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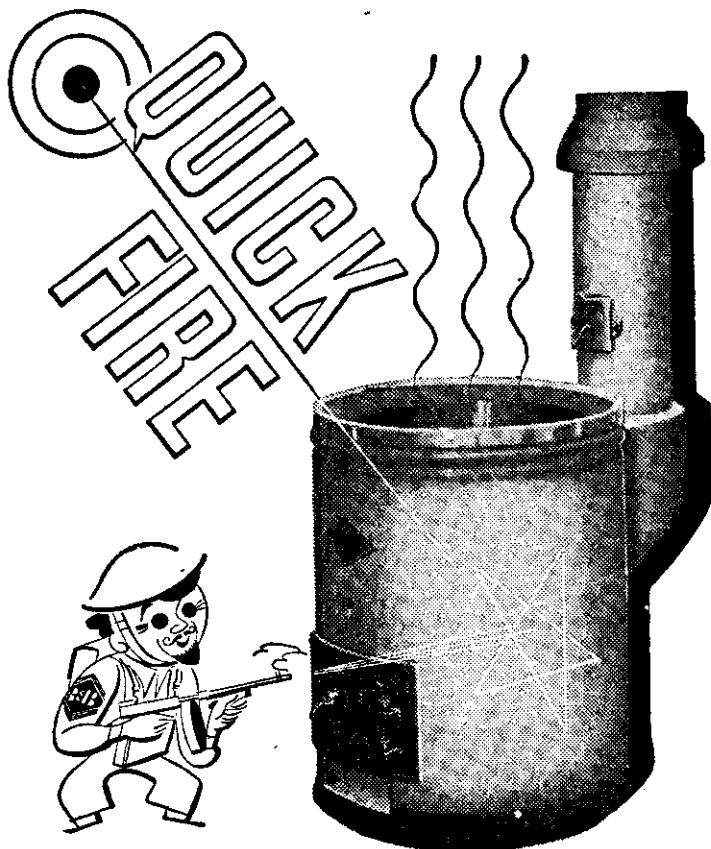
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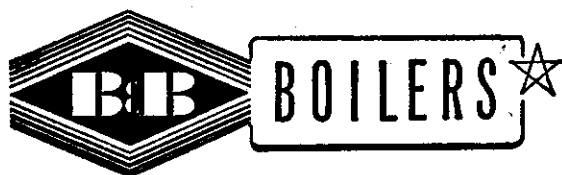
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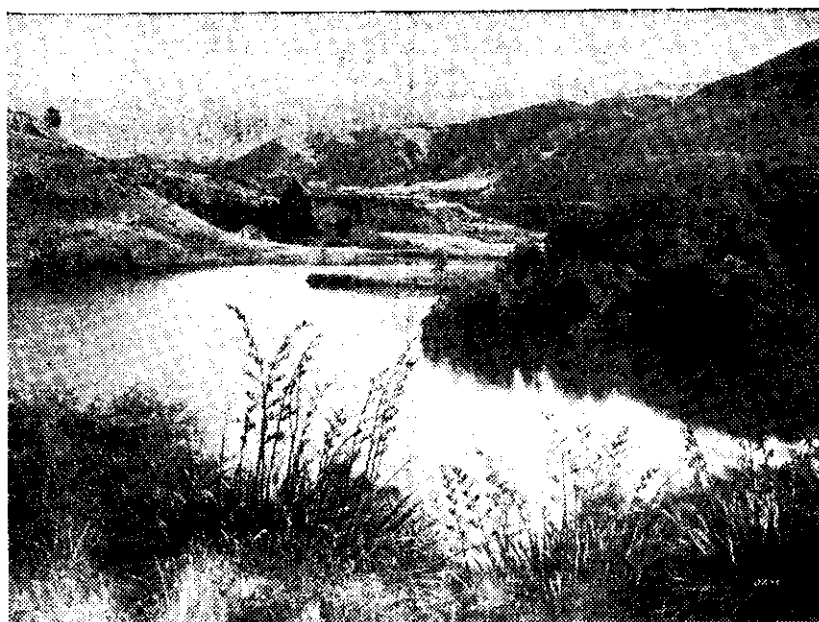
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Tourist Department photograph

"Lakes and beechwoods inevitably associated themselves with Delius"

MOUNTAIN MUSIC

MUSIC is as potent as disease; it is as much a disease as opium, as cocaine, and like them torments the mind with fragmentary fancies.

Certain it is that the true musician does not so much practise an occupation as suffer a ferment and an intoxication; his work is an enthusiasm rather than mere employment. Nevertheless, even this almost religious fervour succumbs to the law which makes intense concentration produce weariness and tedium, so that it becomes necessary at times to relax the mind with unfamiliar things.

Thus it was that I put aside scores, books, and musical instruments in favour of an alpine pack, a few old but beloved garments, and departed with a small party into the solitude of the Spenser Mountains, far from towns and men; my companions knew little of music and frankly cared less. Music was not discussed, yet I was never unaware of it. As the eyes play tricks when sudden darkness follows light, so the mind, bereft of normal toil, recalls images of everyday things. Go where I would, to lakes, rivers, bush, mountains, in weather fine or foul, mind-music lingered tauntingly.

I began to observe the types of music whose themes recurred so constantly when stimulated by New Zealand scenic beauties. By the end of the trip it was evident that recalled music had three common features; it was composed by intensely personal stylists, it was from the Romantic and Modern periods and was usually lyrical and rhapsodic. More recall of Delius than of any other composer was obvious; indeed his Violin Concerto became a silent theme song, background music, sweeping along in the mind, however slow the body, enhancing the loveliness of lake and river, of forest and mountain. Superb alpine lakes and beechwoods inevitably associated themselves with the finale of *Koanga*, that sinuous upsweep of the

Written for "The Listener"
by G. A. McC.

'cellos, the languorous quietude of the chorus, fragments from *Appalachia*, and the songs.

Violence and Peace

The violence and pathos of Rachmaninoff's second concerto symbolised the turbulence of flooded South Island rivers, but after the day's march, the peaceful camp with its writhing blueness of smoke brought a warm flood of themes from the D Minor Trio of Arensky. Specific climatic conditions brought special reactions. Boxing Day in the cirque of the Travers approached the Deluge; rain drove strongly as we climbed laboriously in the swelling roar of a water course: with the storm, austere grandeur increased until a vast rain-filled wind shrieked over scree and crags, and the appalling roar of it came down to us as we sheltered insignificantly and coldly beside a snow drift; a grasshopper sheltered in a cranny, we in a crevice, puny, unimportant. Never once could I clear my mind of the unaccompanied Chaconne of Bach; its austerity, its grandeur matched perfectly the mood of awe and impotence. The dawn of the following day, faultlessly clear, evoked the only Brahms, a mournful miscellany from the Clarinet Quintet and the Violin Sonatas, soon replaced by cold glimmerings of Sibelius's Violin Concerto.

Always, the weird and bizarre in nature evoked Bloch, his Quintet for piano and strings, the Concerto Grosso. Thus was the gloomy rift of East Sabine Valley, the haunting strangeness of Mt. Iris filled with the sound of lost souls. Oddly enough, the latter was more suited to be a backdrop to the *Ring*, for it would not have surprised us to have beheld Brunhilde whooping down from vaporous mist through the grotesque

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