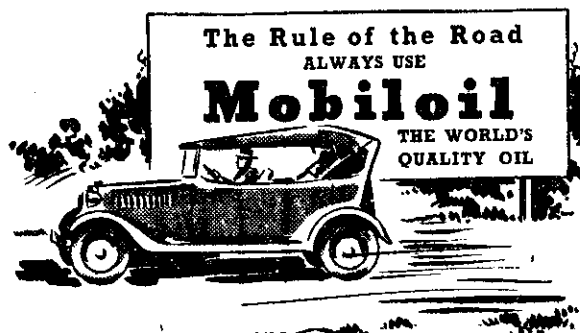


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4M6

EDUCATION VIA ENTERTAINMENT

New Stories and Serials for Broadcast to Schools

PEDESTRIANS bustling through Featherston Street, Wellington, glancing idly at brass name-plates on buildings, might conclude that it is a street given over entirely to prosaic commerce. But there is at least one block of buildings—or part of one—whose sober grey frontage hides a whole world of entertainment. This is the home of the National Broadcasting Service production studios where, every day, actors and actresses play their parts before the microphones, not only to entertain the old but also to instruct the young.

When we called the other morning, the cast was busy on the 50th episode of *Richelieu, Cardinal or King?* The cardinal was being his unpleasant self and his associates were expressing their very proper fear of him and of his power. But, in contrast, preparations were also being made for the first educational serial of this year, for broadcast to schools.

The writer of the serial, C. T. A. Tyndall, of the NBS staff, told us he had taken the period in English history from 1510 to 1543, when Erasmus wrote and Holbein painted, and had called it *The Grafted Rose*. During the Middle Ages there had been a blackout on education, art, science—even thought, and everything making for progress. Then, about 1400, people in Europe began to realise they were missing something in life.

From then on the script-writer explains how the wave of enthusiasm

reached England and how Henry VIII, who was not simply a fat man with a lot of wives, played his part in advancing the arts. The new age, of course, brought new problems. Money, which had not been very important before, became one of the most important things in life. Land, too, had never been looked upon as a thing to be sold for profit; people got their living from it and that was all. But the new men wanted land to make wealth for themselves. Growing crops did not pay, so the land was used for grazing sheep. This threw a lot of people out of employment, and Henry made laws which insisted that a grazier must also plough up a certain amount of his land.

"But you can't put the clock back," says a prefatory note to the serial. "We, to-day, are dealing with a new set of conditions and it was the same in the time of Henry VIII."

The idea of the serial for the schools—mainly country schools—is not so much to teach history directly as to interest children by an exciting story giving the background of the period. All the adventures of the hero, John Neville, are fictitious, but they reflect the age, and present themselves in the form of a child's adventure story.

There are to be 17 half-hour episodes, broadcast from all the main National stations, and the serial was scheduled to start at 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, and continue weekly.

Although Featherston Street is the home of the production studios, most of



"MONEY became one of the most important things in life": A counting-house in the time of Henry VIII (from an old manuscript), a period covered in the new schools' serial "The Grafted Rose," by C. T. A. Tyndall

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, MARCH 8