

POLICY CHANGES DESIRABLE

Choral Music Must Move With the Times

"Our necessity now is to put away that failing which seems to be indigenous in the human make-up, namely, to resist changes of policy," said Mr. Stanley Oliver, conductor and director of music for the Royal Wellington Choral Union at the annual meeting of that body last week. "All societies, organisations and causes are severely handicapped by the fact that probably the majority of us think we



are keeping abreast of the times when in reality all we do is to rearrange our prejudices.

"We must be more enterprising in our programmes. Not for a moment must we scrap the old standard classics, but we must study variety and present from time to time a carefully chosen list of works in the modern idiom. Wellington has an astonishing number of silent and inarticulate amateurs who are struggling to keep up to date with contemporary music. The radio is catering for these enthusiasts nobly."

Choral societies and the like must, if they were to survive, maintain an even higher standard of performance. The masses of the people were critical of quality in performance as they never were before. Recordings of music performed by the best artists were daily and hourly entering the homes of the people via the radio. It was a commonplace to-day to hear almost perfect renditions by great artists, but this was a challenge rather than a discouragement.

Whatever the effect might be of the competition of the radio on the recitals of the individual artist, a large, well-equipped and thoroughly rehearsed choir performing judiciously chosen music could achieve a majesty and nobility in sound effect which could not be condensed into the most perfect of loudspeakers. Any musical society which was not prepared or equipped to measure up to the prevailing standards of excellence would go the way of all flesh. It was better and fairer to the public to cancel a performance than to present a programme which was not keyed up to the highest point of efficiency. It was the actual choral singing which counted.



*"I've no patience
with people who are content with
a wash that's only half white!—*

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