

CHOICE OF PROGRAMMES

Sir,—Surely the time has arrived for the NZBS to take the listener into its confidence and explain fully the reason or reasons for its deliberate policy of restricting the choice of programmes available at any given time. The trend can be traced back for some months, including the abolition of 2YA's classical corners in the morning sessions, the "National Breakfast Session," and the YA and YC links becoming more and more frequent regardless of any special merit in the programme concerned. Now comes all-day standardisation on Sundays. Presumably the other six days are marked for a blitz if the listeners accept this quietly enough.

If the change were dictated by the conforming hand of bureaucracy, saying, "Listen when you are told to listen," it would be bad enough, but there are indications that there is more to the matter than that. If the standardisation is being done in the name of economy the least that listeners can expect are some accurate figures showing the extent of the economy. This is not a protest at the material broadcast, although that, too, is open to criticism. We need to be shown why every main station must have exactly the same programme and at exactly the same time.

AUSTEN B. WARD (Nelson).

(The official reply to this letter is as follows: "(1) There is no 'all-day standardisation' of the programmes broadcast by the six stations linked on Sundays, 1-4 YA and 3 and 4YZ, 1 and 2YZ being excluded meanwhile by the want of new land lines. They transmit the same programme (except when they leave the link for morning church service) till 4.30 in the afternoon, when the link ends. (2) The suggestion that all main national stations, or the six stations linked, now have exactly the same programme at the same time far exceeds the fact. Regular programme links of the six stations specified total less than 40 hours a week. The YA stations have about 80 and the YZ stations about 70 hours for programmes of their own arranging, mostly in the late afternoon and the evening. (3) There is no 'deliberate policy of restricting the choice of programmes' at any given time. The policy of programme choice is and always has been a policy of choice among the programmes of regional stations; and that choice is not restricted by linking one group of them at a time."—Ed.)

TAVERNS IN THE TOWNS

Sir,—Your correspondent "Concerned" takes a gloomy view of the results of licensing law reform. I think because he deals with only one aspect, the lengthening or changing of hours. He does, however, go a little deeper when he asks if the result is the same whatever the closing hour, following this up with the need for education.

To my mind there are at least three factors in this problem: changing licensed hours, not merely lengthening them; changing the environment in which drinking takes place; encouraging the public to acclimatise itself to these. The English system is not just to have a "tea break," but to close bars from about 2.0 p.m. until 6.0 p.m. altogether. The evening session from 6.0 p.m. to 10.0 p.m., or later, is then completely separated from the midday period from 11.0 a.m., or whatever it may be, until 2.0 p.m. These hours are shortened on Sunday, but not done away with.

The environment is, of course, of great importance. Except perhaps in some city or large town bars, the hotel or inn has a social atmosphere, the whole process encourages leisure and entertainment, and the "biggest swill in the shortest time" element is entirely absent. Moreover, especially in country areas, ladies can quite properly enter and take part in the social gathering, and barmen are in any case an "institution" which

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has value. It is to be remembered that the average drinker who spends an hour or two, or even three, in an evening in these surroundings probably drinks less than many New Zealanders do in one hour from 5.0 p.m. to 6.0 p.m. at the present time, and since the former usually does not drink on a more or less empty stomach the results are far from the same. The incentive of the English system, moreover, to the taking of solid refreshment as well, is reflected in the large number of licensed restaurants, as distinct from ordinary inns.

Such a system here would also go a long way (except perhaps in country districts at a distance from a licensed house) to solving the problem of drink in the backs of cars, etc., at dances. If the dance is taking place in evening licensed hours, those who cannot last out without a drink have hotels available, or, which is better in my view, the dance could have an "occasional licence" for a properly regulated bar. A well-controlled bar is far preferable to surreptitious drinking in holes and corners.

All this may be very well, but the great obstacles are, of course, the virtual absence in this country of the type of licensed house which can offer such social service, and the problem of changing the habits of the average New Zealand drinker to meet different conditions. Without meeting those obstacles the matter may justify "Concerned's" doubts; with those overcome his apprehensions would be groundless.

DERRICK G. SOFIO (Whangarei).

ANNA RUSSELL

Sir,—This evening (March 31) I have had the dubious pleasure of listening to a programme by a supposedly good comedienne. Imagine my surprise when I heard this lady make slighting and disparaging remarks, when speaking of English music, on "small boys in surplices." The use of the word surplice implies that the boys in question were church choristers. I should like to register a vehement protest against this disparaging and obviously uninformed comment. The church service is a divine service of worship, and as such any music included in it is part of that worship. Slighting references to the ability of the singers are in the worst taste under any circumstances.

The traditional English heritage of music is a sacred trust preserved in the great cathedrals and churches of the Anglican world. The lady in question is obviously ignorant of such tradition and possibly also of the rules of good taste. It is also probable that she has little knowledge of the differences in quality and tone between women's and boys' voices. I suggest that a closer study of the history of the English Church music and especially relating to the training of boys' voices will cause her to realise (and here I should like to quote from

the Rev. E. H. Fellowes, author of *English Cathedral Music*, and formerly director of St. George's Chapel Choir, Windsor), that "the quality and tone of the voices of English choristers . . . cannot be matched anywhere else in the world."

