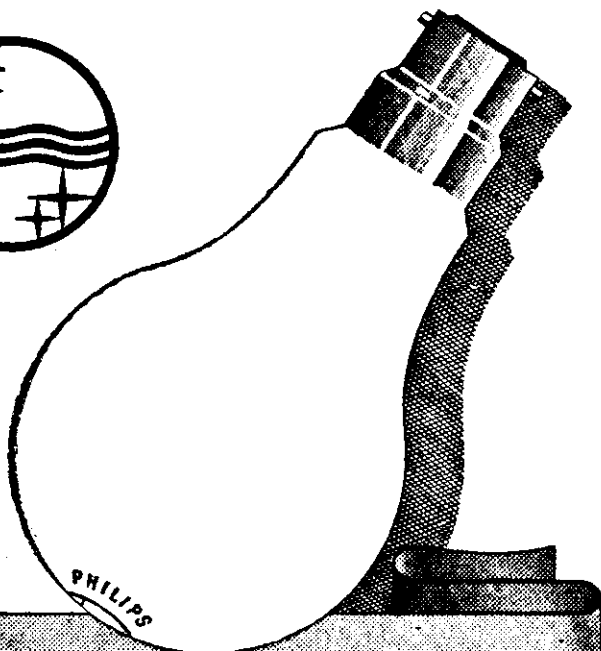
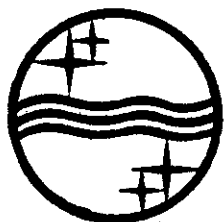


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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Parliamentary Problems

FOR entertainment value, I would back W. S. Gilbert's version of the House of Lords in *Iolanthe* against our own Parliament any day; although this is a point that may well be questioned. In any case I imagine 32B's choice of this particular opera on a recent Sunday afternoon was not at all for the purpose of contrast and comparison. But it may be comforting for listeners to reflect that the particular problems confronting Gilbert's Parliament are ones that would not in the ordinary course of events bother our own Members. Take Strephon's predicament, for instance; he is a fairy down to the waist, but has mortal legs: "You see, down to the waist, I'm a Tory of the most determined description, but my legs are a couple of confounded Radicals, and, on a division, they'd be sure to take me to the wrong lobby." This is a difficult situation for any M.P., but the Fairy Queen, with remarkable political intelligence for a woman, decides that Strephon shall be returned as a Liberal-Unionist. She herself will take care of the offending legs. Would that all our political problems were solved as neatly!

Early Days

HAVING had a brief but painful encounter with New Zealand history in my schooldays—chiefly owing to a regrettable inability to keep historical facts in their chronological order and to spell Maori names with any sort of consistency—I find Douglas Cresswell's talks on this subject particularly interesting. In the first three of his series on *Early Days on Banks Peninsula* there is already enough material to provide episodes for the most exciting serial—"goodies" and "baddies," blood and thunder, massacre and exploration. All Mr. Cresswell's talks are delivered with that intense personal interest which he somehow manages to convey to his listeners. One feels that even if he had been there, he could not have done more justice to this battle or that landing. So I forgot New Zealand's early struggles—and mine—with Maori chiefs and administration, and simply listened to a story that sounds chaotic enough in its development, but somehow manages to take on a definite direction. Which was more than my historical studies ever contrived to do.

Wells and his Work

IN one of the BBC series "The Written Word — Development of the English Novel," V. S. Pritchett paid a warm-hearted tribute to H. G. Wells and his work. Some of Mr. Pritchett's own turns of phrase were effective in describing his subject. For instance, when he said that many of Wells's characters were "plain, ill educated, knockabout people," how many characters spring to mind! Pritchett also called Wells a "ruthless optimist" — forceful description of a writer who seemed to possess the conviction that eventually Science will "burn the world clean," and we shall all lead happy and healthy lives in Utopia. Into the time at his disposal, the speaker packed as tight a portmanteau of Wellsian analysis as possible. Wells was presented to us as a writer whose didactic novels shaped the mind of the generation; one who caught what was in the minds of progressive people and was able

to give it to the common people through a great gift for storytelling: one who would plan everything anew, but got impatient when asked for details; who didn't understand where in the mind of man the rational and irrational meet; who didn't understand religion and publicly despised art; who, above all, time and time again warned his generation just where its policy was taking it. Mr. Pritchett drew no conclusions from these statements, but concluded his talk (surprisingly enough) with a rough comparison and contrast of Wells and Kipling, the internationalist and the patriot. The one point where they agreed, said the speaker, was that both describe violence with a certain gusto. "Both have felt the first movements of our civilisation rising against itself."

Wot, No Fairies?

I HAVE heard several items of 22B's Saturday night, *There Ain't No Fairies*, each time merely being convinced that *There Ain't no Scriptwriters* and *There Ain't No Gold Up That Thar Tree* so why not stop barking up it? However I am pleased to report that last Saturday's Goldilocks and the Three Bears evoked several genuine chuckles. Perhaps it is hard for one reared on



Tinkerbell to take kindly to a programme with such a title, or possibly it is merely one of the kinds of humour for which you have to acquire a taste. Each little story in the series represents a modern version of the fairy tale, purged of its supernatural element (merely because a wise guy called Clifford, the commentator at each episode, believes there ain't no fairies). So his "Jack and the Giant-Killer" tells of a young gadget-salesman who floors a giant of big business; his "Hansel and Gretel" is the pathetic tale of a young couple housed by an unscrupulous witch in a leaky cottage at an exorbitant rental (they finally get rid of her by cunning application of the Fair Rents Act or its Australian equivalent); and "Goldilocks" deals with a Gracie Allen type of female reporter who goes on the wrong assignment and finds herself in the apartment of the Three Bears (Father Grizzly, wife Honey, and son Teddy, plus occasionally cousin Pola) and is the means of cracking a story wide open as well as a bottle of brandy and countless victuals (no wonder the returning Bears find her fast asleep). As well as having no fairies, the stories have a moral; but since by 10.30 on a Saturday night the children are well out of the way listeners to the session are not likely to be distressed at the lack of either.

Counting Chickens

SPORTS fans would chuckle at an item in *The Listener* programme section regarding the Rugby Football broadcast from 4YZ, on Saturday, August 9. This