

might be termed his rehabilitation. It seems to be very well acted, with the possible exception of the small son who, after all, can't do much with the sometimes un-childish lines he is given to say. Another character, a woman, is asked to stand and deliver somewhat as follows: "If you won't do it for your own sake, then do it for England's sake—she is facing the greatest crisis in her history!" and it is a good actress who can make that sort of thing sound spontaneous. Parts of the serial sound very good, however, and if it avoids such patriotic pitfalls as the above, it should be popular. The theme is a promising one, which could stand dramatic treatment, and it remains to be seen whether the author will get more out of it than the present rather Warwick-Deeping-ish episodes seem to indicate.

Sulphur or Snow?

STATION 12B's Junior Quiz is pre-occupied with matters of New Zealand history and geography. I feel that the school syllabus must have changed considerably since I had any personal experience of it. My own recollection is that we used to know a good deal more about Pitt than about Seddon, and that though we might have been full of information about Land's End, we would not have been so ready with the names of the three capes at the top of New Zealand as the girl was who earned half-a-crown for this knowledge the other evening. The question-master handles it all very pleasantly, but I fear that he belongs like myself to the old regime, and should brush up his New Zealand geography. A boy was asked whether Lake Rotoiti was in the North or the South Island. He voted for the South, and when told he was wrong did not argue the point. I don't want to begin any inter-provincial battles. Both the Rotoitis are lovely, and I should not like to have to choose between them. It is probably easy enough to confuse them, because they have literally millions of things in common, and which Rotoiti leaps first to the mind will probably depend on whether you prefer to be eaten by sandflies among the low, sulphurous hills of Rotorua, or among the high, snowy peaks of the Tophouse district. Not the least of a question-master's worries in all such sessions must be the necessity for freeing himself from personal associations, and taking a bird's eye of his subject.

For Whom the Bell Tolls

FOR some time I have thought that Auckland's telephone system would crack under the strain of 12B's District Quiz. A telephonic artery is surely liable to burst when several hundred people are trying simultaneously to connect with the same number and some of them, moreover, are trying out little stunts with their dials that rumour has told them will be effective in putting them through ahead of others. The District Quiz was too good a thing to abandon, though, and 12B hit on the idea of ringing through from the studio to numbers sent in by listeners. I tuned in on December 17 to the first Quiz of the new order, thinking it might be rather dull, but not a bit of it. Though it was late in the evening, several of the people called up were amazingly prompt and accurate with their answers, and others ready with a bit of back-chat when they didn't know the answer. Another innova-

tion is the variation in the amount of the prize money for various questions. Knowledge of the official position held by Samuel Pepys was worth £2, but only 2/- was offered for the more unlikely knowledge of the real names of the Fuller comedians Stiffy and Mo. Two or three people were roused up from their armchairs before either of these could be answered. The Quiz in its new form has something of the excitement of a fishing expedition, though I think that much of its success is due to the way it is handled by the two gentlemen in the studio, whose competence is friendly and informal and who have a pretty line of sprightly patter.

HOLIDAY READING

THE BALLAD AND THE SOURCE, by Rosamund Lehmann, 14/- posted. This beautifully written novel of human relationships seen through the eyes of a child is a Book Society choice.

DIED IN THE WOOL, by Ngalo Marsh, 9/10 posted. An unusual detective story with the distinctive setting of a hill-country New Zealand sheep station.

SINISTER ERRAND, by Peter Cheyney, 9/10 posted. A new novel, swift of action and dialogue, full of delightful and original characters in the best Cheyney tradition.

THE MOVING FINGER by Agatha Christie, 9/10 posted. Mrs. Christie's subtle and entertaining detective story uncovers surprising and sinister situations in a quiet English village.

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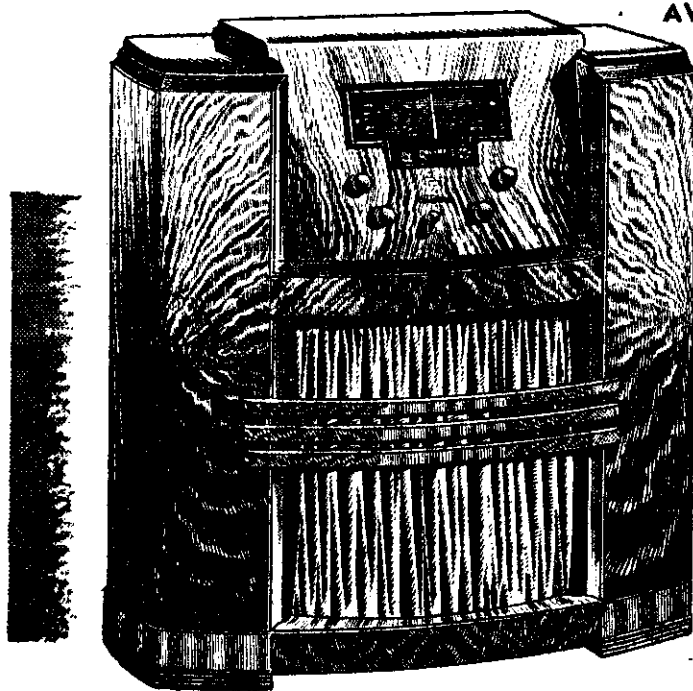
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