

"Nothing So Fine Since VE Day"

INEVITABLY the wonder of a thing declines with repetition. Yet the telephone, for example, is really no less wonderful at the thousandth use than at the first. Since the sense of wonder is vital to our intellectual, moral and spiritual health, it is necessary that from time to time the wonderful become commonplace through familiarity, should rise in its mystery and for a moment fill our sky. It is many years since Kipling wrote of "the hush of our dread high-altar, where The Abbey makes us We." Westminster Abbey was a centre of a world-scattered people bound by many ties, including religion and loyalty to the Crown. But to most people in the Empire-Commonwealth it was a place they read about or saw in picture. Only a comparative few walked in it, sat in it, and heard liturgy and music soar to its ancient arches and stir its imperishable memories. But Kipling lived to see it possible for the Abbey's spoken word and anthem to be heard at the ends of the earth.

As we listened, through the BBC's broadcasts, to the approach to and return from the Abbey, and to the ceremony, thoughts came crowding. There was the continuity of history. There was the enormous body of affection for the young couple and the Royal Family. There was the strength of the British people poured out in this feeling. There was the stately, moving ritual of the Church of England's marriage service. Many millions of people, including numbers in British societies, had never heard that service before. What effect would it have? The climax of the day was the core of the service, the questions asked of bride and bridegroom and their replies. True, only Sovereign or Heir to the Throne could be married in such state, but, as the Archbishop of York said, Elizabeth and Philip heard the same words spoken, and took the same vows, as any couple married in an English village church.

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the south side of the Paturau River—unfortunately in heavy rain. The fact

ROAD'S END

that I made this journey in a 1946 saloon car, driven by a returned soldier whose company's cars and buses will take you anywhere north of Takaka where four wheels can safely run, and to some places where the road is only a beach or a firm line across a mud flat—that, I think, is a sufficient answer to those who call Golden Bay isolated. But if I had not made that journey so comfortably, and for exactly one-eighth of the cost of getting across Cook Strait with my truck, I might have thought the coal-miners and saw-millers isolated who live in their little colonies below West Haven Inlet, and if the bush were not such a satisfying place for children, I should still think those youngsters isolated who waved to us as we passed their primitive homes. But it is not the loneliness of the bush that oppresses me when I think of the children I saw. It is the loneliness of the world outside when they

An Appreciation of the BBC's
Royal Wedding broadcast,
by A.M.

It was at this point that the intimacy of the broadcast became most impressive; indeed, to many it must have been almost overpowering. The world heard clearly the low-toned voices of the couple. But this culminating point of emotion was also the peak of the broadcast's technical success. Radio had given us the shouts in the street, descriptions by commentators, the music in the Abbey, the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury; now it enabled us to hear the responses of the two persons who were the centre of everything. In our wonder at all we listened to, we should not forget the army of workers who made it possible; scientists working over long years; the organisers of the whole complicated presentation; the commentators at various points; the technicians at stations at home and abroad, including those of the New Zealand Service.

For this was a highly difficult and delicate enterprise. There was the popular side to be covered, the processions in the streets and the excitement they caused, and there was the service in the Abbey, where the commentator must not forget he was in Church. Commentators had to describe two worlds, and see that the secular did not intrude upon the sacred. They had to be lively but not flippant; serious but not dull; and they and the organisation behind them had to take care there were no slips in timing, no errors of omission or commission.

There were none. It was a triumph of organisation, technical efficiency, and the human touch. If the BBC has done anything as well, it was only the programme on VE Day. It has done nothing better, and for this truly splendid service, it deserves the thanks of all.

are compelled eventually to move out into it. There will be no birds in the bush for them then; no fish in the rivers; no pigs and deer in the mountains; no calves and pet-lambs at home. There will be hard streets, harder rules, cold and shattering conventions, and only the insensitive and the tough will get through without wounds.

In the meantime they live in the bush, isolated from nothing but the tyranny we call civilisation, closer to their parents, their pets, their living joys, and to one another than they will ever again be when progress has conscripted them for service in industry.

THE road ends in a narrow bridge over an innocent-looking river, and I wondered at first what purpose the bridge served. But when we crossed and looked back I saw green hills on which sheep were grazing, and was told that the coast opened up round the corner into high-quality sheep country. It is astonishing what we have done in a hundred years in nosing out every corner in which money can be made out of grass.

(To be continued)

The prevention of forest fires is an economic necessity. If the future generations of home builders are to have timber, we must today, call a halt to needless forest destruction.

Almost every forest fire is caused by carelessness and can be prevented. To New Zealanders everywhere—to motorists, campers, farmers and all those near forest areas, I address this appeal for care:

"Let us outlaw fire from our forests—let us keep our summer skies clear of smoke."

J. D. Munro

COMMISSIONER OF STATE FORESTS.



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