

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

MISS PRIVATE SECRETARY

These Should Interest You:

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

- "Let's Learn to Spin." Monday, March 10, 1YA 3.30 p.m., 2YA 3 p.m., 3YA 2.30 p.m.
- "More About Pickling and Preserving." Thursday, March 13, 1YA 3.30 p.m., 3YA 2.30 p.m.; Friday, March 14, 2YA 3 p.m.
- "Pantry Stocktaking." Wednesday, March 12, 4YA 3.15 p.m.
- "Annual Meetings." Friday, March 14, 4YA 3.15 p.m.
- "Our Natural Heritage and What We are Doing With It," by "Belinda." Monday, March 10, 1YA 10.45 a.m., 4YA 10.40 a.m.
- "The Revised Text Book: What it Means to First Aiders," by a representative of St. John Ambulance. Tuesday, March 11, 2YA 11.30 a.m.

From The ZB Stations

Special children's stories from all ZB Stations, including 2ZA at 5.30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Fridays.

"Radio Rotogravure," all ZB Stations and 2ZA, Sunday, March 9, 7.15 p.m.

"Far Horizon," all ZB Stations, March 12, 3 p.m.

"Home Folks," 9.15 p.m., Saturdays, all ZB Stations and 2ZA.

"The Society for the Protection of Women and Children," by Miss E. M. Cardale. Tuesday, March 11, 3YA 7.15 p.m.

"On Tour in Southern Ireland," by Diana Craig. Wednesday, March 12, 4YA 10.40 a.m.

Talks by Major F. J. Lampen, on Thursday, March 13.

"Just Some More Travels." 1YA 10.45 a.m.

"Just Old Comrades." 2YA 11 a.m.

"Just Homes." 3YA 11 a.m.

"Just a Home." 4YA 10.40 a.m.

"A Few Minutes with Women Novelists," by Margaret Johnston. Saturday, March 15, 1YA 10.45 a.m., 2YA 11 a.m., 3YA 11 a.m., 4YA 10.40 a.m.

SHE is a brunette with laughing blue eyes. She wears horn-rimmed spectacles with an air. Spectacles—even horn-rimmed ones—were associated with blue stockings and spinsters till Michael Arlen made his "Lily Christine" wear them romantically.

She has short curly hair which always looks as though the wind has just blown through it—attractively so. She has a slim, pliable figure. She is tanned to a nice golden brown—and she successfully exploits the new stockingless mode.

Meet Miss Private Secretary!

Now there are private secretaries and private secretaries. The private secretary of a decade back was usually a formidable female in long skirts, steel-rimmed spectacles, a netted bun—and she wore a bristling air of authority. But private secretaries have changed with the times. The old type is no more. In her place is the modern, up-to-date secretary, intelligent, alert—and attractive. She powders and she uses lipstick—and she is a very good secretary indeed. She brings loyalty and intelligent co-operation to her work. Her employer knows she is not only a good workman but a trusted confidante—and often a sound adviser.

Miss Private Secretary looked at me uncertainly when I suggested an interview.

"Surely you wouldn't find me interesting? My job is not exactly a glamorous one."

"All jobs are glamorous," I said. "It's just the way you look at them. Then there's you, the real you behind your job. Do you still deny the glamorous side?"

She was not so sure. She began to talk about her work—her everyday job of living. Something emerged from it; a sturdy, resolute, unconsciously gallant figure who made a brave show at this business of living.

Her Day Begins

Whir-r-r! The alarm goes off with a noisy clatter. Miss Private Secretary, who has been to a party the night before and didn't get to bed till one o'clock, reaches out sleepily and switches it off.

