

## Lodge Listens . . .



"The subject for discussion in tonight's session for the farmer will be Shearing"

### Private Grief, Public Joy

THOSE who deal in literature as critics or lecturers are apt to be absorbed with the question of form at the expense of the values and ideas which are the subject matter of, say, poetry. Mr. Bob Robertson, over 4YC, in two talks called "Waiting for the Taniwha—Cases of Uneasy Conscience in New Zealand Writers," reversed this procedure. The talks were good in that they unified a great deal of work which was shown to have more in common than one would at first suspect, and stimulating because they drove one to consider afresh one's own relationship to New Zealand poetry. I wondered, however, at the use of the word "gloominess" as a description of our poetry. It seemed a concession to a false but popular attitude which simply resents the deeper themes. And oddly enough my own feeling was caught in a phrase from Milton's "Il Penseroso," read by Philip Smithells after the first talk, in which the poet suggests that black is "staid Wisdom's hue." To have these melancholy or prophetic thoughts, yet be unable to voice them in song or poetry, would indeed be gloom; but poetry is the magic device through which a private grief becomes a public joy to all who understand it.

—Westcliff

### Strutting Players

"MEMORIES of the Old Vic—A Story of London's Famous Theatre," was definitely a story rather than the story, a brochure rather than a short history, and told with an undramatic disregard of dramatic light and shade. But the illustrations made it memorable. I should think Maurice Evans's Macbeth as near as we are likely to get to Sir Henry Irving, though we N.Z. LISTENER, AUGUST 27, 1954.

were left in doubt as to whether this was intentional. It was perhaps unfortunate that the excerpt from *Romeo and Juliet* should have come immediately after a reference to CEMA, which was bound to ring a glockenspiel for anyone familiar with Harlequinade. But the extracts from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* were delightful, and had the merit, for the New Zealand listener, of enabling him to renew his memories not of the Old Vic itself but of a production by one of what the programme refers to as "new roots and flowers from the ruined trunk."

### Unrepentant Seekers

"HERE'S something that if you can't dig for it," said Mr. Mybug to Flora Poste, and this was the very powerful impression left by the NZBS programme *Pacific Gold*, the story of the Cocos Islands treasure. Equally powerful, of course, was the impression that dead men neither tell tales nor leave maps that are 100 per cent reliable, and that after Captain Shrapnel's blasting our chances of doing any selective digging are slight. *Pacific Gold* was a fast-moving, exciting and straightforward story (the listener was left to form his own conclusions about the effect on the human personality of "gold beyond the wildest dreams of avarice" without having stories of curses put across him). Its characters were vigorous and clear-cut, the scallywags deep-dyed, with no death-bed repentance about anything but the fact that they would never see their treasure again. The programme got under way to a lively rendition of Alex Lindsay's specially composed chanty "Who'll Take a Chance for the Spanish Main?"—repeated, suitably subdued, when we hove-to at programme's end.

—M.B.



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