

# ZEBUS IN THE OUTBACK

## Australian Cattlemen Improve Their Herds

IN Texas, according to one of the more colourful American magazines that occasionally come our way, ranchers on the sparse semi-desert lands have been crossing long-horn cows with the sacred Brahman bull of India, an animal noted for the fact that you have to step off the footpath to avoid it (if it happens to be there), and also for its pronounced hump, which would seem to indicate that, like the camel, it is accustomed to desert-like conditions. When Richard Sneddon, compere of the ABC's *Country Hour* and Supervisor of Rural

lands was building up its herds by increasing the water supply. They used bore water entirely, and they expected that by putting down 30 more bores they would be able to carry 100,000 head of cattle instead of the 50,000 they ran now. This was in a particularly good area for cattle, with no pests, no blow-flies or prickly pear.

We in New Zealand, Mr. Sneddon continued, had no idea of the mighty distances—or the terrible country—Australian cattle men often had to contend with. But long, romantic cross-country drives like the one seen in the film *The Overlanders* were becoming less frequent with the graziers railing their stock to market. "Generally speaking we're breeding our cattle closer to the ground and selling them nearer the yearling stage now in Australia, instead of letting them grow into big slab-sided beasts. And although Britain will take all the meat we can supply at present we're improving our type of stock all the time in anticipation of the days when stronger competition will come from South America and other countries."

### The "Country Hour"

The ABC *Country Hour* (it is actually an hour and a-quarter) was broadcast from 12.0 noon each day, he explained. Each State had, under control of a director in Sydney, a rural officer arranging special broadcasts for farmers. The most important feature was the interstate market report at 12.15 p.m., when every capital city was in communication. By tuning in the farmer knew exactly what his stock or produce was selling for on a market which might be thousands of miles away, a most valuable and important service as far as he was concerned.

Music, news, and weather reports for all States were included in the session, the main feature generally being an interview. Often field broadcasts from a sheep station, a wheat farm, or a research station by scientists and experts from the Department of Agriculture were heard. Once a fortnight a visitor from overseas discussed "agriculture in other lands," while *The Lawsons*, a serial about a country family which was now in its 1200th episode, was one of the most popular features with Australian country housewives.

Listeners' reaction was very good, judging from the tremendous number of requests for scripts of broadcast talks, he added. In Sydney alone last year over 10,000 such requests came in.

Mr. Sneddon said the material he was collecting in New Zealand would be broadcast over a network of 36 Australian stations. He was particularly interested in our experiments in stock research. "Your agricultural colleges and research stations can teach Australia many things. Ruakura is particularly outstanding, especially for its work on identical twins in calves, in which Australian dairy farmers and agriculturists are taking a tremendous interest just now."

Several talks on Australian farming conditions by Richard Sneddon will shortly be broadcast from the main National stations.



Spencer Digby photograph

**RICHARD SNEDDON**

*Stronger competition from South America is anticipated*

Broadcasts for New South Wales, arrived in Wellington last week, *The Listener* asked him whether Australian graziers were doing anything along the same lines. (Mr. Sneddon, who is in New Zealand on a short visit gathering material for his radio session, is something of a cattle man.)

"For the past decade or two," he said, "Australian breeders have been carrying out on a commercial scale the crossing of local breeds with imported Brahman bulls. Although that's not what we call them. They actually belong to a species known as the zebu, and in certain parts of North Queensland and the Northern Territory zebu crosses have proved very successful, particularly since they are immune to buffalo fly strike." Breeders crossed zebu with Herefords, Short-horns, and Aberdeen Angus, in that order of preference, he said, and since this had been going on for some 20 years, it was quite possible that New Zealand visitors to the North Australian cattle country had seen some of the resulting cross-breeds.

On the bigger holdings graziers were also improving their stock types by using a better class of herd bull, he said, and increasing their numbers generally after war-time depletion. One big holding of over three million acres that he had visited west of the Barkly Table-

# FORCE of habit



**THE SHELL COMPANY OF NEW ZEALAND LIMITED  
(INCORPORATED IN ENGLAND)**

S15.08

### SKILLED WORKERS WANTED

MORE Specialists, Technicians and trained people are needed to-day. Ensure higher pay and an improved position by taking an I.C.S. Specialised Course. You can be trained in spare time. Over 300 I.C.S. Courses:—

Radio Engineer	Accountancy
Electrical Eng.,	Commercial Art
Mechanical Eng.,	Poster Drawing
Foundry Work	Analy. Chemist
Wireman's Lic.	Marine Exams.
Mech. Draftsman	Diesel Eng.

Send to-day for the Free I.C.S. Booklet, which is an inspiration to every ambitious man. Let us know in which subject, trade or profession you wish to get on. No obligation. Write now to—

**INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE  
SCHOOLS**

Dept. L, 182 Wakefield Street, Wellington

## MOTORISTS CAMPERS

12 Cupfuls boiled in six minutes with the "Thermette" Chip Heater. No special fuel required—only twigs, paper or rubbish. The more wind the quicker it boils.

**BOILING WATER  
6 MINUTES**

Campers and Motorists carry one in your car. 16/3, Post 8d. (Cooking Grid 3/6 extra).

**SKEATES & WHITE Ltd.** 48 Fort Street, AUCKLAND.

