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Basso Buys Egg —But Not For A Song

WHEN Ezio Pinza, the Italian operatic bass, wanted to provide fresh eggs daily for his two-year-old daughter, Clelia, he bought a dozen good laying hens at a cost of three dollars 40 cents each, and took them to his country home out of New York. A henhouse had been built for them, and in they went. An hour later, they were all dead—slain by Pinza's two pedigree Dalmatians. Pinza decided to try again, and brought home another twelve hens; this time he fenced in the dogs as well as the hens, but almost before the hens had time to try out their new nests the gardener appeared, white as a sheet, bearing the cheerful news that none of the hens would ever lay another egg. On the third-time-lucky principle, Pinza tried again; all went well; and Clelia Pinza was given her first home-produced egg.

"But," Pinza said, "I figured out that, what with my prize dogs, the 36 hens, and all the extra fencing, that first egg cost me exactly 200 dollars."

A "Deafening" Voice

Pinza told this story when he was in the studios of the U.S. Office of War Information, recording a programme in the series *America Talks to New Zealand*, which will be heard from Station 3YL at 7.45 p.m. on Monday, February 21. Though he has all of 55 operatic roles up his sleeve, Pinza chose Mussorgsky's humorous "Song of the Flea" to accompany the talk he will give in this series.

When he visited the studios, engineers feared for their equipment at first—Pinza has a powerful bass voice and the agility of a baritone, and he needs no amplifiers to make it sound deafening.

He was the seventh child of an Italian carpenter, and was born in Rome in 1892. His story reads like that of so



EZIO PINZA
The engineers were alarmed.

many other Italian opera stars: an uneventful boyhood took a turning when a neighbour in a shower-room told him he had a good voice, hearing him sing "O Sole Mio." On the strength of the encouragement Ezio went to Bologna, and a collection in his home town produced enough to pay his fees at the Rossini Conservatory. Great War I. interrupted his studies, and after 1918 Pinza was working as a brakeman on a railway until a chance came to sing a Wagner role at the Royal Opera Theatre in Rome. Toscanini heard him and took him to La Scala and from there he went to the United States, where he has sung at the Metropolitan Opera ever since. He lives outside New York with his second wife (daughter of a New York dentist) in a rambling old 11-room house.



Pinza and Shirley Warde, producer of the series, "America Talks to New Zealand," look over the script for the programme before recording