

MUSICAL PITCH

One Standard Required

(By "Nuanca.")

The subject of a standard musical pitch is one which is engaging the attention of Australian musicians, and its absence causes annoyance from time to time.

In London, on the Continent, and in America, Canada, and even South Africa, what is known as "low" or "classical" pitch has been reverted to by orchestras and for all public work, with the exception of military bands, which are bound by His Majesty's rules and regulations to use a higher pitch, for which a special tuning-fork is preserved as a standard for the Military Training School at Kneller Hall.

During the period in which Bach, Handel, Purcell, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, and Schubert wrote, the classical pitch was the one in vogue, but with the growth and development of orchestras, and the introduction of various kinds of wind instruments, it was found that by raising the pitch greater and more varied effects could be gained.

This precedent was followed by other than orchestral music, until high or "concert" pitch became the standard, to which all instruments, and necessarily vocal music were forced to subscribe. As a result, much of the beautiful choral and other vocal work of the greatest exponents of musical art was pushed up above the range of the average soprano, with results which are far from satisfactory. Who, for instance, who has listened to Beethoven's Mass in C has not wished that the music was within the compass of the singers, instead of climbing to altitudes to which they could not successfully follow?

To return to the old ideal has been the objective of the older centres of musical culture, with satisfactory results. Unfortunately Australia lags behind. Some years ago, with the object of encouraging a return to the low pitch of classical ideal, Melba presented a set of low-pitch wind instruments to the Melbourne Conservatorium. For obvious reasons these have never been used, as nothing but untold action on the part of Australian musicians could induce the desired change.

A few months ago Dr. Davies sent a letter to the conductors of all the leading orchestras, and to all the leading musicians of Australia, asking them to co-operate in this much-needed musical reform and introduce low pitch as from a certain date. Nothing has come of it yet, the difficulty being the expense of new wind instruments and the alteration of pipe organs and pianos would be an easy matter.

Even now the pianos used at our own Conservatorium are at low pitch, and the University has purchased from London a set of low-pitch instruments, which are already in practice by students and orchestral players. Though high pitch prevails in our theatre orchestras, many of the most progressive of the players have purchased new concert instruments at low or Continental pitch, but even this leads sometimes to a contretemps.

A few weeks ago a benefit concert was given to a young artist bound for London. A flute solo was billed, but at the eleventh hour it was found that the pianos were tuned to concert pitch, and the flautist was playing on a new low-pitch concert flute. As a consequence the number had to be cut out.

At the same concert the violinist, accustomed to the low pitch favored at the Conservatorium, was forced, on the platform, to tune up to the concert pitch.

That concerted action should be taken if we are to keep abreast of the times in musical matters is obvious, and even in the matter of expense the cost is not unreasonable. In the industrial world obsolete machinery is scrapped and the owner must bear the expense, and in the musical world the machinery by which a musician carries on his profession must give place to newer and better machinery as occasion demands.

MARSUPIAL BIRTH.

Fallacies Disproved.

Lecture by Professor Wood Jones.

Professor Wood Jones, of the Adelaide University, agrees with the view of the bushman who said that "theorists can give their opinions on many matters, but, as regards the vexed question of marsupial birth, the practical man must have the last word." "But," proceeded the professor, in the course of an intensely interesting address on the subject to a large gathering of students and others on Thursday, "I consider that it is not the bushman, who shoots a few hundred kangaroos, that is the practical man, but the scientist who devotes his time to minutely dissecting and examining specimens."

Professor Jones did not begin his lecture with these words, which were rather a sort of conclusive argument, to emphasise the facts which he had laid before his audience. The lecturer dealt exhaustively with the subject, but not over-technically, and consequently his argument was easily followed by the large majority of those present who were not well versed in the intricacies of anatomy.

Marsupials Without Pouches.

"A large number of people," said the professor, "do not realize that there are several species of marsupials altogether innocent of any kind of pouch, nor do they possess one at any time in life. In the case of an animal without a pouch, like the marsupial mouse and the banded ant-eater, the young is faced with no bigger problem than the young of a mouse or rat. It has simply after birth to get to the nipple. People greatly underrate the state of development at which a marsupial is born. It is perfectly true that they are born small, but their formation is most extraordinarily complete, particularly as to hands and feet. The only difficulty for the pouch marsupial lies in getting from the place at which it was born into the pouch. People are apt to say that they do not believe what is told them concerning marsupial birth, because nobody has ever seen it take place. For that matter, very few people have ever seen any wild animal born. There are, however, three credible witnesses, who are separated by long intervals of time and space, who have seen marsupials born, and can give an account of the process. The little animal has been seen to scramble of its own volition from the root of the mother's tail towards the pouch. Apart from its own ability to move, the mother helps it with her mouth."

