

made to the members of Parliament, is neither fair nor correct.

Everything humanly possible has been done to provide good programmes.

The company regularly receives an enormous number of letters from listeners-in. Of these letters 98 per cent. are complimentary and express appreciation of the general fare provided.

A significant fact in regard to the condemnatory reports is that most of them appear in newspapers under the protection of anonymity. There is ample evidence to suggest that a proportion of these newspaper criticisms emanate from those who have been disappointed either in the failure to be included in the programmes through inadequate talent or artistry, or because of unsuitability of the proposed contribution, for some reason or other—frequently because it offends the rule against propaganda. The enforcing of this rule in regard to propaganda and advertising is compulsory upon the company under its license,

but the necessity of observing it has upon occasions compelled the company to give offence to those who have sought to profit by the publicity value of broadcasting. In thus protecting the public interests in the spirit of the agreement entered into with the Government on behalf of the public, the Broadcasting Company has necessarily made some enemies

ATTITUDE OF PROPAGANDA.

These newspaper attacks have been borne in a spirit of silent tolerance, the company, feeling itself rewarded by the full knowledge of what it has done, and is doing, for the public and a fairly intimate knowledge of the source and intent of the propaganda made against it. On some occasions, when the propaganda has been particularly vicious and misleading, replies have been made.

But it seems to be a characteristic of human nature for more publicity to be given to complaints than to replies to them.

It is quite recognised that some listeners and correspondents are genuinely concerned to help with constructive suggestions, to which not the slightest exception can be taken. The company is as concerned as any listener to rectify any defects that might exist, and steadily improve the service, but it is to be recognised that the country as a whole in broadcasting must walk before it can run, and the plants must first be built and the organisation perfected before the full benefit can be given to the programme to be broadcast. It is, of course, obvious that it is the programme that the listener wants; but that programme must be reticulated satisfactorily to his house, just as any other service. The listener must therefore remember that it is not only the cost of the programme that counts, but the heavy and recurring cost that the company has to carry in, as it were, providing the high-powered gun with which to shoot that programme so that it will be available to every house and every listener within measurable range.

BROADCASTING IS DIFFERENT.

In connection with the programme, too, it is to be remembered that it is a comparatively simple matter to put a good programme on in a hall; but it is quite a different proposition to broadcast that concert so as to make it available for reception in every house within hundreds of miles. The capital outlay involved in the artists' talent will be readily recognised, but it is very small in relation to the permanent cost of providing the machines and the organisation to put that concert on the air and into the home. It is very certain that none of the confirmed critics appreciate the intricacy and magnitude of the organisation required in this work.

MINOR POINTS.

Some of the minor points mentioned in criticism may now be dealt with. It is first alleged that the company is understaffed. That is freely admitted. It is understaffed, and everybody in connection with the Broadcasting Company has been working a large amount of overtime gratuitously for the past two years in order that the fullest amount of money possible may be available for providing programmes for the benefit of the listener-in.

In connection with the transmission, it can definitely be denied that this has been unsatisfactory. As a matter of fact,

a particularly high standard of efficiency has been maintained and in point of actual practice, the plants have been operating with efficiency over a wider circle than similar plants are normally expected to operate overseas.

In connection with the earlier plants that have been installed, the company paid for an overseas expert to supervise and instruct the staff in their proper maintenance and operation, and has also made a similar arrangement in respect of the new five kilowatt station in Wellington. The result of this policy has been that the transmission from the New Zealand stations is satisfactory, as hundreds of letters—some from as far afield as the back-blocks of Australia—demonstrate. In connection with some investigations made by the Post and Telegraph Department, it was proved that local defects were due to howlings emanating from improperly regulated machines, or to the topographical and atmospheric conditions of the Dominion itself. It is fair to point out here that, owing to the narrow strip of land which constitutes New Zealand, probably 70 to 80 per cent. of the total power output goes to waste over the sea, and is non-revenue-earning, thus making it even more difficult for the company to get monetary results that accrue to

other stations more favourably situated in populated areas.

NOW READY FOR ADVANCE.

