

LOWER COST HOUSING

Sir,—I listened with interest and attention to a discussion of lower cost housing broadcast on July 13. It was interesting and informative, but I strongly disagreed with the negative approach of the builder. He suggested that young couples should do without desirable (?) things and cited wash-houses and chimneys. They could come later on. We have been married 15 years and have four children. Of late we have enjoyed a moderate degree of affluence and have been able to spend some money on our house. The first thing we did was to get a spin dry washing machine—an English model which also washes dishes. It was placed at the end of the sink bench—an eminently suitable and convenient position. Our wash-house has degenerated into a dumping ground for family rubbish which, for all practical purposes, would be far better burnt. The price of the washing machine is half the price of a wash-house, and has reduced my work by a great deal more than half.

The next thing we did (from affluence, you understand—not because of poverty) was to have the chimney in the living room taken out. We now have a great deal more space. In place of the open fire we put a slow combustion stove (I don't like the word stove—it sounds ugly—ours is porcelain, streamlined and elegant). This requires only a flue. The living room is adjacent to the kitchenette. The flue goes through the wall and up through the kitchenette ceiling. Round this flue I have a marvellous hot cupboard which airs and even dries clothes better than anything we had before. Our stove has also a pipe which connects with the electric hot water system. We use an enormous amount of hot water—and it's always hot!

Our room is beautifully warm—no draughts in the back of the neck. It is much easier to keep clean; there is no dirty grate to clean in the morning, and we use about one-third or one-quarter of the fuel we used to. If we feel like an open fire we open the stove doors; but that happens very rarely. We are quite content to see the flames through the mica doors. I consider our set-up is much cheaper to have than a conventional wash-house and chimney, and is also infinitely easier and pleasanter to live with. It is not a question of "doing without," which implies deprivation, but a question of doing better.

TRIED BOTH (Palmerston North).

"JASMINE FARM"

Sir,—Our attention has been drawn to the talks broadcast by Norah Alleyway, also to the article "Home on the Farm" in *The Listener* dated June 26. The speaker states that when the farm was bought from us it was a "derelict ruin," and that there was no garden. This is not true. During the six years we lived there, we made the house into a comfortable home by putting in hot water and other conveniences, and doing all the painting and papering. We made lawns and flower beds, fixed fences and purchased cows and poultry which we always kept in good condition. We brought up four children and also found time to serve on school committee, Women's Institute, rifle club, Red Cross, drama club, and help with the socials arranged to farewell and welcome home the boys who went to World War Two.

This youngish woman with no ties found that the small holding of five and a half acres was a "kind of Moloch that devoured all her time." She could not even spare one afternoon a month to join the C.W.I., most of whose members

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lived on farms and had several children to care for. She keeps referring to her very comfortable home in Timaru. Why did she want to exchange it for a "derelict ruin"? Incidentally, we found that this same comfortable home had to have quite a sum spent on fixing sanitary drains, leaking roof and cistern, electricity repairs, etc. We do think the NZBS should verify statements broadcast. It would have been easy to find out the truth from residents of the district, instead of accepting statements from this person from England who feels she owes nothing to the country where she found a home. We do not wish to intrude too much on your space, but you devoted a column about the talk and "Fair play is bonny play."

F. AND S. NEWTON (Timaru).

(The following passage is quoted from the first of the talks: "Let me say here that my comments are not in any way intended as a reflection on the owner or his family. He was a returned soldier and a very sick man, with a school-age family away most of the day, so he must have found it very hard to keep things going."—Ed.)

WOMEN'S FRANCHISE

Sir,—I was surprised to hear the speaker on the New Zealand Housewife, Sunday evening (July 5) quote the following lines from W. P. Reeves's book, *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*: "So one fine morning of September, 1893, the women of New Zealand woke up and found themselves enfranchised. The privilege was theirs, given freely and spontaneously in the easiest and most unexpected manner in the world by male politicians. . . . No Franchise leagues had fought the fight year after year. . . ."

These statements are utterly at variance with the facts as revealed in the book *Outlines of the Women's Franchise Movement in New Zealand*, written by W. Sidney Smith (W. S. Lovell-Smith) and published in 1905.

In 1878, Dr. James Wallis moved in Parliament "That in the opinion of this House the electoral disabilities of women should be entirely removed, and that the same political rights and privileges should be granted to women as to men." This was seconded by Mr. Fox (afterwards Sir William Fox) but the motion was not carried. In 1879, John Ballance openly committed himself to the cause of woman suffrage and in 1881 Dr. Wallis introduced a Woman's Suffrage Bill which passed its first reading, but got no further.

In 1887 the question was again before Parliament by the Female Enfranchisement Bill introduced by Sir Julius Vogel. The second reading of the Bill was carried by 41 to 22, but was later dropped from the Order Paper. As yet, no public opinion had been created on this subject.

Upon the formation of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in New Zealand in 1885, a Franchise Department was established with Mrs. K. W. Sheppard as its superintendent. The unions, which numbered 15 in the first year, set to work to create a public opinion, and franchise committees, women's political leagues and similar groups came into being throughout New Zealand. A petition was circulated, signed by 10,085 women and presented to the House of Representatives by Sir John Hall in 1888. Sir John Hall endeavoured to introduce a clause to include women in the Electoral Bill then before the House, but this was not accepted. In 1890 the women again became active and presented another peti-

tion in 1892, containing 20,274 signatures. The Hon. John Ballance, then Premier, included Woman Suffrage in the Government Electoral Bill, but he died before the Bill was passed and was succeeded by the Hon. R. J. Seddon, who was not sympathetic. All hope of the enfranchisement of women in that year was lost.