A Wonderful Sense.

"It is a wonderful thing," proceeded Professor Jones, "that animals born blind, as so many of them are, possess a special organ of sense—known as the organ of Jacobson, situated between the nose and the roof of the mouth, which guides animals which cannot see, to the source of food. It is really a sense midway between the functions of taste and smell. Once the young gets to the nipple, one of the bushman's greatest difficulties starts. As soon as the mouth fastens round the bulbous end of the nipple, the lips tightly contract, until it is a physical impossibility to withdraw it without damage. As the little animal grows bigger the lips gradually open, and when it is sufficiently developed it drops off the nipple, and then suckles only at intervals. There was never at any time, however, any fusion between the lips of the young and the nipple round which they had closed." The professor declared that he had taken a specimen and dissected it in fine layers, and had found no trace of any internal connection between pouch and uterus. The pouch was a pure skin pocket, tethered by nothing but the muscles under the skin. It was no more attached to the abdominal cavity of the mother than was the stomach of a man to his overcoat pocket."

Local Fallacies.

The lecturer then commented upon numerous newspaper cuttings from letters and correspondents on the subject. These he referred to as local fallacies. One correspondent had written giving his opinion "that the young passed through the test;" others that "the kangaroo did not get milk through the teat, but blood;" "only one marsupial could be born at a time;" "Australian marsupials were the only ones in the world;" and that "when a thing at birth is only half an inch long and one-eighth of an inch thick, you cannot tell what it is." In regard to the last opinion, the lecturer pointed out that, compared with the things with which scientific men were working, an object measuring half an inch by one-

eighth of an inch was relatively gigantic. The person who wrote that a kangaroo "could not put its head into its pouch without breaking its neck or its back" could never have watched a kangaroo consecutively for 20 minutes, as they often licked the inside of the pouch.

In conclusion, Professor Jones said he wanted no one to go away with the impression that he had slighted the bushman, or stigmatized his knowledge. He was only taking the liberty of saying that the bushman's version was absolutely wrong. In the sphere under discussion, however, there were two classes who could help. One was the rich man, who could give money to the University and towards the preservation of fauna in the reserve at Kangaroo Island, and the other was the bushman, who could assist with the knowledge he had acquired, and with material, both dead and alive.

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A POLITICAL RECORD.

Legislative Council Presidency.

Sir Lancelot Stirling Re-elected.

Forty years legislative service to South Australia, 33 of which have been spent in the Legislative Council, over which House he has presided during five Parliaments—a period of 23 years—is the record of Sir Lancelot Stirling, who on Thursday was unanimously re-elected to the President's chair.

The nomination and seconding of the motion were respectively made by the Hons. T. Pascoe and A. A. Kirkpatrick, who have been Sir Lancelot's colleagues in the House for 28 years.

The Hon. T. Pascoe said that after 22 years' experience of the wisdom and tact shown by Sir Lancelot in his presiding over the deliberations of the Council, they could do no better than to re-elect him to the position.

Pleasure was expressed by the Hon. A. A. Kirkpatrick (Minister of Mines), in seconding the motion. He thought it must be a source of great pleasure to Sir Lancelot that he held the confidence of every party and every member of the Chamber. Sir Lancelot held a record in public affairs of South Australia. He had been a member of the House of Assembly for seven years, and of the Legislative Council for 33 years, which was a record for any member. Over a long period he (the speaker) had had experience of the splendid manner in which Sir Lancelot conducted the affairs of the House. Members had come to look upon him not only as their formal President, but also as a

very separate Governments. His occupancy of the chair for 23 years was not equalled in any Parliament in the world. During that period Sir Lancelot's high standard of efficiency and impartiality constituted a world's record also. They were fortunate in that his services had been again placed at their disposal. In re-electing him, the members had been wise in their day and generation. There were only three members of the Council still in the Chamber that had occupied seats there when Sir Lancelot was first elected President. They were Sir Lancelot himself, and the Hons. T. Pascoe and A. A. Kirkpatrick. He trusted that the fact that those two gentlemen had respectively been nominator and seconder of that day's ceremony would be regarded by all three as a mutual compliment. He would again congratulate Sir Lancelot, a sentiment in which he was sure every member would heartily join.

