

This Week's Special Article

But Do Listeners Want Sugar Coats Without the Pills?

In the peculiar fashion of the times, it seems to be a positive delinquency to be honest and frightfully bad form to be worthy.

One can imagine the sage of the 20th century addressing his disciple: "O, my son, I would give you a word of warning. You possess, I observe, leanings towards honesty and worthiness. Now these qualities, once praised above most others, to-day are under grave suspicion.

"If a man is honest to-day he is automatically suspected of dullness, and if he is worthy he is suspected of being old-fashioned. Conceal these traits in your character, my son, and you may attain eminence in the world about you.

"Cultivate, if you can, the shiny surface of superficiality, the glib tongue of the prattler, the shallow mind of the sensationalist. Then you will be what the age calls A Success."

The advice of the sage is not unlike the advice of the "Record's" contributor, L. A. Macintyre, in last week's issue. "Not even the advertisements or the blatancy of the commercials at their feeblest," wrote Mr. Macintyre, "have caused me more chagrin than the honest, very worthy talks policy of the NBS."

The talks policy is honest and worthy, yet it causes Mr. Macintyre chagrin! The main thing that causes him chagrin is the "Whirligig of Time" series. "It seems," he says in a pretty phrase, "to have got the NBS giddy."

"LISTENERS do not want pills without sugar coats," said a contributor, L. A. Macintyre, in an attack last week against NBS talks. . . This week, J.B. says if he had to make the choice he would prefer the pill to the sugar coating.

As it happens, though Mr. Macintyre blissfully ignores the fact that the "Whirligig" series makes up only a small part of the NBS talks. Only one a week is given from each

station in the winter months of March to October. They are unashamedly educational. It is not too much to hope that once a week, for 20 short minutes, a few listeners want to be educated, is it?

At the same time, those who have spoken in the series are well aware that the service does its best to see that the talks are as entertaining as possible as well. Considerable effort is made to ensure that the talks do not become mere dry, learned dissertations.

The scripts are submitted, revised, returned to the talker with amendments and suggestions. The talker is given a voice test and coached in the manner of speaking into the microphone. He is exhorted not to forget the human interest in his talk. Often he rewrites his talk so that it will be easy and conversational.

Alas, in spite of all this effort, Mr. Macintyre found reason to praise only the talks by Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe and Professor Alexander. Why, he cries, are all the whirligig talks not like these?

The answer is simple. Why are not all the novels published "Citadels"? Few writers are A. J. Cronins; few talkers are Ratcliffes and Professor Alexanders. These men are noted radio "best-sellers." Mr. Ratcliffe is a BBC favourite and a platform lecturer of renown. Professor Alexander is an American radio talker (Continued on page 42.)

In the Wake of the Week's Broadcasts

Last week I attacked Kingi Tahiri for his broadcast of the women's hockey match between New Zealand and England at Wanganni, and it is only fair to say that the 2YA announcer of the Indian Test match last Saturday was not much better. The foreign names obviously

NEVER A GOOD RELAY OF HOCKEY. puzzled him—for which I forgave him freely—but there was less excuse for his "er-er-ing" and uncertainty about the position of play and so on. I have yet to hear a broadcast of hockey in New Zealand come anywhere near the best of Rugby relays for excitement and intelligibility—and this although I understand much more of the stick game than the other.

For a long time I have been undecided about Dunedin's popular vocalist, Jimmy MacFarlane. Seeing and hearing him in the Operatic Society's "Vagabond King," in which he played a brilliant lead, I was certain he could not be better than in straight singing. Others assured me differently. And then last Sunday 4ZB featured him as their guest artist. After giving "Brave Little Midshipmite" and "Lindy Lou" very attractively, he followed with two crooning numbers, "Never in a Million Years" and "The Moon Got in My Eyes." For the first time I heard the full rich quality of his crooning voice, and knew, once and for all, that croon-

BING CROSBY TAKES SECOND PLACE.

ing was his forte. He made Bing Crosby sound second-rate.

In view of the strongly militaristic propaganda that has been coming over the air recently, I was astonished and intrigued last Sunday afternoon to tune in to a violent attack upon the wastage and miseries of war, coming from 2ZB—the Territorials' own stamping ground.

NCBS PLAY REFUTED "THE TERRYS."

Later, it turned out to be the studio staff in Max Afford's conventionally harrowing radio play, "Sacrifice at Dawn," with Leon Gotz and whole-hearted gunfire. The piece was well enough done, despite weakness at the climatic point, where the German