

Lodge Listens . . .



"—and the second leg of the double was won by—Yippee! I've struck it!"

made one of the most satisfying pieces of listening in an unusual week. Here our questions were answered, almost before we had had time to ask them, and the use of different voices—including the voice of Sir Edmund Hillary himself—gave life and colour to the programme. This was followed up most topically, whether by accident or optimistic planning, by a BBC feature *Goddess Mother of the South*, heard from 4YC that same night. The programme was excellent, and its timing inspired.

—Loquax

Watching and Listening

I AM pleased to be able to record that, apart from the fact that ours were all anonymous and male, there was almost nothing to choose between the NZBS announcers covering the Wellington Coronation procession and the named varieties in London. There was the same enthusiasm, the same open-handedness ("I am now passing you over to my colleague at Government Buildings, who will describe what is going on at the rear of the procession"), the same fluency, possibly even the same style of dress (duffel coat and R.A.F. moustache, for the announcer I had under observation). I was in a very good position to appreciate the debt we owe our radio commentators, for on this occasion whenever the proceedings seemed dull to the eye I could step from the balcony to the radio in the inside office, whence the enthusiastic comments of the eye-witnessing announcer immediately drove me out again to the balcony. Certainly I was occasionally trapped into making unnecessary journeys by the speaker's

too vivid use of the historic present to fill what radio listeners abhor most—a vacuum. But at any rate that evening I was able to sit up to my radio for the Real Thing with the smug conviction that it isn't even the onlookers who see most of the game—it's the stay-at-homes.

Night Falls Again

NIGHT WAS OUR FRIEND, a play by Michael Pertwee, brought us back from our Pippa-like preoccupation with things New-Elizabethan to the world that was more or less our pre-Coronation dramatic habitat, the world of mayhem, murder, madness and marital misunderstandings. And really it was quite nice to be back. *Night Was Our Friend* is a particularly powerful play. It minces neither words nor emotions, and the acting of Olive Lucius and John Carson-Parker in the leading roles was full-blooded enough to sustain the illusion of reality.

—M.B.

The Welfare State

"WHEN I hear some of my contemporaries deploring the sins of the welfare state, I wonder how clearly they remember the beggars of their youth. Foreigners used to be horrified by what they felt was the brutal indifference of London in the 'eighties to human misery and suffering. No child sees those mutilated or starving spectres of humanity today, but some of us who saw them have not forgotten them and so we are able to feel less indignant about the expense of social amelioration."—Compton Mackenzie, speaking in a BBC programme about his memories as he approaches the age of seventy.

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