

## THE DESCRIPTIVE ATLAS

Sir,—As assistants who shared in the work on the original project for a Historical Atlas of New Zealand, we feel very grateful to Professor F. L. W. Wood for enlightening your readers as to the true significance of the new plans for a New Zealand Atlas. From our knowledge and experience of the work involved in the preparation of historical maps and letterpress, we are convinced that the new plans, the new committee and those commissioned to do the new work cannot achieve the high standards of scholarship aspired to by all trained historians and achieved by the Department of Internal Affairs in many of its past publications.

In the past, wartime conditions, Government parsimony and a policy of drift denied to those engaged upon this work the resources needed to complete it and filled them with frustration and at times even hopelessness. Now it seems to have been decided to reject the large amount of research already done, and the awareness of limitations, possibilities and pitfalls gained by the former staff.

The descriptive Atlas claims to embody the earlier Atlas's aim "to provide within the limits set by cartography and historical research a comprehensive record of New Zealand's development from the beginning of its known history to the present." But this claim is clearly contradicted by the subsequent account of the proposed atlas's far too meagre contents and page size. For instance, how many aspects of New Zealand farming or industry can be shown on two pages 10in. by 12in.? And on this page most exploration journeys would be meaningless—it could not attempt to show relief; the lines of exploration trips would be quite inaccurate, and many would appear ridiculously short (e.g., those on the very difficult mountain country of Westland). Let the reader try to think of fitting the South Island's eighty-odd exploration journeys into a map of this size.

Further, if the page size is to be 10in. by 12in. (the same size as *The Listener* page), it would accommodate Canterbury province quite comfortably on the proposed scale of 1:1,000,000; but, on that scale, there are over 30 inches between Stewart Island and Cape Farewell.

The excuse that the original atlas scheme has been dropped because technical skills such as lettering have changed in recent years seems a quite ill-informed attempt to confuse the public. In many sections, research had been almost completed, while draughting work had been scarcely begun. And surely it is naive to suggest that demand for the original Atlas would depend on centennial publicity, rather than on its own merits.

We are left wondering who are the people of New Zealand who will find the Descriptive Atlas "of inestimable value." At least we must warn the serious student that this is the death, not the reincarnation, of the Historical Atlas.

N. TAYLOR,  
M. B. BOYD (Wellington).

## SPELLING OF WHANGAREI

Sir,—As one born in Whangarei (in 1874) I was interested in the remarks (*Listener*, March 22) of my old schoolmate A. H. Reed. With regard to the pronunciations there in 1887, which he quotes, I do not consider these can be taken as a guide to how the name should be spelt. Might I point out that Whangarei was first settled in 1839, and that long before 1887 the name, both spelling and pronunciation, had been

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thrashed out with the Maoris and the spelling decided, first as WANGAREI and later as WHANGAREI.

I do not know by whom or when the H was inserted. The first record of its use, which I can trace, is in a marriage certificate issued by the Church of England there in 1861, and about that time onward the 12 members of the family (my father's generation) all used the H in the name.

Personally, I never saw the name spelt without the H until 1891. Joining the staff of the local Bank of New Zealand I was surprised to find the only domiciling stamp in use was spelt WANGAREI. The Bank opened in Whangarei in the 1870s, but whether the lettering of the stamp was accidental or intentional I do not know. My father (New Zealand-born, 1830) settled in Whangarei late in the year 1842, was a Maori linguist of some repute, also a registered native interpreter. He and many others looked askance at people pronouncing the name in such a manner as Mr. Reed quotes.

I would like to add to Mr. Reed's list of users a few culled from old letters, documents, etc., I hold, giving the different spellings and dates used by a number of prominent people, etc., They are as follows:

WANGAREE  
Supreme Court, Auckland 1852  
Power of Attorney 1843  
WHANGAREI  
Church of England Marriage Certificate 1861  
WANGAREI  
Legal Document 1853  
James Baker 1843  
Rev. James Buller 1843  
James Busby 1844  
Gilbert Mair 1843  
Hone Heke 1843  
Tirarau (Wairoa Chief) 1844  
Gisborne, Col. Secy.'s Office 1856  
C. W. Richmond, ditto 1856  
W. J. Lewington 1843  
WANGARI  
George Clarke 1843  
E. Baker 1849  
Governor Fitzroy 1844  
H. C. Holman 1848  
Wm. Beddington 1851  
Legal Deed 1849

GILBERT H. MAIR (Brown's Bay).

## "THE SEEKERS"

Sir,—There would appear to be little hope remaining for those who expected that *The Seekers* would portray the early New Zealand scene with any worthwhile degree of authenticity. Indeed, as the months of preparation pass it becomes increasingly obvious that whatever may have been the author's intention the producers have done their utmost to distort a story which could have given a fairly actual picturisation of a part of our country as it was 100 years ago.

Of the choice for the chief female character there has been sufficient criticism to show that the explanation given for the exclusion of Maori girls is likely to prove a most unpopular move. The acting of the young girl in *Broken Barrier* was so good and so natural that one must refuse to accept a dictum based on a false conception that Maori girls are not photogenic. As to dancing ability, surely a member of our native race who has seen and participated in the various indigenous dances could perform any of them with greater ease and grace than would a stranger to these shores. It would seem that authentic Maori dance has not been intended for this role, for to judge by the posture and costume of the person chosen, especially as depicted on the cover of *The Listener* of February 26, some form of dance full of sex implications has been substituted.

