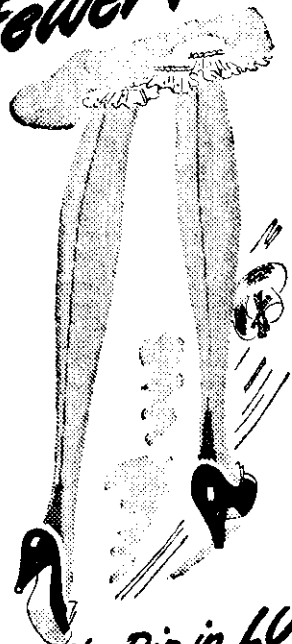


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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### The General's English

THERE was a very interesting example the other night of a telling colloquialism (or slang, if you like) in a talk by General Slim, who commands the 14th Army in Burma. Incidentally, it was good to hear this talk by the head of an army that hasn't had anything like its due of publicity. One concludes from its achievements that this splendid army has a first-rate soldier at its head. Referring to the steps taken to supply and reinforce by air the British garrisons cut off in the Imphal area, an astonishing and perhaps unequalled piece of work, General Slim said that this had been described as "a brilliant piece of improvisation." Then he exclaimed "Improvisation my foot!" The phrase sounded like the bang of a door on a still night. My point is that this kind of language is very welcome on the air (occasionally at any rate) because it is so obviously sincere, and is a sort of thing that appeals to the listener. Far too many radio speakers speak the literary language rather than the spoken language, with the result that their talks do not strike home. I have no doubt that the staffs of Broadcasting Services do their best to make talks' language homely, but they can't do everything. Mr. Ivor Brown, the English critic, who is crusading for simpler English, mentions an example in a farming talk from the BBC. A farm worker referred to "depletion of staff." As Mr. Brown points out, such a man in ordinary circumstances wouldn't use the word "depletion." He would say "with so many away."

### Milne or Disney

SOME of A. A. Milne's songs of Winnie-the-Pooh and Christopher Robin were broadcast from 3YL recently; it was a one-man show and the compère singer was an American. This produced a curious effect. The singer entered into the spirit of the thing with a sympathy and understanding which should win him Dr. H. S. Canby's highest approval, but all the time his voice presented to the mind the juxtaposition of Christopher Robin and Huckleberry Finn, Pooh and Donald Duck. One imagined that essentially bucolic and pastoral bear, standing in direct line of descent from Robin Hood and the Midsummer Night's Dream, treating his new surroundings with a bewilderment as complete as his courtesy. And indeed the transplantation would hardly take effect, nor should it; the difference is too great and too valuable. In English folklore, derived from Celtic and Teutonic sources, giants exist to be slain with the maximum of despatch and the minimum of dignity; but Americans invented Paul Bunyan, the man scaled up to fit the size of the continent.

### Prophets Without Honour

IN Dunedin recently the Music Teachers' Association gave a recital of works by local composers, the first half of the programme being broadcast from 4YA. We in New Zealand wrongly place more emphasis on performance than on composition. We arrange public subscriptions to enable our promising

executants to proceed overseas for study, and when they reach the top of the tree we are proud and self-satisfied. Our composers, on the other hand, find the utmost difficulty in getting their works performed, let alone published; should they succeed in doing both, public apathy generally ensures that their labours will have proved in vain. It is necessary, therefore, that support be given to any manifestation of the creative talent in our midst, and the M.T.A. deserves thanks for its venture, which we hope will not be the last of its kind. The phrase "local composer" is an unhappy one, with its suggestion of amateurism. The musicians whose work was represented here are amateurs in that composition is not their means of livelihood, but their work shows a solid background of harmonic and contrapuntal knowledge, and a technically competent use of these basic resources. It is time that such work by New Zealand composers should take its rightful place in regular broadcast programmes, to refute the general false impression that there are only, at most, one or two people in the Dominion who are capable of writing music of any quality.

### Jam To-morrow?

THE coal merchant told us that he thought he might be able to let us have two bags early in September. The Auckland Electric-power Board warned us that indulgence in radiators would compel

them to "trip out the feeders"—their picturesque technical euphemism for plunging each suburb in turn into darkness, which painful necessity we have so far spared them by our self-denial. We wrapped rugs round our knees to keep out the southerly that held the Gas Company's coal shipments bar-bound on the West Coast, and sat down to digest the nourishing but cheerless Oslo breakfast of fruit, bread, cheese and milk that now takes the place of dinner. Thinking to warm our spirits with recourse to augury and soothsaying, we tuned in to 2YA's Winter Course talk: "Coal, the Fuel of the Future." It was cold comfort. Coal, the speaker told us, has a big future. There is little hope of a substitute being found; it will outlast petroleum. Some countries have enough for another 10,000 years. New Zealand has enough for another 60. After that it will be, perhaps, a case of put out the light. What hope, or what terror, does such a future hold for us?

### Saccho and Vanzetti

RICHARD SINGER, in a recent broadcast by 4ZB of his "Famous Trials," resurrected the notorious case of Saccho and Vanzetti. This trial, which took place within recent memory, has yet fallen rapidly into the limbo of "causes célèbres," which includes the Lindberg kidnapping and the Reichstag fire. We remember the names of the accused, and have a faint recollection of the

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