



# "They're Off"--How you get the Sporting Results

This article, continued from the cover, describes the establishment and progress of the Broadcasting of sporting events in New Zealand. Mr. A. R. Allardyce, the company's sporting organiser, has now described over fifty first-class events. From the first uncomfortable perch on a haystack, depicted below, the service has expanded, till now all facilities are courteously afforded by sporting authorities.

## TROTTING VETERANS BORROW ALLARDYCE'S EYES.

On being approached, Mr. A. I. Rat-tray, the secretary of the Metropolitan Trotting Club, Canterbury Park Trotting Club, and New Brighton Club, was only too pleased to grant permission to the company to broadcast descriptions of the trotting meetings from Addington, and allotted a dress circle position in the stewards' stand at their excellently appointed course. The first transmission from the racecourse created a great deal of interest, and one of the greatest difficulties to be contended with was to keep inquiring sportsmen from asking numerous questions while the station was on the air. They are now thoroughly educated, and behave really well.

A little coterie of old members are among the most interested outlookers. Their eyesight is not what it once was, and they encircle the announcer and listen to the description of the race. They are thus able to follow the fortunes of their respective investments. On the occasion of the Duke's visit they must have felt lost, as on this occasion the announcer's position was moved into the main stand.

## EDUCATED UP TO THE "MIKE."

The appearance of the microphone at these events always creates a great deal of public interest, and gives rise to many animated discussions on the wonders of wireless. To-day the "mike" at Addington is an accepted fact, so much so, that on one occasion when it was decided not to broadcast the announcer went for a tramp through the country. Arriving at a

wayside inn about midday, he was interested to see someone tuning in a set. On inquiring what the fan was trying to pick up, he was told that a congregation of local residents had assembled to hear the races at Addington. It was quite impossible to convince the listeners that there was no transmission without disclosing his identity, and this he had no desire to do. The disgust of these sports can only be imagined when they tuned in at 8 p.m. and heard a selection of gramophone records from the studio.

## PIONEERING EXPERIENCES AT RACING.

The first transmission from Riccarton racecourse took place a year ago this week, when a description of the races was broadcast on the occasion of the winning of the Grand National by Peter Maxwell.

This first transmission has almost become historic in Christchurch on account of the difficulties to be overcome before it could be accomplished. Firstly, the C.J.C. would not allow the broadcasters to have a position in the grandstands, as they might interrupt some of their officials or patrons, but they gave permission to work from any part of the course outside the enclosures.

The next difficulty arose over a suitable telephone line, as at that time Riccarton was not very well supplied with lines. This difficulty was overcome by the generous action of Mr. J. McCombe, the well-known Riccarton mentor, who placed his private 'phone at 3YA's disposal during the time the races were on. Then a position had to be secured, and after a thorough investigation it was decided that the most suitable place would be on top

of a half-eaten haystack, which was situated round by the scraping sheds, or nearly three furlongs from the finishing post, at the beginning of a back straight.

## SUCCESSFUL FIRST VENTURE.

Only those who know the size of Riccarton racecourse can appreciate the distance the announcer was away from the horses. As things were not so far advanced as they are now in the broadcasting world it was necessary for the announcer to go out alone, and, armed with diagrams for the connecting up of

the amplifier, he left for the course. Assistance was given to haul the heavy batteries and gear connected with relays on to the top of the stack by the driver who went out, and then the announcer was left to his own devices. It was necessary to run three furlongs across the course to see the starters and jockeys on the board in front of the stand, then another run back to give this information, describe the preliminaries, and the actual running of the race. Without glasses this was no easy matter, but the announcer was lucky enough to be able to place every

winner and second horse throughout the meeting without making a mistake. Of course, these difficulties were explained to listeners, with the added information that the placings were not to be regarded as official until he had time to go over and check them on the judge's box.

## "A DIPPY MAN ON A HAYSTACK."

The weather had been very wet and the stack was very cold and damp, and the only way to scramble on top was with the assistance of an old hurdle laid against the side of the stack, which wobbled ominously on every occasion it was used. Fortunately, the relay was voted a great success, and the announcer felt that all his labour had not been in vain.

The microphone on top of the stack may be seen in the accompanying photograph, and it certainly created much diversion among the few who had crawled through the fence to see the events. One such group crowded underneath the stack and indulged in much speculation as to whether the apparatus was a moving picture machine, electric timing gear, or just a perch for the staid steward. They were sublimely unconscious that their conversation was being carried to the ends of the earth. The riders in the various races also evinced the greatest curiosity in the contrivance, and one on returning to the birdcage reported that there was "somebody sitting on top of the haystack who was quite dippy, as he was speaking to himself."

A year has made a great difference in the conditions under which a sports announcer works. He has now a snug seat in the grandstand, and every consideration shown to him by officials and patrons alike.



Location of the first sporting broadcast in New Zealand.  
Mr. Allardyce perched on a haystack at Riccarton, August, 1926.

