

# How Broadcasting in New Zealand Appears to an American

by

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MY knowledge of broadcasting in New Zealand is based almost entirely upon extensive written communication with the officers of the Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand as its contact with broadcasting in the United States. Your company, seeking to take advantage of progress and experience in every corner of the globe, is maintaining a close watch on developments particularly in the United States.

Only those closely familiar with the confusion existing in the United States, following upon the unrestrained and unregulated beginnings which attended the birth of broadcasting here, can appreciate the advantages of the wise course which has been followed in New Zealand. Your management is free to concentrate its effort upon programme improvement and technical progress. In the United States scores of broadcasting stations are threatened with cancellation of their licenses, their economic position is insecure, and others are troubled with heterodyne interference, destined to continue until the number of stations on the air is reduced by economic pressure or legal extermination.

**FREE** competition, however, has its share of advantages. The listener, particularly in the more populous centres, has the choice of numerous programme sources. This provides incentive to offer superior programmes. As a result of this competition, radio in the United States has attracted the famous and competent personages of the opera, concert, and theatrical stage. But the inspiration of competition has been won at a cost of unpleasant congestion and economic insecurity of the stations themselves. The only estab-

lished source of revenue is through goodwill broadcasting, sponsored by concerns which profit from the favourable attention of the public. The leading stations maintain high standards of commercial broadcasting, so that the listener is not repulsed by direct advertising.

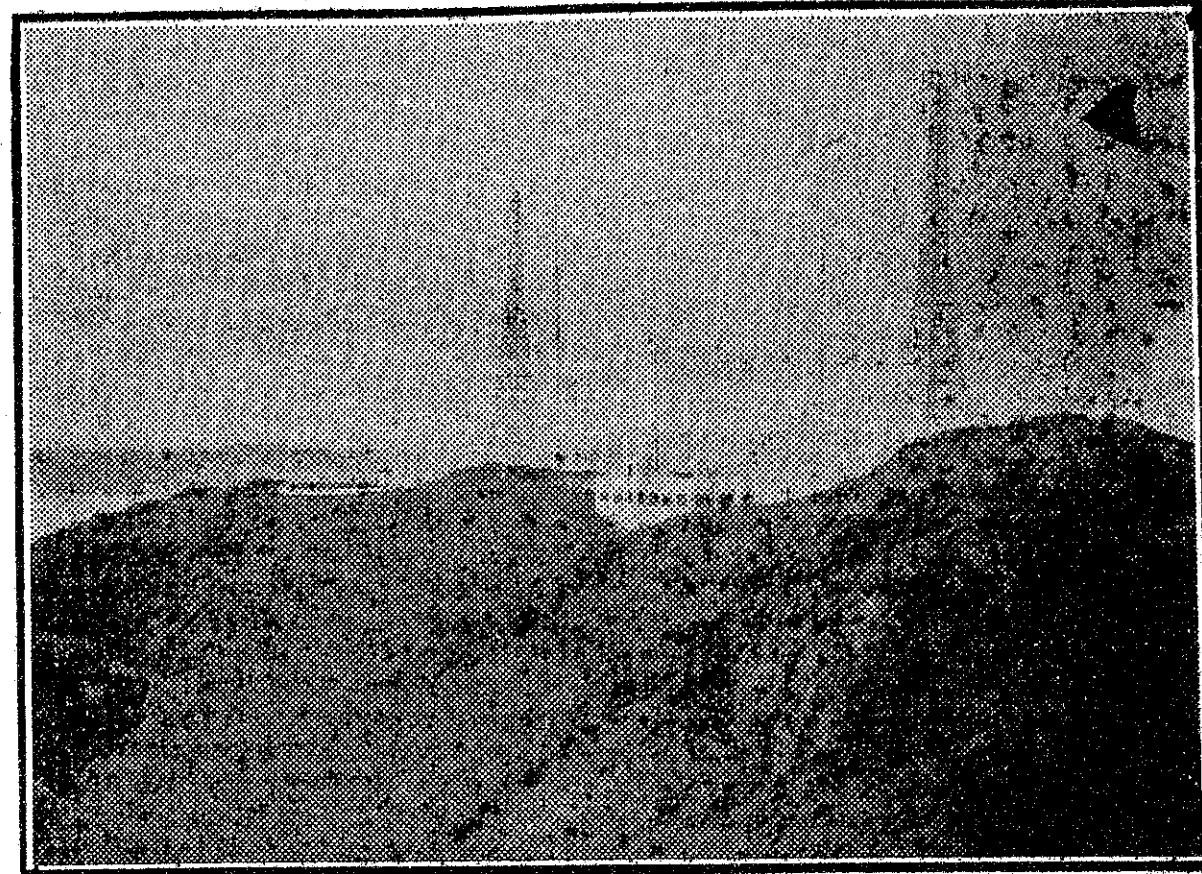
In New Zealand you have no such economic problem. The listener himself supports the station, and he is not, therefore at the mercy of the commercial broadcaster. The only consideration in New Zealand when programme material is planned is its



MR. H. FELIX.

popularity with the listener. No advertiser, footing the bill for talent and station expense, need be satisfied by radio commendation of his product.

**BUT**, as is characteristic with any artistic effort, there is no universal



General Panorama of 2YA, Wellington, Transmitting Station, on a spur of Mount Victoria. This is a very commanding position, and the station is one of the notable landmarks of Wellington.

—Photo., Andrew.

formula for pleasing the listener. Human tastes are individual and consequently no programme will please every listener. It requires no expert to tell a station management what kind of a programme would please himself, but it requires a genius to please two persons of a group of three and a super-impresario to win the majority of a group of thousands. The wisest programme management concerns itself with progressive appeal to every taste. It does not seek the impossible objective of pleasing all the audience all the time.

**ILLUSTRATIVE** of the principle, is an incident which occurred at a famous New York Club. A cub reporter and budding novelist was introduced to the publisher of what is perhaps the world's greatest popular weekly magazine. Its circulation runs into the millions. A little abashed, the young man, to make conversation, mentioned that he had read the last issue of the magazine from cover to cover, and had enjoyed every story and article in it.

"If what you say is true, I need a new editor," replied the distinguished publisher. "The way to please large numbers is to publish one and only one story in each issue which pleases each individual reader and to appeal to a different group with each story. The way to reduce your circulation to one reader is to publish a collection of

stories appealing to one individual taste."

To serve the greatest number of listeners, your programme management must provide the widest variety of classical music, semi-standard ballads, dance music, and educational matter. It devolves upon the individual listener to select what pleases him and to remember that others, of different taste, have equal right with him to find features that they enjoy. Only by serving the greatest possible number with the greatest variety can radio grow to the highest standards of presentation in every field of endeavour, and to deserve universal support from every class of society.

**GIVEN** intelligent programme-planning along these lines, successful broadcasting requires expert technical management and the highest grade of equipment. In this respect, I am sure that the most modern practice is being followed in New Zealand. Your management follows with extreme interest the detailed reports of technical progress in the United States, and through your excellent weekly publication I have opportunity to observe that there is a minimum of delay in putting feasible improvements into practice.

I am happy to extend every good wish to continued progress in the fine art of broadcasting in New Zealand.

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