

Should Listeners' Money Pay For Relays?

AN IMPORTANT REVIEW OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED

THE statement published by us last week from the General Manager of the Radio Broadcasting Company in connection with the refusal by the authorities of the Band Contest being held in Christchurch this month to permit broadcasting will have been read with a great deal of interest by listeners and readers.

The statement was important because Mr. Harris wisely took the opportunity of briefly dilating upon the reason given by the Band Contest authorities for their refusal. This reason was apparently that the Band Authorities refused to permit broadcasting of their concert because it objected to giving the Broadcasting Company "something for nothing." On this point Mr. Harris rather neatly turned the tables by pointing out that, contrary to the conception apparently held, it was not the Broadcasting Company which was getting "something for nothing," but the attraction that was broadcast on relay.

It costs the Broadcasting Company, he explained, considerable money to maintain broadcasting, whereas the persons whose performances may be broadcast are involved in no additional expenditure. Neither has the broadcast of popular performances any adverse effect on the attendance. As a matter of fact, it has been proved, here and elsewhere, that considerable benefit accrues to the attraction broadcast on account of the publicity thereby given.

FROM this point Mr. Harris went on to make an important explanation concerning the attitude adopted by the Company to clubs and organisations whose meetings or performances are suitable subjects for broadcast on relay. This statement is sufficiently important to be reproduced here in its entirety.

"The Radio Broadcasting Company's position is not that of a private company formed to exploit the public, but that of a public company formed under Government regulation to administer a public utility in the interest of the community.

"The company appreciates that it costs racing and trotting clubs, band associations, musical societies, and such like public institutions a considerable amount of money to provide their form of entertainment, and it is their business to decide whether they shall or shall not permit broadcasting. The company also appreciates that these institutions are giving, in their own way, and at considerable personal effort and expense, service of the greatest public interest. However, as the Broadcasting Company's service is also given in the public interest, it cannot for this reason make direct payment for relays, although it is prepared to co-operate with such institutions to the extent of providing the broadcasting service without any cost to them."

THAT statement puts the position very fairly, and shows that the Broadcasting Company is in no way concerned

to make any complaint when its applications for permission to broadcast are met with refusal. But several recent occurrences combine to indicate that an effort is being made to spread the idea abroad that the Broadcasting Company is a very wealthy body, and that it is being guilty of something approaching meanness or lack of consideration for its listeners in refusing to pay for the privilege of broadcasting race meetings, musical fetes, sporting contests, etc. This is a position which, in the interests of listeners, needs to be examined, in order that a correct appreciation of the facts may be secured.

IN the first place, it is to be noted that the Radio Broadcasting Company is a public company, working closely under Government regulation in the administration of a public utility in the interests of the community. It is not a private company engaged in money making by the exploitation of the public. In effect, the Broadcasting Company is a trustee for the wise and efficient administration of the funds made available to it from listeners' licenses. Its own earning capacity, as such administrative trustee, is limited by its Government contract. It is therefore very much to the interest of listeners that the Company shall expend the sums entrusted to it judiciously in maintaining its service and affording suitable entertainment and news services to listeners.

Only by the strictest of economy and the most capable of management will the company be able to give the quality of service desired, and continue the policy of expansion laid down.

HOW far would the company's funds go if the demands for relay charges were acceded to? A moment's thought shows that no fund, however extensive, would meet the obligation, for payment to one would involve payment to all; and the company, in reaching the determination to reserve listeners' funds for the operating expenses of the stations, and the employment of professional artists, is following the only possible course.

BUT the question may well be asked: Why should the question of payment by the Broadcasting Company for relays of public interest ever be raised? This is not the practice in any other country in the world where broadcasting has reached a very much higher standard of development than is the case here. Publicity over the air in the United States is very highly valued, and theatres, motor-car manufacturers, and other large organisations pay large sums to broadcasting stations for the privilege of being put "on the air" even indirectly. A prominent motor-car manufacturer in the United States recently paid as much as £18,000 for one hour's broadcast of a programme arranged under its auspices, and in addition paid for the talent employed. That manufacturer did not ask the Broadcasting Company to pay him; he paid it that money for the privilege of "going on the air," and he did it because he reckoned the publicity thus secured was worth it. Similarly, theatrical companies frequently pay for part of

their performances to be broadcast merely as an advertisement, and so great is the appreciation of the advertising value of performances put over the air that one broadcasting company alone received an income of nearly a quarter of a million pounds annually for the sale of time and service in this direction. It will be seen, therefore, that the suggestion that the Broadcasting Company should pay for relay performances strikes a note out of harmony with modern broadcast developments. Commercial concerns gladly pay for publicity when it is available, and those behind public meetings and events of interest wisely welcome all the publicity they can get and freely afford all opportunities for it.

