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RADIO REVIEW

The "Ancestral Face"

DAVID McLEOD'S 3YC talk, "Skye, Island of Colour," read with the slight Scottish burr of Basil Clarke, was of equal merit to similar things done by the BBC. It had the additional interest of presenting us with the island as seen by one of ourselves. But to think of the so-called "sober" Scot reeling in gay kilts till 4.0 and 7.0 a.m. makes us seem by contrast almost depressed. Beyond the enjoyment the programme brought, I could not help but wonder at the impulse which could pull a man back so far to find his own "ancestral face"—Skye having been a McLeod stronghold for 700 years. Others among us might almost as easily claim some portion in this tradition, but in truth we find ourselves belonging to all who have spoken, written or painted in a way that raises a sympathetic echo within us, whether it be the Scot of the ballad or the Welsh of the song. There must, however, be some advantage and satisfaction in being able to turn back to this more solid core in time and place, something which gives life a slightly more definite meaning.

Report from Africa

IT was not surprising that Colin Willis's "Report on Kenya" should redound to the credit of British colonists. Britain is a Prospero with the problem of an emerging Caliban on her hands. Prospero is always admirable; but the intractable Caliban feeling a yoke, however light, remains a moral problem. We cannot answer for Kenya; still we may not feel inclined to nod sagely at the administration of our own mother country. Violence and terrorism, ugly as they are, are often a corrupt fruit whose causes it is our job to discover. Consider, for example, the unrest of so very many native colonial populations at the present time. Is evil and violence endemic to native populations? While Mr. Willis suggests that the settlers have been there so long that they might be its new native population one did not hear how the Kikuyu themselves regarded this statement. Without belittling the benefits the British have conferred upon this people, one must not forget that the greatest and most important gift any race can give another

is simply that interior sense of freedom from whose security a people may direct their own destiny. —Westcliff

News from a Festival

▲UCKLAND'S Festival of the Arts has had unusually good coverage this year. Apart from the expected and acceptable broadcasts of the National Orchestra concerts, Jan Smet-erlin's recitals, *The Dream of Gerontius*—a triumphant collaboration between Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin—and the two operas *The Telephone* and *The Man from Tuscany*, there has been a wide variety of comment on and description of such arts as can be treated only indirectly until we have television. Public symposiums on the ballet and the Wellington Unity Theatre's *The Wild Duck*, have been heard, as well as addresses at the opening of the School of Architecture exhibition and talks and viewers' reactions at the momentous Frances Hodgkins exhibition. The presentation of such sessions showed sensitive editing and an easy assimilation of lessons learnt from BBC documentaries. In each case, just enough hesitations were left in to suggest spontaneity, but not so many as to reveal the incoherency which often assails even the most intelligent speaker when faced with a microphone and lacking the protection of a script.

Changing Background

BACKGROUND TO THE NEWS began in 1YA's *Feminine Viewpoint*, spread to the evening session, and thence to southern stations. For five years, the Geography Department of Auckland University has provided thirteen speakers to give first-hand descriptions of places in the headlines. In Dr. Cumberland's farewell talk last week, announcing the death of this feature, the wide coverage he described must have surprised even regular listeners. Now *Background to the News* is to be replaced by a national programme, which, it appears, is to be a commentary on the news—a kind of junior *Lookout*—rather than a background to the news, despite its appropriation of the Auckland title. There is no reason why this should not be an acceptable additional session, yet the distinctive character of *Background*, which provided a new, immensely popular approach to geography, has been destroyed to create it.

—J.C.R.

A Little Nugget

ST. JOHN ERVINE'S *Jane Clegg* (produced by the Belfast studios of the BBC) I thought a little nugget of

"I KNOW WHAT I THINK . . ."

THE BUTTERFLY THEME

"MADAME BUTTERFLY" has always seemed to me one of the great artistic legends of the Pacific, fit to be ranked with *Maui*, and "*Moby Dick*" and "*For the Term of His Natural Life*"; particularly the hidden chorus at the end of the second act, for me the most pathetic moment of the drama. It calls to mind all the tragedy of the meeting and mingling and misunderstanding of races that occurs around the shores and islands of the Pacific. These thoughts were inevitably aroused by the performance from 4YC on a recent Sunday evening of Puccini's opera. But I put most of them down to the force and beauty of the singing of the Italian principals, and the chorus of the St. Cecilia Academy in Rome. In particular Renata Tebaldi as Cho-Cho-San brought out the fatalism of the Butterfly theme in the love duet at the end of the first act. It was easy to hear that she, like most operatic sopranos, enjoyed singing Puccini's music and playing what must be one of the most admirable heroines in grand opera. —Miya-Sama

(Readers are invited to submit comments, not more than 200 words in length, on radio programmes. A fee of one guinea will be paid after publication. Contributions should be headed "Radio Review." Unsuccessful entries cannot be returned.)