



J. W. B. Waimate
Says The—

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Is All We Say It Is!

Here's his letter: "I received the Aeritrol on Monday, and, after a few days' trial I am writing to let you know I am very satisfied with it, and that it is ALL YOU SAY IT IS. It certainly increases the volume, and makes the small stations clearer and easier to listen to. We can also get Wellington (2YA) now in the daytime, and we could not hear it without the Aeritrol. The neighbours are all anxious to get one, so you should get some orders from these parts."

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Of The **"Aeritrol"**

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reduce noise level and interference—
increase volume of weak stations—
eliminate the need for an aerial—
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BOOKS

TWO CANS OF OIL AND A CHARGE OF DYNAMITE

(1) *"The Technical Schools of New Zealand: Historical Survey."* by John Nicol. Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., for the New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

(2) *"Vocational Guidance in New Zealand."* by H. C. McQueen. Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., for the New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

(3) *"Little Ann and What To Do With Her."* By F. L. Combs. With drawings by J. F. Kahn. Whitcombe and Tombs.

IT is a good sign when the printing presses of a country turn out books on education while the country itself is at war. As long as someone is going round with a spanner and a can of oil the machine will at least keep running.

Two of these books are the work of skilled mechanics; skilled and skilful. In the first Dr. Nicol runs over the technical school system, a strange creation largely home-made. He explains how it came into being, and why; its purpose and scope; and its most obvious limitations. It is useful spadework, and he does it with a good deal of skill. Already names that we can't afford to forget in New Zealand are fading from our educational memories—George Hogben, George Malcolm Thomson, John H. Howell, for example. It is good to be reminded of our debt to them. It is necessary also, if we are ever to remake the system, to understand why it is such a peculiar system at present—so very good in places, and in places so very bad; and Dr. Nicol explains this. But except in his final chapter, "Retrospect and Reflection," he is too anxious to avoid provocation. He tells us what happened according to official reports, not always what really happened, or should have happened. It is certainly not fair to criticise him for failing to do what he did not undertake to do, but there is such a difference between his first eleven chapters and his last that it is impossible not to regret his delay in opening out. Technical education was not plan-

ned in New Zealand. It grew, and is still growing, but does not quite know where it is going. Our ordinary High Schools, on the other hand, have certainly changed, but the more they change the more they are the same thing, and the

it is just too bad. But it is not a reason for abandoning the others. Mr. McQueen would greatly extend vocational guidance throughout New Zealand, but there would be no mumbo-jumbo about his methods, and he would apply them to those schools only whose headmasters are too remote from the private lives of their pupils to be able to help them.



F. L. COMBS
... He may revolutionise us

BUT what is one to say of Mr. Combs and "Little Ann"? First that if Dr. Nicol and Mr. McQueen are skilled craftsmen, Mr. Combs is artist, architect and engineer. They replace bearings, tighten up nuts, put a platform here and take away an elevator there, and you know when they hear the wrong noise. But they accept the machine. Mr. Combs comes as near to destroying it as he can. "Little Ann" is a portent—a charge of dynamite for twenty-three pages, then for twenty-three pages further a magnificently bold appeal for a new structure altogether. Mr. Combs may be right or wrong. He is certainly wrong occasionally—for example, in his mixture of education and economics at the foot of page 42. He should fight one battle at a time. But if he is not nearer to the educational truth than any one else has ever been in New Zealand—I am talking now of primary education—the others are dark horses.

more our University changes the more it resembles a Technical School in a top-hat. Dr. Nicol hints at these things but does not say them, and until someone says them with authority we shall go on muddling through.

MR. McQUEEN'S is a less important book than Dr. Nicol's, but is written with more confidence. How far vocational guidance can be extended is far from clear, but Mr. McQueen knew what he wanted to say before he started, and when he did start he did not tremble. Nor would it worry him if you adopted an obscurantist attitude and argued that there is nothing in vocational guidance but common sense and that common sense can get along quite well without index cards. He ignores those who have no sympathy with him, and is careful not to serve up miracles to the others. His faith is firm, but he would sooner not have "guidance" at all than have it wrapped up in mystery. A vocation to him is a job, a job is something you do for bread and butter and jam, and there is no need for any nonsense. So there is no make-believe in his case histories, no hesitation in his recommendations. Guidance seems more sensible to him than go-as-you-please, and he says so. If those who most need a guide prove to be those least capable of following one,

Little Ann will haunt you. She should never have been born, and she should never have been starved, stunted, twisted and forced into the unlovely piece of propriety she became. She is your child and mine; your victim and mine; your blunder and mine; and Mr. Combs wants to know what we are going to do about her. If it were to be the Infant School again or Mrs. Beath the decision would be difficult. For although Mrs. Beath has her moments, she speaks a horrible lingo—"warts and callosities on our immortal souls"; "stresses that make us emotively toxic"; "flight from the Ego"; "a living, breathing Becoming that is rife with promise for the future." Perhaps she has to use a jargon like that to save her creator's face, since he is a shy man as well as modest. If we had to decide between her and the system she would still, I think, win. But Little Ann will do to her precisely what she will one day do to the system—if we really wish to be saved. She is destruction, but she is also re-creation. In other words, Mr. Combs has probed deeper and seen farther than any educationist in New Zealand who has so far committed his vision to print. He may revolutionise us, and he may leave us precisely where we were, because we may really be hopeless. But I personally hope that he will not write any more about Ann. He will not bring it off twice, and having done it once he should raise his collar round his ears and let the tempest rage.

—Ed.