WE have dealt with this subject so comparatively fully, because we regard it as important that listeners, whose money it is that is at stake, should understand and appreciate the issue involved.

That issue is that it is not fair or right for listeners' money to be devoted to payments for relaying public performances when no extra cost whatsoever is involved to the organisers of such functions.

Listeners' funds are fully required for the provision of programmes involving individual artistic talent and time, and the maintenance of the station and staff's services. The company is quite satisfied to provide programmes by its own enterprise, but it is also ready when functions of a general character are available, in which listeners would be interested, to give freely of its services and facilities for broadcasting them; but obviously it is not right or possible that payments for such occasions should be made. As the General Manager rightly said:

It is not the Broadcasting Company which is receiving, on such occasions, "something for nothing," but, in reality, the performance that is being broadcast in receiving publicity at the expense of the broadcasting service.

On this point it is to be noted that it has been customary for the fullest possible facilities to be given by practically all organisations for the record of their doings by the public Press. This has grown up because the value of such publicity has been recognised and the right of the public to news appreciated. It is true that there is a distinction between news and entertainment, but the principle of the value of publicity remains, and the greatest beneficiary in all broadcasts is undoubtedly the entertainment which, under our conditions, receives publicity for nothing. Perhaps if the Broadcasting Company were to consider the question of itself imposing a fee for such broadcasts, it would prove the best corrective of the misconception which has been the subject of the General Manager's explanation. We do not suggest there is any intention of doing so—in fact, we have the General Manager's assurance to the contrary in his statement, but on the merits of the case there would be more justification for that course than payment for the privilege of relaying.

On Shortwave

MR. SELLENS' REPORT

A MYSTERIOUS STRANGER

Mr. F. W. Sellens reports:—

During the week I received a card from PCLL, Holland, containing the following particulars: "QRA: Radio-Laboratory, Parkstraat, 29 The Hague. Transmitting station located at Kootwijk, Holland. QRH: 16,600 kilocycles; Power 22 k.w.; Beam-aerial: Direction Holland-Java. An acknowledgment was received from Marconi Works, Chelmsford, of report sent in reference to reception of their test on November 5 from noon till midnight through station 5SW Philips Radio also wrote, but were not able at the time of writing to give any particulars of date of opening of their new station or the wavelength to be used.

On Saturday afternoon, February 11, 2XAD was heard, but was weak. KDKA was louder but speech and music were muffled.

2XAF was fair speaker strength toward the finish of their transmission on Sunday afternoon. Orchestral music was being broadcast.

RFN was heard during the evening after being missed for a week or two. He was working on about 70 metres, and I do not think up to the usual volume.

Monday morning found 3LO testing on 32 metres from 7 a.m. as usual, at good volume and modulation RFN was on 70 metres. At 10.40 p.m. JHBB, Japan, commenced their test. About 50 per cent. of their English talk was understandable. Good strength and modulation, but a noise like a pump going all the time.

ANE was on the air on Tuesday morning. They went off at 6.15 a.m., but were heard again later on. The 40 metre stranger was heard, but I could not identify him.

This station was heard again on Wednesday morning when I heard "RC" later "New Zealand, Australia." "Here comes" "Radio Station."

PCJJ was tuned in at 6.23 a.m. when a violin solo was heard at good strength, which gradually decreased till 7.30 a.m. when I closed down.

At 10.42 p.m. JHBB was tuned in. Talk was heard till 11.30 p.m., when their musical programme commenced with a stringed instrument. Volume which was good at first, increased as the time advanced. On Thursday morning the elusive 40-metre station was again heard. About 6.25 a.m. another stranger on about 31 metres was heard calling "Hullo, Hullo," this he repeated many times, saying it in different tones, and sometimes singing it, and a whistle at times, but not a clue as to the identity.

RFN was heard on 70 metres during the evening, 40-metre station again on Friday morning. PCJJ was first heard at 6.25, but they started before this. Some fine organ music was heard at first. Volume at this time was fair phone, which continued till about 7 a.m. At 7.25 a.m. strength

had increased. This is quite unusual, as volume as a rule goes off as the sun gets higher.

