

NOT SO MUCH NEWS FROM LONDON

FROM March 4, there will be a reduction in news broadcasts by the NBS. The London News from the main National stations will be heard at 6.0 a.m., 8.0 a.m., and 6.30 p.m., and Radio Newsreel at 6.45 p.m.

At 7.45 p.m. the news and commentary from the United States will be broadcast and at 9.0 p.m. the NBS newsreel will be heard. At 11.0 p.m. again London News will be on the air. Wickham Steed's talks on world affairs will continue at 1.30 p.m. on Sundays. The Commercial stations will confine their news broadcasts from London to 6.0 a.m. and 11.0 p.m.

"HERE is the soup and this is Miss N. Bly serving you," or words to that effect, were seized on during the war years by English cartoonists who made comedy out of a grim situation. They took the phrase from the BBC news readers who, according to policy, gave their names over the air before getting on with the job.

There was a reason for it—a good one. When the invasion danger was in the offing there was a distinct possibility that German agents might try to imitate BBC announcements and spread enemy propaganda. But the BBC saw to it that listeners all over the world became familiar with the voices of the genuine broadcasters. There was very little chance of impersonation.

Happily, the need for that sort of thing is over. And, although we are not in a position to say what the men whose voices went into every household in the British Empire plan to do now that their wartime jobs have ended, we can say that, if they desert broadcasting, they will be missed. It is certain that some of them will go abroad; one is

already in Australia (see page 17); and in any case, with the reduction in broadcasts of London News there will be less chance for New Zealanders to hear those who remain. But their names will not soon be forgotten; such names as those of Derek Prentice (now in Australia), Neal Arden, Robert Harris, Robert Beatty and Norman Claridge. All of these came to radio from the stage.

Who They Were

Harris joined the BBC in 1940 as a news reader. His main private interests are old houses and travelling. He refused a broadcasting contract in Australia because he did not wish to leave England while the war was on.

A South African with an English upbringing, a man who is keen on all sports and an expert at none; a fresh and friendly individual with a delight in elaborate leg-pulls—those are the outstanding features of Derek Prentice. He once duped an English literary club into accepting him as a visiting German student—not for days, but a matter of months.

Neal Arden went on the stage at the age of two. Later he went in for optical work, but rejoined the theatre. By 1934 he had made contact with the BBC and for three years did much broadcasting in the Drama Department and the Children's Hour. Then he joined the regular staff of the BBC as an announcer.

The first London job of Robert Beatty, who became one of the BBC announcers, was playing the role of a corpse in a small theatre for 7/6 a week. Later he came to life. He describes his hobbies as (a) flying, and (b) making the money to pay for it. He joined the BBC in 1940 and became best known as the "At Your Request" man; the musical feature compiled by him from requests of listeners all over the world.

Off to Sydney

WHEN Jean McPherson, of Wellington (right), appeared with the Jack Davey show "Can You Top This?" which toured New Zealand last November, her individual style of singing attracted the attention of the Australian director of a sponsored radio unit. He took a recording of some of her songs back to Sydney. The result was a contract for her signature, and she will leave for Sydney on March 27.

Miss McPherson is to join a programme-producing company with a staff of 150, producing at least four musical shows a week, which are broadcast over 60 Australian radio stations. The orchestra is of more than 30 pieces and is in charge of a New Zealander, Dennis Collinson. Well-known artists such as Harold Williams, Strella Wilson, and Haydn Beck are heard in these programmes.

Listeners in New Zealand have heard Miss McPherson principally in a weekly feature from 2YA. She sang at the second concert given by the 2YA Camp Concert Party early in 1942 at the Trentham Military Camp and has ap-



peared since then at hundreds of concerts. She has sung many times in hospitals to wounded servicemen and has appeared in National as well as Commercial radio programmes.

During the war many of her songs were recorded for the Forces programmes broadcast from Egypt to the Middle East, and for the Pacific Islands programmes.

And last of these few, selected at random, we come to Norman Claridge, an announcer and narrator in the BBC's Empire Service. He is a member of an old stage family and he himself went on the stage at 18; he has been on it ever since. He joined the BBC as a member of its Dramatic Repertory Company in 1940 and transferred to the Overseas Division as an announcer in 1941.

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