

Highly Successful Schools' Broadcast

Excellent Reception in Most Parts of the Dominion

The experimental broadcast to schools carried out from 2YA on December 13 was outstandingly successful. Places as far north as Ohakune and as far south as Milton reported clear reception. The educational possibilities of specially selected programmes are illimitable, and it can be confidently anticipated that as a result of this initial experiment, regular broadcasts to schools will, before long, become a recognised feature of our educational programme. The Director of Education, Mr. T. B. Strong, is greatly impressed with the results of this experiment, which shows how greatly radio can help the outback teacher, giving the pupils of the country schools cultural opportunities not otherwise available.



APPROXIMATELY thirty schools were selected for the experimental broadcast, these as far as possible representing every district in the Dominion. In actual fact the broadcast was received by more than twice that number of schools, and the general results were exceptionally good. The great majority of the reports show clear reception throughout the whole of the programme, although in some cases the afternoon was marred through electrical disturbances in certain districts. Disappointing reception was reported from Auckland, also from the Waikato, but, on the other hand, Ohakune reported excellent reception. Christchurch schools complained of erratic reception, but schools in the rural area, and those further south, reported the successful reception of the greater part of the programme. Particularly pleasing are the reports from Southland, where reception under summer daylight conditions could reasonably be expected to be not so good. At Milton the whole programme was clearly received, while further south, at Longbush, fair reception was recorded. Speaking generally, reception was excellent throughout Taranaki, Manawatu, Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa and Marlborough, except where local electrical disturbances were responsible for distracting breaks. Elsewhere, with the notable exceptions of Christchurch and Auckland, fair reception was general.

"WONDERFUL POSSIBILITIES."

Discussing the various reports, the Director of Education, Mr. T. B. Strong, said that he fully realised the importance of the experiment, and the educational possibilities of wireless. The tenor of the reports received indicated that for complete success the rebroadcasting of the programmes from the various stations would be necessary.

"This broadcast was purely an experiment," continued Mr. Strong, "but its success has been sufficient to demonstrate the advantages which wireless offers in education. Given successful reception, the country schools could be greatly assisted through judiciously selected programmes. I believe that wireless could be used in conjunction with the 'School Journal' with very beneficial results. Suitable literature published in our journals could be dealt with by experts, and children taught by wireless to appreciate more deeply the delights of good music, art and literature. Next year we hope to go further with this matter, and eventually it may be possible to utilise widely wireless in our educational programme."

ENTERPRISING DEALERS.

A particularly pleasing feature of the experimental broadcast was the enterprise of many radio dealers in installing sets in schools other than those listed for the official experiment. The reports already received indicate that thanks, mainly to the initiative of the dealers, at least twice as many schools as were on the schedule "listened-in" on December 13. In all probability the number was very much greater, as it is known that numbers of schools have not as yet reported.

This commendable spirit of enthusiasm exhibited by the dealers shows that they have a thorough appreciation of the possibilities opened up by regular broadcasting of programmes to schools. There will, we feel certain, be little difficulty in arranging for the successful reception of school programmes in all parts of the country, and a very wide potential market for radio sets is thus exposed. Apart altogether from the actual sets which would necessarily have to be installed at thousands of schools throughout the Dominion were a wireless programme to become a definite feature of the school curriculum, there is a wider field open to exploration. The child who receives interesting instruction by means of wireless is going to carry his enthusiasm into the home, and thousands who have thought of radio merely as an interesting but unnecessary luxury are going to become buyers, so that they too can gain the enjoyment which has been opened up to their children.

If the Education Department definitely decides upon a wireless instructional programme, and as few difficulties remain to be overcome it may be presumed that they will do so, the question of purchasing sets for the various schools will naturally arise. Though this might at first appear a definite obstacle in view of the expenditure which must necessarily be incurred, the educational possibilities are so great that ways and means could be found of raising the money. Under present conditions, subsidies are paid to school committees who voluntarily raise money for the purchase of school gramophones, etc., the Department subsidising the voluntary contributions on a £1 for £1 basis. The extension of such subsidies to the money raised for the purchase of wireless sets would act as an incentive to

committees to raise the money for their individual schools, and would result in widespread applications.

WIRELESS LESSONS.

The programme given on this occasion was purely experimental and was not indicative of the class of work which would be carried out were wireless adopted generally. Naturally the broadcasts would have to cater for the different classes at the schools, and the programmes be so arranged as to be suitable for Standards 5 and 6 on one occasion, and for the lower standards at other times. Subjects which ordinarily present difficulties to the teacher could be treated by recognised experts, and with classes specially prepared beforehand, excellent results should be secured.

Radio for schools is no new thing, and for the past three years careful experiments have been conducted in America with school programmes. Miss Johnson, who was in charge of the work in California, said: "The experiment has been most worth while, and it has definitely proven that radio instruction is practical and a much-desired feature of any school system."

Miss Whitmarsh, to whom was entrusted a series of thirteen health talks, reporting on the possibilities of wireless, said: "The results would have been greater had more schools participated. In my particular field of instruction this experiment has convinced me that radio does much in stimulating an interest in health habits and arouses an interest in a subject which, having no special time allotted, is often neglected on the programme. I think it not too ambitious to predict that in the near future instruction by radio will be a standardised department of instruction, guided by a full-time director."

OUR OWN RESULTS.

Judging from the success of our first experiment, results similar to those recorded in the United States may be confidently anticipated. Many of the reports received from headmasters of schools were of a most enthusiastic nature, showing that the teachers recognised the assistance that could be given them "over the air." Here are some extracts from the reports received by the Director of Education:

Motupiko (Nelson): "The reception was excellent, the voices of each speaker being heard very distinctly."

