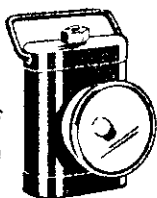


Advice to Householders

EMERGENCY LIGHTING RESTRICTIONS

- ★ Buy an ordinary cycle lamp and use it as a hand lamp.
- ★ Always hang it by your door for outside use.
- ★ Use it as a table or bedside lamp also.



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Radio Review

SMALL TOWN PROGRESS

MANY years ago a Governor of New Zealand who was deservedly popular but not noted for his intellectual gifts, made this statement at a prize-giving. "Education, ladies and gentlemen—education has—er—er—made the British Empire—er—er what it is." Next day this simple statement suffered a newspaper seachange into this: "His Excellency said that education had been the prime factor in raising the British Empire to that proud position of pre-eminence which it now occupied in the world." I was reminded of this when I listened to Mrs. Hamilton Grieve's account, in her *Small Town Portraits* series (the instalment was entitled "Progress"), of what happened when the local newspaper got loose on the purchase of a motor-mower to cut the town bowling green. Bill Scroggs (or some name like that), the local butcher, had been cutting the grass by hand, but, as he explained, his something-or-other sciatica got him down. Bill was bewildered and indignant when the local editor, taking the purchase as a sign of progress, expatiated on "mechanised aids" and "obsolete relics." He talked of an action for libel, until it was explained that no offence had been meant. So Bill's education in the nature of progress, and the use of English, was advanced.

The editor, said Mrs. Grieve, was also sub-editor, reporter, advertisement-taker and compositor. Probably shortage of labour was partly responsible for this concentration, which reminds old hands of conditions in newspaper offices in the frontier days of pioneering. Calling on my own memories, I reflected on the progress that a country office has seen. This one-man-staff would work by electric light and use a telephone. Quite likely he set up on a linotype, not from the old case, and an internal combustion engine or electric motor turned his printing machine. I remember an office where the machine was worked by manpower, like a mangle, and a much later one lit by candles held by nails stuck in a board. The editor of the smallest newspaper today has his radio set. If wires are blown down or destroyed by fire or earthquake, he is still in touch with the world.

The talk was a pleasant, vivid picture of small town life. "God made the country, but the Devil made the town." Yes, commented some cynic, but who made the country town? I find these little towns rich in interest. They have their own flavour. If a train waits at a station always get off and walk about the platform and try to absorb the atmosphere of the place. Some of these towns set cities an example. Taihape used to be a camp in the bush. Now the road traveller is greeted by a rose-garden at one entry, and an attractive bush park at the other. In contrast, consider the entry into Wellington by

Thorndon Quay. Yet the overall human pattern is much the same in country town and city, and radio talks help to bring this home. There are no New Zealand native dialects; the only variations have been imported and planted. The voice of a member of a Young Farmers' Club coming to you over your set is indistinguishable from that of the city clerk or teacher. When I was young you could often tell a countryman in town by his dress; now you can't. Get off at the remotest country station, and you will find men and women dressed just as they are in the city you have left. The "country bumpkin" as a figure of fun is fast disappearing, and radio is helping to push him off. When we get television, we shall see all this even more plainly.

—A.M.

Most Unforgettable Character

TWO brief announcements of a 4ZB Mother's Day Request Session brought over two thousand replies in a few days. The result was ludicrous. Two hours' listening gave us seven recordings, the rest of the time being taken up with "To Mum from Dad and Dave," or "All the best to Mother from Jack and Joan and wee Johnnie," repeated not once, but hundreds of times. After an hour, even the stout-hearted announcers quailed: "How many pages have you done?" asked one, and the reply was: "Four, but I've got twenty-five here. I hope we'll make it." I gave up after another hour, three more recordings and several hundred more names. After all, I had heard Tauber singing "Mother Machree," Bobby Breen singing "Mother," "Silver Threads Among the Gold," and "This is My Mother's Day." Blinking away a tear, I switched off my radio, wondering why mass-produced emotion, no doubt genuine enough in origin, should be so saccharine and humourless.

—Loquax

Music When Soft Voices Die . .

ON Saturday evening 3YC regaled us with Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*; on Sunday the same session was played from 3YA. Looking at life steadily and looking at it whole it is no wonder if some Christchurch listeners can't help singing that line about wanting only "you and MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC." Where are book reviews in the evenings, or is it thought that ZB's racy sketches are sufficient? In the matter of poetry should readings from our own poets originate only in other studios; and why, when splendid readings were given on the last evening of the Writers' Conference by Messrs. Baxter, Dowling, Smithyman and others were these not recorded? Apart from Mr. Baxter's brilliant survey of New Zealand poetry which the confer-



N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 25, 1951.



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