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It Is Not So Naive To-day

RADIO ENTERTAINMENT FOR CHILDREN

(Continued from page 15.)

Commercial Service have been experi-
menting to make the children's hour
really interesting for intelligent chil-
dren. From that experiment has
emerged the new 2ZB session which
has had immediate success. It features
the "Young New Zealander's Radio
Journal," which is compiled by some
of the best brains in Wellington. Close-
ly following regular news magazine
practice in its design, it is introduced
every evening at 5 p.m. by the capable
Bryan O'Brien, who acts as editor.
The leading article is handled by Mr.
O. N. Gillespie, whose name as an im-
promptu speaker on every conceivable
subject has been known all over the
Dominion for many years now. Cutting
right away from the beaten track of
the teacher, Mr. Gillespie talks sanely
and intelligently to his boys and girls
on subjects that are topical, vital and
full of interest. A common mistake in
former children's sessions was to
adopt a patronising, superior tone and
founder along with inane drivel that
became acutely painful to parents and
children alike. But Mr. Gillespie speaks
to his child audiences as his equals,
and he has real enthusiasm for the
qualities of the young people in the
country he loves so deeply.

Other personalities at 2ZB are a
prominent educationalist (The Ques-
tion Man), a first-class woman singer
and pianist, an outstanding Maori per-
sonality and a widely-travelled an-
nouncer (the Story Man). The work
of these entertainers and instructors is
varied with talks on famous explorers,
voyagers, discoveries, inspiring deeds
and with chats about hobbies, tricks,
puzzles and games.

THE aim and method of presentation
of 2ZB's children's session is best
explained in the words of Bryan
O'Brien himself. "The endeavour is,"
he said, "to cater for every taste and
age. Not only does this apply to the
whole journal but also each particular
issue. Each feature comprising an
issue, with one or two exceptions, runs
no longer than 7½ minutes. A new page
is audibly turned for each feature,
which differs radically from the preced-
ing one. Provision is made for illus-
trative stories, with the result that
correct atmosphere is created. Descrip-
tions of scenes, and so on, play the
part of setting and scenery on a stage
and naturally makes the whole presen-
tation much more vivid.

"It is our belief that even the very
small children are not interested in
pointless chatter. This has been en-
tirely eliminated.

"We also believe that in a proper
presentation it is possible to instruct
as well as to entertain. The small child
is forever asking the why and wherefor
of things. Surely this is an indication
that the child is genuinely interested
in the things so often uninvitingly
wrapped up in the 'education parcel.'
So we have a special page for the
'Question Man' who regularly has to
deal with some pretty stiff posers.

"Provision is also there for music,
history, literature, Maori mythology

and stories of great men, and great
achievements, as well as fiction, suit-
able for children. It is good to think
that the work put into this new session
by Mr. Strachan, the Programme Or-
ganiser, Mr. Gillespie and others, has
been rewarded by high praise from par-
ents, especially those living in the
country."

Though it is not the policy of the
Commercial Broadcasting Service to
standardise its programmes—for each
station is apparently left to work out
its own destiny to suit the individuality
and needs of its territory—yet it would
seem that the 2ZB stations, and particu-
larly 2ZB, are bringing a vitality to the
children's hours that has too long been
missing. Children are at last getting
credit for intelligence.

Music in His Blood

(Continued from Page 9.)

There are a few rehearsals that are
as vivid in Mr. Muston's mind as
a triumphant concert. There was that
time when a drunk man burst into the
old Choral Hall in Airedale Street,
Auckland, and pointed a loaded revol-
ver at the conductor's head. The or-
chestra thought they would be playing
the "Dead March" for him, but the
hold-up was ruined by the speedy re-
moval of the principal performer in it.

Another memory from rehearsals
goes back a few years to the time when
the Bohemian Orchestra was first put-
ting the last polish on the overture
"Robespierre." It will be remembered
that the guillotine scene of this work
is followed by a gruesome sound from
the bass drum, suggesting the fall of
the victim's head into the basket.

"This had been gone over by the
drum many times without producing
enough realism for my demands," said
Mr. Muston when he recalled it to me.
"The rest of the orchestra sat taut and
longed for their beds. The first clari-
net could stand it no longer. Rather
sleepily he said to me, 'How would it
be if I made a noise like blood?'"

"He made a juicy noise with the reeds
which broke up the whole show. A
few minutes later we all left for home."

Little things like this brighten a con-
ductor's life. But sometimes Mr. Mus-
ton has felt a pang of regret lately.
"I begin to think I'm getting old," he
said. "The other day, a little girl I
am teaching brought along her father's
studies which I used to teach him. And
the violin she uses is the same one that
I once taught him to play."

So, Mr. Muston sighs lightly and
rolls his wood down the Auckland
Bowling Club greens. He supposes he
must be getting old, but those who
know his patience and unquenchable
enthusiasm at orchestral rehearsals can
never quite believe it.