## THE CHIT CHAT CLUB

Being a record of some of the dissertations of members of the X Club, on wireless matters of moment in New Zealand.

Gathered round the great open fireplace in one of the well furnished, cheery rooms of the X Club was a little coterie of members. Anyone who was a frequenter of the club would know that this same half-dozen was to be found there regularly between five and six in the evenings. Here, in front of the blazing open fire, reinforced with glasses of something conducive of good fellowship, these self-same members nightly discussed problems small and big connected with wireless.

"Wireless bugs, poor devils," was the description applied to them by many of the other club members, and visitors were often taken into the room just to have the phenomena shown to them. No one thought of entering the little circle unless he had had his baptism "on the air" for, as Boodle, one of the wealthiest and stingiest members, so aptly remarked, "You never know when you might catch it."

At times, this little circle was joined by the oldest member, who, though detesting wireless and all connected with it, felt called upon to give his views, "for the benefit of those cheeky young devils who need keeping in their place, sir!"

To-night the conversation had drifted from squealing valves, and the particular corner of Hades reserved for their owners, to a general discussion of the programmes of the week, and, as usual when programmes were under discussion, there were heated patches.

"I rather liked that address of Morrison's from 2YA on the 'Economics of Business,' said Larton—commonly known as "Blinks," because of his huge American goggles, and his habit of blinking fiercely at you in order to clinch a remark. "It's the sort of thing a chap needs these days, with the fierce competition we have."

"I didn't hear that one," said Brenton, "what was it all about?"

"Well," said Blinks, planting his feet more firmly on the mantleshelf, "it was a dry subject, rather well clothed with illustrations. Instead of starting off in the usual way with the

'fundamentals of economics' he took us for a trip round Wellington, showed us the sights, spoke of the splendid homes seen on the route, and then pointed gently, but firmly, to the fact that all these represented money, and that all these people made a living somehow.

"Then he took us further afield to the dairyfarm, the forest and the sheep station, and showed us how delicately interwoven are the details of business. Even the fat middleman"—and here Blinks looked slyly at Winton Thribs—"was shown to be necessary. He said that business was the means used to supply the needs of humanity, and in supplying those needs business was also the way by which people earned their living. He likened the world of business to a great machine, which, though considered ugly and unwieldy by some, was generally accepted, in the hope that we could further improve it. Everyone, whether he were a common labourer, a bushfeller, a skilled worker, or a professional man, was needed, and it was up to everyone to try and make themselves as efficient as possible through introducing modern methods of thought and work."

"Hrmph!" said the oldest member, clearing his throat. "Bosh, sir—pure bosh! It's easy enough to prattle about modern methods, young man, but in my day we succeeded without them. Look at me, sir, look at me. Retired at fifty through hard work. Modern methods be—"

"That's all right sir," replied Blinks, with a twinkle, "but you see, you had the advantage over us. Cash registers weren't invented in your young day."

At this, the oldest member looked as though he were going to have an apopleptic fit, "the look of guilt," as Blinks afterwards described it—and Larton hurriedly changed the subject.

"One of the best addresses I've heard for a long time," he said, "was one from 3YA, by a missionary from China—a Dr. H. G. Anderson."

Blinks yawned prodigiously, and proceeded to take another sip from the glass, in order, as it were, to fortify himself against boredom.

"You can look bored if you like," continued Larton, "but I tell you it

was something out of the ordinary, and," he added maliciously "an eye opener for the ignorant."

"This doctor said that tourists and travellers who visit only the treaty ports consider themselves authorities on Chinese affairs and give vent to opinions which are supposed to give a true picture of China as a whole, but which in reality do nothing of the sort. While many of the treaty port business men consider that the big stick is the only way of settling the Chinese problem, this missionary says that in his opinion Britain will reap a rich harvest of good-will from her present attitude of patience and tolerance."

"This missionary has been many years in the province of Szechuan, close to the Tibetan border. In this province, about twice the size of New Zealand, there are about 60,000,000 and 70,000,000 people. More than half the population of the world lies within a radius of 1200 miles of the city! Outside the capital is the West China Union University, in which Dr. Anderson is working. The city, from his description is a true meeting place of East and West, and in the last four years has been revolutionised through the introduction of electric light, motor cars and motor roads, telephones, and a postal system and this 2000 miles East of Shanghai."

"His chat put a different complexion on missionary matters too, for he says that there really is not the antagonism which the papers would have us believe. For years his province has been subject to the looting of a nondescript army, and the poverty-stricken inhabitants cruelly taxed."

"Only a mob of Chinks would stand for it anyway," growled the oldest member who could contain himself no longer.

"Yes, he went on to ask us to be spared from the fools who talked of all Chinese as 'ignorant Chinks,'" said Larton bitingly.

The oldest member subsided muttering.

"What a gigantic task is ahead of the missionaries. He went on to say that there are 400,000,000 people in China, and the peaceful reforming of such a population is almost impossible. The people in his province are changing from a 200-year-old culture to a brand new one in a single generation—and they are doing it without much friction."

