

THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY

Sir,—We should very much appreciate answers to the questions below, in connection with the sudden unexplained termination of the series of talks *The Family and Society*.

- (1) Was Mr. Nixon's script read before permission to broadcast was given, and by whom was this permission given?
- (2) By whom was protest first made, and on what grounds?
- (3) Were there any similar protests, and if so, by whom?
- (4) Who made the decision to terminate the talks?
- (5) Why was no reason given over the air for their termination?

NANCY M. FOX,
DOROTHY E. MORRISON,
BETTY POLAND,
(Auckland).

(The official reply is as follows: "By an error of judgment, one script was bought which, if broadcast as written, would have given offence to many listeners. This script was the fifth in the series. The only protest received was against the third talk, which the Broadcasting Service considered unexceptionable. The decisions to delete an illustration from the fourth script (which deletion did not affect the argument), and to withhold the fifth until it could be recast, were made by senior officers of the Service in the course of their regular duty. Mr. Nixon felt he could not say what he wished to say except by substantially the same detailed treatment as formerly. As this detail was unacceptable, the series lapsed after the fourth broadcast. Mr. Nixon's views were never in question: he strongly supported the traditional role of the family in society."—Ed.)

"TO A JET PILOT"

Sir,—As there is no evidence to support a belief that you have examined the poem "To a Jet Pilot" by James Baxter (*Listener*, November 16), I feel I am not being presumptuous in suggesting a detailed perusal not only by you, but also by those who blindly venerate Baxter's writings.

Apart from the slang used and the too obvious statements which can only be criticised on the grounds of good taste, I would point out that the poem is constructed in such a manner that it presents an unhappy conflict between the accepted poetical technique embodying both rhyme and metre, and a certain emotive rhythm pertaining only to poetry in the Eliot style. A closer examination discloses many faults. For example, the use of the word "amorous" to describe "vault." Surely Baxter could have drawn a more suitable adjective from his—no doubt—extensive vocabulary?

Supposing that some continuity exists in the text of the poem, one must object to the closing line of the first stanza. I am forced to assume that the "lads" are looking up from the "shop-girls' breasts." Delightful, although I hardly imagine Baxter intended to convey such an impression. Also, why "a flower?" One can only hazard a guess at its significance, for the emotional impact of the word is insufficient to warrant its inclusion in the poem.

"Mene, mene, tekel . . ." What prompted this biblical quotation—this indulgence in profundity? A desire to impress his reading public?

In the third stanza one criticises Baxter's use of the distasteful word "wormsmeat," and the too obvious cliché "bundle of nerves."

The fourth stanza also possesses many faults. For example, the nonsensical passage, "the cowering houses under your thunderbird are wounds to prove you liar and vulnerable flesh." If a comma is placed after the word "liar," some semblance of coherency is attained, although the phrase "and vulnerable flesh"

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

shows nothing more than an unsuccessful attempt to make use of the emotive afterthought, a technique employed by superior poets.

The concluding line may be interpreted in several ways. Is Baxter assuming that the essence of God is the essence of the reality he has attempted to portray, or does he believe that God's fire will be a result of this reality? Or is this just another of his pointless obscurities?

One cannot condone poetry of this nature. Are we in this country so deep in the mire of pseudo-intellectualism that we are unable to distinguish between the pretentious aspirant and the genuine literary artificer? It would appear so.

DAVID R. WATSON (Dunedin).
(Abridged.—Ed.)

THE DUCO

Sir,—The picture of the "little Ducu" towing a barque in Wellington Harbour (*Listener*, November 16) recalls the disaster of September 7, 1907, when this vessel was lost at Pencarrow Head with all hands when battling against a heavy southerly. Mal-loading of bunker coal was stated to have been a contributing factor in causing the Ducu to founder at the harbour entrance in the course of a voyage to the Chathams, her departure incurring the disapproval of the Marine Surveyor. On January 3, 1896, I had a trip in the Ducu outside harbour limits: this was a few days after the wreck of the *Halcione* when it was necessary for Customs officers to investigate the disposal of cargo salvage at Fitzroy Bay. The Ducu, with the Duchess, maintained an excellent harbour ferry service to the Eastern Bays, a theatrical gag of the period alluding to "The Duke of Kaiwarra" and "The Duchess of Day's Bay." Wellingtonians of that era will recall the genial Captain Jones, Master of the *Mana*, Ducu and Duchess.

W. H. WARREN (Redcliffs).

RADIO PIONEERS

Sir,—Your contributor "G. le F.Y." spoils an interesting article by the statement which refers to "Johnny" as a type we haven't started to breed yet in New Zealand (*Listener*, October 26). Before a trail of smashed "B" stations was left throughout New Zealand, such enthusiasts, the real pioneers of broadcasting, were many. In most cases at their own expense, and lacking most facilities, these men put music for the people on the air, and deserve a place in our memories.

I speak only of those I knew, realising that every district had its share, but I really feel that the debt which New Zealand radio owes to men like John Howarth, B. T. Shiel, Bob Cook, and their contemporaries of other towns should be acknowledged.

42W (Hamilton).

INVASION OF SPACE

Sir,—I possess pictures of a rocket designed for inter-planetary travel and of a design for a space-station. I have just received a report of the International Congress on Astronautics held recently in London, wherein is a plan for landing 50 men on Mars, using space-stations as stepping stones; the expedition to last some three years.

Your admirable editorial directs attention to a number of cogent points bearing on these ambitious schemes and emboldens me to suggest that the prospect

before the human race would be considerably brighter if, all nations consenting, the United Nations decreed a 25 or 50-year scientific holiday. This interval could be used for bringing our moral and spiritual development to a point where we might become trustworthy custodians of what we have already discovered—time enough then to carry our disruptive tendencies amongst the celestial spheres. As you point out, it would be better for us "to stay rooted in our own small world, at least until we have learnt to live in it peacefully."

