

Editorial Notes.

Wellington, Friday, August 25, 1933

FOR the first time since it came into being the British Broadcasting Corporation has answered publicly Press criticisms of its policy and methods—answers that might very easily be given by the New Zealand Broadcasting Board to the listeners in this country who have made similar complaints. Official replies have been withheld in the past, not because the B.B.C. does not welcome such criticisms, but because they have, up to now (with certain honourable exceptions) consisted almost entirely of individual utterance and opinion on the part of the writers who have shown that they have not informed themselves of the facts, or of the circumstances which have to be taken into account in dealing with the facts or the forming of any policy. If the British concern replied to every public mis-statement of fact concerning its activities in broadcasting, it would require to employ a considerable staff in doing nothing else.

The Broadcasting Board in New Zealand is in a similar position. Both in the silly season and out of it numbers of New Zealand newspapers open their correspondence columns to letters of the wildest criticism—letters which any person of moderate intelligence could easily discover to be the work of a biased or a child-like mind. The Board is perhaps approached for an answer to such letters. Naturally enough, it refuses to comment. The newspaper reports the result of its request and the inference is that the "Board hasn't got a leg to stand on."

Public mis-statements are one thing, genuine criticism another. It is definitely valuable and helpful, provided three conditions are fulfilled: (a) That the critic is, by training and equipment, one whose opinion is worthy of respect; (b) that the facts upon which the opinion is formed are accurate; and (c) that the criticism is without prejudice or bias.

Certain of the leading papers in England (including *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Observer*) have recently devoted space in both their editorial and correspondence columns to criticisms of the B.B.C.'s musical activities, major attention being paid to the administrative policy. It has been said that the Corporation's attitude toward young artists is dis-

couraging, and that it does not do nearly enough for British composers. Figures have proved that the B.B.C. is doing more for young composers

Books to Read

Literature in Demand at the Moment

THIS list, supplied each week by the Wellington Public Library, indicates books that are in general demand at the moment, and may serve as a guide to those readers who are looking for new and interesting literature.

FICTION.

"The World His Pillow," by James Bartie.

To anyone who has known the West Highlands of Scotland, this novel will be a delight. The story deals with the childhood and life of Duncan, a young poet, brought up in a remote Highland cottage until, at the age of seventeen, he is removed by the death of his father to an uncle's house in Glasgow and the turmoil of modern life. This is a well-written book of pronounced literary merit.

"I'll Tell You Everything," by J. B. Priestley and G. W. Bullett.

"A rollicking British mystery story, notable for its humour and for its minor characters, depicted in the best Priestley manner."

GENERAL.

"Edwardians Go Fishing," by George Cornwallis-West.

An interesting and amusing collection of Edwardian anecdotes, including accounts of the popular sports and pastimes of the period. Mr. Cornwallis-West is a well-known raconteur whose intimate knowledge of life in political and social circles well fits him for authorship of this kind.

"Texts and Pretexts." An anthology with commentaries. By Aldous Huxley.

"Mr. Huxley goes over his rich store of personal poetical experience, and sets down two or three hundred of his favourite pieces and passages, most of them English, many French, and a few Latin, Italian, Spanish; with a running commentary designed both to establish the peculiar quality and virtue of each and also to suggest its bearing on the contemporary outlook."

"I Am a Fugitive from a Georgia Chain Gang!" by R. E. Burns.

"An indictment of savage and archaic penology."

than all the rest of the concert-giving organisations in Britain put together. And it gives more employment to young artists than any other organisation. But the fact that,

for every quarter-hour's solo performance in the day's programme, in which one soloist can be employed, there are at least 100 applicants means that there must be 99 disappointed artists. If the Corporation gave the whole of its day and night to the broadcasting of solo items, it could not satisfy one-tenth of the applicants for broadcasting honours. It is obvious that there must be some discrimination, and the process of selection and elimination is the best that has been devised so far.

New Zealand, of course, has nothing like the same number of artists to pick and choose from, and, as the people of the Dominion are able to hear the world's best talent by means of the radio, the gramophone, the talkies and, occasionally, the concert platform, it stands to reason that the listening public is not going to be content with a second-class singer at the microphone. Why not give more of our local artists a chance? is a constant cry. But there are few artists of importance and worth in the Dominion who have not been approached for a radio performance, and the process of selection and elimination is steadily going on. In the meantime there is a fair sprinkling of recorded music from our stations—better, a thousand times, that we should listen to a first-class recording than mediocre singing from a local artist!

In a year or two the Broadcasting Board will have on hand an index of the real talent in the country, and it will be able to draw on it at will to provide New Zealand listeners with concerts that will be, while not above criticism (for you cannot please everyone), at least enjoyable and interesting.

Try for a cash prize. Colour, mount and cut out the Jig-saw ad. series. See page 43.

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