

# BASIS OF N.Z. MUSICAL CULTURE

(By Maxwell Fernie.)

**T**HE prevention in New Zealand of a stagnation or even a general decline in good music was emphasised in a previous article as being of great importance. The solution to such a position was to be found in the better education of every child in the fundamentals of music.

Art or Culture may be likened to the delicate bloom of a plant which has grown to maturity with or without artificial aids, but which, nevertheless, is sturdy. Likewise, a flourishing and well established national life may be compared with the plant of which the bloom is the natural result in maturity.

National life in New Zealand is not yet fully matured although it is rapidly reaching fruition. Already the Dominion has evolved a definite physical type, and although new methods are being applied to economics, industry, education, and legislation, nevertheless, there is appearing a particular trend of culture and mental outlook which is indigenous to the country, or, in other words—national.

Probably those responsible for setting the educational standards some 30 to 40 years ago played a much larger part than was anticipated in the moulding of the present-day New Zealanders' characteristically broad-minded, clear thinking and modern outlook on life. Indeed there is a flourishing and vigorous growth of the « plant of national life ». *But it has not yet reached full maturity.*

In a young country, the development of secondary industries and the employment of men and women other than in primary production usually denotes a certain stability in national characteristics. This naturally requires a revision of educational standards in order to bring to fruition new ideas formed during the approach to maturity.

Adult education is always a more difficult task if there is no specialised foundation prepared in childhood. The dictators of pre-war Europe fully realised the value of child education in form-

ing certain fixed ideas. This power was used to their temporary advantage for the purposes of the present conflict, the results of which will prove ultimately how unfortunate this experience has been for the youth of Europe.

Again, New Zealand's national life is approaching maturity and « bloom » of a culture which must *the time is now opportune* for the careful preparation for the « bloom » of a culture which must be given every opportunity to to form in the minds of the future citizens of the Dominion.



A wider scope in child education is becoming a necessity and it is to be hoped that in post-war years the younger people will be given greater encouragement to develop their natural gifts of clear thinking and their talents which have been founded so well during the early growth of the Dominion.

The culture of music in New Zealand is of paramount importance, but hand in hand with music are the sister arts including literature, drama, oratory and painting. These arts flourish successfully only when they become an integral part of the lives of a people, and together with various activities constitute the culture of a community.

Coming from British stock, the people of the Dominion have the happy gift of being able to appreciate the arts and cultures of foreign lands, as well as those of the