

BREAKS AT THE MIKE

When The Announcer Slips

A WELL-KNOWN NBS announcer offended ardent feminists by saying over the air, a few years ago, that everybody could settle down nicely for a talk under the auspices of the Society for the Prevention of Women and Children. A little later he went to the war. He's back now, after battlefield experiences which he says were nothing to the execrations he heard over his telephone after that incident.

Probably every radio announcer in the world has made a slip at one time or another, and most listeners like them all the more for it. A twist of the tongue dispels the atmosphere of complete erudition and rectitude. Announcing is something of an art of its own and, from time to time, the NBS receives batches of applications from people who think they would do very well in front of a microphone — much better than the people already on the job.

All Are Liable to Fall

The simple essentials are a pleasant, interesting voice, good diction, a good reading sense or, in other words, the power to interpret properly, and a natural ease. Would-be announcers may possess some of the qualifications we have mentioned, but when it comes to an audition, they often find that there are several other requirements they had never dreamed of.

But it does not matter how practised and experienced an announcer may be; he is liable to fall now and again. Some of the slips we were told of we cannot print, but there are at least two which made every listening farmer in New Zealand laugh.

In the course of a commentary on a wool sale, the announcer referred more

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girls—and older women, too — get to know of it. There's travel. There's variety. There's the fun of discovering what is inside other women's houses. There's the interest of human contacts. There's the pride of belonging to a recognised profession. There's the solid satisfaction of giving service where service is needed. And I think, too, that most girls quite enjoy housework—housework efficiently and intelligently done, I mean, not inefficient drudging. Besides our girls will be free women after 5.30. That ends the very worst feature of domestic service—worse than the poor wages, the dependence and the monotony—I mean the one 'night off.' What chance for every woman's main chance did that give a girl against her friends who could be out trapping seven nights a week and the week-end too?"

"So this Home Aid can retire," I sighed gratefully, one hand already on the door-knob. "You are promising me a reconditioned wife, kids soothed down to angels, a charming (temporary) home companion, and just no work left for myself to do."

"No, nothing," she fired through the closing crack—"except of course to pay that £4—or as much of it as you can."

—Staff Reporter.

than once to corrugated ewes. One of his colleagues, reading an ordinary market report spoke glibly about mixed sex ewes. Everybody interested in the land wanted to know immediately about the new type of sheep.

"The Immoral Bard"

Ordinary slips of the tongue produce curiosities. It was announced once, for example, that from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. would be Shakespeare hour, featuring excerpts from the immoral bard.

In community sings it was customary to acknowledge gifts for sale for patriotic purposes over the air when a sing was being broadcast. Somebody had sent in a sheep and the gift was acknowledged by a woman song-leader with a comfortable figure. There was conjecture about what he was referring to when the announcer remarked: "Now wasn't that a plump and tender carcase?"

Most announcers are looked on as fair game by information-hunters. Sometimes they are even tele-

phoned at their homes by people seeking suggestions on such things as a Maori name for a racehorse, for a maternity home or for a private residence.

A woman who arrived home late one afternoon from shopping felt in need of a cup of tea. When she turned on the tap, the water had a distinctly milky shade. Immediately she rang the NBS. Was there any chance of her being poisoned? Oh, only lime in the water. She was so relieved.

Slips by the Listeners

AH slips are not on the announcer's side. Listeners seem to collect curious impressions. A woman heard the announcement of a song title, "The Bloom is on the Rye." She rang the NBS to thank the announcer for reminding her, as it looked like rain, that the bloomers were on the line.

Following a race meeting came the usual inquiry.

"Please could you tell me what won the last race?"

"Trojan Melody first, False Scent second."

"Oh, Trudging Merrily first and Falsetto second; thanks a lot."

There was a man who wanted to hear a recording by Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra a second time. He asked the announcer: "Can we have those four white men from Auckland again?"

Probably it was somebody else's fault when an announcer said: "You are now to hear a recording by Ernest Butcher, 'How to Treat a Wife'—his own composition."

Though announcers are usually happy in their work, they occasionally reach the blasé stage. One spoke with the greatest sincerity when, after a long day at the microphone, through a staff shortage, and his final "Gooooood-night," he relaxed and, wrongly thinking he was off the air, said "and that will do the . . . s for to-night."



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