

New Zealand on Record

EXTENDED play records with a primarily educational aim will be the starting point and main strength of a new record publishing adventure, Kiwi Records, whose first disc has been welcomed by an officer of the Education Department. This disc is one of a short series, *Let's Learn Maori*, by William Ngata, son of the late Sir Apirana Ngata, whose broadcasts on Maori subjects have included a series of lessons in Maori now being heard from 3YC and 4YC. Mr Ngata's first record, a lesson in Maori pronunciations, has the full text printed on the jacket. The second will go on to simple sentences, and others will complete an elementary course in the Maori language which so far as is known has not previously been recorded for general use.

The field for records of educational value was quite wide in New Zealand, A. W. Reed, of A. H. and A. W. Reed, publishers of Kiwi Records, told *The Listener*. Following *Let's Learn Maori*, the work of New Zealand poets had a fairly high priority. It was hoped that some of these would be spoken by the poets themselves, and in the meantime the series would begin with poems from *New Zealand Bird Songs*, Eileen Duggan's book for children, read by the

Aucklander John Thomson. Physical education was another field to which the new records would contribute. There was a need for the right sort of records for this work, and a group of folk dances from different countries, recorded by New Zealand musicians, would make up another six discs.

Among New Zealand stories which it is planned to record, Maori legends told by Kenneth Melvin (well known as a broadcaster under his own name and as Tusitala) will have an important place. The first two will probably be "Hinemoa and Tutanekai" and "Kai and the Whale." With Maori music as background, these are certain to appeal to schools, and are also expected to interest tourists. Other children's stories with a New Zealand background are likely to be included in the list—a field which should give some new scope to New Zealand writers. Beyond these primarily educational series, Kiwi Records aim to branch out into a wider field of recording which should help to perpetuate and popularise the work of New Zealanders. In this programme Maori music will have an important place.

Work on the record publishing project began about six months ago, and a few more discs are expected to be out this year; and during 1958 the publishers hope to be able to offer a representative range with a few dozen or score on the market. The records are being pressed in Wellington.

Discussing the need for records of New Zealand subjects suitable for schools, the Supervisor of Teaching Aids for the Education Department, Walter B. Harris, who is also in charge of the National Film Library, said the Department was encouraging schools to build up their own record libraries. In



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corporated in the National Film Library is a record library started more than a year ago with over 1000 discs presented by the British Council as a foundation. There have also been gifts to the library from the Governments of France, Belgium, West Germany and the U.S.S.R. The library is not meant to replace school record libraries, but rather to provide schools with samples of the type of record available so that they are encouraged to buy for themselves. To help them do this the Department provides a £ for £ subsidy on the purchase of records by State primary schools and also subsidises the purchase of inexpensive record players.

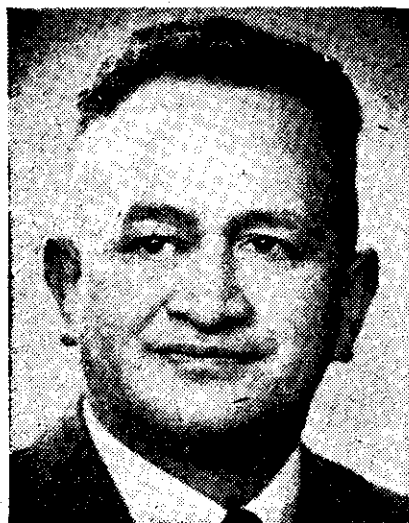
Mr Harris said the central library had been set up at a very suitable time when the old 78 r.p.m. records were going out and the new LPs were coming in. The British Council collection covered English music and gave a fairly complete cover of English poetry. These records, all 78s, did not travel easily, however, and the library preferred to have plastic LPs which

were much easier to send by mail. Though the 10-inch and 12-inch LPs were much too long for ordinary class use, the 7-inch, 45 r.p.m. extended play record with a playing time of six minutes and a half was ideal.

"Unfortunately," said Mr Harris, "there are not nearly enough of these records being made—it's almost impossible to get from overseas records of New Zealand topics, whether of Maori music, music by New Zealand composers or orchestras, or of New Zealand speech, poetry or drama. Teachers frequently request records of this sort, and the Department would welcome any records, particularly 7-inch, 45 r.p.m., of New Zealand music, poetry and legends suitable for schools."

The first example of these was the Maori language record produced by Kiwi Records. This and others in the series to follow would be a great help to schools which would like to teach Maori if more help were available. The Department was helping Kiwi Records in the production of the six records to provide music for folk dancing—one record of four dances for each class from Standard 1 to Form 2. These will accompany an instruction book on folk dancing recently published by the Department. "The 7-inch record is of such a convenient size that it should be possible to produce a record for use along with a book, inside the same binding—say, a musical score or a book of verse," Mr Harris added.

EILEEN DUGGAN (left) will be the first New Zealand writer recorded in a series of readings from (and in some cases by) New Zealand poets. BELOW (left to right), W. T. Ngata, John Thomson and Kenneth Melvin, whose voices will be heard in Maori language, verse and story-telling recordings



Spencer Digby photograph

