

or whining. The formation of the consonants often conveys the suggestion of crippled lips or of a tongue that has got itself jammed in under a loose denture.

But I must not say too much. People are usually just as sensitive about their voices as they are about their faces. And often as not a heart of gold goes



"Sky-blue imitation-English voices that move the children to boisterous laughter"

with a voice that ought to find a use as an offensive weapon in commando warfare.

I know I shall be rebuked if, having touched lightly on certain deficiencies in New Zealanders' habits of speech, I do not try to provide a remedy. I feel that the teachers are really the only people who can do much about it. The Training Colleges should make a serious attempt to establish a norm of speech. There is no need to go to extremes, and produce sky-blue imitation-English voices that move the children to boisterous laughter.

There is one suggestion I would offer. I am convinced that in the process of learning to speak well, a great deal depends on rhythm and emphasis. The sing-song verse-speaking most of us were taught at school years ago is the worst possible training. The chanting of multiplication tables we used to do was thoroughly destructive of the sense of rhythm. Most New Zealanders speak with too little emphasis, too little light and shade. (Sometimes, when they come to give radio talks, and feel the need for using a touch of emphasis here and there, they often put it in ludicrously wrong places.) Here, I think, we have the chief reason for the emphasis of the suffix *-ly*—"quicklee," "nicelee." Any who had been trained in infancy in the proper use of rhythm and emphasis would naturally place the stress on "quick" and make the second syllable a very light one.

Good English speech is neither hang-dog, nor affected and "prissy"; nor ostentatiously "cultured"; nor pedantically "correct." I contend that there is something that can be called "standard English," and that it is a recognisable norm, which is "objective" in that it conforms to certain phonetic requirements, and is based fundamentally on aesthetic and not social conventions.

The case for the defence rests.

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