"That all seems all right," said Blinks, "but don't you think the Chinks, er... I mean Chinese, just pull the legs of the missionaries in order to get medical aid and other things."

"No, he dealt with that too. He said that many of the Chinese were standing up against the persecution to which they were being subjected, and that, sure enough, is a pretty sound test. 'Remember,' he concluded, 'the Chinese aren't just Chinks, they are people, different from rather than inferior to you and me. When critics of the East cease to mix up inferiority and difference the racial

problem will be well on its way to solution.' And for myself," concluded Larton, "I believe the missionary's right."

"Call them Chinks, or whatever you like," said the oldest member, "but you can't handle them any way but with a big stick. Keep 'em down."

"It's in the younger generation of Chinese that our hope would seem to lie," said Larton, "and praps its from the younger generation of Englishmen that we're going to get that sympathy which will constructively help." "I was a bit disappointed with that address on physical culture from 1YA by W. N. Kerr," said Brenton who prides himself on a knowledge of Jiu Jitsu, Swedish drill and the like. "It seemed to be a bit too much general stuff about what a decrepit lot we are—and of course we know it's true—and too little about what we should do."

"Yes, I thought that too," said Drexler, commonly known as "Silent George" because of the few contributions he made to the general conversation. "Modern life makes it pretty hard to keep up physically, and we want to know the things we should do to put Nature at rights."

"What line did he take?" asked Blinks.

"He pointed out that disease was a coward, striking a chap only when he was run down, and that we all are carrying around germs of diphtheria, tetanus and tuberculosis."

"Good God," said the oldest member rising suddenly, "you pack of blessed disease carriers! I'm off, for I'm damned if I want to catch any of your infernal diseases at my time of life," and with that he stamped heavily out of the room.

"I don't think he need worry much," said Drexler, "even if he has got a bit of a corporation."—"Well, to continue, this chap Kerr reckoned that it was particularly during the winter months that we should go in for physical exercise."

"What about football," said Blinks, "surely that's strenuous enough for anyone?"

"Yes, that's all right, but his talk was really directed to the older crowd who have passed the football age. He said that a Harley St. specialist, Dr. Leonard Williams, had said that if we got ill we shouldn't be pities as victims, but should be condemned as fools. Kerr reckons that the normal life of man should be from 120 to 140 years, judging from the comparison between the time it takes for animals and for human beings to mature. His slogan is that 'the man who cannot spare time to look after his health, usually holds the averages good in taking time to be sick,' and I think there's something in that. He's a great believer in the use of the flesh glove, and almost the only practical hint he gave was to use this freely. He says that it is a very valuable exercise not only for the skin, but also for the muscles, reacting on the internal organs. You have to be careful, apparently, in the way you apply it, and it should not just be

rubbed any way, but should always be up and down towards the heart. And it ought to be easy for you, Blinks," concluded Drexler, "for you must never hold your breath—so you could still keep on talking."

"What about another?" said Brenton, a remark that met with instant approval. Glasses replenished, the talk drifted from wireless momentarily, to the subject of motor cars. Larton had just purchased a brand new Doshier, and was dilating on its many virtues, and the way it would climb on "top," which reminded Blinks of a trip he had had in one of the earliest models round about 1900.

"There was an interesting address on the history of motor cars from 4YA a week or so ago," said Harrison, another member of the magic circle, "and it made one think of the astonishing advances that have been made in only a few years. When you think that the first internal combustion engine wasn't made till 40 years ago, and then see the types of cars we have to-day, for carting bloated aristocrats like Larton about, you can see there's a history, and a jolly interesting one, to the motor car business."

"This bird, who called himself 'Gargoyle,' said that the first internal combustion engine using petrol, was invented by a German, Gottlieb Daimler in 1885, and was used for propelling a bicycle, later being fitted to a river boat. A Frenchman, M. Levassor, saw the possibilities of using the engine for propelling carriages, and fitting the engine to the front of the carriage, made the drive through the clutch to a set of reduction gears and thence to the back wheels. Although details have been altered, the principal of transmission remains exactly the same to-day. He went on to tell of the advances that had been made following on motor races disclosing weaknesses in different models. The first race from Paris to Bordeaux was won in a car which averaged 15 miles an hour."

"Another point I liked in that address was the way in which he traced the growth of motor manufacturing in England, and he showed that we have taught the Yanks a few things about cars, and invented such things as the spare wheel, and the six cylinder engine. Feared as instruments of the Devil in the first place, all sorts of restrictions were placed on the use of motor cars, but these have been surmounted by time, and now we have the low-powered high-efficiency engine developing as much power as engines three and four times their size developed in the early days of motoring."

"Another point stressed by 'Gargoyle' was the need for correct lubrication. If old Larton, for instance, doesn't give his fancy bus a good brand of oil, and plenty of it, she will seize up or peter out on him without so much as a 'by your leave.' Correct lubrication is a great thing and it is no longer considered sufficient to buy the cheapest brand of oil you can get, and dump it into the oil sump."