

Right: "FLOODED FIELD AND TREES," by Russell Clark. A light and fanciful exercise in the linear technique that has occupied this artist lately

by a Chinese painter of the tenth century in a recorded conversation that goes like this: *Questioner*: "Painting is to make beautiful things, and the important thing is to obtain their true likeness; is that not right?" *The painter answers*: "It is not . . . Painting is to paint, from the shapes of things to estimate their meaning, from the beauty of things to reach their inner significance, from the reality of things to grasp the meaning of all things. You should not confuse outward beauty with reality."

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THERE you have it in a nutshell. But that is a tall order and we had better fall back on the lesser, but still very moving revelations—the interplay of essential form with changing outward conditions, the structure of rock and root and bone beneath the surface of land and flesh, the intricate, endless pattern of shapes in light.

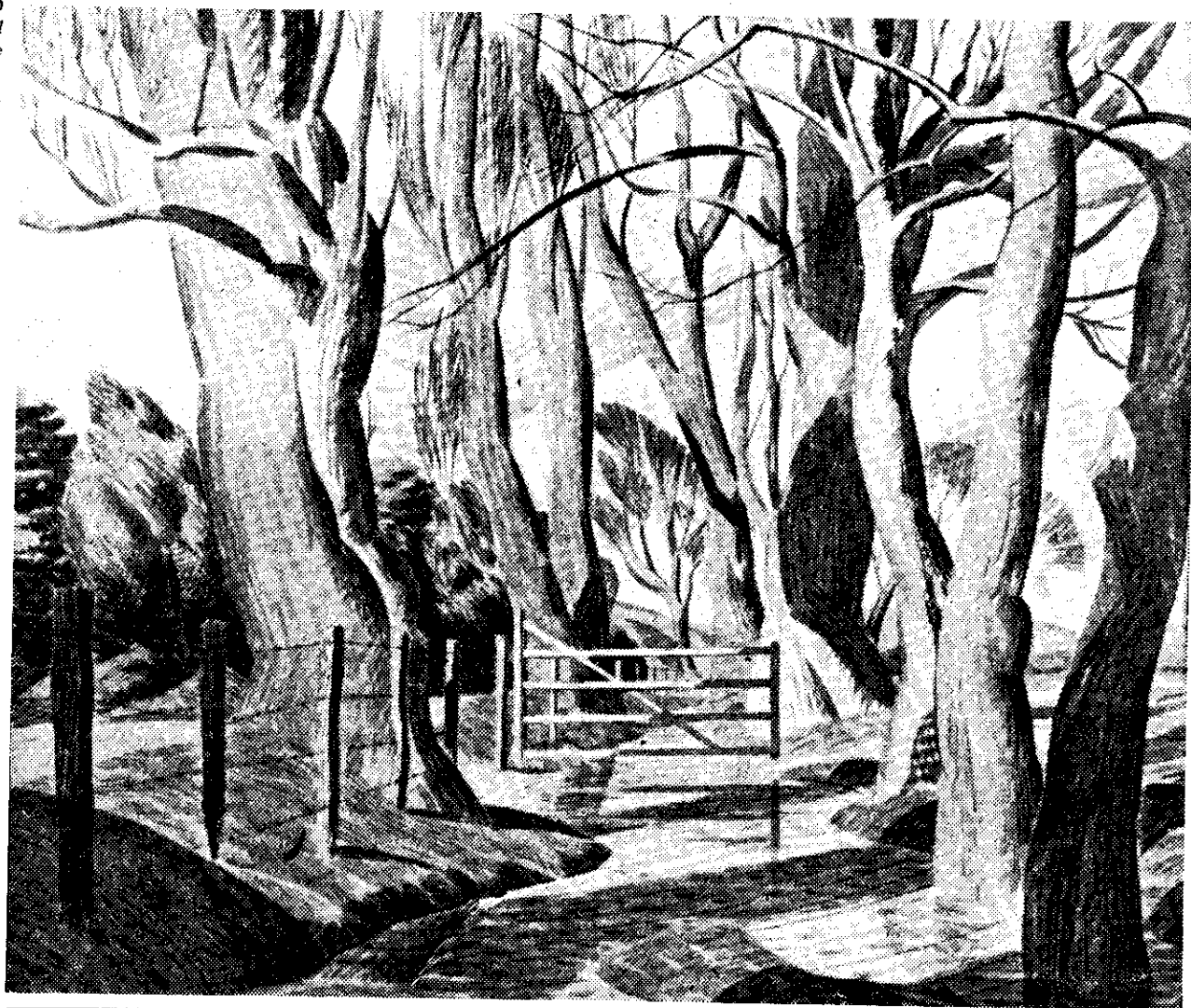
And if that is too much to ask for, then surely at the very least we can demand that our painters reveal something of the substance and quality of New Zealand life. According to our Academy these islands are a depopulated expanse of scenery in which nothing ever happens. But New Zealanders climb in the mountains, picnic in the bush, bathe in the sea, listen to music, go to the races, milk their cows and shear their sheep, take their babies to the Plunket rooms, sail on the Waitemata, pick apricots at Roxburgh, fish at Russell, stew at Rotorua, get baptised, capped, married, and cremated. Do you mean to tell me that in all this fun there is no material for painting? If there were a popular art rooted in our common life, and thus revealing it to us, we should see and enjoy many things that we now take for granted.

