

BETTER RECEPTION

Sir,—One must admire your attempts to help the New Zealand listener get improved reception during the winter evenings, when short-wave reception over any distance is not possible. No matter what ends your listeners go to to try and improve reception, they will find it of little use due to the severe Australian interference. Though you state that the NZBS stations in their primary area provide "impeccable" signals, interference on local stations is often severe enough to cause distortion.

The main trouble is the interference from Australia. You state that Australia has many stations and is forced to occupy the whole medium wave band. Yes, Australia has 151 stations in operation and New Zealand 29. Australia has 2½ million listener licences and New Zealand one-half million. Therefore, Australia has five times the stations, and five times the receivers that are in New Zealand. When we consult the frequencies assigned to the stations, we find that Australia has 59 stations on clear frequencies (on which no other Australian or New Zealand station operates), and New Zealand on the other hand has only one—2YA. This co-called "agreement" is the cause of the severe interference in New Zealand. In North America, the United States has 2508 stations, yet its neighbours are not forgotten; Canada has eight clear channels, Mexico 11, and Cuba and the Bahamas have also interference-free frequencies.

The remedy is: for the Australian stations which use frequencies on which New Zealand stations operate to be forced to provide directional antenna systems, so that the signal is "shielded" away from New Zealand; for the YA stations at least to be given clear channels; for Australian stations which are remote controlled relays and rebroadcast a key station from sign on to sign off, to be made booster relays on the same frequency. In Adelaide, ABC stations in Woomera, Alice Springs, Port Lincoln and Crystal Brook all relay the same programme, yet use four frequencies.

The Australian Broadcasting Control Board has recently granted Adelaide stations an increase in power to 2000w., which has resulted in more extensive interference on 1XH, 2XA and 1XN. Melbourne stations have been granted an increase to 5000 watts, which will cause further interference.

Australia has taken over every broadcast band frequency except three, one of them being used by 2YA, so that chances of interference-free reception of New Zealand stations is now not possible, the only remedy being a further reshuffle of frequencies, with New Zealand stations getting their rightful share of clear channels.

ARTHUR T. CUSHEN (Invercargill).

(Australia has operated broadcasting stations on every channel of the broadcasting band for many years, and requests for a reasonable number of "clear channels" for New Zealand stations have not been met. Adjustments to frequency allocations have, however, been made on both sides to reduce mutual interference. While most countries co-operate at international radio conferences they still have the sovereign right to operate their radio stations as they wish, and they cannot be compelled to leave channels free for other countries.—Ed.)

WITHOUT DOGMA

Sir,—Your correspondent Jean Irvine in her letter concerning my review of *The Quaker Approach to Contemporary Problems*, has raised several important points of criticism. The field she has opened up is a large one. A full answer would probably require a detailed analysis of the historical development of Protestant and Catholic Christianity. I

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cannot offer that; but I will try to answer a few of her objections.

She asks, "Can confused thinking lead to such a remarkable unity of action as the Quakers show?" I would not dare to suppose that members of the Society of Friends cannot, by submitting their wills to the will of God, perform acts of invaluable service to their fellow men. But this is hardly the point I raised; that, as set forward in the book under review, Quakerism has become in a large degree a religion of social welfare. I would like to express my point of view more fully.

I am of the opinion that those sections of the believing Christian community who lay very great stress on works and do not examine their faith intellectually may, while aiding their fellow men in material things, weaken by confused thinking the structure of values which makes such acts of charity possible. How often is work for social welfare or the abolition of war (I am myself pacifist by conviction) not based in part upon an anxiety that such works alone can save mankind, yet that the forces of destruction are too virulent to be overcome?

The three parts of the Creed which your correspondent quotes as so difficult to give intellectual assent to, are in my opinion essential parts of a view of the world which removes that anxiety. The promise of the resurrection of the body implies that man as he essentially is, a hybrid of spirit and animal, not a ghost or Platonic Form, shall live at one with God through the mystery of the Resurrection of Christ. The doctrine of the descent into hell implies the release of all imprisoned souls, not from the world of sense, but from the forms of death and corruption which afflict us all. The doctrine of the communion of saints asserts precisely that mutual help of all, living or dead, who are in God's will, which sustains the universal Church, including the Society of Friends.

These are deep waters; but we are told that Much-Afraid passed over the river singing. No one could tell the meaning of her song; for it was the expression of a private joy. But the exercise of common faith and a most meticulous reasoning by the first Fathers of the Church gave Bunyan the material for his Christian allegory.

JAMES K. BAXTER (Wellington).

"BORIS GODOUNOV"

Sir,—M. T. Dixon claims that the Rimsky-Korsakov version of *Boris Godounov* is now universally accepted. This is scarcely true. Admittedly, it is much more frequently performed than Moussorgsky's original, but each score exhibits different qualities and each has its admirers. Rimsky-Korsakov's conception is exotic and richly orchestrated; Moussorgsky's much more stark and grim. But this discussion has as yet only scraped the surface of the complications that *Boris* involves. Moussorgsky in reality left two versions of the work, and Rimsky-Korsakov made two arrangements. Producers are free to choose scenes from any of these versions, and both selection and order of scenes constantly vary. The production mentioned by Mr. Dixon (almost certainly Sadler's Wells, 1935), was Moussorgsky's first version. This, in largely the same form, was also produced at the Metropolitan, New York, early last year. Moussorgsky's second version was produced at Covent Garden in 1948, although last year the Rimsky-Korsakov score (his

second, with some changes) was reverted to. Both Moussorgsky versions have therefore been produced within recent years.