The Hon. D. J. Gordon (Leader of the Liberal Party) tendered Sir Lancelot the cordial congratulations of his party. It was the fifth consecutive occasion that he had been the unanimous choice of members to fill the highest post in the gift of the Council. That in itself was not only an enviable distinction, but it constituted a record which had not been equalled in any Parliament in Australia, or he doubted in any Legislature in the Empire. Throughout that long period of continuous service, now over 22 years, he had at all times enjoyed the support and confidence of all the members who had sat under his presidency. Their confidence in his knowledge of the standing orders, of Parliamentary procedure, sound judgment on questions upon which they desired his guidance, in his strict impartiality and unflinching courtesy on all occasions had never once been misplaced. He extended Sir Lancelot their congratulations and assurances of co-operation in maintaining the high reputation for decorum and dignity which the Chamber had deservedly enjoyed under his rule.

Sir Lancelot also received the congratulations of members of the Country Party from the Hon. W. G. Mills, who had

every confidence in the President's justice and impartiality, and gave an assurance of help in the carrying out of his orders and decisions.

In thanking members for his re-election, Sir Lancelot said offering him the Presidency for a fifth term was a gracious recognition of his services in the position which he had occupied for nearly a quarter of a century. He doubted whether there was in the records of Parliamentary procedure, at least in the Commonwealth, a similar instance where a politician had been enabled by the goodwill of his fellow-members, helped happily for him by his physical ability, to retain and discharge the duties of the highest office to which a member of the Council might attain. For the renewed expression of such good will he tendered them his grateful recognition. Allusions had been made to the high standing and decorum of the Legislative Council. Any credit for that desirable result must be to a large extent due to their desire that such should be realized and maintained. Without such generous support any efforts of his would, he felt, be futile. He felt sure that the standard of their future deliberations would be as fully maintained. His chief desire would be, as hitherto, to impartially administer the standing orders, and to his ruling he could rely on their willing and ready obedience. If in the wisdom in Parliament it should be decreed that the Legislative Council should remain with powers unimpaired to act in its true capacity as a Chamber of revision, he was sure its services in the future would be as useful to the State as they had ever been in the past, and that with their help under his presidency its traditions would be fully maintained.



SIR LANCELOT STIRLING.

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Mr. Lawrence Birks, B.Sc. (Adel.), A.M.I.E.E., A.M.I.E.S., chief electrical engineer of the New Zealand Public Works Department, died on Friday. Our Wellington correspondent states that Mr. Birks was taken seriously ill in Sydney recently while on the way to the World Power Conference in England, and he had to return to the Dominion. Mr. Birks at one time held the position of Lecturer in Engineering at the Adelaide University, and was also assistant engineer for the Sydney electric tramways. Deceased was 50 years of age, and was a native of Adelaide. He was among the earliest students to gain the Angas Engineering Scholarship of the Adelaide University.

ANGAS SCHOLARSHIP

New 26 JUL 1924

Mr. Claude Gibb Successful

At a meeting of the Adelaide University Council this afternoon Mr. Claude Dixon Gibb was awarded the Angas Engineering Scholarship.

Mr. Gibb is a son of Mr. John Gibb, the well-known Port Adelaide carrier, and was born at Queenstown 28 years ago. He was educated at the Alberton State school and Lefevre High School, and won a scholarship which entitled him to a course at the School of Mines. There he won a gold medal.

As an electrician he joined the Adelaide Cement Company, but at the age of 18 enlisted and served with the Australian Flying Corps, rising to the rank of Lieutenant. After the war on his return to Adelaide Mr. Gibb was appointed instructor at the School of Mines, and later transferred to the University, where he was under Professor Chapman and obtained his B.E. degree.

He is making a special study of electrical engineering, and last January left for Great Britain to join the staff of the Parsons Turbine Company at Newcastle-on-Tyne. The thesis which won him the Angas Scholarship was written before his departure from Adelaide.

After two years with the Parsons Company it is the intention of Mr. Gibb to proceed to the United States to study the latest developments in electrical engineering practice.

Founded by the late Mr. J. H. Angas to encourage the training of scientific men and especially civil engineers, with a view of their settlement in South Australia, the Angas Engineering Scholarship of the Adelaide University is worth £250 annually for two years.

Mr. C. F. Koerner, who is now working on the new bridge across the river at Murray Bridge, was placed next to Mr. Gibb.

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DR. RICHARDSON'S APPOINTMENT.
Our Melbourne correspondent telegraphed on Friday night:—Regret at the loss to Victoria of the services of Dr. A. E. V. Richardson, formerly Superintendent of Agriculture, who has been appointed Director of the Waite Agricultural Institute, South Australia, was expressed at the quarterly meeting of the members of the Chamber of Agriculture. A motion was also agreed to that the amount at present being spent by the Victorian Government on agricultural research was insufficient. On the proposal of the Chairman (Mr. T. V. Cowan) it was decided to write to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Hogan) with a view to having the services of Dr. Richardson retained for Victoria.