

News and Instruction Keep Distant Listeners in Daily Contact

Comprehensive Service Given from All Nations

ALTHOUGH the promise of entertainment is admittedly the chief objective of radio broadcasting, the very great importance of the work that is being done on what may be termed its instrumental side is now almost universally recognised and appreciated. Here it is that radio is proving itself the friend and ally of every organised agency that is striving for the betterment of humanity. And such a friend! Such an ally! Men and women of imagination were at first awed by the contemplation of radio's illimitable power and influence; its all-embracing intimacy with the human race; its unchained lightning of thought and intelligence flashing through space uncharted but unerring into the very holy of holies of family life. "What does this new and wonderful thing portend?" they asked. Good? Ill? One or the other it must be. Which?

The answer rested with the people whom radio has come to serve, and the people in the mass being at heart good, radio's stupendous potentialities have been from the first rightly directed. So to-day, friend and ally of every beneficent human agency, radio is co-operating helpfully in every organised effort to aid to the sum total of the world's joy and happiness. And it is doing this good work very largely through the medium of that branch of its manifold activities whose operations come within the comprehensive classification of "News and Instructions."

IN New Zealand the Radio Broadcasting Company is fully alive to the value and importance of this feature of the service; but first of all let it be emphasised that radio broadcasting is not in competition with any established institution or organisation engaged in purveying news and knowledge. For instance, in the matter of "news of the day," such as market reports, and items of general public interest, the transmission time for this service happens at an hour when the broadcasting of news cannot possibly conflict with or prove prejudicial to the interests of the newspapers. By 7 p.m., when the broadcasting of news commences, the daily evening papers have been delivered and, in most cases, read. The service is primarily intended for listeners resident in country districts, and, in short, for all to whom the printed sheet is not immediately available. To all such who receive it, it is proving a service of inestimable value, and, in many cases, of actual material benefit. Prompt advice as to the trend of the market has meant to many farmers the difference between selling their stock and produce at a loss or a profit. A case in point is that of a nurseryman who gladly and voluntarily assured a representative of the Broadcasting Company that the cost of erection of the largest glasshouse on his place had been entirely covered by the extra money he had been able to make and save through carefully following his radio market reports.

IN addition to the regular news session, however, the company's four stations broadcast results of sporting

events as soon as they are received, at any time during operating hours; and it may be taken for granted that the information thus sent over the air not only affords great satisfaction to listeners, but serves also to whet their appetite for the more detailed description which their newspaper will give them a little later. Before passing to another phase of the radio news service it may be as well to give readers who are not yet familiar with it a rough outline of the matter broadcast every evening. Let us take one of the stations—2YA—as an example. Its nightly budget goes out something like this:

7 p.m.—Chimes of the Wellington Post Office clock; and then sporting results—racing, football, hockey, etc.; the day's shipping at the port of Wellington; weather report and forecast; market reports, overseas and Dominion; British Official Wireless, covering matters of Empire and international importance and general news of outstanding interest; special announcements—"Safety First" message (N.I. Motor Union), daily hint to listeners, etc.; items of general interest per favour of the "Dominion" and "Evening Post," covering Parliamentary happenings and jottings; summaries of the proceedings of conferences and important public meetings; personal items; city affairs and happenings; and a variety of items of general interest.

The other phase of the radio news service to which we have alluded comes under the heading:

Lecturettes and Talks.

THESE cover a great variety of subjects, informative and entertaining. During the time the four stations of the Radio Broadcasting Company have been operating, they have broadcast a great many addresses and lectures on nearly every subject under the sun. These lectures number a great many more than the casual listener would think, and their scope has been wider than is usually recognised despite the fact that the regulations under which the company works prevent controversial subjects being introduced.

A glance at the programmes for the past year shows the wide range of subjects which have been covered. Historians have told of their researches; the oldest residents have related their reminiscences of early life in New Zealand and elsewhere; geologists, naturalists and travellers have talked of subjects which they have studied; seamen and adventurers have entertained with stories of brave deeds, whether in the Arctic ice with Worsley or crossing the Atlantic in a cockle shell; aviators have spoken of aeroplane and airship development; electricians of the wonders of electricity and the radio miracle by which time and space have been annihilated; astronomers have told what mortals know of the mystic infinity of the skies and heavenly bodies.

These groups of headings encompass a myriad of subjects, informative as

well as entertaining, and have been generally so presented by the lecturers as to be both informative and entertaining at the same time.

