

BETTER RECEPTION

Sir.—The data showing frequency of certain New Zealand stations and the interfering Australian stations given by W. F. Chubb is interesting. But the editorial note in reply is not convincing. Here in the Waikato we are at our wits' end: all the programmes worth hearing are on the YC stations—after 8.0 p.m. we cannot hear either 1YC or 3YC for violent interference from Australia. (It seems incredible that three Australian stations—Warragui, Warwick and Perth with a total output of 0.8 kw.—can so wreck 1YC on 10 kw.) When Parliament is sitting 2YC is relegated to 2YX, and this we cannot hear at all. Why not Parliament on 2YX, if there are any listeners, and leave 2YC alone?

In sum: of the four YCs, 4YC is left to struggle; and this, Sir, does not tally with your contention that 2YC is on greater power to give it "useful" coverage over most of the country. Taking the population of the Auckland Province into consideration, and its ratio to the rest of New Zealand, do you consider an output of 10 kw. fair? If it is not "economically justifiable" to increase this power, it leaves South Auckland from Raglan to the Bay of Plenty in an exasperating position.

C. H. PAINE (Hamilton).

TALKS ON RUSSIA

Sir,—G.H.D.'s diatribe in your issue of September 3 reveals the doctrinaire mind that is characteristic of those who blindly accept authoritarian attitudes and refuse to allow their minds freedom of action. This is shown in the suggestion that the NZBS knowingly permits itself to be used as a medium for partisan propaganda, and the reference to "liberal" stupidity.

I recently came across Lord Acton's definition of a "liberal"—he is an authority who should impress G.H.D. After saying that by liberty he means "that every man should be protected in doing what he believes his duty, against the influence of authority and majorities, custom and opinion," he goes on: "A liberal who thinks his thought out to the end without flinching is forced to certain conclusions which colour to the root every phase and scene of universal history. He believes in upward progress, because it is only recent times that have striven deliberately and with zeal according to knowledge, for the increase of security and freedom. He is not only tolerant of error in religion, but is specially indulgent to the less dogmatic forms of Christianity, to the sects which have restricted the churches. He is austere in judging the past, imputing not error and ignorance only, but guilt and crime to those who in the dark succession of ages have resisted and retarded the growth of liberty, which he identifies with the cause of morality, and the condition of the reign of the conscience."

If the NZBS is under the influence of this kind of "liberal stupidity," long may it continue to be so.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).
(Abridged.—Ed.)

Sir,—I regret Mr. Collins's haste to misunderstand the meaning of the phrase "his timid treatment of religion in Russia." I did not expect him to say that he saw "secret police listening in at services of worship," or even to hear him speak of "harrowing tales of oppression." What I had in mind was that there was one conclusion waiting to be drawn and he ought to have come out with it. It is this: since the churches in Russia are not allowed to undertake welfare work, or to run schools and hospitals, and are not allowed even to teach

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Christianity to children under 16 years of age, it is evident that while Russian individuals may worship if they wish, the churches may not carry out their mission.

In other words, Christianity in Russia has been narrowed down to worship and piety, and entirely deprived of witness in a meaningful social context. This is not freedom of religion. Christianity can survive only if it concerns itself with every aspect of man's life, and if it is allowed to exercise this duty in the widest sense. Otherwise Christianity is submerged and finally replaced by materialistic and totalitarian ideologies. There is every reason to believe that the restrictions on the churches in Russia are just for this purpose, and they make Mr. Collins's assertion that Communism is not our enemy all the more confounding. A.B.C. (Wellington).

FLUORIDATION

Sir,—Several correspondents question my view that most mothers cannot be bothered to give their children fluoride tablets every day. Perhaps I should have said, those mothers not gifted with better than average intelligence or education, that is, half of them, and especially those with several young children to care for. Your correspondents only reveal their qualification in one of these respects. The case of vitamin supplements is different because they can completely prevent the deficiency diseases, which also are more frightening than the familiar and relatively trivial tooth decay.

An educational campaign to those not on the water supply line would be comparatively cheap, but if public water supplies are not fluoridated people will naturally doubt if fluoride is really good for them. If some supplies are fluoridated while other towns rely on tablets, confusion and overdose will occur when people change their place of residence. If all public supplies are fluoridated and private water users take tablets the position will be clear. Fluoridation of salt or any food is impracticable because the dose cannot be controlled closely enough. "Water Drinker" is quite mistaken if he believes that pure water contains only the compound H_2O . It generally has far more solids in it than the 1 part in a million of fluorine and few of the other impurities benefit the health. His objections to the purification of sugar and flour are also mistaken. The valuable impurities lost in flour milling and sugar refining are, as regards the teeth, the fibre, which helps to clean them, and the water which dilutes the sugar. Thus "raw" sugar is as bad as refined. One must chew the sugar cane itself to avoid tooth decay.

R. B. D. STOCKER (Sydney).

Sir,—May I point out to "Water Drinker" that Wellington water, so far from being sparkling and pure, is on many occasions, and always after rain-falls, bacteriologically classifiable as "unfit for human consumption." Among all the undesirable organic debris, protozoa and bacteria, a little added fluorine would therefore hardly be noticeable. EX-BACTERIOLOGIST (Wellington).

A HORRID WARNING

Sir,—Youthfully ignorant, I imagined that the old argument Box Office v. Non-Box Office had long ago ceased to be relevant—especially apropos theatre. Surely now we must realise that both

are complementary and indivisible. Both are using ideas and methods discovered by the other; each is a training ground—no matter in which the student ultimately chooses to work—and both are showing future audiences what an exciting thing is theatre. Let's not therefore worry ourselves over much in which camp others may be working—fine plays and players are found in both. That theatre be entertaining is a thing which I know both Mr. Bruce Mason and Mr. L. Assheton Harbord would demand—their ideas of entertainment being merely a little different. All that we need ask of either of these extremes is that, when working in theatre, they be as proficient as necessary and as inspired as possible.

