

# Girdle Round the Earth

A PART from making the Empire to which we belong more real, *The Queen's Journey*, heard over all stations, also led one to consider the technical achievements of our modern world. Within a single hour one had heard from every corner of the globe. Just what this means only became apparent when the voices began to "come in" from Australia, the Far East, India, Africa, the West Indies, the sub-Arctic and Antarctica, and Great Britain. Remembering the earlier days of radio, and even now the surging of a bad reception, the clarity of the calls was remarkable. Considering the brief nature of the greetings it was also astonishing how much information and entertainment was packed into them, from the short outlines of a nation's aims and ideals to the Christmas calypso and other songs. The fact that the greetings of the Queen's whole Empire were gathered into a BBC bouquet gracefully thrown from Britain to New Zealand must surely add to the uniqueness of the present tour.

## Diluted Drama

A WEEK of plays: Maugham's *The Creative Impulse* adapted for radio by O. A. Gillespie, and Henry Reed's *Pythias*, both heard over 3YC—neither of which proved very entertaining. The NZBS production of Maugham's story was pretty well equal to the work in hand. Possibly it is Maugham's own fault that, in the scenes involving the servants, the cockney speech was too heavily laid on for my liking. This weakens the irony of a situation in which the husband turns away from his arty wife and her everlasting highbrow parties to the cook. *Pythias*, in which two people discuss a fantasy they are in the act of creating about a little-known traveller of the ancient world, points to the weakness of monkeying about on the inside and the outside of a plot all at once. There was, moreover, a naive undergraduate enthusiasm for the questing spirit of man floating unnecessarily on the surface. Once really engaged with such things, whether in play writing or exploring, the self-conscious references drop out as the real object of the play or the exploration holds the field of attention.

## Burns Well Read

TAM O' SHANTER is a difficult poem to read aloud. To the unpractised the proper interpretation and therefore modulation of the Scottish dialect is not at first apparent, with the result that the tale seems a trifle long-winded and the climax scarcely seems to justify all that led up to it. But Harold L. Wightman's delivery of the poem over 3YC during the last few weeks, apart from being one of the best readings in the vernacular that I have heard, was a revelation of how *Tam o' Shanter* should be interpreted. With all the changes of mood rung throughout the verses, from compassionate amusement at Tam to the description of the stormy night and the grim devil's rites at the Kirk of Alloway, it became very easy indeed to see Burns in the throes of composition. His wife and children

came to call him for tea but left him undisturbed seeing him busy with his notes. On returning later to the river bank there was Burns pacing back and forth "reciting very loud with tears rolling down his cheeks."

—Westcliff

## Musical Shares

FOR my money, the NZBS has never done a better job than its coverage of the "Royal Occasions." Months of preparation paid heavy dividends, for technical arrangements were excellent, the commentators at their best, and the inevitable "fluffs" (including that of the gentleman who told us that "Warkworth" was 40 miles north of New Zealand) were few. But, spending the Christmas-New Year fortnight at home and having no wish to hear every Royal broadcast, I found that there was little else available to my taste. When it wasn't the Royal visit, it was Racing or Tennis, Sundays only excepted; enough to give a visitor the impression that the universal religion of New Zealanders is Equinolatry. Of course, this was a necessary service, and most other listeners were catered for agreeably enough by 1ZB and 1YD, but 1YA filled in between horsey matters with the same kind of "pops" numbers. Might not 1YC have been on the air for some hours daily, or if that is expecting too much, at least half of 1YD's time devoted to a different kind of entertainment for those who cannot agree that holidays put people out of the mood to hear serious music?

## One-Man Shows

EDGAR LUSTGARTEN, whose crime novel, *A Case to Answer*, is a gem, turns his expert knowledge of criminal law to very good purpose in the fine BBC *Prisoner at the Bar* series (1YC). In the urbane, highly literate tradition established by Harry Hodge and H. B. Irving and continued by Montgomery Hyde, Mr. Lustgarten manages, in re-examining such celebrated trials as those of Richard Piggot, Lizzie Borden

and Frederick Seddon to give not only a concise statement of the facts, but also to examine many of the legal points involved. His crisp voice, tinged at times with irony, is perfectly suited to this kind of topic, and in quoting the proceedings, he gives them just enough dramatic flavour to suggest the different speakers. This was noteworthy in the case of Frederick Seddon, in which Mr. Lustgarten "played" the exchanges, between the Prosecutor, Rufus Isaacs, and the arrogant Seddon, to splendid effect. These re-tellings of famous trials have more than a sensational value: handled with such skill, they become human dramas, as well as revealing to the layman something of the subtleties of legal procedure and of the safeguards surrounding the administration of British justice.

—J.C.R.

## The Seeing Ear

ONE of the most exciting things about listening to ballet music over the air is that it enables you to recreate a visual memory of the ballet itself. In the same way the NZBS production of *Ladies in Retirement* brought back in almost exact detail a film I thought I had forgotten, and thus gave me a very vivid and rewarding listening experience. But what is legitimate in the case of ballet music is perhaps not so legitimate in the case of a radio play, which certainly deserves to lead an independent existence. Had I heard the play without seeing the film I'm sure I should still have found it most exciting. The fact that I could so easily superimpose this version on the fine film version suggests that our NZBS productions have reached a high standard in acting and direction.

