

SPELLING OF WHANGAREI

Sir,—In the years to come, the Maori language will be replaced by English and will, as Sir Peter Buck has stated, become only a subject of academic study. But the Maori place-names will always survive. We shall always have Rotorua, Waitangi, Whangaroa, Tauranga, etc., and it is most desirable that these names should not be maltreated in pronunciation as many of them are today, as they offer the only means of showing the real beauty of the language.

We learn from Grey's Mythology that some of the place names in Taranaki were given by Turi-Aotea after his canoe, Waingongoro where he snored, Tangahoe after his canoe paddle, while a traveller named Hau is recorded in an old cradle-song as having named the places further down. "When he came to a river he found it wide, and so he called it Whanganui. The next water was turbid and so he named it Whangaeahu. Then a tree was felled, and so Turakina, etc. Finally, when he saw the shining waters of the lake, his eyes glistened with delight, and so Wairarapa. That was the rejoicing of your ancestor, O my daughter."

I have read with interest the letters in reference to Whangarei, and, at some risk, offer another contribution based upon the information given me recently by a well-known Ngapuhi man in whose district the place is situated. First of all, however, there is no word in Maori beginning with "Wanga," and this can be ruled out. "Wanganui" is the local pronunciation which would not be followed by other Maoris.

There are two words spelt "whanga," one a noun meaning a wide stretch of water, an estuary or river, and the other a verb meaning to "lie in wait." The story goes that in the days of old there were flying creatures in our land. Two of them, Rei-tu and Rei-pae, came up from Waikato, having arranged to meet near those hills called Manaia. Rei-pae, however, turned off to Kaipara and became an ancestor of the Ngatiwhahia tribe. The other, Rei-tu, waited for her, but then went on to Whangape, to become the ancestress of the Rarawa. The place where Rei-tu waited was known as "Whanga-a-Rei"—the waiting by Rei, and the name thus given is now Whangarei, and is pronounced "Whang-ah-ray."

WILLIAM W. BIRD
(Onehunga).

TRAGIC DESTINY

Sir,—If J. Malton Murray is a real person he shows amazing—in fact quite unbelievable—knowledge of the thought processes of Abraham and other people who lived three and four thousand years ago. But his letter of April 2 also informs us that he himself does not exist. For (he tells us), because all deities are "mental conceptions" they do not exist. Mr. Murray is certainly an idea in my mind—therefore . . . Well, this argument at least lets even people who cannot check up his theories about Abraham and the Bible with modern scholars, know how seriously to take any letter signed "J. Malton Murray."

A.M.R. (Christchurch).

Sir,—For years, in very frequent issues of *The Listener*, one J. Malton Murray has carried on a systematic anti-Christ campaign in the form of letters. Self-confessed apostate as he is, he's perfectly entitled to his views. If he wants to be anti-God he's free to live and die like the animals. But must your readers be nauseated with this one man's interminable advocacy of anti-Christianity? Surely you would not

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allow a single contributor to your editorial columns to preach Communism, for example, or free love, year after year? NO SAINT (Wellington).

(It is better to answer a man's opinions than to question his right to express them.—Ed.)

Sir,—So at last we know that J. Malton Murray has been a professing Christian but has fallen by the wayside. For him Christianity does not work. If Mr. Murray had accepted Jesus Christ and not Christianity he would have found that it worked, and his prayers would have been answered. The Apostle Paul stated, "For by Grace are ye saved, through Faith, and not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast."

Quite obviously Mr. Murray tried to work out his own salvation instead of letting God do it in His own appointed way through Jesus Christ. It may not be too late for Mr. Murray to put his trust in Jesus Christ and then he will discover that his prayers will be answered as mine and countless thousands of others have been answered. But till that happens Mr. Murray should not blame God or the Church for the position he is in today.

MURRAY F. SMITH (Auckland).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

MUSIC FOR BANDS

Sir,—My fellow townsman "J.M." protests against brass bands playing transcriptions of string orchestral music. But why?

As an organist of sorts I am perhaps open to the charge of being prejudiced in favour of orchestral transcriptions, but even so, how much of the untranscribed brass repertoire can stand firmly on the legs of its intrinsic musical merits? I would be hard put to it to mention even one such piece. Most of the brass tone-poems I hear in broadcast band programmes are mere pretentious trash. Most brass marches (apart from Sousa's) are just bad hymn tunes, especially in their trio sections.

Miss Winifred Styles told us in *Music Magazine* that the viola has a regrettably small repertoire, which the violist has to fill out with vocal and instru-

mental transcriptions. So it is, surely, with the brass band repertoire.

But must it always be so? Can't our rising New Zealand composers be induced to write serious music for brass combinations—if possible, uncacophonically? F. K. TUCKER (Gisborne).

Sir,—I hope Mr. Heawood and "J.M." (Gisborne) will admit that a good brass band, whatever the music, is much better to hear than an indifferent orchestra. Do they not find also that, in a good brass band, with perfect intonation, the harmonics supply the full range of tonal colour? I often play myself a brass band record to supply the warmth and precision lacking in a preceding orchestral recording. It would be most enlightening to most of us, if we could have an analysis by Sir Malcolm Sargent of the pleasure he gets in conducting brass bands, which he has done quite often in transpositions and otherwise, and, I believe, solely for the pleasure he experiences in doing so. Personally, after the first 70 years, we seem to flit from flower to flower, musically, remembering the tit-bits and forgetting the tedium which can, with the help of the willing knob, be so easily transposed. In the latter (tit-bit) connection, who will ever forget the purity and delicacy of Mr. Braithwaite's interpretation of the Jupiter Symphony at LYC on April 8? Finally, even in a poor combination, think of the pleasure the performers get (or are striving for) and thank the NZBS for the opportunity given us to make our choice for listening. WILL CRANSTON (Auckland).

