

NEW FOREST FRONTIERS

THESE are 600,000 acres of them up there, extending from, say, the top of Lake Taupo to past Rotorua; so many pine trees that if pushed down, and laid end to end in one long row, they would easily go 150 times around the globe. And the residents claim they form the biggest artificial forests in the world.

These trees, many of them planted in areas which had been abandoned by farmers as hopeless, have to be chopped down, transported over specially-constructed roads, and then milled. To do this, factories are needed, and men to work the factories, men with their wives and their children, who need schools and community centres and post offices and shops to buy their food and clothing. In short, towns are needed; they are being built.

These forests, and the towns springing up in them, are described by Jim

Henderson in a series of seven talks, *Frontier Towns*, which will be broadcast on the YA and YZ stations, the first three at 9.15 p.m. on Thursdays, February 10, 17 and 24, and the remainder in April.

The first talk describes the forests themselves, and especially the precautions taken against the forests' worst enemy—the man with the match. Stan Mark, for instance, spends his working day from sunrise to sunset at the top of a 60-foot steel tower, but unlike the Lady of Shalott, he must constantly watch over a vast blue, green and brown circle of forest, hills and river. Over thirty miles he can judge the distance of a fire to within half a mile. With his telescope and French binoculars he has watched a cricket match six and a half miles away—"the ball was a bit hard to follow, though." At first sign of a fire, he radio-telephones headquarters, and if necessary, a thousand fire-fighters can be mustered. . .

In 1948 there were 140 people in the township of Tokoroa. Now there are well over 5000. But what stresses are imposed on the people in towns undergoing such forced growth? For one thing, they had to build three great institutions vital to any community—a maternity hospital, a gaol and a cemetery. The hospital now contains 10 maternity beds—they will be needed; at the time of writing the population was due to increase by about 50 known; they finally got a gaol, brick, with two cells, and a sergeant; and as for the cemetery, they've got a site set aside, but nobody has yet taken enough time off from building Tokoroa to get buried there.

But Mr. Henderson is not content with describing merely the shell of the

towns, the buildings and environs. He takes a real person, Judith, and her family, and shows how they came to Tokoroa fresh from a big city, with no knowledge of small-town community life and, indeed, no community life to come to in Tokoroa; he tells how they were lonely for months till they began helping to build the community spirit of Tokoroa.

Other talks in the series describe the mills at Kinleith, the loggers' camp at Murupara and the town of Kawerau. They are an interesting mixture of facts, descriptions and stories about people—like the logger who half swallowed the large black weta, and the patrolman who is hoping to catch a lurking traffic officer trespassing on a private road.

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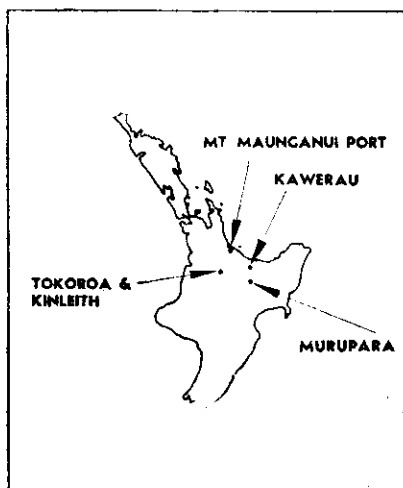
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THE ORCHESTRA

Programmes for Christchurch

THE Orchestra is to open its Christchurch Prom season with Douglas Lilburn's *Festival Overture* (3YC, February 7), an appropriate gesture, for Douglas Lilburn may almost be said to have grown up as a composer in Christchurch. The *Festival Overture* was written, if I remember rightly, and having no reference to hand, for the 1940 Centenary celebrations, but has not been performed since that time.

Apart from Lilburn's work, the Christchurch programmes tread more or less familiar paths, which is no bad thing at this time of the year, when our listening is just being tuned up. For instance, there's Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5 in E Minor* (3YC, February 7). This is the sort of music in which it is easy to wallow, letting thought be engulfed in a sea of turgid emotion, enjoying vicariously the introspective melancholy and self-pity which the composer himself let overflow into the music. And, after all, what was good enough for Tchaikovsky as a musical expression can hardly be cavilled at in the listener. But, although Tchaikovsky dubbed himself no composer of symphonies—"What I write has always a mountain of padding; an experienced eye can detect the thread in my seams and I can do nothing about it"—there is much more to his music than torrents of sound and voluptuous tunes. The seams

may show, but the colours of the fabric are always rich and the energy and vitality of the music cannot be denied. There's still a bit of prospecting to be done in the Tchaikovsky goldfield.

A work that still yields much gold, despite many playings, is Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole* for violin and orchestra (3YC, February 9). It was Manuel de Falla, I think, who said that the best Spanish music was written by Frenchmen. Lalo has certainly caught what everyone believes to be the typical Spanish atmosphere which is, in fact, the colour of Andalusia. It is in the richness of the orchestration, in the lift of the melodies, but most of all, in the rhythms. It's a long time since I heard Vincent Aspey play the *Symphonie Espagnole*. This is music that is right down his alley. It comes naturally to him. And for a work like this which demands rhythm and emotional flexibility that is the only way it can come off.

But the most interesting programme to be broadcast from Christchurch is probably the Verdi group of opera overtures and arias with Dora Drake and Laszlo Rogatsy as soloists (YC link, February 10). The great operatic battle in the 19th Century was between Verdi and Wagner. In the long run, I rather fancy Verdi will win.

—Owen Jensen



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