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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Community Centres

THE series of talks from 2YA by H. C. D. Somerset on *The Community Centre* are very timely, since we are just beginning to get conscious that there are such things as community centres, and that many people think that no community should be without one. A good thing, we decide, and find ourselves rising to our feet to suggest "community centre" at any public meeting called to discuss war memorials. But if we were asked to define a community centre we should probably expatiate on the advantages of having the new Plunket Rooms, the library, and the old Table Tennis Club under one roof, a miniature civic centre with no corporate life of its own. In the two talks I have heard so far, Mr. Somerset has succeeded in showing us that a community centre is something greater than its component parts, that it exists primarily for "the exercise, in company or otherwise, of the speculative faculty." This does not mean, however, that the Sir Tobys among us will be deprived of their cakes and ale, for we have it on Mr. Somerset's own authority (the former quotation is Aristotle's) that the activities of the centre must be complementary to, and not too far in advance of, the life of the community.

Properly Provincial

SINCE jealousy between the four main cities of New Zealand is one of our least lovable traits, I was pleased to find, in the first broadcast of the new ZB feature *Challenge of the Cities*, that the undesirable type of provincial rivalry was soft-pedalled. No matter to what city listeners belonged, they couldn't help but enjoy the broadcasts from all four centres. I'm a Dunedinite myself, but I had to admit that the Aucklanders' description of their undeniably lovely harbour, the Wellingtonians' cheerful presentation of an ill wind as something to be proud of, and the stern, statistically-backed facts of the Christchurch broadcasters were all excellent introductions to those three cities. It was inevitable (to this listener at least) that Dunedin should quote Thomas Bracken; and the accentuation of the Scottish atmosphere will be a success if McTavish has any say! Altogether, the programme promises to be very interesting; to misquote a film slogan, it is a good way of "presenting New Zealand to the New Zealanders!"

Cinderella as a Poem

THERE is nothing so commendable as not getting into a rut, so we should be grateful rather than startled if we find ourselves faced with a serving of *Cinderella* at 9.30 in the evening, which is what happened to listeners to 2YA on a recent Monday. *Cinderella* has been rewritten as a "poem" by Alice Duer ("White Cliffs") Miller, but the subject scarcely gives scope for her undoubted talent for tear-raising, since the happy ending is all too obviously just around the corner. However, the lady does her best by endowing *Cinderella* with a well-intentioned papa who comes to a William Rufus and shortly after deciding that his second marriage was all a mistake. Thereafter the story meanders daintily along the traditional path, in pantomimically syncopated

couplets. There are occasional infelicities. Cinderella's ball dress is fastened with diamond studs

Because in those old days they had no zippers.

But strangely enough her slippers Were made of plastic glass!

On the other hand, Mrs. Miller has a refreshing directness and many felicities of expression. The prince, we are told, was "just the sort of man that young girls dream of meeting, and very seldom can." And I liked Cinderella waiting to try on the slipper, and sitting down with "a shy yet comforted air," and Stepmother's "stretching her mouth till she thought that she smiled." Moreover, followers of the royal wedding will appreciate the attention Mrs. Miller lavishes on the details of Cinderella's nuptial accoutrements, so different from the reticence of the story-book version.

Beethoven to Milne

FEW visiting radio artists give us such consistently interesting programmes as the Australian baritone Clement Q. Williams. In the first recital which I heard he introduced what were described as "Lieder—Old and New." Beethoven's "Adelaide" began this group, and in contrast were some songs by Kilpinen, Strauss, and Wolff. Another fine recital consisted of a Russian group and a Scandinavian group, the latter containing songs by Palmgren, Berger, Sibelius, Sinding, and Sjogren, composers who seem to be almost completely ignored in the repertoires of our own singers. Nothing could be further removed from this type of programme than Mr. Williams's presentation, on another occasion, of the Fraser-Simson settings of songs from *When We Were Very Young*. I fancy that the settings by this composer, like the verses of Milne, are a little too sophisticated to appeal to the very young listeners for whom they were intended, and that they are better understood by the adult child. I don't imagine, somehow, that the "hums" invented by that little-known composer, Pooh Bear, were as melodically difficult for children to sing as these settings by Fraser-Simson. They would, I am sure, have more of the genuine nursery-rhyme about them. A. A. Milne himself confessed that he couldn't remember any of the tunes to which his words were set—whereas nobody could fail to remember the tune of a nursery-rhyme, even after one hearing.

Hit and Miss

THE ways of the *Hit Parade* are inscrutable. Not only do the most incredible songs get to the top—I often wonder if the copyright owners pay out vast sums of money to put them there, though perhaps it is merely that tastes differ in this as in other things—but once there, these numbers frequently vanish from the programme and are not heard again. Often, too, in the course of several *Hit Parades* a song will stage a quite unexpected come-back. After diligent questioning I managed to ascertain that the songs chosen for this session are those of which the greatest number have been sold in sheet-music during the week, played in order of popularity. I should be very tempted, if I had the

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