Grumbling a little at the hardness of life, she reluctantly parts with her warm bedclothes. There is a tinkle of crockery outside her door. Miss Private Secretary lives in an apartment house, morning tray provided. It appears. Hot tea, toast and marmalade. She nibbles at it while she dresses. She is awake now—and the world looks a bit brighter. . . . Clock hands creeping around. . . . Can't decide what to wear. . . . A ladder in her new stocking, darn it! Day is warm—she'll try out her new silk frock. . . . There is an undertone

of footsteps throughout the house. Other busy, work-a-day ants going forth to their jobs. Miss Private Secretary gives a final dab of powder to her nose, snatches up purse and gloves and is off.

Correspondence

Two minutes early! Gosh, that could have been two extra minutes in bed. Never mind, she'd make up for it. Have an early night for a change. There is a private letter for her amongst the voluminous business correspondence. Her Number One Beau. Suggests seeing a picture to-night. Thoughtfully Miss Private Secretary reaches for the morning paper and looks up the theatre pro-

At 2 o'clock she is back at work again. Stock records to be checked. Two of the branch managers have come in with a grievance, and the chief refers them to her. She talks, argues, conciliates, and sends them away satisfied. Privately she thinks men make a great ado about nothing. The phone is busy during the afternoon. In the chief's absence, she takes messages, gives information, and makes appointments. Still a few letters to finish off. She hurries against the hands of the clock.

"Nothing Really Exciting"

Five o'clock. Miss Private Secretary, with the satisfaction of good work behind her, wonders what she is going to have for dinner as she dons hat and coat. So ends her day.

She smiles at me now with a little air of depression.

"You see? There's nothing really very exciting about it."

"But you wouldn't be without it?"

"No. I don't think I would. It's really interesting work—particularly when we are busy—something doing all the time. I like that. There are days that seem all too short—and others, of course, that drag. A philosopher would put that down to his liver. But it's part of a business person's life. We take the good with the bad, and we don't think we are really so badly off."

"What do you think the most important essentials in your own job?"

"Well, I suppose capability should come first, but I think even before that I would place absolute reliability and trust. You see, you have all the business secrets of the firm in your keeping—and the confidence of your employer. If you can't respect them, then nothing else is much worth while."

"Tell me," I said suddenly, "what are you going to have for dinner? That rather rounds off your day, doesn't it?"

"It gives it meaning," she laughed. "I'm starving. I've been dreaming for the past hour of grilled steak, but as I've missed the butcher's shop it'll have to be fish."

I left her in earnest search of filleted terakihī!

True to Life

Dr. Bruce-Porter, famous English surgeon, once found a girl who was slowly dying, reading a newspaper serial in which the heroine suffered from the same disease as she had. He hurried to the author and was told that the heroine died in the final instalment. The doctor persuaded the author to change the ending—and the serial's heroine and his patient both lived.

The Last Word

The wife of Lieutenant R. Davis (awarded the George Cross for his leadership of the party that removed the one-ton bomb outside St. Paul's Cathedral) made this amusing comment when recently interviewed: "The job was just in his line. He is very handy about the house."

grammes. Can't choose between Laurence Olivier and Paul Muni. Will decide later.

Like a cog that has slipped into place, the business machine gets into motion. Correspondence to be opened and distributed. Her chief's own pile of letters make an impressive pile on his desk. Miss Private Secretary has already swiftly memorised their contents, and her mind is busy with facts and figures.

10.30—and that costing work still ahead of her. The life of the office flows on about her, but Miss Private Secretary is lost in the intricacies of F.O.B., landing costs, cartage and selling figures. The rich world of commerce opens out before her eyes, and her finger is on the pulse of it, feeling its organised flow and rhythm.

11.30—Abruptly her brain snaps off to a new compartment. The morning correspondence is awaiting her on the dictaphone. For the next hour she is busy on the machine. She takes a couple of phone calls, argues with an irate client, manages to pacify him, and returns to her typewriter.

Lunch—And After

Lunch-time. Tommy, the office boy, takes her order for sandwiches and a meat pie. The girls have made tea in the staff room. She talks, laughs and dreams a little through the lunch hour.