For further information, I would refer anyone interested to the following numbers of the English magazine *Opera*:—February, 1953, p. 117; March, 1953, p. 184; July, 1953, p. 420. I believe that the Covent Garden Opera Book of *Boris* also discusses fully the various versions of the work.

JEREMY COMMONS (Auckland.)

POETRY IN NEW ZEALAND

Sir,—It is a pleasure to agree with Mr. Baxter that love is a noble theme and rightly the favourite theme of the lyric poet. But love is primarily a relationship between persons and only secondarily a biological phenomenon. The trouble with some of our poets is that in their account of love the biological element is given pride of place. And this is not only bad philosophy, it is poor art. As Jean Grutten remarks in his book *The Blessed Virgin*: "Even those who describe guilty love, if they set any store by artistic veracity—Euripides, for instance, or Racine or Proust—must preserve a certain chastity of expression. Here again it is true that the flesh avails nothing. A mystery is known only to the spirit. Folly or indiscretion, cynicism or a mistaken desire to return to reality, may strip the spirit of its veil, present it in stark nakedness; but the result is no return to nature, merely a bastard monstrosity of perverted spirit and uninhabited flesh."

G.H.D. (Palmerston North).

SPELLING OF WHANGAREI

Sir,—The documents which Mr. Alex Main quotes, and those in my possession, appear to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the "h" in the spelling was inserted in the late 1860s, most probably for the reason given by Mr. W. W. Bird, who points out that there is "no word in the Maori beginning with *Wanga*. Naturally everyone did not fall into line and adopt the change at once. Even as late as 1906 the local Post Office was using a brass cancelling stamp without the "h."

It would be interesting to know if and when the New Zealand Geographical Board confirmed the "change over," but I have known it not to confirm a change for at least 25 years. Mr. Bird's pronunciation, Whanga-ah-ray (if the "ay" is pronounced as in "day") corresponds exactly with my father's instruction 70 years ago.

I agree with Mr. A. Szigetvary that we need not keep to the "phonetic" spelling of the early missionaries. It is well known that many place names have changed both in spelling and pronunciation since the missionaries first interpreted them. We do not adhere to the missionary spelling in such words as "Keddy Keddy" or "Kiddee Kiddee" for Keri Keri, nor "Wyeroa" for Wairoa, "Kepero" for Kaipara, "Kottamatta" for Otamatea, etc.

With regard to Mr. Main's claim that the pronunciation is Fong-ah-ray, it is relevant to state that during the last 50 years the matter of the "F" sound has been well thrashed out for and against, in letters appearing in the press. However, I think it would be correct to say that all the old-time Maori scholars, and people born and bred in New Zealand who had long association with the Maori, deprecated the use of the "F" sound. Many people

found difficulty in pronouncing the "wh," especially when joined to the "nga," and therefore adopted the "F" sound, that being the nearest to the correct one. Sir Apirana Ngata in his book of Maori Grammar, writes, "Avoid giving the 'wh' the sound of 'f'."

GILBERT H. MAIR (Brown's Bay).

Sir,—At the risk of wearying you and your readers may I just say in reply to Arpad Szigetvary that, while admittedly the missionaries used some quaint phonetic spelling, they could hardly have mistaken the WHA sound for WA, nor REI for RE.

A. H. REED (Dunedin).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

WOMEN WRITERS' ANTHOLOGY

Sir,—In a recent review from 22B of the book *Poems—An Anthology* by New Zealand Women Writers, the reviewer was apparently under a misapprehension as to the compilation of the book. Criticism was made of the fact that only women writers were included. The position is that we are an incorporated society, established in 1932 under the name of New Zealand Women Writers and Artists' Society. The book is a collection of verse composed by some of the Society's members and it did not purport to be an open anthology, inclusive of the work of non-members. This, I think, is clear from the title page.

MARGARET N. KELLY,

Hon. Secretary, N.Z. Women Writers and Artists' Society.

BEFORE THE OPERATION

Sir,—I was interested in "Sundowner's" reflections from a hospital bed, particularly his assumptions of the thoughts and feelings of those who, under certain conditions of health, are going under an anaesthetic (not a "local"). "Sundowner" assumes that such patients must be preoccupied with thoughts of the hereafter, the skill and experience of the surgeon, and possible complications during the operations.

I have had eight operations in as many months, under "Sundowner's" arbitrary conditions, and never once have I given a thought to those things. I have questioned other patients in a similar predicament, and they have substantially agreed with my experience.

I am not a Christian, so I was not worried about the alleged judgment day; the skill and experience of the surgeon cannot be doubted within human limits; complications are always possible, but only a morbid mind would think about them. If you don't "come out," you will never know about it, so why worry?

DELAYED FLAP (Christchurch).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

J. D. H. Gifford (Napier).—Address not known here.

K.E.C. (Havelock North).—Many thanks. Clipping will be useful.

M.A.B. (Helensville).—Jack Maybury. See issue of June 25, page 21.

M. C. McIlwraith (Hamilton).—The talks have been broadcast three times already in your province. They are not available in print.

May E. Furey (Christchurch).—No one has been displaced. The person now being heard has resumed duties after a year's leave of absence.

G.L.D. (Parematu).—Owing to unforeseen circumstances, the denomination found it necessary to substitute a studio service after the programmes had gone to print.

P.C.B. (Wellington).—Apart from the broadcast of the Halsey reception and some of the street parade there was nothing. There were, in fact, seven other programmes: two documentaries, two for children, interviews, descriptions, and so on. It is agreed that a special musical programme or two might have been introduced.