

RECORD BBC EXPORTS!

FOR most New Zealanders, the phrase "export of brains" implies an unfavourable balance of trade in this department of our national activity. But there is also an inward traffic in brainpower. As L. MARSLAND GANDER, radio correspondent of the London "Daily Telegraph," points out in this article, the BBC Transcription Service's export traffic has increased significantly since the War.

MOST of Britain's exports have expanded in volume since the end of the war, but one of the strangest, insubstantial yet profoundly important, has boomed. It is the export of air-waves—in other words, voices and music recorded by the British Broadcasting Corporation on discs or tape and sent by them to all parts of the world.

The BBC Transcription Service, as it is prosaically called, despatches 77,000 discs a year by air and sea. From Fiji to New York, from the Falkland Islands to Norway, hundreds of local broadcasting transmitters radiate these programmes round the clock. More than 50,000 of these discs are in English or with English announcements, and the rest, in nine other languages, are chiefly Spanish, Portuguese, German and Italian.

A Trouble-free Service

It is a complete overseas broadcasting service stripped of the difficulties that arise from variable reception or atmospheric and adapted to simple receiving and transmitting apparatus. In addition, it is supplied free to most foreign users, though some British Com-

monwealth stations make contributions within their means. It is a particular boon to the small one-man station. The operator, with his packet of records, is not only able to give his local audience the best London programmes, but is also provided with material for announcements.

The range covered by the Transcription Service is virtually as wide as that of the BBC Home and Overseas programmes except, of course, for news and topicalities. Light music is the most universally popular item with overseas users, but in foreign countries the English language lessons have attained immense and sustained success. At one period 400 Latin-American stations were broadcasting the conversational lessons incorporated in the series *The Family of Dr. Baker*, which comprised 104 fifteen-minute sessions.

All four big Variety shows of the current winter season are offered. These are *Over to You*, with Murdoch and Horne; *Take It From Here*, starring the Australians Joy Nichols and Dick Bentley, plus the very English Jimmy Edwards; *Ray's a Laugh*, with Ted Ray, now being hailed as the successor to Tommy Handley; and *Have a Go!* with Wilfred Pickles of Yorkshire doing his hearty impromptu and good-humoured interviewing.

In serious contrast, the Christopher Columbus anniversary broadcast, in Spanish, achieved popularity in South America, and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, from the Third Programme, had unexpectedly wide appreciation. Classical and religious music used by many stations overseas included Purcell's *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen*, and the famous Carol Service from King's College, Cambridge. Many of the productions of plays by such authors as Shaw and Eliot are also eagerly sought, be-



BBC photograph
A PRODUCER (foreground) and her assistants at work in the Maida Vale studios of the London Transcription Service

sides lighter efforts like A. A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*, and Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows*.

Three Year Limit

All Britain's best symphony orchestras are becoming increasingly familiar abroad. To ensure good quality, and also to conform to copyright requirements, the BBC lays down certain rules for users. A record may be broadcast only three times from any one transmitter. Musical records may be broadcast five times. After three years, however often a record has been used, it must be scrapped. Another provision is that the Transcription records must not be used in sponsored advertising programmes.

There are many specialised activities of the Transcription Service. For instance, Wynford Vaughan Thomas, the

well-known correspondent and commentator, is recorded in 13 programmes called *Glad to Meet You*, acting as a guide to the cities and countryside of Britain. "The best way to understand a country is to loiter and gossip your way through it," he says. An attractive illustrated pamphlet has been issued in connection with this and many other Transcription series.

The centre of the Service is in a former convent at Maida Vale, London, where a staff of 150 work under the direction of R. D'Arcy Marriott. Most of the recordings are made on slow-playing 16-inch discs and the comparatively small amount of tape recording is supplied chiefly to Germany. Few could have foreseen that the modest beginnings in 1938 would have yielded such impressive results today.

Story of the New Zealand Press

"TO a philosopher all news . . . is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip." That was how Thoreau summed up newspapers nearly a hundred years ago. Since then the number of newspaper readers has grown astronomically. It wouldn't be easy to say how many of

them are mainly "greedy after gossip," and how many read their papers in a way to justify the view of Wickham Steed, a former editor of *The Times*, that the outstanding function of the Press, "to gather, to make known and to interpret news of public interest," is "socially valuable and, uprightly discharged with a sense of responsibility, highly honourable," that "upon it the safety of a community may depend." But most people nowadays certainly rely on their newspapers for something—and it is equally true newspaper men get a ready audience when they start talking shop.

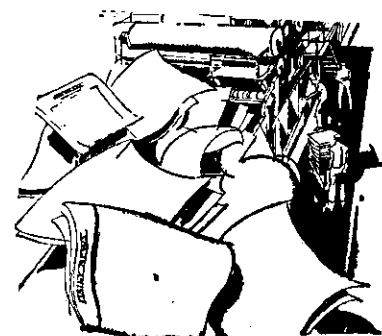
A picture of *The Press in New Zealand* as seen by a number of men who have been associated with newspapers in one way or another will be given in nine talks which YA and YZ stations are to broadcast weekly at 9.15 p.m. on Thursdays, starting on April 3.

New Zealand seems always to have had a

great number of newspapers, but the forerunner of them all was the old *New Zealand Gazette*. Only ten weeks after the famous gathering at Waitangi the first issue of this first paper published in New Zealand (there had been one issue in London) came off the press which had been set up in a prefabricated house on the Petone beach. In less than two months a second paper had appeared, in the Bay of Islands.

The stormy atmosphere in which some of those early papers were established (sometimes the storm quickly overwhelmed them) will be described by Dr. G. H. Scholefield, former Chief Librarian of the General Assembly Library, in the first talk in the series. In the following two weeks he will bring the story of the development of the New Zealand Press down to recent times, and some surprises are guaranteed for those who don't know their newspaper history.

There are now forty-three daily papers in New Zealand, as well as many published less frequently. W. E. Crawford, editor of the *Northern Advocate*, thinks that this is a good thing—that there's safety in numbers. In his talk,



the fourth in the series, he will describe the Press today, including the Press Association system of news collection and distribution. Then John Hardingham, Parliamentary correspondent of the *New Zealand Herald*, will give a picture of a reporter's life as he sees it; Geoffrey Webster, literary editor of the *Auckland Star*, will explain the interest of newspapers in their readers' tastes; an advertising man will discuss "The Press and its Advertisers"; and R. H. Billens, managing editor of the *Manawatu Times*, will talk about "The Press and the Fourth Estate." The series will end with a talk by Alan Mulgan on "The Future of the Press." Mr. Mulgan is a former literary editor of the *Auckland Star*, and when he retired in 1946 was NZBS Supervisor of Talks.



DR. G. H. SCHOLEFIELD

Spencer Digby
ALAN MULGAN