

have been something of a literary monument, decay to a heap of nails and boiler-dust. Not that Butler would have minded. "When a thing is old, useless and broken," he said, "we throw it away; but if it is sufficiently old, sufficiently useless, and sufficiently broken, we put it in a museum." I cherish also the comment of his Notebooks on Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*: "Jones said it was a mercy they had no words."

## Real Music

AMONG a lot of cheap sentimental songs in IYA's Saturday programme. Patricia McLeod's Hebridean group stood out as something genuine. The common balladic descriptions of the moon, dawn, sunset, the sea, and other natural phenomena are neither poetically nor scientifically true. At the best they are pleasant for those not allergic to sugar, and funny to those for whom "a mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure." To most others they are positively embarrassing. But these songs of the Hebrides are the speech of folk accustomed to think, to feel and to understand. It is not only love of people they express, but love of the earth, the air and the sea, and, above all, love of living. Patricia McLeod sang them with sincerity and simplicity.

## How Beautiful His Feet . . .

THAT well-known, that almost immoderately well-known piece, "Police-man's Holiday"—tum-tum-tiddly-iddly-to-tay—is, though it has taken me a long time to realise, a profound social document. Together with the introduction of the policeman into the Harlequinade and that immortal moment in "The Man Who Was Thursday"—"But this is absurd!" cried the policeman, clasping his hands with an excitement unusual in one of his profession, "but this is preposterous!"—and similar cultural gems, it sheds a revealing light on a unique characteristic of English life. Spain sees its Civil Guards as symbols of oppression and terror; America its police force as types of the backstairs of municipal politics; French policemen in works such as Simenon's carry an almost physical impression of the dingy despair of the Parisian underworld; but the English mythology turns the policeman into a figure of fairy-tales and writes elfin music about his light fantastic toe. You may treat this with admiration or scepticism as you choose, but the fact remains unique. The English genius is at its best in its faculty of making poetry out of the dullest details of city life; it is in Dickens and even in the least successful works of the late J. M. Barrie.

## Were They the Same at Home?

THEODORE HOOK, who was the subject this week of John Reid's talk in the series "Notable British Wits" (IYA) must have been an entertaining but dangerous fellow to know. In addition to displaying a pretty party wit, he was an inveterate practical joker on a grand scale. Even his best friends may have

been in constant jeopardy of having their self-esteem damaged either by his ribald tongue or his lively but eccentric imagination. Friendship would be maintained at the owner's risk and some, no doubt, enjoyed the notoriety of being in at the kill. One wonders whether Dean Hook of Worcester found his brother's reputation a little inconvenient. The conventional prettiness of Hook senior's music—he wrote over two thousand songs, including "The Lass From Richmond Hill"—suggests that he at least may have found Theodore something of a trial. It did come as a shock, however, to find that the wit had both wife and children. Did domestic ties confer immunity? Was Mrs. Hook an unwilling collaborator and sufferer, or like many other wife, did she encourage her husband in his perversity?

