

# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Thoughts in a Post Office

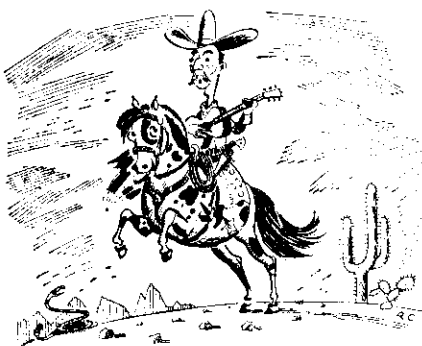
THE morning programmes at 1YA are sometimes better than the printed page suggests. Now and then there is a good recorded talk, unlisted, such as one given recently by Caroline Webb as a tribute to Eleanor Rathbone, who died a few weeks ago. In England, where graduates have their own Parliamentary representatives, the universities have confounded popular superstition about their unworldliness by electing people who blow keen winds of common sense through the problems of everyday life. There was A. P. Herbert, for instance, who forced England to laugh with him at the fantastic divorce laws—and to amend them. There was Eleanor Rathbone, Independent Member for the Combined Universities since 1929, who refused to believe that the country could not afford a higher standard of living for its lower-paid workers; and who insisted that both justice and expediency required that the family income should bear some proportion to the number of dependent children. For the greater part of her

working life she thrust forward the principle of family endowment with simple and devastating logic, and did more than any other one person to overcome the hostility and ridicule it met. Next month New Zealand mothers will collect their first universal family endowment payment. There may be a short queue in the post office and time for a few minutes' reflection. That is the moment when Eleanor Rathbone might wish to be remembered.

### Fences

I FEEL some need of apology in writing about the song called "Don't Fence Me In," for all readers will have heard it by now on quite a number of occasions and will reflect that either you like it or you don't and that there is very little more to be said about the matter. However, it is not the purpose of this paragraph to enter into a discussion of the ditty's merits, but rather of its antecedents. The theme is vaguely Western—that favourite compendium of the larger and looser American aspirations—and, whether the author intended

it or not, this lends a distinctive interest to his title and theme. For in the history of the cattle industry of the West of America the coming of fences signified a great change which lasted many years—the change from the era of free pasture and semi-nomadic herdsmen (the cowboy par excellence, nearest in type



to the Argentine gaucho) to one of high finance and intensive capitalist farming, in which either private owners or great trusts obtained the title to stretches of land, fenced them off and developed them as exclusive private property—to the fury, vigorously expressed in word and deed, of the old guard, who felt the historical scene of which they were a part passing away. A later age, to whom the cowboy and his hat became a romantic

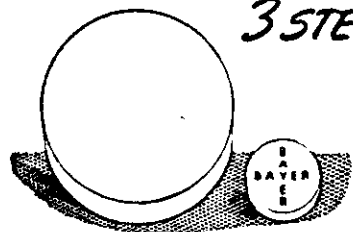
legend, sided as usual with the primitive, unbusiness-like, almost unworldly phase of the industry, and lamented the coming of the fences. So the over-popular crooning hit refers rather vaguely to a genuine historical struggle and a favourite American legend.

### Brahms the Miniaturist

ON a recent Wednesday evening at 1YA a half-hour programme was given by the Orpheus Group. Brahms was their subject. Brahms the miniaturist. They gave solo and concerted items for voices, and violin and piano. Members of this group have been heard at other times as solo broadcasters, and those other times are the proper moments for writing of their solo work. As the Orpheus Group they seem determined that we shall be thinking of the composer, not of the soloists. There was a thoughtful commentary, prepared specially for this collection of small items. One feels very warmly towards a band of musicians who will put this amount of care into planning a programme that has a logical and coherent idea behind it. They show an approach to music that is still too rare in concert and radio programmes—a wish to serve the composer by illuminating his various moods and experiments, rather than to serve themselves by dipping here, there

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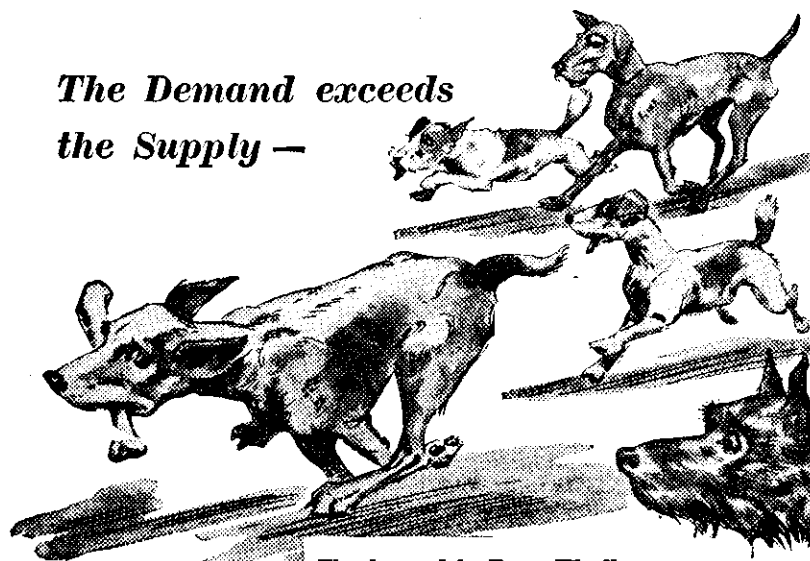
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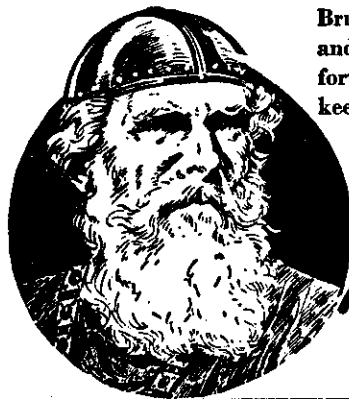
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