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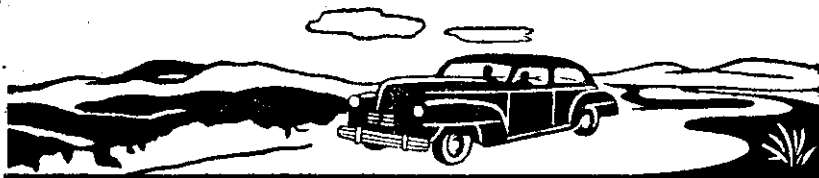
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RADIO VIEWSREEL What Our Commentators Say

Students in Conference

I DO not know whether or not to feel grateful for the fact that 2YA's evening talks for the past week have been made up of crumbs from student congress tables. I think on the whole not, since, whatever the cultural value of a talk, it ceases to be stimulating to the listener if the reader has continually to grope for a comma or realign a phrase. Students are presumably used to this sort of thing but the pampered listener (at the end of a hard day at office or washtub) finds it hard enough to listen to a talk at any stage, and still harder if it becomes obvious that he is not even being talked to but read at. The talk I enjoyed most was the Friday night discussion between M.P.'s Marshall and Wilson on "New Zealand's Political and Economic Future," of which midway-between-elections amiability was the keynote. Honours I think went to Mr. Marshall, who caught Mr. Wilson very neatly in the slips by pointing out, when Mr. Wilson praised dairy co-ops, that these were composed of individual owners of the means of production; but Mr. Wilson got, narrowly, the last word. For profundity the discussion did not measure up to some of the earlier talks, but it was more stimulating, and incidentally demonstrated the fact that a controversial discussion need not tread on listeners' corns provided the right people are doing the discussing.

So Early in the Morning

IF you wake round about seven on weekday mornings it's Hobson's choice between the prosy meticulousness of the news and the blatancy of the Commercials. That I now listen to 2ZB every morning is due entirely to Maurice Power, who, since he can wring entertainment from a commercial, is probably



capable of getting blood from a stone and certainly gets alertness from the newly-wakened. His methods are unorthodox, and sponsors may take a dim view of such mannerisms as discreet coughs when describing lingerie, blatant ones when hawking lozenges, man-to-man "whew's," when subtly warning husbands against an eight-guinea costume tailor. But these methods (used with a master's restraint) make all the difference between a flop-eared audience and a prick-eared one.

The People, God Bless Them!

I WAS sorry to find when I tuned in to 2YA last Saturday night that the irrepressible Wilfred Pickles was no longer in his accustomed place, having presumably journeyed to another station out of my bivalve's reach. I had never before met anything quite like Wilfred, and it took me several Saturdays to get used to his heavy and open-handed avuncularity, but an acquired

taste is not easily forgotten, and I now find other quiz shows tasteless beside his. It was not only the rich Lancashire satisfaction oozing from his "Give him the moonie" (any quizmaster worth his salt likes getting rid of his sponsor's cash): it was his delight in the object of his session, the business of "presenting the people to the people." The quietest individuals, facing him across the mike, found no difficulty in telling an audience of strangers, on request, their most embarrassing experience, their dearest wish, or the three companions they would like for their desert island sojourn. Dear old ducks of 80 (addressed as Luv by the compère) quavoured a song for him or recited their favourite bit of Shakespeare. The fastidious may consider that the session would be all the better for a little more restraint, but Wilfred, in influencing his protégés to let down their hair to its fullest extent, has produced a quiz show which has as much for listeners as for the quizzed.

Chatter on a High Plane

IT is a change to turn from the concentrated musical utterance of Beethoven's later works to those of his earliest period. The Septet Op. 20 for four strings and three wind instruments is a delightful sample of what we might call pleasant chatter on a high plane. It has the feeling of urbane and witty conversation among an aristocracy to whom time was of no moment. In it Beethoven allows himself, after an Allegro, Adagio, and Minuetto, the luxury of a Theme and Variations and a Scherzo before going on to the last movement, a Presto. In all, it is a delightful change in the hurry and bustle of our times. It was recently well played from 2YA by a group from the National Orchestra under the leadership of Eric Lawson. It provided a difficult problem for the microphone because of the contrast of the groups of strings—one violin, viola, 'cello, and bass, and the three wind instruments—clarinet, bassoon and horn. The balance on my set seemed to me to be good with the exception of the first violin, who was, I thought, too far from the microphone to let his important leads tell enough.

Pool of Silence

"UNDER the Dome" was a BBC programme telling listeners about the reading room of the British Museum, probably one of the most famous spots in the world. Immediately this programme began, a hushed and reverent atmosphere descended on the listener by the presentation of probably the most difficult "background noise" in radio—the silence of a great library. It is true that a library is never quite silent. Be the attendants never so rubber-soled, the readers never so engrossed, there is always the occasional hobnailed boot tip-toeing on the floor, the sibilant whisper, so much more penetrating than low speech, of request and instruction, the inhibited cough under furtive palm, the rustle of pages. But with these few sounds dripping into a vast pool of silence, the listener felt the unseen presence of the thousands of readers, famous and infamous, known or unknown, who have frequented this historic spot. Attendants recalled some of those who sat