

Twenty Questions

TWENTY Questions, a high-performance, streamlined version of the old animal-vegetable-or-mineral obstacle-race which has won great popularity in America and Britain, will be heard by New Zealand listeners next week when it starts simultaneously from all Commercial stations. The first broadcast is at 9.0 p.m. on Friday, August 10, and it will be on the air at the same time on Friday each week.

Stewart MacPherson, the BBC reporter, who with the band leader Maurice Winnick introduced *Twenty Questions* to Britain, will be the question-master in this Towers of London version of the quiz. He was question-master when the programme was first broadcast by the BBC.

MacPherson and Winnick discovered *Twenty Questions* in America late in 1946, when MacPherson went there for the BBC, covering the first voyage of the Queen Elizabeth as a passenger liner. When they suggested to the BBC that a similar show might go down well in Britain, a young South African producer, Cleland Finn, was put on to the job of seeing what could be done.

"Finding a question-master presented no difficulty," said Finn. "Who better than Stewart MacPherson himself? We decided to experiment with a trial recording. Stewart announced that he was thinking of something. An invited audience was shown what it was by means of a placard, and the people who were supposed to be listening at home were told what it was by a voice speaking from another studio. Within a few seconds the people in the audience were chuckling. Then someone asked a particularly appropriate question and the audience spontaneously broke into ap-

plause. By the time we had been going for five minutes it was obvious that the show was a success."

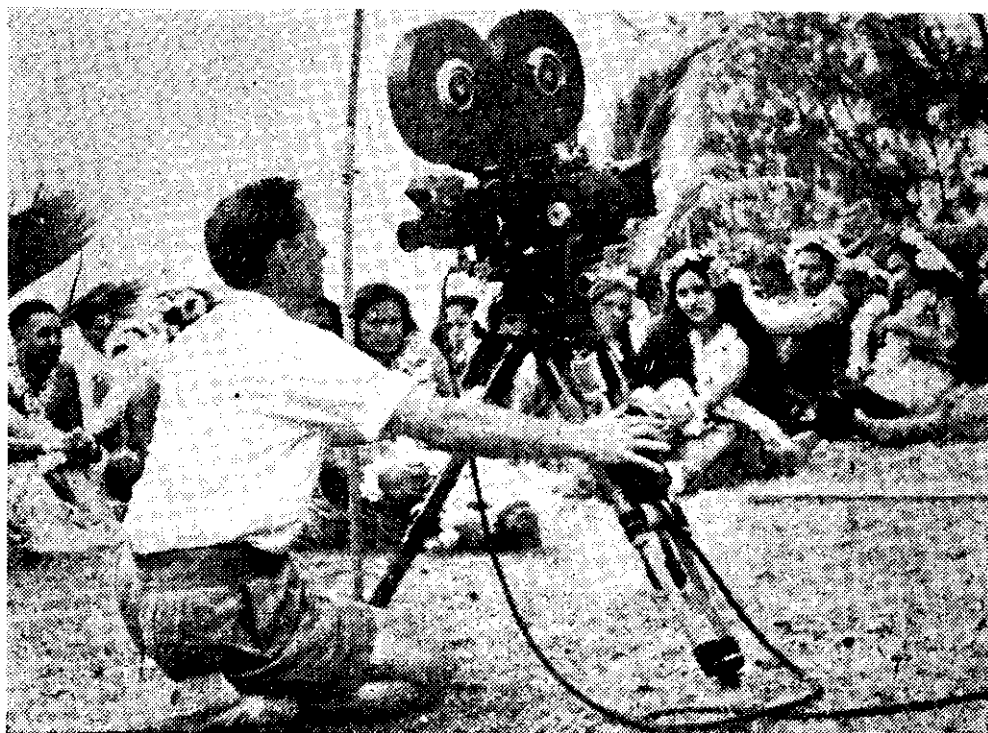
Now one of the best-known radio reporters, and winner of a radio award, The Voice of the Year, in 1950, Stewart MacPherson had only two pound notes and a few shillings in his pocket when he landed in England in 1936 from a cattle boat which had brought him from Canada. His first job was as a shoe salesman—but he has literally "gone places" in a big way since then.

Another former member of the BBC team in the Towers of London *Twenty Questions* is Daphne Padel, a British housewife who represents the average listener in the session. Making his debut in the programme is Richard Murdoch, of *Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh*. His ally (and a thorn in the flesh of Stewart MacPherson) is Frances Day. American-born, Miss Day has worked in cabaret, on the stage, in films and television, and has made such popular recordings as *It's D'Lovely*.

Completing the team is ex-Superintendent Robert Fabian, formerly of Scotland Yard, a popular character in London's West End and a close friend of Danny Kaye and many other celebrities.



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RIGHT: Stewart MacPherson, question-master, and (at top) the four members of the "Twenty Questions" team. From left, ex-Superintendent Fabian, Frances Day, Daphne Padel, and Richard Murdoch



National Film Unit photo

ISLANDERS AT THE CROSSROADS

"YOU don't have to look around very closely very long in these islands before you realise that on the one hand you have lushness, sensuality, security, and on the other disease, hardship and danger Wherever you look there seem to be two sides to every view—which all adds up to a picture of a people who are standing at the cross-roads between our way of life and their own."

Russell Reid brought this impression back from the Cook Islands where, late last year, he spent three months and a half with a National Film Unit team making a film, *Moana Roa*. He gives something of each side of the picture in three talks which he has recorded for the NZBS. The first of these will be heard in the 3YA Women's Session at 2.5 p.m. on Tuesday, August 7.

In this first talk in *Pacific Assignment* Russell Reid says something about the people, their dances, their love of the sun, their sense of humour. Then more seriously—so that no one will think the life of the Cook Islanders is just a lovely bunch of coconuts—he discusses, surprisingly, the housing problem, and its link with coconut trees and the vital export trade.

The impact of the church and the islanders' reaction to the cinema are described in the second talk; and in the last Mr. Reid makes interesting comment on working life in the islands, food, health and education.

The talks are illustrated with excerpts from the sound track of *Moana Roa*.

AT LEFT: Dick Crone, National Film Unit cameraman, prepares to shoot a hula dance at Rarotonga, while working on the unit's Cook Islands film, "Moana Roa"