

and takes, another orbit. This episode did no harm. But the other involved us in a tedious archaeological expedition and after we had been digging for what seemed hours, we unearthed an early moon goddess, Ningall, if I render it correctly, and it is in search of her that her discoverer climbs aboard the rocket ship. Eventually, the ship passes through a cloud of meteors which throw it off orbit, and we leave the travellers circling for ever round the sun. Much too diffuse, the play was nevertheless enjoyable for its distinguished production and acting.

## Gogol

THE great Russian writer's *Diary of a Madman* was realised by the BBC in a production of masterly skill from 2YC. Paul Scofield, who has one of the English theatre's most powerful and flexible voices, read the Diary, and with the discreet but hair-raising accompaniment of weirdly suggestive music took us at once into that dark damp world of 19th century Russia with which, supremely, Dostoevsky has made us so familiar. Slowly, with piercing clarity, the whole face of contemporary Russia became visible: the perniciously corrupt Civil Service, the odious toadying and fawning by the lower clerk for the one above him, the dark horrors of domestic life. Paul Scofield has a bravura technique of characterisation, of sudden switches of mood and accent which recalls Emlin Williams. Don't miss it, by any means, when it is played again.

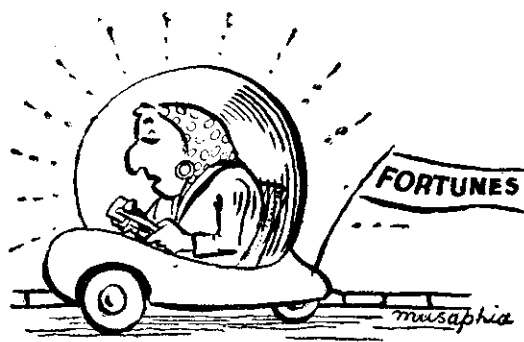
—B.E.G.M.

## The Tightrope Walk

OUR world last week took a further step along the tightrope over chaos. Some time ago I heard a latter-day Cassandra on *Background to the News* (2YA) beg leave to distract us from the Budget to frighten us for a few minutes about Lebanon. As far as this listener was concerned, she succeeded most thoroughly in her self-appointed task. Ending her analysis of events in the Middle East, she sought to answer her own question what the ordinary men and women of the world could do to avert disaster; but no answer came, save the admonition, now as she admitted quite out of fashion, to pray, and to pray hard. In days of distress we can tune in immediately to hear what the rulers of our country have to say. The morning after the landings in Lebanon, Parliament, still distracted by the Budget, offered us the small change of politics at Question Time. On *Lookout* Mr Keith Jackson, Lecturer in Political Science at the University of Otago, gave us the facts and their terrifying possible consequences with gravity and concern. The NZBS at least, is playing its part in trying to open our eyes to the abyss below.

## Beyond the Pale

BY chance I was able to hear the last of the talks on *Thy Servant the Dog* by Dorothy Holderness. If the earlier



ones were as good they must have been of high quality. Since 2YZ is not the easiest of stations to hear beyond Hawke's Bay, I hope we are to have a chance of hearing these talks nationally. In delivery and manner Mrs Holderness is sometimes akin to a Joyce Grenfell, or an Anna Russell even, but her style is ideally suited to her sub-

ject, to which she brings both knowledge and amused affection. With little interest in dogs, particularly the pariah (her subject here), I found myself listening keenly throughout. The speaker is undoubtedly an enthusiast, very well informed, with room in her heart for all dog-comers. She traced the history of the pariah and his kin from earliest times, outlining his anti-social life and customs, and dispelling prejudices on her way. Jackals, dingoes, Maori dogs, and a host of outcasts paraded before us winning our interest and even our sympathy. The speaker convinced us, as she set out to do, that even the pariah has his private feelings. It was a pleasure to find such an unlikely subject so completely engrossing.

—N.L.M.

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