

# NEW ZEALAND LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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## The Exhibition

**M**OST of the general reading matter in this issue deals with the Exhibition — a fact in itself of some significance. For the Exhibition is a sign and a portent. Even if it were the smallest instead of the biggest thing of its kind the Southern Hemisphere has ever seen it would be something to marvel at in our present circumstances.

We are a small country with a ridiculously small population. We are only a hundred years old. We have passed through a world war and a world-shaking depression. We are twelve thousand miles away from the purchasers of the bulk of our produce. We are at the end of the prosperity that comes from virgin soil and unlimited land settlement. We are heading for, but have not yet reached, planned production and a new economic balance. In other words, we are passing through a social and industrial revolution. And we are at war again.

But the Exhibition will be opened next week. We have made up our minds not to be downhearted. The way is dark, but we have light enough to walk by. So we go on — whistling certainly to keep our courage up, but really keeping it up. Nor have cynics a case for sneering. Whistling after all is no crime. Neither is cheerfulness, however craftily we come by it. Better the grin we assume to bear it than the anxiety that is one step from panic.

The Exhibition consigns panic to the pit. It defies the devils of gloom and pessimism. It says to every business man whose ledger keeps him awake at night that there have been wars and depressions before. It says plainly to all of us that life goes on if we don't obstruct it.

If the crowds are smaller than they would have been in brighter days, we shall have more elbow room and more leisure to see and enjoy. The fewer the guests the bigger the helpings.

## You Know His Voice

## (2) A. L. CURRY, OF 3YA

**W**HEN A. L. Curry, "the man with the golden voice," who is chief announcer at 3YA, Christchurch, joined the service several years ago, he was probably the youngest senior announcer in a recognised National service in the British Empire.

Mr. Curry was attracted to broadcasting purely because of his interest in speech. He grasped an opportunity to use a successful talent. As a matter of fact, he forsook an accountancy career to follow a profession which seemed to him to be an outlet for his qualifications and his sense of the artistic. His people first noticed his ability when he read the newspaper news to them in his home town—Masterton.

Straight from an office in which one dealt entirely in figures, he dropped into a new sphere which juggled with words — and clicked — in 1927, shortly before the opening at Wellington of 2YA. And after three months in Wellington he was appointed Chief Announcer at 4YA Dunedin. In those days the Dunedin system had not been really organised, and it fell to Mr. Curry to bring the station into line with the other three centres.

### First Overseas Broadcast

It was not long before he was appointed to Christchurch as Chief Announcer at 3YA, then the administrative centre of the original Broadcasting Company, and he continued with the work. He has been associated with almost all the outstanding developments in radio as far as it has gone in New Zealand, including the announcement of the first attempt at overseas broadcasting — the Dempsey-Tunney fight, in 1927. Then he introduced the broadcast on the occasion of the first Empire transmission, when 5SW Chelmsford came on the air from London.

"I well remember the feeling of excitement in the Christchurch studio as we stood by for the first carrier-wave from England to New Zealand. It was with a voice filled with emotion that, at the close of the broadcast, I announced: 'You have been listening to G 5SW Chelmsford, England,'" says Mr. Curry. To-day, of course, such broadcasts are carried out with as little concern as a relay from a local theatre.

### Longest Hook-Up

His next big stunt was in 1928, when the Trans-Tasman air crossings were made and he, with other national announcers, kept a

long vigil. He was in charge of the announcing when the first two-way conversation between New Zealand and America took place and when Commander Byrd spoke to William Ochs, of the *New York Times*. That was the greatest hook-up in distance and coverage of listeners ever undertaken, reports of listening in success being received in Christchurch from all over the world. Since then, overseas flights, two-way conversations and international relays have come to be "taken as read."

Mr. Curry's most interesting experience was doing a spot of broadcasting from underneath a river — when the opening of the

Waitaki dam was celebrated. He took a long lead into one of the inspection tunnels in the dam itself. With the waters of the river thundering overhead, he was able to provide a realistic background for listeners.

### A Debating Enthusiast

Although broadcasting in the National Stations is confined to the presentation of programmes, Mr. Curry recalls times when a New Zealand announcer did descriptions of events from horse-racing to cricket, and enjoyed every minute of it. However, he finds his job of to-day an all-absorbing one. He inaugurated the Federated Debating Societies of

New Zealand in 1928, and this organisation is now represented in almost every major town in the Dominion. He is the sole Life Member. A good deal of the renewed interest in public speaking, particularly in the South Island, is due to his active work in organising debating groups. Christchurch recently acknowledged his place in the Federation by appointing him patron, and he still takes the keenest interest in speaking and literary societies. In fact, he usually spends his night-off from broadcasting, as a judge. He won the New Zealand Oratorical championship twice and the elocution championship and debating championship once. He is interested also in the work of dramatic societies, and has been an actor and a producer.

"My sole hobby is my work, but I like all forms of sport. Someday, perhaps, I might make some sort of a fist at golf," he says, with a whimsical smile.



A. L. CURRY