

## Auckland Notes

(By "Call Up.")

A NUMBER of Aucklanders are deeply interested in the "Record's" Spelling Bee competition and are eager to take part if possible. It seems a pity that an Auckland branch of this competition could not be arranged as there would evidently be plenty of support for it.

MISS MOIRA CLOUSTON, who is among the most popular elocutionists who have been heard from 1YA, is leaving Auckland to reside in Wellington, where, no doubt, she will soon become well-known to listeners to 2YA.

THE programme from 1YA on the night of Saturday, July 26, has been considerably altered from that announced in the official programmes. Instead of the relay of the Municipal Band from the Town Hall from 8.10 p.m., there will be a studio concert from 8-9 p.m., and a relay of the wrestling from the Town Hall from 9 p.m. The studio concert will consist of solos and duets by Madame Cora Melven and Mr. Norman Day, and instrumental and vocal numbers by the Mat-tai Trio.

THE programme from 1YA on Wednesday, July 16, was specially good. The half-dozen items by the Monte Carlo Concert and Dance Band, which provided the bulk of the evening's entertainment, were particularly enjoyable, and well above the average. Their playing of "Il Trovatore" was particularly good. This band, consisting of eight professional players under the conductorship of Mr. F. K. Cunningham, plays both light and classical music with equal ability, and is a decided acquisition for Auckland listeners. At 11 p.m., on the same night, 1YA commenced a relay of the special broadcast of "Hawaii Calling" from 2YA. This was most successful, and kept the local station going till nearly 2 a.m.

STATION 1YA's new slogan is "Every Week a Music Week at 1YA." However, for the week August 17-23 inclusive an extra special Music Week has been arranged. Full details are not yet finalised, but briefly the schedule is as follows:—Sunday, August 17, a special musical service conducted by the Rev. Leslie Olds, who will speak on "Music and Religion"; Tuesday, programme by the Orphans' Club Orchestra and a talk by Mr. A. B. Ohappell; Wednesday, a full operatic night, with a talk by Mr. G. de Olive Lowe; Thursday, programme by the 1YA Choir with a number of special soloists, and a talk by Mr. Holingrake; Friday, a classical night with a talk by Mr. Karl Atkinson; and Saturday, a concert relayed from the Town Hall, where the Municipal Band will be playing. All the music on the choir's night will be by British composers, one of the items being an old English rhyme entitled "John Ball Shot Them All." No topical or personal reference is intended! The special soloists during the week will be Madame Towsey, Miss Mira Monk, Mrs. Keven, Mrs. L. Parry, Messrs. Gibbons, Taylor, Arthur Ripley, Frank Sutherland, and John Bree.

## Singer's Struggle for Success

## 1YA Soprano's Ambition



N ambition born in one, and really deeply rooted, can withstand many set-backs and disappointments, but it is usually realised in the end. It may, however, lead one into some awkward predicaments and deep holes first. Joan Laird, soprano, who has been heard from 1YA several times in the last few months, and who is to sing some extracts from Sir Landon Ronald's "Cycle of Life" from that station on August 8, has a very interesting story to tell of herself.

Left an orphan at a very early age and educated in a small convent school she came to Auckland as a girl of fourteen and took a position in an office. Her great ambition was to sing, and even as a child in the convent she had tinkled the keys of a piano and, as many another girl, she dreamt of the day when she would be singing in grand opera. New Zealand offered her few opportunities for realising her ambition so she worked her passage to England. To arrive in a strange country in mid-winter, with no friends, hardly any money, and no waiting position is an unenviable experience for anyone, especially for a girl of twenty, but "pluck, inspired by ambition, can do much," says Joan Laird.

For months she tramped the streets of London looking for a position. Those advertised in the papers were useless, for there was always a queue waiting. Her memory of this time seems to be one long vision of climbing office stairs to ask for positions which were not to be had. Finally she secured one to which she had to cycle eight miles along the flooded Thames Valley roads every day.

All the time she had been practising her music, dragging her little piano from one boarding house to another, but she could not afford lessons and was almost in despair as to how she could obtain a hearing anywhere. But that ambition kept her going.

Finally it was rewarded and she secured an introduction to Mr. Basil Marlo, a well-known teacher at the Aaolian Hall. Mr. Marlo heard her sing and was so impressed by her voice that he offered to take her up and train it without fee. A first-class teacher, a term saved! As she then received a position in the office of the Ontario Government she had a better chance to feel that her troubles were coming to an end. Paying for a piano and music makes a big hole in a small wage and by the time one's room has been paid for also there is apt to be a necessary saving in food. Influenza overcame her, continued relapses kept her from her work and from her study.

When the British Broadcasting Company decided to form a "National" chorus and advertised for singers, 6000 vocal aspirants, including the little New Zealand girl, applied. A thousand of the applicants were invited to a solo test at Savoy Hill. Joan Laird was one of those invited but became so nervous at the sight of the microphone and the stern and critical audience that she collapsed, her poor physical condition, doubtless, having something to do with it.

She went away broken-hearted, believing that she had lost the chance of a life time. However, a few days later she received a letter from the B.B.C. saying that they realised the ordeal of



## "Arguing the Toss"

## Varsity Students on the Air

AN unusual relay will take place on Monday, July 28, when 3YA and 4YA will broadcast a debate between the Canterbury and Otago Universities. The respective teams will be in the respective studios and the speeches of each will be broadcast from both stations. Listeners-in to 3YA, for instance, will hear the Christchurch speakers and also the Dunedin speakers, whose remarks will be relayed to and broadcast from 3YA. Similarly with 4YA.

It had been intended that a similar debate should take place on relay between the Auckland and Wellington Universities, but owing to no line being available this debate has had to be cancelled.

The subject for the Otago-Canterbury debate is: "That Industrialism is Detrimental to Culture." The respective teams will be:—

Otago University: Mr. P. H. W. Neville, Mr. J. G. Warrington, Miss M. K. Steven.

Canterbury University: Mr. C. S. Perry, Mr. C. E. Purchase, Miss C. West-Watson.

the test had upset her and asking her to try again. This she did and was this time successful, for she was among the chosen 250 who were finally selected. She was impressed by the fairness of the whole selection, merit being the sole condition that counted. Even the wives of some of the B.B.C. officials had to undergo the same rigorous tests as all other applicants.

The "National" Chorus turned out to be a great success, and was acclaimed to be the best choir in England. It worked under such famous conductors as Sir Henry Wood, Sir Thomas Beecham, Sir Hamilton Harty, and Sir Granville Bantock, and, of course, was always broadcast.

Miss Laird made her platform debut at a recital of Mr. Marlo's pupils given at Tunbridge Wells and received a very good reception. She seemed to be well on the road to success when her old enemy 'flu again got her in his grips. It became evident that she could not survive another English winter, but as she had no money there seemed no prospect of getting away.

Then Sir James Parr took an interest in her, and, as he was about to return to New Zealand, offered to take her as his private secretary. As everyone knows he changed his mind about coming back to the Dominion, and remained in England. However he generously helped Joan Laird to return and now she is here again. Grand opera is still her undaunted ambition, and she hopes to return to England for further study before going to Italy.

And that is the story of the plucky little girl whose sweet soprano voice has already charmed many an Auckland listener.

Radio Listeners' Guide, 1930 Edition,

Dealers and Booksellers 2/6, posted 2/9.

P.O. Box 1032, Wellington.

Available Everywhere