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## Radio Conference

**L**ISTENERS to shortwave programmes may not need to be reminded that there is congestion in high-frequency broadcasting. A turn of the dial seldom brings a station clearly into focus: there must be delicate manipulation before an overseas broadcast can be separated from noises which indicate that other stations are clamouring for attention. New Zealand's interest in radio channels is no longer confined to the needs of home listeners, and this country was therefore represented at an international conference held recently in Mexico City to remove some of the congestion. One of the Dominion's two delegates, Mr. W. L. Harrison, has explained in an interview the difficulties which had to be faced. It is not necessary to understand the technical problems to be able to assess the value of what was done. Shortwave transmission is helping to make the world smaller than it used to be, but the nations cannot speak clearly to one another if they try to speak loudly in the same place and at the same time. It was found at the conference that the 69 nations wanted about three times the number of channel hours available. They had to modify their requirements, and in the end they were able to produce a plan acceptable to 51 delegations. There was, of course, a practical reason why the conference had to be successful; and technical problems are more easily settled than the arguments of politics, where fact is constantly at the mercy of opinion. But technical issues are not isolated: national interest and political divisions may be found among the megacycles as well as on disputed ground in Berlin. It is therefore worth noting, hopefully, that an international conference has produced results, and that the way is open for firmer agreement in the future.

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN.

Sir,—I would like to register a very strong protest against the NZBS practice of arbitrarily cutting the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Of course we are grateful for even these, but why such mutilation? If the answer is time, why not give us one Act only at each session? The potted version of *The Gondoliers* from 2YA on May 27 lasted less than an hour, little more than half the opera being presented.

M. MILLER (Sumner).

PROGRAMME PRIORITIES.

Sir,—Here's one voice crying against 2YA's action in fading out the studio performance of Douglas Lilburn's *Sonatina* on Thursday, May 19, at 9.0 p.m. Maybe the weather office ritual is essential to the happiness of those who run things. If so, wide clearance should be allowed at this hour, or in the event of a mistake we should forget about our export production and the national hook-up for a few minutes.

A. MCKEE (Petone).

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Sir,—I think the time has come when something should be done about the very poor "serial" entertainment one receives from some New Zealand radio stations, particularly 2YZ Napier. Out of the half-dozen or so regular features presented, only *North of Moscow* and *The Corsican Brothers* are real dramatic serials which give the listener that hair-raising thrill at the end of each episode. But even those two are of little use to the average person who works daily, as they are presented between 10.0 and 11.0 a.m. Could not the Edgar Wallace or Rex Beach thrillers or some similar type be presented between 7.0 and 9.0 p.m. of an evening? I recall the time when 7.30 or 8.0 o'clock, on a Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday always used to be the time for such serials as *The Circle of Shiva*, *Soldier of Fortune*, *Hunchback of Ben Ali*, *Inspector Scott of Scotland Yard*, etc., and they were always looked forward to. Of course there are several evening features one occasionally hears, but they are tame. Oh, for the good old days!

"PICCADILLY" (Waimarama).

WEATHER REPORTS

Sir,—Your correspondent "Nib-Nab" is unreasonable in his attempt to reform the weather forecasters. An impassioned cry of "North Island preference," followed by a suggestion for the reversal of the present order of reading the weather forecasts on alternate days for the sake of variety, an arrangement which could only result in the complete confusion of the listener, is not likely to arouse the sympathy of the appropriate broadcasting official. There is, however, at least one good reason for

advocating a South-to-North reading. For most people the forecast of a cold change is the most useful one, and in many districts this change comes from the south. Would it not be more logical and more interesting to be able to follow the progress of a cold front from the arctic regions northwards, than suddenly to encounter it in the middle of our journey southwards?

BAN-BIN (Christchurch).

ABOUT BOOKS

Sir,—The alleged "critical moment" in the book trade must have serious repercussions on the art of the writer; at no time has his lot been an easy one, and present-day trends indicate that his position is likely to become more hazardous than ever. Apparently the "gloom about books" is something that even the publishers are unable to agree about, but it seems obvious that the time is ripe for a show-down in the book trade.

