

PERSISTENT PIGEONS

Sir,—In *Shepherd's Calendar* in your issue of September 21 under the heading of "Persistent Pigeons," Sundowner states: "Though it is just on 50 years since he left Dunedin . . . he remembers still that one of his consolations when he went unwillingly to school there was the Town Belt and his teacher G. M. Thomson's talks about the birds in it. But he does not remember seeing a pigeon there or hearing G.M. mention one."

In *A New Zealand Naturalist's Calendar* in the chapter entitled "Rambles around Dunedin" (being a Presidential address delivered to the members of the Otago Institute) my Uncle, referring to a tramp to Swampy Hill, says: "Lower down in the bush-clad slopes and in the denser vegetation of the ravines, kiwis, ground thrushes and crows were abundant and no doubt kakapos also occurred; while in the upper foliage the silent wood pigeons were very common, feeding in spring and early summer on the kowhai leaves and later in the season on the berries of mistletoe and the turpentiney fruits of the miro and other pine trees."

When one considers it, as the crow flies, or as in this instance the pigeon flies, there is no great distance between the lower slopes above mentioned and the Town Belt of Dunedin. It is 46 years since I left that city but if my memory serves me aright I have seen wood pigeons in the earlier years in the Town Belt reserve. PERCY THOMSON (Stratford).

PURCHASING POWER

Sir,—Mr. K. O'Brien may feel that his "cycles," "blocks of assets" and other curiosities are convincing but others may be convinced, not that the doctor is needed for our monetary system, but rather that he is needed for something which seems to be buzzing in the heads of some reformers.

Our money derives its value from the fact that we can count on its acceptance as payment and the fact that it is so accepted enormously, incalculably, facilitates exchanges of goods and services. The banking system brings money into circulation by printing notes and by granting overdraft authorities on which cheques are drawn. That money goes out of circulation when cheques drawn on deposits are paid into overdrawn accounts, when deposits are used to pay banks for external funds that are needed to pay for imports, or to meet other external obligations, and when free deposits are changed into fixed ones.

A volume of money far less than would be required to purchase, in a single transaction, the goods available in a year will purchase those goods within the year because the output and imports are sold in small fractions, with the sales distributed over the year, so that the same money will finance many purchases. "Cycles," "N," "Z," or any other, need not disturb us. They no more put money out of circulation than they put noses out of joint.

Our assets are always wearing out of existence, and so business and industry must provide for depreciation; but depreciation funds are invested and no more create a shortage of purchasing power than any other investments. J. JOHNSTONE (Manurewa).

JAZZ IN NEW ZEALAND

Sir,—Unfortunately, everything in Mr. Austin's letter on jazz in New Zealand is very true. From practically every station in New Zealand at practically all times can be heard these horrible discordant sounds, artificially blended to give "music." The worst offenders, of course, are the commercial stations, but

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

YA stations present, for the greater part of their broadcasting time, sheer trash. Our leading station, 2YA, is expected to give some classical music, but we very rarely are treated to it. Such programmes as *The World of Jazz* and *The Guy Lombardo Show* are surely nothing but ignorance, sheer ignorance.

The YZ stations, in my opinion, present a far better and more cultural programme. Our own 4YZ here in Invercargill gives us a considerable amount of good music, and one shudders to think of the popularity of this great station being lessened by the advent of 4ZA—our new commercial station.

In conclusion, I should like to commend *The New Zealand Listener* on its high standard over the years. I suppose it is inevitable that jazz topics should be introduced periodically, but the less we see of them the better. I should also like to thank the NZBS for the YC stations, which are a great cultural asset to our country.

M.E. (Invercargill).

Sir,—Without wishing to join in the controversy about the musical ranking of jazz, may I insert a news item and a theory that may be interesting to the various parties? In the *American Saturday Review* of July 14, is an account of a visit paid last year by a picked American jazz band to eight Middle East and Balkan countries. The American National Theatre and Academy and the State Department assisted. According to the writer, who was lecturer with the band, the music was "received with wild enthusiasm and the musicians treated like heroes." Why? The audiences "definitely associated jazz with the cheerful, informal, and generous side of American life and they were bowled over by its spontaneity and vitality. The stereotyped notion that jazz is lowbrow never got in the way of their enjoyment." Jazz was fun, they said.

The writer has no doubt that the tour created much goodwill, and we know that there is surprise and disappointment in America at the general difficulty of engendering this feeling, but perhaps the most surprising and important part of his story is the conclusion, which I give without comment. Listeners said to him that they knew America had many bath-rooms, skyscrapers and motor-cars, but they had real doubts about American culture. American literature, opera, symphony, and painting are derived from Europe, and Europeans judge them by their own high standards. Jazz, born and reared in the United States and nowhere else, is considered a new and impressive contribution to culture, and "the concrete example of one good jazz band may communicate more of the sincerity, joy and vigour of the American way of life than several other American creations inspired by Europe." A European composer remarked to him that jazz was "one of America's best loved artistic exports." A.M. (Wellington).

Sir,—Among some correspondents there seems to be a confusion between true jazz and ephemeral musical rubbish which has borrowed from jazz idiom, and which nobody pretends is of permanent value. But true jazz, especially in its modern developments, involves a study as systematic and demanding as does ordinary good music, if it is to be understood. It becomes more difficult to define music in words when modern pragmatic methods of thought increase the flexibility of their meaning, but my opinion is that true music is an art form into which beauty, as a universal, has

entered. The various musical forms which have been evolved are expressly designed to show off the universal beauty, in the best way, by endowing the artistic creation with unity and balance. Some composers, like Mendelssohn, have been masters of musical form, without possessing that insight into the universal form of beauty which makes music sublime, participating in something which is eternal. Other composers, like Schubert, possessed the artistic soul capable of apprehending beauty, but their expression of it was hampered by their lack of mastery of the forms of unity and balance. Before music can be great it must have that divine spark of intuitive artistry which is insight into the form of beauty.

