

# SCIENCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

## New Series of Winter Course Talks

**F**ACTS of everyday life, taken for granted and appearing as dull as a New Zealand township on a Sunday, can be fascinating when examined by the scientist. And so, for a series of Winter Course talks from 2YA each Monday evening from June 4 to July 9, some of the ordinary things which New Zealanders take in their stride will be discussed and explained. These talks will be given under the auspices of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

For instance, if you ask a boot repairer how to get the squeak out of your shoes, he will probably advise you to pay for them. But that is only his little joke. There is romance in a pair of shoes. Glace kid leather may come from shell-torn Malta, the squalid towns of the Middle East, China, India, Switzerland or South America. In the New Zealand products the soles are made from New Zealand hides, but the uppers may be made from skins obtained from all over the world. You will learn some astonishing facts about footwear if you listen to a talk by Phillip White on June 4.

**A** ROAD can be described as a line of least resistance to travel. In primitive times we took advantage of the tracks made by animals which had, by instinct, pioneered the way of least resistance. With the increase of modern, fast-moving traffic, many people have been inclined to take the development of highways as a matter of course. A knowledge of road construction principles will be needed more and more in post-war years, yet of all the ancient arts, road-making is probably one of the last to call in the services of the laboratory scientist. M. J. Hyatt and H. Williamson will give a talk on "Highway Materials" on June 11.

**I**T may seem odd to refer to coal as the fuel of the future when transport research workers are talking airily about running a car on compressed air. But it may come as a surprise to listeners to

hear that the world's petroleum resources are strictly limited, whereas coal reserves are most extensive. World reserves are estimated at seven million millions tons—enough to keep the fires going for 5000 years. W. J. Hughson will chat about coal on June 18.

**W**HY does iron rust so readily while silver only tarnishes and chromium remains bright? Do water pipes corrode on the outside as well as the inside? These are questions for metallurgical, physical, and analytical chemists rather than for the layman. But the everyday household has its problems through attacks on metal by water, acids, and salt solutions. So the householder will find a lot to interest him if he listens to "Chemists and Corrosion," by J. S. Lambert and others on June 25.

**A** NOVELIST once said that the most attractive sight in the world was a crystal glass of pure water standing on white napery. But clear, sparkling water only means that there is no suspended dirt or silt present. Disease-causing bacteria may be there in their millions. New Zealand water supplies are, fortunately, of good quality. The great majority of people are content to turn on the bathroom and kitchen tap and draw what they want without thinking of the careful planning and control which lies at the back of a water supply system. Different types of water, laboratory examinations of them, and purification systems will be the subject of a talk by H. J. Wood on July 2.

**H**OT springs eternal—that is a pun one might make about some parts of New Zealand where those manifestations occur which intrigue the tourist, and it is said, cure the sick. Such phenomena are also found in California, Tuscany, Japan, and Kamchatka, but the most important regions of thermal activity are in Iceland, Yellowstone Park, and our own country. With the recent outbreak of Ruapehu we now claim six active volcanoes—Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe, Red Crater and Te Maru on Tongariro, Tarawera and White Island—and hot

toadying secretary, the belligerent frightened doctor, are all characters worthy of being depicted on a larger canvas. The plot too is dexterous, but it did seem incredible that, having murdered his victim by means of poison in the salt-cellar, the villain should have committed so obvious an error as to leave the salt-cellar on a table in the restaurant, where it was later the means of poisoning various innocents; however, had he not done so, we doubt if the police could ever have pinned it on to him, in which place there would have been no excuse for the radio play either. It is also doubtful whether any really famous sleuths such as Wimsey, Poirot, or Alleyn would have considered the case sufficiently advanced to go to a jury at the point where the play finished; the dour Scot says, "We'll get him!", but the reader is left with an unanswered query, "How?"

springs are associated with dormant volcanic activity. There are cold, scientific reasons for investigating hot springs. You will hear something about them from S. H. Wilson on July 9.

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## SCARLET FEVER

### Important Advice, Part I.

Scarlet Fever spreads fast. If it's in your district watch out for sore throats.

Sore throat, fever, nausea or vomiting are typical symptoms. Where Scarlet Fever is about, the germ may be picked up at school, at work or on a social visit.

Many adults in a scarlet fever zone may suffer from sore throats and a feeling of malaise. Children, on contact with these carriers, will develop the fever and rash.

Those with sore throats should take treatment and stay at home, and all others should keep well clear of them until they are better.

Quarantine restrictions must be obeyed when scarlet fever is around. If it strikes anyone in your household, this is what you do:

- Strictly isolate the patient for three weeks (if not removed to hospital), and longer if there are any discharges or persistent sore throat—until they clear up.

- Keep child contacts away from school and other children for seven days if the patient has gone to hospital; or until he is out of isolation if he is at home.

- Adult contacts who are healthy and without the tell-tale sore throat sign, may continue at their work, unless they are handling food or are brought into contact with groups of children.

When the isolation period is over, or the patient removed to the hospital, fumigants are not necessary to disinfect the room. Boil everything that can be boiled, wash the blankets and put them in the sun, wash out and vacuum-clean the room, and throw it open to fresh air.

**Don't take chances with Scarlet Fever.**

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FOR A HEALTHIER NATION

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happy experience, and prompts the thought that Bach wrote a number of such gay works which I hope we shall also hear in their entirety.

### Pass the Salt

**"DINNER WITH A NOVELIST,"** a BBC production heard from 4YA, was so much above the average radio thriller that any more plays by L. A. G. Strong will find me among the audience. It is not usually possible in so short a time to have plot plus characterisation, but here we have an excellent plot and a cast so neatly drawn that they become people instead of puppets. The novelist himself, coolly talking shop while he watches his victim eating a poisoned meal in a famous restaurant; the victim, who has our entire sympathy even while we deplore his hypocrisy, his oily voice; the hard-boiled Scots detective, the

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