

"STORY OF THREE LOVES"

Sir,—Unfortunately, like many other Wellington people, I had seen and enjoyed the film *Story of Three Loves* long before I read "Jno's" criticism. Critics need a shaking up from time to time. "Jno" appears to have been almost unmoved on seeing this film.

American films often make me fidget with exasperation. This film was a credit to M.G.M. It was on the *Sunset Boulevard* level. It was as good as the best English films in its way. Technically the film had several outstanding features. The Technicolor was really excellent, the sound was clear and beautiful, especially the piano in the first part, which had that fidelity and attack often lost in recorded music. Sound effects were presented perfectly and added to drama which held one's nerves tense with anticipation. The camera work and dramatic montage were also first-class.

The show was divided into three stories, each having about three players—all top-line stars. It was hard to say which was best. The last was perhaps the most dramatic, the first the most beautiful, and the second had the most romantic appeal. Each part could be the subject of a half-hour discussion.

It is not a good thing for a critic to give away the gist of the film story merely because he lacks the imagination to write an article on the character of the film. This film was one which would be most appreciated by the "grown-up" section of the audience. There was nothing trite in the dialogue or the sequences, except that which was meant to be so.

I am indebted to your film critic for certain details of the cast and for the name of the producer. There is no need for vague padding and irrelevant chatter in writing a film criticism; and it is a good thing if a critic keeps to the point and emphasises the good features with sincerity and direct comment.

ALEXANDER LEE (Wellington).

(Abridged.—Ed.)

GEOGRAPHY AND MUSIC

Sir,—Your inset paragraph on page 30 in *The Listener* of January 22 has got its geography wrong. Should "England" not read "Great Britain," as this famous Glasgow Orpheus Choir was also famous in its native land Scotland? The NZBS also commits the irritating mistake of the BBC—I heard an announcer relating to the public, among items of the Royal Christchurch Musical Society open air concert on Monday, January 18, that the hymn "Crimond" would be sung. Didn't she know that this is merely the name of the accompaniment air, but not a hymn, the music being that given to the world-famous 23rd Psalm of the Scottish Psalter—in fact, so famous a psalm that it has two other equally famous tunes, namely, Brother James's Air, and Strathcathro.

I was present at the Proclamation of Her Majesty at the Mercat Cross beside St. Giles in Edinburgh, and did not hear her proclaimed as "Queen of England," but "Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Dominions beyond the seas." *Vide* also British coinage!

HELEN MACKINNON
(Christchurch).

THE SHADY SIDE OF FLEET STREET

Sir,—May I express my whole-hearted admiration and gratitude for your much-needed editorial of January 15? My only regret is that, I fear, the offenders are too pachydermatous for your well-aimed shafts. One cannot withhold thankfulness that our own

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

New Zealand newspapers rarely descend to anything approaching such cheap caricaturing and exhibitionism. One can also assure the journalists concerned that the average Maori could teach them much in courtesy and breeding. There is surely a wisdom of the heart as well as of the head. Both are signally absent in this recent flagrant example of "the shady side of Fleet Street."

PAKEHA SHE (Dunedin).

Sir,—I trust that the Editors of the English papers who published the "diluted" reports of their journalists on the Waitangi ceremonies will be given an opportunity to read your excellent comments in the leading article of *The Listener*, January 15.

REWA GLENN (Wellington).

Sir,—I would like to congratulate you on your outstanding editorial concerning some of the overseas reporting of aspects of the Royal Tour. It is a thoughtful statement with considerably more perspicience than any other I have seen on the subject. I applaud your remarks about our attitude to our Maori people. I am sure every New Zealander, whatever his tribe, will applaud also.

While the immediate mischief is done by the columnists, I am more concerned about the attitude shown in the editorial comment in some of the papers. The patronising attitude of *The Times*, for instance, shows that there are still in high places those who are inclined to be "kindly" towards "us colonials." That is depressing, for there seems to be no cure for it. But an editorial such as yours serves to remind us, as New Zealanders, of things we are inclined at times to forget.

GORDON INGHAM (Waiheke).

PRONUNCIATION OF FOREIGN NAMES

Sir,—As an Esperantist I cannot leave unchallenged "Student's" statement that "there will be no need for Esperanto, as English is becoming the international language." I am afraid "Student" is overlooking some important points. English is probably the finest of the national languages, but any hope that it may be generally accepted as the international language is frustrated by two factors: first, the difficulty of mastering it (or any national language) quickly, and sufficiently well to think in it; and second, the prejudices and jealousies of other nations. Has "Student" forgotten that English has already been rejected, or has lost ground, in Eire, India, Israel, the Philippines and Egypt (where it has been replaced in the school curricula by French) and that speakers at UN conferences still use their own languages, if official, rather than yield to English? Esperanto avoids both these objections. Its mastery takes approximately a month for each year needed to master a national language; it meets with ease all the requirements of language; it has been international and neutral from its inception, and has been further moulded and polished by a considerable international usage. It is a keen and efficient tool, ready to the world's hand.

