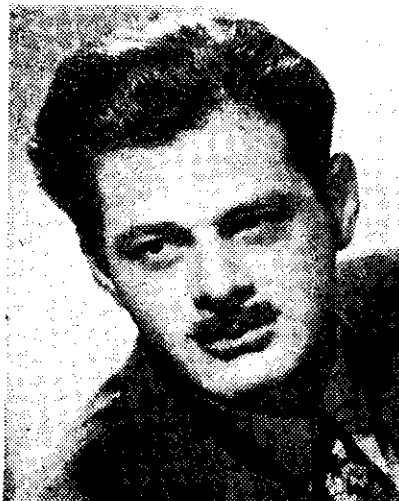


# HE HAS BEGUN SOMETHING

## Norman Corwin and "Radio Literature"

AT one time it was thought that Providence had singled out Orson Welles to revolutionise radio drama and radio presentations in general. Not improbably Welles himself thought so, but that was before the call came to him to go to Hollywood. In quitting radio he left the field clear for another prodigy—Norman Corwin.



NORMAN CORWIN  
Another prodigy

Although there is a solid basis for comparison between these two, they are poles apart as personalities. But each in his own line is an innovator. About Orson Welles' real significance to the films there is debate; some call him a mountebank and some say that he is a genius. There is no such division of opinion over Corwin's role in radio.

It is unquestionable that, as a writer, still more as a pioneer in new techniques, Corwin has made an astonishing contribution to broadcasting. He has opened up new vistas. In American radio his imagination and audacity have been allowed a full fling, with the result that radio literature as a distinct branch of letters is coming into its own, gradually.

### All His Own Work

Actually, Corwin is a serious writer with something to say. It just happens to be radio's luck that he had an urge in its direction rather than an urge to

(continued from previous page)

future, any producer, comedian or script-writer will be able to try each of the regional directors in turn and have his case judged on its merits.

### Controversial Broadcasting

The Director-General adroitly side-stepped attempts by reporters to engage him in controversial issues. One question about "political" broadcasting got this answer: "I'm not trying to imitate Joad, but it depends on what you mean by 'political.' If you mean whether controversial broadcasting will increase, the answer is definitely yes."

Sir Noel Ashbridge covered some technical points. The over-all coverage by the new programmes would be 95 per cent, and listeners would often have the choice of three or four programmes, since many of the regional transmitters will overlap, as they did before. He prophesied a "cascade of shrieks" from angry listeners when the BBC returned to longwave broadcasting, which had not been used for over five years. Wartime civilian sets had been bought, against his advice, which could not receive long waves, and those listeners would have to wait until they got adaptors before they could hear the Light Programme.

There was one other new decision. To help the Regional Directors discover the wants of listeners in their own regions, the BBC's listener-research organisation will itself be regionalised, and its findings will show variations in taste from region to region.

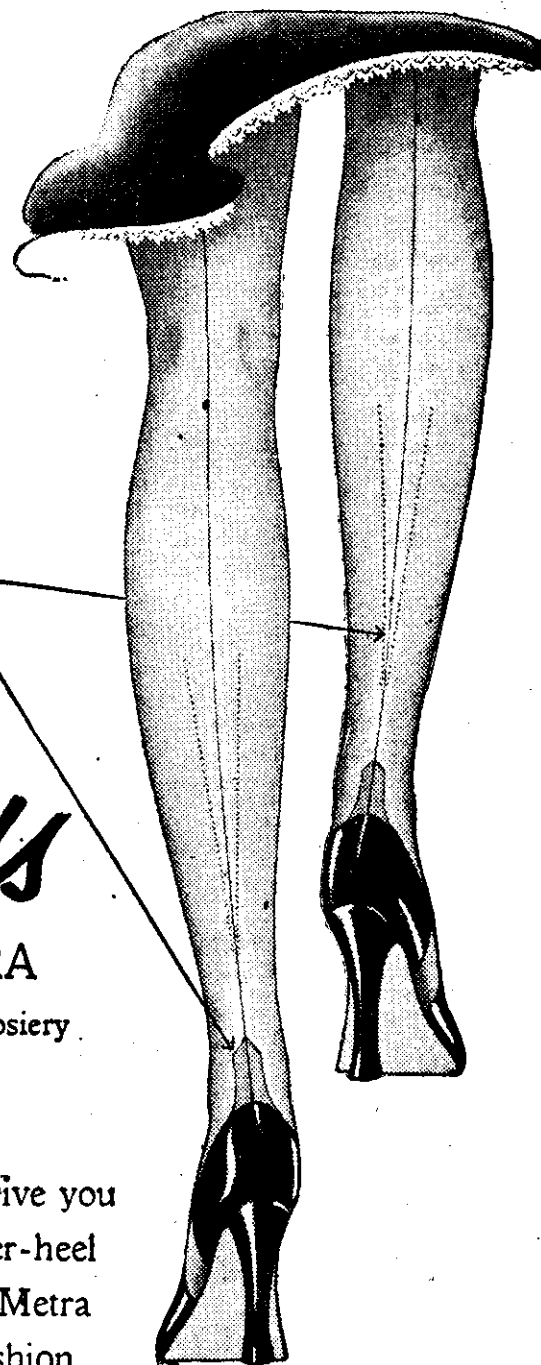
write novels or try his hand at formal drama. The commercial stations have presented three of his programmes in New Zealand: "We Hold These Truths," "This is War," and "You Can't Do Business with Hitler." The first two, scripts as well as production, were wholly his own work. Some listeners will still, probably, remember "We Hold These Truths," which was an example of history according to the text-books and yet made alive and arresting. For New Zealand tastes the programme was possibly too exuberant, but it was a revelation of the possibilities of radio when it is in the hands of writers and producers who have the understanding and ability to get the best out of it.

### Global Writer

To say that Corwin is the greatest single force in radio at the present time is perhaps a slight exaggeration. But it is only just an exaggeration to say, as a reviewer did say in a notice about one of his books, that he "writes for the world." His work is known in Russia, in South America, and throughout the British Empire. In 1942 he accepted an invitation from the BBC to go to England and produce several shows.

During the war he has been a pioneer in the field of international radio, and such programmes as "An American in Russia," and "Transatlantic Call" were a decided contribution to international understanding. Norman Corwin holds an award from the Institute of Education as the writer who has "demonstrated the cultural, artistic, and socially important uses of radio." There is a limit to what one man can do, but Corwin's chief value lies in his influence on other writers. He has shown what can be done and thus has made an important beginning.

STOLEN jewels and the adventures of an ambitious detective in trying to recover them are the highlights of a current thriller, *The Hawk*, heard from 22B at 6.30 p.m. on Wednesdays.



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