

SINGING LESSONS

Sir.—It was with great surprise that I heard over the air that Mr. T. J. Young was no longer to conduct the singing lessons with the studio class. As Chairman of the Kelburn Normal School Committee, the school which over the past eighteen years has provided the children for the studio class, I cannot let the occasion pass without a tribute to the work that Mr. Young has done.

Mr. Young is a first-class musician who has put into the work not only his outstanding ability, but his great interest. Over the years he has perfected a technique which not only enables pupils with good singing voices to sing better, but enables children whom no one suspected of having singing talents to sing effectively and well. As all who have heard his broadcasts will know he has a particularly happy manner with children, and speaking of those who know him personally, children regard him with a lively affection.

I have been given to understand that now there are landlines from Dunedin the studio class will be conducted from there. While appreciating in full the value of change and variety, may I respectfully suggest that in an age which, consciously or unconsciously, tends to regimentation and bureaucratic control, it would be of value to teachers and pupils to have the benefit of alternative programmes. The class has occupied one half-hour of broadcasting time once a week at a time when numbers of people cannot listen. Could not two half-hours be spared so that teachers would have the opportunity of making use of either or both the Dunedin and Wellington classes as their timetable or preference dictated? M. A. TILLER, Chairman, Kelburn Normal School Committee.

TEST BROADCASTS

Sir,—Once in every five years or so there is a thing called a Test match in Australia, which is a matter of some interest to a large number of clean-living, high-thinking and licence-paying New Zealanders. For about ten hours of every day of every year, every radio station in New Zealand churns out an endless stream of recorded noise, technically known as music. By some curiosity of departmental arithmetic, the NZBS considers it a just proportion if we are deprived of three quarter-hours of this music, and allowed a what-the-butler-saw sort of peep at the noble contest raging across the Tasman. With superlative cunning, the three dullest periods of play, before lunch, tea and stumps, are chosen for our delight. And then, when something happens, when sizes and catches follow in a dizzy series, when we do not know whether a man is in or out, they cut us off in the middle of a sentence. . . .

Sir, this is not cricket; it is not justice; it is not even common sense. The Government can well congratulate themselves that the election was over before we knew of this. Is it too late for the department to turn over in its sleep, and allow us to hear the remaining Tests, otherwise than as a series of hiccups?

S. MUSGROVE (Auckland).

(It is impossible to give Professor Musgrove what he wants—all the Test cricket, apparently—without displacing many programmes that others want.—Ed.)

SPARS FROM HOKIANGA

Sir,—Perhaps I ought not to have been quite so dogmatic in stating that Nelson's Victory could not have been masted with Hokianga spars. Unfortunately, however, all the available con-

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clusive evidence seems against such a supposition, though spars were taken from the Waihou (Thames) River as early as 1794. Cook does not mention kauri, and it is known that the trees he refers to at the Waihou were kahikatea. Marmon, according to his own story, though he saw the Bay of Islands several times while on whalers or sealers, did not settle at Hokianga until 1824. When Marsden saw the chiefs at Hokianga in 1819, and told them he wished to examine the mouth of the harbour to see if a ship could come in with safety they "were very much pleased, and expressed their earnest wish that a ship might visit their river," which seems to make it pretty conclusive that such an event had not then occurred. However, surprises do sometimes occur, and everyone interested will hope that Miss Irvine may succeed in obtaining some hitherto unrecorded reliable evidence to support the Hokianga Maoris' tradition.

A. H. REED (Dunedin).

EVOLUTION THROUGH SEX

Sir,—It is amusing to watch an evolutionary biologist pontificating with easy assurance on the most difficult problems. "Life," N. J. Berrill tells us, "justifies its own existence." Poets and philosophers have wrestled mightily with that problem—Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Augustine, Dante, Kant and a host of others. But it is no trouble at all to N. J. Berrill. You see, he knows about Evolution with a capital E. And nothing is a problem to Evolution. Invertebrates turn into vertebrates; man leaves the sea and is transformed from a cold-blooded denizen of the deep into a warm-blooded dweller on land. No one has the faintest idea of how these changes were effected. What does that matter when we can invoke Evolution?

The same easy assurance marks J. D. McD.'s diagnosis of our modern ills. "The basic flaw in the organisation of modern society," he declares is that "a sexually mature person is maintained in an infant status in society." In natural conditions, it would not be so. "Natural conditions," for these biologists, are the conditions that obtain in the world of nature—among shrimps, barnacles, spiders and the rest. For them, man is simply a part of Nature and in his sexual behaviour should act accordingly. May it not be that one cause of juvenile delinquency is the purely naturalistic outlook on life which many of our children derive from their contact with evolutionary biologists?

G.H.D. (Palmerston North).

UP FROM THE SLIME

Sir,—A long time ago I read a reference to du Nuoy's book that described him as a Roman Catholic, internationally eminent scientist (now dead), who had been connected with the Rockefeller Institute, U.S.A., and later with the Pasteur Institute, Paris, and had been awarded a prize for his work. My recollection is quite definite, but as I cannot at present quote the supporting

authority, this point must remain in suspense.