We need to become less dominated by our mania for destruction; less like irresponsible schoolboys fooling about in an explosives factory; less of apes and tigers and more nearly something that would offer at least some colourable justification for Hamlet's encomium beginning: "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty!"

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).

RACING BROADCASTS

Sir,—It is very nice of you to add footnotes to all those letters, telling us when we could have heard the race results. What we want you to do is to publish a journal that will tell us beforehand when and where we can hear them.

The *Listener*, November 6, told us to tune to 2ZA and hear "Racing Summary—Canterbury." We heard the last four results—no commentary on Trotting Cup or Melbourne Cup. Now you will tell us that we could have heard all this from 2YA at 7 p.m. But how did we know that? Did *The Listener* give us that guide? Is it not failing in its purpose if it does not do so? I cannot maintain a listening vigil; I can but tune in when *The Listener* tells me. Let me quote another instance. The *Listener* said, "2ZA, Saturday, November 10, at 12.45—Sports Summary." That summary was over by 12.40.

THE GOOD-OIL (Marton).

(1. Technical trouble between 22B and 32B explains why the summary from 22A covered only the four last results from Riccarton. 2. Summaries do not include commentaries on races in New Zealand or on the Melbourne Cup. 3. The 12.45 summary from 22A was not broadcast early; the correspondent possibly heard the result that was broadcast at 12.40, and concluded that it was the last of the summary. 4. Programmes in our issue of November 2 included details of broadcasts on the Melbourne Cup and New Zealand Trotting Cup to be given from 2YA and 2ZA. A summary of the arrangements was also printed in an article on Page 7.—Ed.)

ENGLISH CHURCH MUSIC

Sir,—I should like to endorse the appreciation expressed by F. K. Tucker of the broadcasts of English Church Music, particularly the one from 2YC on November 4. It may interest listeners to know that the selection broadcast by 2YC was taken from a series recently recorded under the title of "An Anthology of English Church Music" as a result of a request by the British Council. It was my privilege to be present in Canterbury Cathedral when some of the works in this series were being recorded under the direction of Dr. E. H. Fellowes—probably the greatest living authority on Tudor church music.

F. K. Tucker inquires who was the composer of the magnificent "Sing Aloud with Gladness," asking if it is by "Samuel Sebastian Wesley or his father, Charles." The answer is, by neither! The composer was Samuel Wesley, the father of Samuel Sebastian, and the son of hymn-writer Charles. The great evangelist John and Charles were brothers, and it is from Charles that the musical branch of the family stems. Charles had two sons—Charles and Samuel. Samuel was born at Bristol in 1766 and died in 1837. Early in life he joined the Roman Catholic Church, which probably accounts for his small output of English church music. He is remembered now chiefly for the two wonderful motets, "In Exitu Israel" and the one under discussion—"Exultate Deo" ("Sing Aloud with Gladness"). His son, Samuel Sebastian, was born in 1810 and is probably the greatest figure in English church music between Purcell and Stanford.

Finally, may I echo the plea of F. K. Tucker for more of this fare. Also, if 2YA wishes to use the title *In Quires and Places Where They Sing*, coming as it does from the rubric after the Third Collect at Matins or Evensong in the *Book of Common Prayer*, it should include only music from our rich heritage of English church music, and sung by the traditional cathedral or collegiate choir of boys and men.

G. R. EVERISS (Wanganui).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Bruce Mason.—Please write. Student (Hamilton) and *The Student* (Wellington).—Your letters arrived after the correspondence had been closed.

J.R.B. (Wellington).—The facts as you state them, in the Mozart-Bartok programme, are acknowledged, with apologies; they were inquired into the next day. The explanation, which involves an account of certain difficulties (at present insuperable) in the simultaneous monitoring of more than one programme in one control room, cannot be clearly summarised in a note like this. If you care to ring this office, an arrangement will be made for you to hear it.

Hard-up Taxpayer (Christchurch).—(1) Legislation does not permit time to be sold on non-commercial stations. (2) Government policy, as first laid down and still effective, is against the sale of commercial-station time to religious organisations. (3) The amount of licence fee revenue far exceeds £135,000; the gross figure, 1950-51, was £580,821.

Karl Elmendorf (Christchurch).—Listeners who write to point out announcers' errors, especially if station, date, and item or time are identified, are always sincerely thanked for their help in a never-ending task—to improve announcing standards. But to abuse the appalling announcers' because some foreign words and names are mispronounced during transmissions totalling more than 100,000 hours a year is no more helpful and no more just than it would be to describe sub-editors as illiterates because occasional grammatical errors and misprints appear in the most carefully-produced newspapers.

J. F. Lyon (Wanganui).—Dinner music programmes are not regarded as appropriate occasions for music that deserves undistracted listening.

Weather or Not (Christchurch).—If you will be so kind as to give a few examples of the frequent and unnecessary references, approximately dated, and to specify the station or stations, inquiry will be facilitated. Reports on outdoor events—race meetings, games, shows, etc.—may be expected to include them. Do you mean other occasions than these?

Listener (Inch Clutha).—Letters are selected in accordance with interest and quality. Your other complaint is being passed on.

A.A.M. (Melburn).—What They Said at the Time will start from 2YA at 8.30 p.m. on Monday, December 10.

Protestant (Waiuku).—It followed a procedure established over a number of years for this annual broadcast. It is not unusual for a YC station to be used in this way for a daytime broadcast for which it may not be desired to alter the main programme structure for the day.

W. R. Toorh (Christchurch).—The version played is that officially adopted by the British Broadcasting Corporation; orchestrated and arranged by Gerrard Williams, formerly Musical Director of the BBC; performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult; and recorded by H.M.V.