

The New Zealand Radio Record

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THE RACING BAN.

THE ban against broadcasting by the Trotting and Racing Conferences was discussed by Parliament last week. The Leader of the Opposition raised the subject by commenting upon the arbitrary power arrogated to themselves by these Conferences, and the penalty inflicted upon the public by reason of their actions. Other speakers endorsed the view that the reasons advanced by the Conferences in relation to limiting gambling were sheer hypocrisy. We have already commented upon this aspect of the question, and last week pointed out that the Secretary of the Racing Conference, in his correspondence had substantially abandoned the reasons advanced initially, and now raised the question of £ s. d. In the Parliamentary discussion a suggestion along the same lines was made by the Prime Minister. "Possibly," he said, "the Conference took the stand that the privilege of broadcasting the racing was worth something to the Broadcasting Company: it helped to fill their programmes at little expense, and was it not worth something? was the question the Conference would probably ask." The Prime Minister is a little astray in the facts. The broadcasting of race news does not "help to fill the Broadcasting Company's programmes at little expense." To serve the public with race news, the Broadcasting Company has invariably gone on the air specially at considerable extra expense to itself. It most decidedly is not a question of the Broadcasting Company getting a cheap means of filling its programmes. Very heavy expense has been incurred by such special transmissions. In the case of racing and trotting, for the twelve months ended June, 1928, 64 special transmissions were given, totalling 303½ hours. Practically the whole of that time was extra time beyond the ordinary programme time imposed upon the Company in the terms of its license.

SINCE the suggestion that payment is at the root of the ban has been made, it will be well to give some little consideration to that aspect of the matter. In the twelve months ended June, the Broadcasting Company gave 206 special transmissions dealing with sporting subjects, these covering racing and trotting (64), Rugby football (71), Cricket (29), Tennis (6), Boxing (9), Athletics (7), Motor Sports (1), Swimming (2), Soccer (5), and rebroadcasts of sporting events (12); the total time devoted to such transmissions being 5734¾ hours. Racing and trotting received 303½ hours of this time. In assessing the value of publicity over the air, two points require

consideration: (1) The value to the sport, and (2) the value to the medium conveying the news. Last week we published a testimonial given by the Otago Boxing Association as to their appreciation of the value of broadcast publicity. It is a fact that since boxing tournaments have been broadcast in this country there has been an outstanding revival in the sport. All sports show the same trend.

THERE is no evidence anywhere or at any time that any sport has suffered by reason of broadcasting: all have secured a marked benefit. Is it right, therefore, that the medium that confers that benefit, and gives to the public an added appreciation of the sport being broadcast, should pay for the privilege? Is it not more in keeping with the assessment of the value of broadcasting that the sport that is deriving the benefit should pay for the benefit conferred? Listeners know full well that their fees are fully taxed in maintaining and operating the four stations and leaving a margin sufficient to pay for the individual skill of the artists employed. While individual artists are entitled to remuneration, the same argument does not apply to those sports and pastimes which would be carried on whether broadcast or not. Listeners are fully aware that the sum they pay is not sufficient to leave any margin for payment to the Racing and Trotting Conferences. Those bodies derive their profit from the attendance of the public, and that attendance is calculated to be benefited by broadcasting and not hindered. Race news is worth a lot to the Press, but does the Press pay for it? On the contrary, every facility is afforded free. Broadcasting alone is penalised. Why?

Auckland Notes

(By "Listener.")

GRAMOPHONE records, judiciously selected, are splendid attributes to a radio programme. This was emphasised here on Sunday night, when Mr. R. Strong, of the Auckland Gramophone Society, provided a most interesting hour's recital following the usual church broadcast. It may have been Mr. Strong's first appearance at the microphone; the manner of his delivery suggested that it was, but he handled his subject interestingly, and provided just those correct touches which made the broadcast recordings more appreciated.

ON Saturday last was relayed from Eden Park a description of a Maori football contest. The game was an attractive one to spectators, but owing to the personnel of the two teams being not well known to listeners, it lost much of its attractiveness over the air, despite the able way in which it was detailed by Mr. Meredith.

A SIDELIGHT on the broadcasting of race meetings illustrates how useful such information may be. A racehorse owner in Auckland is not the owner of a receiving set, but he had a horse running at a meeting in Sydney on a recent Saturday, and was anxious to know immediately of its performance. He communicated with a friend, who undertook to find out the result if possible. The race was barely finished before the owner received a ring to inform him that his horse had won. Australia wisely gives facilities for the broadcasting of races.

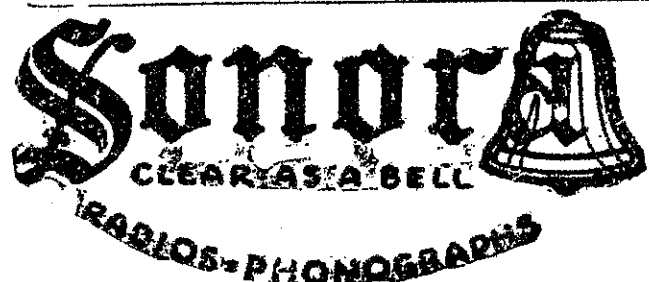
"UNCLE TOM," Mr. T. T. Garland, has a host of juvenile champions who look forward to his weekly appear-

ances at 1YA. His "party" last Wednesday was a very merry affair, delightful to the youngsters. "Uncle Tom" has a way of introducing originality into his early evening hour, and listeners are not slow to welcome it.

"WELL over three thousand miles from your coast," said the captain of the s.s. Papanui, "I picked up KFI and 1YA on my set; both at about equal strength. I changed for a while from one to the other, but found a greater appeal in the Auckland programme, and so abandoned American entertainment for a New Zealand one that was more to my taste." Many of the ships that sail the seven seas have now one or more broadcast receiving sets aboard, and the users of them become keen judges of good programmes.

THE "mystery night" promised for 1YA is the subject of much comment among local listeners, who are looking forward to the novelty of it, and the competition with which it is associated. One or two isolated newspaper correspondents (anonymous variety) have seized on the announcement to voice complaints, and offer suggestions for what they consider something better, but the generality of listeners is content to await the efforts of the local advisory committee on programmes, who are facing the tasks ahead of them with much enthusiasm.

QUITE a number both in the city and the country heard the afternoon announcements of race results from Christchurch this week, and were highly delighted that the Broadcasting Company had found means of circumventing the restrictions which had been placed upon racing news over the air. In placing these restrictions the racing and trotting conferences seem to have ignored entirely the interest which the female sex evinces in races. In hundreds, if not thousands, of homes here they tune in during the afternoon to hear descriptions from Ellerslie, Alexandra Park, Trentham, and other places. Their interest is a sporting, but not a gambling one, and the imposed restrictions are killing it.



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