember, even when we think we know, that we may be wrong, and we never forget, however much we may know we know on some subject, that there is a reader who knows more. But we are going to break all our rules in this issue. We are going to suggest, in fact to say, that the photograph on to-day's cover is something that has never before been published in the world, big place though the world is. We do not say that a takahe chick, until this one was captured and photographed, had not been seen before by man. Man is a fairly old animal even in New Zealand. We do not say that this photograph, or one taken at the same time, is not now in other hands, has not reached the office of some other journal, and has not been seen by others than our own readers. We do not think that has happened, but we have enough respect for the enterprise of journalists to know that it could have happened. We say however that even if it has happened the photograph others have seen is of the chick dangling from Dr. Falla's hands on to-day's cover—and that this is the first notornis chick ever seen by civilised eyes. Nor is it only a famous chick. It is clever. It broke into history before the egg (though we shall not explain how until our next issue). It is so famous and so clever that it justifies all the space we have devoted lately to ornithology. And here, if we were wise, we might stop. But we have caught the fever too, and therefore announce, but in muted taps of our typewriter, that this chick did something to the men of science who found it that nothing had ever done before. It made some of them (we don't know how many) wonder if they were not close to a greater discovery still — the greatest, if it comes off, in the modern history of birds.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

BROOKLYN PUBLIC SCHOOL

Sir,—In September next the Brooklyn Public School will celebrate its Jubilee. In its 50 years over 10,000 children attended the school, and it is probable that quite a number of them will be found to reside in the districts covered by the circulation of your paper.

The School Committee seeks your assistance in bringing the Jubilee celebrations to the notice of ex-pupils so that a roll may be compiled. To enable an authentic record to be compiled of ex-pupils, all old scholars are requested to send in their names and addresses, together with period of attendance at the school, to the Jubilee Secretary, Brooklyn Public School, Wellington.

G. WENTWORTH,

Hon. Secretary,
Box 543, Wellington.

FRANCES HODGKINS

Sir,—Margaret Frankel (Christchurch) suggests that some of Frances Hodgkins's paintings be shown in all the centres. The exhibition of some of my late sister's more modern work I consider both unjust to the artist and to the public. As every artist knows, the practice of painting is subject to moods and all artists attempt to paint at times with hopelessly poor results; these results are usually thrown aside. Much of my sister's work is of this nature and should not be exhibited. I have not seen the five pictures sent out by the British Council, but if they are comparable to the sample sent out previously, then they should be treated discreetly.

Frances justly, I think, became known in England as a water-colourist of repute, in which medium she undoubtedly excelled. Her treatment of colour and form in brilliant sunlight was a pleasure to the eye of anyone conversant with the subtle hues and tones that lie between the extreme poles of all the colours of the spectrum, that are comparable with the chords and scales of music or the finished product of a literary master. Frances was an impressionist, that is to say, she gave the impression of form whilst weaving colour and form into art. Her colour is usually beautifully blended and flows in curves of beauty as does all good music, painting, or literature.

I should like to see an exhibition of her work, shown in all the centres, chosen from all the periods of her many changes in expression over the last 50 years, accompanied by some sensible explanations for the guidance of the public and the critics. I make the suggestion in all humility, for what it is worth.

P. D'E. HODGKINS (Auckland).

ISLANDS AND ISLANDERS

Sir,—G. M. Wilson is suffering from that form of nostalgia which leads to distortion of facts. In his article on Norfolk Island he declares that it was the imposition of mainland ways of living which made the islands difficult for the mainlander and the islanders, the implication being that the islanders were just "nature's children" before we invaded their paradise. This is nonsense. Long before the mainlander arrived in numbers, the islanders sent their children abroad to be educated: Scots College, Sydney, and Kings, Auckland, could muster a good Old Boys' Association on the island. Also the stores in

Mr. Wilson's time had been selling pate de foie gras, caviare, and other rare groceries, all brought through Vila, duty-free, from France. The island girls could wear dresses made of hand-printed French crepe-de-chine, their fathers could drink French brandies and liqueurs, and did (once a fortnight, as the liquor law allowed), they wore riding kit tailored by Poole, London, and had their boots made in Oxford Street. All these civilised amenities were available for those who could afford them. And those who cared to market their produce always could.

