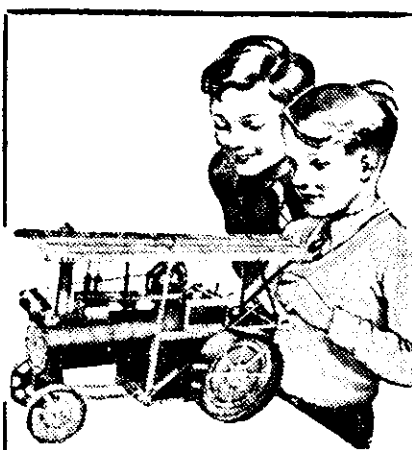




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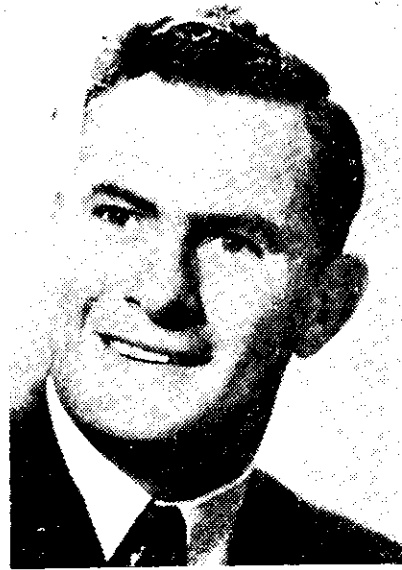
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WHEN free from the ties of earning a living the average New Zealander likes to change into tennis shorts, golfing slacks (plus fours seem to be sartorially out), the cream flannels indispensable to a self-respecting cricketer, or better still, just old gardening togs. Even bishops have been seen crossing the lawn with a trowel in one



Spencer Digby photograph
DON ALLAN
Beekeeping broadcaster

hand, a bag of blood and bone in the other, and the episcopal boots covered with common clay. One member of the Wellington staff of the NZBS I know goes a good deal further. At certain times of the year, particularly in summer, he takes the veil and goes into retreat at the bottom of the garden, to carry out operations connected with his hobby. He keeps bees—five hives of them—at Wainui-o-Mata. "Bees are fond of company and fly all over the place," he remarked the other day. "If

Open Microphone

any of my visitors get stung they can't blame my bees unless they prove that the stingers bear the letters 'D.A.' tattooed on their backs." These initials belong to Don Allan, who has been a member of the NZBS for the last 13 years, and who was recently transferred from the job of Staff Training Officer to that of a Programme Officer in the Broadcasts to Schools Department.

Don Allan explained that his new job includes supervision of the Correspondence School radio programmes on the technical side, and listener research in primary schools in the Wellington-Hutt Valley area. With another member of the staff he visits schools to observe children's reactions to broadcast programmes, and he questions teachers and pupils to see what general use is made of radio in schools. At places which cannot be visited conveniently teachers are asked to fill in questionnaires. Typical comments are: "Dramatic type of presentation is very effective"; "Having four classes in one room, it is impracticable to take advantage of all programmes offering, much as that is desirable . . . there must be no distractions, and such conditions are possible only in singing lessons"; "Too much background noise, narrator not clear enough—rather too long for junior primers." "Such reports," said Mr. Allan, "are a valuable aid when drawing up programmes for forthcoming broadcasts. Occasionally we find it helpful to take the narrator into a classroom so that he can meet the young people to whom his broadcast is being directed." In 1944 Don Allan married another member of the NZBS staff, Marjorie Crawford. They now have a family of three—two boys and a girl.

IN Great Britain, Canada and the U.S.A. group-listening schemes have been at work for some time. Now the

Adult Education Department of Canterbury University College is establishing, with the co-operation of 3YA's Talks Section, a scheme of radio group-listening to *Well Informed Circle*, a programme mentioned GROUP-LISTENING on this page last week. *Well In-*

formed Circle is conducted by two panels which appear alternately at 8.30 p.m. on Fridays to discuss a wide variety of contemporary problems. The Department feels that if its plan is successful it will assist one of the fundamental aims of its work—the provision of material to give adults a clearer view of the problems of the day. It is hoped that listening groups will be formed by members of Women's Institutes, branches of the Women's Division of Federated Farmers, Young Farmers' Clubs, Country Girls' Clubs, and so on, and by families and friends. Each group will be provided in advance with a short summary of the subject under discussion, an agenda listing the main points likely to arise and, where necessary, a book-list. Groups will also be supplied with forms on which to advise the Adult Education Department of the results of their discussions, and so provide a means of comparison with the opinions of other groups. Listening-groups will probably need to appoint a chairman and secretary, says the Department, but apart from that the idea is to keep the proceedings as informal as possible.

THE next speaker in the BBC series, *Man and the Soil* (3YC, Monday evenings), is Professor G. E. Blackman, whose subject will be "Mechanisation and the Power of Nature." Professor Blackman occupies the Chair of Rural Economy at Oxford, and has been much occupied with agricultural research.

SINCE 1941, for example, he has directed research under the aegis of the Agricultural Research Council into the cultivation of oil-seed crops, the cultivation of maize, and the chemical control of weeds. He is also a member of the Colonial Advisory Council of Agriculture, Animal Health and Forestry. In his talk, at 7.30 p.m., on May 25, the Professor will discuss what is, and what is not, practicable when man interferes with nature.

PICTURED in the next column is the Dunedin soprano Dora Drake, now back in New Zealand and scheduled to appear with the National Orchestra on Monday, May 25. It was as Donna Anna in a Sadler's Wells production of

Mozart's *Don Giovanni* that Miss Drake scored her biggest success in London—success she attributes largely to three years' tuition with the Scots baritone Roy Henderson. Shortly before leaving England she was asked to sing in the Coronation Choir, but had to decline because of her New Zealand commitments. Even en route to New Zealand in the Strathnaver, Miss Drake did not escape from her calling. She received several "vice-Regal commands" to sing for Australia's Governor-General designate, Sir William Slim, and his wife. But the experiences which impressed her most abroad were a performance of

The Story of a Famous Tenor

A MORNINGTON (Dunedin) reader asks for information about the famous German tenor Josef Schmidt (right). Not a great deal is known of him. The current impression is that he died in a German concentration camp, but actually his death came when he was an inmate of an internment camp in Switzerland—a very different matter. I am told that he first became famous in 1930 when he attended the Bounty Fairs held in Antwerp. The song that brought him the greatest applause was "Ik hou van Holland," a melodious tribute to the charm of the Netherlands which gives an evocative little sound picture of the old mills flanking the canals. "Holland is a veritable fairyland," Josef Schmidt sang. He was extremely short—a drawback to appearing on the opera stage. My informant says, too, that he had a deformed foot. Schmidt, who was born in Rumania in 1905, was "discovered" by the motion picture industry. He made a short tour of the U.S.A. in 1937, and in 1938, when his singing angered the Nazis, he lived for a while in France. Then, when the Germans invaded France he fled to Switzerland. His health was poor, he was unable to stand the strain of internment camp



life, and he died in 1943. Josef Schmidt's songs are as popular as ever and few request programmes do not include "Today is the Happiest Day of My Life" and "A Star Falls from Heaven." If any reader has any further information about Schmidt, it would be welcome.