

The Visiting Debaters

NO one, hearing the broadcast of the recent debate from IYA between a team from Oregon University and a team representing Auckland University College, will quarrel with the judges' unanimous verdict in favour of the visitors. A well merited victory was achieved mainly by superior appreciation and treatment of the chosen subject, which was "That Imperialism is a Menace."

The American team took the affirmative, Mr. Miller taking the lead. Pleading for less petty nationalism and a greater understanding of internationalism, the speaker claimed that Imperialism was the greatest curse of civilisation and the surest cause of war. It was based on an assumption of superiority—a belief that the people of a particular nation were a chosen people. Even Heaven, said Mr. Miller, was not free from conscription by Imperialists, who not only desired to subjugate all their own people, but claimed God for their own side.

Mr. Adams, leader for Auckland, suggested that the only sane way of judging the subject was to test the result which had attended its practical application. Unfortunately this speaker, as did the succeeding defenders, based his arguments solely on British Imperialism in South Africa. He raised an ingenious plea that the development of waste land in Africa was brought about solely from humanitarian motives; settlers had at the back of their mind the satisfaction of over crowded European countries and not self-enrichment when they took over territory from native owners.

Mr. Wilson, second speaker for the Americans, drew attention to the evils which followed in the wake of civilisation, propelled by Imperialist colonists; who tore down racial standards, principles, and institutions. Mr. Barker, an Auckland speaker, chosen at short notice to replace an absent member of the defending team, obviously felt that the time allowed him for preparation was inadequate, and proceeded to burlesque the subject. He certainly provided some mirth, but must have cost his side many valuable points.

The final speaker for the visitors, Mr. Pfaff, was pungent and vigorous. Reminding his opponents of the subject under debate, he proceeded to show, from the example of his own nation's handling of Nicaragua, how Imperialism was working in a vicious and widening circle which was leading to the decadence of nations.

The VOICE of MICHAEL By "CRITIC"

Winding up for Auckland, Mr. Rowe, nothing daunted by a reminder of the subject under debate by the last speaker, proceeded to show how valuable to South Africa was its settlement by the British Empire.

Mr. Miller was allowed a few minutes in which to close the debate for the affirmatives. He summarised the points made by his side, and contended, quite correctly, that the opponents had not only been unable to negative a single one of these, but had been unable to advance a single point in favour of Imperialisation. As the speaker mentioned, ability to have remembered, and spoken on the actual chosen subject instead of swerving at a tangent on to the rights and wrongs of the British Empire, would have been more valuable to the Auckland speakers. He might well have added that fewer personalities and a general seasoning of ordinary politeness would have detracted nothing from the effect of their eloquence.

The judges had no difficulty in arriving at a decision which gave the debate to the visitors by a margin of thirty-three points.

Help the Birds in August

THE cause of the birds was again advocated to listeners on Wednesday evening last by Mr. A. E. Wilson, with the special objective of making August widely and popularly observed as "Bird Month." This gentleman's voice was particularly cultured and pleasant—one of the nicest radio voices I have heard—and I earnestly pray that his address be taken as a model by some other speakers.

In his matter I specially liked his anecdote of American experience illustrating the wonderful methods by which Nature preserves the balance between insect and bird life. In the pioneering days of America one of the Western States was overrun by a horde of crickets. These descended like one of the seven plagues of Egypt, and bade fair to sweep the whole State clear of vegetation, and ruin the wheat and barley crops, on which the inhabitants depended, not only for the bare means of existence, but their farming profit. By fires, traps, ploughing—by every device imaginable—the people strove to stem the invasion. All in vain, and the case seemed hopeless, till out of the blue came a host of seagulls! In her mysterious way Nature had conveyed the information to the gulls that food aplenty awaited them. They answered

the call. They ate and ate and ate, and the crickets disappeared before their unceasing hunger. At the end of a fortnight the land was clear, and the gulls departed. Ten years later the crickets, having steadily multiplied in the interval, again reached the stage of becoming a menace to crops and vege-



MADAM WINNIE FRASER.

A well-known Christchurch vocalist, who will broadcast a recital from 3YA next week.

—Steffano Webb Photo.

tation. Once more the gulls answered the call.

That incident struck home, and made one regret that more such stories were not used in this speaker's address.

Of the general case for birds, practically all are convinced, leaving little need for stress being laid in the form of what might be termed editorial comment upon their protection. The anecdote strikes home where a reasoned summary fails. An anecdote is remembered where balanced phraseology passes out of mind. May I suggest, therefore, to future speakers on behalf of the birds that they "tell us more stories." Their cause will benefit thereby.

The Continent of the Future

AN enviable destiny awaits the continent of Africa if the forecast of Mr. John Ash, of the "Christchurch

Star" proves correct. I wonder if enviable is the right word? One is almost inclined to take it for granted that the "civilisation" of a country must prove beneficial to that country. Having in mind some of the international tangles of the modern world, however, we must pause and ask ourselves whether we actually do confer a favour in reaching forth, octopus fashion, to bring more territory within the "civilised" fold.

Before the entry of the missionary, who seeks to show that but for his coming the natives must have been damned eternally, and the trader, who shows the natives how very simple it is to acquire those aids to a life of sloth, ease and temptation (thereby really giving the missionary something to do)—before the arrival of both these gentlemen, I repeat, the native enjoys a healthy, animal-like life, the substance of his creed being that the weakest must go to the wall. Just exactly what do we offer in its place? Reservations, whisky, motor-cars, the necessity of working for a living! Small wonder that some native races seem belated with their thanksgiving.

Be all that as it may, Africa seems destined for a great future according to our standards. Her future will be watched by the possessive eyes of all the great nations, most of whom already enjoy some share of African territory. There have been singularly few international complications as the result of the division of the continent. While few continents have been credited with the secretion of more mysteries, it is a fact that modern inventions and modern methods of exploration, coupled with the white man's proverbial curiosity and indomitable courage in satisfying it, have succeeded in laying bare most of Africa's dark soul.

Mr. Ash claims on her behalf that when her almost limitless resources are realised an end will be put to the old theory of an unavoidable world shortage of primary products. Let us hope that her productive activities will not be unduly concentrated on butter, cheese, and wool!

Youth and Economics

I SEEM fated not to hear Mr. Ross!

Knowing that he, and some of his students were due for a discussion on economic topics last week, I took care to include the 4YA talk in my proposed schedule.

I was a minute or two late, and missed
(Continued on page 29.)

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