

(continued from previous page)

little dubious about going in. The faces were unfamiliar; who were we, ignorant, anonymous day trippers to mingle with these crisp, coached, competent skiers? We hung about diffidently, saying in hushed voices that we never knew that nowadays so many people could ski so much better than we had ever dreamed of becoming in those far off times when coaching came from books and hearsay.

THE technicians set up their gear; the programme people dangled a microphone the size and shape of a toffee apple in front of club officials, who stared into the middle distance and said their pieces laboriously. Ski-ing terms are rather esoteric. It isn't much good describing in detail a course set for a giant slalom race, when the resulting programme will be heard by people who don't know much about ski-ing, but the idea of the roped teams race was one that could be put across more universally. We took the gear up to a spot near the ski-tow shed, where the teams race was to finish.

There were three members to a team, roped together. They ran on parallel courses, marked by pairs of flags through

which they had to turn. The slope was steep. Anything could happen.

The commentator, a club official, took a deep breath, knitted his brow, and concentrated on the progress of the two teams who had started about 300 feet above. The teams weaved, wound and entangled; separated, merged again, indulged in a little light-hearted infringement of the rules and staggered over the finishing line, calling for witness that they would never compete in another roped race. The leader of the winning team was interviewed, and there was optimistic talk about televising the Canterbury Ski Championships of 1954.

WE packed the gear, had a cup of tea and some Christchurch Ski Club food, and paddled off down the spur with that gingerly, duck-like gait necessity seems to dictate on snow slopes. The day was finished for the honorary background advisers, but the NZBS staff had a good deal of writing, editing and recording to do before their programme could be put over the air. It had snowed, and early the promise had been unpleasant, but everyone, even the technician in charge with his 40-pound tape-recorder, voted the day well spent. Something new had been added to New Zealand radio.

—G. leF. Y.

## Still Going Strong

FOR the greater part of the last three years Peter Dawson, the famous Australian bass-baritone, has been on tour in England, and more recently, he completed a 10,000 miles' trip through Australia for the ABC. Now he is back in New Zealand giving a series of public concerts, the first of which will be at the Civic Theatre, Christchurch, with Geoffrey Parsons at the piano. Part of this concert will be broadcast, and it will be followed by public concerts in other parts of New Zealand, with the Main National Stations concerned relaying sections of the programme.

The price of everything seems to have risen since he was last in New Zealand, he told *The Listener* in an interview the other day. "Why, the only thing that has stayed put since I was here last is the £10 penalty for misuse of the emergency lever in a railway carriage."

What impressed him most about England was the lovely appearance of the countryside with its intense cultivation and the comparative happiness of the people in all their trials. "When travelling," he said, "you carry your own soap and towels to the hotels, and you do miss bread. But the people in the shopping queues are remarkable. The women talk at the rate of knots and the conversation takes a brighter turn as the salesman comes nearer in sight. I never heard a grumble.

"Service in hotels and restaurants has changed. The old idea of the Englishman home from India snapping his fingers for a waiter has gone. The waiter's not there to be chivvied. It's almost a case of 'Please, Mr. Waiter.' At one place I stayed at in Leeds I put sixpence in the gas meter. Nothing happened, so I asked the proprietor about it. 'That thing hasn't been working for five years,' he said, so I got my tanner



PETER DAWSON

back. And the whisky situation is a bit grim in England. You are allowed a bottle a month for 22/-. If you want more the black market can supply it at £5. So you don't drink much."

Peter Dawson made several new recordings while in England, some of them with organ accompaniment in an old church with an audience of one—the verger. He also recalls singing to the largest audience he has ever faced. It was at Harringay where, at an open-air function, he sang such old favourites as "Old Father Thames," "I Travel the Road," and "The Road to Mandalay" to 83,000 people.

While in Wellington Peter Dawson was interviewed by 2YA on his impressions of England as it is to-day. His talk was broadcast the other evening and repeated in the *Week in Radio* session last Sunday.

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