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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Ave ITMA

NOW is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by the return of That Man Again. No longer shall we find it necessary at week's end to seek the neon lights and the pallid pleasures of the local picturedrome, since Saturday night has now no chance of being the loneliest night of the week. I write this immediately after the first broadcast of the new *ITMA* series, and find it indeed difficult to descend to the brass tacks of impersonal comment from the dizzy heights to which I have been exalted by my first intoxicating handle of new-brewed Handley after three months of enforced abstinence. I am conscious that the task of evaluating *ITMA* needs the pen of a Kavanagh, so with acknowledgment to this instrument I shall content myself with remarking that Tommy Handley as the Cork of the North is even more at home than he was as Governor of Tomtopia, that Colonel Chinstrap is still as indefatigable in his Trail of the Lonesome Pint, and that to compensate for our loss of Major Munday and Naive we have a brand-new brigadier nephew for the Colonel plus a nice little piece (destination unknown) from the other side of the Tweed.

Wedding Retrospect

LOOKING back on the wedding broadcast (I listened to 2YA's one-hour résumé on Friday night) I think the thing that impressed me most was the virtuosity of the announcers. Peter Scott, Richard Dimbleby, Wynford Vaughan Thomas—all three names were familiar from other BBC broadcasts, but one had connected these voices with grimmer and more controversial themes. Now I would not have been surprised if Audrey Russell (I did not hear her in this particular version of the proceedings) had proved equal to the task laid upon her of equating outward minutiae with inward significance, of seizing upon the simple romanticism called forth by the sight of any girl on her way to her wedding and refusing to let this dominant theme be submerged by the tide of splendour and pomp accompanying it. The reporting of weddings has long been held to be woman's work, but listening to the BBC's Big Three on Friday I wondered whether in this activity, as in the higher branches of other female occupations such as dressmaking and cooking, men may not after all have the master touch. So adept were the three at confining in the spoken word not only the outward colour of what they saw, but also some of the emotional tensions in themselves, the principal actors, and the crowds around them that listeners to the broadcast felt the thrill of actual participation.

Post-Mortem

LOCAL Bodies has never been a very live topic, and, now that the elections are over, deadlier than most, but I should like to exhume it for long enough to consider whether something could not have been done to make the broadcasting of results a less unwieldy business. On a Parliamentary election night there

is high drama in the air, and this drama is focussed and brought sharply home to us by the immediacy of radio communication. There is not the same dramatic tension apparent in the election of a local body (though it is doubtless our own fault that there is not) and what dramatic content there is is spread too finely over the multiplicity of names and places to be effective. Any honest excitement we may have worked up over the first fifteen places in the City Stakes is slowly dissipated by the time we get back to the race our money's on via half a dozen county councils and a town board or two. Furthermore, though each progress result gives us the first fifteen in the field we are given no glimpse of that sixteenth horse (a rank outsider) who is hugging the rails close behind and may ultimately qualify for a place. However, Time, the tyrant, probably boggled at the necessity for even the fifteen names and numbers, and certainly one row did tread upon another's heels so fast that there was not even room for the customary bar or two from William Tell in between. "What's in a name?" asked Juliet, and certainly the majority of names heard by listeners on Wednesday night meant nothing to them. It seems as though we must wait for television (which proved at the Royal wedding to be merely a fair weather friend) before we can get over the air local election results with entertainment value.

For Castaways

DESERT ISLAND DISCS has reached 4YA, and Mary Martin, lecturer in music at Otago University, began the series with an enchanting programme of her favourites. Miss Martin stated that she professed no love of splitude, and would choose only records which reminded her of scenes and events in the past—the Overture to Mozart's *Figaro* serving a double purpose, reminding the castaway of nights at the opera, and also providing a perfect example of Formal Balance should one feel inclined to lecture Man Friday on musical appreciation. The other records chosen represented Bach, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, and Vaughan Williams. There were no vocal recordings among them—and this, in view of Miss Martin's reasons for her choice, seemed strange—for what could be more evocative of the world the castaway has left behind than the sound of a human voice? Apart altogether from the imaginary circumstances surrounding the programme, the music provided by Miss Martin was so much to my taste that I wish someone would invite her to compere a similar half-hour once a week or so; apart from providing me personally with something worth listening to, this programme could then be broadcast on short-wave, and genuine castaways who had managed to salvage their radios would have no need of gramophone records, or needles of sharpened thorns.

The Great Kate

PUBLIC opinion, which for many years thought of Kate Smith as "the fat girl," rather than "the girl with a voice," now places her in the highest rank of American entertainers. Audiences to-day can forget her