

# TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF RADIO

## *The Story of Broadcasting in New Zealand*

**N**OVEMBER is Radio Month. To mark the anniversary of 25 years of broadcasting in New Zealand, the seven main National stations will broadcast a special feature called *Marconi's Child Grows Up*. This programme is in four episodes, which will be heard on the four Sunday evenings in November, starting this Sunday, November 7, at 6.0 p.m.

Up to November, 1923, broadcasting in New Zealand was in the hands of a few enthusiastic amateurs, but on that date the Government passed legislation preparing for a network of powerful stations, thus laying the foundations of the complex organisation which is today the NZBS, with 23 stations broadcasting to over 422,000 licence-holders. *Marconi's Child Grows Up* tells the story of how this expansion came about, and re-enacts in documentary fashion many broadcasting highlights of the past, with illustrations taken from old recordings in the NZBS library.

Episode One, "The First Six Years," covers the period from 1923 to the completion of Station 4YA in 1929. Listeners will hear something of the protracted negotiations and petitions to Parliament, and, on the entertainment side, the voices of Nellie Stewart, Rosina Buckman, and other artists of the acoustic recording period. The voice of the late Sir Charles Kingsford Smith is also heard, with a description of his landing at Sockburn Field, Christchurch, after the first trans-Tasman flight of the Southern Cross, while other featured events are broadcasts to Byrd's expedition in the Antarctic in 1929, extracts from speeches by King George V and the Duke of Windsor (then Prince of Wales), and an account of the part played by radio in the Murchison earthquake.

Episode Two takes the story up to the formation of the Broadcasting Board in 1931. Mention is made of the depression years, the London Five-Power Naval Conference, the Napier earthquake, and early experiment in the use of radio for educational purposes.

The Third Episode covers the years 1932 until the outbreak of war. It describes the formation of the National Broadcasting Service in 1936, and the establishment of recording studios, a Talks Department, a Productions Department, and, in 1937, the inauguration of the Commercial division.

The final episode deals with the war and post-war years, and the series ends with a hint at future expansion and developments to come.

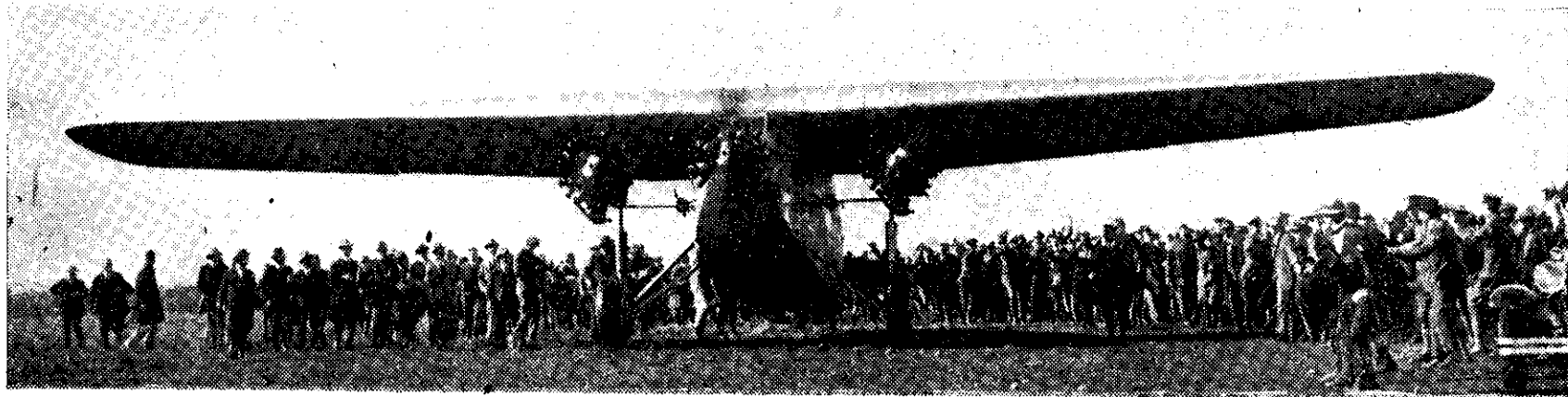
The scripts of *Marconi's Child Grows Up* were written by Stephen Solly, who wrote the series of industrial documentaries now being heard from the ZB stations on Sunday evenings. The programmes were produced in the Production Studios of the NZBS.



