



STATION 2ZW

Sir,—My attention has been drawn to an article in the September 6 issue of *The Listener* in which Aunt Daisy refers to "Nimmo's Station 2ZW . . . [as] . . . a small private concern whose main purpose was to encourage the sale of wireless sets." For record purposes may I be granted space to correct this assertion?

First, 2ZW was not "Nimmo's." The licence for this station was held by the writer who, in conjunction with Mr A. E. Rolfe (New Zealand Manager for the Australasian Performing Right Association), and the late Mr Byron Brown, arranged for the purchase of the 2ZW transmitter from Messrs Collier and Beale, Ltd., which was to be located on the premises of the Bristol Piano Company, Ltd., Wellington, and operated in conjunction with that firm.

Prior to this arrangement being given effect to, however, a syndicate was formed comprised of the following leading Wellington business men: Messrs Byron Brown, W. R. Kemball, H. F. Wood, Cyril Brice, W. J. Mason and R. H. and A. J. Nimmo; and it was this syndicate, which subsequently became the 2ZW Broadcasting Service Ltd., that was operating 2ZW at the time Aunt Daisy refers to, the transmitter being located, for technical reasons, in Nimmo's Building.

The personnel of the 2ZW Broadcasting Service Ltd., and the fact that the station was at that time the second most powerful in the Dominion, is a sufficient answer to the assertion that it was "a small private concern."

As regards the assertion that "its main purpose was to encourage the sale of wireless sets," this was far from being the case. 2ZW came into being to crystallise a definite conception of radio by its founders as a public utility. It explored and exploited a range of broadcasting possibilities that only an unfettered missionary zeal could initiate and sustain. Apart from its innovations in the matters of programmes and incidental services not the least valuable work of 2ZW was its active co-operation with the various relief organisations in Wellington for the purpose of raising funds, foodstuffs, clothing, etc., for the unemployed and needy (the station operated throughout the depression years).

It was responsible for reopening the Children's Health Camps when they were closed for lack of finance and equipment; it founded the Smith Family Joyspreaders Inc., whose members are all anonymous, and which has expended many thousands of pounds in providing assistance to deserving families and particularly to ailing mothers; it was the unofficial almoner to the Government during the depression; it inaugurated the milk-in-schools movement and raised the funds necessary to provide milk for the children in Wellington schools prior to the Government instituting the national scheme; it was the first to broadcast programmes on short-wave from New Zealand, operating in conjunction with the Western Electric Co., Ltd. (Station 2ZX).

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

In view of this, and many other intimate, vital and practical innovations by this popular pioneer in radio broadcasting in New Zealand, it is fitting and proper that some visual record should appear in New Zealand's only national publication to correct any impression that 2ZW was only "a small private concern," brought into being for the main purpose of selling radio sets.

L. E. STRACHAN (Gisborne).

("Mr Heigh-Ho" of 2ZW).

(In fairness to Aunt Daisy we must explain that the information about 2ZW was obtained from another source and checked in Wellington. We are very glad to have Mr Strachan's fuller and more accurate statement. But it should be pointed out that the reference he seeks to correct was followed by this sentence: "It had a large following of listeners and was 2YA's main local competitor."—Ed.)

THE CHICKEN-HEARTED

Sir,—The claims of parapsychology are based on the statistical treatment of a biased selection of the results of many experiments. The first weakness is the difficulty of controlling experiments where nothing can be measured except the number of events observed. The second is that the experimenter should be skilled in both mathematics and psychology, almost incompatible traits in a single personality. A third weakness is the state of the science of statistical mathematics, which is still in its infancy. If anyone thinks that only simple arithmetic is involved, he can test telekinesis by tossing a penny and praying for heads. Common sense tells us that if we toss five heads running our next toss is more likely to be a tail. Statistics appear to support this by showing that the probability of five heads in five tosses is one in 32, while the probability of six heads in six tosses is only one in 64. Yet philosophy tells us that the coin has no memory, and that at the sixth toss the chances of a head or tail are exactly equal, as with any other toss.

Figures support the claims of parapsychology, but figures can lie, and scientists can deceive themselves. Strangely enough, the statistical proof of clairvoyance is accepted by the same sort of mind which dismisses the statistical proof of the connection between cigarette smoking and lung cancer, showing that superstition and conservatism are compatible traits of personality. The difference is that lung cancer and cigarette smoking are facts which can be connected statistically, while clairvoyance is a mere statistical artefact. More important, knowledge of the cancer-smoking connection can be useful to humanity, while telepathy, clairvoyance and telekinesis have never been put to any practical use, and, if they could be used they would only increase human misery and chaos.

VARIAN J. WILSON (Timaru).

OUR WORLD

Sir,—Having read Louis Fischer's *This is Our World* I share some of the reactions Mr Burdon reveals in his review. The book makes, however, rewarding reading. If I remember rightly Mr Fischer develops the theme that Pacific affairs will be profoundly influenced by the outcome of the present experiments in China and India. Following Lenin, Mao made the Chinese peasants basic to his revolution, and the technique of military-cum-secret-police power, plus ideological mass hypnosis is being followed there as it has been in Russia. This means that the peasants, deluded into thinking they are working for themselves, will carry out the plans and instructions of the

intellectual professional revolutionary "brass" at the top. And this means that probably greater, more direct and rapid progress will be made than in India.

