

SO YOU WANT TO BECOME AN ANNOUNCER?

Many Are Called But Only Five Per Cent Are Chosen

"YOU ought to go in for radio - announcing," his friends had told him more than once. "You've got just the voice for it," they said. So he made an appointment for an audition and in due course spoke a few trial words into one of 2ZB's microphones. It would be pleasant, easy work, he thought, with plenty of records to play with; and he might even become a "personality" with fan mail.

The audition committee of station manager, presentation officer, and programme organiser sat in the manager's room and waited for the voice to come through a loud-speaker. It gave some news about advance programmes, the names of some picture theatres and titles of current films and went on to say how its owner loved somebody's soap. Then came three or four foreign names and the audition ended with a long para-

graph containing multi-syllabic words arranged with the idea of testing eye as well as voice.

"Not bad," said the station manager. "There's quality in his voice and I think he might make an announcer." The others agreed with reservations. He could be used for a start, in off-peak sessions; a little more warmth and conviction in the trade-name department and he would probably turn out quite well. Then followed an interview with the manager and some words of advice.

Five Per Cent. Succeed

The first audition of a would-be radio announcer is purely exploratory. Some applicants go through several tests; and in every case the final trial takes place in the production studios of the NZBS. Of all the many applicants for announcing work only about five per cent. make the grade.

The station manager told a *Listener* staff reporter who attended the audition



"A little more warmth and conviction in the trade-name department"

about some of the attributes expected in an announcer. "Many people come here wanting to go on the air," he said. "To be successful a man must have, primarily, a good vocabulary. In New Zealand he can't specialise in any one form of announcing, for he has to read anything from the name of a Czech composer to a trade-name. His standard of education must be good; his voice must have a

warm, friendly ring, and be welcome in listeners' homes. And, of course, when announcing commercial items he must be enthusiastic and convincing."

The Main Faults

"What are some of the common faults in applicants?" we asked.

"Gusty breathing (which can be heard in the receiving-set) is one; another is emphasis on sibilants, which are greatly magnified by the microphone. Sometimes, after a month or two, an announcer starts to 'elocute.' That's bad. Complete naturalness is what we want."

"What is the best age for a man to start an announcing job?"

"At about 25, I should say. By then his voice is more or less mature."

Radio stations, he said, were always on the look-out for an appealing voice, but announcing is not as easy as it sounds. In the commercial stations an announcer puts in 28 hours a week on the air, but he works 38 hours; the remaining 10 are spent in documentary work and research. He has two consecutive days off duty each week. If he has a gift for description, he may be required to do special broadcasts—such as taking a look at the bottom of the sea in diving-dress and broadcasting his impressions on the spot. But these novelty broadcasts usually entail hard work and a session taking a few minutes on the air has probably meant as many hours in preparation.

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