The lectures are intended to suit all tastes and needs. Those broadcast during afternoons generally relate to domestic affairs, such as fashions, cooking or house-keeping, because ladies form the great majority of listeners-in during the afternoon sessions.

IT is little use broadcasting talks to farmers during afternoons. The farmer's session comes after dark, when the day's work is done. His special session is that devoted to news and commercial reports and then, too, are broadcast the special talks for the man on the land. In this connection may be mentioned the lecturettes, prepared by the Department of Agriculture, sent out from 2YA, and the Canterbury Progress League arranges for broadcasting from 3YA. Similar service to farmers is rendered by 1YA and 4YA. Other talks, such as those telling of concrete and its uses, have a direct appeal to the farmer; so do talks on motoring, but motoring talks have a still wider appeal, for they interest many city men who own cars.

An endeavour is made to arrange for talks to be given between 7 and 8 o'clock so as not to interfere with the concert session, for a talk on pigs or bees, or the winter feeding of poultry, would have an incongruous setting in a Beethoven evening. They would also be missed by those farmers who have to retire to bed early.

BUT there are many lectures and talks which are eminently suitable for inclusion in the evening's concert programmes. In this connection may be cited the highly informative talks on "Imperial Affairs"—upwards of forty in number and covering a wide range of international problems, which were given from 2YA by the Editor-Announcer. Some of the most eminent professional men in New Zealand have addressed the microphone at the various stations. These have included speeches by the Prime Minister, the Right Hon. J. G. Coates, Sir Robert Stout, Sir Frederick Chapman, Right Rev. Campbell West-Watson, D.D., Most Rev. Archbishop Julius, Archbishop O'Shea, Rev. Dr. Gibb, and the Mayor of Wellington (Mr. G. A. Troup), the Mayor of Christchurch (Rev. J. K. Archer).

Among the prominent visitors from overseas, one of the most interesting to speak to the microphone was Mr. Tokugawa, Japanese Consul-General for Australasia. Dr. A. W. Hill, Director of Kew Gardens, London, Group-Captain P. T. M. Fellowes, Director of British Airship Development and Mr. M. A. Gibley, superintendent of the R. A. Meteorological Division of Britain, were other speakers.

Other visitors who have been induced to speak have included Dr. H. E.

Wareham, a noted medical missionary of Central Africa; Rev. P. Leonard, D.S.O. (founder of Toc H) and Miss Maude Royden, famous English woman preacher.

In a souvenir record such as this, it is desirable that more than passing reference should be made to the classified features of the broadcast service.

The Man on the Land.

FROM both an entertainment and information point of view radio broadcasting has a tremendous appeal to the man on the land. From whichever point of view it be viewed, radio is indispensable and is no longer a luxury. It brings the best entertaining talent of the Dominion right to the fireside of the country homestead—and there is no question but that the best artists in the Dominion perform for the Broadcasting Company—and it brings to the fireside an excellent news service, especially on the commercial side, which has proved to be of incalculable value to many a farmer. With up-to-the minute market reports, farmers equipped with radio do not buy and sell on the blind, as they used to do a few years ago.

In the news session, also, sporting results are broadcast, and these to many are, of course, among the most interesting of the news items. From the stations, too, lectures intended specially to help the man on the land are regularly broadcast. First among these may be placed those broadcast by representatives of the Agricultural Department. These are regular features on 2YA programmes. So also are the addresses sent out from 3YA by lecturers of the Canterbury Progress League. During the past year, all aspects of farming have been well covered by highly-qualified lecturers, with the result that men on the land have been provided with valuable education. All that the farmer needed to do was to tune in to one or other of the stations, when he would hear discussed some topic in which he was interested—fodder and root crops, forestry, bees, poultry, flower gardening, top-dressing, pigs, sheep, frost fighting, scientific treatment of soil, how to keep stock well, etc.—in fact, talks on every aspect of farm life.

AND just here let a tribute be paid to the Department of Agriculture, whose Minister, administrators, and experts were as one in the unanimity and enthusiasm with which they grasped the opportunity which radio affords of extending the Department's sphere of useful service to the farming community. The farmer who listens-in to the weekly lecturette knows that the man who is speaking to him is an acknowledged authority on the subject with which he is dealing, and that the information he is getting is authoritative and reliable, based on the very latest teachings of scientific research. The series of lecturettes was commenced on February 16 1928, by the assistant director, Mr. F. S. Pope, and the roster to date as