

SOUTHLAND CELEBRATIONS

Sir.—Is it heresy for the *Year Book* to persist in saying there is no Southland Province? Can any reader tell us what is Southland; where are its boundaries? We know that some of the organisations which use this name of Southland have clearly defined boundaries in which they operate; but which of these covers Southland—neither more nor less? As far as our information goes, Southland came into existence in 1861 and continued until it was re-united with Otago. With the abolition of the provincial system, Otago (including former Southland) became the Otago Provincial District. This, we are informed, is still the official name for the former Otago and Southland Provinces.

Our school atlases, and some other maps, are inclined to be misleading in the way they mark off the districts. One before me—a New Zealand publication—shows under the heading "New Zealand Political" the land districts of the Dominion. The "New Zealand Historical" map in the same atlas does define the New Ulster and New Munster districts but merely gives the names of the provinces: the boundaries are not given and it is noted that the word Southland overlaps well into western Otago. The current *Year Book* map showing the correct boundaries of the former provinces is one which should be used in our schools and adopted by our atlas makers.

So this *Year Book* "heresy"—and the provocative statement that if there is no Southland how could it be having its own centenary—brings us back to the question asked at the beginning of this letter. What are Southland's boundaries today?

HERBERT D. MULLON
(New Plymouth).

YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL

Sir.—In his letter (*Listener*, March 9) S.J.M. ventures several opinions and makes a few inferences that are far from the facts concerning creative education. It is a fact that some children who have shown artistic ability in the Infant Room lose interest when they enter the Standard classes. However, rather than being a natural consequence, as S.J.M. infers, it is more likely to be due to factors, either at home or at school, which interfere with their natural emotional development. S.J.M. has not considered, apparently, the emotional aspect of child development or otherwise he would not cite the loss of ability as a point in favour of his case. The real concern of creative education is with the fullest development of the potential worth in individual children and in this the emotional and imaginative aspects play an important part.

Sensibility and self-discipline are developed during these creative periods through the nature of the media or materials used and the necessity that children feel to adapt them to their purpose. It is the "doing" that matters in relation to the natural and harmonious growth and development of young children. These are *real* experiences and not fantasy as S.J.M. has inferred; although a certain amount of fantasy may enter into them, which is only natural considering the age of the children. What they "do" comes naturally and is an expression of those qualities which we admire so much in children.

As for the matter of doing harm, it is more likely that the insistence on "realism" and the acquirement of "skills" in handling the tools of learning could, without due regard for all the factors concerned in a child's "readiness" to comprehend and handle them, harm the

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children emotionally, and lead to a stifling of the very qualities so essential for his growth and full development. Further, children working during these periods, and in creative periods in the Standards, are completely absorbed in an unselfconscious manner, which can be observed usually up until the age of 11 years, when intellect and reality begin to make them more aware emotionally of their "real" selves and their "real" environment. Would any "real" person play "trains" or "cowboys and Indians" in a manner that nine-year-olds would in a public place?

S.J.M. has used the terms "active" and "passive" in a physical sense which tends to confuse the issue as these terms do not fit the facts when children are regarded as "whole" beings with certain basic needs to be satisfied if they are to become fully integrated. In my teaching experience in many schools I have seen no better means of satisfying those needs for adventure, security, recognition, response and self-realisation than in those creative periods of "activity" where children can, of their own free choice, seek them in a sympathetic environment.

FRANK DEAN (Dunedin).

MRS. HELEN WILSON

Sir.—Warren Bible's suggestion that the writers of New Zealand should band together and present Mrs. Helen Wilson with a tape recorder is surely excellent. First, because Mrs. Wilson is a natural-born broadcaster, and transmits the power and warmth of her personality through the microphone, which has an uncanny way of exaggerating vanity, self-consciousness or nervousness, but can find none to magnify in her voice; and secondly, because we here in New Zealand have a great need of spoken history. Our old timers won't last forever, the people who saw the beginnings of independence in this country have tales to tell which come best, like all other histories and folk-lore, from the living mouth: and we are not, to my mind, making all the use we can of this remarkable means of holding history, pickling it down for a later age. So may I add my own enthusiasm, and sense of urgency, to the plea that here, and now, the writers and listeners and readers of New Zealand should give to Mrs. Wilson an easy way of telling the rest of her own unique and remarkable history.

SARAH CAMPION (Auckland).

HAYDN'S TOY SYMPHONY

Sir.—The point of criticism in my letter concerning the performance of the Toy Symphony appears to have been missed by your correspondent Dulcie M. Cohen. My contention was that the symphony was badly performed because a capable musician was not in control of the orchestra. It was interesting to read that Dulcie M. Cohen conducted the New South Wales State Orchestra at several performances of the Toy Symphony. By her own words—"and I'm no Danny Kaye"—she supports my argument. It seems to be apparent that Dulcie M. Cohen did not conduct the orchestra in the capacity of a public humorist or comedian, but in the capacity of an experienced and capable musician.

My simple contention that a musician and not a comedian should have conducted the Toy Symphony has so incensed two other correspondents, "Bop and Bach," that their associated mental reactions have led them to assume that I am a worthy gentleman richly en-

dowed with unoriginal conservatism, that I dislike "pops" concerts in general and that I should listen to some other programme. Impetuous assumptions such as these, which stem from annoyance and not from logic, add nothing of value to the discussion. "Bop and Bach" ask if I would dare "to criticise Haydn for daring to introduce a little levity into the sacred art of music." This is nonsense. Obviously I do not criticise Haydn. I can see the humour in the Toy Symphony. It is inherent in the music itself. It is a subtle humour that does not require the addition of conductoral buffoonery.