Modern jazz has its forms too, of course, though they are much more loosely defined than those of music. I must explain that I do not class jazz as music in the sense that I do, say, Beethoven's fifth symphony (which approaches perfection of form). I do not dislike jazz—indeed I am very interested in its more recent developments—but very little jazz so far has shown true artistic perception of beauty, and though we may be fascinated by jazz as we are by some modern painting and sculpture, I think that whatever it may be we cannot claim it is music. It is very clever and intricately designed; it has an "intellectual" interest. I enjoy listening to jazz, because it is interesting, but I do not listen to it as I do to music. I think a new age is dawning which will be devoid of the cultural influences we have known. It is likely that before long the process of artistic creation will be in a situation parallel to that in the centuries following the collapse of Greek civilisation.

History repeats itself. The golden age of music is already almost over.

FLAMINGO (Nelson).

INTERNATIONAL OWNERSHIP

Sir,—About nine years or so ago I wrote a letter to *The Listener* concerning, among other matters, the international ownership of the Antarctic Continent. Mr. Walter Nash a year or so ago made a similar statement. In the light of recent events, is it not time to re-examine such a proposal? Mr. R. M. Hutton-Potts in a recent *Lookout* suggested that it would be a right gesture by the United States to make the Panama Canal an internationally controlled waterway. Colonel Nasser is against such control of the Suez Canal.

I suggest that everything which can help toward the realisation that we all belong to the same species will be to the benefit of all mankind. States are made up of communities and communities of individuals. Why, then, cannot the human race accept its diversity knowing that in diversity there is strength and ultimate good? An important step toward the unity of man would be the ownership of some part of the earth by all men. Who could unify us? Ourselves or invaders from outer space—killers of course, as we are but men. Or am I too naive?

G. C. MARTIN (Invercargill).

THE MEDICINE BILL

Sir,—The real reason for the ridiculous and steeply rising cost of "medicines" is that orthodox medical men do not know what disease is, nor how it is brought about; they know next to nothing of the natural, and nothing whatever of the spiritual provisions, either for maintaining or regaining good health. And so they resort to indiscriminate use of

masses of deadly poisonous drugs (or violence, in the form of surgery or irradiation), trying to mask or temporarily suppress the evidences of unhealthy living they've been taught to believe are "diseases."

The one outstanding achievement of modern medical so-called "science" is the suppression, by poisons and violence, of the acute illnesses which are so often a vital part of nature's (God's, that is) provision for averting or healing chronic disease.

The medical system as practised today is, to the extent of at least 80 per cent., a colossal, fantastic, transparent, increasingly expensive and futile fraud.

ULRIC WILLIAMS (Wanganui).

HORI AND DAD

Sir,—Surely the Maori deserves from us something better than this vulgar guying which many must deplore as a gesture of disrespect—even contempt—for our fellow New Zealanders, who during the one hundred and fifty years of joint occupation of these favoured isles, have suffered so much at our hands. If only those who profess to find amusement in making of the Maori a figure of fun could know just what the more cultured and racially-conscious of his people think of pakehas who descend to this form of "humour" they would—unless case-hardened by habit and ignorance—blush for shame. The attitude indicated by such performances have little point now that few Maoris speak as do the characters in the *Radio Roadhouse* sketch; most of them today are products of good schools and many can set an example to pakehas in the use of English. In fact the Maori of the short story and the joke corner was never typical and is now outdated. He survives only where lack of good taste and understanding prevail.

If some Maoris appear to tolerate such expressions as form the basis of "Hori and Dad," it is only their better manners that make them hide their contempt for those who so offend them; or they have become accustomed to these insults and with a mental shrug, say "He aha ki to Maori?" ("What is it to the Maori?"). This attitude toward what is handed out by the pakeha is deplored by those of both races who seek to raise the Maori to a sense of dignity and responsibility lost through the period of association with white people. At a time when Maori leaders are striving to save the remnants of native culture in all its forms as a means of inspiring the race toward a better way of life it ill becomes the NZBS and its journal to encourage the presentation of Maoris as a medium of doubtful humour.

M. B. SOLJAK (Whenuapai).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

B. Dunn (Hobsonville): Thanks for a candid expression of opinion; but it is not sustained.

R. S. Clarkson (Christchurch): "The local programmes after 9.30 p.m. should be devoted wholly to light variety until they close down." If they were, they would have to close down early for want of material.

Spero Meliora (Wanganui): But it isn't unlimited, and hasn't been used as if it were.

Mrs. D. E. Staladi (New Plymouth): No replay scheduled at present; possible later.

Joan Archer (Ashburton): The series began at 4YA on September 17, to run each Monday in the Women's programme, 10.45 a.m.

D. Couling (Invercargill): Letters should be confined to broadcasting or to topics already raised in *The Listener*.

R.A. (Balclutha): Not to our knowledge.

Good Listening (Christchurch): Some Wednesday morning discussions are repeated of an evening, although the one you mention was not.

Stewart Smith (Otago): Thank you.

Countesswoman (Te Awamutu): So long as the established use of W.O. readers is maintained, the most suitable will be selected and trained.