

the physical requirements of such an organisation, and the experiment of the 'thirties and the makeshift of the war years are finished with. Three hundred men and women are working in shifts 24 hours a day under one roof, with sets of three and sometimes four coloured telephones on the key desks, corresponding with coloured lights hung above them (see photograph); they have the latest in inter-communication systems, with smart grey loudspeakers that are capable of interrupting a conversation at any moment if a head of one section wants to speak to another without going and knocking at his door; editorial conferences, each morning and afternoon, merely involve the climbing of stairs. There is a tunnel connecting the basement with the basement of B.H., so that the staff can cross the street without going outside; and the sleeping quarters which the Corporation provides for its shift workers are next-door-and-round-the-corner. I was shown the windows of its hollow-looking dormitories from the main newsroom; across the light-well, in what was once a private house, are the 30-odd beds for staff use, with blackout curtains still in place for those who have to sleep in daylight.

Night Shift is Popular

It is all incredibly efficient and hygienic-looking. Mr. Hole recalls the nights when he slept on old newspaper files at Aldenham, in order to be on hand in the early morning to speak to Pacific listeners at their evening meal. Nowadays, sleeping in a BBC bed is a matter of preference for some of the News Division staff. They work 12-hour shifts, three days on and three days off. For some of them, it is a perfect arrangement. There are volunteers for the night shift (starting work at 10.0 p.m.), since some of the staff are in amateur theatrical companies, and like to have their evenings free in London. For anyone who is doing some outside writing, it means three unbroken days to work at home. And for anyone who likes to live out of London it is ideal—he can sleep two nights in a BBC bed, and four at home.

Yet the greater convenience has not made work easier for the news staff. Once, Home and Overseas News staffs worked to their own patterns, with breathing spaces between bulletins. Now, all those who are in a common pool



BBC Photograph
TAHU HOLE
"Round Peg"?

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, JULY 30

NEW BRITISH COUNCIL EXHIBITION

Wakefield Collection of Contemporary British Art

IN 1945 New Zealanders saw an Overseas exhibition of Children's Art which was brought here by the British Council, and in 1947 their Rural Handicrafts display toured the country. During the next few months we will be able to see another British Council sponsored art exhibition, the Wakefield Collection of contemporary British watercolours, prints, and drawings. It will arrive here next month from Australia, and will be shown in the main cities and provincial centres, starting at the Wellington National Art Gallery on Tuesday, August 17.

The collection contains 223 separate exhibits, consisting of 68 watercolours and drawings, and 155 etchings, engravings, wood-engravings, lithographs, and colour prints. The tour has been arranged by the National Art Gallery in conjunction with John Bostock, the local representative of the British Council.

Noteworthy works in the watercolour section are Roger Fry's *Verona*, Frances Hodgkins' *Fish*, Paul Nash's *Stone Cliff* and John Piper's *Christchurch, Newgate Street*. Generally speaking exhibits in this part of the collection cover the artistic activity of the best part of a century, varying from the work of such veterans as H. B. Brabazon and Philip Wilson Steer to that of younger artists like Robert Darwin and Raymond T. Cowern. The choice of works from the older artists, however, was restricted to

those whose work formed the inspiration of later schools.

The drawings also cover a wide field, including pencil sketches for sculpture

and original studies for paintings, as well as drawings which have been made purely for their own sake. Walter Richard Sickert, Sir Muirhead Bone,

and Augustus John are the veterans in this part of the exhibition, and although not all British artists are represented, the exhibitors hope that the drawings selected will give some idea of the variety of modern draughtsmanship, techniques and the high standard achieved in this field by contemporary British artists.

The collection of 155 prints may well be the outstanding part of the exhibition, in the opinion of Stewart Maclean, Director of the National Art Gallery. The selectors have been able to obtain some very fine examples, and their generous choice was influenced by the fact that in the graphic arts the British tradition has always been a strong one. In aquatint and mezzotint the English were pioneers, so much so that their monopoly of the mezzotint process led to its being called in the



"TETE FAROUCHE"
Augustus John's self-portrait (etching), one of the many fine works in the Wakefield Collection

work on either Home or Overseas News, at much greater pressure, because the bulletins are interleaved and come at shorter intervals.

The organisation which Mr. Hole controls from his room on the top floor is the largest thing of its kind anywhere. It has a London reporting staff, a dozen staff correspondents in foreign capitals, and four special correspondents—aviation, diplomatic, parliamentary, and industrial.

In Britain, the Division presents eight national bulletins daily and a three-minute summary last thing at night. For overseas, it produces 23 bulletins (all these are in English; foreign-language news comes from a completely separate unit). With Radio Newsreel (eight editions daily) and "From To-day's London Papers," news talks, sports reports, weekly summaries of Parliamentary news, and other variants, these add up to 65 broadcasts a day. The responsibility for all that goes out rests with the Controller-Editor, the Deputy Editor, and News Editors.

Work Without End

The work never ends. When the Home Service announcer says "Good morning" to us here before breakfast, the night staff who have been working on overseas services are thinking about going to bed. Men and women are at the desks of the new newsroom (shown in the photograph opposite) 24 hours a day—some working at cables, or reporters' copy, others dictating to typists. Every piece of copy for the microphone is dictated, because the differ-

ence between the spoken and the written word is considerable, and what may look clear on paper may be far from clear to a listener. The dictation rule ensures the clarity that listeners all over the world associate with the news from London.

In rooms on the same floor or not far away are the reference section (*The Times* is kept complete, with *The Times* index; other papers are kept for a month and then dispersed into files in the form of clippings); the teletype room (where machines are tapping out the reports of agencies such as Reuters, UP, AP, and so on); and the telephone room (where machines record on cylinders for the typists the reports of foreign correspondents, who have regular conversations with News Divisions by telephone or beamed wireless).

All this complexity now lies under the hand of that former New Zealand journalist who so emphatically inscribed his name several times over on the top and the surroundings of the reporters' bench in the No. 1 Magistrate's Court in Christchurch. It was there until a few years ago, and when there was talk of building a new courthouse, there were suggestions that the top, at any rate, of the old press desk, with its distinguished and not-so-distinguished names deeply carved all over its surface, ought to be preserved. If this were done, speculation might go on for years, as it always used to in that courtroom—what does the R.P. stand for in Tahu R. P. Hole? Perhaps it is time someone christened him, in the American parenthetical style ("Round Peg").

18th Century *la manière anglaise*.

In recent years there has been a greater realisation that line engraving, far from being a mere aid to book-illustration, is in its own right a craft of great beauty and power. There is as a result a large number of examples of this type of print in the exhibition, as well as many woodcuts and wood engravings, including works by John Nash, Robert Gibbings, and Eric Gill. Particularly interesting are the many colour prints, which should form one of the most attractive features of the collection.

The Wakefield Collection originated from a gift of £3,000 made to the British Council by the late Lord Wakefield, and the task of selecting and buying the exhibits was entrusted to Campbell Dodgson, former keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. For the last nine years he has visited exhibitors, dealers, and studios in Britain in a constant search for new works. The most difficult part of his work he found to be the acquiring of watercolours, the best examples of which are naturally harder to get hold of than prints.

However, the use of his long experience and great enthusiasm for the arts has resulted in a collection which comes near to the British Council's ideal of representing every watercolourist and draughtsman of importance in Britain to-day with something which is on a level with his best work.