

Memorable "Mike" Moments

(10) Bill Meredith

STILL in pursuit of all the most embarrassing microphone moments among radio announcers, we approached Bill Meredith, 12B's Sports Commentator the other day as a likely person to have unusual moments before the mike.

"Oh, I don't know," he said, "everything goes quite smoothly usually."

"Yes," we answered, "but surely there have been moments in your life when . . ."

"I do remember something," he interrupted, "now I come to think of it. It was some time ago. I was in the studio with a violinist and a 'cello player who were to play the obligato in a song I was to sing entitled 'Fiddle and I.' Now this song has a rather unusual introduction. The mike was switched on, and the violin and 'cello began playing the introduction. They had barely finished two bars when the technician on duty in the control room rushed into the studio with 'Don't tune-up in the studio!'"

"The introduction was recommenced, when the technician burst in again, saying, 'Didn't I tell you not to tune-up in the studio?' You can imagine his astonishment when he found the mike was switched on, and we were on the air!"

"Well," we laughed, "that wasn't very flattering to the violin and 'cello."

(11) "Stop-Press Johnny"

"Very amusing," said "Stop-Press Johnny," "but not so embarrassing as what happened to me. It was during an 'outside' broadcast. The microphone was of the lapel type—and having no lapel I had fastened it to the ornament hanging from a zip-fastener which 'zipped' the full length of my frock. Somewhere in the background was the inevitable technician, doing good work in semi-darkness.

"Can you imagine what I felt when the microphone started to slide downwards, 'unzipping' as it went. I hastily seized the fastener—below the microphone—and then gave a strong pull upwards, thereby nearly upsetting the aforesaid technician, who had somehow or other succeeded in standing on the connecting length of rubber tubing. Thanks to a poor light no one else realised what had so nearly happened—but I now wear a buttoned-up costume if I'm likely to use a 'lapel' microphone!"

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT

(Continued from opposite page)

"Just for the reasons that I have already indicated it is something for the children to see as well as the parents; it is something that will let them know what is happening in New Zealand as nothing else will. But one of the things that pleased me most was the crowd attending the Exhibition. I didn't see any evidence of distress. You can't find many serious faces here to-day.

"Mr. Sullivan looked serious when Uncle Scrim was getting one on to him a moment ago, and I think that was the only serious face that I saw since I came in here this afternoon! But even that is worth while. What a glorious world it would be if we could all smile, if we could all make some attempt to help the other fellow. And when we laugh or smile the world will laugh or smile with us, and I think this is the time when we should try to do that, because after all the world is all right; it is what we make it.

Praise for 5ZB

"However, ladies and gentlemen, perhaps in the not very far distant future you will have an opportunity of hearing my voice again, because I want to get closer to you. I want you to know that I am on deck to stay, and despite the fact that one or two have been busy burying me, I absolutely refuse to lie down! (Laughter.) Now, to the organisers of 5ZB I think I should say a word of praise. After all, we have some initiative displayed here to-day.

"Well, I don't know where the idea came from for this 5ZB; probably Scrim will have to stand the blame. He gets a lot of blame now, and I suppose a little bit more won't hurt. The last straw they say breaks the camel's back, but I think the camel on this occasion will carry it all right. However, I want to congratulate Scrim and all those who were associated with him in the development and administration of 5ZB, and all the rest of the B's. (Loud laughter.)

"You will know the race of people that I have come from, ladies and gentlemen, after that! The National stations, too—I got a word over their network

this afternoon, and it seems to me that the modern world is producing something that will keep us going ahead whether we like it or not as long as the people can hear our voices, know what we are doing, that we are prepared to sink or swim with them. What else matters? However, Scrim and all the rest assembled here to-day—a thousand thanks for the privilege of being with you to visit the British Court, the Dominion Court, the Government Court—Waitomo Caves, I saw that in the raw state—it is well worth while, too—fernery, Mr. Buxton—splendid! To everybody I say come and see it.

"However, ladies and gentlemen, I am sure you will join with me in expressing our very sincere thanks to all who have played a part in the wonderful work that is displayed here to-day at this Exhibition."

Uncle Scrim: "5ZB is on the air from the Fair. But his Worship has really carried a tremendous responsibility in this matter and we would like to lose no opportunity of saying how much we appreciate the part he has allowed us to play in it. Mr. Hislop, would you kindly round off the interview?"

