

Open Microphone

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS
ON AND OFF THE RECORD

Well known to 3YZ listeners for his programmes about West Coast life, David White has always had a hankering to write, and was only 12 when he bought an ancient typewriter for £3. He was educated for a life at sea, but at 16 found himself instead a night messenger on a Christchurch newspaper, one step towards becoming a reporter. After a number of years in broadcasting, first at 3ZB and then, following a spell in Australia, at 3YZ, journalism still fascinates him. One of his hobbies is writing articles for New Zealand periodicals, and he admits that his ambition is to do broadcasting talks work or full-time writing.

In three years' work on West Coast News Review, Mr. White has interviewed about 800 people and found that what frightens most people most is the microphone. "Often," he says, "the man who speaks loudest and most confidently before an interview becomes a small-voiced coward when it's being recorded. I've found, too, that when an interview is over many people talk more freely and interestingly than they have for the record." Incidentally, he declares that in many interviews "at home" for documentary features the most hospitable families have been those of Italian migrants now working

in the mines. Well aware that there's a vast amount of material waiting to be turned into radio features about New Zealand life now and in the past, Mr. White finds this sort of work intensely interesting. "But a great amount of research is necessary, and factual accuracy is essential," he says. "Once, for instance, several railwaymen complained about a train whistle used in a feature—they weren't built then, I was told."

A married man—whose one very small daughter Debra Ann was "not named after a racehorse"—Mr. White has some homely activities among his hobbies—gardening, for instance, and home brewing. He's also a keen amateur photographer, specialising in 35 mm., and he likes to "fiddle" with cars and play the clarinet. In Christchurch he did some amateur acting, and was active in Junior Chamber of Commerce public speaking circles. Tailored to a working life on shifts, his sports are rifle shooting, fishing, swimming and tennis. Has he any special likes or dislikes? Mr. White has a ready answer for that one, too: "I like spaghetti, cooked Italian style, rock 'n' roll records and chamber music ensembles. And I dislike Gracie Fields records and—because there's no privacy—living in a flat."

THE man who discovered radio comedy star Jimmy Edwards arrived in Australia not long ago to become Director of Light Entertainment for the ABC. He is David Porter, who has had a distinguished career with the BBC. "I first met Jimmy when I was an instructor in the R.A.F. in Canada, and I taught him to fly," Mr. Porter recalls. "During this period I wrote some scripts for him, and he performed brilliantly in them on Air Force stations. After the war I was involved in a production at Her Majesty's Theatre, London, and Jimmy, seeing my name, asked me if I would arrange an audition for him at the

THE PROFESSOR BBC. Of course I recommended him, and he was a hit right from the start." Mr. Porter is a great admirer of Dick Bentley and Joy Nichols also, and last produced them with Jimmy Edwards in a programme for American servicemen at a United States Air Force base in Lancashire—the largest in Europe. Originally a variety producer, David Porter's last position with the BBC was as Assistant Head of Programmes, Sound and Television, in the North Region, which serves over 11,000,000 listeners. Incidentally, he says that *The Goon Show* is probably the most popular variety programme in England today—more popular recently than *Take It From Here*.

Recent news of Jimmy Edwards is that he has become headmaster of a school for the sons of gentlefolk—but only on TV. Jimmy once admitted that when he was a preparatory school teacher for a time some years ago, "the boys all laughed at me," and at TV rehearsals it seems to be the same. In the opening instalment of his new show he had to quell mutinies by both staff and boys. The climax of the programme was his attempt to teach five classes five subjects simultaneously—chemistry,

French, music, gymnasium, and special biology. *Whack-Ho!* as the programme is called, is written by the *Take It From Here* team, Norden and Muir.

"I found the experience fascinating," Jimmy declared when asked about the series. "I am glad to say that most of my nervous twitching has now stopped." Before *Whack-Ho!* he said, he was called on to play one of the title roles in the film *Three Men in a Boat*. "No, I was not the Boat! I was one of the Three Men—the good-looking one." Jimmy also said he has been to Malta to entertain the troops "with a veal-faced actor called Bentley." Dick, he said, created "quite a stir" because he was "the only man whose Balaclava Helmet was actually issued to him at the Battle of Balaclava."

THE distinguished scientist and Nobel Prizewinner Sir Edward Appleton, who gave the most recent series of BBC Reith Lectures, later to be heard from NZBS stations, has in a way a special interest for New Zealanders, for he was a pupil of Lord Rutherford. A Yorkshireman—he was born in Bradford in

1892—Sir Edward spent the early years of his career at the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge

before he was appointed Wheatstone Professor of Physics at King's College, London. It was during his period at King's College that his researches led to the discovery of the ionised region in the atmosphere now known by his name—the Appleton Layer—which acts as a reflector of radio waves. Sir Edward has also occupied the Jacksonian Chair of Natural Philosophy at Cambridge and the secretaryship of the British Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1947, and two years later became Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Edinburgh University.

Noted for his work on the development of radar, Sir Edward is also well known as a most lucid scientific broadcaster. At a British Association meeting, when the presentation of science was criticised, he once commented: "It is my belief that if a scientist cannot talk simply about his subject, he has not got to the bottom of it himself." The subject of his six Reith Lectures is *Science and the Nation*.



SIR EDWARD APPLETON
A pupil of Rutherford

N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 1, 1957.

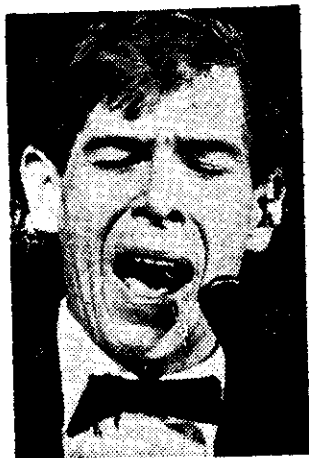
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