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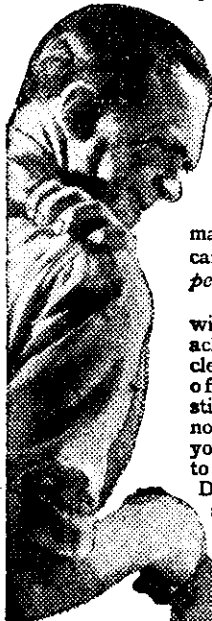
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RADIO VIEWSREEL What Our Commentators Say

Plays Elusive and Unelusive

HAVING listened to two radio plays on a recent week—*He Who Gets Slapped* from 2YA and *The Dover Road* from 2YC—I have not yet made up my mind whether it is better to be amused by A. A. Milne or bemused by the unknown perpetrator of *He Who Gets Slapped*. I feel A. A. Milne did not get a chance to exert his well-known charm in the meagre three-quarters of an hour given him by the NZBS adaptation. And as if conscious that this was a concentrated version of the original, the cast became somewhat strident, making a delightful piece of Milnerie seem like something worn by Hedda Hopper. In spite of these disadvantages, however, *The Dover Road* remained entertaining. The same cannot be said of *He Who Gets Slapped*. But on the other hand there was about the latter a strong suggestion that here was something to get your teeth into, if only the thing would materialise sufficiently to enable you to come to tooth-sinking terms with it. It had atmosphere, depth (unplumbed), a strong Petrouchka motif, a dimly-sensed suggestion of *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*. I am annoyed at having missed so much, and haunted by the fear that the loss may have been caused as much by my denseness as by the author's obscurity. In fact, for the first time in my listening life I crept away from the radio feeling that it would be a good idea for programme supervisors to adopt the newspaper editor's practice of having a picture of his Average Reader on his desk, and when in doubt...

Prepared to Listen

FORM IN MUSIC, which I listen to from 2YC on Friday nights, strikes me as one of the best sessions on the air, and memorable as one of the first adult sessions to enjoy what, in another sphere, has long been the privilege of certain of the schools broadcasts—adequate advance presentation. I refer, of course, to the *Form in Music* series of articles in *The Listener*. It is a great help to come to a session of this type with some preparation for it, and to know that, if one is in the mood to listen emotionally rather than intellectually, failure to absorb the commentator's remarks can be largely made up for by subsequent reference to Article Seven. And sessions of this type would seem to solve the programme organiser's dilemma of whether the listening public should get what it likes or like what it gets, since they fulfil the purpose of educating their audience to Higher Things. Enough sessions like *Form in Music* and it should no longer be necessary for programme arrangers to count up the hours of light music, weigh them against the hours of "serious" music, and express the answer in terms of 25/-.

Too Kind to Us?

NORMAN CORWIN'S "One World" episode dealing with New Zealand was much too gracious towards us. In this pastiche of New Zealand social attitudes it was stated that our country is of much greater importance internationally than its size or population would indicate; I think, however, that this must be qualified by substituting

"should be" for "is" of greater importance—for few of us here believe that we are, for all our social pioneering, of very great or lasting importance to more than a few liberal thinkers in other countries. If Norman Corwin's broadcast is a means of making our virtues known abroad it may well prove a two-edged weapon; such a flattering broadcast may cause visitors and immigrants



to anticipate an earthly paradise, and the consequent disappointment will be greater when it is realised that we are not quite the paragons of virtue here represented. Nothing was said, for instance, of the shortages or the rationing, and as for the climate—well, those who visit Dunedin for the first time might well get a shock after hearing Mr. Corwin emphatically state that "it never snows in New Zealand, except in the high country!" What did impress me, after the initial shock of hearing myself and my fellow-countrymen praised for things which most of us take for granted (the necessity for providing for the aged and sick, the necessity for equality of franchise, the necessity for keeping down the infant mortality rate, and so on) was that Norman Corwin had managed to pack so many facts into so brief a time, and that he had, in random microphone shots, picked so representative a selection of people. Indeed, with possibly one exception, all the voices brought to the microphone were fair to awful examples of what has been so thoroughly discussed in *The Listener* under the heading of the New Zealand Accent. Here we had it in all its barrenness, all its distorted vowel sounds and omitted consonants, a recorded example of what we sound like to others. I'm afraid my last emotion, at the end of this broadcast, was "Horror! Do I, perhaps, sound like that, too?"

The Mixture as Before

IN his series of talks on *The Making of a New Zealander*, Alan Mulgan appears to have no intention of giving us a recipe for this dish; possibly the list of ingredients varies too much. What Mr. Mulgan does give us, however, is probably far more to the point: a collection of reminiscences about the process as he remembers it. Not the best writing in the world can replace the first-hand verbal account of the days which often seem to us of the younger generation remote and sometimes a little ridiculous: the fact that our grandfather probably proposed to our grandmother as "Miss Brown," for instance, or even (for sheer ludicrous effect) the thought of chaperones, those

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