

The CARILLON and the PEOPLE

by Clifford Ball

[Master Carillonist]

— A Talk from 2YA —

BEFORE long the carillon will be part of the life of the citizens of Wellington. Its name will be on the tip of every tongue, and its pronunciation is sure to cause some controversy. I have only been in Wellington a few days, but I have been asked my opinion on a number of occasions as to how the word should be pronounced. It is, of course, essentially French, and in that language is pronounced "Careeyon."

As the Carillon, until fairly recent times, has always been characteristic of the Low Countries (Belgium and Holland), we have no equivalent in the English language. English people who have no knowledge of French naturally like some English method of pronouncing the adopted French word, as it does not come easily to them to say "Careeyon." I notice that quite a number of people say "Carrilion," which Anglicises the word in the same way as the French "pavillon" becomes pavilion.

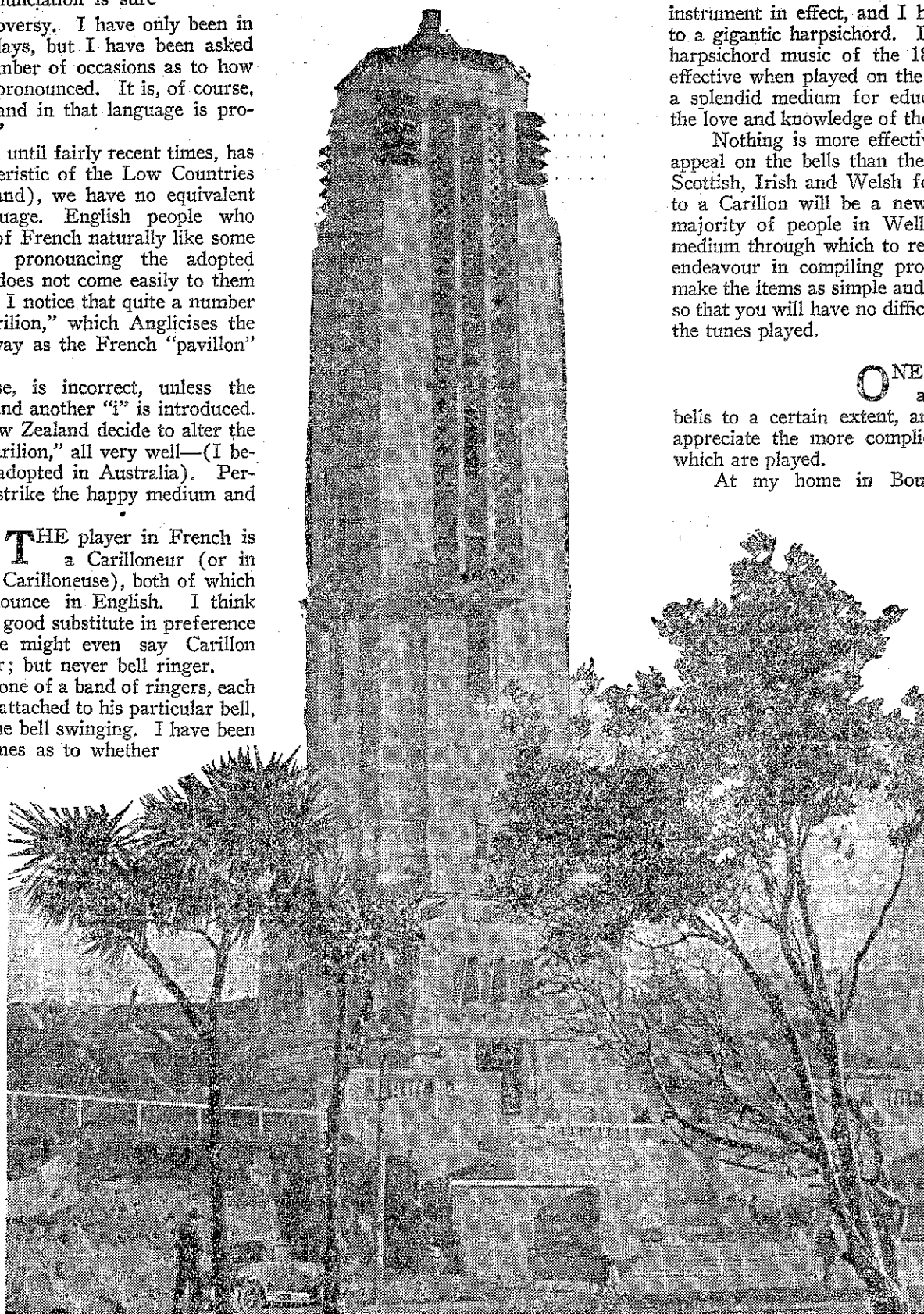
This, of course, is incorrect, unless the spelling is changed and another "i" is introduced. If the people of New Zealand decide to alter the spelling and use "Carilion," all very well—I believe this has been adopted in Australia). Personally I prefer to strike the happy medium and say Carillon.

THE player in French is a Carillonneur (or in the case of a lady, a Carillonneuse), both of which are difficult to pronounce in English. I think Carillonist is quite a good substitute in preference to Carillionist. One might even say Carillon player or bell player; but never bell ringer.

A bell ringer is one of a band of ringers, each of whom has a rope attached to his particular bell, with which he sets the bell swinging. I have been questioned many times as to whether

I played the Carillon by means of ropes. On other occasions I have heard the uninitiated say that they thought I had a huge hammer in each hand and struck the

The campanile, New Zealand's memorial to those who did not return, rising loftily and dignified from Mount Cook. Peals from the 49 bells comprising the carillon were broadcast on Monday last.



bells themselves. One has only to see the size and disposition of the bells in the tower to realise that this would be a physical impossibility even to such an agile person as a Carillonneur. The Carillon is a comparatively delicate

instrument in effect, and I have often likened it to a gigantic harpsichord. In fact, much of the harpsichord music of the 18th Century is very effective when played on the Carillon. It is also a splendid medium for educating the people in the love and knowledge of the nation's folk music.

Nothing is more effective nor has a greater appeal on the bells than the traditional English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh folk songs. Listening to a Carillon will be a new experience to the majority of people in Wellington, and a fresh medium through which to receive music. I shall endeavour in compiling programmes at first to make the items as simple and as direct as possible, so that you will have no difficulty in distinguishing the tunes played.

ONE has to acquire the art of listening to bells to a certain extent, and in time one can appreciate the more complicated classical items which are played.

At my home in Bournville, B'ham, we

have a Carillon (not as large as yours), consisting of 42 bells, with the largest bell weighing 2 tons (yours is 5 tons). I give recitals there each Sunday evening during the summer months, and these are attended by large crowds, who congregate on the green and in the park nearby, where seats are provided. The tower containing the bells is situated in the village green of (Cnld. on p. 24.)

Each bell in the carillon, from the smallest treble bell to the great bourdon bell, weighing nearly five tons, is inscribed. The bourdon bell carries a frieze of fern leaves and flax as a N.Z. national emblem upon its

shoulder.
—"Dominion" photo.