

# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Take It Back

RECENTLY I wrote a paragraph lamenting the apparent disbanding of the 4YA Orchestra, due to the fact that many of its members had been selected for the National Symphony Orchestra. This was premature, and I should have realised that the authorities would anticipate and rectify such a denudation of local instrumentalists. The solution arrived at seems to be the only possible one, for a country like New Zealand, sparsely populated and with a day's journey, at least, between any two of the main cities. A complete reshuffling of all our players has resulted in the formation of the main orchestra in Wellington, together with one light orchestra and two strong groups of strings, one of which will be stationed here in Dunedin. If this results in 4YA relinquishing the type of orchestral fare known as "light" or "salon" in favour of the compact string orchestra and the formation of trios, quartets, and quintets, then the musical life of Dunedin will be enriched rather than robbed by the change in personnel. The newcomers to the Dunedin ranks, Ormi Reid, Harold Taylor, Alex Munro, D. Sutherland, and Reginald Svttonn, will be an asset to the city's music and we look forward to hearing the newly-arranged 4YA String Orchestra.

### Not Gold

I ATTEND the début of each new serial, half hoping for, half dreading, subsequent enslavement. In the case of *All That Glitters* (first instalment from 2YA the other Saturday) I am pleased to pronounce myself out of danger. The opening lines were promising. The scene was the staffroom at a girls' school, and the determinedly bright banality of the conversation gave it an authentic ring. Till, however, tragedy reared its starkly naked head. The parents of the schoolgirl heroine have both been killed in a plane crash, whereupon the sports mistress (it might have been the English mistress) had to deliver a line something like "She has lost both parents? Poor little Pamela!" Pamela herself, though she has scarcely appeared yet, seems fated to become a much-put-upon young woman. The heavies, Uncle Matthew and Aunt Sarah, are destitute of even the skim milk of human kindness. Poor Pamela! The depths of misery to which she has already sunk suggest that it will be a long time before she surfaces.

### With 'Er 'Ead Töcked Oonderneath 'Er Arm . . .

A RECORDED series—not too new on the New Zealand air—which has replaced *Book of Verse* from 3YA is a sort of England and Scotland conducted tour, or radio Baedeker, called *This Sceptred Isle*. The first to be broadcast concerned the Tower of London, and consisted of a series of dramatic dialogues between prominent personages associated with the Tower's history. When I tuned in, a little late, William the Conqueror was in conference with his architect; then we had Anne Boleyn on the eve of her execution and the Princess Elizabeth and her gaoler. The first of these it were perhaps best to

discuss no further; the other two were what is usual in these dramatisations. There were two more to follow. One, a most curious affair, depicted John Felton, the murderer of the Duke of Buckingham in Charles I's time, being threatened with the rack by Archbishop Laud and uttering indignant and eloquent denunciations of the practice of torture, which, we are assured, had much to do with its cessation. Lastly there was Colonel Blood, who tried to steal the Crown Jewels, entertaining Charles II. so much by persistent rudeness to his royal face that he was promptly enlisted in the royal bodyguard. But on the whole, how hollow, stilted and vaguely phoney are these spectral colloquies.

### MacLeish on Radio History

WE cannot reproduce historical conversations with any degree of realism or conviction, except in the rarest of cases. This topic is dealt with by the American poet Archibald MacLeish in the preface to his *The American Story*, a printed series of historical




broadcasts which, having read, one must very much wish to hear. He argues that the peculiar function of the radio is not dramatisation, which is proper to the stage, but the bringing to life of original narratives and first-hand accounts. "It is, or should be, possible for radio to present a given text loyally and literally and simply, and yet in such a perspective and with such a focus of attention to give breadth and presentness and meaning to its words." MacLeish has certainly succeeded in so treating the narratives of American discovery, exploration, conquest and settlement without any of these laboured conversations of persons unhandily resurrected; and his method seems worth following up.

### Tantalus and 3YA

STATION 3YA has adopted a theme or signature tune, one which is played regularly to fill up the momentary gaps between the end of one programme and the beginning of another. This practice holds definite possibilities in the direction of giving the station a measure of individuality, it being at present a legitimate criticism of the YA stations that one is not markedly unlike its neighbour. But if this is to be maintained and developed I would urge that it be done thoroughly. Let the tune be put over consistently and definitely so that we come to associate it with the particular station—so that

(continued on next page)



**Beautifully new  
but richly experienced**

In vivid contrast to the drabness of post-war economy, Courtenay offers you a new beauty of cabinet design and technical perfection that is both stimulating and satisfying. Behind each individual Courtenay lies the experience of over seventeen years of radio manufacturing in New Zealand and a record for dependability established right in thousands of New Zealand homes. Ask the man who owns one and he'll tell you—"of course it's good, it's designed and made for New Zealand conditions."



There is a Courtenay Dealer in your town.

N.Z. Distributors: **TURNBULL & JONES LTD.**

Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin,  
Hamilton, Palmerston North.

# Courtenay

*There's no Compromise with Quality*