In India, under democracy, Mr Nehru and his team must win over by persuasion an illiterate peasantry bogged down in age-old customs and superstitions. The "brass" there depends on the votes of the peasants for power. Under such conditions, progress is likely to be slow, somewhat confused and erratic, and it might compare unfavourably with China. The important point is the final influence on other Asian nations.

Britain is sagaciously liberating peoples from her "imperialistic" domination. But it is possible that the new leaders of these people might do better in the near future if they were in relations of non-imperial tutelage to the British. It is a very hard world for untried rulers and political novices to live in, and it cannot be quite so neatly parcelled up and disposed of as some of Mr Fischer's essays tend to make us think.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).

THE WOMAN IN THE CAVE

Sir,—Your correspondent "Onlooker" of Hastings seems to start his thinking with too many unsound assumptions. If one is to decide on normal or abnormal behaviour by referring to "the purpose for which man was created," then one would obtain as many answers as there are religious and philosophical theories in the world. No one knows the purpose for which man was created, if any.

The censoring mind is purely the result of early environment and training. A number of children brought up without human intervention from birth in complete isolation would not develop any mental censorship or conscience. First, annoying practices such as obscene letters and the antics of some adolescents are completely our fault.

The moralities that are instilled into earlier generations by the church are fading from society as the influence of the church lessens. We must replace these by positive rational moralities taught from reason, not faith. A weary catalogue of don'ts followed by complete indifference as we ponder the various attractions of races, pubs or football is hardly likely to keep any intelligent teenager at home on Saturday. G. S. BROWN (Hamilton).

SPELLING

Sir,—What is the reason for the constant spelling errors found in today's press? In your issue of September 13, a correspondent, Barbara Brewer, three times wrote "adaption" instead of adaptation, a common error which appears frequently in newspapers. Other mistakes I have noticed in *The Listener*, and elsewhere, are "interpretive" for interpretative; "retraction" for retraction, and "phenominal" instead of phenomenal.

It would be interesting to learn whether this is just carelessness, or lack of education.

L. D. AUSTIN (Wellington).

IRON CURTAIN OPERA

Sir,—In his eagerness to bring *The Consul* up to date and make the opera "topical," somebody blundered in the introductory remarks to the programme (on sale at the performance). It was stated there and in *The Listener* that the action was "obviously" taking place in an iron curtain country, and a few

lines later we were told that the hero was fleeing from "Fascists." Surely you can't have it both ways? Menotti wrote his drama at a time when Fascist—and Nazi—persecutions roused indignation and pity. It was "obviously" not directed towards an iron curtain country which then did not exist, though the human plight which is the theme of the opera is, of course, a world-wide one.

Incidentally, if guesses have to be made it is not difficult to know what country the never-seen consul represents!

WITHOUT POLITICS
(Wellington).

"THE POHUTUKAWA TREE"

Sir,—S.C., writing of Bruce Mason's play *The Pohutukawa Tree* in your issue of September 13, says: "Few have the gift to capture, as Mr Mason has done, the thoughts and feelings and stubborn pride of an old Maori woman of high birth." According to S.C.'s outline of the play, this old Maori woman is driven by the "downfall" of her children (16-year-old daughter in trouble with pakeha youth and 18-year-old son influenced by comics) to reject these children, to turn from her religion (previously described as "her deep Christian faith"), and finally to a "decision to die" (does this mean suicide?).

Surely S.C. does the play grave injustice. Or is this really Mr Mason's hi-fi version of race relations under a pohutukawa within sight of Rangitoto? R.M.R. (Hokianga).

LORD KITCHENER

Sir,—Are the incidents related in *Their Finest Hour*, broadcast from ZB stations, supposed to be true to fact? While listening with interest to the story of Lord Kitchener, I detected two glaring anachronisms. First, Kitchener was supposed to be congratulated by Queen Victoria at the end of the South African War. That war ended in 1902. Queen Victoria died in January, 1901.

Secondly, it was said that Kitchener was going to Russia after the First World War was won. Is it not a fact that he was drowned in 1916, two and a half years before the armistice?

When well-known incidents like these are distorted, how are we to know which parts of the stories are fact, and which are fiction? L.E.R. (Picton).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Skipple (Takaka): Thank you. Will make inquiries.

Gobbledygook (Kamo): Afraid too descriptive.

G. F. Holibar (Auckland): (1) You overlook the fact that most of the programmes you dislike are recorded and distributed by British companies, not American. (2) If you refer to NZBS productions, the output of the studios is as high as producers, casts, choice of scripts, and technical resources will allow, if standards are to be maintained. If you refer to the New Zealand Players, that company is generally touring its own plays, which cannot be successfully broadcast from the stage. When members of the company are not required for a tour, they commonly take interim engagements with NZBS Productions Section.

