

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CANADIAN FOLK SONG COLLECTIONS

DEAR SIR,

The interesting article by Dr. Barbeau on Canadian folk-song collections printed in your last number omits any reference to the traditional Gaelic folk songs recorded by the writers in Cape Breton and on the adjacent mainland in the autumn of 1937, using an Ediphone.

This collection was made with the express purpose of comparing the oral tradition of Barra, in the Outer Hebrides, with that of the descendants of emigrants from Barra living in Cape Breton, the two having been almost entirely separated by then for about a hundred years. In that respect, the following conclusions were reached: (a) the older people in Cape Breton spoke very good Gaelic, (b) but the tunes of the traditional songs sung there had been somewhat simplified; (c) very good versions of the words of old waulking songs were extant there, closely resembling the Hebridean versions. There were no songs we recorded from Uist and Barra people in Cape Breton that were not known to Uist and Barra people at home.

Altogether 102 items, including over eighty songs, were recorded from eighteen different reciters on this expedition. The tunes of about fifty of these songs were transcribed by Séamus Ennis of the Irish Folklore Commission in the winter of 1946-47; photostatic copies of this transcription are in the possession of the School of Scottish Studies, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, and the Canadian National Museum at Ottawa. Some of the other tunes were transcribed by the late A. Martin Freeman and others by the second of the undersigned. These MSS, and also the transcription of the words, which was made at the time of collection, are in the possession of the writers.

Celticists and folklorists possessed a magnificent potential field in pre-second war Gaelic-speaking Cape Breton, but it was practically ignored.

Yours truly,

J. L. CAMPBELL.
MARGARET FAY SHAW.

Isle of Canna,
Scotland.

17.5.61.

BARTÓK MEMORIAL CONFERENCE

DEAR SIR,

In March of this year the Music-Folklore Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences organized a Memorial Conference in honour of Bartók.

I enclose a list of the papers read which may be of interest to readers of the *Journal*.

The conference was held on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th March.

GYÖRGY KERÉNYI and BENJAMIN RAJECZKY: Bartók népdal-lejegyzései (Bartók's Folk-song Transcriptions).

ILONA RÁ CZ: Bartók Béla utolsó évei a Magyar Tudományos Akadémián (Béla Bartók's Last Years at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences).

PÁL JÁRDÁNYI: A magyar népdalok új rendje (The New Order of Hungarian Folksongs).

LAJOS KISS: A várpalotai munkásság zenei hagyományai (The Musical Traditions of the Worker Inhabitants of Várpalota).

GYÖRGY SZOMJAS-SCHIFFERT: A finnugor népek közös tánczenei hagyományai (The Common Dance Music Traditions of the Finno-Ugrian Peoples).

LÁSZLO VIKÁR: Hegyi-mari dallamtipusok (Mountain Mari Melody-Types).

IMRE OLSVAI: A déldunántuli dallamdialektus (The Melody-Dialect of Southern Transdanubia).