

even helped to convoy New Zealand troops to the theatres of war. It was a fact—though I found myself not desiring to be reminded of it. But it is his duty to remind us of facts, and it is this relentless presentation of all the facts that makes his talks seem Fascist to some no doubt, and honest and accurate to others.



Although the Ashburton Silver Band has made much progress under the conductorship of Lieut. W. H. Osborne, it has a long way to go before it reaches top microphone form. Playing at 3YA

**NOT YET IN
THE
TOP FLIGHT**

last week, the band chose acceptable numbers. Naturally it included a hymn, without which no band programme would be complete, but here certain tonal faults were apparent. Turning to the lighter side, it made an excellent job of the novelty item, "The Merry-Go-Round Broke Down," giving it unusual, but very effective, treatment. The band is wise in not adhering too closely, as far as its library is concerned, to the old staggers among composers. Rimmer, Ketelbey and Co. are heard at every open-air concert, on the racecourse and at the show-grounds. Ashburton's policy of letting them rest for a while is a good one.



"And Now Good-bye," by James Hilton, a radio play produced by Mrs. E. T. Moller. So announced 4YA last Monday. It sounded an interesting combination; a good local producer and a front-rank novelist. Fortunately the play did have a good producer, or Heaven

alone knows what would have happened to it. For half its length—and it ran for an hour—it was simply a collection of "bits," effects and music, somewhat loosely strung together, and the rest of it was not much more than a duologue. A minister and a girl are eloping; the train on which they are travelling is involved in a terrible collision and the girl is killed. Frantically searching for her, the minister succeeds in rescuing several other passengers. He returns to his village and finds himself a hero, but realising he is living under false colours, for no one knows he was eloping, he all but breaks down and, to ease his conscience, tells his doctor friend the truth. Thereupon the story switches over to the courtship and the reason for the elopement. Only grim determination on Mrs. Moller's part and (obvious) hours of rehearsal made all this clear. If, indeed, it was clear to most listeners. The effects were excellent, and the casting was well done—but these things are not enough. More than anything, radio plays must be entertaining, and not even the best producer in the world can make an unsuitable play entertaining. "And Now Goodbye" was unsuitable. A radio play, to be really successful, must attract interest from the start, and must maintain that interest. This play did neither.



Listening to 3YA on April 4, I heard Miss Merle Cunningham, pianist, in a Bach recital. In the Toccata and Fugue she displayed very fine technique and a strong left hand. In the more rapidly-moving Gigue she was equally skilful. Then came "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"—simple, softly-flowing, with a strongly-marked melody changing to minor and back to the major theme. This was another excellent presentation of the Hess arrangement. A Rummel arrangement of "Mortify Us With Thy Grace" was the concluding number. It may have been that Miss Cunningham was a trifle nervous; she should not be, for she is no stranger to the microphone, but one could not help noticing an occasional missing note—a fault liable to occur in anybody's playing if not feeling up to the mark. If she watches this important point, she will bid fair to make a fine name for herself as a solo pianist.



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"A George Edwards Production." One hears that announcement preceding recorded plays very frequently from the NBS stations. It seems to me that fifty per cent. of recorded plays are George Edwards productions, and one can only

**THEY HAVE
QUANTITY,
AT ANY RATE**

admire the company's remarkable output. Though unpolished in the main, these plays are fairly well received—better so than I consider they deserve, and the present "Mystery Club" series from 4YA seems as popular as the recent Inspector Scott dramas. To my mind, it is high time the company introduced new voices, for, in the Scott tales, Darby and Joan, in the present mystery series and other presentations, the voices are so much alike that the average listener immedi-

ately connects Inspector Scott or other characters with the speakers, which results in an annoying irritation and serves to detract from the pleasure of the performance.



One doesn't hear much about the NBS Auxiliary stations. They quietly go their way, providing satisfactory alternative programmes to the main stations, and rarely receive any praise.

THEY WORK ON WITH LITTLE PRAISE

Last Sunday 4YO put on a delightful programme, and one that should have been widely listened to. Between 7 and 8 p.m., the programme of popular numbers, rendered by leading orchestras, bands and vocalists, was as enjoyable as anything I have heard for a long time. Featured in the presentation were Paul Robeson, singing "No, John" (and how he sang it!), Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald ("Farewell to Dreams"), and Gladys Moncrieff ("Sally in Our Alley"). Just the sort of items listeners relish, and similar programmes in future would not be frowned upon.



Excellent material was contained in Mr. Malton Murray's talks on "Triumphs Over Affliction," from 2YA on recent nights. The speaker, whose broad accent was effective in giving a conversational flavour, dealt with a number of figures of history and present-day, who gloriously overcame such handicaps as blindness, deafness and loss of limbs.

GOOD MATERIAL BUT TOO MUCH OF IT. The achievements of the armless man and the Irishman without hands or feet made as good listening as any Ripley tales, although Mr. Murray did not "put it over" quite so well as that famous recorder of amazing things. He tried to cover the ground too quickly, giving in one or two cases sketches so brief that they lost half their point. However, the talks were well worth hearing.



It is estimated that 14,000 people in New Zealand suffer from progressive deafness—70 per cent. being afflicted with the hereditary type. Yet to many of these people radio is the greatest blessing for years,

**THE CURSE
OF
DEAFNESS.**

as, by some peculiarity in vibration, it is able to make itself audible to sufferers of years' standing. Curiously enough, also, is the fact that a deaf person will hear a conversation in a train far better than in the quiet of his own home. Sons and daughters-in-law are apt to become unfunnily facetious about this "can't hear a word you say" business, but there is no doubt that deafness is a curse which robs thousands of one of the great joys of life. It was with particular interest, then, that listeners to 3YA on a recent evening heard Mrs. G. A. Hurd-Wood talk on "Achievements of the Hard of Hearing." Obviously she has the cause at heart, for she has done a great deal of radio and public speaking in the course of her mission on behalf of the deaf.

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work. Such a man cannot do his work adequately, strive however he may.

Both services realise that a really first-grade announcer, possessing all the virtues, is difficult to find. He must be, of course, a man of the highest education, for thousands of people regard the radio speaker as their Bible, in the matter of pronunciation and of accuracy in information.

How often have I heard a ZB fan say, "Oh, let's switch over to a YA station and get something restful," or, a YA listener say, "to blazes with this ditchwater solemnity, what about a bit of 'pop'?"

Complete uniformity of announcing style is, of course, impossible, because the two services are intrinsically different, but one feels that both would benefit if each were to learn from the other. Even if the NBS does believe that announcers are a "necessary evil," people listen to and take notice of them. They will be better pleased and more receptive if they are deluded into the belief that the announcer has an interest in what he is saying and in those listening. And the Commercials would increase the wide, wide circle of their friends if there was a more rigid insistence on uniform pronunciation and the restraint of dignity applied to "brightness."

As the old recipe books are so fond of saying—"Take a little of this, a little of that, let simmer—not boil—till well done. Then serve in moderation for the stomach's sake."