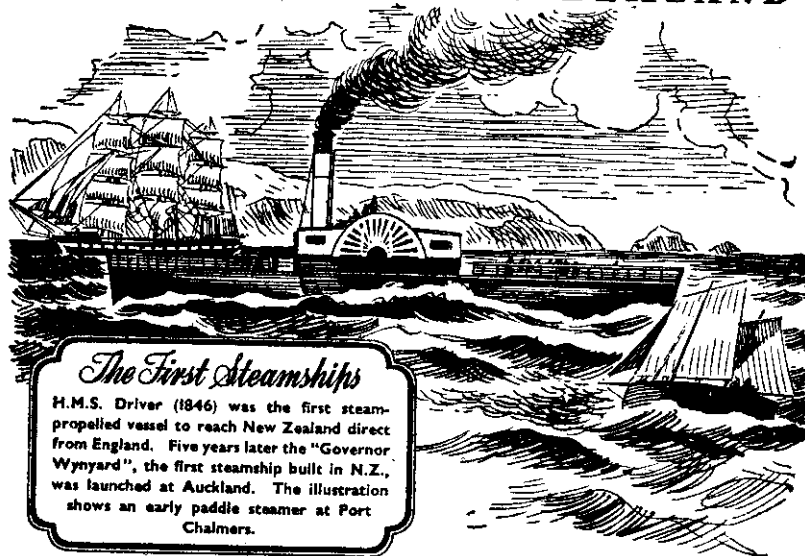
## Private Enterprise

IF Dunedin listeners will turn to the Sunday programmes printed in *The Listener*, they will see, squeezed into a couple of inches, the morning programme provided by a station which generally gets left out when these notes are being written. It is Station 4ZD, privately operated; its hours of broadcasting are intermittent, and the descriptions of its programmes are, unfortunately, misleading. For example, who would guess that by tuning in to something labelled "A World of Music" the listener would be rewarded by the sort of programme which should occupy the Classical Hour from the main station, and seldom does? For example, the other morning, finding other stations occupied with sporting news, brass bands, and somewhat uninspiring hymns from a local church service, I turned to this "World of Music" broadcast, expecting a succession of light ballads or salon orchestras. Instead, I heard Dukas' *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (with all the titles of the movements announced), and various other moderns, making an hour of balanced listening.

## Ellington Speaks

THE "Answering New Zealand" series contains some surprises, not least the fluent radio voice of Duke Ellington, a recent guest speaker. He described his latest essay in what he calls "concert jazz," a work entitled "Black, Brown, and Beige." This is a jazz expression of the history of the American negroes, whom the composer lovingly referred to as "my people"; and his swift but factual description of the evolution of his race from ancient Africa to modern America was influenced by what is evidently a vividly personal interest in the problem. Ellington and Deems Taylor spoke of jazz as America's folk music, with which it is difficult to agree when it is remembered that its melodies are mainly the product of Tin Pan Alley. Ellington's shrewd musicianship was apparent in one comment he made—"A good jazz player may not be able to read music, but he must be able to improvise." Self-satisfied musicians who despise jazz may well take this to heart; five minutes of attempted improvisation at the piano will convince many an accomplished high-brow that there is more in genuine musicianship than the mere ability to play what is written on the paper.

## BUILDERS OF NEW ZEALAND



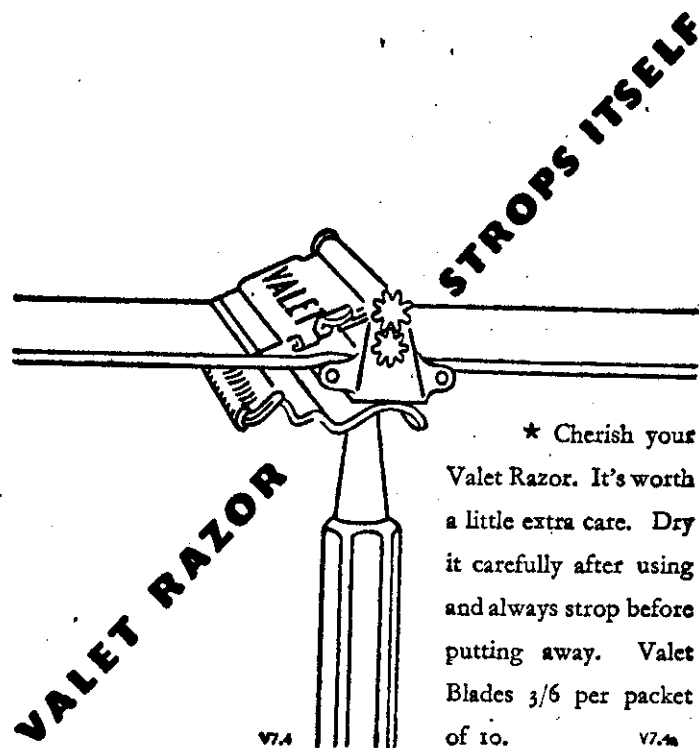
The development of New Zealand has been linked inseparably with ships and the sea—in earlier days by the picturesque old sailing ships, and later by the faster steamships which replaced them. Long before the almost total eclipse of sailing vessels on our sea lanes, the Government Life Insurance Department was founded. This great institution, too, has been inseparably linked with the growth of our country. For over seventy-five years the 'Government Life' has taken pride in the fact that its Life Assurance service is specially fitted to the individual needs of New Zealanders. Insure with the . . .

## GOVERNMENT LIFE INSURANCE DEPARTMENT

The Pioneer  
New Zealand Office  
Established — 1869



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