I trust that in future similar remarks will not be permitted over the air.

ANGLICAN (Wellington).

EASTER

Sir,—It is excellent that the Broadcasting Service in this country makes so much of Good Friday and Easter in the way of services, talks and music. I am grateful for it. I hope, therefore, it is not churlish of me to say that it is a matter of regret that so good a paper as *The Listener* should apparently be ignorant of the meaning of the word "Easter." In your editorial and generally in your issue of April 1 you make no

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distinction between the solemnity of Holy Week and Good Friday and the joyous Feast of Easter. *The Listener* has consistently erred in this matter ever since it began, despite changes of editors and staff. "Easter," says the Concise Oxford Dictionary, "Festival of Christ's Resurrection." "Passion music" is not "Easter music."

In the last few lines of your editorial you make a proper contrast between the greyness of Good Friday and the light of Easter. But you call Good Friday a "Festival," which it is not, and you speak of Easter "Monday" as though that were the centre of the Queen of Festivals. Can it be that *The Listener* does not know that on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene, early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre? (Jn. xx, 1).

R. P. TAYLOR (Dunedin).

(It is very wrong, though very easy, to be ignorant or forgetful in these matters; and we shall try next time to be more precise. We hope, however, that what we wrote did not suffer in spirit from lax observance of the letter.—Ed.)

THIS IS DENNISTON

Sir,—I wish to apologise to Mrs. Violet Pearson and to local gardeners for giving the impression that Denniston is too rocky to support many good vegetable gardens. This was in my talk "Buller Mining Community Centres" in the ZB series *This Is New Zealand*. I have been carefully through the script, and as far as I can see this is the only mistake. The first two minutes of the talk were concerned mainly with the impressions of a Scots bride settling in Denniston at the end of World War One. The remaining 10 minutes of the talk describes the remarkable improvements by community-minded people in

the Buller district (including Denniston) in the last eight years. I wish Mrs. Pearson had mentioned this in her letter. The talk ended: "A new life has opened up in Buller today. They've gone a long way since World War One." This talk (like every other talk in this series) was checked as soon as it was written by local people. Five people (three of them had lived altogether 65 years in Denniston) checked and approved the script. The whole object of this talk was not to describe Denniston, but to try and show what Buller people have done for themselves lately.

JIM HENDERSON (Eastbourne).

DARKNESS AND LIGHT

Sir,—Many expressions of appreciation of your admirable and inspiring Easter editorial should reach you. It will find both an echo and a solace in the hearts of many of those "ordinary people" who do not attend church as well as of those who do, who alike furnish those unfamed qualities of goodness, devotion, fortitude, humility, sacrifice, as "a reflected light from Calvary." Thank you, Sir!

C. GIBSON YOUNG (Wellington).

Sir,—I am writing to thank you for the splendid leading article "The Darkness and the Light," so appropriately in this week's issue of *The Listener*. I trust that it will be read and appreciated by thousands of listeners like myself throughout the country. You have expressed in a very striking way the vital problems facing mankind today, and have left no doubt in the reader's mind of the truth that our only hope is found in the Easter message.

HURST DOWLING (Christchurch).

FOSTER MOTHER

Sir,—Listening to recorded interviews with foster-mothers of State wards broadcast from 4YZ, I was thrilled to hear the impassioned statement made to the child welfare officer by one of these mothers. She was obviously an ordinary woman living a simple life; but when she told, in a voice shaking with excitement, how and why she came to take in these unfortunate children from broken homes, to give them the foundations of happiness, good citizenship and Christian faith, I felt the physical sensation of a thrill down my spine. This good woman went on to say that, whereas formerly her health was poor, now, with all this work, her health is positively good. Health and happiness in work and responsibility? This is hers indeed.

H. H. FRANKLIN (Bluff).

THE WEEK'S MUSIC

Sir,—A Latin tag, "Sua cuique boluptas," occurred to me when I read the letter signed K. T. and A. M. Madaford in your issue of April 1. I hope your correspondents derive benefit from listening to *Take It From Here*. Some folk never seem to reach mental maturity. I have seen adults reading children's comics and have envied their apparent enjoyment. If they thrive on such puerile pabulum, why deny them this juvenile pleasure?

L. D. AUSTIN (Wellington).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Music (Oamaru): A letter to similar effect is printed and commented on above.

J.D. (Petone): (1) We are hoping to print one later in the year. (2) Will try to obtain and publish the information.

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

THE Southern Cross, a passenger ship of revolutionary design, will reach Wellington on May 2. To mark the occasion, "The Listener" will next week publish a four-page history of the Shaw Savill and Albion Company. Fully illustrated, it will describe the part played by the Company in the development of New Zealand cargo and passenger services, and will tell of notable ships that have carried its flag across the Pacific. The demand for this issue is expected to be heavy, so that readers will be wise to order their copies in advance.