

# "THE CURSE OF NATIONALISM"

## An Examiner Looks At Music In The Dominions

"IT seems to me that the colonies suffer under a curse of nationalism." This challenging statement was made by Dr. Edgar Ford, visiting English musician and composer, examiner for Trinity College of Music, London, in an interview with *The Listener* the other day. Over a cup of tea in a Wellington hotel, Dr. Ford amplified the statement. New Zealanders, or Australians, or other people of the Dominions and colonies, he said, expressed intense pride in being what they were—but were rather inclined to forget that they were all part of the British peoples. Dr. Ford feels that if the peoples of the British possessions were not so insistent on their aloofness from the Mother Country (some colonials even regarded Englishmen with a certain derision), they would acquire a cultural background which at the moment is missing.

The insularity complex of colonials, thinks Dr. Ford, is reflected in their music. For example, during the many years in which he had travelled throughout the Empire, although he had found numbers of capable and technically excellent musicians, he said he had found very few with a knowledge of "the literature of music"—in other words, a real cultural background for their work.

### Sundays in Paris

Dr. Ford left England just over a year ago, and since then he has been examining, and giving a large number of recitals and lectures in Australia. He spoke of the war, and about Paris—that metropolis of the art-loving world—and mentioned with a smile how he usually spent Sunday when he was at home. Sunday in England, he said, was as gloomy and boring as tradition had it, so his usual plan of campaign on a Sunday had been to catch a boat to France. Arriving in Paris about four o'clock, he would have a meal and a rest. Then dinner—and then the opera.

"The Parisians have a secret which few other people have," said Dr. Ford, "They have found the secret of the art of living."

### His Music in Auckland

Dr. Ford is himself a composer of distinction, and he has recently been at work on a symphony, the first movement of which has already been played. The completed composition will probably be given its first performance when he returns to Australia. He has written a number of light works, and some of them will be featured by the Studio Orchestra under Harold Baxter in the evening programme from 1YA Auckland, on Saturday, July 6, including "May Morning" Suite, and "Springtime in Puppet Land."

In the course of his work as an examiner, Dr. Ford has naturally had some amusing experiences. One day, for instance, a boy came into the examining room. He was to play the piano. Seeing a rug under the piano stool, he asked if it could be removed, as it would "deadens the sound." The request seemed



Spencer Digby photograph

DR. EDGAR FORD  
Sundays at home were boring

peculiar, as the rug was nowhere near the instrument itself. However, Dr. Ford agreed, expecting to hear another Paderewski at least. In fact, the boy played horribly! Another time, a woman came in for a singing examination. She was clad in flaming red, had put on rouge in formidable quantities, and belladonna in her eyes. She carried, too, a massive collection of rings, bracelets and necklaces. And then she began to sing "I renounce the things of this world," followed by an invocation to angels clad in raiment pure and bright.

### Two Beecham Stories

And speaking of amusing stories, Dr. Ford recounted two about Sir Thomas Beecham. The first incident occurred while Sir Thomas was visiting America. Soon after he arrived at his room in a New York hotel, the telephone rang. Sir Thomas picked up the receiver. "Hello, is Sir Thomas Beecham there?" drawled a voice. Being assured that Beecham was there, the voice continued, "Waal, Sir Thomas, Ah'm the president of ther English-Speakin' Union in Noo Yark." "I don't believe it," said Sir Thomas, hanging the receiver down.

The other story dates from Sir Thomas's divorce. The great man was in Manchester at the time, and during the day the newspaper posters screamed out such sensational headlines as "Sir Thomas Greets Lady in Pyjamas," etc. Now, Manchester has the reputation of being very staid and proper. That night Sir Thomas was to conduct a big symphony concert. The concert-goers arrived, but when Sir Thomas stepped into the conductor's rostrum, not a murmur came from the audience. Not a handclap or a whisper disturbed the silence. Calmly Sir Thomas surveyed them for a moment; then, turning to the orchestra, he said, "Gentlemen, let us pray."

To conclude on a reassuring note for prospective candidates at musical examinations: Examiners may appear terrifying in the examination room, but in reality they are generally the most human people one could hope to meet. Dr. Edgar Ford proved that during this interview.

## Radio Personalities

### (16) COLIN TRIM—Station Director, 4YZ Invercargill



Spencer Digby photograph

IF readers will glance at an average day's programme for one of the main stations, and ask themselves what it must be like to be the man responsible for gathering together all the hundreds of details necessary for its presentation and continuity, they will know something of the work of Colin Trim, now Station Director of 4YZ Invercargill.

He has just been transferred there from the position of programme organiser for 2YA and at this moment is probably feeling his first heavy frosts since he started in broadcasting work 14 years ago.

When broadcasting in New Zealand was run by a private company with headquarters in Christchurch, Mr. Trim secured a job managing Station 2YK in Wellington. That was in 1926, just when radio was beginning to develop out of the embryo stage. In 1927 2YA was formed and he became programme organiser. Since then, with only one or two breaks—in 1930 he worked at 1YA—he has remained in Wellington.

It was little use our representative asking Mr. Trim about his hobbies, in the usual manner of interviewers prying into the private lives of public figures. For Mr. Trim is a programme organiser, and programme organisers have no hobbies.

What do programme organisers do? Everything. They listen to auditions. They engage artists. They have to see what the artists want to sing or play and make sure that their items run the right length of time, do not repeat other programme material, do not infringe strict copyright laws. He must see that every minute of the whole day is covered in the programmes prepared two weeks in advance, and yet there must be sufficient flexibility in his arrangements to ensure that operators, announcers, engineers, and all the rest of the radio station's organisation are provided for in the event of emergencies.

If there is a relay to be covered it is the programme organiser who sees that the operators have tested the line, that the announcer can get there in time and be provided with proper accommodation. He has to watch all the time that none of the many hundreds of items broadcast during one week by his station repeats itself unnecessarily or duplicates the broadcasts of any other station.

However, in spite of all this, Mr. Trim has found time to take an interest in repertory work—"small parts, I had no time to rehearse long ones"—although even this has been dropped since the war and the influx of overseas broadcasts began to make a programme organiser's life even more complicated than usual.