In conclusion, it may be said, by way of summary, that the company from the outset set before itself the very highest ideals of satisfactory service, but it recognised that these ideals would only be attained by the provision of satisfactory plants for broadcasting of programmes, an efficient organisation for feeding the plants and securing the programmes, and thirdly, the building of a high standard in the programmes themselves. These points have been taken in order, attention being concentrated upon first things first. That stage is passing. The plants have been provided, the foundation of organisation has been built, and the superstructure largely perfected. There comes now the third stage of programme improvement. Much has already been done along these lines but more unquestionably remains to be done. The company freely admits that it has been compelled by circumstances to cut its coat according to its cloth, but with the attainment of freedom to concentrate energies upon the third phase, the listening public can rest assured that the programmes will be brought to the fullest standard of efficiency attainable by the talent within the country, and in line with the general standard of efficiency aimed at in all phases of the company's organisation.

THROUGH THE MAGIC DOOR

CHILDREN IN RADIO-LAND

BEDTIME STORIES

When we see the children absorbed in the bedtime stories of Uncle Jack, we grown-ups repress a sigh. They are in a new world, one that we never knew when we were young. These young folks are living in Radioland.

Radioland? We never heard of Radioland in our young days and there was no Uncle Jack to admit us through the magic door to that wonderful place where the only grown-up who ever treads the golden pathways is the radio postman. Children now-a-days live in another world, enticed there by that modern Pied Piper, Uncle Jack. Just as the children did in Hamelin, "all the little boys and girls with rosy cheeks and flaxen curls" respond to Uncle Jack. We grown-ups can never know the pleasure of being a niece or a nephew of Uncle Jack, of hearing our names coming out of the air, of listening to Uncle Jack's kind words—sometimes of advice, sometimes of praise and sometimes of admonition—and to receive presents by the Radio postman. A letter to Uncle Jack with a request to be allowed to join the radio family is all that is required. Without being a member of the family one can never fully enjoy the real glamour of Radioland. But all the same, there is a lot of pleasure in it for us grown-up folks.

I wonder if we could have a peep into Uncle Jack's mail bag? What thousands of letters he must receive! And what interesting ones. We are sure his young correspondents—but they are not all young, for many parents write too, when they have important things to say to Uncle Jack—will not mind us seeing their letters.

Here's one envelope, obviously addressed by a child to whom a pen is a difficult instrument to handle. The address, half printed, half written, covers the whole face of the envelope. But there is no mistaking whom it is for. It contains the usual request: May I join your radio family?

What an assortment of letters! Some are written on small notepaper in the neatest script and some are on sheets of foolscap, the lettering large enough to fill up the space between the lines. Some are written in ink, some in pencil. Many are the first letters that the writers have ever penned, and very commendable efforts some of them are, too. These first letters are an honour to Uncle Jack. Kisses are plentiful. Sometimes half a page will be filled up with crosses.

Some of the young listeners are of a precocious nature, as can be seen from the following excerpts:—

"I am writing on behalf of my little brother, who will be five on the 15th of this month, and who is a great wireless enthusiast."

A child of ten writing says:— "I have a baby sister named Gwennie, eighteen months old, who dances when she hears the music over the wireless."

Another girl writes:— "Our baby Susie is four years old and she listens in with great interest to the bedtime stories. To-night she joined in the chorus of 'Bye, Bye, Blackbird' with great glee, and she wants to know if you will sing her favourite song 'Don't Bring Lulu' next time. In fact, she called out to-night, 'Please Sing Lulu' and couldn't understand getting no reply."

There is a note of disappointment in these letters:— "I wrote to you but I did not hear my name called out."

"I was not listening in when you answered my letter, but when I got to school one of the girls in my class told me all about it. Her name is Mary, too."

There are frequent references to school, its pleasures, its advantages, and its drawbacks:—

"I do wish I did not have to go back to school and learn new sums. Still, if we did not go to school, we could not write to you, could we?"

"I think it is time to do my homework now. Well, good-night, with love and best wishes."

"We have a new headmaster, and he does not believe in giving us homework, so we think he is just all right."

Could Uncle Jack ignore such an innocent hint as this? But probably the child's parents do not approve of her eating chocolate:—

"You seem to have lots of chocolate. I would like to write again and get you to send some by wireless."

Two of many fervent appreciations:—

"I think the bedtime story hour is lovely"

"We wish you would have a bedtime story every night"

The radio postman was glad to have this assurance:—

"We have a Fox Terrier dog, but we keep him on the chain, so that the radio postman will not be afraid to come in."

