



(continued from previous page)

(C) Punch

there are many opportunities to hear opera in the flesh. Yet, in New Zealand, where live opera, despite the young Opera Company, is still a rare treat, the broadcasting of off-beat compositions is an important addition to our cultural life. A dip of the lid, therefore, on behalf of all who can't afford LP albums, to the NZBS for this invaluable service.

—J.C.R.

landlines I can't foresee much less pre-recording. It is convenient to the broadcaster, who can do his piece at a time to suit himself, and economical for the NZBS. So long as the only off-set against these solid advantages is a debatable psychological point pre-recording will continue, and I make no complaint. Complaint is justified, however,

when the recordings themselves are poor or worn. The recordings of *But For This Man*, by Celia and Cecil Manson, from 2YA were quite shocking, and put a formidable obstacle in the way of enjoying the fruits of some valuable research into New Zealand history. —R.D.McE.

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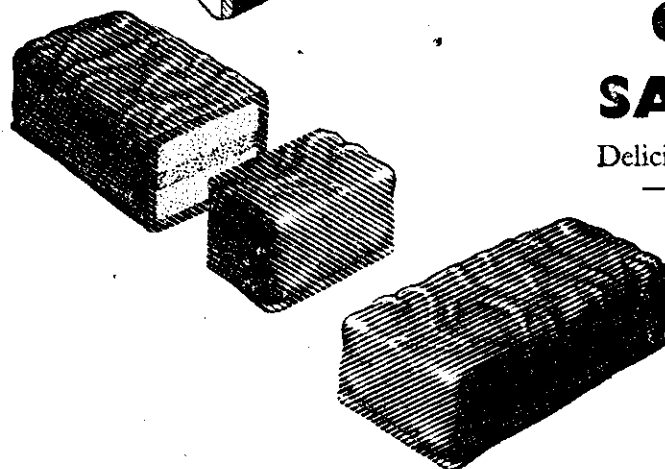
Fact Foremost

HAZARDING a generalisation, I would say that New Zealanders too often argue from an inadequate basis of fact. It was pleasing to find that in the talks on divorce entitled *Divers Unhappy Differences* fact came first, opinion afterwards. Professor Davis's outline of the legal position was followed by Allan Nixon's summary of his statistical investigation into divorce in New Zealand. This largely followed his pamphlet on the subject, though there were some new findings and a new emphasis on the interdependence of factors commonly associated with divorce—pre-marital pregnancy, youth, low education and income status, for example. Marie Griffin was able to go some way beyond the statistical approach from her experience as a family guider. Her conclusion that, far from securing release from unhappiness, divorce usually causes more, can be accepted with the reservation that a counsellor probably sees the unhappiest cases. The Rev. Ewen Simpson's summary of the theoretical approach of the churches to divorce was useful as far as it went, but might have been supplemented by some evidence of their practice. The discussion between the speakers which concluded the series produced a surprisingly unanimous belief that the law should provide some stay of proceedings to enable an attempt at reconciliation, encouraged by Mrs Griffin's assurance that this stage is not too late. Their tinkering with the idea of compulsory guidance before marriage seemed to me less happy. But it was a stimulating series.

In the Groove

MORE than once I've met people used to working for the BBC who have been shocked to find how many NZBS programmes are pre-recorded. They are sure they couldn't do their best if they knew that only the technician was listening at the time. The habit dates, no doubt, from the time when recording took the place of non-existent landlines; but even now that we have the

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