RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

The Goods, But No Delivery

AM all for parochialism in my morning talks, since I like to feel I am getting from the talk something I couldn't get from the Readers' Digest or the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Thus I was pre-disposed to enjoy Mrs. Wood's series of talks on Early New Zealand Education, a field scarcely scratched by previous talkers, and one full of interest to listeners who like myself had been offered at school only the political and military history of the colony. And my interest waxed as Mrs. Wood got nearer and nearer to her final talk on girls' colleges in Auckland and Wellington. Mrs. Wood is an excellent historian, and her respect for facts is blended with a lively sense of the amusing (though her anxiety that we should take with due seriousness the struggle of our ancestresses towards better female education kept her from excessive frivolity). In view of the quality of the talks it was all the more regrettable that her delivery should have been so rapid and her voice so soft that listeners found some difficulty in keeping up.

News Views

THE news, I am inclined to complain, is all very well in its place, but the trouble is it has so many places. It assails me when I surface in the morning, the brightness of its delivery and its assumption of my intelligent interest (at that hour!) driving me reluctantly to the commercials for the sake of the soothing syrup of the Andrews in between. At eight o'clock breakfast I am still unable to give it the attention which any kind of radio talking demands. At 9 o'clock in the evening I have read it all in the paper, and in any case I am too tired for concentrated listening after I have made the long and often vain pilgrimage from Auckland to the Bluff in search of the Wellington weather. But on the other hand my irritation at the omnipresence of the news sessions evaporates in the glow of my gratitude when radio gets a chance to deliver the news at first hand, hot from the sound waves, I just happened to be standing by after the Morning Talk on Monday of last week when I heard an unaccustomed and inexplicable burst of solemnly triumphant music, from which a voice proceeded asking me to stand by for an important announcement. I continued to stand by (it scarcely seemed seemly to sit) and was in due course informed that Princess Elizabeth had been safely delivered of a son. The evening papers did their best with banner headlines, but no headline could convey the controlled emotion (synchronised to the heartbeats of listeners) that breathed in the announcer's voice, and was in itself both news and commentary.

Excerpts from "Hamlet"

"THE best is yet to be," said Browning, and I am still waiting for the general release of Sir Laurence Olivier's Hamlet. Meanwhile the NZBS is seeing to it that my appetite for the Old Vic and all its works grows by what it feeds on, and on a recent Monday I was treated to a half-hour programme

of music and spoken excerpts from the film. It was magnificent, though of course the scrappy nature of the programme prevented it from giving listeners a large-scale air-lift and forced them to be content with a few short cultural hops, since they were brought to earth at frequent intervals by studio comments on the action of the play. Would it have been safe, I wonder, to assume that listeners were sufficiently familiar with the play to dispense with these makeshift bridges? In spite of the slight annoyance I felt at the announcer's probably necessary intrusions the programme had a deeply exciting effect on me, due primarily I think to Walton's strange and compelling music. Sir Laurence of course had less opportunity to exploit the element of aurprise-all the same I shall not easily forget the sodden despair of his "To Be or Not To Be."

Good Material

WONDERED what Playhouse of Favourites would do to Dostoevski's Crime and Punishment, but surprisingly enough, apart from necessary shortening, it suffered not too badly. The main theme of the novel, the gradual and relentless crescendo of guilt, fear, and remorse, still made itself felt in spite of difficulties of cutting and with undoubted aid from the star, Lloyd Lamble. This play came over 4ZB, and I imagine there might be many listeners to that station who didn't know the novel and were hearing a great story for the first time. I hope its effect was to draw the attention of such listeners to the novel itself-a thriller, if ever there was one, owing its thrills to the genius of an author who was able to place his readers in a murderer's shoes and make them feel as though the crime were a personal one. For the proper and fullest enjoyment of Crime and Punishment it goes without saying that no half-hour play is adequate. Neither is it adequate for a novel by Dickens or Herman Melville. But Playhouse of Favoutites, although often it annoys lovers of such books by its attempts to dramatize them, has the merit of presenting the best authors; and if it converts even a small proportion of listeners into readers of good books, apart from entertainment value, it is achieving a worthwhile purpose.

Selective Listeners

SOME listen to Dad and Dave, or to the wrestling; classical music and light opera both have their following; on the whole, I think the programmes cater pretty well." These words might be taken to represent the taste of a cross-section of listeners anywhere in New Zealand. It may surprise some to learn that they were the words of a country schoolteacher, in a 4YA discussion panel who was attempting to give listeners an indication of the sort of programmes his school-children habitually listened to. When it came the turn of the other adult speakers I was not surprised to find their tastes differing little from the above. The storekeeper suggested "light music, market (continued on next page)



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