

Hot Shots

Editorial Notes

Hot Shots

CHRISTCHURCH has already had a nine degree frost.

A SIXTEEN tube radio set is being boosted in Auckland. The price is in the vicinity of £75.

"THE BARRETT'S OF WIMPOLE STREET" has brought the best business to a Dunedin theatre since it showed "Disraeli" some years ago.

A MOVIE camera and screen have been installed for geography lessons at the Kowhai (Auckland) Junior High School.

THE signatures of male members of Wellington society are few and far between in the visitors' book at Government House.

A PIECE from the Wedgwood dinner service belonging to Catharine the Great of Russia is on display in a Christchurch store.

SYBIL THORNDIKE has returned to London from America to play the lead in a new play by Merton Hodge, the New Zealand playwright.

COLOURED floodlights, the first in New Zealand, are being used to illuminate Parliament Buildings, Wellington, during Jubilee Week.

MRS. DAISY BASHAM ("Aunt Daisy") reports having received a tempting offer to remain in the United States. But she preferred New Zealand.

THE first trip was made last week over the Tawa Flat railway deviation, near Wellington. This deviation will cut more than half an hour off the Auckland-Wellington trip.

LADY DAY, wife of the official secretary at Government House, Wellington, was farewelled by 400 women at a reception given in Wellington last week prior to her departure for England.

CHRISTCHURCH is the only one of the four centres lacking a town hall, and residents are again pressing for the provision of one. The Civic Theatre, adjoining the municipal offices, is used for official functions.

THE B.B.C. has returned to the beam system of transmission and is contemplating increasing the number of zones and narrowing the beams. This should mean improved shortwave reception and is Britain's answer to Germany's shortwave challenge.

Wellington, May 10, 1935. VOL. VIII, No. 44.

ANNOUNCERS' VOICES

A GREAT deal has been said and written lately about the voices of the announcers at the New Zealand national stations, the argument being crowned last week by a Christchurch correspondent who suggested that "there are quite a number of Oxford and Cambridge men out here who are doing very little good for themselves yet who have just those qualities of speech which are so desirable in an announcer." While there are one or two junior announcers in the New Zealand service whose voices will never be ideal for broadcasting, we consider, at the same time, that the senior announcers at the YA stations have voices that are both cultured and pleasant.

The person whose duty it is to make announcements over the air is entrusted with a considerable responsibility. There is a minority of listeners who would have our announcers adopting the free-and-easy and often facetious manner of speech of some American and Australian announcers; there are others who would like to see the adoption of the rod-of-iron speech of some of the more pedantic of the British announcers. The New Zealand men pursue a happy middle path—and please hundreds of thousands of listeners by so doing. Some of the junior announcers may benefit from a little criticism—but hands off the senior men!

BRITISH NATIONAL THEATRE

ONE of the schemes put forward to permanently mark the Silver Jubilee of his Majesty is the establishment of the long-discussed British National Theatre. As far back as 1908 interest in a National Theatre was aroused and the sum of £150,000 was raised toward an endowment fund. For the past 27 years the scheme has been allowed to lapse, but it has now been revived and opinions are being freely expressed by English dramatists, actors and critics. Writing in "The Observer" (London) Mr. John Gielgud, the eminent Shakespearean actor and producer, says:

We know that £150,000 is already in hand, and another £350,000 is being asked for. But it should be very seriously debated whether that is not an enormous sum to spend on the building of a new theatre in central London—where there are too many big theatres already. One or two of the newest and biggest, like the Prince Edward, are very often empty. There is, of course, the contention that as the first sum of money was subscribed expressly for "building a theatre," it cannot possibly be allocated to any other purpose. But an Act of Parliament should be able to arrange this.

Now we come to the consideration of what plays a single National Theatre is going to do. It's not so easy to find them! Shakespeare, of course (we'll come to him in a minute)—but then what else? You say at once, Shaw, Galsworthy, Ibsen, Chekhov, and so forth. But there is not the slightest danger of any of these being neglected in present conditions. These are continually being revived in central London theatres, and they are, and have been for years, the staple diet of the suburban and repertory theatres. Good new plays of the classic order are very hard to come by—and the producer at the National Theatre may find himself torn between tripe and Shakespeare!

Now we come to Shakespeare. But there are already two institutions given over to him, the Old Vic and the Stratford-on-Avon theatre, or even three, counting Sadler's Wells. All these three have excellent records in the past, but they are all hampered by two things—time and lack of money.

Supposing the three institutions—Stratford, the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells—were in a sense amalgamated, and endowed on a large scale as the genuine foundation of a National Theatre. In the first place, the companies would be interchangeable, and infinitely more care could be given to production. A play could run a month at the Old Vic, then go to Stratford, then to Sadler's Wells, and then perhaps tour for a month. Having only to produce a play every three or four months, would give a producer much more time to put his best work into each. Actors could be given engagements of a year—or of much more than a year. It could be made worth their while to stay permanently with the company. And with more money to work with, the scenery could be better.

"BLOSSOM TIME" will open Christchurch's new Avon Theatre this month.

CHRISTCHURCH'S new State Fire Insurance building is easily the most imposing structure in the city.

A SCHEME for an Auckland "little theatre" to cost £29,000 has been temporarily abandoned owing to lack of support.

ENGLISH visitors express surprise at the politeness of Australian and New Zealand men in removing their hats in lifts.

IN five years a national scheme will be completed giving radio programmes to 700,000 Indian villages, embracing 320,000,000 people.

THE Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society has bought three pictures from Mrs. Murray Fuller's English exhibition. One of them is "Perthshire Up-lands" by Sir D. Y. Cameron.

WELLINGTON children are wildly excited at the thought of a children's party at Government House next Saturday—the first for some years.

AN advertisement appeared in New Zealand newspapers last week asking for a general manager for a broadcasting company newly formed in New South Wales.

"ROYAL CAVALCADE," "The Iron Duke," "Jew Suss" and "Lives of a Bengal Lancer" seem to be the chief New Zealand talkie attractions for Jubilee Week.

IF the continuity of the 4YA programme on election night cannot be broken, the new mayor of the city will be asked to broadcast his remarks from 4YO.

DURING Jean Batten's flight from Australia to England, her father, an Auckland dentist, telephoned the "Star" every day to get the latest progress reports.

ACCORDING to "Aunt Daisy" who recently returned from Australia, Reg. Morgan and Albert Russell, New Zealand's community singing kings, are doing well in the Commonwealth.

AN Auckland resident, annoyed by the nightly thumpings of an opossum on his roof, dispatched it with a shotgun. He was last week fined 5/- for killing the "possum, having no license to do so."