

BROADCASTING ELECTION RESULTS

Sir,—My chief difficulty with the Maori election results was due to the fact that the candidate whose name was spelt Tauwhare to Wirehana was pronounced Wirehana, and Hovell was pronounced Moananui. This difficulty would have been avoided if the names of the candidates had been numbered.

When Wednesday came, I could not find *The Listener*, so used a daily newspaper. The electorates were not numbered. Dunedin North was placed before Eden, instead of North Dunedin after New Plymouth. The candidates for Mornington were given as Hudson, Hannan, Stephens, instead of Hannan, Hudson, Stephens. The candidates for Rangitikei were given as Gordon, de Malmarche instead of De Malmarche, Gordon. I found it difficult to keep up with the announcer, but it would have been easier if the electorates had been numbered, as in *The Listener*.

I suggest that, for the next election, a list be prepared with a number for each electorate, and a number for each candidate. Result might be read out "Electorate eight, candidate 19, McDonald 2190, candidate 20, Skinner 3814." Probably it would not be necessary to read out the numbers of the candidates every time.

As soon as the list had been prepared, it should be copyrighted, and copies should be sent to anyone who wanted to print it. Anyone would be allowed to print it, for distribution, without payment of royalty, on condition the sheets distributed were true copies of the original. Doubtless anyone who wished to do so would be allowed to print the names in any order he chose; but, if he did so, he would not be allowed to call it a true copy of the official list. If this were done, anyone buying or receiving a score sheet marked "True Copy of Official List" would know that the names and figures on his list would agree with the names and figures which would be read out on the night.

IGNORISSIMUS (Tauranga).

(A simpler way out of the difficulty is to buy *The Listener*—and not lose it.—Ed.)

LONG-DISTANCE SERIALS

Sir,—I also would like to make my protest at the length of some of the serials. Personally, I think no serial should have more than 24 episodes, spread over two quarter-hour sessions or one half-hour per week. As the announcer makes quite clear the product he is advertising at the beginning and end of the session, surely there is no need for him or her to chip in again half-way. After all, I think that we, the listening public, pay for the serial when we purchase the product being advertised.

A.H.J. (Wellington).

CHURCHES IN RUSSIA

Sir,—On page 118 of his book *Soviet Success*, the Dean of Canterbury has included a chapter on institutional religion in the Soviet Union. Included in this chapter is a report of a conversation with the Chairman of the All Union Council of Baptists and Evangelical Christians. This chapter and this conversation just about sum up, I think, all that need be said on the matter of religion in the U.S.S.R.

Whose word is more to be relied on—Kraevchenko's or the Dean's? One cannot help suspecting that a large number of those who are concerned with the fate of the Churches in Russia base their con-

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cern more on its propaganda value than upon a genuine feeling for religion.

A final note of warning. Twenty-odd years of anti-Soviet propaganda culminated in the greatest war of all time. Let those who indulge in anti-Soviet feeling today search their hearts and ask themselves if they would like to have on their conscience the thought that they helped pave the way for a war more horrible than the last.

SCHOOL TEACHER
(Mauriceville).

HUMOROUS WRITING

Sir,—With P. W. Jackson, I would like to see more articles such as "Bardell's Gremlins" by F. L. Combs. Until lately we seemed to get more sketches and articles of the lighter type which still kept to the general high standard of *The Listener*. Humour does not need to be what is often called "a funny story," and *The Listener* evidently used to get a supply of cleverly written stuff. Has the supply fallen off, or are the writers perhaps not encouraged nowadays?

I would like to say a word of appreciation to the artist whose sketches and illustrations are scattered through your pages, but even these do not seem as plentiful as they used to be. His caricatures are at times superb. Even as a victim I have thoroughly enjoyed the various guises in which I have found myself portrayed at his hands; I hope you will give us plenty of his clever work.

EVE GRAY (Papakura).

USE OF LEISURE

Sir,—Your leader of December 2, on the use of leisure, spotlights a central problem of contemporary life. We have as a nation no conception of the proper use of leisure. A negative approach to the forty-hour week, discussing it as an escape from work rather than an increase in leisure, has passed unnoticed for years. Our schools equate leisure with sport.

It is hardly fair, however, to dismiss the problem by pointing out that work and leisure are not absolute opposites. I myself, working as a librarian, find that in taking an active interest in my work I am spending my time much as I might if I did not have to work at all. But as a student during vacations I worked in many jobs where the deadly factory routine precluded an intelligent interest in work. It was interesting to me for a month as a new experience and an opportunity to meet people more alive than those I was used to, but until mechanisation eliminates jobs of this nature many men must centre their lives off the job. An attempt to combine mental activity with such work (as, in my experience, with shaving) leads to the problem of "industrial accidents caused by day-dreaming." (Housman, you will remember, cut himself remembering a line from Milton.)

We need more leisure to think, to feel and to rest. We do not think. The complicated detail of modern politics is not mastered or even dimly understood by the majority of voters who have little leisure and use it wrongly. Even those whose work is intellectual stop thinking when the whistle blows and remain specialists.

