

NEW RADIO DEPARTURE IN AUSTRALIA

World News Service On Short-Wave

THE Commonwealth Government entered the world broadcast sphere on December 20, says "The Listener In." The Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) broadcast an address to listeners in Northern Europe through the powerful 16 kilowatt A.W.A. stations VLQ and VLQ2. These transmitters, with VLR and VLR3, the National short-wave stations at Lyndhurst, Victoria, constitute the first stage of the Postmaster General's Department's technical plan to provide facilities for Australia to "tell the world of her activities in the fight against Hitlerism."

Short-wave transmissions to nine major zones—Europe, North and South America, the East, India, the Pacific Islands, and Africa—are planned, although such complete coverage has not been possible at the start of the service.

At the outset, broadcasts were made from the two A.W.A. stations at Pennant Hills, N.S.W., for a daily period of six hours, and for two hours daily from the P.M.G. Depart-

ment's stations, VLR and VLR3. The Perth station, VLW3, was to go into service on January 15, and be added to the short-wave broadcasting network as the demands of the service increased.

The principal transmission will be to Northern Europe (two hours daily). It will cover Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Holland, Scandinavia, Belgium, Switzerland and Austria. Languages used first for this transmission will be English, French, German and Dutch. Others will be added.

A second transmission of one hour a day will be directed to Mediterranean countries, including North Africa.

Other Languages

At first the broadcasts were in English and Spanish, but other languages came into use by January 1. Two separate transmissions, each of one hour a day, are made to North America to reach the Eastern, Middle and Western States. A daily half-hour session is broadcast to South America in English and Spanish. The service in English to India is undertaken by Amalgamated Wireless and was in full operation by January 1. The Netherlands East Indies broadcasts are made in English and Dutch.

Arrangements for the service, which will be controlled by the Department of Information, provide also for the use of VLR and VLW, for special services respectively to Japan, the Philippines, and the Pacific Islands, and to South Africa, Kenya and Rhodesia. VLR is now providing a shortwave programme regularly and is heard well in many other countries but its power, 2 kilowatts, is regarded as inadequate for the new service, and in the next six months will be raised to 10 kilowatts.

Technical services at the studios will be undertaken by the P.M.G.'s Department. The Australian Broadcasting Commission, in collaboration with the Department of Information, will provide studios, translators, announcers and special programmes.

Wide Range Planned

Transmissions at the outset will be in English, German, French, Dutch and Spanish. Italian, Arabic, Russian, Norwegian and other languages will be added later.

Initially, wavelengths on only two of the international broadcasting channels—the 25 and 31 metre bands—are being used, but as seasonal and other conditions call for it, broadcasts will also be radiated on the 16 and 19 metre bands.

Beam aerials are used by all the transmitters in order to conserve power and to ensure the greatest possible signal strengths for receivers in the areas it is desired to cover. Although designed specifically to cover nine zones, the broadcasts are receivable in countries other than those to which they are specially directed.

TWO STARS WHO SHINE AS ONE

IF you want to be reassured that romance has not gone out of art, that technique, "platform appeal," and high pressure salesmanship are not the only things that make for success, take a good look at that engaging pair, Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson, and find out how they came, not only to play two-piano music, but to make a big success of it.

True, they are married; and romance is supposed to stop when housekeeping begins. But, as a distinguished French critic reminds us, they seem to have solved that too. Both of them were wedded to their art before being wedded to each other. One has often heard of an artist who has sacrificed his — or, more likely, her — career for matrimony. Here are two people who have "sacrificed" two careers for each other; and in so doing have gained fame.

Each of them was a rising pianist. But they were newly married, and for one to be playing in London while the other was in Scotland or Ireland was not their idea of life. What they wanted to do was to play together. They had done it as students; they had opened up a new world for themselves, and they wanted to go on exploring it.

And here they were, separated from each other, each becoming a popular pianist. But when they met, they played together, discovering new talents, and delighting an eager circle of friends. And one

day they were induced to play some of their music in public. To their utter surprise they were an even greater success together than they had been separately, so the logical thing was to continue together.

Recognition Was Slow

Artistic success is one thing, and a payable proposition another. It took years to gain that recognition for their two-piano recitals that brings fees commensurate with the standard of their performance. But in the wide and loving comradeship of all art these young people found a friend who knew all too well the bitterness of struggle that is so often a prelude to success.

This friend was the brilliant artist, Dame Laura Knight. She persuaded them to go, at whatever cost, to America. They followed this advice, and their first tour of the United States proved the turning point of their lives and set British and Continental music centres clamouring to hear, and rehear, the new two-piano team.

Success Overseas

They are not the first British artists to discover that an overseas reputation is a passport to success at home. This rule applies to all kinds of entertainers, from the comedian to the cantatrice. And contrariwise, it is the dearest ambition of almost every Continental artist to gain the hall mark of a London success — with operatic singers, especially that of Covent Garden.

Ethel Bartlett's association with painters is such that her portrait has graced the Royal Academy for four successive years; she has been, in fact, so much in demand that all sittings have now to be refused, for fear of too great encroachment upon her work.

The woman of French-Huguenot-Irish-Welsh ancestry married the man from Inverness — perhaps this in part accounts for the spiritual unity that lies behind their amazing artistry.

4YA listeners will hear Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson, pianists, on Friday, January 26, at 9.45 p.m.



Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson