



N.P.S. photograph

WHEN you meet friends of Asquith M. Thomson—and they're pretty numerous—one of the things they're sure to mention about him is his remarkable talent as a storyteller. Listeners will remember his recollections of school break-ups and school concerts, and next week he's to be heard (YA-YZ link, April 30) giving an amusing account of his experiences as a sub-enumerator in last year's census.

STORYTELLER

"Tommy"—as he's known to *Open Microphone*—didn't get off to a very good start that day, for the first woman who opened the door to him told him to go to blazes and take his rubbish with him. As she explained later, she thought he was "one of those religious people." Strangely enough, he says, no one else jumped to such theological conclusions, though he was suspected of being several other sorts of people. Mr Thomson (left) has many incidents to relate, and he ends with one that will puzzle and entertain listeners as much as it still puzzles him.

★

WHEN Harry Secombe of *The Goon Show* was playing on the London stage not long ago in *Rocking the Town*, Swansea people who came to town for the show liked to go backstage and recall with SEAGOON him their schooldays when he was not considered good enough to take part in the end-of-term play. Scarlet fever, it seems, had left him very short-sighted. On stage at school he would bump into the scenery, so he was given a job painting it instead of acting. In those days his sister was the family comic, and when she started taking him along to church socials to help with her act he wasn't at all eager—he suffered badly from stage fright.

According to Eric Johns in *Theatre World*, Harry used to write verse that wouldn't scan and short stories that no

editor would buy. That was in his early teens. His comic genius first started to bloom when, aged 16, he went to work in an office. He often got into trouble for taking off his boss on the phone, and it was on an office outing that he first appeared in London, giving an impromptu one-man show.

Open Microphone

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS ON AND OFF THE RECORD

THE New Zealand mezzo-soprano Mona Ross, who has spent the last four years with the Carl Rosa Opera Company, was a busy visitor to Wellington recently. Miss Ross studied at the Royal College of Music, and as she was completing her studies there the College opera director asked the Carl Rosa directors to



N.P.S. photograph

MONA ROSS

Her favourite is Carmen

come and see her work. She was accepted immediately, and since then has sung all the leading mezzo roles, including Carmen, her favourite. Now she is back for six months' holiday with her parents.

When we met her at the NZBS Concert Section Miss Ross had been discussing arrangements to appear with the tenor Richard Lewis and the National Orchestra in the Verdi *Requiem*. She was also making plans to join the New Zealand Opera Company for *The Consul*, in which she will take the important role of the Secretary, and for *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. We asked about any other appearances. "Well," Miss Ross said with a laugh, "I'm not committed to anything else—I've simply got to have a holiday."

★

LAST year New Plymouth earned itself national attention through what is thought to be the first New Zealand performance of Gluck's opera *Orpheus and Eurydice*. The man responsible for this was William Komlos, who was recently in Wellington as guest conductor of the National Orchestra for a studio concert. Mr Komlos told us there had been "quite a lot of con-



BBC photograph

THREE Goons get camera-happy at the 1956 National Radio Show, from which they broadcast an edition of "The Goon Show." From left: Harry Secombe, Peter Sellers and (in foreground) Spike Milligan

Listener's Record Buy Guide-



WINSTON CHURCHILL

speaks in 'I Can Hear It Now'

Excerpts from the unforgettable wartime and post-war speeches of one of the great figures in history.

12in. LP CORONET KLC 502 39/6

TUNES IN TEMPO

Dance music on the Hammond Organ by the incomparable Ray Colignon—an engaging selection for party nights.

10in. LP PHILIPS P 10404 R 25/-

Free Write to Philips Electrical Industries of New Zealand Limited, Box 2097, Wellington, for your free copy of Philips and CBS Coronet latest record Catalogue Supplement.



The Best of FRED ASTAIRE

A round dozen of the gaily sophisticated songs that have charmed thousands through the years.

12in. LP PHILIPS B 07075 L 39/6

P.D. 64



buy Pleasure-buy Records by PHILIPS