Spencer Digby photograph

STEPHEN SOLLY, author of the script for "Marconi's Child Grows Up"

Below: The arrival of the late Sir Charles Kingsford Smith's plane, Southern Cross, at Christchurch in 1928—one of the highlights of early news-broadcasting in New Zealand.



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could get 61 per cent. more milk in 305 days of machine-milking than anyone else could. The cow's career had been followed for six years. If Mr. Smith, her special milker, was taken away, her milk yield would drop right away. As soon as he came back, it shot up again. Yet the man and the cow had no apparent system of communication. He didn't whisper in her ear or scratch her neck before he started milking. It was just that they were well adjusted to each other, and a definite relationship had been set up between them, much as between a man and his horse or his dog.

### Psychological Types

Cows also varied from type to type, and from breed to breed. Although he couldn't say too much about the psychological characteristics of the various types without stepping on the toes of the breeders, he could say that a Jersey, for instance, was more sensitive to her environment than a Friesian. She might be more skittish and troublesome when socially maladjusted, but on the other hand she would respond bet-

ter with good treatment. She would also become better adjusted to humans than other types, and could be more easily made into a pet.

On the question of music in the cowshed and whether it increased the milk-flow, Professor Petersen said he had no detailed knowledge of its psychological value. He didn't know whether the cows liked it or not, but he thought they were probably less likely to notice other distractions with the radio going. However, it was "quite the rule" in America for farmers to have radios going in their milking sheds.

In more serious vein the Professor commented on dairying conditions in America. In the "milk sheds" (the term used to describe areas supplying milk to big cities like New York) the maintenance of herds was a real problem. Farmers in these districts wouldn't rear heifers at all, but bought cows already in milk (generally about five years old), milked them as long as they were profitable (about 16 months on an average), and then sold them to the slaughterhouses.

There was a tendency for the number of dairy herds to decrease these

days, although the demand for dairy products was greater than the supply. Labour difficulties were the main problem. As a result the number of dairy farmers was going down at an alarming rate. Some "just quit," others put in new labour-saving devices, such as an elevated milking platform to save the milker the labour of bending down to put the cups on. This latter innovation was proving most popular, the ideal height for such platforms being about 18 inches from the ground.

### Mastitis—No. 1 Disease

Mastitis, or mammitis, he said, was officially listed in the United States as Number One disease, economically, to the dairy farmer. The standard treatment was penicillin, with which a fair degree of success had been obtained, although it was not the solution by any means, and they were not quite so enthusiastic about it as they had been at first. Personally he thought the real solution was by prevention of the disease through proper management. "I'm going to show a motion picture which describes how improper milking can injure the udder. The fundamental principle is to get all the milk out of

the udder, and that's the form of management we recommend. We don't say 'don't strip.' We say every bit of milk that's let down can be obtained by proper manipulation of the cups, so that you don't have to strip by hand. By pulling down on the cups and manipulating the udder with the other hand all the milk can be got out."

In the States, he said, the Federal Department of Agriculture was doing a lot of big-scale experimental work, and co-operating with the individual states on disease control and meat inspection. But one thing the New Zealand dairy farmer didn't seem to realise was that he had economic advantages greater than any other farmer in the world. In no other country could the cows be put out to pasture and get the greater part of their required milk-producing nutriment simply by eating the grass. In the United States 65 per cent. of the cow's feed had to be harvested, stored, and re-fed to her. For that reason the farmer was engaged from early spring to late autumn on getting in winter feed, and that was one reason why the average herd on a one-man dairy farm in America was considerably smaller than its New Zealand counterpart.