The Franchise Superintendent lost no time in vain regrets. A fresh petition was drawn up and circulated. Upon the assembling of Parliament in 1893 it was found that the signatures to the third petition numbered 31,872 (nearly one-third of the women of the colony). Sir John Hall prepared and introduced a separate Woman Suffrage Bill which, after a stormy passage, was passed eventually by both Houses, and on September 19 Mr. Seddon forwarded the following telegram to Mrs. Sheppard: "The Electoral Bill assented to by His Excellency the Governor at a quarter to twelve this day."

These dates and figures serve to show that the Women's Franchise was the outcome of 50 years' work by thousands of women and men, and was not handed to them on a platter.

HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR IS DUE (Christchurch).

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Sir,—Henry Ford well said that history was bunk. The recent BBC school radio series *The Pioneers* is in the great journalistic traditional view of the Elizabethan Era. Sir Walter Raleigh is made to declare that his settlement in the New World is inspired by thirst for

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glory, promotion of trade and bringing the word of God to Indians—in that order. Now Raleigh was the best of the somewhat disreputable band of pirates and slavers who provoked (and subsequently defeated) the Armada. But it is astonishing to find his motives so misrepresented; for he declared them himself and in print. What he wanted was money.

LUX (Eastbourne).

FIVE FINGERS

Sir,—On the cover of your issue for July 3, you draw attention to a radio play at present in the process of production. The name of the play is *Five Fingers*. Did you have any special reason for digging up a rara avis with polydactylism (six fingers) to illustrate this?

F. E. DREIFUSS (Auckland).

(Perhaps we can escape the finger of scorn by explaining that it was merely a sort of dramatic licence, encouraged by the theme.—Ed.)

ARAWATA BILL

Sir,—While reading your leading article on Arawata Bill, I was reminded of an old prospector, Tom Kirby, whom I met in Patearoa, Central Otago, some 25 years ago. He was a well-educated man, had read and could quote the classics, and had memorised a prodigious store of factual knowledge. He could give at once such information as the comparative sizes of countries, and their populations. He knew all the members of the Royal Family for generations back, and could give the dates of their births, marriages, and deaths. He could keep books, do simple accounting at least, but never worked at a job longer than to gather sufficient funds to equip

himself for a prospecting expedition to the back country beyond the Serpentine. He went on foot and, though the wrong side of 50, carried 60 lb. loads imper- turbably, generally in a wheat sack.

Like many of his type he was kind-hearted and generous. I was doing a little fossicking myself at the time in one of the old sluicing claims at the back of Patearoa township, where my uncle had been tunnelling into a steep face, and then washing for prospects and "cradling" into the deep waters of an adjoining pond. Learning that I was trying to get some specimens of alluvial gold and the tiny little rubies, etc., often found with them, to show my school pupils, old Tom Kirby at once produced some of his hard-won "prospects" and insisted that I take some.

D. J. C. PRINGLE (Christchurch).

Sir,—Those who have studied—Roman History, shall we say, know that the proof of legend is the diversity of reports of the same thing. In the article on Arawata Bill in *The Listener* of July 20, I find this sentence: "Arawata Bill says Mrs. Mackenzie, always travelled alone, without even a dog for company." The night before I read this, I was reading *In Search of Central Otago*, by G. Hugh Sumpter. On page 82 the author states: "Arawata Bill's only companion was his faithful horse, which was with him for nearly twenty years."

The Roman historian Livy boldly chooses (with reasons) his version of a story. I copy Livy. I choose the "horse" version of Arawata Bill as being (to me) more dramatic and more moving. Anyway, Arawata Bill is already a legend.

E.M.D. (Christchurch).

POETS' CORNER

Sir,—In your number of July 10, under the above heading, "Arejay" wrote a letter which I heartily endorse. I have no doubt that if a poll of *Listener* readers could be arranged, giving their honest opinion of some of the verses you see fit to publish, the result would favour "Arejay" rather than yourself. My point is that you allow the mediocre to crowd out the good. Could you not more often devote some space to real poetry, and not to a jumble of words seemingly culled at random from a dictionary?

Poetry should satisfy and stimulate, but what satisfaction or stimulation is there in many of the modern poems? Luckily, sooner or later, people regain a proper perspective, so Kipling and others of his school will live, when the T. S. Eliots of the world are forgotten, save as a source of amusement. "You can fool some of the people all the time, etc."

MAC (Wellington).

(A public opinion poll would certainly go against us in this matter. But it would also have gone against poets who today are put forward as good examples. They, too, were rejected by their generation, or came slightly into favour. Keats and Shelley were ignored or laughed at. The "Lyrical Ballads" of Coleridge and Wordsworth, the most important event in English poetry since Milton, had a hostile reception. And poets who in those days would have headed popularity polls would now be near the bottom, or quite forgotten.—Ed.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Doubtful (Christchurch).—Productions Department, Head Office, NZBS, Wellington.

Democrat (Canterbury).—Sorry; the discussion has lapsed.

W. Fraser (Napier).—Thank you. Will pass it on.

Parent Listener (Foxton).—Your criticism will be borne in mind.

Regular Listener (Wellington).—Two requests are still allowed; but, to allow for better programme arrangement, they are not usually played together. When requests are again invited, it will be for single items; the double requests make for long delays.