

## STORIES FOR CHILDREN

Sir,—In your issue of October 29 "Lunette" wonders why New Zealand cannot compete in the production of children's books with those imported from overseas. Her experience at her local library was certainly unfortunate. The librarian could produce only one children's book published in New Zealand. It is to be hoped that "Lunette" will urge the librarian to stock more of the New Zealand children's books, which are readily obtainable from all good booksellers. An inspection of their stock will show that quite a number of such publications are available.

Much of what "Lunette" says is true. It is difficult to produce books for young people at a reasonable price in New Zealand, though it is certainly incorrect to say that there is no one here to publish them. Many interesting experiments are made from time to time by the leading publishers of this country, but the real problem which they face is the limited editions of such books which satisfy the New Zealand market. The English publisher can produce many thousands of copies of a children's book and needs to do so, to produce such books in what is a highly-competitive branch of book publishing. The sale of such books can be spread over the large populations of the United Kingdom, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, etc. The New Zealand publisher has to pay the shipping costs on all the material which is used in the production of books, and yet can depend only on the limited New Zealand market.

Present-day developments in publishing may well lead to some encouragement for writers in the production of simultaneous English and New Zealand editions which, on the one hand, will provide the larger overseas sale and on the other a more intensive campaign for publicity and distribution which occurs with books published in New Zealand. Writers must, however, remember that such books of New Zealand interest must prove equally acceptable to the reader overseas as well as in New Zealand, which demands a high standard of writing.

In our experience we find that the great majority of books written for children and submitted for publication in this country have no New Zealand background or significance, and should rather have been submitted overseas.

A. W. REED (Wellington).

## SPARS FROM HOKIANGA

Sir,—In view of the small amount of research that has been done into Hokianga history, it seems a little premature of Mr. A. H. Reed to assert so categorically that spars were not shipped from Hokianga as early as the Napoleonic wars. The story that they were is based upon local Maori tradition, and there is no ground that I can see for contradicting it on available evidence. They were not, in fact, shipped from the dockyard at Horeke, but according to three sources which I have so far tapped, the spars came from the ranges behind Whirinaki, were skidded down the slippery trunks of the black tree fern, and loaded into a ship in the Whirinaki River.

It seems feasible to me that in view of the shortage of spars during the Continental blockade, some effort might have been made by the Admiralty to get spars from the trees Cook had mentioned. There is, I believe, a story that a shipment of kauri went from Maraetai, near Auckland, as early as 1790. And surely some ships coming from Sydney would have made a landfall

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

here and have seen the tall kauris which then grew right at the entrance to the harbour?

Maori tradition also states that the first pakehas to live here were sawyers left behind by their ships to get ready a load of spars while their ships went to Sydney and back. One of these who stayed on was our first permanent settler, Jacky Marmon, whom the Auckland Centennial Early Settlers' Roll lists as being here in 1809. I do not know the source of their information.

From my reading of Marsden's Journal I am inclined to think that the section dealing with Hokianga may have been written up afterwards, as it has very few proper names and not a great deal of detail in it. In that case the fact that Marsden does not mention any settler here does not necessarily mean there were none. One must remember, too, that some of them, as deserters, were not anxious to meet anyone with official connections.

We must, I think, in dealing with the very early years of our history, keep an open mind, and not deny the possibility of happenings for which there are no written records. How many ships' logs of the period still survive?

JEAN IRVINE (Rawene).

## THE FEMALE FORM

Sir,—So no matter how you clothe her, according to "Designer" (Listener, November 5), the poor little large girl will never look "glamorous and feminine" within the "accepted meaning of the term." So much the worse then for terms whose meaning has become so restricted as to be valueless. Fortunately we do not all worship at the shrine of the "boyish and immature" figure elevated to the dominant position by our own century, but not by all those centuries which preceded ours. That the slim figure is dominant cannot be doubted by anyone who has studied the many fashion magazines whose sole idea in presenting the "matron" is to iron out those curves which have always delighted the male eye. Since so many designers cling exclusively to this one ideal they are disqualified by the narrowness of their taste from having anything valuable to say on the subject of the larger figure.

Though it should not be for the amateur to advise the expert, a certain paucity of imagination in the latter compels me to enunciate one principle disclosed in our own selection and cutting of dresses; and that is that it is a mistake to try to pare down the larger figure. Here we should let a proportioned amplitude reign. In other words, don't let the large woman get into suits and slacks, but try out the full gored skirt, and if the arms and neck are worth while—as they more often are in the larger woman—then make the most of them. Ideas, and variations of this kind on current themes, may not be readily found in our own century, but then it is no new thing for the designer to turn his eyes back to 15th Century tapestries or the more fulsome principles which governed the time of the Baroque.

It is obvious that nature even at the peak of her own ideal never intended some women to resemble willows; they more resemble cherry trees in full bloom. The amount of work done, or food eaten, bears no relation to coverage, and indeed the taking of benzadrine or other dietary measures often produces a fine mesh of lines around the eyes and

a strained look which is not at all glamorous within my own understanding of the term.

Lastly, I rather dislike the crack about "camouflage," a term which might as easily be turned against any of the devices used as much by the slim as by the larger woman to make the most of herself.

PETER PAUL R.  
(Christchurch).