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NO, the Academy will not do. In this show there are interesting experiments in technique by S. B. MacLennan and Russell Clark, there is the highly cultivated vision of T. A. McCormack, there is the impressionist virtuosity of S. L. Thompson, and when you have said that you have said nearly all. The engravers, of course, are in a class by themselves, doing excellent work which should eventually prove of great service in the making of good New Zealand books.

The group of unshackled, thinking painters is so small that, when they stay away in a bunch, the gap is painfully noticeable. Where are Evelyn Page, Lois White, Margaret Thompson? Where, above all, are John Weeks, A. J. C. Fisher, Eric Lee Johnson? We cannot afford to miss any one of them, and yet I know some of these outstanding artists no longer submit to the Academy because they have been met with such lack of understanding in the past.

Meanwhile, the paintings on show are selling merrily away, including, I was glad and surprised to see, a delightful work by Mr. MacLennan. The Customer is sometimes right.



The World As Soldiers See It

(Written for "The Listener" by L. R. HOBBS)

AN important result of the war is that many New Zealanders have become internationally-minded. Whereas once they regarded foreign policy as something to be talked about mysteriously by Foreign Secretaries in England, many aspects of it are now as well known to them as the workings of social security or the totalisator tax at home.

Thousands of New Zealanders now know as much or more about the problems of Trieste and Venezia Giulia as do the once solely omniscient leader-writers on the newspapers. It may be embarrassing for the leader-writers, but it is good for New Zealand as a whole.

Thousands of other former Kiwis are now also perfectly competent to discuss the pros and cons of British policy in Egypt. They know, many of them from costly and painful experience, just what difficulties lie in the successful defence of the Suez Canal. How many Members of both Houses of our Legislature know as much about Middle East problems and politics as do the more studious among former members of 2nd N.Z.E.F.? These young men had the advantage of seeing the situation on the

spot and of listening to experts on the subject, experts talking on their home ground.

Many thousands of them have been to Palestine and Syria. They know the implications of French rule in Syria. They have seen for themselves the attempt to build a Jewish National Home in Palestine, and measured for themselves the prospects of Jews and Arabs living together in harmony. They have seen the Palestine Police in action, and they know the meaning of the modern and yet almost medieval police forts which overlook all the countryside from strategic points. When the cables talk of riots at the Wailing Wall or in Tel Aviv, they can picture what is happening, and know why.

They have, in fact, an interest in the future of these countries that is far more than academic, or far more even than the casual curiosity of the tourist as to what happened to some of the countries he visited. Many of their friends died that Egypt (and with it the Empire) might not be overrun by Rome, and to that extent they have, and know they have, a moral stake in the country.

It is the same with Italy. They know some of the ramifications of Italian poli-

tics, the clash between Church and Communism, the difficulty of filling that vacuum in a country's idealism created by the abolition of Fascism.

This knowledge has a deep and an important effect in the "deepening stream" of New Zealand's national consciousness. The important question is whether it is universally realised and appreciated. Before the war New Zealanders in general were satisfied to gaze on the rest of the world through the barbed wire strands in a high fence of isolationism. Now a bigger proportion of its younger men than of its elders have a keen curiosity in world affairs, and firm opinions on what is and is not the correct line to take in foreign affairs.

The results of this are difficult to foresee, but it cannot be gainsaid that they are interesting. It would have been unthinkable before the war to imagine an election in New Zealand in which foreign policy had an important part in anyone's policy. Now it is quite possible that the candidate for some rural constituency at the end of his pre-election speech on social security and the guaranteed price may have to answer some intelligent questioning on the line Empire policy, and New Zealand policy in particular, is taking towards events in Egypt or Italy.