

THIS WEEK'S SIGNED ARTICLE.

Murder Will Out!—It Has In Wellington . . . by Stuart Perry

MR. PAT LAWLOR, in whose fertile brain was conceived the idea of Authors' Week, had another inspiration a week or so ago, and the consequence was a meeting of some of Wellington's most prominent writers at his home, where, in an atmosphere of tobacco smoke, good fellowship and keen criticism, the idea was thrashed out and approved. Following English precedent, some Australian authors recently produced a crime novel entitled, "Murder Pie," a chapter written by each author. The whole was a convincing and popular book. And now Wellington is to have one such—and, if one may anticipate for a moment simply because the information is too good to keep entirely to the end—not only one such, but two such—the second being of a very different character.

Of the second novel, more anon. The first was the prime care of the meeting. Looking round the table from my left, I decided that Mr. Lawlor had chosen a well-assorted group of writers—almost every phase of literature was represented, yet there was not a man present who had not the ability to tackle the compact complexities of a mystery story.

Mr. Lawlor outlined the procedure. The first chapter would be chosen by ballot from among several already written. Then a further ballot would be taken to see who would take up the thread of the story, who would then continue it, and so on.

On my left sits Mr. G. G. Stewart. Some of the readers of this journal, perhaps most, may have noticed the tremendous advance in advertising technique recently displayed by the Railways Department. Mr. Stewart has been responsible, and in his spare time edits the New Zealand Railways Magazine. He is one of the humorists of the group.

Next to him sits a man whose name is well known. He has mastered the difficult art of becoming a successful columnist. His name is Leo Fanning; and he can condense.

Next is Mr. C. A. Marris, whose work with New Zealand poetry, drama and artistic literature is as well known as his career on the Christchurch "Sun" and the "New Zealand Times." His prose style ranges at will from the ridiculous to the distinguished, and he should feel competent in any company.

Suitably enough, his next door neighbour in Mr. Lawlor's booklined study is another dramatic editor—and a producer and novelist

into the bargain: Mr. Victor S. Lloyd. Notice the sheets of foolscap protruding from his coat pocket. You will hear more of them later.

Directly opposite me is the sole practising barrister of the company—though three of us were trained to the law—a writer on matters military and legal, Mr. C. A. L. Treadwell. As chairman of the National Executive of New Zealand Authors' Week he was very much in the public eye a month or so ago.

Then three of the younger brigade—Mr. Eric Bradwell, the dramatist, whose play "Clay" was produced so spectacularly in Wellington some weeks ago, and who admits to have in preparation a novel about a bookshop and the human nature encountered there, to be called "Will There Be Anything Further, Please?" Mr. Bradwell has a genius for titles.

Lighter touches, and perhaps the more scintillating patches of the novel should be supplied by Mr. Redmond Phillips, the author of the Victoria College extravaganzas—and the "leading lady" in most of them. The dramatic element is strongly represented.

One away on my right is Mr. J. Wilson Hogg. Like Mr. Lloyd, he has the distinction of having had his first novel accepted by an English publisher. "Snow Man," a novel of the drug traffic, is still selling well, and Mr. Hogg expects to have his next book finally completed early next year.

Then, last of those actually present, our host, Mr. Pat Lawlor. The idea is his, as the idea of a New Zealand centre of the P.E.N. (most of us are members) was his. His chair tilted back, a cigarette drooping from his lips, a broad grin on his face and a glass in his hand, he laughs first at the jokes, shudders first at the grisly passages as each man reads out his chapter; and is obviously enjoying himself hugely.

So far nine, and myself, ten. But there are four others, who through illness or absence from Wellington (no less excuse was proffered by any) are not here. And they are all worthwhile writers.

No. 1: Mr. O. N. Gillespie, one of our foremost poets, and our only short story anthologist. There is no realm of writing to which he is a stranger, no branch of literature with which he is unfamiliar. He has one canon which might be held before the eyes of every aspirant for fame in letters—literature must be (Continued on page 8)

Introducing . . .

CHARLES STUART PERRY, assistant Librarian at the Central Library, Wellington, and eldest son of Canon Charles Perry, of Christchurch. Mr. Perry is the author of "The Litany of Beauty," was the chairman of the Exhibition Committee of Authors' Week, and is a nephew of Hugh McCrae, the well-known Australian writer.



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AOTSATS

THE Dunedin Repertory Society began its new year with a credit balance of £534.

HOME-MADE cake shops are beginning to outnumber milk-bars in Dunedin.

TWO complete power failures took place last Thursday afternoon in Christchurch.

OTAGO Listeners' League had first notice that it was not intended to appoint a direct listeners' representative on the Advisory Board.

THE proposed use by the Government of the new Wellington station will probably mean a re-allocation of frequencies in New Zealand.

WHILE visiting Wellington recently a ship's "crew" (really officers with tickets) emerged from the foc'sle in evening dress, to the amusement of onlookers.

AOTSATS

A £20,000 brewery deal just completed in Christchurch went through with the best of spirits.

IZM has now started a special broadcast of sports results at 7 o'clock on Saturday evenings.

THE Bill Hindman Radio Sports Club, associated with IZM, now boasts a membership of 21,884.

IT is rumoured that the Government proposes to make radio sets to enable poor listeners to enjoy radio entertainment.

A SISTER of the lead in the original London production is in "Bunt Pulls the Strings," now being presented by the Dunedin Little Theatre.

BY a special request, the Auckland newspapers, during the retrial of Eric Mareo, have not, as was customary, mentioned the activities of the jury.

NEXT week's signed article has been written by Mr. Gordon Mirams, M.A., Dip.Journ. It concerns the progress of the cinema from 1896 up to the production of "Things to Come," the H. G. Wells masterpiece, and the only film ever to be mentioned in the House of Commons.