

ERIC RIDGWAY BAKER

ERIC RIDGWAY BAKER, a sub-editor of *The New Zealand Listener*, died suddenly on June 9, at the age of 53. He had been a member of the literary staff for 10 years.

Mr. Baker was educated at Christ's College, and his long and full experience in journalism began with the *Press*, Christchurch. Although he worked also for the *Timaru Herald*, and for a short period was editor of the *Wairoa Star*, his longest service was in Christchurch, where he remained with the *Press* for 15 years. During the Second World War he served in New Zealand in the Army, and became a regimental sergeant-major on the East Coast. He came to *The Listener* in 1944.

In the last years of the war, and for some time afterwards, staff shortages were acute. Mr. Baker soon showed that he could be relied upon to take an extra strain, to give help when and where it was needed, and to give it cheerfully. He was a good journalist.

His training had not been easy. As a young reporter, he worked in Christchurch while that city was disturbed by the rivalries of four newspapers. Life was strenuous, and it gave Eric Baker a realistic outlook. But those who worked with him were never deceived by an occasional air of toughness. He was a man of extreme gentleness. His kindness was shown, not only in what he did for other people, but also in the way he did it. Sympathy was never formal; it came from him warmly, and yet with an unusual delicacy of tact and understanding. He liked people, and could feel their troubles as if they were his own. Nor did his sympathy end with personal knowledge. He was a blood donor when many people still looked doubtfully at transfusions, and he kept up the practice for 16 years.

Mr. Baker was known with affection throughout the Broadcasting Service,



and far beyond it. When *The Listener* began to publish "Open Microphone" he was asked to take charge, and the pages soon began to show his personal imprint. His knowledge of people in broadcasting, musical and dramatic circles was so wide that often he could write from his own experience. As the feature grew, he built up an information service which readers found increasingly interesting and valuable. His last notes are published in this issue. It will not be easy to find another "Swarf."

The journalist will be missed, but the man leaves a place that cannot be filled. His colleagues were his close friends; and there are many other people, in all parts of New Zealand, who share their sorrow.

EARLY SETTLERS

("When Tasman rediscovered these islands."—Buck.)

*THE silver-eye, the wasp, are latest,
And the Dutch in their second coming.
But others earlier, discovering islands,
Parting the sky, the sunset fringes,
Sunlong, starlong, with the prow on Venus,
In the easy season of the Pleiades.*

*The Association
Is open to the descendants
Of the Early Shiploads.
Did you come in the Endeavour?
The Wycliffe, Tory, or the Charlotte Jane?
There is a small subscription.*

*But our long fish broke the western waters
For Kupe, Toi, before Young Nick or Abel.
Which is your canoe?
Tainui, Arawa, or Kurahaupo?
You should join the Association.
There is no colour bar.*

*This is a young country,
Counting the white keys only.*

*"2.0 p.m., 7th October, Land from the masthead.
Could but just see it off the deck at sunset,
West by North."
"A great land, high-lying."*

*Aotea-roa.
Timeless the first arrivals
By the scarlet trees.
"Ko te iwi Maori"—but the tribe is human,
Adam the ancestor.
We are all descended.*

—S. J. Harrox

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