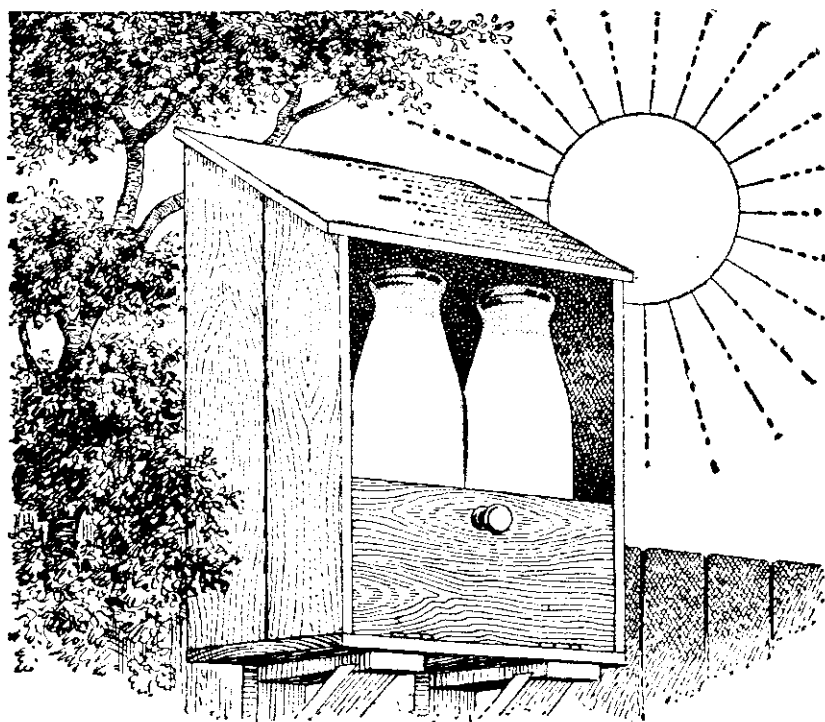




Sunlight and Milk do NOT agree

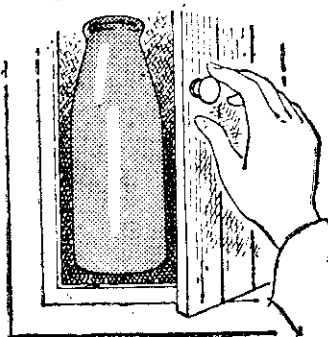
When milk is exposed to the rays of the sun, its flavour is spoiled (by the oxidation of some of the milk serum constituents) and it loses its Vitamin C content.

Even indirect light is harmful to milk. A bottle of milk exposed to light that entered through frosted glass for two hours lost 15% of its Vitamin C. How is **your** milk received at home? Does it sit on the door-step, in an open box at the gate, or anywhere where it receives full light or sunlight?

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Every Friday

Price Threepence

FEBRUARY 3, 1950

Editorial and Business Offices: 115 Lambton Quay, Wellington, C.I.

G.P.O. Box 1707

Telegraphic Address: "Listener," Wellington.

Telephone 41-470

"Soap Operas" and the Theatre

THE drama school at Masterton, described in an article on Page Six, included a course in playwriting. Professor S. Musgrove, who directed the course, was reported at the opening of the school to have said that radio plays in New Zealand were "consistently mediocre." He thought that the demands of the NZBS were partly responsible for the absence of outstanding work, though he suggested that "lack of subject matter" was an additional factor. "Any kind of literature," he said with obvious truth "is the product of a long period of incubation." Professor Musgrove said other things which were not reported: we cannot safely or fairly judge his opinions outside their full context. But the subject is too interesting to be left without further discussion. It is true that broadcasting has brought opportunities and temptations to playwrights, though it could scarcely be said that we have reached the point where our own writers are much endangered. Few dramatists are able to do outstanding work in any country; and in New Zealand it may be premature to expect more than average talent. Moreover, if talent exists, it may be drawn increasingly to the theatre, in which at the present time a significant activity—doubly important, perhaps, because it is confined largely to amateurs—may be noticed. The truth seems to be that radio playwriting does not attract the best creative minds. Serials most popular in New Zealand—*Dad and Dave*, *Hagen's Circus*, etc.—come from Australia, where the production of ingenious features is now a highly organised commercial activity. Writers who dream up a set of promising characters become proficient in a technique which allows them to build one episode upon another—often with superb irrelevancy—until the serials are stretched across the

years. A short synopsis of what has happened in Snake Gully during the past ten years or so would be a revelation in bathos, yet the characters are near enough to life to be able to maintain their hold on public interest. People who do this sort of work are industrious, and sometimes clever; but they are not likely to be playwrights who have taken the wrong turning. It would be wrong to suppose that writers in New Zealand who could do better work are being pressed to satisfy the public appetite for serials. "Soap operas" are imported, and our own playwrights may not suffer from them, either economically or artistically. If there were fewer serials, it would be impossible to fill the gaps with plays written and produced in New Zealand. It must be remembered that radio drama is everywhere in an experimental stage, and the spread of television may mean that there will never be a full flowering of the non-visual play. Serials for broadcasting are adaptations of other literary forms: it may be worth noticing that the best achievements of the BBC are presentations of great plays in the World Theatre series, or radio versions of famous novels. Outstanding work has not yet revealed the growth of the radio play as a special genre. Nor can it be said that the stage has been much affected, in an artistic sense, by the activities of radio writers. Serious artists follow a tradition which has survived the cinema, and which may survive television. In New Zealand, however, the real problem has little to do with radio, but is simply the old problem of a growth in the arts which cannot be forced. On that point we are in agreement with Professor Musgrove. There will be outstanding radio plays, not merely when technical resources are greater, but when the nation's experience is wide and deep enough to sustain a ferment in the arts.

N.Z. LISTENER, FEBRUARY 3, 1950.