

Lodge Listens . . .



"The public are warned that live shell practices are to be carried out. . . For the information of motorists, the danger area lies on both sides of the Desert Road, but the Desert Road itself is safe"

(continued from previous page)

G. Wodehouse, was sidesplitting enough for two. I remember reading the story and chuckling, but it was as nothing to the play, where you were privileged to hear the condensation of the sentiment-laden atmosphere of Honeysuckle Cottage going drip-drip-drip on the hard-boiled hero's heart. As the wistful, elfin slip-of-a-heroine Paddy Turner could not have been better, managing somehow to be the cause of nauseous sentimentality in others without actually getting wet herself.

Full Treatment

KAWERAU, I feel, is something to crow about, and the documentary programme on Kawerau last Sunday morning (April 17) was instinct with the same belief. It crowded with conviction and virtuosity, using, especially in the early part of the programme, the rising inflections, sudden silences, crashing chords and all the other appurtenances of urgency that give the listener the agreeably fluttered feeling of being courted. I can, of course, remember being aroused to resistance and even flight by this same technique, but, of course, it all depends what's doing the courting. The epic proportions of Kawerau demand nothing less than the full treatment, and so successful was the programme in generating excitement at the beginning that it carried us without tedium through the slower-moving stretches—for example, the conversations with the American executive who spoke English very slowly as though it were a foreign language. I emerged at

programme's end with the satisfied purr of one whose national pride has been stroked the right way.

—M.B.

Atmosphere and Illusion

IF there were anything like an "Oscar" for the best New Zealand-made radio documentary of the year, I would be glad to nominate Jack Dobson's *North American Journey* (12B) for the award. To be sure, he has a much more exotic and interesting set of subjects than the stay-at-homes can exploit. At the same time, a good topic, as we have seen often enough in the past, can be ruined by badly selected material, inept questions, and clumsy editing. This series shows clever and economical jig-sawing, not too much labouring of the obvious, and a flair for picking interviewees who are interestingly articulate. The *Film City* job was a little too reverential of Hollywood mythology for my taste. But this is *San Francisco*, with its happy combination of interview, description, and natural sounds, conveyed very satisfyingly the atmosphere of that paradoxical, exciting city. And *Shasta Daylight*, dealing with the train that runs from San Francisco to Portland, Oregon, so successfully created the illusion of an actual trip on this handsome train that memories of the pitiful inadequacies of our own rolling stock pierced to the heart like an arrow. The blend of interviewer's nous and technical skill gave these sessions an immediacy which more formal documentaries often miss.

—J.C.R.

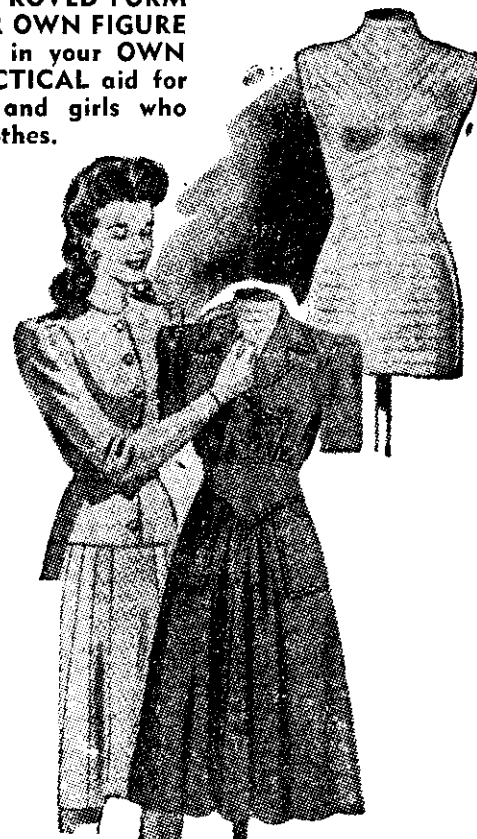
N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 29, 1955.

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