

ROMANTIC CAREER OF FRANK PICK

A talk on Frank Pick, new Director-General in the Ministry of Information in London, was given by Nelle Scanlan from 2YA on August 15. We summarise it here:

FRANK PICK is a Yorkshire man, not yet sixty, and with a wonderful record of organisation and achievement behind him. Over lunch one day, he told me something of his life, which is one of those romantic careers you come across in England. He was at that time head of the London Transport Board, which controls all the trams, trains, buses, motor coaches, trolley buses and underground railways within thirty miles of Charing Cross. Not the actual head, Lord Ashfield is the head, but he is the active head. And he was getting £10,000 a year for the job. He told me that day that he would willingly take half the salary for half the work. It was a tremendously responsible position, but there was no such thing as halving it.

According to his own account, he didn't come of rich or influential people, nor did he claim a brilliant scholastic career, medals or degrees. Perhaps that

was modesty; in any case, it isn't always the medal winners at school who get to the top in later life. Nor would he admit whether it was finance or organisation that was his strong suit. But I believe it is his genius for organisation that has made his services so valuable. As a lad, he worked in various offices in the North of England. Then he came to London, like most ambitious men. He assured me that he had "got the sack" several times. One incident I remember. He said that he had some office job, and was set to work in a back room, with little to do but poke around. It was one of those conservative old places where most of the clerks were ancients who had spent a lifetime with the firm, and the dust of antiquity was heavy over the place. And when this quiet, North-country youth offered some bright suggestions, and stirred up the dust a bit, he was "fired."

Wherever he worked, I fancy, he saw newer and better ways of doing things. It was his work with a railway company which first brought him into prominence, but it was not until he was appointed to the London Transport Board in London that he became a well-known figure.

Now, the name of Frank Pick is associated in the public mind with many great achievements, the latest being the evacuation of the children of London at the beginning of the war.

It was Frank Pick who planned and carried out that stupendous task, without a single accident or mishap. Thousands and thousands of children were transferred from London to various points in the country under his direct supervision.

"The Mystery of Darrington Hall"

OF particular interest to fiction-lovers and theatre-goers is the new NBS dramatic serial, "The Mystery of Darrington Hall." It is adapted from a famous novel, and the radio cast reads like a theatrical Who's Who of Australia.

If you yourself don't, your father and mother probably remember the American novel, "At the Mercy of Tiberius," by A. J. Evans, which was a "best-seller" in its day and was one of the earliest mystery stories in the modern manner. From this novel has been adapted the radio drama, "The Mystery of Darrington

Hall." It tells of the murder of General Darrington and how his granddaughter is held for trial.

Theatre-goers will find that in the radio cast of over forty players they recognise the voices of many well-known actors and actresses who have often been seen on the stage in New Zealand. Heading the cast is Harvey Adams, well-known actor and producer, and playing opposite him is Maiva Drummond, who will be remembered by listeners for her portrayals of Glenda in "Singapore Spy" and Sophie of Lodz in "The Soldier of Fortune." Others in the cast are Yvonne Banvard (who was last over here playing in "The Women"), Victor Gouriet, and George Hewlett (who plays General Darrington and who will be remembered by theatre-goers as an old favourite with the Nellie Bramley companies). Two New Zealanders appear in the cast—Honor Sim, who is an Auckland girl, and Marshall Crosby, an old Christ's College boy, well known in Australia as a producer. Charles Zoli, who visited N.Z. with the Balalaika Company, is also in the cast. Finally, there is Fred Bluett, who appears as Isam Hornbuckle. He needs no introduction to New Zealand audiences.

The first episode of this serial will be broadcast from 3YA Christchurch on Thursday, September 5, at 8.15 p.m.

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