

THE editor, tactful soul, has conveyed gently to me that some speakers have suffered themselves to feel annoyance at some remarks of mine upon their efforts. In all innocence I commented upon points that appeared to me, as a listener, to be capable of improvement. My point of view is simply this. These talks are meant to be entertaining and instructional. It is with the object of giving listeners matters of interest that these speakers go to the trouble that they unquestionably do in preparing their matter and devoting their time before the microphone. This service undoubtedly imposes a definite tax upon their time and intellectual capacity. In so far as this service is gratuitous on their part, it may be held by some to be thereby protected from criticism. I appreciate very much the generosity with which they give their services, but I conceived it to be my duty, in the interests of listeners and, even more so, of the gentlemen themselves, to endeavour to point out matters the correction of which would add to their own efficiency. I do seriously contend that these sensitive gentlemen should harden their souls for their own good. I trust I am of average intelligence and possessed of some discrimination, and I judge that what appeals to me will appeal to others; what leaves me cold will leave others cold—and it is so terribly easy to put up the switch and leave the gentleman talking to himself!

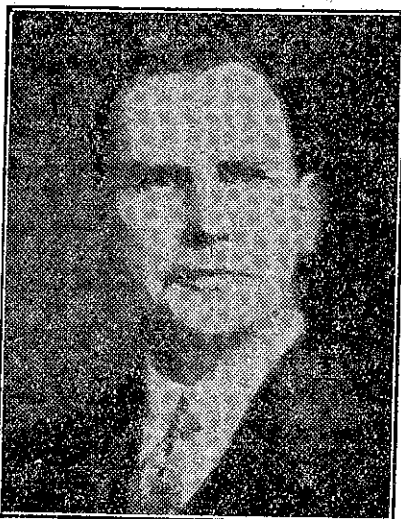
I REMEMBER that, in an Australian studio, a gentleman who was giving a series of anecdotes became so wrapped up in his own verbosity as to exceed the time allotted to him. The studio officials were loth to interrupt him, but seeking an opportunity at the termination of one of his stories, they switched his microphone off and carried on with another transmission from a neighbouring studio. The gentleman, in all innocence that his audience consisted of himself, rambled away for a further 20 minutes—quite to his own satisfaction, but obviously to that of no one else. Now, the cutting off of dull speech-makers need not be done by the studio. That is done readily enough by the listener in his own home. The first object of these men with a message is to win their audience. The purpose of my comments has been to help them win that audience by pointing out minor matters usually capable of correction. Only this past week, in the search for entertainment and instruction, I encountered two most deadly dull speeches. I sat them through tenaciously, but I can imagine that the percentage of listeners who accompanied me to their bitter end was extremely small. With alterations of style and manner these could have been made presentable enough. But if I mention these points will those speakers be offended? This sensitiveness to criticism on the part of some of our minor speakers confirms a charge which I have been reluctant to acknowledge hitherto. This is that New Zealanders, almost as a whole, are intolerant of criticism and immured in self-conceit. The Lord knows I do not wish to set myself up as impeccable. I class myself merely as an average listener intent upon getting the best out of radio. Were I to appear before the microphone—as I may whisper I have, but not necessarily in New Zealand—I would be grateful for hints as to personal improvement. However, the editor, one of whose chief functions is to act as a buffer and ease the bumps of controversy, requests me to temper my criticism with mercy. I thought I had done so, but in deference to those sensitive souls who shall be nameless I shall

# The VOICE of MICHAEL By "CRITIC"

for the future comment more upon the matter than upon the man, reserving, however, the right by implication to convey hints for improvement. And may the Lord deliver me from the small man!

## The Problem of India

SOME conception of the magnitude of Great Britain's task in settling the Indian problem, amicably and satisfactorily, was conveyed in a most entertaining talk by the Hon. G. M. Thomson, M.L.C., from 4YA on Monday. There



LEO O'MALLEY,  
a deservedly popular Auckland bari-  
tone, singing on June 18.  
—S. P. Andrew, photo.

is little doubt that Mr. Thomson is correct when he states that practically every civilised country in the world is watching the manner in which this intricate and delicate problem is being handled. Holland, France, Spain; in fact most of the older countries have their colonial problems: problems that relate to countries in foreign possession or under foreign mandate, but, whereas nearly every other country is dealing with one race of people, Great Britain is dealing with a huge and heterogeneous mass of humanity whose outlook on life is different from that of any other native race on earth. When it is considered that the Indian population is roughly 315 millions, of which approximately 217 millions are Hindus and Brahmins, 66 millions are Mohammedans

the ruler makes the burden of taxation increasingly difficult to bear. In face of all these difficulties, and with sets ready to fly at each other's throats the moment that British control is removed, there is, Mr. Thomson pointed out, a body of half-educated men sitting in Westminster, advocating complete freedom from control for India. That this Empire is destined to rule its own destinies eventually, seems the natural conclusion to draw, but to precipitate matters unduly would be little short of disastrous. Rightly or wrongly, we have acquired responsibility in India, and we cannot at this stage drop that responsibility. India must be taught how to rule before she can hope to handle her own very difficult affairs.

## Sea Power and Freedom

IN face of the many able pacifist talks to which I have listened in the past Mr. Forbes Eadie spoke with refreshing candour on the danger of indiscriminate disarmament on Tuesday evening from 1YA. Mr. Eadie gave a brief resume of the admirable work accomplished by the British Navy and the Mercantile Marine during the late Great War. From the service that was performed on that occasion, it is made quite apparent that without our Navy being maintained at a strength adequate to protect the British Empire, disaster must overtake us. The scrapping of ships and the depletion of navies is admirable in theory, and, so long as it is carried out with strict parity, equally admirable in practice. The difficulty is that all our naval agreements seem to end in Great Britain sacrificing sea power without corresponding sacrifices on the part of other nations. Without our Navy in the last war the British Isles would have been starved out in a few weeks. Germany would have been able to dictate her own terms to conclude the war. That these terms would have crippled the British Empire for life seems inevitable where the spendthrift habits of disputable. I enjoyed this talk extreme-

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