## RECORDER PLAYING

Sir,—All honour to Wainui-o-Mata. One of our local recorder players came back from a holiday with a glowing account of the interest in the arts to be found there. It is a pity that O.J.'s article about the development of amateur music had to include that paragraph about recorders. People who regard recorders as poor relations of more expensive musical instruments are corrupted by the monetary standard of value. Actually the best things are seldom the most expensive. Recorders are very fine musical instruments indeed, and are capable of rendering some of the finest music in existence. To paraphrase the words of O.J.'s article, they can be played "anytime, anywhere, in a trio, a quartet," or in bands of any size whatever.

C. T. WILLIAMS (Kaiapoi).

Sir,—The article on music making in Wainui-o-Mata makes interesting and pleasant reading, and Gordon Anderson is to be congratulated for his fine work.

I have long felt that too much time, money and patience are wasted trying to make pianists out of unwilling children, when they would probably learn far more music willingly on some wind or string instrument, especially if there were ample opportunities for group playing. Mr. Anderson's pupils are very fortunate in this respect. I fear, though, that O.J.'s rather disparaging remarks about recorders may mislead some of your readers. He underestimates their possibilities and I wonder if he has ever heard them well played by adult or school groups. These are the cheapest and easiest to learn of the serious instruments, and are very suitable for school music. Admittedly their rather gentle tone would be lost in a large orchestral group, but on their own, or in duets, trios, quartets or larger groups with or without strings, with which they blend well, they can produce really beautiful music.

I have heard groups of primary school children using different combinations of descant, treble and tenor recorders playing good music in three parts very competently after two terms' instruction. A similar standard of playing could not be reached in that time on any other instruments.

Recorder playing can form a good basis for learning other wind instruments, but they should not be regarded merely as a stepping-stone to greater musical achievements. I stress that they are important musical instruments with an extensive literature of good music available for them.

WIND PLAYER (Christchurch).

## PULSATING LAKES

Sir,—In the recent article "The Spell of the Lakes" reference was made to the generally accepted pulsation of the surface of Lake Wakatipu, which is frequently reported as rising and falling by some inches with a period of roughly five minutes. Pulsations of a similar kind are well known on other lakes, and were first investigated in detail by Forel,

who made an especial study of Lake Geneva about 1880. The term "seiche" is generally used to describe such oscillations, which are believed to be caused by the atmospheric pressure and wind tilting the surface of the lake a few inches from the horizontal so that it then vibrates rather like the water swinging from side to side in a hand basin.

There is very little easily accessible data dealing with the behaviour of Lake Wakatipu, and no detailed scientific investigation appears to have been made of the amplitude and the periodicity. The Otago University Science Students' Association is conducting an inquiry into the phenomenon on Lake Wakatipu, and are anxious to collect first-hand descriptions of the various effects noticed. The unusual shape and depth of Lake Wakatipu may produce effects not noticed elsewhere, and it is hoped that a fuller investigation with proper instruments may be made at an early date.

We should be extremely grateful for any information relevant to the matter, such as date and place of occurrence, rise and fall, duration, and weather, which readers can let us have. The value of the inquiry will depend considerably upon the number of accounts obtained, and correspondents are assured of a reply. Letters may be sent to Lake Wakatipu Inquiry, University of Otago, Dunedin.

R. R. MARPLES,  
Secretary of Science Students'  
Association.

## DAME SYBIL THORNDIKE

Sir,—I do not wish you to be taken to task for the article which I wrote on Dame Sybil Thorndike and Sir Lewis Casson. No doubt Mr. I. R. Maxwell-Stewart has since seen your correction, and obviously now would wish to criticise me. He has cleverly divined that I used a work of reference to guide me to the facts of the careers of our distinguished friends: it was *The Oxford Companion to the Theatre*. Your correspondent implies that such works are unreliable. There are, it seems, reference books and "the true facts." Be that as it may, I consulted the *Oxford Companion* only for the first paragraph: the rest is all my own work.

BRUCE MASON (Wellington).

## "WAITING FOR THE TANIWA"

Sir,—I listened with some interest to Mr. R. T. Robertson's talk on "Waiting for the Taniwa." Has it occurred to the critics that New Zealand writers are probably so gloomy because their productions are mostly so dull?

ALISON HANHAM (Marton).

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

L.M. (Takapuna): Many thanks.  
V.T.V. (Auckland): Sorry; the word should have been megacycles. Other information later.  
Incognito (Lower Hutt): Please send your name and address.

D. G. Sofo (Whangarei): (1) Long wave broadcasting stations give wide coverage, but to be effective they must be of very high power and would therefore be very expensive to install and operate. An extra wave band would be required on receivers, therefore increasing their cost appreciably. Also the incidence of noise and static at lower frequencies (longer wavelengths) is higher, so that the wider coverage is offset to a considerable extent. Up to the present time the use of medium frequencies has offered a more economic and effective broadcast coverage in New Zealand. (2) Congestion of the medium wave broadcast band in Australia and New Zealand is very much less than in Europe and in America. Shared channels in America carry anything from three to 170 or more stations, depending upon the power used. Secondary coverage under these conditions is almost nonexistent. In Australia and New Zealand shared channels carry only two or three stations. This means that we can obtain much wider secondary coverage from our medium wave stations.