

# Public Relations--a Policy of Mutual Co-operation

by A. R. Harris



RADIO broadcasting is a national service. Its many phases of personal ramifications cover interest of the greatest diversity.

On the spiritual side, there are many people who are interested in church services, others opposed to any kind of church service, some want a service of a particular denomination, others want no creed, but are interested in broadcasts of an ethical character in general.

In intellectual matters we have those partial to a certain science, others perhaps not at all interested in any phase of science, but keenly interested in the higher forms of music or drama; whilst we have also a very large section of listeners attracted by entertainment of a humorous nature, certain news items, sports of various kinds, jazz and lighter forms of music.

THE Broadcasting Company cannot select its audiences, or broadcast at any one time only to a section appreciative of a particular type of entertainment; there is always an unsatisfied element. The company must either cease to function, or, while functioning and endeavouring to please all sections, inevitably fail to please all sections at one time or another, so long as indiscriminate listening is indulged in.

There are several ways by which this difficulty may to a certain extent be met, and two methods adopted by the company during the year have been:—

First, by a fundamental classification of programmes whereby definite types, attractive to certain sections, are broadcast at particular times, so that listeners can, if they wish, discriminate without inconvenience or loss of service.

Secondly, by eliminating as far as possible any suspicion of favouritism for any particular form of service, thereby encouraging a spirit of tolerance and public confidence.

THE first of these methods has been adopted by dividing the service into particular sessions, and classifying the programmes so that definite types are broadcast of each station at specified times, such programmes covering as wide a field as possible within the limits of their types, so as to give the greatest practicable diversity.

WITH the object of putting the second method into operation as effectively as possible, and at the same time increasing the public utility of its service, the directors of the Broadcasting Company have, during the year under review, introduced a public relations scheme embodying:—

1. The formation of public committees at each of its stations.
2. The appointment of honorary official listeners in various places throughout the Dominion.

In all walks of life there are societies and associations of highly qualified enthusiasts organised in a spirit of public service, each with its definite objective. It is not desirable that radio broadcasting should lessen the public interest in these organisations, or in any way prejudice their activities. On the other hand, it is of the greatest public utility that radio broadcasting should co-operate with such organisations.

THESE organisations exist for the definite purpose of promoting interest in various subjects. For instance, there are musical and dramatic societies, interested in offering to the public various types of entertainment. There are the churches, whose purpose it is to present religious teaching, and there are other organisations who are specially interested in the child life of the community. All are inevitably concerned with what radio broadcasting is doing so far as it affects their particular interests.

WITH membership constituted of representatives of these organisations, church service committees, musical and dramatic committees, and children's session committees have been formed at the company's Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch stations. All positions are honorary, so that while the committees are closely associated with the company and its operations, their members are in this respect entirely independent. With each member an authority on his or her subject, the committee as a whole acts as a clearing house or tribunal on such matters in the broadcasting service as come within its scope, and it is able to offer to the company suggestions of worth-while value without any question of unfair discrimination between the various sections of the community entitled to use a national broadcast service. By this co-operation the objects of the associations and societies represented, and also the objects of the Broadcasting Company, have been furthered, and on the other hand listeners receive the benefit of the application to a new science of the experience of persons who have given many years and done much work for the ideals aimed at by their organisations.

BY adopting a procedure based on these considerations, both the material included in the programmes, and the construction of the programmes, are subject to review before they are broadcast, by committees whose per-

sonnel is specially qualified to deal with them.

## CHURCH SERVICE COMMITTEES.

BEFORE publicly announcing its public relations plan, eight of the more prominent denominations, namely: Church of England, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Salvation Army, Church of Christ, Congregational,

were invited to confer with the company for the purpose of forming a committee to deal with the broadcasting of church services from the Christchurch station, 3YA. These denominations comprise over 96 per cent. of those whose religion was declared on the last census. Six of the denominations sent along representatives, and two indicated their intention to stand aside for the present. In these two cases, the company intimated that seats on the committee were open for their representatives at any time, and also voluntarily undertook that should they so desire to be broadcast at any future time their application would be given the same consideration as if their representatives were on the committee. At this conference, a committee was formed, and functioned so satisfactorily that no hesitation was felt in offering the scheme to the public as the most effective means of establishing contact between listeners and the company.

FOLLOWING the success of this committee, others of a similar nature have been organised at the stations in Auckland and Wellington. Certain transmission hours have been placed at their disposal, and all applications for broadcast during these hours, and all business in connection with broadcasting of religious matters, are referred to these committees, which recommend to the company the action they consider should be taken. In each centre the church committee has reserved dates for broadcasting of services of such churches as may make application and are not represented on the committee. Each committee confines its activities to the station in connection with which it has been formed, and makes its arrangements to suit local conditions. The personnel of the Church Service Committees is as follows:—

### Station 1YA:—

Rev. H. M. Smyth (Anglican).  
Rev. D. Morrison-Sutherland (Presbyterian).  
Rev. E. Drake (Methodist).  
Rev. E. Nicholls (Baptist).  
Mr. D. Donaldson (Church of Christ).  
Rev. L. Fletcher (Congregational).

### Station 2YA:—

Rev. C. V. Rooke (Anglican).  
Rev. R. D. Howie (Presbyterian).



3YA Church Service Advisory Committee.

Standing—Rev. W. Greenslade (Methodist), Mr. J. Crawford (Church of Christ).  
Seated—Rev. T. W. Armour (Presbyterian), Rev. D. Gardner Miller (Congregational), Rev. J. Robertson (Baptist).  
Absent—Archdeacon F. N. Taylor (Church of England).