

## AWAY FROM IT ALL

### Bridson Play for NZBS

THE urge to get away from the encroachments of civilisation — escapism some people call it—has attacked most of us at one time or another. Thoreau's experiment in Walden was a famous example. Satisfaction has been found by others in sailing a small boat single-handed over long distances, or by retiring to a lonely corner of the tropics. D. G. Bridson (senior features producer for the BBC), who was in New Zealand recently, has written a verse drama on this theme of withdrawal from the world, called *Aaron's Field*. His own description of it is "a modern morality play in verse." The broadcasting rights have been bought by the NZBS, and the play has been produced under the author's direction in the Wellington Production Studios. Programme dates will be announced later.



Spencer Digby

D. G. BRIDSON

When it was first broadcast in England *Aaron's Field* aroused such interest that it was repeated several times. Though the background of Aaron's story is peculiarly English, his experiences are likely to appeal to everybody who has ever had his dreams shattered by the complex interferences of modern life. In brief it is the tale of a little man who tries to retire and live in peace on a small field, but who still cannot escape from the world. The next war—it could be World War III—breaks out, and he gives us his field to be used for a shelter against bombing raids. Enemy aircraft come over and eventually Aaron gets his field to himself, simply by being buried in it.

There are 15 characters in the cast, only one of whom is a woman. The production notes describe Aaron as an engaging, middle-aged person, well-meaning, good-hearted, but often bewildered. The others are more strongly allegorical. The Lawyer is wheedling, plausible and persuasive, a man whose crooked dealing is in marked contrast with Aaron's honesty; the Squire is a fishin', huntin' and shootin' type; the Farmer slow-speaking and of broad dialect; the Vicar highly parsonical; Whittle is a small-town expansionist; the Tourist a small-town vulgarian; the Keeper a man of the surly flunkey type; the National Trust is represented in an upper-middle-class fashion; the Builder is one of the post-war *nouveaux riches*; the Industrialist is a big business man in a small way; the Publican is broad Yorkshire and broad-bottomed; the Banker is a mincing, bald blockhead; the Woman is garrulous, gushing and all in a flutter, and The Man is quiet, benevolent and kindly.

Mr. Bridson, who is regarded as one of the pioneers of verse drama for broadcasting, also wrote *The March of the '45*, the first verse-feature programme to be produced in England or America.



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