The producers seem never to have become acquainted with the fact that among Maoris solo dancing with sex significance is unknown.

The Maori meeting house shown in the cover picture is another instance of the general lack of detail which marks this film's production. Here we have ornamentation of a kind that was surely never seen on any Maori building of pre-pakeha days, and which even outdoes the worst examples of modern incorporation of incongruous and ugly features. The theme of house decoration for the film may be intended as a compliment to Miss Laya Raki, for it has a distinctly Indonesian aspect. As for the bowls lying at the dancer's feet: are they poor copies of native wooden utensils without the usual carved ornamentation? If they are of earthenware, here is another gross misrepresentation, for it is generally known that the Maoris had no knowledge of any branch of the ceramic art. One could, even from the few glimpses so far given, go on with justifiable criticism. The screening will give us cause for laughter and for serious thought.

M. B. SOLJAK (Auckland).

(Abridged. Further correspondence on this subject should now be postponed until the film has been screened.—Ed.)

## SAMOAN POLITICAL HISTORY

Sir,—I am engaged, under the auspices of the Australian National University, in research in the field of Samoan political history, 1830 to the present. While working in New Zealand, I should like to get in touch with anyone having in his possession unpublished letters or other papers pertaining to this subject.

R. P. GILSON

(Victoria University College).

## FUNCTIONAL ENGLISH

Sir,—“L.J.W.” finds Mr. Vogt's ideas (*English for Teachers*) “not entirely novel,” but I am surprised that he does not recall where they have been expressed “with such vigour and clarity” before. Does this help?

“This is the first class in English, spelling and philosophy, Nickleby,” said Squeers... “Now, then, where's the first boy?”

“Please, sir, he's cleaning the back parlour window,” said the temporary head of the philosophical class.

“So he is, to be sure,” rejoined Squeers. “We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C-i-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a caseament. When the boy knows this out of book, he goes and does it. It's just the same principle as the use of the globes. Where's the second boy?”

“Please, sir, he's weeding the garden,” replied a small voice.

“To be sure,” said Squeers, by no means disconcerted, “So he is. B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, tin, bottin, n-e-y, nay, bottinney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby.”

Vigour and clarity, surely?

FANNY (Lower Hutt).

## WORLD AFFAIRS

Sir,—Congratulations to Mr. J. D. McDonald on his splendid talk in *Look-out* on Saturday, March 13. It is understandably difficult for untravelled New Zealanders to gain a clear perception of world affairs. Many are somewhat guiltily aware of apathy resulting from this poor understanding of the world situation, but incline to the view that we are isolated bystanders watching events over which we have no control. Mr. McDonald tactfully deprives us of this excuse and indicates the power this

small country could exert by influence and example. Our material advantages can be conducive to selfish wallowing and are liable to blunt our mental outlook. Such a well expressed view as the one presented by Mr. McDonald can do much to counteract this attitude and bring us to a better appreciation of our responsibilities.

J. H. MURRAY (Hikurangi).

## LEARNING TO LISTEN

Sir,—A correspondent wishes to know when Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was performed in New Zealand. I heard it twice in Christchurch about 1950-1951. It was performed by the Christchurch Royal Musical Society, and by the same society and combined choral societies of Christchurch, accompanied by the National Orchestra. The performances were magnificent and were listened to by thousands of people with rapt attention.

M.L. (Auckland).

## MUSIC FOR BANDS

Sir,—I should like to support Mr. Heawood. Personally, I like band music, but when it comes to listening to music written for a string orchestra, played by a brass band, I think the brass band is not fulfilling the composer's ideas.

A brass band enthusiast of my acquaintance once claimed that band music is the music of the New World, of the new century; and now that the old masters are transposed into brass band arrangements, symphony orchestras will become redundant. It appears that others think along the same lines. In listening to a regular session of band music I sometimes feel that some conductors and players in brass bands merely show their technical ability by performing music other than that which was composed for, and is suitable for, brass bands.

J.M. (Gisborne).

## BLOND BARITONE

Sir,—As apparently none of Nelson Eddy's New Zealand admirers has written to you with regard to the article in *Open Microphone* in your issue of March 5, I would like to point out that a statement that Nelson Eddy was to visit this country along with Jeannette MacDonald in 1953 was made also in Dominion newspapers. On hearing of this, the singer himself wrote in January last year: “There seems to be some mistake regarding my appearance with Jeannette MacDonald in New Zealand, I am not planning to leave this country this year.”

With regard to Allan Eddy, the Australian baritone, he is certainly not Nelson Eddy's brother, as the latter has no brother. In my hearing Allan Eddy claimed to be a cousin, but when asked by the Nelson Eddy International Club if this were so, Nelson Eddy answered with a categorical “No.”

NELSON EDDY FAN (Dunedin).

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

K.J.H. (Wellington).—Correspondence closed.

W.L.W. (Whangamata) and I.R.M.S. (Wellington).—Sorry, your letters arrived after the correspondence had been closed.

Take-What-From-Where. (Eastbourne).—Apologies and regrets now; the explanation lies in a coincidence of mishaps, which can be detailed for you if you ring the station manager.

G. T. Coombes (Balclutha).—(1) Handel's Organ Concerto No. 2 in D Flat, July 28, 1951, Wellington Town Hall; soloist, Charles Martin. (2) At Auckland, the difficulty of the pitch of the organ has yet to be overcome; at Christchurch, that of the position of the console, below stage level remains forbidding.