THE RUMINANT HARE

Sir,—In reply to Varian J. Wilson, in the experiment of Morot, confirmed by Eden, Southern and Taylor, the caged rabbits had free access to fresh food. They were prevented only from obtaining the soft pellets passed from the anus. These rabbits died because it was necessary for the food to pass twice through the alimentary canal.

Mr. Wilson seems to be under the impression that the caged rabbits were forced to eat the pellets and had no other food. This was not so. They were

given fresh food, and prevented from eating the pellets. His example, therefore, of the springboks is beside the point. The springboks in the van of the herd, like locusts, ate all the green feed, while the animals in the rear were reduced to eating the droppings, because there was nothing else to eat.

Of course, rabbits and hares do not regurgitate their cud, as do the herbivora, but they nevertheless do chew that which had previously been partly digested. They literally chew their cud for their lives.

D. S. MILNE (Lower Hutt).

Sir,—In my Scofield Reference Bible I have come across this interesting footnote to the sixth verse, Leviticus, Chapter 11: "Hebrew, 'arnebeth,' an unidentified animal, but certainly not a hare, possessing as it is said to, characteristics not possessed by the hare. The supposed error in the text is due entirely to the translators' assumption that the English hare and the ancient 'arnebeth' were identical."

SCOFIELD (Christchurch).

POETRY IN NEW ZEALAND

Sir,—With reference to the recent review of *New Zealand Poetry Yearbook*, 1953, by J. C. Reid, I would suggest that Mr. Reid's exception to the sexual, anatomical and associated imagery employed by J. R. Hervey, Anton Vogt, and myself springs from an acceptance by Mr. Reid of that rather irrational belief that the body is symbol and source of all evil. The significant fact that Mr. Reid has been at great pains to list the offending words points to a likely preoccupation at repressed levels.

One also suspects that Mr. Reid's missionary zeal ("New Zealand poets need encouragement less than vigorous criticism") has received an additional filip from recent contact with American "New World" culture, and that we are about to be subjected to a form of "moral McCarthyism."

As for the clever term "Spasmodics," I suppose one label condemns as well as another; one should not deny the critic his little act of creation—even if it is only the inventing of an ambiguous term. ROBERT THOMPSON (Auckland).

THE DESCRIPTIVE ATLAS

Sir,—Three letters have already appeared in your columns criticising the article on the "Descriptive Atlas" in *The Listener* of March 19: an answer to those criticisms is eagerly awaited. Moreover, until a precise and authoritative statement is issued by the New Zealand Atlas Committee, the *Listener* article must stand as the expression of Atlas policy.

As a former member of the Historical Atlas staff, I find that article incredible. For, if it is to be taken literally, it is evident that the magnificent conception and the very considerable achievements of the Historical Atlas are being thrown away. Further, that an attempt is being made to obscure this abandonment by thirty-two and sixpence worth of departmental camouflage.

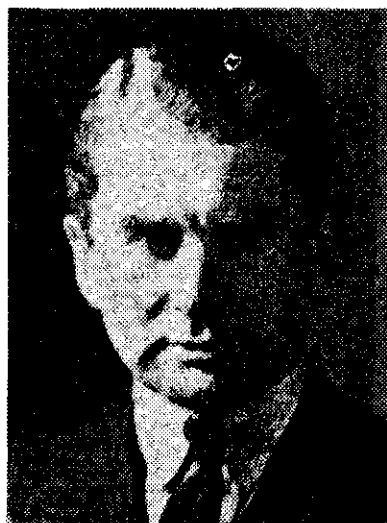
R. M. ROSS (Takapuna).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

A. M. Isdale (Thames).—Sorry, the correspondence cannot be reopened.

Christian (Otaki).—We have no protection or privilege which is not available to any other newspaper. There would certainly be no protection for us if we printed your letter. It is not an offence in this country for a man to proclaim himself an agnostic.

The Australian Federal Election



LEICESTER WEBB

THE Australian Federal General Election will be held on May 29, and to help New Zealanders to understand the issues four talks will be broadcast from YA and YZ stations at 9.15 p.m. on the four Thursdays preceding the election—the first of them on May 6. The speaker will be Leicester Webb, Reader in Political Science in the Australian National University, Canberra, and former Director of Stabilisation in New Zealand. Mr. Webb is expected to begin with an account of the party system in Australia, preferential voting, the "swinging" seats and developments in voting trends since 1951. He will go on to discuss parties and personalities—Mr. Menzies and Sir Arthur Fadden and the Liberal-Country Party alliance on the one hand, and Dr. Evatt and Mr. Calwell and the Labour Party on the other. Party policy and organisation will be examined and internal troubles mentioned. Mr. Webb will next consider issues old and new, compare the party programmes and survey the campaign. In the last talk he will sum up.