We do not learn to feel. Some time for interest in good reading is necessary

before people will understand the humanity of others in other lands. The untidy approximation of interests seen in married couples is relevant. A young married couple have far too few moments together for intimate discussion which must be given a little time to grow. Most lose interest in each other while still strangers and become average, anxious New Zealanders.

Then one must rest a little. A little troubled sleep against a background of the neighbour's wireless and rattling trams is not enough. We may live months in a city without experiencing genuine silence. The healing effects of silence are so little known that to mention them must suggest mysticism.

If this letter is not convincing, it is perhaps because it has had to be composed in odd moments.

G. W. TURNER (Christchurch).

SCHOOLBOY VOICES

Sir,—As conductor of the Tangiteroria School Choir, I wish to correct the wrong impression of the listening public that I sang with the children. The bass part was taken by a group of six Maori boys led by a boy of 13 years of age.

W. A. DOUGLAS COLE
(Tangiteroria).

THE HUNGRY GRAMOPHIL

Sir,—In a recent issue of your journal one of your commentators deplored the plight of "gramophils." It is true that we are but rarely offered good recordings in the scanty time set aside for so-called classical music. Yet we do look forward to such items, and the disappointment at hearing inferior renderings of recorded music is the greater when the gramophil knows that better issues exist, and are, for inexplicable reasons, not released. As a recent case, I would like to refer to the Chamber Music hour from Station 2YC, Wellington. I had made a point of listening in to Schubert's Trout Quintet (op. 114), and although I admit that the best-known recording, by the Pro Arte Quartet and Arthur Schnabel is not, from a recording point of view at least, perfect, it is infinitely better than the discs played over 2YC on Monday, December 12. Would it not be possible to select the best rendering available? Again, if only a very inferior recording is available, why not forgo the work in question?

GRAMOPHIL (Wellington).

TEMPO FOR SINGERS

Sir,—W. H. Warren's letter in your issue of December 16 instances Dr. Bradshaw's remarkable slow-down at the end of the "Thunders and Lightnings" chorus of the St. Matthew Passion (followed by a final 12-beat pause, which he didn't mention) and its impressive effect. No one who sang this oratorio under the Doctor will be likely to prefer the strict time of the recent edition. Dr. Bradshaw, in the main a strict-timeist, knew when to take the law into his own hands.

But it was only of solo singers I wrote. I hold that lieder composers—from Schubert to Strauss—presuppose strict time from their singers (except where a variation from it is composer-commanded) or they would never have written the pattern accompaniments they did write. These cannot be played unless the

singer sings what's in front of him. In an art song, singer and accompanist are not master and humble servant, but are joint interpreters of a Master.

Reproof of the typical timeless wobbler was never perhaps more neatly administered than by Sir Alexander Mackenzie. At a rehearsal, having at length given up the vain job of trying to adapt his orchestra to the timeless one's non-starts, spurts, slowdowns, and general lawlessness, he stopped proceedings and said in his good broad Scots: "I wish you'd have the goodness to remember that this is an orchestra, not an elastic band!" F. K. TUCKER (Gisborne).

CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

Sir,—I have just heard an excellent discussion from 2YA on "State aid to private schools." I am sure the decision to permit the discussion of such a potentially explosive topic was both wise and courageous. The explosive topics are precisely those that need to be aired and are most often avoided for fear of offending one or other section of the community. Surely one of the tokens of an adult mind is the ability to discuss these very problems sanely and reasonably.

Let us hear both sides by all means, while yet we can, and for a future subject may I suggest that the NZBS help us to get at the truth about Russia—or as near to the truth as we can. What on earth does she want? Why can't we make any headway with her? Are we to believe Henry Wallace, Professor Bernal and J. B. S. Haldane or, on the other hand, Churchill, Bevin, Truman and the Pope? Now is the time to make some attempt to answer these questions. It will be too late when the bombs burst.

MORE GUNPOWDER (Inglewood).

WORLD THEATRE

Sir,—It has been interesting to read of the forthcoming *World Theatre* broadcasts, partly because I knew some of the leading players while I was free-lancing for the BBC, but more particularly because of the closer association which some New Zealanders had with Commander E. J. King Bull, then in the Navy, who later was a producer in the first *World Theatre* series of programmes.

In 1944-5, among members of The Churchill Club—who had come from all parts of the Empire—King Bull started and led a small group of modern poetry enthusiasts. In the library of Ashburnham Hall, reputedly one of the most lovely homes in England and for a long time a part of the famous Westminster Boys' School, we chose, read and discussed poems by men like T. S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas and modern Americans.

About 40, slight, good-looking and in appearance the naval "type," King Bull was very well informed on poetry and drama and its radio presentation.

During the war a story went the rounds of the BBC concerning a phone call he made to Broadcasting House when in Home waters. A new and harassed telephone attendant, unaware of his identity, was asked by the Commander to connect him with a certain number. On being asked who was speaking he said, "I'm King Bull." Really! she said tartly. "Well, I'm Queen Cow."

MARJORIE SKILL (Russell).