

## LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(Continued from page 4)

### ANOTHER COMPETITION?

Sir,—I want to suggest that you should conduct a new competition—free to all who care to enter. The prize to be £1000 in cash and £500 a year for life. The subject a week's radio programme suitable for transmission from one of the YA Stations. The only condition to be that the programmes MUST ENTIRELY and ABSOLUTELY meet the wishes of at least 50% of the listeners.

With the number of critics about, surely someone MUST be able to do the job! A perusal of the daily newspaper and *Listener* correspondence on the matter of programmes reveals a lack of balance or perhaps I should say a lack of consideration of the wishes and likes of other listeners. Leading articles in newspapers and reports of discussions by some Education Boards tend in the same direction. One writer, for example, would abolish jazz and swing and substitute classical; another would abolish all classical and give the other classes of music. Newspaper editors write about our "poor" programmes and ask the authorities to take a lesson from Australia. They also complain of "too many records" and ask for more personal presentations. (I wonder, sir, if it would be possible at some time to conduct a trial to see if listeners can really tell a recording from a personal appearance?).

And some of our Boards of Education. I'm afraid their remarks are not based upon personal knowledge of the type of programme put over during the children's sessions. One member wants "Inspector Scott" stuff cut off the programmes because it's unsuitable for children; but shouldn't his children be in bed when that particular item comes on? I know a leading member in the teaching profession who is very fond of such fiction—would you deprive him of his enjoyment? And as to scrapping "The Fourth Form at St. Percy's": to be logical, all of our Wodehouse and Jenkins books should be banned by the censor.

I feel pretty sure the NBS appreciate constructive criticism, but most of what we read and hear is of little value as an attempt to improve the Service. Let's have more toleration and constructive criticism based on the varied likes of New Zealand's million listeners. That's why I suggest this competition. I'm perfectly sure no one who has even been connected with radio programme production will enter.

Meanwhile Professor Shelley and Mr. Scrimgeour are doing pretty well.

—H. D. MULLON (New Plymouth).

Sir,—I read so many letters in your columns and in the daily papers complaining of the programmes presented by the Broadcasting Services that I feel it is high time another note was struck, so wish to say that I for one am well satisfied with the fare provided. Certainly if I had the arrangement of the programmes myself for myself there is a lot I should alter, cutting some items out altogether and altering the times of others; but there are some three hundred and fifty thousand other licence-holders to be considered as well. I reckon that the programme organisers are doing a good work and doing it well.

I have a quarrel also with those people who keep complaining of the cost

of the licence, 25/- per year. Let us see what we get for this extortionate (?) fee. Four main stations and four commercial stations on the air for eighteen hours a day. Four secondary stations closing at 10 p.m. instead of 12, and several smaller local stations on the air in the evenings only with additional Australian stations thrown in; all these open to owners of broadcast sets only. For those with "dual" or "all-wave" sets there are hundreds of foreign stations as well, some of which can be heard at any hour during the day or night. Surely people who complain of the charge for this service — a fraction over three farthings a day — have lost all sense of proportion.

If space is available I should like to suggest that people take *The Listener* regularly, look it through, and ear-mark all items in which they are interested and arrange to listen to them. Do not ask Mr. and Mrs. Jones for bridge on that particular night, or run over to Auntie Mary's to see how little Bobby is getting on with the mumps just at the time announced for your special item. Those who go to the set and twiddle the knobs just when the spirit moves them expecting something to suit their individual taste are bound to be disappointed. I find it a good idea to look through each day's programme the evening before and make a supplementary list of the items I wish to hear. If we use our sets intelligently, we shall soon get our money's worth—yes, even that dreadful three farthings a day.—HARRY R. GOLDSMITH (Takapuna).

### MODERN MUSIC

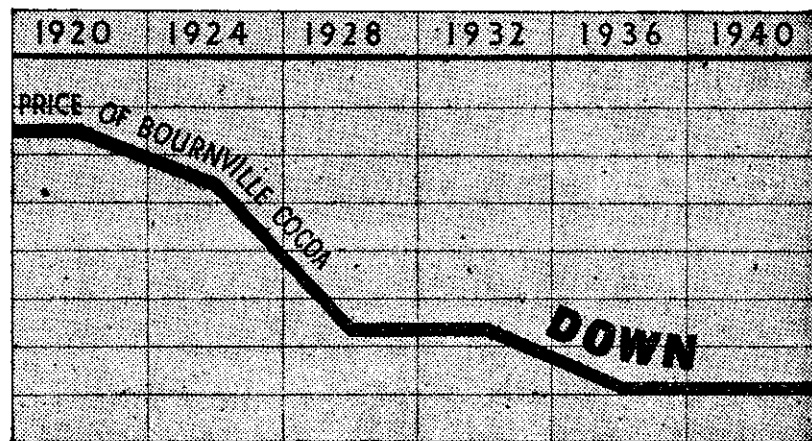
Sir,—I have read with great interest the articles on Modern Music, or "Swing" in your paper. To me it's like a politician telling a baker how to bake bread to read the views of Mr. Austin and L.R.M. Why must people who obviously know nothing of Swing Music criticise it? Mr. Austin is unknown to me, though I am a musician with years of experience with dance bands. He has never cropped up in our little world, so how can he speak with authority on "Swing?"

The trouble is that people think that "Nursie, Nursie" is swing music, and then compare it with one of the great works. This type of tune is played because it is simple and the public can understand it. The ambition of dance musicians is to play swing as played by Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, etc., and to us this is the highest form of art, not the lowest. Also to be able to play this music, one's musical ability would have to be colossal. In this entire country there wouldn't be one single man, straight musician or otherwise good enough to play 4th trumpet or 4th saxophone in a band of that calibre. Does that seem like a low form of art?

There is one musician in New Zealand who once played in the New York Symphony Orchestra for a few weeks and could be there even now. Yet this player, with all his ability, would have to go to the "woodshed" for a long time before he could play for Benny Goodman's Band. No, one type of music is as good as another in my opinion, and if any man thinks that Swing Music is beneath his dignity, let him try to play it, and he'll be lost in the first eight bars.

—R. LESTER (Wellington).

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