Of all the arts, the writers' is the most arduous; it receives the least encouragement, and enjoys no patronage. At this alleged critical moment publishers are particularly active about

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their own interests, one suggestion being that Governments should subsidise the publishing of books. This would, of course, encourage the production of books, but would not secure writers against the exploitation of publishers whose whole outlook must necessarily be bound by the profit motive. If the writers' art is to be incorporated into New Zealand culture—which we hear much about but see little of—it will need more encouragement than publishers are likely to give it. The solution appears to rest with our public-spirited patrons who could contribute towards establishing the writers' art on a firm foundation.

L. BOND (Auckland).

BREAKFAST SYMPHONY

Sir,—In quiet manner an announcer at 1YA on a Monday morning at 7.30 launched the breakfast symphony, and 1YA is to be congratulated on this important step—15 minutes of bright lilted music of such high order is little enough respite from the hours of "noise" which has been the sole fare pounded out from all stations during the early morning for years past. Those 15 minutes each morning were pure joy and gave me a light heart for the rest of the day, and I firmly believe that many others will get as much pleasure from the music of the breakfast symphony. As a recently returned visitor from England, where the BBC each morning entertains with bright, varied, and often

classical music, it was an utter disappointment to me to find that the NZBS continued to limit us to such unvaried fare in the first hours of the morning.

WINIFRED MOORE (Auckland).

Sir,—Please allow me to offer my heartiest thanks and congratulations to those responsible for the new symphony programme at 7.30 each morning. The choice of Litoff's "Scherzo," played by Moura Lympny and the Philharmonia Orchestra for the opening number, was a flash of sheer inspiration. At last there is some real pleasure to be had in the morning instead of mere tolerance for punctuality's sake. There is, however, still one request I would like to make. Sandwiched as the programme is between Bing and Dinah, would it be possible to have a little more meat and a little less sandwich?

BETELGEUSE (Whangarei).

THE ROYAL ODE

Sir,—The prize-winner of the Royal Ode Competition is to be congratulated on a very fine piece of work, as a poem, but it should be pointed out that her poem does not fulfil the chief condition in the competition. It called for a poem expressing homage to the Crown, presumably the homage of New Zealand to the Empire, and this condition imposed a restriction on choice of subject matter and set a limit to originality of treatment. The winning poem, in my opinion and in the opinion of many others, does not attempt to meet the conditions imposed, and those competitors who observed the rules, even though they admire the poem, may be excused for feeling surprised at the decision of the judges in the circumstances.

ALSO PERPLEXED

(Auckland).

A N.Z. THIRD PROGRAMME

Sir,—I have a heap to do to-night, but I must take time off to support J.T. in his request for an hour or so a week of something like the BBC's *Third*. There must be thousands of us scattered up and down the land who look upon radio (and its cousin cinema) as something of a half-baked affair, and not what it could be. My own idea is that such programmes should come from local stations at a definite time—say, when most people are out at the theatre.

GEO. S. SMITH (Thorndon).

BAY OF PLENTY STATION

Sir,—My thanks to the Broadcasting Service for putting Rotorua on the map—a good station, with reception wonderful here; better than 1YA Auckland; 4YZ Invercargill, 4YA, 4ZB, 2YA, and other small stations. Are these others going to be improved at all?

LISTENER (Sydenham).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

J. Baxter (Christchurch): Photograph will be printed shortly. Your other suggestion will be passed on.

New Dial (Rongotai): In cases 1 and 2, the set is not sufficiently "selective" to separate the stations, although they are at least 30 kilocycles apart. If it is desired to listen to stations in Christchurch and Dunedin, the addition of a "wave-trap" in the aerial circuit would reduce the signal strength from the Wellington stations, and probably eliminate interference from local stations. In case 3, the condition is caused by harmonic frequencies generated in the receiver owing to its proximity to the stations and its inability to cope with the strong signal being obtained. In case 4, the inability to cope with the strong signal suggests that while listening to 2YD the aerial should be disconnected or considerably shortened.

## BROADCAST BY THE KING

ON Tuesday, June 21, His Majesty the King will speak from the Colonial Office to mark the official opening in Britain of "Colonial Month." His speech will be rebroadcast by the main National stations in a link at 10.30 p.m., and repeated at 7.15 a.m. and 9.0 a.m. on Wednesday, June 22. The purpose of Colonial Month is to draw attention to the importance and significance of the Colonial Empire. Several special radio programmes have been planned by the BBC, including "Colonial Journey," to which 14 colonies contribute. It will be broadcast by the NZBS at a later date.