

APRIL 22, 1949.

Professor Shelley

IT is our unhappy task in this issue to record the resignation of Professor Shelley, who has been Director of Broadcasting since the Government took control in 1936. Professor Shelley is not only retiring from the Service, but retiring from New Zealand, and it is no reflection on his successors to say that he leaves a gap which no one now serving with him is likely to see completely filled. His task, when he took charge thirteen years ago, was not so much to direct the Service as to create it, and although the war came before a single major plan could be carried through, his personal influence remained. As clearly as the BBC to-day is what Lord Reith made it, with all his limitations and faults, the NZBS will long remain what Professor Shelley has made it, in spite of everything in him and in it that has gone wrong. While he would be the last to say, suggest, or think, that he has done anything single-handed, it is not what he has done that will be remembered but what he has been. Those who apply cold efficiency tests would no doubt criticise him as an administrator. He has been too human, too sensitive, too kind, for any of the brutalities that usually go with efficiency, with the result that he has never been free of dead wood or of lame dogs. For that he has paid in personal overwork and in long periods of misunderstanding. But no one else has paid. The strain on him has been overwhelming; but his mark is now on the Service and on New Zealand, and the vulgarity that is in us all will never quite erase it. Nor does anyone know so well as those who have been closest to him how vulgar, by comparison, most of us are—how dull, ignorant, careless, and insensitive; how casual with truth; how blind to form. That is why we began by saying how improbable it is that any of us will see his like again. And that is why we end by repeating that his successors will inherit standards which the Service, whether it always reaches them or not, will always now strive for.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

AS WE ARE

Sir,—I was interested in the painting "On the Hooks," by Sam Cairncross, in a recent issue. I have never seen anything so dead look so alive. Sam should be congratulated on his choice of subject. It is symbolic of New Zealand—nearly as much so as a man with a cow's teat in one hand and a ten bob race-ticket in the other.

IAN WARDELL (Timaru).

UNIVERSITY TRAINING

Sir,—I have been studying your "Training at the University" and there is only one of the writers who seems to me to "hit the clout," Miss Nancy Northcroft, who asks for "a study of the natural environment and man's relationship to it."

If a university sends out its graduates convinced that the Universe shows neither Plan, Control nor Guidance the result will be disaster for them and for the community. The first thing to study then must be the Universe and Man's place in it. A little astronomy and cosmogony will bring your student to geology which shows the gradually unfolding history of the earth and its inhabitants. Palaeontology would lead to history with its twenty great civilisations, which all seem to have failed from the same cause—wealth above and poverty below—while the oppressed peasants flocked into the great cities. From that a study of Prince Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* and also of the art and beauty cultivated by paleolithic man would show how gladly we respond to co-operation and to the beauty which everyone can recognise in the home he grew up in. These studies led by men who themselves had faith in the infinite around them should be the beginning and the foundation of all education. Teach Latin and Greek if you can find time for them, but you must have biology, geology, and the history of co-operation among the gregarious animals and among primitive men; for if "kill or be killed, eat or be eaten" is all that science can teach, our education will only produce atom bombs.

THOS. TODD (Gisborne).

CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

Sir,—Mrs. Macaskill's talk from 2YA in the Family Guidance series dealing with the psychology of the child raised some doubt for me as to the success her methods will achieve. The particular instance of the child's outlook being blighted by the mother's dissuading her from a favourite pastime of playing in mud and water for fear of dirtying herself or her clothes, prompts me to ask Mrs. Macaskill. (1) Is it not true that the training and disciplining of the child begins at birth and that the infant not being endowed with a sense of what is good or bad looks to its parents upon whom rest the daylong responsibility of guidance and instruction whether in the form of discipline or play? If all form of discipline is neglected how much more difficult will be the task of self-discipline to the adolescent once the supervision of school years is over. (2) Does this giving in to a whim of mud and water extend to the desire to play with electricity, fire, dangerous tools or eat unsuitable food? Is every denial of a request the start of some "frustration" in the child? (3) We were then

informed that Miss Two-year-old is now allowed to play in her mud and water and as a result is more easily managed in all directions. Would it be such a setback to character building to suggest to the lass, not unkindly, that the clothes take time, and in my case loving care, to make and launder, and there is no need to see how filthy they can be made?

M. E. TOPLIS (Kaikohe).

PROGRAMMES FOR FARMERS

Sir,—Being a farmer desirous of entertainment on a wet day and at other odd moments, I find I am unable to procure a programme as the network is handed over to the Education Department for child tuition. Again at 4.30 p.m. the network once more ignores adult wishes and endeavours en masse to amuse the children. Is the Broadcasting Service merely thoughtless in ignoring the adult audiences at these times or is it trying to build up a "youth movement?" I am fully aware that the cities may have a low-powered alternative, but I speak as a country person.

"OVERLOOKED" (Glenesk).

de MAUPASSANT AND PSYCHOLOGY

Sir,—Your programme reviewer lists concisely the character of de Maupassant, but his remark that de Maupassant had "no psychology" is misleading. True, de Maupassant does not comment widely or moralise upon the mind processes. As your reviewer says, he was a "supreme observer," but those observations were not to the exclusion of the psychology behind the actions of his characters. In *The Diamond Necklace*, for example, a revealing picture of the mind of the ambitious Mme. Loisel is given—one is in a position to comprehend her subsequent actions. Wishes, desires, and incidents are presented so clearly that one almost feels the author saying—here is my character, the mind of my character, judge and comprehend her story for yourself.

JOHN MCINDOE (Dunedin).

THE MAORI LANGUAGE

Sir,—Let us have some commonsense on the subject of pronunciation, as well as meaning, of our Maori place-names. The interpretation and pronunciation should be based on facts, and facts are ignored almost entirely by most modern Maori authorities. A fact is rightly referred to as a tin-tack, for it pains certain parts of our anatomy if sat or trod upon. Tread on a tin-tack and you are liable to a fit of frenzied lunacy. Remind Maori scholars that all that is known about the ancient Maori was learned from self-interested claimants in our native land court, remind them again that not one name on the map was placed there by any other than the early missionaries, surveyors, and European explorers, who knew no Maori and they turn and rend you.

Why be spellbound? Typists and printers never are.

MAUI (Auckland).

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

G. C. Edwards (Mania): The "Jena" Symphony in C (No. 257, composed about 1797, but not published till 1911) is regarded as "doubtful authenticity" by Dr. Oscar Thompson, author of the *International Cyclopaedia of Music and Musicians*.



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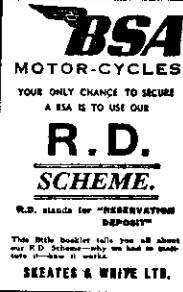
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