



## INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS

Sir,—The interesting discussion on intermediate schools broadcast in *Question Mark* must have been followed appreciatively by many parents who feel, with Mr Murray Nairn, that intermediate schools, completely detached from either primary or post-primary departments, are an expensive "anachronism" and an unnecessary relic of the days when many children finished their formal education at Standard VI level.

When an intermediate school is attached to a post-primary, it is an integral part of that school. Not only are the children privileged to share the facilities (and uniform) of the senior school, and learn by example from its staff and its prefects, but as younger members of the school family they feel that they "belong" and are eager, when the time comes, to join their post-primary seniors in an environment already friendly and familiar. They are imbued with the traditions of the school while yet upon its threshold; but as new, separate intermediate schools continue their costly mushroom growth all over the country, sometimes, admittedly because of overcrowding, but often, too, in anticipation of a possible and remote future need, it is difficult to concede that these two-year "isolation wards" are really warranted. In that little time, the teacher-child relationship is in embryo and the child can scarcely develop a feeling of loyalty for a school attended for so brief an interlude.

Here, my son, thy father thought the thoughts of youth,  
And heard the words that, one by one, the touch of life has turned to truth.

What intermediate school could call forth such fervour?

While this triple-segment system of education is with us we shall continue to foster a detached teacher-child relationship with a corollary of uninterest on both sides, so that it is no longer the concern of any particular teacher or group of teachers if our children go forth into the world inarticulate, illiterate and commercially incompetent.

JOYCE JEFFERY (Auckland).

## AUCKLAND LETTER

Sir,—My *Auckland Letter* about country slums has evidently blistered the Achilles heel of "Ex Farmer" (Dunedin). This seems less my fault than his, since he has plainly read it in mounting indignation and thereby wholly missed its point.

My "disparaging account" was not of "the shortcomings of a home-built Northland house" so much as of the life within it, a life which all too often squanders in carelessness and triviality the efforts of the pioneers, and the amenities they won for us. They built this land and built it well: not only by working a great deal harder than we now do, and to more purpose, but also by making intelligent use of materials they found around them. The women's ingenious sewing of sugar or flour bags, for instance, or the way in which, as shown by Helen Simpson's *Women of New Zealand*, they concocted such necessary things as soap and candles out of

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whatever substances that came handy, should be a lesson to us. But what would those early women have thought of the modern farmer's wife who allows expensive electrical gadgets to be wasted through bad installation or sheer neglect? Or of the farmer who equips his cowshed with all conveniences, and leaves his wife to do her weekly wash in the open, fetching the water herself in kerosene cans from some distance away? "How I wish I were a cow!" as one of these poor souls said: this is a true story, which perhaps "Ex-Farmer" hasn't yet heard. (I am assuming, by the way, that he is a New Zealander, and therefore knows even better than I, an Englishwoman, such books as Helen Wilson's *My First Eighty Years*, and *Land of My Children*, or Jean Boswell's life of her pioneer mother in the Waipoua forest, *Dim Horizons*.)

As to "snobbery and ignorance," I can only answer thus: That snobbery all too often dwells in the eyes of the beholder, especially when a New Zealander wants to refute a critical Pommy: and that my "ignorance" of rural slums comes from observations in Canterbury, the King Country, Auckland, Northland, and North Queensland. Lest "Ex-Farmer" thinks I am criticising only the New Zealand variety, I'll briefly describe a farmer's hovel on what used to be an Australian goldfield. Floor of hard-packed earth (as in a Kaffir kraal); no hot water system; no lavatory except the usual hessian curtain in the bush; no bathroom save a square of concrete under the house on which the bather can stand, while tipping over himself the contents of a watering-can slung from the hoists by a piece of whipcord; two pet kangaroos (who cannot be house-trained) roaming freely through the place and expressing their natural joie de vivre from time to time by sweeping all the crocks off the kitchen table; a front gate which has long ago abandoned all effort to stay up, and combines, with a latchless front door, to admit ducks and hens who roost under the kitchen table; and, at the gap where the gate *should* be, a flash new car which has cost the owner nearly a thousand pounds.

It is this kind of attitude to country living, this frivolous frittering away of cash on showy luxury, that I criticised, not the efforts of the pioneers to make life easier for those who come after them.

SARAH CAMPION  
(Auckland).

## DESIGN FOR MUSIC

Sir,—Historically the problem of the hall suitable for both theatrical and musical requirements is a record of ingenuity dogged by inevitable failure. Folding wings, flexible proscenium, raisable canopies, and even movable and adjustable floors and endless other devices have been introduced, to pay only lip service to the problem, and to state blandly that it has not been solved. It is my firm opinion, after many years' close study of theatre and concert-hall design, that the requirements of the two are utterly irreconcilable.