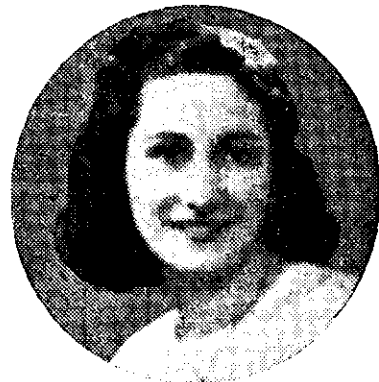
Mr. Hislop: "Thank you, Uncle Scrim, for those references to myself, but there is one responsibility which I certainly gladly declined. That was when the scheme was brought up of bringing this splendid 5ZB Station out to the Exhibition. It was desired, of course, that everybody should know it was coming here, and in order that they should see it in the most easy way, the original proposal, which I think came from you, Uncle Scrim—was that it should be brought—this large railway carriage—should be brought through Lambton Quay, through Willis Street, through Cuba Street, right through the city, in the middle of the day. Well, we went into that matter and we found that we would have the utmost difficulty in turning any of the corners, even if we stopped all the traffic and removed all the population from the streets. (Laughter.) So, of course, it came out by boat and eventually down the road to this site.

Who Won the Bet?

"I am sure also listeners-in will be glad to know that at the present moment Mr. Sullivan is smiling brightly and I will tell you why. When we were coming round this afternoon and saw this very large crowd in the grounds, I bet Mr. Sullivan a new hat (I hope there is no one listening who objects to an occasional innocent bet), I bet Mr. Sullivan a new hat that there would be over 50,000 in the grounds throughout the full day and night, to-day, and he thought there would be just under it, so there is a hat depending on the attendance throughout the day. And now may I come to what I really want to say—and that is to express most sincerely on behalf of all my colleagues in this enterprise our appreciation of the Prime Minister's views this afternoon. I can speak from personal knowledge of this enterprise right from its beginning, and do wish to say this—that right through the piece we have had great personal encouragement from Mr. Savage himself, and very great help from him and his colleagues, and Mr. Sullivan as the Minister principally concerned, right through the piece. It would have been impossible to put this Exhibition to the standard which it has reached without that co-operation, that very full co-operation given in respect to everything we asked, by the Government, and I am glad to pay my tribute to them for helping us. And now Mr. Prime Minister, thank you very much indeed for coming here to-day. It is, I know, just the forerunner of many visits, and we hope that if you have seen everything you will have the satisfaction of knowing that this Exhibition has been not only worthy of the great occasion it has been put on to mark, but that it has been something that has delighted and inspired all the people of New Zealand—all the children and all the men, and all the women. Thank you for your visit this afternoon."

And so concluded the first visit of the Prime Minister to the Centennial Exhibition.

Meet the LADIES



MISS N. McKENNA — "Tony" of 2ZB — is one of the most attractive girls in radio. She stands about 5ft. 2ins., her eyes are liquid, dark-lashed brown, and her hair black.

"Tony" was born in Blenheim, but did not live there long. She was educated at the Otaki Convent and later the Hastings Convent, and when she left school she went to Wellington with her family.

In 1937 "Tony" joined 2ZB as receptionist, and incidentally she was the very first girl to join the Station. It wasn't until 1939 that she got her chance before the "mike," and to-day her Home Service Session from 2.30 p.m. to 3 o'clock every day from Monday to Friday is becoming very popular with housewives and women listeners generally.

At the beginning of this year she went to Australia. She was away about seven weeks, and during that time managed to see a great deal of Sydney and its environs, and also was interviewed over Station 2UE when she discussed radio in New Zealand as compared with radio in Australia. Although she looks every inch a chic town girl, "Tony" confesses that she much prefers the country really, and was literally bewildered with the heat and the noise in Sydney combined with her poor bump of locality, which led her into walking many unnecessary miles.

Of course she loved every minute of her time in Sydney — but none of it was very conducive to peace and quiet. She returned to Auckland with Cushla de Lange (now studying singing in Australia), and then went back to her work in Wellington. She is planning great things for her session. Just recently she has begun a series of interviews by representatives of all the various women's organisations throughout New Zealand. Each one talks about her particular work for her particular organisation — it may be Women's Institutes, Guilds, the Y.W.C.A., the Plunket Society, or any others. Already listeners are showing their appreciation of this innovation, and mail is pouring in.