## Endurance Test

IT'S IN THE BAG is, like all Gaul, divided into three parts: first, a kind of concertina-ed clumps game with bells on (very good listening), then a series of rapid-fire questions delivered to each candidate in a manner calculatedly pulverising (this rouses all your protective

## NEXT WEEK'S BIG GAMES

### ALL BLACKS

v. Newport, January 22 (N.Z. time): Score and scorers—YAs, YZs, 6.0, 7.15 a.m.; ZBs and 2ZA, during breakfast session. Cabled account of match—YAs, YZs, 8.15 a.m., 12.40 p.m. Summary with commentary excerpts—YAs, YZs, 9.35 p.m.

v. Neath and Aberavon, January 24 (N.Z. time): Score and scorers—YAs, 6.0 a.m.; YAs, YZs, 7.15, 8.0 a.m.; ZBs and 2ZA, throughout morning. Eye-witness account—YAs, YZs, 9.0 a.m., 12.33 p.m. All Black newsletter—ZBs and 2ZA, 9.15 p.m. Summary with commentary excerpts—YAs, YZs, 9.30 p.m.

### CRICKET

v. Natal, final day, January 19 (N.Z. time): Scoreboard and summary—YAs, YZs, 7.15, 8.0 a.m., and 12.40 p.m.; ZBs and 2ZA, during breakfast session.

v. Border, first day, January 23 (N.Z. time): Scoreboard and summary—YAs, YZs, 7.15, 8.0, 9.0 a.m. and 12.40 p.m.; ZBs and 2ZA, during breakfast session.

v. Border, second day, January 24 (N.Z. time): Scoreboard and summary—YAs, YZs, 6.0 a.m. (if available), 7.15, 8.0, 9.0 a.m., and 12.33 p.m.; ZBs and 2ZA, throughout morning.

instincts on the candidate's behalf and is therefore as good as a god cry at the pictures), then the fearfully exciting business of choosing the bag, where the winner is subjected to all sorts of nerve-shattering psychological pressures from both compere and audience. No wonder that the audience (which has definitely had its money's worth in the nearest thing we've got in radio to a blood-sport) is likely to feel for the competitor, who survives this terrific last-round conflict with Selwyn Toogood, something of the affection inspired by the gallant little bull who stands up to the Biggest Matador.

—M.B.

# DX NOTES

THE British Broadcasting Corporation, the world's best-known and most popular shortwave broadcaster, has just been celebrating the 21st anniversary of the beginning of its overseas service. On December 19, 1932, the Empire Service began broadcasting news bulletins to the Pacific, Indian, African, West African and Canadian zones. The original service was meant to provide an English service to remote areas and a means of communication with local broadcasting services. Within a few weeks it was realised that English-speaking people all over the world were listening to the service, but the main object of the service remained the building of fuller understanding among the peoples of the Commonwealth. Today the General Overseas Service—successor of the Empire Service—is recognised as a valuable link between Britain and the rest of the Commonwealth. English was the only language used in overseas broadcasts up to the end of 1937. By this time other nations were operating shortwave stations, and in the interest of upholding British prestige, it was decided to add more languages to the BBC's service. In 1938 services in Arabic (to the Middle East) and Spanish and Portuguese (to South America) were started. With world tension growing, a few hours before Mr. Chamber-

lain's return from Munich in September, 1938, the BBC started broadcasts in German, French and Italian. In 1939 the overseas and European services were expanded and broadcasts started to Spain and Portugal, and in Afrikaans. The BBC's broadcasts during World War II are history.

Today more than 40 different language services are still in operation, including a Russian service started in 1946. Postwar transmitting has been complicated by the need to counter Communist jamming of broadcasts to Eastern Europe. Two high-powered shortwave stations and several of lower power began operating in 1951 in Southern Johore, in Malaya. The stations—known as the British Far Eastern Broadcasting Service—are designed to improve the strength of BBC broadcasts to the East and Far East.

## Your Hit Parade

The National Broadcasting Company's popular Hit Parade programme is back on shortwave from the Armed Forces Radio Service at 10.30 p.m. on Thursdays. Best frequencies are 9570 kcs., 9600 kcs. and 9700 kcs. (all 31-metre band). The orchestra of Raymond Scott is featured.

## Brussels Good

Brussels, Belgium, broadcasting to the Far East, Australia and New Zealand, is heard at good strength with interesting programmes from 10.0 p.m. daily on

17760 kcs. (16-metre band). Strength is better than most stations on the band, the only louder signal being Ankara, Turkey, on 17820 kcs., broadcasting in Turkish to troops in Korea.

## Verifying Paraguay

Henry T. Tyndall, Jun., of Burlington, Vermont, is a determined man, which explains why he has the world's biggest log of broadcast band stations. The latest count shows 3778 stations, verified from 88 countries. For years "Hank" has been trying to verify a station in every South American country that has a broadcasting station. This is how he achieved that ambition. "On February 21, 1950, I copied a special carnival programme from ZP9 Asuncion, Paraguay, on 970 kilocycles. I reported, enclosing an international reply coupon, and when no confirmation came wrote a follow-up and enclosed another coupon. I really stuck with it. I wrote at least 20 letters, sent used stamps, IRC's and air mail, and probably spent 2 dollars 50 cents in all. I finally contacted the U.S. Embassy and the long contest ended when an attache of the Embassy went to the station and sat right in the office while Atilio C. Bajec typed out a verification. The attache said my letters were all over the place, but no one seemed to know what I wanted. I value this as one of my outstanding verifications of all time, and surely earned it."