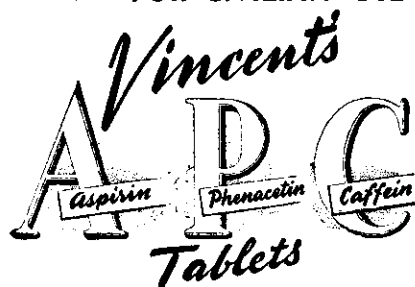


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A MAN WHO KNOWS HIS ABC

C. J. A. Moses Talks to Us About Broadcasting in Australia, Cricket and an Escape From Singapore

YEARs ago, as it seems now, households all over New Zealand stayed awake far into the winter nights to listen to a man in a studio in Australia describing a game of cricket going on at the time in England, and pretending he could actually see it. In fact he simply had a cabled ball-by-ball description in front of him, and a pencil in his hand with which he would tap a wooden cup to make the sound of bat meeting ball. The man whose voice we mostly heard in those early days, and the man who really got the thing going, was C. J. A. Moses, now General Manager of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. Mr. Moses has just been to New Zealand (with R. J. F. Boyer, chairman of the Commission) to see how the broadcasting of Parliament works out in practice, and we were able to interview him while he was in Wellington.

When you meet him you discover that Mr. Moses is just the kind who could carry off that remarkable feat of imagination and mental quickness. His conversation would be breezy in any surroundings. He can answer your questions at once, without having to think them over. If they call for a well-thought-out answer, the answer has already been thought out. If they call for a string of facts or figures, then facts and figures you will get, at a rate almost too fast to put them down. He has all the frankness and boyishness that are obvious in our photograph, but that should not prevent you from realising that he is General Manager of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. On the other hand, the fact that he has the chief executive position in a very big and important organisation should not prevent you from realising that he was still playing football in 1941.

Future Plans

We asked Mr. Moses about the ABC's plans for the future, and found that



Spencer Digby photograph
C. J. A. MOSES
His voice is known to us

these depend very largely on the provision of permanent special buildings to replace the scattered leased premises in which the ABC at present makes shift. Plans for the main executive building in Sydney had already reached the state of a model in 1939, but they have been changed since. Meanwhile the ABC suffers in Sydney what the NBS suffers in Wellington. The NBS occupies seven buildings at present, scattered round Wellington. The ABC occupies nine, and one of them is nine miles from the main building. This is at Burwood, where the orchestra and military band work and play. But in none of these buildings, Mr. Moses told us, is staff so congested as it seemed to him to be in some sections of the NBS.

He hopes they will get fairly high priority for building in due course, because they are ready to go ahead in all States. "In no State have we all our own permanent buildings. We have parts of our town eventual permanent places here and there. In Sydney, for instance, we have a part of our equipment on our site—that sounds Irish—I should say in the site, since it's actually just the basement and foundations that are built. But of course as you can imagine our work is greatly handicapped in leased premises because our studios are only adapted rooms instead of being specially designed for what we need."

Bigger Orchestras

"Apart from buildings, have you any plans for programmes?" we asked. "Mr. Boyer told us a little about your plans for your London office, your new monthly journal, and so on. Is there anything else you can talk about at present?"

"Well, in January, the Sydney Orchestra will be built up to 82 players on a full-time basis. This will be done in conjunction with the Government and Sydney City Council. That is to say, the State Government will guarantee £20,000 for three years and the City Council will guarantee £10,000 for three years, in addition to giving us the free use of the Town Hall—which might

be equal to about £2,000 a year. The Adelaide City Council is also contemplating similar aid, so that the Adelaide orchestra can be increased from 18 to 55 permanent players. At present if we want to give a concert with a full orchestra in the other cities we have to shift players about from place to place at enormous cost, and an augmented orchestra isn't the same thing as a permanent team. The Melbourne City Council may do something about it in the end, too. In Melbourne this year there were 4,000 subscribers for the season's concerts, which means that we get 2,000 in the hall at a time, and repeat each concert, making 16 concerts altogether. In 1936 there were 800 subscribers for six concerts. Last year in Melbourne there were 30 concerts of all kinds (including repeats, that is) and in addition 12 free ones for children. In Sydney it's been even more remarkable. In 1935 there might be about 300 subscribers for what was then an amateur concert. Now there are 3,300 subscribers for the concerts that take the place of those amateur ones. Last year there were 32 concerts, plus 16 for children—and these are free. This year, as you probably know, we've had Dr. Malcolm Sargent conducting and also Sir Ernest MacMillan, the Canadian conductor. There'll be two conductors for next year too, of course. But we don't say who, as they haven't accepted yet. We'll also have the famous English pianist Solomon, and we hope a first-rate singer and a first-rate violinist."

Escape From Singapore

We had heard that Lieut.-Colonel Moses was one of two who escaped from Singapore with General Gordon Bennett after the surrender had actually taken effect. We asked for the story.

"Yes, I was one of three who escaped. It came about in this way. Lieut. Walker (who was the General's A.D.C.) and I had been discussing the possibility of escape, and Walker suggested that the General might like to try it with us. The three of us left Headquarters at 11.0 p.m. on the Sunday night—the capitulation had taken effect at 8.30 p.m.—and after midnight Walker swam out to a sampan. That took us to a junk, and we spent five days on it, making for the Sumatra coast. There were three Chinese on board, and every time Jap seaplanes came down to inspect us we went below and up went the Chinese on deck. It was just as well they didn't take objection to us, because when the light came the first morning we discovered we were right under the guns of Plakya Mati fort. And although we didn't know about it when we went on board, the junk was also carrying 200 cases of naval four-inch ack-ack ammunition, so of course if they'd fired on us we'd all have gone to blazes. Anyway, the seaplanes seemed to think we were all right. Some of the time we looked as if we were going to Singapore because we were tacking back in that direction, so that would put them off the scent. Then off the Sumatra coast we came up with an English launch with

(continued on next page)

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