Particularly in these ideas I have avoided the words professional and amateur, these days applicable in that one gets paid and the other doesn't, an obvious thing, and having no connection bearing on their competence or otherwise and certainly not on their happening to be Box Office or no.

Popular or minority, because of our contemporary knowledge of dramatic theory and history, because of our technical resources, theatre today is greater in potential and fact than ever before. Tomorrow it will be better. And the day after, better still.

REID DOUGLAS (Auckland).

Sir,—Mr. Bruce Mason has graciously extended an olive branch and suggests that, although we travel by different roads, we both have the same objective—the furtherance of the drama. In this I fully concur—and go perhaps a little further, embracing the theatre as a whole. It will interest Mr. Mason to know that we have a very live and active Repertory Theatre in Lower Hutt and one of our chief aims is the encouragement and development of younger members, for reasons that are quite obvious. It is when critics are destructive and sarcastic that my hackles rise, because I consider that even in the poorest play or production there is some vital spark that is worth while. Why not look for it, and give encouragement as well as constructive, helpful and kindly criticism? This is infinitely to be preferred to the exercise of wit and eloquence at the expense of people who are probably passionately devoted to the theatre and who need help rather than caustic discouragement and horrid warnings. To Mr. Mason I extend the hand of friendship in all sincerity—reserving the friendly privilege of taking a friend to task if and when he offends my sense of fair play.

I make no claim of infallibility, but I will always be vehement in my protests against any word or deed that is wittingly or unwittingly designed to hinder, destroy or discourage the development of the theatre in New Zealand. It is only on my interpretation of what constitutes encouragement that I have crossed swords with Mr. Mason. I accept wholeheartedly his suggestion that we enter the lists together, even though from opposite gates; and provided that we recognise public indifference as our common enemy and fight against it without respite, perhaps our joint efforts may be of value and service to Theatrics, at whose shrine we both worship.

Baldly speaking, long or short hair doesn't matter. The only thing that does matter is the development of the theatre in New Zealand, and with the co-operation of Mr. Mason (and anyone else who is willing) we can go ahead and achieve that aim. To that end I am happy to

dedicate all my efforts. I thank Mr. Mason for a stimulating joust and trust that he has enjoyed it as much as I have done. L. ASSHETON HARBORD

(Lower Hutt).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

AN ENTHUSIAST IN CHINA

Sir,—David Hall begins his review of Margaret Garland's book, *Journey to New China*, by honestly revealing his prejudice. For this honesty, if not for his prejudice, he may be congratulated; but there is a sustained sneer underlying the whole review which must give a wrong impression to those who have not read the book. To quote only one of many examples of that sneer: "Undoubtedly it needed moral courage to lift the bamboo curtain, but to congratulate oneself on that courage only draws attention to the heavy investment one has made in the validity of one's enthusiasms."

Not only does Mrs. Garland nowhere "congratulate" herself on her courage, or even hold herself out as courageous, but a reading of the book makes it clear that, if she left China enthusiastic about the achievements of the present Government, that enthusiasm arose from her experiences—it was not a prejudice in which she had heavily invested before entering China.

The internal evidence of the book is that Mrs. Garland was a cool and level-headed observer who cross-checked what she was told wherever possible. The least an honestly prejudiced reviewer could do, I should think, would be to suggest that those interested in the subject should read the book for themselves and form their own conclusions as to the validity of Mrs. Garland's impressions. SHIRLEY SMITH (Wellington).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Donald M. Christie (Christchurch):—Station programme entries were amended; not the "showcase" panel; sorry. The programme announced in the panel, "Journey to Malaya," will be presented by all the ZB stations at 9.35 p.m. on Sunday, October 10.

Salamander (Bay of Islands): If you were to tell us what church and what minister on what date, it might be possible to have useful advice conveyed to him by an appropriate channel.

Music-Lover (Wellington): You have "listened in vain" because the recordings don't exist. A has not been recorded commercially yet, it seems; B has been broadcast whenever he could be engaged, and knows that he will be engaged again as soon as he is ready; C has declined repeated suggestions to broadcast. "Records be made available immediately": a phrase to be addressed to magicians.

Swede Turnip 3/- (Wellington): Too close to party politics.

Ted Austin (Christchurch): Sorry; photographs not available.

Roy Ulric (Auckland): You did not ask about the YDs, no; but you must allow us to bring the YDs into the answer to the question you did ask, if the answer requires them. The YC evening programme type is not assumed till 7.0 p.m. Till then, YC or YD provides an alternative to YA's service programme. YC and YD do this in Auckland; in Wellington YC does it alone; so also, YC does it alone in Christchurch and Dunedin. Population statistics appear to be irrelevant.

R.G.H. (Christchurch): The YC stations broadcast programmes alternative to those of the YA and ZB stations in the same regions; they are not and never were intended to give listeners a choice of four YC programmes. Such listeners as have a choice of two (or more) are listeners most fortunately placed topographically; but programmes are rightly planned, not for this minority, but for the majority who have regularly good reception of only one of the YCs. Since the link programmes are introduced selectively, because their standard is high and because the link enables them to be heard by the widest possible audience, the reference to a "raw deal" is mis-directed.

J. A. Harvie (Christchurch): Yes, it has been considered; but such a development is for several reasons impracticable at present.