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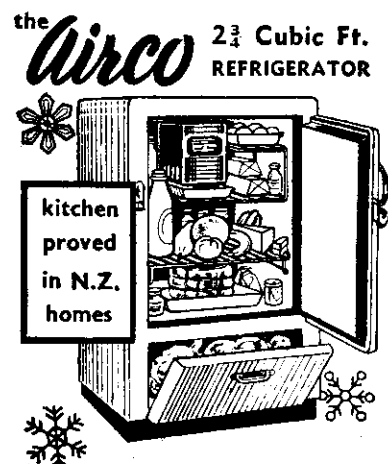
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Spencer Digby photograph

As producer and actor, and often both at the same time, William Austin is one of the most experienced men in New Zealand broadcasting, but he still remembers clearly his first part, back in the days when radio plays went straight on the air. "It was in a play called *Off Finisterre*," he told us. "I had one line. I had to say 'I don't play quito,' and I sat down and worked out the most effective way to say it, with due attention to inflection and emphasis." At that time Mr. Austin was a law student at Victoria University College after as good a beginning as any New Zealander could expect—he was born in Greymouth and educated in Wellington. When Bernard Beeby became NZBS Supervisor of Productions, Mr. Austin continued his free-lance radio work and was in some of the first plays recorded. He also represented Wellington in productions when actors were brought together from all over New Zealand during the Easter holidays.

The war interrupted all that. Mr. Austin volunteered early for the Air Force and served for seven years as a navigator—over Europe, in Malta, the Middle East, India, North-west Africa and England—coming home with the rank of Squadron-Leader and a D.F.C. There was a job for him in the Productions Department of the NZBS, and soon he was himself producing under the Supervisor of Productions. For three years from 1949 he was in charge of production at the Auckland Studios. His experience has included acting and producing in the widest field, though one of his most exacting jobs was as a reader of continuity in Royal Tour magazine programmes. (One of his recent productions, *The Last Lap*, is referred to on page 25.)

Did he prefer producing to acting? "Yes, because of the added responsibility of dealing with so many more factors than your own performance, radio production is on the whole a much more satisfying thing," he said. "In both you need to be extremely self-critical—it's fatal to be smug—and there are many disappointments at the play-back stage of a production." An actor who had worked on production, said Mr. Austin, came to regard the producer with even more respect than before. "You can understand his difficulties, you're quicker to take direction, your performance is more disciplined, and you come to accept the principle that everyone must have direction."

Though still very interested in the legitimate theatre, in which he has done

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quite a bit of work at one time and another, Mr. Austin finds full-time work as a radio actor and producer leaves little energy for repertory work. His last part was in Auckland, as Thomas Mendip in *The Lady's Not For Burning*. He admits, too, that another interest is taking a great deal of his time. He became engaged not long ago to Valerie Spencer (assistant to the Supervisor of Women's Programmes in the Commercial Division), and the interior decoration of a house he has bought at Pukerua Bay, near Wellington, is taking most of his spare time just now.

THERE was more than a little sadness in Hollywood the other day over the death of Arthur Johnston, the songwriter who composed such evergreen film tunes as "Pennies from Heaven," "Cocktails for Two," "Thanks a Million" and "My Old Flame." He died after a long period of ill-health at the age of 56. Johnston entered the musical world in the 1920s, when he was employed as pianist to Irving Berlin. He settled in Hollywood in 1929 and soon made his name in the film capital, writing musical scores for important pictures (among them Chaplin's *City Lights*), and collaborating with lyricists Sam Coslow and Johnny Burke. The Coslow-Johnston partnership was established in 1931, when the two composed "Just One More Chance." This became one of Bing Crosby's favourite songs, and most of Johnston's later hits were first heard in Crosby films. Arthur Johnston had been comparatively inactive as a songwriter in the post-war years, other business interests taking up much of his time. But one of his later songs, "If I Only Had a Match," was recorded by Frank Sinatra and the late Al Jolson in 1946.

DEATH OF A TUNESMITH

AN inspecting engineer went butcher's hook at an old roadman for his road: the darned road was an absolute disgrace, said the engineer. On and on he went: he'd never seen such a road: all banked wrong; badly COASTING drained: a hopeless sur-
ALONG face; too steep here; too flat there . . . far too narrow. . . When he ran out of words, the old roadman looked up. 'Yeah,' he said. 'And how's she for length?'

That typical bit of local humour is just one of a number of smoke-oh yarns which Jim Henderson (at right) collected in his travels up and down the West Coast. He called on *The Listener* the other day to tell us about the talks he has based on these travels. This is New Zealand will be heard from the ZBs on Wednesday nights at 7.30, beginning September 1. "I've confined the present series to the West Coast, and next month I'm off to Northland," he said. "I'd like to cover as much of New Zealand as I can in this way—just roving around, talking to people, trying to get over in my work the real way New Zealanders live."

Besides the yarns, Jim Henderson tells about the golden elephant house, the search for greenstone, coal-mining, the white herons of Waitangi-roto River and, of course, West Coast "characters."

To get biographical information out of Jim Henderson himself you need a Coast coal-miner's pick, shovel and explosives. But he did admit he was 35, born in Motueka, and that after an "utterly undistinguished" career at Nelson College and in journalism, went off to war. He was captured at Sidi Rezegl in 1941 and repatriated through Turkey in '43. Back home in hospital he wrote *Gunner Inglorious*, and then adventured in England and Canada for three years, where he "starved and froze" respectively. Since then he has written *R.M.T.* and *22nd Battalion* for the War Histories Branch of Internal Affairs.

Jim lives in Eastbourne now, with his wife and two children—one aged two, the other a totalitarian of four, to whose question "How dare you speak to me like that?" Jim, for all his skill with words, still hasn't found a right and proper answer.

PATRICIA MURPHY, 2XA's Shopping Reporter, and her twin sister Joan literally slipped into radio. "We were born on Mount Egmont. That led almost inevitably to skiing, and skiing led to interviewing a ski instructor from Austria, Ernst Skardarasy, over 2ZB. After that we were offered the chance of taking over Aunt Daisy's programmes while she was overseas. Identical voices, figures and looks were added advantages in our publicity while we were at 2ZB." The Station lounge was often crowded by those curious to see the Radio Twins broadcast. A great percentage of the listening public believed that just one person was doing the two parts, the voices were so alike. But marriage parted the Murphy twins, for in 1942 Joan went off to the United States. Patricia, after representing New Zealand in a ski team racing against Australia, returned to broadcasting in 1949 when Station 2XA opened in Wanganui. With a radio career, a house and two daughters to look after, Pat has little time just now for skiing. However, for this year's leave she will be returning to the



N.P.S. photograph

N.Z. LISTENER, AUGUST 27, 1954.