Since the war I have met a number of foreign Esperantists who, knowing several European languages, confess that English defeated them. They said (in the course of easy Esperanto conversation) that it was the pronunciation and spelling of English that held them up. Most of them were university graduates so, apart from a few bread-and-butter

phrases, what hope is there for the foreign man in the street? We Britons tend to think of all "international" communications as being between a Briton and a foreigner; but does "Student" seriously insist that if a Turk, a Finn and a Chinese wish to discuss business together, they must all learn English? Why? How?

Truth usually lies between extremes. Esperanto does not seek to replace any language, but to supplement them all. There may conceivably be room in this world for both English and Esperanto, not to mention French, Portuguese, Swedish, Arabic and the rest. But only Esperanto will be essentially international.

BRENDON CLARK

(Auckland).

(Abridged.—Ed.)

Sir,—May I say "Thank you" to I. R. Maxwell-Stewart for his "brief" reply to my letter? His statements have afforded me a good deal of amusement.

R.F. (Wellington).

Sir,—Your correspondent "Student" cannot agree with your other correspondents I. R. Maxwell-Stewart and "Angelene" on the pronunciation of either "Los" or "Angeles," and then makes the unqualified statement, "There will be no need for Esperanto as English is becoming the international language." Without rancour, may I correct him?

Certainly more and more people may be speaking various versions or dialects of English or broken English, but more qualifications than this are necessary before a language may be acceptable for international use. An international language must be phonetic (with no argument as to the pronunciation of "Los" or "Angeles"). It must be entirely neutral, giving no national advantages. It must be acceptable to East and West, and be easily learned by both. It must be flexible and capable of conveying the finest shades of meaning (exit Basic English) and above all, it must have the approval of the average citizen in all the different countries. Esperanto conforms to all these qualifications, and what is more, it is an organisation with fervent adherents in every country of the world. What better recommendation could any language have than this?

"Student" can confirm my statements at his own Esperanto Club in Palmerston North, and for the sake of accuracy in his future letters, I advise him to do this.

In conclusion, Sir, a petition with 16,000,000 signatures asking for Esperanto to be accepted as the official international language, is at present in the hands of Unesco, and will be considered at their next meeting in Montevideo this year. For the sake of the future of the world, let us hope and pray it will be successful.

NELSON HILL

(Wellington).

"THE TITFIELD THUNDERBOLT"

Sir,—Why no reference in "P.J.W.'s" review to the Wellington-Manawatu Railway? The parallel may not seem obvious at first sight, but fundamentally there is the same set-up, the enthusiasts who step in when authority falls down on its job, and the intense local patriotism.

Think what the National Film Unit could do with Palmer and his K-van dining-car, the stampede from the Pakakariki Hotel when the engine whistles, the record-breaking run of No. 9, and those heroes of my youth, the drivers with their sweeping moustaches.

It would have to be done in the local idiom, the dry documentary approach—I am not suggesting an attempt to transplant the English whimsy. But what a film it would make!

W.M.R. (Havelock North).

HOME-PRESERVED FRUIT

Sir,—I cannot agree with your correspondent E. L. Tapsfirth that home-preserved fruit is cheaper than tinned—unless the fruit is home-grown. Even then, with sugar the price it is and electric power an almost prohibitive luxury, I very much doubt that it would be cheaper.

I grow my own fruit and bottle it, but still think it might be cheaper to buy; and those who should know declare that all the essentials of fresh fruit are retained by modern methods of canning.

Z.H. (Otahuhu).

THE ROYAL TOUR

Sir,—I would like to thank the NZBS most sincerely for the excellent work they have done in broadcasting the Royal Tour, for the hours of work and organisation involved. It cannot be easy to stand and fill in gaps, as some of the announcers have had to do while waiting for events to take place, with pattering of interest to the listening public. Again, many thanks.

TOMMY (Invercargill).

Sir,—After reading your interesting article on the work of the Talks Department and their outstanding service to the public, may I draw attention to the good work done by the NZBS in general? Their first-class coverage throughout the Royal Tour, commented on by overseas critics, must have meant endless organisation. No country is better served than New Zealand.

COUNTRY LISTENER

(Rangitikei).

Sir,—Congratulations to NZBS commentators who covered the Royal Tour. They told us just what we wanted to know.

GRATEFUL (Auckland).

Sir,—May I give thanks to all in the NZBS who made possible such clear and wonderful broadcasts? Commentators and announcers gave us, the invisible crowds, eyes to see with, and sometimes they were misty eyes, so moving were their word pictures. We can say truly that we journeyed royally with our Queen and her Consort. May I say three cheers for the commentators and all who could not cheer themselves?

ONE WHO NEVER MISSED A BROADCAST

(Masterton).

A BOOK REVIEW

Sir,—I was disappointed in reading the review by "P.J.W." of Alan Paton's book *Too Late the Phalarope* in your issue of January 22. To my mind the review inadequately describes a very fine piece of writing. Even if opinions differ as to the standard of the work, my main criticism is that your reviewer has plainly failed to read the book, his version of the pinning of the note to the door being completely at variance with the facts of the story. If he has so lamentably failed to grasp this point, one is then forced to consider the value of the rest of his review and the thoroughness of his insight.

D. G. SMITH (Rotorua).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS
J.A.B. (Otago).—Not until June.
Curious (Nelson).—"Saturday's child" is the version recognised by the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.
R.G. (Wellington).—It would be more suitable for the journal which published the story.