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A VOICE CALLS AT MIDNIGHT

—And Is Heard In America

BY midnight the 2YA building, headquarters of the National Broadcasting Service, is lonely and deserted except for a few people who see the night through on special jobs. Announcers and technicians have said their last good nights to the world in general; programme departments are merely deserted shelves of records; there will be little doing between now and the first "good morning" of the new day.

But at midnight one day last week there was a considerable to-do and some tension in a small studio at 2YA. The occasion was the first shortwave broadcast to the United States by Mervin K. Slosberg, the NBC correspondent who recently arrived in New Zealand. Not only was it a big step forward in the desirable direction of informing the people of the United States about the Dominion of New Zealand, but the broadcast was the climax of an elaborate trial of relays.

Mr. Slosberg had been asked by the NBC of U.S.A. to prepare a bulletin of exactly three minutes and ten seconds length for incorporation in an early morning news broadcast over a nationwide network. It should be no longer and no shorter than three minutes and ten seconds, or it might throw contiguous programmes out of joint. So Mr. Slosberg prepared a careful script and was now waiting for the red light and his cue.

Route of a Voice

It is interesting to trace the channels through which his voice travelled on its way to the breakfast tables of America. When he spoke into the microphone, the impulse went first of all to the 2YA control room, where a watchful technician was standing by to help it on its way. From 2YA it went to the central telephone exchange, just as though Mr. Slosberg had been having a telephone conversation with a friend in a Wellington suburb, and from the exchange, by another landline, to the Government shortwave transmitter.

Then to Sydney, the New Zealand transmitter being not quite powerful



MERVIN K. SLOSBERG
A lot of work for 190 seconds of talk

enough to guarantee a strong signal direct to America. From the receiver in Sydney it went through another city exchange system to the transmitter, which sent it, in one powerful jump, to a receiver somewhere near San Francisco. From there it went by land line to the NBC studios in New York. Distance: nearly ten thousand miles.

This, it should be stated, is by no means the longest relay which the New Zealand Post and Telegraph Department has been asked to arrange. In pre-war days, a radio-telephone service for commercial purposes operated between New Zealand, England, and most Continental countries. The relay was between Wellington, Sydney, and England, and by telephone cable and land line.

Waiting for the Red Light

And so Mr. Slosberg had merely to sit at his desk waiting for a red light and a cue from New York. It was in the 2YA control room and at the shortwave transmitter that one observed the tenseness attendant on such a split-second, round-the-world relay. Take, for instance, the scene at 2YA during a test link-up between Wellington, Sydney, and San Francisco. The technician in charge is a very busy man and manipulates a maze of switches, knobs, headphones, and telephones with fascinating dexterity.

The layman can comprehend little of the conversation. It goes something like this:

"Hello, Sydney. Yes, quite readable."

"Yes, y's. Just a minute. You'll have to take that one down to a parallel. Another one from that blank in B amp. (This to the assistant technician in the control room.)"

"Hello, Sydney. Yes. I'll give you a test. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Hello. This is 2YA calling Sydney. One, two, three, four. . ."

Repeat this at length.

More Technical Language

Half an hour before Mr. Slosberg comes on the air, the Wellington shortwave transmitter has a final check-up with Sydney and San Francisco, the operator conducting another practically unintelligible conversation into space:

"Would you say a few words for me, San Francisco, please? . . . That's O.K.

(Continued on next page)

Keep that happy expression

When the problems of the day seem beyond you, light up a Player's. In the enjoyment of its fragrant aroma difficulties become less formidable, and composure is restored. Remember at all times that happy expression "Player's Please".



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OR PLAIN



REMEMBER AT
ALL TIMES THAT
HAPPY EXPRESSION...

Player's Please

BRITISH IN NAME --- BRITISH IN QUALITY

"Bonds For Bombers"

FROM a broadcasting point of view, the highlights of "Bonds for Bombers" Week, now in full swing, is the dramatic hook-up of 15 National and Commercial stations this Thursday evening, March 26, for the purpose of acquainting listeners with the progress of the campaign.

At seven o'clock on Thursday night listeners will be able to eavesdrop while the campaign headquarters in Wellington call up by telephone representatives of the 15 postal districts in the Dominion. Each representative will speak on behalf of the National Savings committees within his district, and will give progress reports. The programme will last half an hour, and will be carried by ten National and all five Commercial stations.

A further reminder to listeners of the "Bonds for Bombers" drive is the fact that for two weeks the prize money in the "Apple Query," broadcast from all CBS stations every Saturday night, will be paid in Bomber Bonds.