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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Walk-Over

THE last of 2YA's 1947 Discussions—"Should New Zealand Invite Immigration from the Displaced Peoples of Europe?"—differed from its predecessors in giving the referee what amounted to a walk-on part. In the other discussions the participants tended to divide themselves into two opposing teams, with the chairman in the middle endeavouring to keep the conversational ball rolling without allowing any one team to get a veritable feast of it (as they say in the sporting papers) and keeping a sharp eye out to recall within the white lines any player who showed a tendency to get beyond the confines of the subject. But this time his job was largely a sinecure, since all the gentlemen concerned were anxious to get the pill between the same posts. In this they were completely successful, even though the referee did try to make things a little brighter for the audience by dropping that well-stubbed brick, Housing, just where one of the team was likely to trip over it on his unopposed trot to the touch-line. At one stage of the game Malcolm Mason, sensing the chairman's dilemma, agreed to help provide a Roman holiday atmosphere, but it was obvious that his heart was still with the Home Team, and at the conclusion of the match he was back with the boys in time to share in the Affirmative's walk-over victory. And even the audience was happy, since deft handling of the ball made up for the fact that the Opposition hadn't been able to field a team.

### Stories for Children

THE art of story-telling will not be forgotten as long as there is radio, and many a Kai Lung unrolls his mat invitingly from the privacy of the broadcasting studio. On a recent Wednesday from 2YA I heard one of the most enjoyable programmes of *raconteur* I have heard for a long time in one of the special children's sessions with which a benevolent service sought to lighten the pre-Christmas burdens of the family woman. The first story was Kipling's *The Elephant Child*, and the second a South American folk-tale I had not heard before, *The Lazy People* (the latter complete with a very sound moral denied the former). Both stories were ideal for verbal presentation, and so completely transported was I by the histrionic power of their presentation that I was tempted to cry at session's end that there was one greater than Tusitala or William Austin. However, comparisons are odious, particularly since the Kai Lung of the special children's session has the inestimable advantage of being a composite figure with as many voices as Siva has hands and at his disposal all the sound effects provided by the NZBS juke-box.

### Piping is Poetry

DUNEDIN is not entirely inhabited by Scots, nor was it entirely settled by members of that race, and Dunedinites of mixed descent may be pardoned for a little resentment when radio speakers presuppose that we are all kilt-wearers down this way. Such a criticism, however, certainly cannot apply to the

BBC feature *The Making of a Piper*. This programme, first broadcast to Scottish listeners of the BBC, was appropriately re-directed at Scottish listeners to the NZBS through 4YA, and those who failed to hear it, whether Scottish, Welsh, Irish, or English by descent of birth, missed a first-rate combination of detailed information, unusual music, and that elusive quality known, for lack of a better description, as "human interest." The programme traced the



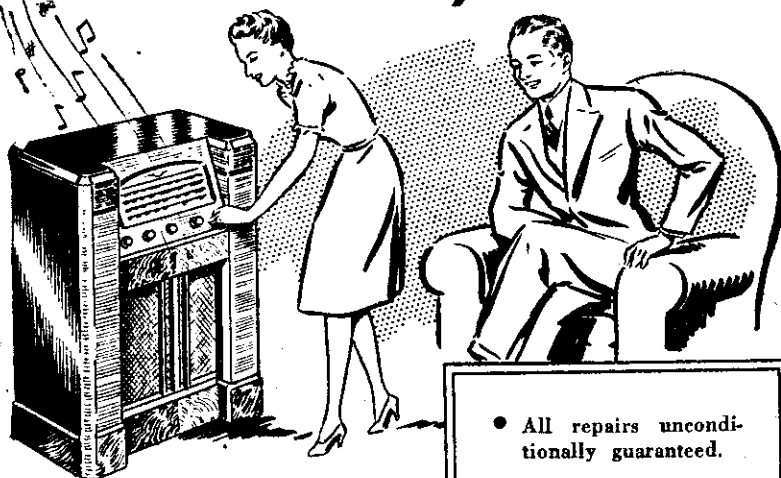
career of Pipe-Major William Ross, of the School of Piping in Edinburgh Castle, from his first try on a practice chanter at the tender age of six years, through the steady development of his talent, through his war service with the Scots Guards, to the high place he now occupies teaching a most difficult instrument and training youngsters of promise to become pipe-majors in their turn. In the course of this programme I picked up more information than I can tabulate here—the pipes, for instance, are made of cocoa-wood, ivory, and reeds which come from Spain, only the sheepskin bag being of local material; there are three drones tuned to A, and a chanter on which the piper plays the tune with his fingers; marches and dance-tunes are known as the "little music," and the fascinating pibroch (of which we heard several plaintive examples) is the "big music." The details of performance were as lost on me as they would be on any one else who has never handled a set of pipes; but the programme, by explanation and illustration, gave me a clearer insight into the purpose of those characteristic grace-notes, made me familiar with the peculiar and unique scale of the chanter, and left me in complete agreement with Pipe-Major Ross, that "Piping is Poetry."

### Unpirated Pirates

AFTER a superabundance of Savoy Operas when the NZBS acquired the right to put them over the air, Gilbert and Sullivan gradually began to be heard less and less, and the performance of *The Pirates of Penzance* the other night from 4YA came as a pleasant variation of the regular programmes. No operettas stand constant revival as well as the Savoy Operas. The stern hand of the copyright-holder, while it allows us to hear little enough of this delicious music, ensures also that only authentic performances of the operas can be heard; and it is probably this vigilance which has kept these plays so popular for so many years—audiences and radio listeners do not grow tired of them through hearing the music too often, through sitting out poor amateur productions, or through listening to

(continued on next page)

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