G.H.D. says that du Nuoy was "not even a Christian." Let du Nuoy speak for himself: "The time has come for all men of good will and of good faith to become conscious of the part they can play in life if our great Christian civilisation is to endure. . . . Our animal ancestors fought for their lives; men fight for their faith in the higher destinies of man . . . the so-called Christian virtues are really the consequence of the laws of evolution; that is precisely what we believe. . . . The ideas which are the logical result of the telefinalist hypothesis of evolution developed in this book are essentially those of Christian morality." Your readers can decide whether du Nuoy comes within my category of religious scientists, or is, as alleged by G.H.D., "not even a Christian."

Those who accept the imaginative story in Genesis as proof that God then created all things as we now know them may be asked: How did the serpent progress before it was condemned to crawl on its belly? Did it walk like a centipede, or fly? And why, as science declares, does the unborn child develop gill-slits, and even a tail? Why do animals during development often pass through stages in which they resemble other and usually simpler animals? Finally, scientists tell us that fossil remains often show us actual intermediate stages in evolution, and if geology speaks truly, we can go back steadily in the earth's history to a time when there is no trace of man, and still further back when we can still find animals.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).

THOSE DARK GLASSES

Sir,—In your November 29 issue you publish the text of a talk broadcast recently by Dr. H. B. Turbott on the subject of sunglasses and night-driving glasses. This conveyed both to listeners and to readers the notion, clearly underlined, that ophthalmologists as distinct from ophthalmic opticians, are the only qualified source from which to obtain advice on these particular and related matters. This arises from the incorrect and limited definition he applied to the professional qualifications of ophthalmic opticians and which, in its present form, is both an unfair and unwarranted discrimination against the professional qualifications of the latter. Since Dr. Turbott, by virtue of his office, is fully informed on the fact that ophthalmic opticians are statutorily recognised to perform the functions which the context of his published talk reserves only to ophthalmologists, I am sure that it was far from his intention to convey the impression which it does, and because of this he would no doubt wish to be the first to rectify this accidental but misleading interpretation.

Ophthalmic opticians, no less than ophthalmologists, are trained and fully equipped to advise upon and to prescribe for optical and functional defects of vision. The ophthalmologist is a medical practitioner specialising in the treat-

ment of diseases, injuries and surgery of the eye, as distinct from the ophthalmic optician, who specialises in refraction and the correction of optical defects and functional anomalies of vision. The ophthalmic optician is fully trained to observe conditions of the eyes beyond the range of the normal and consequently if he has reason to suspect that a person's visual apparatus is affected by some abnormality he refers the patient to his physician or an ophthalmologist, as judged necessary.

Such matters, therefore, as advising upon the correct form and the appropriate indications for the wearing of sunglasses or protective glasses come well within the legitimate and qualified province of the ophthalmic optician.

MALCOLM CHOLERTON (Christchurch).

DAME SYBIL THORNDIKE

Sir,—When I criticised your article on Dame Sybil Thorndike I did not know Mr. Mason was the author; I detect an unjustifiable note of irony in his reply. There can be no conceivable objection to the use of a reference book to aid the composition of such an article, and I do not seek to impugn the truth or correctness of the factual data of the article. I should have said final or complete facts. The article was obviously written by one without personal or acquired knowledge of his subject, and appeared to have been compiled from reference books only. It confirmed a completely incorrect impression created by the dailies. That Dame Sybil was at the Old Vic from 1914 to 1918 is correct. That she was at this time in any way famous is completely incorrect.

Several histories of the Old Vic are available; one at least I should have expected the author of such an article to be familiar with. The Old Vic had, pre-Lilian Bayliss, for many years eked out a very precarious existence. For long periods it was closed and the remuneration of performers whilst operating was very meagre indeed. The complete facts, or facts with background, are, as I said, more interesting.

I. R. MAXWELL-STEWART (Wellington).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Cricket Fan (Wellington): Because the complete scoreboard is given after the 9.0 p.m. News, as you are singularly unfortunate in having been "unable to find out."

Mountbatten (Owaka): Chappell CX 385, "Said the Bells"; no retail distribution.

G. R. Swanson (Rotorua): Not available; but, so far as is possible, inquiries sent to 2YA will be answered.

Z. R. Saunders (Mataura): The question you raise is being considered.

Protest Vote (Lower Hutt): The effect of the statement exceeded your account of it. You could usefully read the Defamation Act, 1954.

V.T.V. (Auckland): Radio frequencies below 540 kcs. are allocated to fixed radio services (i.e., telegraph, telephone, etc.), maritime services, navigation aids, and aeronautical services. Only in Europe is a band of lower frequencies allocated to broadcasting. Regional co-ordination is all the more important in the use of these lower frequencies on account of the wider coverage to avoid harmful interference. The licence for Station 2XM Gisborne is held by Mr. P. R. Stevens, of Gisborne. The only other private station in New Zealand is 4XD Dunedin, 1430 kcs.

A Still Small Voice (Auckland): Letters should be related to broadcasting or to topics raised in The Listener.

D. Bennett (Auckland): Thank you; the suggestion has been passed on.

P. D. L. Hadden (Gisborne): The BBC World Theatre Oedipus Rex will be heard from the four YC stations again between March 28 and April 10, 1955.

Not Fooled (Wellington): Did anybody say it was linked?

C. Arthur Hart (Christchurch): Da-more-ray.

DOUBLE PROGRAMME ISSUE

THE next issue of "The Listener" will contain programmes for two weeks, December 27-January 2, and January 3-9. It will be on sale from Monday, December 20. There will be no issue for December 31, and normal publication will be resumed with the issue of January 7, which will be on sale from Tuesday, January 4.