While listening to 2YA a friend rang up to say that the 31-metre "Hullo" station of Thursday morning was on the air calling various countries at good strength.

I tuned him in at 9.10 p.m. just in time to get him at the finish, but did not hear a call. Volume was very good. I believe this station is the one I often reported as singing "Au Japanese." The voice appeared the same.

At 10.47 p.m. JHBB commenced talking, after putting out some Morse, giving his call and address. Something was said about last day of test, also "listeners-in—results of our test." "Broadcasting station of JOAK." Esperanto—national language." Speech was spoilt by a pumping sound. Volume was quite good.

On Saturday morning at 6.15 a.m. 5SW and 2XAD were talking. The carrier only of the latter station could be heard. 5SW was readable, but was unsteady and weak.

The 40-metre station was going strong, but talking a foreign language while I was listening.

Another Report.

Mr. H. Churton, Mount Eden, Auckland, writes:—In one of the late issues of your paper you request reports from short-wave listeners, but Mr. Sellens seems to be the only "live" one in New Zealand. Perhaps this report may be interesting enough for you to publish.

I have a home-made three-valve "all wave" receiver, the wiring of which is very rough; nevertheless, the results are extremely good. The aerial used, both for short and long waves, is 45 feet high, 80 feet long, and only a single wire. The coils are home-made, being "air supported" (i.e., no coil former), and are plugged into the ordinary three-coil holder. The wave-length range is from 15 to 600 metres. Every one of the stations heard has been picked up on two valves, and if loud enough, put on the speaker with the second audio stage.

The following is the list of stations heard:—Broadcast wave-length: 1YA, 2YA, 3YA, 4YA, 1ZB, 2YK, 2FC, 2BL, 2GB, 2KY, 2UW, 3LO, 3AR, 3DB, 4QG, 5CL, 7ZL. Short waves: OZ's, 1AL, 1AL, 1AN, 1AO, 1FF, 1FF, 1FK, 1FP, 1AK, 2AB, 2AL, 2AQ, 2AT, 2AY, 2BR, 2BY, 2GC, 2AJ, 3AP, 3AU, 3AZ, 4AE, 4AM. O.A's: 2CM, 2FC, 2HM, 8HS, 2LG, 2WC, 3BY, 3KR, 3LO, 3XK, 4NW, 4PN, 5RI, 5DN, 6AG, 6WP, 7CW, 7HL. Out of Australasia: RFM, ANE, 2XAD, 2XAF, 2XG, PCJJ, 5SW, the one in Japan, which, according to Mr. Sellens is JHBB.

There are a number of stations that I have heard, but unfortunately missed the call sign. On Friday, February 9, at about 7.30 a.m. a station was heard on about 26m. Unfortunately I had to leave at 8 a.m., but my brother listened to it till 9.45. Musical numbers were heard at first, followed by what was apparently a children's session, as a lady and a man were giving a children's entertainment. The call sign sounded like WBO, but I could not be sure of this. During the announcement the call sign 2XAF and 2XAD were mentioned. On Wednesday, February 8, at 6.55 a.m., a

station on about 23-24m. was heard giving "test words" like No. 2XG. Could not get his call sign, but when he finished "Test No. 107" he switched over to Morse and kept sending V's and O's. If this letter is his call sign, the station is one of the beam systems in Canada.

At 7 o'clock this morning a station was heard on about 38 metres, when a lady was talking. The strength was R5-6 and modulation nearly perfect. At 7.10 a man commenced to announce, beginning "Achtung." After about five minutes of this language the station commenced V's and AFK on Morse. The AFK identifies it as being in Germany.

The Japanese Station.

J. W. Rait (Brooklyn): Re Japanese station operating on about 38-40 m., I endorse Mr. Sellens' remarks referring station operating on about 38-40m., I received them on Morse and afterwards by voice. Different languages were used, the English being very hard to understand. The musical and vocal items are far from being enjoyable, it being typically Oriental, and the singing sounds like a fish hawk. Reception was very good considering; modulation could be a bit better, no doubt, but the strength of signals were quite possible. Last Thursday, 9/2/28, 6 a.m., I heard a station in Morse send AFK innumerable times. Short talks or speeches were all that were heard, "ick" being heard on several occasions. Strength of signals was R7. A slight fade. Modulation was O.K.

