

Philip Mygatt, Advertising Executive Who Passed Through Auckland Recently, Has Handled Big Radio Programmes, But His Nastiest Moment Was When . . .

MRS ROOSEVELT NEARLY "MISSED THE BUS"

By J. Gifford Male

ON the mimeographed "Who's Who" I received at the purser's office on the Mariposa, when she passed through Auckland recently, he was described as "Mr. P. F. Mygatt, of New York, who is proceeding to Australia to carry out executive duties for the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Company."

In the circumstances I was quite justified in expecting an elderly, adipose, go-getting American, a "live wire" who was going to show Australia just how the advertising game was conducted in the States. He would probably, I speculated, be an Elk, or a Shriner, or a Buffalo, or all three.

I was pleasantly disillusioned. Go-getter Philip Mygatt may be, but he doesn't look it. He dresses in a tweedy, almost English style, and he looks absurdly young for anybody described as an executive of the largest advertising firm in the world.

RADIO advertising is already a very important what Mr. Mygatt advertising agency.

specialises in; not exactly radio advertising as New Zealanders understand it, but rather the writing, production and supervision of "super" and stunt programmes.

And the chances are that in the very near future he will be introducing something new to Australian listeners in the way of programmes.

There's also a chance that Mr. Mygatt will be coming across to New Zealand for a visit.

His firm was started in the 1870's by J. Walter Thompson, an old sea captain, who commenced as a buyer and seller of space in newspapers, but, through typical American tenacity and enterprise, built his firm up until when he died in 1916 it was

The scope of its activities has also expanded. It is still interested in the buying and selling of space in newspapers and periodicals, but that is only one department.

Head office of the organisation occupies two whole floors of one of the broadest buildings in New York, and there are branches all over the world.

New Medium

JUST as in New Zealand and Australia, the advent of commercial radio brought specialised problems for the American advertising agent, and few agents found they could ignore the new medium. It is in the radio side of J. Walter Thompson's business, as I have indicated, that Mr. Mygatt has specialised.

Flesh-and-blood and bigger and bigger names are indeed the watch-words in American radio to-day. Walter Winchell, New York's famed keyhole columnist, earns more for his high-pressure, soap-sponsored broadcasts than for his daily column in the "Mirror." Bing Crosby, Don Ameche, Bob Burns, Charlie McCarthy mean just as much—Don Ameche more—in radio than they do in films.

It was Mr. Mygatt's firm that was responsible for building Charlie McCarthy into a radio personality; responsible indirectly, therefore, for his phenomenal success in films.

Mr. Mygatt knows Bergen personally. He had seen him doing his act in the Rainbow Room in the Rockefeller Centre and also in a small roadshow. Then J. Walter Thompson talent scouts became interested, and he was tried out.



PHILIP MYGATT, J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency executive, who is now in Australia. He may be visiting New Zealand in the near future.

THERE was immediate scepticism. How could a ventriloquist and a dummy possibly be a good radio act? Stage or films maybe, but certainly not over the air.

But Bergen and McCarthy were an almost immediate success, and by the end of 1937, six months after their radio debut, they were among the top-liners in radio.

One of the most important programmes which Mr. Mygatt has written and supervised is the Lux Radio Theatre, a feature which is put over with a tremendous amount of sensation and spectacle. Stunts such as a transcontinental relay by Noel Coward from the New York Theatre at which he was appearing in "Tonight at 8.30" were all in the day's work.

But the programme which Mr. Mygatt most of all enjoyed looking after was Eleanor Roosevelt's weekly session for Ponds, which he assisted Mrs. Roosevelt write and put over.

He has a whole-hearted admiration for the very energetic Mrs. Roosevelt, as indeed he has for all the Roosevelts. "They're a very smart bunch, the whole lot of them," he says.

No Dilettante

IN spite of the almost legendary number of her interests and activities, Eleanor Roosevelt is far from being just a busy dilettante. Everything she tackles she tackles very efficiently.

An experience Mr. Mygatt had with Mrs. Roosevelt illustrates admirably that lady's initiative and self-possession.

It happened the night Son John married Ethel Du Pont. That same night at seven o'clock punctually, Mrs. Roosevelt

had to go on the air, wedding or no wedding.

Five minutes to seven came but it brought no Mrs. Roosevelt, although she had promised faithfully she would be there. Three minutes to seven, and Mr. Mygatt began biting his nails and calling for the emergency script.

One minute to seven and Mrs. Roosevelt swept calmly in, as though nothing had happened, and went on the air as per schedule.

She explained to Mr. Mygatt afterwards that, owing to the thousands of curious sight-seers, the Du Pont estate, where the wedding took place, was closely guarded, and when she came to leave she found all the driveways and exits were blocked.

Undeterred, she left by the kitchen door, located her chauffeur, drove across country for a mile, and broke through a fence to a highway.

Orson Welles

A BROADCAST of exceptional interest which Mr. Mygatt was privileged to hear was Orson Welles's sensational version of H. G. Wells's "War of the Worlds." He still cannot understand how it was ever allowed to go on the air, and why the dangerous potentialities were not seen during rehearsals.

Regarding his new work in Australia, Mr. Mygatt is enthusiastic, although, as he points out, he has several new problems to contend with, among them the absence, in Australia or New Zealand, of networks comparable in magnitude and coverage with the NBC and Columbia networks in America.

NEVER VENTURE — NEVER WIN

Solve This Simple Little Puzzle —and Win £100 IN CASH

Don't miss this splendid competition! It is just a short and easily-worded paragraph about A ROYAL PRESENT, which appeared in a New Zealand daily newspaper some time ago, and has now been put into puzzle form by our artist. The opening words, "IT WAS . . ." will tell you what it is all about and the rest of the wording is simple, and the sense of the sentence will help you. Each picture or sign may mean part of a word, one, two or three words, but not more than three.

Solve carefully and write your solution IN INK on one side of a sheet of paper. Sign your name and residential address, and post entry to:—

PUZZLE PIE No. 284R,
BOX 950, G.P.O., CHRISTCHURCH.

READ THESE RULES CAREFULLY.

All entries must be postmarked not later than Wednesday, February 8.

The Prize of £100 in Cash will be awarded to the competitor whose solution of the paragraph is correct or most nearly correct. In case of ties the prize-money will be divided, but the full amount will be paid.

£100 prize-money is deposited with "Truth" (N.Z.) Ltd. The decision of the Editor of "Puzzle Pie" will be final and legally binding throughout. A postal note for 1/- must accompany each initial entry, and 6d. each additional entry. Penny stamps (1/1) accepted if postal note unobtainable. Any number of attempts may be sent on plain paper. Alternative in single entries will be disqualified. Results will be published on Friday, March 3.

RESULT "PUZZLE PIE" No. 275.

The winning competitor in this contest is: Miss M. FOX, 335 Stafford Street, TIMARU. Her solution, containing two errors, was the most nearly correct one received, and the prize of £50 in cash is, therefore, awarded to her. Prize-money will be posted on Monday, February 27th.

SOLUTION TO "PUZZLE PIE" No. 275.

Paragraph from the "N.Z. Times," February 17th. 1896: "They had no time to free themselves from the awning of the sinking steamer. The agonised cries of perishing men and women were appalling, but only for a moment, for many were carried down with the boat."

