

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER

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The Printer Tells The Tale

THE appearance of *The Changing Land*, the last of the Pictorial Surveys issued by the Department of Internal Affairs, marks the end of one of the most interesting ventures of its kind ever undertaken by a British Government. If the experiment had failed technically it would still have been remarkable as an idea. It would remain as an heroic declaration of a Government's faith in the power and permanence of the word. For the Government, and not any individual, must be thanked for the decision to make our story our centennial monument. On the other hand, individuals must get credit for the plan—Dr. C. E. Beeby for recalling something like it in America, Mr. J. W. Heenan for an immediate realisation of the possibilities, and an amazingly rapid infection of other people with his own enthusiasm. Without that enthusiasm the project would never have been carried through.

It would of course be foolish to pretend that the result is beyond criticism. Here and there, but rarely indeed, mistakes in fact have crept in. Once or twice only—an amazing achievement in a series running to thirty numbers and about two thousand pictures—an illustration has been changed at the last moment without a corresponding change in the legend accompanying it. In one case—it will be a useful winter game to run this joke down—editor, illustrations editor, printer, reader and supervisor have been egregiously hoaxed. But it is permissible, and in fact possible, to draw attention to facts like these only because the general degree of accuracy, by all comparable New Zealand standards, is almost indecently high.

But it is not merely in these senses that the printer has told his tale. The first number of the series was something that has never been told in New Zealand before—the story of New Zealand before it was New Zealand; our land, in a literal sense, in the making. The final number contains the last words of Guthrie-Smith, who died almost before his manuscript was dry, and ended with the moving words printed in a separate panel on this page. In that sense the whole series is the "pilgrim's path" that three generations of New Zealanders have now trodden.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

Letters sent to "The Listener" for publication should be as brief as possible and should deal with topics covered in "The Listener" itself. Correspondents must send their names and addresses even when it is their wish that these should not be published. We cannot undertake to give reasons why all or any portion of a letter is rejected.

DINNER OR DAVENTRY?

Sir,—I purchase *The Listener* solely to procure the programmes so that I can know what to avoid and what to listen to, as my time is limited. However, as I have written before, the broadcasting authorities are having a nice game with the shareholders who pay so dearly (the highest fees in the world) for the privilege of listening—to say nothing of their breach of faith with your publication.

Take Sunday, 16th February, as an example. The 1YA programme for 2 p.m. had listed music by Haydn: The Oxford Symphony. Not only was this item omitted without explanation, or apology, but 2YA had listed for the same hour music by Handel from "Judas Maccabaeus" (sung by the Sheffield Choir) and this also was not played. Surely it is the duty of some one at each station to see that

The Pioneer Passes

Within a hundred years of New Zealand history has the home of the pioneer been changed from untilled bareness to garden and green trees, been beautified by sorrow, joy, and toil. Simple or gentle such a home has been a nucleus of culture and continuity, a centre radiating the ancient virtues of hardihood and simplicity. The pioneer himself, stubborn to endure, strong to subdue, heroic to defy, has passed away. The day has come to him, as come it must to all, when time has sapped the sinews of youth and bowed the strength that could not tire. Over the home paddock to the House of God near by has the slow procession of his funeral moved. Along the pilgrim's path that every man must pass has he been borne. The verdict of the world on work and worth, what left undone, what done, has been pronounced. "His bones are dust, his tools are rust, his soul is with the saints we trust."—(H. Guthrie-Smith in "The Changing Land.")

an attempt is made to adhere to the published programme or else see that an explanation is made. Christchurch has offended in the same way on former occasions, so perhaps a slipshod method has crept into the stations and they need gingering up a bit. The listener with a limited time hates to be cheated out of what he may think the only worthwhile parts of the whole programme.

To-day also a change of system of relaying the Daventry broadcasts is announced. On week days but not on Sundays one relay is at 12.15, repeated again at 1.15. Now as one who can only hear this particular relay (as may many others) on Sundays, why are we to be robbed again? At 1.15 we are at dinner, and no wireless during meals is our plan. If it is thought that the 12.15 may interfere with the Church services, I will say, with all reverence, that any church service lasting over an hour and ten minutes should be cut off, especially on a hot summer morning.—H. ALEXANDER (Auckland).