In Vienna, in 1790, Joseph Haydn himself conducted the first performance of the little musical joke Toy Symphony. He did not receive his baton from a large suitcase, and he did not clown his conducting.

VIA MEDIA (Wellington).

"THE SUNLIT HOUR"

Sir.—There are several wild inaccuracies in the letter by Margaret Kelly about my radio review of Ruth Gilbert's *The Sunlit Hour*. Your correspondent's zeal has run away with her memory. She maintains that I "could point to no technical fault or emotional falseness." Certainly I did not deny the poet's verbal graces; but my complaint was precisely on the ground of "emotional falseness," particularly in Ruth Gilbert's religious poetry. Your correspondent also charges me with "unnecessary cruelty directed at the tragedy of Robin Hyde." My exact words, in context, were: "Are men suspicious of intelligent women? Yes—but other women are more so. One can see how the woman writer is pushed towards crankiness, cowardice, nullity. One saw how Robin Hyde was driven into a corner." I suggest that the tone of this statement is sympathetic, not cruel. Nor did I refer to "a Women's Union of Writers." Nor did I speak of "biological experiences," but listed among the special temptations of a woman poet "the temptation to moralise about her biological function." I had in mind Ruth Gilbert's "The Blossom of the Branches," in which she identifies her (poetic) attitude in childbearing with that of the Madonna at the Nativity.

On these various inaccurate grounds your correspondent bases her charges of "absurd megalomania," "unnecessary cruelty," "vulgarity," "poetic despotism," "bad taste," "slippery rhetoric." An angry woman is a bad marksman.

JAMES K. BAXTER (Wellington).

MORE LIGHT ON MAHLER

Sir.—B.E.G.M. in his recent comment on the Mahler song cycle, *Songs of a Wayfarer*, has stuck his neck out again, but it is he who offers the affront, and rather in the manner of a hissing goose who has strayed into a glade of nightingales—clearly above his head! If he is so unfamiliar with both the composer and this work (despite its frequent performance from YC stations, and an article and portrait of Mahler in this journal, I think written within the period of his critical encumbrance)—having apparently turned the knob at random, why settle on this particular item for so churlish a criticism?

We would all be the better for some "preparation" before first hearings, but the course of broadcasting would be rather rugged if the Service followed B.E.G.M.'s demands and provided it

before every "important" (to whom?) item, on the chance that it might be unfamiliar (to someone). As a people we are spoon-fed enough, and should surely do our own research before we burst into print in bemusement or dissatisfaction.

M.S.B. (Auckland).

THE NATIONAL ORCHESTRA

Sir.—In reply to Mr. L. D. Austin, whose letter appeared in your issue of March 9, I would point out that I am not trying to disparage the National Orchestra. Far from it. I was expressing my feelings at its presentation of the Toy Symphony. If he will read my letter again, Mr. Austin will see that I enjoy listening to it. I still do, and New Zealand would certainly be a poorer place without it.

As for the comparison with the Philharmonia, I still do not think that the National Orchestra is of the same standard, for in a country like New Zealand there are not the players available for such an orchestra. No doubt, though, the National Orchestra will approach this standard and be "on a par with the best."

D. H. MCKENZIE (Papakura).

BYRONISM TO BURLESQUE

Sir.—What little I was able to hear distinctly of Professor J. Y. T. Greig's Byron broadcasts made me wish to goodness I had been able to hear them all under good reception conditions.

Might I ask that these Byronic programmes be soon re-aired, either from station 2YC, or if from any other YC studios, let it at least be early in the evening next time, before the air is fouled by uproarious Australian programmes of the *Take It From Here* type (two or three of them at once, it often seemed to me).

F. K. TUCKER
(Gisborne).

BBC BROADCASTS

Sir.—It is surprising that Keith Mitchell, of Christchurch, should be the first to complain of the indistinct voices of the BBC announcers, as this has been going on for years. One in particular sturs so badly, it is often quite impossible to catch what he says, even with the deepest concentration. I groan when he gives his name. I wonder if our complaints will by any chance do some good—I hope so.

BARBARA JEKYLL
(Christchurch).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

P.M.C. (Wellington): Distribution begins in different centres, and the reviews are done in Wellington. Thanks.

A.G.G. (Papatoteto): Will pass on your comment.

A. R. D. Fairburn (Auckland): All the YC stations have now broadcast *The Spanish Tragedy* twice. In July and in February 3YC and 2YC broadcast it on a single night; 1YC and 4YC have both done so once, and used the convenient option to broadcast the play in two parts. You missed 1YC's complete transmission in July, no doubt.

Reid Douglas (Howick) and A. Once Good-Humoured Lady (Auckland): As IYA's commitments in news, market reports, and so on, were inconsistent with the continuous, smooth presentation of a programme of dinner music between 6.0 and 7.0 p.m., it was allotted to 1YC. All YCs are intended at this hour to keep their programmes to dinner music. They do not take up their evening programme function until 7.0.

Listener (Wellington): If it will comfort you to know that 40,000 were discarded last year alone, be comforted. You ask for the use of the broom and in the same breath ask why you do not hear more recordings by an artist who has issued two new 10-inch recordings and released one more in the last five years, and of whose earlier recordings fewer than a dozen remain in the catalogue. But be comforted again: some 45 r.p.m. pressings, oven-fresh, have just been delivered.