There are few centres in New Zealand big enough to support fully either live theatre or live music, or buildings designed for those specific purposes, but let us realise that there are some centres (and one would think Lower Hutt was one) which could, and in such places it is wrong to be satisfied with a half-baked compromise; and in those places incapable of supporting a building for music, then design for theatre and let the orchestras manage somehow

—never strangle the production side of theatre in order to improve acoustics. After all, they will never be really good unless other activities are excluded completely.

The Victorians, who understood theatre very well, built in London and elsewhere some of the finest buildings in that field that we have; but in not understanding acoustics they produced the Albert Hall. Let those of us today who do profess an understanding of acoustics do the best we can for music.

R. WARD (Auckland).

## DR DORIS GORDON

Sir,—The late Dr Doris Gordon will be well known to your readers through her notable services as Director of Maternal and Child Welfare, and by her spirited autobiography *Back-Blocks Baby-Doctor*. As she did so much to improve the standard of obstetrics in this country by founding Chairs of Obstetrics in Dunedin and Auckland, the New Zealand Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society, together with the National Council of Women, has decided to raise funds for a memorial to this remarkable woman, to take the form of a scholarship or lectureship in Obstetrics.

The campaign was opened in Hamilton on July 29 by Dame Hilda Ross, and has the commendation of the Hon. J. R. Hanan, Minister of Health. Nobody has done more for the welfare of the mothers of this country than the late Dr Doris Gordon, and all who are interested in maintaining the high standard she helped to establish are earnestly invited to contribute to this fund. Contributions may be made payable to the "Doris Gordon Memorial Fund," P.O. Box 5003, Wellington.

A. H. FOATE,  
Secretary, N.Z. Obstetrical and  
Gynaecological Society.

## NEW ZEALAND OPERA COMPANY

Sir,—With reference to Sarah Campion's article on the production of *The Medium* in Auckland recently, and Mr Gordon Dryland's letter in connection therewith, with your permission I would like to clarify one point.

It is not a case of Wellington versus Auckland in the matter of opera. The New Zealand Opera Company is not just a Wellington company. It is a professional "New Zealand" company in the true sense of the word, drawing its artists from various parts of the Dominion. For instance, for the Auckland Festival productions, the artists were selected from Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin. *The Medium* was indeed produced by a Wellingtonian, but the company's very successful Christmas opera, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, was produced by John V. Trevor, until recently of Dunedin, while Menotti's three-act music drama, *The Consul*, which will be staged in Wellington's Opera House, will be in the hands of the New Zealand

Players' producer, Richard Campion. Once again, for the cast, *The Consul* will include artists from Auckland, Wellington and the South Island, as well as a member of the Carl Rosa Opera Company, England, who is at present on holiday here.

Since its inception three years ago, the company has toured widely throughout the country, and at the moment it is successfully touring Mozart's *Bastien and Bastienne* throughout the rural areas.

The founder of the New Zealand Opera Company, Donald Munro, originally of Dunedin, returned to the Dominion in 1951, after having spent some 13 years abroad, and the time seems opportune to offer to Mr Munro our congratulations on the fine success he is making of New Zealand's first professional opera company.

OPERA LOVER (Wellington).

## THE DREAMING ISLANDS

Sir,—It matters not what Mr Goldblatt imagines is proper in a "free market" with "supply and demand as its basis"—because those things are long forgotten dreams even in these dreaming islands (as in most other parts of the world). Not only in a dream world, but even in this world as it remains after the defection of supply and demand, the theory of the professional economists concerning capital investment is a fallacy. I made that very clear in my first letter, when I wrote: "That the theory is fallacious is proved by the existence of economic restraints, etc." Mr Goldblatt's description of the economists who hold such a theory as "my friends" must be a sample of a brand of humour which is unfamiliar to me.

Finally, it takes more than an unsupported denial from Mr Goldblatt to upset my claim that Canute was like a political force trying to hold back an economic tide.

K. O'BRIEN (Hastings).

## MUSIC FOR "DANDY DICK"

Sir,—I notice in your issue of July 19, in the short article about Mr Bruce Mason, the statement is made that he played all the incidental music for the New Zealand Players' production of *Dandy Dick*. I would like to point out that Mr Mason played the music for the Wellington and Auckland seasons only, after which Miss Rilla Stephens took over for the remainder of the tour, playing the music for the first and second acts under the name of LaBellarilla. Recordings were used for the third act, in which Miss Stephens was acting.

TAIGEE (Wellington).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS  
Regular Listener (Taurarunui): Thank you. Will pass it on.

Apprehensive (Auckland): Sorry; the trade name puts it out.

Bored Thoroughly at 11 (Wellington): Your request has been passed on.

J. Colyer (Havelock North): Suggestion noted. One difficulty is that there are other instruments with equal claims.

## AUNT DAISY'S PHOTOGRAPH

A limited number of additional prints were made of the photograph of Aunt Daisy published as a supplement in last week's "Listener." Readers who were unable to secure copies of the issue may obtain a photograph by sending sixpence in stamps to the Publisher, "The New Zealand Listener," P.O. Box 6098, Wellington.