(A correspondent who puts dinner before Daventry and both before the Holy Ghost is perhaps a little difficult to please.—Ed.)

AN EXPLANATION

Sir,—You seek an explanation in your issue of February 28, of the celebration of March 6 of the 66th anniversary of Maurice Ravel's birth on March 7, 1875. Perhaps 4YA's explanation is that on March

6 Ravel completed 66 years of life; this is the legal view. A man is 21 years of age on the day preceding his 21st birthday. On that birthday he begins his 22nd year. During the last war, a young lieutenant, who was to inherit great possessions when he was 25, was killed in France on the day before his 25th birthday. Was he 25, could he dispose by will of this property? The House of Lords held that he could; he was 25 at any time on the day he was killed in the afternoon; the law in this regard takes no account of parts of a day. There are other similar cases.—JOHN DOE (Auckland).

MODERN VERSE

Sir,—May I join in the discussion on modern verse? I read Anton Vogt's verse, and enjoyed it. Some of it, I thought, was excellent poetry, most of it very amusing satire, and all of it very clever. Altogether, a very readable volume, and full of meat. As I say, I found all these things, but I did not find that it was "difficult" or "obscure," as J.G.M. has apparently led "Fiat Lux" to suppose. Many of the passages required a careful reading and re-reading, and a deal of thought, but I found no "difficult" or "obscure" lines. This is just to convince "Fiat Lux" that this particular volume of modern poetry was neither difficult nor obscure. If "Fiat Lux" wants the simplicity and the "language" that common people can understand, without "any cult of obscurity," I would direct him to one of the old school. Browning is the name.—"MODERNIST" (Waipukurau).

VERBAL FLY FISHING

Sir,—Preserve me from poetesses. However, since "Neutral," boggling at the job of producing a 17-line Pindaric ode on the subject of "Tomato Blight," has beaten the pistol with her lush sonnet on "A Summer Night," here goes for my own on the same subject. I hope that's the last I hear about it:

"A SUMMER NIGHT"

(Freeman's Bay, Auckland, N.Z.)

The night is hot, the moon is like a red
Just ripe tomato, and the breath of flowers
Is baffled by a local sewage bed . . .
(If "Neutral" only knew how many hours
It takes to write a something something sonnet.)
Now if the subject were, let's say,
The anti-classic bee in "Neutral's" bonnet,
Or snobs, or amateur poets who play
At writing flowery sonnets, I'd be glad
To waste the time. The only consolation
Is now there's only three more lines to add.
And if you knew the verbal constipation
I've suffered writing this, I'm sure you'd quite
Appreciate the fact that I don't care whether it scans,
rhymes or makes sense, and that further, I'm fed to
the teeth with "Neutral" and the whole idea of
writing a sonnet on "A Summer Night."

—"WINCHESTER" (Auckland).

GARDEN TALKS

Sir,—I am right on the side of "Hope" in asking for an extension of time for the gardening talks. These talks have been considerably curtailed, which looks very much like robbing Paul to pay your Peter, rather than the other way about. I don't say old Paul, because so many of our young and middle-aged people of both sexes are gardening enthusiasts. These gardeners are surely doing a war service in trying to grow more and better vegetables, in the pursuit of which many of them have much to learn and many pertinent questions to ask. Why not give these honest workers and well-wishers a greater measure of encouragement?—"ONE OF THEM" (Whangarei).

MORAL REARMAMENT.

We have had numerous direct and indirect appeals to print articles on "Moral Rearmament." In reply, we must point out: (1) that *The Listener* is a secular and not a religious journal; (2) that moral rearmament has been preached in all the churches since the beginning of Christendom; (3) that the Oxford Group section of Christians must do what all other groups do, viz., provide their own engines and their own moral steam.—Ed.