

School Broadcasts

JEAN COMBS SIGNS OFF

THIRTEEN years after moving in as Officer-in-Charge of Broadcasts to Schools, Jean Combs left her office for the last time at the end of March. How did she feel about going? asked *The Listener* when we called for a farewell word. Well, she said without hesitation, she was sure she'd feel sorry when it came round to the first working day after Easter—she had got as much satisfaction from working with "Schools" as from teaching—but just at the moment she was rather looking forward to doing a job she hadn't been able to give all her time to till now—which was taking care of a husband and home. Miss Combs became Mrs. Desmond Buckley about 18 months ago, and that, of course, she said, was her reason for leaving "Schools."

Miss Combs told us she was actually the second person to be in charge of Broadcasts to Schools. She came to the job after training as a teacher in Wellington and teaching in both city and country schools and at the Correspondence School.

"At first there was just me and half a secretary in a back room at the Loan and Mercantile Building. I shared a secretary," she explained, "with Peter Harcourt, who was doing *With the Boys Overseas* in the room next door. I was there about three years and we



Spencer Digby photograph

came to our present offices—by that time the staff had grown quite a bit—by way of a spell at the Waring Taylor Street Studios." Three years ago Miss Combs also took over Children's Sessions and became Supervisor of Broadcasts to Schools and Children's Programmes, and she has also seen in recent years the development of the new and successful *Kindergarten of the Air*.

"I think the increase in the distribution of our booklet gives a pretty fair indication of our development," Miss

Combs said. "Back in the early days we published one music booklet which was distributed to about 3000 teachers, and there was a French booklet every two years. Now there are altogether seven booklets, and the total printing this year was 133,000 copies. Listening time for our sessions, including Correspondence School and *Kindergarten of the Air*, has increased from three hours and a quarter a week to five hours and a quarter a week." "Reporting," a form of listener research in schools, started about 10 years ago and has gone on steadily ever since. "We're of most help, I think, to the country schools," said Miss Combs, "and in our reporting we watch most carefully for their reactions. City and town schools have so much to draw on that country schools have to do without."

And, apart from husband and home, what did she intend to give her time to in future? "I started writing radio plays for children before the days of Broadcasts to Schools, and that's something I want to keep on with," Miss Combs said. And other interests? "Theatre and films I love and, outdoors, walking and gardening." And with a pleased smile she added: "We have a section at Otaki where we have a weekend bach and hope to build a summer cottage, and we'll be there over Easter to plant 100 freesias, two dozen irises and numerous shrubs."

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about ourselves, but there seems to be little doubt that after a bare nine years

as an actor David Kossoff

LEMMY is still only in his middle thirties. His part in *The*

Young Lovers isn't the only one for which he has doubled his age, for he has done a number of fine character studies of men in their sixties and seventies—the most recent of them Mr. Kandinsky in *A Kid for Two Farthings*, now being shown in New Zealand.

As a young man David Kossoff intended to be a technical artist, but back in 1945 he joined the BBC Repertory Company, where he stayed for six

years. He says: "It was a good school for learning the profession, I assure you." To prove that he had learnt the job thoroughly, David won with his very first film a British Film Academy award for the best supporting actor of the year. Among his recent radio appearances was a leading part in a BBC production of *The Same Sky*. This evidently has something of the quality of *The Young Lovers*, for it has been described as "a play to be seen by all who feel pity for the loves and perplexity at the hates of mankind." In this David had the part of the father of a Jewish girl, played by Yvonne Mitchell, who also wrote the play.



REG WILLIAMS, who is heard in a weekly nature talk in "Hello, Children," from 2XG on Thursdays, is seen here during an excursion to Cape Kidnappers last summer. Diane Cresswell is asking the question.

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