But this was very disconcerting if there is one dog more than another that the radio postman fears, it is a Japanese Pug:—

"I have a little Japanese Pug pet dog, and his name is Billie. Will you please warn the radio postman to be careful if he comes to our house?"

Now we come to letters from parents, whose expressions of gratitude are based on diverse reasons:—

"He loves to hear Uncle Jack tell me

his bedtime stories. In fact, it is the only time he is really good."

"It is lovely to watch little Jimmy's face when he is listening in. What great pleasure you do give. It's worth paying twice the license fee."

"Please excuse this rather untidy letter, but my boy was that anxious to write you. We have only had the wireless on about three weeks, and enjoy the talks to the children as much as they do."

"As a constant listener-in of your children's stories, I wish to congratulate you on your children's entertainments, which are enjoyed by thousands of kiddies, and makes the possession of a receiving set a pleasure"

"I wonder if you know how much the older folk enjoy listening-in to the bedtime stories and hearing of all the 'Radio' children who write to you. My word, Uncle Jack! What a lot of kisses you get sent. Can you explain how it is?"

"We had great fun last time the Radio postman called. You forgot to say first where the parcel was put, so they had a great hunt all over the house and were greatly excited when they found it."

The bond of personal interest:—

"Little ——— had the misfortune to break his arm at school last week, and he thinks Uncle Jack ought to know about it."

"Your few words to my son did

more good than a dozen bottles of tonic and I cannot find words to express my appreciation."

Advice from Uncle Jack carries much weight:—

"He is a good boy, but he forgets to clean his teeth without being reminded, so if you would please give a word of advice—which he enjoys when given to others—it may help to make the occasion nicer. May I thank you ever so much, and accept from us all our appreciation of all that is done for the children. We enjoy the sessions almost as much as the children do."

These troublesome scooters:—Recently Uncle Jack had to send a scooterer up north of Christchurch. Now, scooters are very awkward things to send by wireless, and this one somehow fell off twice on the way. It caused Uncle Jack a lot of trouble, but he was persevering and it landed eventually at the foot of the aerial mast. That incident explains why the little boy mentioned in this letter is anxious about the safe transit of the scooter he wants Uncle Jack to send him.

"On Saturday is Jimmy's birthday. He is wanting you to send him a scooter, and he is awfully worried that it might get caught coming along because he says Uncle Jack might not give it a big enough push, and it might get caught on the wires by Kaiapoi."

This scooter got through safely, and no doubt Jimmy's faith in the virtues of carrier waves is firmly established.

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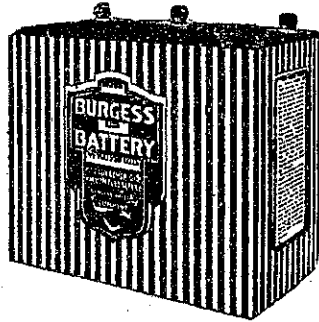
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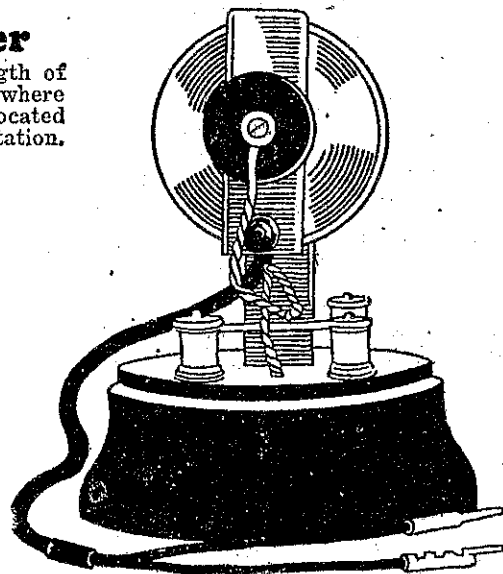
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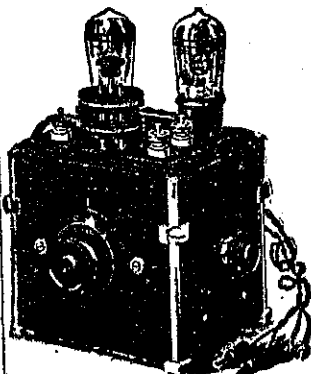
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