

the salary of a University Lecturer. The holder is Ian Cross. The second scholarship, worth £500 is awarded annually by the New Zealand Literary Fund to a promising writer with further work under way. It may, of course, be used for travel, and research, as well as writing. Holders have been E. H. McCormick, Philip Wilson, and Sylvia Ashton-Warner.

An Australian Prize, for which New Zealanders are eligible, is the S. H. Prior Memorial Prize of £100. One New Zealander has won it—Douglas Stewart with his radio verse play *Fire on the Snow*, in 1945.

In addition to these recurring awards, there are from time to time special competitions. *Landfall* gave the prose award in 1957, and a poetry award in 1953, the winners being John Caselberg and Maurice Shadbolt, M. K. Joseph and Keith Sinclair. At the time of our national centennial, there were literary competitions organised, since when provincial centennial committees have planned similar schemes, often with excellent results. For dramatic writing, the British Drama League One-Act Play Competitions provide a testing ground. There is at present no independent award for full-length plays.

Finally, this stocktaking must notice the generous assistance given to letters by the New Zealand Literary Fund, apart from the awards already noted. The Fund makes grants to writers and to publishers.

To writers grants are for the collection of material, for research, travel, and the preparation generally of worthwhile work. Notable books resulting in this group are Antony Alpers's biography of Katherine Mansfield, and Janet Frame's remarkable novel *Owls Do Cry*.

Publishers may receive grants in aid of publication, both for reprints of our earlier literature, and for the issue of new works. R. M. Burdon's *King Dick*, Charles Doyle's *A Splinter of Glass*, were thus assisted. In addition, the Fund helps to keep a number of our literary periodicals on their feet, *Landfall* being the best known.

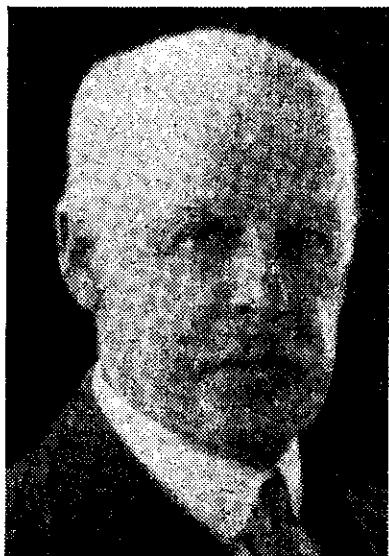
It is clear, then, that most of the kinds of awards available to writers overseas can be paralleled here for resident New Zealanders. But we have, obviously, no Alfred Nobel. Apart from the enlightened and generous work of the New Zealand Literary Fund, our prizes are not valuable in cash; never



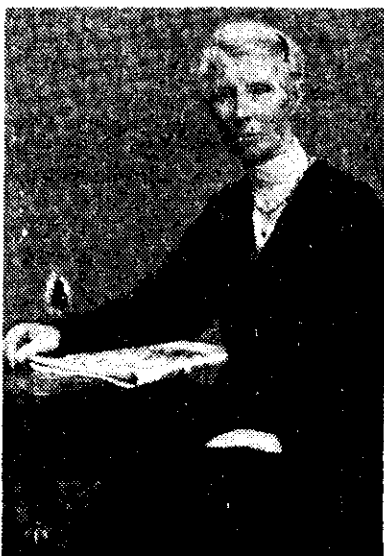
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mind, let us make them valuable in prestige. Let us make a fuss about them, and note the winners publicly with pride. It is ironic that the new Katherine Mansfield Award made this year in Menton will be noted, along with Nobel, Pulitzer, James Tait Black, Tom-Gallon, and the rest, in the Britannia Book of the Year, while the Award made by us in the land of her birth will go unnoticed even in our own record, the New Zealand Yearbook. In all that compendious tome, there is no heading for Literary Prizes. Let us then make a fuss. A book that wins a prize should win readers. Blurbs, citations, Press, all must emphasise these awards. We should get a notable to present each as it is won, and have a photographer handy. We should all know what the prizes are for, and who wins them. We should build up their national prestige, and applaud at our Literary Prize-givings.

Then, someday perhaps, a New Zealander standing on the ruins of the Auckland Harbour Bridge may, like Pasternak, achieve world bestsellerhood by refusing when offered it, the Katherine Mansfield Award (N.Z.)!



HUBERT CHURCH



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N.Z. LISTENER, OCTOBER 16, 1959.

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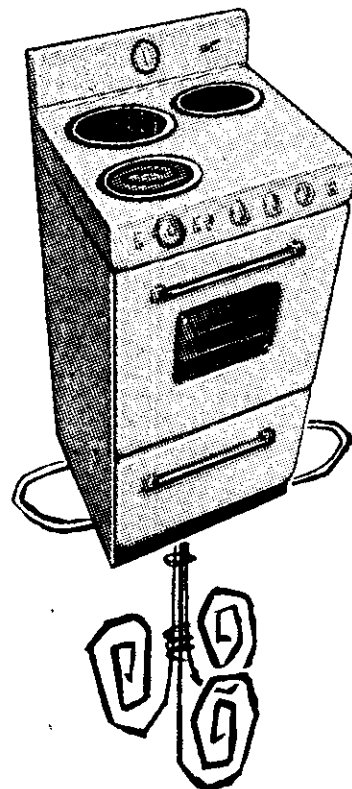
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