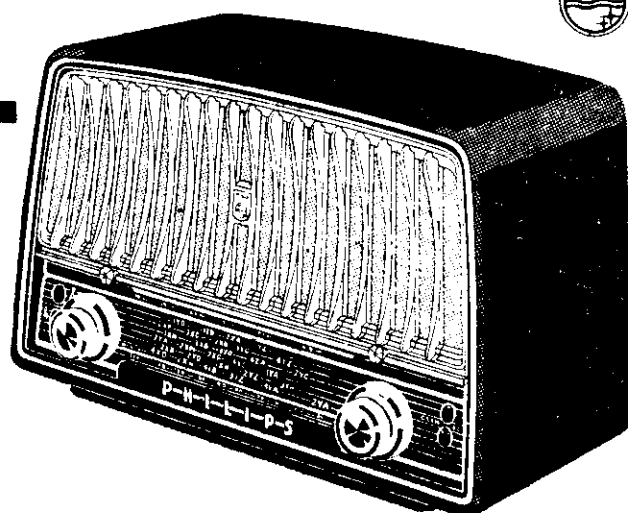


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Auckland Notebook

MINUTE MEN

[N case anybody's curious, real live people, mainly real live New Zealanders, are involved in the fancier plugs you hear on behalf of merchandising campaigns from the Commercial stations. Of course the vast majority of locally advertised products have their plugs read by the regular announcer-on-duty, who is also likely to be a living New Zealander, but sing song, dramatics, and special sound effects have to be handled by people with time to rehearse. Quite a bit of this sort of recording goes on in Auckland, some by private agencies, and some in the recording studios of the NZBS, who can fit in about a hundred a month, on top of the usual well-filled recording schedule. If they had more studio space, they'd do more. The demand is solid. Earl Rowell, who looks after drama in the Auckland studios, is also the man who sees to the commercial recording. From these hundred one minute productions, he will tell you, may come six hundred dubbed recordings, which are sent out to stations all over the country, wherever advertisers want their messages projected. Usually the advertiser, feeling a need for this sort of plug for his product, goes to an agency. The agency sweats out the copy, has it approved by the advertiser and then by the Broadcasting Service. Mr. Rowell assembles the cast from his list of auditioned, reliable, experienced dramatis personae. He charges a flat rate per one minute disc of the agency, whether the copy is a short Shakespeare reading or someone playing a xylophone made of bottles. The dramatis personae get their cut out of this. No one actor does a hundred a month, but a good solid troupier can add a worth while dollop to his income. Mr. Rowell, whose job it is to produce recordings which keep the advertiser and the agency happy, and the public ding dinging on the cash registers, and who must do this without killing off a high percentage of his dramatis personae, hasn't let the grind reduce him to a mechanical man. He discusses his work with candour and amiability and has retained the freshness of outlook necessary to appreciate the miraculous when it bursts on his gaze. How could anyone doubt the power of the properly inspired singing commercial when an Auckland professional man doubled his clientele by investing in just one? Where are these tunes born? Sometimes in the agency. In this case the rather ruggedly simple idea is whistled or sung to one of Mr. Rowell's musicians. The latter writes it down, polishes it, and arranges it for two girls and a guitar, or four close harmonists round a piano, or whatever choir and orchestra is finally chosen. A test cut of this is then submitted to Head Office for approval, as is also the case with the completed recording. Sometimes the agency may be short on musical tunes, in which case the words are sent round to Mr. Rowell and he asks a musician to tailor a tight fitting

garment for them. Recording sessions, which agency people often attend, suffer no harm from give and take, Mr. Rowell thinks. Ideas fly around, compromises are reached, conflicts resolved. But there is always heartfelt agreement on the need for absolute clarity of speech and lyric. If the customer can hear nothing but a rumble of plum stones, how can he know what to buy? And always remember, fellers, you've got exactly one minute to make up his mind for him.

Aliens III

ARE there more or less vegetarians than Soccer players in New Zealand? I don't know, but I should guess fewer. Do butchers ever gather in menacing mobs, haul out their cleavers and massacre bunches of vegetarians? No. They would grudge the time off from selling meat. Vegetarians in New Zealand are very minor and very alien. You can tell that by walking down the street any Saturday and Sunday about noon. Roast meat wafts from every house. Still, they have a better show in Auckland than anywhere else. It's easier to grow fruit and vegetables in that climate all year than, say, Tapanui, and it's easier to stay warm in Auckland on a diet which seems cold to those newly converted. Vegetarians keep up their morale by meeting at their clubs and eating at the vegetarian cafe. The latter has its own inexpensive atmosphere plus food, and its own clean freshness. We have a notable, thought-provoking distinction here. A hospital aims at sterile cleanliness, which is as dead as outer space. Good vegetarian food is clean but living. It's impossible to explain that one any further except by eating that way for a few months. At their clubs vegetarians listen to ideas from California, which has an all-year growing climate, they exchange recipes, encourage puzzled members, and note how much better they are all looking. Are they? Don't tell the Meat Producers' Board, on whom our standard of living depends, but the answer is yes, for a small alien minority, they do seem to look better, particularly as they age.

—G. leF. Y.



(C) Punch
"On the contrary I think it's the lousy weather that drives man to fooling about with H-bombs"

N.Z. LISTENER, FEBRUARY 1, 1957.