What blew the islands into the doldrums was not the example of the mainlanders, but the imposition of a fruit embargo by the then New Zealand Government as a body blow for the embargo Australia placed on New Zealand

Mr. Oliver and Professor Gordon: "Shelley's statement is an emotive outburst, and can't be taken seriously."

But can't it?

As I see it, legislation is largely a crystallisation of public opinion on social issues. Politicians are seldom originators: they are too concerned with the popular vote. But the popular vote, even in progressive legislation, doesn't depend only on catch-cries and cheap-jack propaganda. It rests on the individual conscience. And this individual conscience, like the individual consciences of the legislator, is quickened by the poet.

To get down to instances, drawn at random, Wordsworth is an unacknowledged legislator in educational reform even in this country. Shelley himself led the way to women's suffrage. The authors of the Gospel had a hand in Social Security. And so on.

ANTON VOGT (Lower Hutt).

ORGAN MUSIC

Sir,—One must support "Rusty Diapason" and others who have written about organ music. Longer and higher quality programmes of organ music are not only desirable but urgently needed, if we wish to shake the standard of playing in this country out of its complacent mediocrity. Organists are able, I feel, to "get away with it" to a far greater extent than are their instrumental and vocal brethren because their audiences, and often they themselves, are not used to hearing anything better, but the NZBS with its large and comprehensive library of organ recordings could surely rectify this.

ROBERT I. PHILPOT
(Dunedin).

OPERA BROADCASTS

Sir,—The NZBS means well but is doing good music a disservice by broadcasting the operas on the main stations. To begin with, songs in a foreign tongue are not songs at all; there can be no song unless the words are understood by the hearer, and divorced from the acting, costumes, lighting, and the atmosphere, operatic singing is merely vowel sounds set to music. In fact, they might

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just as well sing scales. The broadcasts consist of disjointed dirges interspersed with the few melodies from each opera which have become well known through the years.

People in the cities can attend the performance if they wish and in addition they have the choice of several radio stations at full strength, whereas we in the country often have to depend upon one station, and that one the loudest, for entertainment; some nights the static is so bad that no station is loud enough to be heard comfortably, and therefore the authorities should confine the all-evening broadcasts to the subsidiary stations.

BETTER MUSIC
(Morrinsville).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

W.W.G. (Remuera): Not if you arranged for protection by the police.

"Ancient" (Takapuna): We regret these failures as much as you do, and are passing your letter to the appropriate authorities.

"Appreciative Listener" (Otaki): No end to it if we start nominating local composers whose work ought to be broadcast. The fact that this musician has been broadcast once is proof that he is known to the Broadcasting Service.

FREQUENCY CHANGE AT 1YD

STATION 1YD Auckland, which has been transmitting since December 20 on a temporary frequency of 1,240 k.c., reverted this week (April 11) to its scheduled frequency of 1,250 k.c. Engineers of the NZBS and of the Post and Telegraph Department have completed technical adjustments designed to eliminate the interference with other radio services which led to the temporary abandonment of the scheduled frequency about six months ago.

potatoes. The embargo on the selling of our produce in New Zealand destroyed our only sure market, no ships came to us from this country, and while the Australian market was open to us it was already swamped with the kind of goods we produced. The islands have always been over-romanticised. When we tell the truth about them they emerge as a delightful place to live in and a better place to die in. You take a long time to die in that salubrious climate, and when you do, you are buried free. JUDITH TERRY
(Avondale).

TRIBUTE FROM AMERICA

Sir,—We have recently come here from Vancouver, B.C., and you will have no idea of the enjoyment and thrill that we get from the radio here. We can listen to one of our favourite symphonies or concertos nearly every evening. It is a great treat after the jazz, advertising, and money questions, that the people in the Pacific North West have to put up with. We did get a concert every Sunday, but the less said about some modern American music the better.

ROBERT FOULIS (Ruahaka).

POETS AS LEGISLATORS

Sir,—It seems to me that the Forum on Sunday, March 20, missed the bus. Shelley's "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world" became several things for several people; but as far as I could tell from careful listening, nobody seemed to take much interest in what the words meant to Shelley himself. Or indeed, what they mean at all.

Mr. Oliver was content to discuss: "Poets are." Mr. Milne: "Poets are sometimes difficult." Miss Stephens and Professor Gordon: "Poets who are difficult to-day are sometimes simple to-morrow."