Eketahuna: "Every word of the speeches was distinctly heard, and the type of lessons given by Mr. Taylor was received enthusiastically by the children."

Carlisle School (Marlborough): "I have to report clear reception and the absence of any distraction."

Levin D.H.S.: "I have to report that the radio reception at this school was of first-class strength and clearness. There was a complete absence of static."

Upper Moutere (Nelson): "Every word of each speaker was heard distinctly."

Tiakitahuna (Palmerston North): "The volume was very good, and there was neither fading nor distortion."

Pipiriki (Wanganui River): "I have to acknowledge the clear loudspeaker reception of the whole programme."

Carterton D.H.S.: "The reception by our school was perfect. There are, no doubt, great possibilities before this new mode of instruction."

Fitzherbert East (Palmerston North): "I think that wireless could be made to serve a very useful purpose."

Fordell (Taranaki): "The experiment was successful beyond expectation. The address of every speaker was surprisingly clear and was followed by the children with interest."

Eketahuna: "Education addresses splendidly received. Every word of literature talk came through very clearly."

Milton (South Otago): "Wireless reception excellent. Fills us with enthusiasm."

Leamington (Cambridge): "Failure owing to atmospheric robbed of much of its usefulness by static caused by an by doing so he would distract the attention of the children."

Longbush (Southland): "On the whole, the test was more satisfactory than I had hoped it could be at this time of the year. Had 2YA been relayed through 3YA the reception would have been quite successful."

Waiteika (Opunake): "The music, etc., was enjoyed by all, and I have no hesitation in saying that as regards reception the programme was an unqualified success."

Maungaturoto: "The reception was excellent, and the children and staff were able to enjoy the programme provided by the Department to the full."

Reikorangi: "From beginning to end there was not the least hitch, and the items came through very well indeed. There was no static or interference."

Waitoa (Waikato): "The volume was spoiled with considerable interference by static. Musical items and addresses were alike indifferently received."

Manurewa (Auckland): "Indistinctness and atmospheric noises prevented any but those close to the machine from hearing. The musical items were best received."

Kihi Kihī (Te Awamutu): "Unfortunately, a severe electrical storm—and probably a local one—passed over during the hour, and static was particularly bad."

Lemington (Cambridge): "Failure owing to atmospheric conditions, a thunderstorm coming on soon after 2 p.m."

Lowcliffe (Canterbury): "I have no hesitation in saying that even for daylight reception everything was perfect. Not a word was missed, and it is the wish and hope of parents and children in this district that yesterday was but the first of many such days."

Wanganui: "The programme was excellently received at Wanganui Technical School."

Woodville: "Every word of each address came through clear and distinct, and the music was most enjoyable."

Horopito (Ohakune): "The reception of the broadcast was excellent."

Paparoa (Christchurch): "Unfortunately, the trial was robbed of much of its usefulness by static caused by an electrical disturbance passing over the district."

Ongarue (Taumarunui): "The school children listened very keenly to the programme rendered, but the success was marred by the prevalence of a rain storm that swept over just prior to the broadcasting of the programme."

Elsthorpe (Hawke's Bay): "Static at times spoilt what was otherwise a very good reception. Keen interest was displayed throughout. Wireless lessons as a permanent institution should be of great value to pupils and teachers alike."

Fiat Creek (Ral Valley): "Right throughout the trial there was no suspicion of fading. The address was entirely satisfactory, especially for pupils from Standards 4 to 6."

Tairua (East Coast): "I much regret that the results were disappointing. After some interference by static, the items were faint."

Taihape D.H.S.: "The day was not at all suitable for good results. Static gave some trouble, but some speakers were heard clearly."

Wanganui: "The reception was very good, and even at the back of the hall every word could be heard without difficulty. If wireless is used in schools it would be inadvisable for the teacher to have any oral part, because by doing so he would distract the attention of the children."

Timaru: "The conditions were not altogether favourable, but the address of the Director and the Chief Inspector came through very well and could be clearly heard right to the back of the large room."

Sefton Rural (Canterbury): "The upper children listened in, and had the programme been rebroadcast through 3YA we should have had a delightful reception."

Linwood (Christchurch): "The voices were heard quite distinctly, but the music suffered. As an experiment it was quite successful. A day should be set aside specially for addresses to Standards 5 and 6, and another day for the lower standards."

Manala (Taranaki): "We assembled the whole school in our largest room, which I now think was a mistake, for the novelty wore off for the smaller children. I think the broadcasting of good models of elocution would help to break down the self-conscious efforts at recitation by most of our bigger boys and girls."

CO-ORDINATING LESSONS.

In addition to the brief excerpts given above, much valuable data and many useful opinions were provided by teachers who heard the experimental programme. The general opinion inclines to the belief that the most effective use can be made of wireless where previously-arranged lectures are given, the teacher having maps or diagrams available for ocular demonstration of the points made by the speakers. The benefit to be derived by a series of short lessons by one individual lecturer is stressed, the children thus, after the first performance, having a feeling of common interest with the lecturer. "Musical instruction provides the most profitable and the most promising field for broadcasting in the schools," says one head teacher, and, realising the difficulties attendant upon the teaching of singing and the still greater difficulties associated with the inculcation of a proper appreciation for good music, all will be in complete agreement with him.

This experimental broadcast opens up a further field of useful service for radio in the Dominion, and dealers and listeners recognising the advantages of educational broadcasting work should give their keen support to any proposals which may be brought down by the Education Department for wireless installations in schools.

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