

with £65 prize money, the gold cup for the aggregate, and Drum-major Donaldson collected the Harrison medal and the gold medal for the winning band. Individual performers were again to the fore.

IN 1935, immediately after that triumphant innings at Timaru, the band suffered a setback from which it has not yet fully recovered. Mr. Dixon retired. He retired simply because other musical demands were too great for him. He had insufficient time to spare, fairly, for the band and he knew his own limitations. He retired and to-day devotes most of his time to conducting the 4YA studio orchestra, a finely-balanced combination which, under his baton, retains the standard to which it was brought under Mr. Gil Dech's temporary leadership.

After Mr. Dixon's retirement several older members of the band also retired. It became a shadow of its former self. The Timaru victories seemed as if they might be the St. Kilda Band's swan song.

IN June, 1935, Mr. A. W. E. Webb wielded the baton, and continued until December 9, 1936, when Mr. L. Francis, the present conductor, was appointed. Mr. Francis had been a member of the band in 1926, but left it to go to Wanganui. Later he conducted the Greymouth and Westport Bands, and obtained B grade championship victories while in charge of them.

Mr. Francis is a comparatively young man and very keen. Under his guidance the future of the St. Kilda Band seems assured. He has many young players all of whom are as keen as the leader, and there is no doubt it will be only a matter of time before the band "comes again."

At the 1938 contest, at Palmerston North, the quality of the younger players was proved by the successes gained by them. R. Francis, son of the conductor, won the open boys' solo contest under 17, and D. Christensen, an 11-year-old lad, was second. In the tenor horn selection Francis was first, and in the open boys' amateur cornet solo, the youthful Christensen was the winner. All were excellent performances.

A DEFINITE improvement has been noticed lately in public performances, and in the broadcasts given periodically from 4YA.

Behind the scenes, Mr. A. G. Homer, as secretary, has given loyal service for 11 years, having been elected in 1927. He takes his band work seriously, and the success of the band is a personal success. He himself joined as a player on October 29, 1923, and has had successes with the E flat bass, winning in 1927, coming second in 1923, and third in 1929.

Though his lustre is a little dimmed at the moment St. Kilda's star will shine again. Mr. Francis has much to do to bring the band to the high standard it held a few years ago, but he is confident—and his confidence means a great deal.

CONVINCED Tory as I am, I have never felt happy at the sight of the Union Jack as a tablecloth at Conservative meetings.—Sir Charles Petrie.

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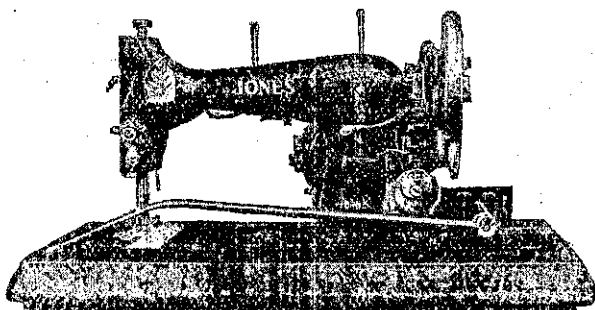
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