



Women and the Home

Radio is the slender wire that brings the world and its affairs into the tiny kitchens and living rooms which hitherto had isolated so many housekeepers in the performance of their duties
—Margaret Bondfield

INTERVIEW

FURS AND THE WOMAN

These Should Interest You:

Talks prepared by the A.C.E., Home Science Tutorial Section, University of Otago:

"Caring for Clothing and Shoes." Monday, August 26, 1YA 3.30 p.m., 2YA 3 p.m., 3YA 2.30 p.m.

"Lime, Iron, Iodine and Vitamins." Wednesday, August 28, 4YA 3.15 p.m.

"New Puddings." Thursday, August 29, 1YA 3.30 p.m., 3YA 2.30 p.m.; Friday, August 30, 2YA 3 p.m.

"Housework Made Easier." Friday, August 30, 4YA 3.15 p.m.

Talk by a representative of the Wellington Red Cross Society. Tuesday, August 27, 2YA 11.30 a.m.

From The ZB Stations

From all ZB Stations: "The Guest Announcer" at 8.0 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays

1ZB: "The Young Marrieds' Circle" (Molly) Monday to Fridays at 4.30 p.m.

2ZB: "Stars of To-Morrow" at 6.30 p.m. on Sunday, August 25

3ZB: "Rhythm and Romance" (Wide Range) at 11.0 a.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays

4ZB: "Variety Programme" at 3.0 p.m. on Wednesday, August 28

2ZA: Gardening Session at 6.45 p.m. on Tuesday, August 27

"Fashions": Ethel Early. Tuesday, August 27, 3YA 11.15 a.m.

Talk under the auspices of the National Council of Women. Wednesday, August 28, 1YA 11.15 a.m.

"Cooking by Electricity": Miss D. McStay. Wednesday, August 28, 4YA 11 a.m.

"Help for the Home Cook": Miss Janet M. Shaw. Friday, August 30, 3YA 11.15 a.m.

"Cooking by Gas": Miss J. Ainge. Friday, August 30, 4YA 11 a.m.

"The Morning Spell (2) The Amateur Psychologist": Mrs. Mary Scott. Saturday, August 31, 2YA 10.45 a.m.

IT is interesting to find a New Zealand girl who has qualified as a fur specialist. This, for a woman, is a rare calling, even in America.

I climbed up a flight of narrow stairs in search of this specialist.

I found her in the workroom, surrounded by a litter of pelts, bolts of silk lining, cards of buttons and braid, and other tools of trade. A most workmanlike room, with the machines whizzing and the scissors snip-snipping as the assistants worked on their jobs.

The fur specialist herself was a tall, healthy, attractive, 100% New Zealand girl. She, too, looked workmanlike in a white overall with her pretty brown hair rumpled above it.

We talked of furs. It is so easy for women to talk of furs—even if one is a tyro and the other an expert. To both they carry glamour, a sense of beauty and richness—of luxury and costliness.

A Fortune in Furs

The specialist emerged from a side room carrying in her arms a fortune in furs. She emptied them in my lap. A silky-soft, dark, shining fortune. My hands were lost in them. Long, glossy, silver foxes, mink, skunk, Russian and Arctic foxes, seal and ermine. A pale grey pelt, which I learned was a Brazilian mountain lamb, stood out from the soft, dark pile.

Appreciating my interest, the lady specialist brought out a skunk skin, and demonstrated to me how one was cut. I marvelled at her quick, unerring touch as the special fur knife cut a succession of V shapes down the pelt—even to the trick of lengthening a skin. In one small mink skin she made as many as fifty distinct cuts. It looked so easy, and yet I knew that behind this apparently artless manipulation there were long years of study.

"I am often asked," she said, "if the fur never troubles me by getting in my nose and throat, but if it is cut—like this—you merely sever the surface of the pelt and the hair is left untouched."

Taught by a Russian

Sixteen years ago this girl began her apprenticeship in the fur trade. She was lucky in two things. First, in discovering a calling that suited her talents, second, in her choice of teacher. The furrier who trained her was a Russian from the Court of the Tsar. He knew furs—and he loved them—and to this girl he passed on his understanding and his knowledge.

"I was really very lucky," she said earnestly. "To-day girls who become apprenticed to the trade usually only specialise in one line, either as cutters, machinists, or improvers—whatever they show an aptitude for. But I was taught every angle of the fur business—even to designing, matching skins, and grading winter and summer pelts. Then, too, unlike apprentices to-day, from the very first I had the advantage of handling the most expensive skins; mink, sable, Alaskan seal. The training not only equipped me with a unique profession,

matter of two eyes, ears, and a nose. Each animal's face must have an individual expression—the fox differs from the skunk—and the ermine from the fitch.

Her Favourite Pelt

I was caught up, fascinated by this lore.

"Tell me," I said, "what fur do you prefer best yourself?"

She sighed.

"The most expensive of all—sables. I love them—but they are only within reach of the few. For the average woman's pocket I think black seal is the best investment—though summer ermine is the most attractive."

"Where do your skins come from?"

"All over the place," she said, "Norway, Canada, Russia, South America—and Arctic foxes come from the Arctic regions. These are rare, as only a limited number are allowed out each year.

Trip to America

She told me with enthusiasm of her trip to America last year. London, and a trip across on the Queen Mary were to have been her schedule, but the war came, so she could not make the English trip.

America fascinated her—particularly the many fox farms she visited. While there she saw several fur parades; the most gorgeous being at Treasure Island at the Golden Gate Fair. The furs worn were luxurious beyond description—and at this particular function all the women guests were presented with a shoulder spray of white gardenias.

One breath-taking coat, she described, was fashioned for the opening of the opera season. It was made long and flared out behind in a small train. At a touch, a concealed zipper unhooked the skirt, leaving a short jacket with a circular flare. The flare, in turn, zipped off, leaving a bolero—and the sleeves also possessed zippers that could make them long or short as desired. This wonder coat was in Canadian mink—and it cost just fifteen thousand dollars!

BANISH FRECKLES

You could lose your freckles—if you could get as far as Budapest and the surgery of the celebrated Dr. L. Justus.

The procedure is not exactly pleasant, but the doctor guarantees results. He covers your eyes with pads held in place with metal rods. Your nose is plugged, and you breathe through a tube. A solution is then applied to the skin which loosens the cells in which the colour particles lie. Three days later the skin layer loosens and peels and white skin appears underneath. In ten days your freckles will have vanished—and you are the possessor of a flawless skin.

but it has brought a personal happiness and independence. I have much to be grateful for."

In the early days, she told me, furs were mostly hand-sewn. Even though machines were in use, any special work was always done by hand. She remembers one coat with 300 tiny mole skins sewn together by hand. Alas for dimmed eyesight and pricked fingers!

"Nowadays," she said, "machines are so up-to-date that they do the fine work instead of hand-sewing."

Designing Fur Coats

She, herself, has designed and made up scores of fur coats—a work in which she takes a peculiar pleasure. One model she showed me, in summer ermine, was the acme of smartness with an unusual blouse pouch at the back. Then there is re-modelling of coats and furs; a difficult but fascinating task—for often she is rewarded by seeing a miracle emerge from some discarded Cinderella of a coat. There is also the mounting and modelling of fox stoles. Here again imagination is needed. It is not just a

The Decorative Scheme

For the woman who likes to "follow through" with her colour scheme to the last detail comes the glad news that she may now match up her window curtains with her bread!

A Washington firm has patented a method of colouring it to suit the aesthetic taste of the most exacting customer. So far, however, we are restricted to pastel tones. Stripes, dots and patternings are also still to come.