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JEFFERSON ROSS, who carries a banner for the common people in *The Doomsday Story* (page 8) has also carried one for a prince of Royal blood. The camera caught him here in costume as Glenaladale, a Highland chieftain, supporter of the young Stuart pretender in the British Lion film *Bonnie Prince Charlie*. He was in exceptionally good company, David Niven, Margaret Leighton, Judy Campbell and Jack Hawkins being the names listed just ahead of his in the publicity sheets.

Notwithstanding his name and the Highland dress, Ross hails from Lancashire. By World War II he'd graduated from repertory to the West End, but, like many another, he left the stage for the battlefields of Greece, North Africa and Italy, ending up with the rank of captain. In 1946 he returned to England to appear in a war play, *All This Is Ended*, before the late King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. His performance brought him a film contract with Sir Alexander Korda, under which he appeared in nine films, including *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, *Night Beat*, and, of course, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*. He has starred in about 200 radio and 56 television plays, was named "Television Actor of the Year," for playing Dick Dudgeon in Bernard Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple* in 1949, and won the National Award for his performance in *The Guinea Pig* in 1951. Many listeners will have seen him in the flesh as Tony Wendice in *Dial M for Murder*, which was toured in New Zealand earlier this year.

MANY listeners will know that the BBC *Palace of Varieties* which is heard from NZBS stations, turns back



INES BROWN sorts her overseas mail

Open Microphone.



the clock to the days when the music hall was a convivial, full-blooded affair with any amount of give-and-take between artists and audience.

PIONEER but they may not know that the producer of the series now being heard, Ernest Longstaffe, first did this job about 17 years ago. When Longstaffe retired from the permanent staff of the BBC about five years ago he was 65, and had worked for the Corporation for 23 years. He gave himself a fortnight's holiday, and then planned to launch out on a round of the towns he had visited years before as a touring conductor and producer.

taking with him a vaudeville production of the Longstaffe type.

There is probably no man in show business who can teach Ernest Longstaffe anything about putting on robust, cheerful entertainment, for he is used to writing book, lyrics and music, casting the show, producing it, and then presiding over it from the conductor's desk. He wrote his first composition when he was 16. This was a Sung Eucharist, which was done from a little church in his home county of Essex. Before he was 20 he had tried his hand as an estate agent and a commercial traveller, but the theatre was tugging at him all the time. So he started out in theatrical companies touring tiny English towns. This led on to bigger things, and finally to the West End. To use his own words he began as a "throaty and inadequate baritone" in the chorus, graduating to chorus-master, musical director and proprietor-producer.

Ernest Longstaffe was one of the earliest to take his vast experience of entertainment from the footlights into the new-fangled broadcasting studio. His first production for the BBC was a one-hour revue, *The Bee Bee Cabaret*. He followed that with revues and variety entertainments every few weeks, rounding off his first year by putting on the first radio pantomime.

HAVE you ever had the nerve-wracking experience of sitting up front at a concert, even if it was only in the local hall, while you waited for a friend, on his first appearance as a soloist, to make a mistake? It has happened to all of us. Of course,

AMNESIA when your soloist is an experienced concert artist you relax, knowing that nothing will go wrong. According to an item in

The World in Her Postbag

LETTERS and picture postcards from distant places pour into the London office of Ines Brown, who spends her time in arranging *Listeners' Choice*, the programme of gramophone records which the BBC broadcasts several times each week in its External Services. Miss Brown's postbag averages about two hundred letters a week. The greatest number come from West Africa and Malta, and considerable quantities also from India, Pakistan, Mauritius, the Seychelles, East Africa and the Middle East. As she also arranges *Forces' Favourites*, the record programme for British Forces serving in the Far East, she gets a large number of letters from Hong Kong, Malaya and all other places where British troops are stationed.

Miss Brown has been arranging these request programmes since 1949, and is well used to reading appreciative letters from listeners who want their special records played. The life of a popular song in Britain is short, but the listeners overseas are more faithful, and certain records remain popular for an astonishing time, and are played regularly, year after year, in *Listeners' Choice*. Many people who write want a record played to celebrate some particular anniversary, and such letters are put into a special "anniversary file" and brought out on the appropriate day or one near to it. A vast assortment of picture postcards on the walls of Miss Brown's office come from listeners all over the world, who have been kind enough to send a greeting to *Listeners' Choice* after their record has been played. The shelves behind her show programmes of selected records, with the listener's name and address attached, which are ready for playing soon.



BBC photograph

N.Z. LISTENER, JULY 23, 1954.