

would not have known I had reached 70 if the calendar had not shouted it out.

* * *

H. C.M., Dunedin, wants to know what I think about this passage in a book he has just read (*Animals and Man*, by G. S. Cansdale, Superintendent of the London Zoological Gardens):

The birds introduced to New Zealand were mostly of British species: some are useful or neutral, but others have turned into pests, including the skylark, which is now listed as the second worst bird pest there.

I think the man who wrote that knew as much as I did when I wondered if bats had disappeared

MAY 30 from New Zealand and thought that the whistling

frog was heard only in Westland. But I think there was more excuse for him than there was for me. A man living in one part of the world gets his information about other parts of the world from those who live there. In particular he gets it from books written there, and in this case the New Zealand authorities are on the Londoner's side. First, there is this paragraph about larks in the standard book about New Zealand birds written by Dr. W. R. B. Oliver:

On account of its habit of eating grain and seeds, and especially of pulling young plants out of the ground as they are just appearing above the surface, the skylark is reckoned the most destructive pest after the sparrow. It is quite a common bird and therefore especially troublesome to farm and garden crops.

Dr. Oliver said that about 1930, but G. M. Thomson had said the same thing,

in approximately the same words, nearly ten years earlier. Here is a paragraph from *The Naturalisation of Animals and Plants in New Zealand* published by the Cambridge Press in 1921:

Next to the sparrow the skylark is considered by farmers to be the most destructive of the small birds which have been introduced into New Zealand. They are particularly destructive in spring, when they pull wheat and other grains out of the ground just as these are springing. They also uproot seedling cabbage, turnip and other farm plants. In the Foxton district pea-growing is quite impossible, owing to their depredations.

Respectful as I wish to be to all authorities, and especially to these two, I think they have both written as recklessly as I now do in contradicting them. Larks have never been numerous enough anywhere in New Zealand to challenge the bad pre-eminence of sparrows, and I should like to know in what district last year (when Dr. Cansdale's book was written) they were numerous enough to alarm a single farmer. Whatever the situation was in Foxton when G. M. Thomson wrote his paragraph, I suspect that he set down what someone else told him, and that his informant was not given to under-statement. Started on its way by G. M. Thomson and the Cambridge Press the remark would go round and round the world, and I don't like to think how often it has been round already. This note will of course not stop it, but it will be something if it checks or diverts it for a day or two, and makes others in addition to H.C.M. scratch their heads.

(To be continued)

TEST CRICKET BROADCASTS



AS *The Listener* went to press the Minister in Charge of Broadcasting, R. M. Algie, announced revised broadcasting arrangements for the Cricket Tests between Australia and England.

While Tests are in progress, the four ZB stations now remain on the air from 10.30 p.m. till 5.30 a.m., except on Saturdays, when they will broadcast the ball-by-ball commentaries beginning at midnight. From 10.30 p.m. till midnight on Saturdays the ZB's will give frequent progress scores. As previously announced, 2YA will carry the commentary on pre-luncheon play from 10.30 p.m. till 12.30 a.m., including Saturdays.

During lunch (12.30-1.15 a.m. N.Z. time) and the tea adjournment (which comes at about 3.15 a.m.), the ZB's will entertain cricket fans with musical numbers and a commentary of their own.

Expert at 3XC

ERIC EDRICH, who is broadcasting Test previews from 3XC the evening before each match, has no need to bask in the cricketing glory of his young brother Bill. In his best year—1948—he scored 121 runs for Lancashire against its ancient rival Yorkshire, and he stumped the great Bradman for 43 when his county played Australia. Now resident in South Canterbury, Eric was a Lancashire player for the three seasons up to 1948 and is in a good position to give listeners informed comment on

English capabilities. His first preview was given from the Timaru station at 7.0 p.m. on June 10. Others will be heard at the same time on June 24, July 8, July 22 and August 14.

Rugby League Tour

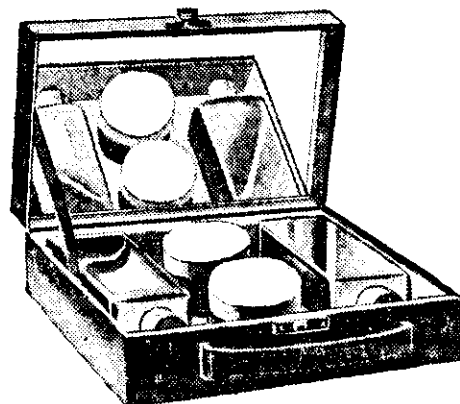
BROADCASTING arrangements for the Australian League Team's tour of New Zealand are as follows:

Commentaries on the three Tests (Christchurch, June 27, Wellington, July 4, and Auckland, July 18), will, with one exception, be broadcast from the four YA stations, 3YZ and Radio New Zealand. The exception is that 3YA will not broadcast the July 4 Test, but will instead give a commentary on the Wellington v. Canterbury representative Rugby Union match at Christchurch. Five-minute summaries of the Tests will be broadcast from Main National Stations at 7.0 p.m.

Full commentaries on other matches will be given in each case by the local station concerned. Summaries of major matches and results of minor matches will be given from Main National Stations at 7.0 p.m. Details are: June 24, Australians v. West Coast at Grey-mouth, commentary 3YZ; June 30, v. South Island at Dunedin, 4YA and 3YZ; July 6, v. Taranaki at New Plymouth, 2XP; July 8, v. South Auckland at Hamilton, 1XH; July 11, v. Auckland at Auckland, 1YA; and July 15, v. Northland at Whangarei, 1XN.

N.Z. LISTENER, JUNE 19, 1953.

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