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after the manner of the BBC Brains Trust, the questioner being named, and the question put to the most appropriate authority—and answered from the horse's mouth where this is possible. For instance, to answer a question from Taumarunui on the pure science of Dr. Albert Einstein—"How can that sort of stuff possibly help mankind?"—Dr. Einstein himself was interviewed. Questions on musical matters have been referred to Deems Taylor (of *Fantasia*) or to Leopold Stokowski; on art matters to Howard Devree, art critic to the *New York Times*; on food to Mary Barber, dietitian to the U.S. Army; on humour, to Eddie Cantor; and so on; and most of these people were brought to the microphone to give their answers.

Four programmes in the series *United States Answering New Zealand* have already been on the air. In these, listeners have heard Deems Taylor and Stokowski on the subject of how radio has influenced home-music in America, and on the possibility of visits to this part of the world of U.S. orchestras. One programme included a fascinating novelty—a recording made during a rehearsal of the NBC Symphony under Toscanini. Then there was the question, on the "New Deal" and what it amounts to by comparison with New Zealand's Social Security Scheme. This was answered by Max Lerner, of the editorial board of the *New York newspaper P.M.*, which Mr. Lerner said was roughly equivalent in its outlook to a combination of *The Standard* and the *Auckland Weekly Illustrated*.

In future sessions listeners will hear some of the authorities mentioned above, and several others. Two questions on immigration, for instance, will be answered by Earl Harrison, U.S. Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalisation. A Wellington university student's question, "What do Americans think of the Atlantic Charter, and what are the chances that Congress will ratify it?" will be answered by Quentin Reynolds, who begins as follows:

"First of all, the Atlantic Charter is a statement of faith and not a treaty. And therefore our Congress will not be asked to ratify it. It's completely outside of the province of Congress. The Atlantic Charter was a sort of prayer and hope for the future, and you don't ask Congress to ratify your prayers or your hopes. . . ."

## 50 YEARS OF PROMS

*THIS tribute to Sir Henry Wood, written before his death, is contained in the latest BBC London Letter:—*

Sir Henry Wood began the Promenade Concerts and made of them a metropolitan institution. Broadcasting in the past 17 years has transformed them into an imperial possession. And so when 75 years old Sir Henry climbed on to the rostrum at London's Albert Hall for the opening night of the fiftieth season, the volleys of cheers and drumming of feet to a crescendo (always the promenaders' highest mark of approval) sounded in millions of homes in Britain and overseas, through the chain of microphones slung above him and the orchestra. Not a seat, hardly a square foot to stand on, are to be had these summer evenings in this bomb-scarred and solitary hall left in London for large-scale concert-giving.

Sir Henry Wood, the original and presiding genius, in his 50 years of loving labour, has introduced some 900 new works to his rapt and youthful audiences,



EDDIE CANTOR  
"Mass Production to the Right"

A woman in Lower Hutt asked, "Do Americans eat any meat except chicken?" and Deems Taylor, who was master of ceremonies on this particular session, answered the question himself: "Chicken is certainly no luxury to us . . . if you've got the impression that we eat nothing but chicken, that's nothing to the impression we got. We ate chicken till it came out of our ears . . . and for a very simple reason, that all other meats were rationed, and chicken was not."

To answer a question from Te Kuiti about the difference between American humour and British humour, the arrangers of *Answering New Zealand* brought Eddie Cantor to the microphone. He began to say that he thought New Zealanders laughed at Bob Hope because . . .

"Bob Hope's an Englishman," said one of the other guests. To which Eddie Cantor countered that he was a Russian himself. Then Mr. Cantor went on to say how he had walked into a defence plant and the woman at the gate said "Mass Production to the Right."

"And I say—Look, lady, I'm Eddie Cantor. And she says Mass Production to the Right . . . People only laugh because they know I have a large family."

apart altogether from acquainting them with the classical masters. He, at 75, is a phenomenon. At rehearsal as punctual and conscientious as ever, formidable in his intentness over a phrase, exacting in his building of a climax. In performance, as youthfully dramatic as when that silver-fringed pate was an unruly black mane, which in fortissimo passages was combed impatiently back with thick, workmanlike fingers. The mannerisms marked by the frock-coated, pinch-waisted London of 1895 are still present, though matured and gentled by time, for the open-necked befuddled audience of 1944 to see the jerky nods to the strings, the commanding vertical baton for the brass, the shrinking back of the whole body to the platform rail when a pianissimo is disregarded, the modesty, full and held, of the bowed shoulders when accepting the multitudinous plaudits of a faithful and discerning crowd. This is a man who is 75 years young, whose artistic conscience still enables him to say, in effect, what he says to a shrinking soloist about to make a first appearance: "Now, come along and enjoy yourself."

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