

# STATIC

by  
"SPARK"

I WANT to know what happened to that long-snouted, snivelling individual that Major-General B. S. Merlin told us about, at 2YA, in his secret service talk. I've passed the age when "to be continued in our next" holds any allurements for me. In this case I want to know the sequel. The Major-General's description of a human rat would be very hard to beat.

A MOST delightful talk on Switzerland was given by Professor Algie from 1YA, and, as is invariably the case, the Professor was in good form. The graphic account of the journey from Florence, through Milan and St. Moritz to Davos, was such that any with imagination could follow the journey with keenest interest. Those who have travelled this route, up the many spirals to the high plateau from which one can look down on Italy, would enjoy listening to Professor Algie and travel with him in memory that entrancing journey again. The summary of the history of the people of Switzerland was worth hearing, and the examples of government which he gave should give listeners cause to wonder if our methods are as good as they might be.

THE appeal of Dr. Campbell Begg (2ZW) for noble-minded youths to join the "Transfusion Group" will surely result in the response of many more suitable donors than will be immediately required. Any nervous anticipation that a would-be donor may have felt previous to Dr. Begg's lucid explanation of the process of extraction has now disappeared. Quick response may mean the saving of many valuable lives, and I feel sure that few can resist the appeal of one who does so much for the relief of suffering.

THAT ridiculous suggestion of the Advisory Council—Reserved—is so often filled with the interminable recording that it was quite a welcome change when Dr. A. L. Lewis broke in from 2YA last week. On each occasion his anecdotes and thumbnail sketches of Hollywood personalities were charming, instructive and mostly amusing. The Advisory Council would surely not claim that if there had been no "reserved," listeners would not have had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Lewis.

IN his talk on the 2ZW Club, Mr. Will Appleton remarked that the formation of the club had excited a lot of unfair criticism. To me that is a very curious thing to say, considering all the circumstances, and especially those which prompted the appeal for the institution of the club.

## This Week's Winning Par.

ON Wednesday afternoon the announcer at a "B" class station said, "We have received word that Galli-Curci is unable to fulfil her engagements in Dunedin at present," and then he said "We will now play 'Thanks be to God.'—N.B., 'Broadacres,' N.E. Valley, Dunedin.

*A weekly prize of 5/- is offered for the best paragraph pertaining to radio. Address contributions, "Spark," Box 1032, Wellington.*

People who have publicly made adverse comment will interpret that to mean that their criticism is thought to be unfair. Many suggest that the case for the club has not had the best of advocates, and after hearing some speakers I'm inclined to agree with them. Some members of the committee appear to have had a better understanding of the reason why so many are willing to support the club and haven't bothered about criticism. There is quite enough hostility to the club without an attempt to cultivate hostility. When a private company is required to go cap in hand to the public, the best policy is undisguised meekness and a plain tale—even if the story brings to light incidents that the proprietors are disinclined to make public. When the listener is invited to assist voluntarily, and 2ZW outlines all the pros, it is surprising to me that someone has not demanded the right to present some of the cons. Every one has heard that the station could have been disposed of at a profit, and quite a number are aware that other firms, selling similar goods, would be glad to share the monopoly that was granted by an indulgent Department to the proprietors of 2ZW.

OWNERS of B class stations conveniently forget that by the agency of receivers they are permitted to intrude upon the hearths of the people—a condition of affairs that would not have been tolerated before radio. Further, they ignore the fact that the receivers were not purchased by the B stations, and that they are licensed in order that a national service may be conducted. I have subscribed to the club with a very fair knowledge of conditions, and I'm not the least bit worried about criticism, unfair or otherwise.

THE assertion that a strong club, with possibly a membership of 8000 or 10,000, would be the strongest argument for a subsidy toward an alternative service is poor logic and pure parochialism. This contention overlooks the report of the Coverage Commission, and one would think that the city listener with a few shillings worth of radio equipment is entitled to have a better service than some country listeners with £100 worth. Some of the "unfair critics" seem to recognise that the members of the Coverage Commission have a better understanding of the essential of radio. My opinion is that when income from licenses is large enough to permit of an alternative programme for listeners with moderate receivers, the listeners will demand that broadcasting will not be done for private gain and the ether will be God's voice—not Moloch's.

IN the concluding talk of the series "Pakeha and Maori," in which Dr. I. L. G. Sutherland (2YA) trenchantly dealt with the problems that had faced the early settlers and those which confront the pakeha to-day in his relations with the Maori, a very eloquent tribute was paid to Sir Apirana Ngata and the Young Maori Party. Dr. Sutherland's understanding and studious observations were a pleasure to listen to, and it is to be trusted that his Maori listeners appreciate the fact that there are many pakehas who agree with the expressed opinions. Knowledge that the Maori must help himself and rely but little upon help from the pakeha, who views life quite differently, is undoubtedly the healthiest sign of an increasing interest in the welfare of

the race. The day has gone when the European could look upon our noble native as a museum specimen, and in developing his industries without the paternal assistance from his co-resident, the Maori will evoke an admiration among pakehas that his history and traditions demand there should be.

A CONTRIBUTOR to a northern paper makes the assertion that there is considerable talent available among local performers, which is not encouraged to broadcast. This is a very easy assertion to make, but more difficult to substantiate. There may be performers of merit who never make a public appearance, but even these are extremely few in number. It was inferred that the fee is often incommensurate and I have known of performers who have laboured under a belief that their gifts were unique. Writers who are aware of exceptional talent living near a YA station would be better employed if they acquainted the Broadcasting Board of their discoveries. The Board regularly conducts auditions, patiently, if critically, and I know of one audition session in which forty applicants were tested and only one found worth while. Even country talent should be made known to the Board, as suitable arrangements for audition can often be made without much difficulty to either party. Personally, I think there is very little proved or promising talent of which the Board is ignorant, and I understand that had it not been for 4YA, Master Lex Macdonald might yet have been practically unknown.

IN his talk on "Zanzibar" (2YA), Dr. Guy H. Scholefield remarked that he thought very few New Zealanders had visited this island, and mentioned that the wife of the present Governor of Zanzibar was born in this country. That it is off the track of the usual New Zealand wayfarer is very true, and I do not know of more than about a dozen from this country who have paid a visit to this out-of-the-way island. Of that dozen, four are members of my own family, and no two of them have been there at the same time. As one used to tropical heat, I can agree with Dr. Scholefield that Zanzibar is hot, but I have been in hotter places, and one of them is Muscat, another place mentioned in the talk. The Sultan of Muscat established himself in Zanzibar, to better conduct his slave trade, and I have no doubt he felt the more equable climate of his island home at times quite chilly, compared to his Arabian territory. The Zanzibar slave trade is supposed to be extinct, and so far as the export of "black gold" from Africa to countries