J. M. C. Tingey (Green Island): Having seen many reports concerning the reception of a Japanese station testing on a wave-length of 37.5 metres, I may say that I have picked up that station on several evenings last week.

While listening to it last night at about 11.30 o'clock I distinctly heard the call JOAK, repeated slowly, twice in succession. As I have often heard this station on the broadcast wave-length, I have no doubt in stating that it was the station mentioned. I have a short-wave adapter, constructed by myself, and during the two weeks it has been in operation I have had stations RFN, PCJJ, 3LO, 2AQ, JOAK, together with several other modulated carrier-waves on the 30-metre band, on the speaker.

THE SHORT-WAVE SET

POINTS ON OPERATION

DEAD SPOTS.

ON the broadcast wavelengths, a set can be made to oscillate easily, but on the short waves, below 100 metres, care should be taken in the construction of coils and the disposition of components, or trouble will arise. Dead spots (says the Melbourne "Listener-In") are another cause of faulty reaction control, and these may be prevented by careful adjustment of the size of the aerial coil. If the total wavelength of the aerial, earth and the aerial coil is the same as that situated at some point over the range of the grid condenser, then the set will refuse to oscillate at this point, as the both circuits are

in resonance, and the energy absorbed by the aerial is great, and causes the set to become "dead." Another cause of this trouble is the coming into resonance of the reaction coil, which produces the same effect. So that the efficiency of a shortwave receiver depends mainly on the adjustment of the coils and the distance between them. The distance between the aerial and the grid coils will determine the amount of selectivity which the set will possess, and the further the distance between these two coils the greater the selectivity, but the volume will be less.

Very Fine Tuning.

A distance of half an inch should be ample, as tuning is exceptionally fine on these wavelengths. The grid leak should have a high resistance of from 5 to 10 megohms, not, as is the case with the broadcast receiver, 2 megohms. The grid condenser has a proportionately small value, and should have a capacity in the vicinity of 0.0001 microfarads. A large variable condenser can be used to tune the reaction, as, usually, this adjustment is not critical, especially with continuous wave Morse transmissions. A special valve should be selected, as some will not oscillate on such low wavelengths.

A valve of the 201A type proves excellent for these wavelengths. The special 200A detector is liable to be very noisy and unstable, although it is supersensitive on the broadcast bands.

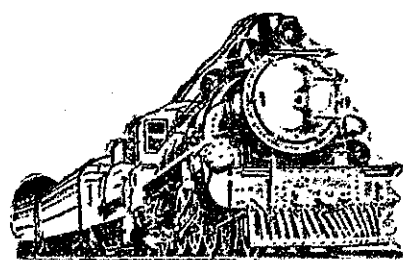
In some improperly built shortwave receivers a howl occurs just on the point of oscillation. This is not noticeable in the detector stage, and goes to prove that the trouble exists in the audio stages. The trouble

can be fixed by burning the filaments of the audio valves beyond normal brilliancy; but this is bad practice, and reduces the effective life of the valves. The best method of eliminating the trouble is to completely shield the detector stage from the audio stages. This should effectively eliminate the howl. Separate rheostat controls should also be fitted as such a howl would be caused by using the one rheostat to control all the filaments.

Radio Frequency.

Old valves in the audio stages also howl, so that it will be seen that there are many sources of this trouble. Radio frequency amplification (apart from the new double-grid valve) offers no advantage under 100 metres, and when stations from all over the world are received with a single valve it will be seen that such amplifiers are not necessary. In any case tuning is difficult enough with the addition of radio stages which complicate tuning to a very great extent.

Most of the low wave transmissions are in code, so that a so-called distortion transformer with an extremely high ratio can be used to amplify the signals before reaching the amplifying valve. Such an arrangement produces frightful results with speech and music, but is worth another stage of audio amplification as regards the increase in volume. A high MU valve of the new type gives a further amplification unobtainable in any other tube. Bearing all these hints in mind, the best can be obtained from a short wave receiver which is giving trouble due to unstable regeneration.



Get
Strength
From the
Week-end.

Have a Cheap Safe Trip

Warm, summer weather is not always welcome for working days, but it is ideal for the week-end run by rail, the cheap, safe trip to the "great out-doors"—Nature's refreshment for body and mind.

Communicate with the nearest Stationmaster, Passenger Agent, or District Manager, for full particulars.