

A MESSAGE FROM MASEFIELD

Poet Laureate Speaks To New Zealand

TWO or three years ago, a tall young man with glasses, and very long hair, came into our office carrying a book of poems under his arm. The other day the same person called again; this time minus some of his hair, which had been blitzed off in Bath. It was Robert Solway. He had just returned from a year's service in the Merchant Navy. During his absence, Solway visited many countries, including Brazil. He saw the entry of Brazil into the war. When we questioned him, he was reluctant to speak of his experiences; but we managed to extract from him the story of his encounter with the Poet Laureate, John Masefield. "In spite of Mr. Masefield's great success," Solway told us, "he is still a very simple man in his tastes. He does not court luxury and is, as his many books prove, a hard and industrious worker. In appearance, he is tall and slightly stooped, and has a saddened, shy look about him."

For four days the English poet entertained Solway at his home at Burcote Brook, Abingdon, Berkshire. "The house, a two-story dwelling, stands behind a group of trees and is built of brick and covered with rough cast. When I called, Mr. Masefield expressed delight at meeting again a New Zealander. Asking eager and anxious questions about war-conditions here, he said that it was his desire, one day after the war, to visit us."

"When afternoon tea was served," Solway told us, "I was handed a slice of delicious cake, containing plums of a

rare kind. The poet, eyeing me carefully said, 'I don't know how we acquired these plums, but I hope it was honestly.' Mrs. Masefield said that she had had them given to her at a meeting held in Oxford. The room in which we sat was walled with books. Some of them were first editions of Yeats, Dowson, Synge and others. A model or two of some slender sailing ship built by Masefield's own hands stood on a table. They were beautiful pieces of work, and a joy to behold. Masefield spoke sadly of the war. 'It is a tragedy that so much of our young manhood is sacrificed on its altar,' he said, 'but one day it all will end.'"

Before he left, Mr. Masefield asked Solway to take back a message to the people of New Zealand:

"When you return to New Zealand, tell your friends and Government that I have admired its growing literature and advanced legislation for a considerable time. While I have never been to New Zealand (the nearest I got was Melbourne on the occasion of the Centennial Celebrations), I intend, if still alive, to try to visit it after the war. There is still so much to be done, and I hope that I will be able to fulfil my wish. Tell the New Zealand people to give more encouragement to the poets, artists, and young writers by getting them to recite or talk about their work over the radio or, better still, from the stage. It will give them heart to do better work. The peace



JOHN MASEFIELD

The plums in his cake weren't stolen

will bring with it a revival of the Arts, and we will all be busy building the new and better Britain. England at the moment is like a jig-saw puzzle, with everyone trying to find out where he best fits in, but one day, this will be a forgotten thing, and sanity among men will come again. May New Zealand play an important part in the future development of Art."

"The Easy Aces" Also Want To Visit Us

LAST September, the National Commercial Broadcasting Service sent to Jane Ace, of Easy Aces fame, in New York, a birthday book containing signatures from admirers all over New Zealand, interspersed with goodwill messages and photographs. The following letter of acknowledgment has now been received from the "Easy Aces":

Dear "Scrim": Both Jane and I wish to thank you for the most wonderful book of names signed by all our friends in the Land of the Long White Cloud.

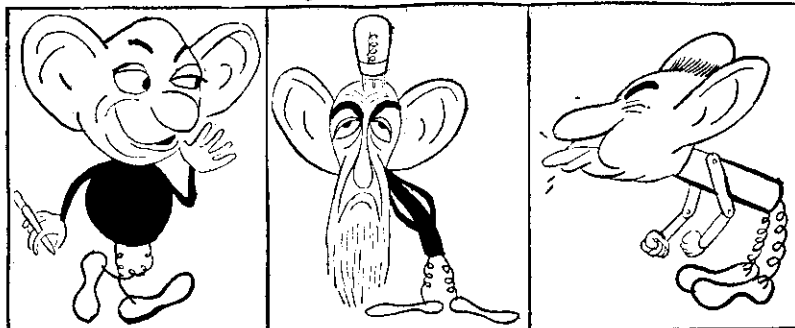
In the 12 years we have been in radio this is the nicest gesture we have ever enjoyed. We invited to our home Cokey, Marge, Miss Thomas and all the other members of our radio family, and we all had a marvellous time reading every page of the book. Jane, of course, was at a loss for words. As she put it—she was "unspeakable." And she put it down in her book of Things to Do in the Beautiful World to Come that we must go and see for ourselves all the beauty those pictures convey.

So perhaps in not many birthdays to come we shall be strolling into the National Commercial Service to say hello in person to those many persons who wished Jane a happy birthday.

The album is one of our prized possessions, and as we thumb through it from time to time, we get a glowing warmth as we think and realise that lurking somewhere behind the horrible pages of modern history, there are a kindly, brotherly people who can take time out to write their names in a book of good cheer.

Kia Ora from all of us to all of you.
THE EASY ACES.

If Your Radio Goes Wrong—



BLAME IT ON THE GROHMS

WHEN anything goes wrong with your radio set or with the programme to which you are listening, you can—if you like—put the blame on one of the little fellows shown above, or on one of their cousins. They are Grohms, a tribe of radiocentrics, originating in the fertile minds of American press-agents, who were looking around for scapegoats for listeners' wrath when programmes go wrong. Instead of taking the kicks themselves, radio officials may now be able to use the alibi, "Blame it on the Grohms." The three Grohm-types shown above are: the "Slobnik" (left), who spoils script-writers' copy; the bearded "Laffnix" (centre), who takes all the sting out of comedians' lines; the "Foobus" (right), who makes nasty noises which come through the microphone. Other Grohms not shown here are the "Lock-sniff," who carries round a key with which he inconveniently locks doors in the studio; the "Messibelle," a female Grohm who "teeters on decibel controls" and causes the volume to waver; and the "Nostragrohms," who inspires news commentators to make incorrect predictions.

These Grohms are evidently related to the Gremlins, a tribe of mischievous, air-minded pixies recently invented by fanciful R.A.F. men to explain all the unexplainable things that can go wrong with an aeroplane.