

pervaded Alistair Campbell's verse programme *To Spring* that evening. There was a strain of elegy among the bursting buds. Spring verse has long been a set exercise for poets, in the same way that Jacobean men of affairs all wrote in praise of contentment and the quiet life; but Mr Campbell used nothing merely perfunctory. He found a fine variety, too, including New Zealanders, although, as he said, New Zealand poets seldom get excited about spring, which the early settlers seem to have brought with them. There were familiar pieces—Housman's cherry trees among them—but most were less well-known, American as well as British. The reading was uneven and mostly poor. The Robert Frost and the Henry Reed and one or two others were done with feeling and understanding, but one reader persisted in a uniformly dirgelike tum ti tum; while several poems, like the Thomas Nashe, which demanded formal if gay music, were given just too free an expression. Mr Campbell ended with a Yeats which brought the spring fever down with a bump. Bruce Mason cheered me up later until he ended with a like wallop. We seem not to believe wholeheartedly in spring.

### High Fever

NESTA PAIN writes documentaries about medicine and about insects, and the ones about insects are the best. Such extraordinary behaviour, especially when set to music. Her programme about smoking and lung cancer was a rush job with no beauty of form, merely recorded opinions strung together; but to the smug non-smoker it was scarcely less fascinating. Such extraordinary behaviour, even if not set to music. I didn't know whether to admire more those bravely nonchalant souls who were convinced by the figures but meant to go on smoking all the same, or those determined to see nothing in it at all. I wondered how long it would be before indifference turned to resentment and the Medical Research Council comes to have an equivalent meaning to wowser. An adviser to the industry earned his keep with what seemed to me a neat piece of rationalisation. Perhaps, he said, a pre-cancerous condition set up an unconscious malaise which demanded a compensation such as smoking, so that smoking was the result, not the cause, of lung cancer. But why should only lung cancer arouse such a need? And why, of all possible compensations, only cigarette smoking? There's no escape for you there, brother. You're doomed, for not being sensible like me

—R.D.McE.

### Nights of Spring

NEVER, to the best of my knowledge, has spring been ushered in with such a radio fanfare as last week provided. The various groupings of music caught the spirit of the season admirably, especially since, with I presume, the co-operation of the Weather Office, the weather in Auckland (I cannot answer for the outer darkness) came up to scratch. For me, the most interesting programmes came on Wednesday, Alistair Campbell's compilation of poems, *To Spring*, and Bruce Mason's intimate revue, *Rights of Spring*. The poems, selected from New Zealand, America and British sources, were linked together with a bland commentary and were, I thought, unusually well read. *Rights of Spring* didn't seem to me to be quite as bright as the earlier Mason opus. *Wit's End*; the opening song rather went

on, the various interviews sagged, and Duke J. Mangel-Wurzell laboured. But Mr Mason's skill at mimicry is something to be marvelled at, and the revue had quite as many high spots as any revue I've seen. Professor Apfel-Strudel's poem, with its gobbled refrain, Noddy in love and, above all, a wicked parody of a well-known political figure, made this unique divertissement one of the choicest flowers to bloom in the spring programmes.

### My Lady Nicotine

EVERYONE, I take it, has heard of the man who was so terrified by what he read in the papers about the evil effects of smoking that he decided to give up reading. After the indefatigable Nesta Pain's documentary on *Smoking*, he would also undoubtedly give up listening to the radio. This BBC feature gave the expression "coffin-nail" a new meaning. Miss Pain and her collaborator

Parking Metres

### SOFT SOAP OPERA

*THE broadcasts we hear from the House of M.P.'s  
The tastes of some people are failing to please,  
So might I suggest that perhaps the ZBs  
Could brighten the present routine?*

*No Minister then would be tempted to speak  
At the question-time quiz with his tongue in his cheek,  
When he knew that the straightest reply of the week  
Might win him a washing machine.*

—R.G.P.

had taken care to present both sides of the case as fairly as possible. The Tobacco Manufacturer's scientific representative, Sir Ronald Fisher, was able to point to weaknesses in the statistical case for a relationship between cigarette-smoking and lung-cancer, and one or two other speakers saw similar weaknesses in the evidence. But the weight of testimony was against the cigarette-smoke. The summing-up of Lord Adrian, secure

in his pipe-smoking immunity, put the matter, I feel, beyond doubt. This programme did a better job than any printed discussion I have seen; by putting the issues so justly, and by offering such a crowd of witnesses. But the most interesting revelation was that, despite the Medical Research Council report and the widespread discussion of it, cigarette sales have been affected not one iota. Holy smoke, indeed!

—J.C.R.



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