

## Broadcasting in Japan

### Sidelights on Stations Heard in N.Z.

TO New Zealanders broadcasting conditions in Japan, the home of stations which are becoming increasingly popular, are of more than passing interest.

For centuries Japan remained dormant, the sleeping monster of the East—the mysterious East. As one by one intrepid foreigners dared to enter this unknown, the veil of mystery rose. Finally foreigners were invited to mould the activities of the Japanese citizen; feudalism was replaced by democracy, modern means of transport replaced the crude methods of the primitive man, an army and a navy modelled on German and English lines replaced the former disorganised forces, and now, last but by no means least in importance, communication has been brought up to date. With startling rapidity Japan has aroused herself from the lethargy which for so long retarded her progress.

#### Broadcasting.

BROADCASTING began regularly in the middle of 1925. Shortly after this, the stations were amalgamated, and the controlling authority received the title of the "Broadcasting Corporation of Japan." It was, in fact, an amalgamation of the three broadcasting bureaux which were in existence. To-day there are eight broadcasting stations in the country—Tokio (JOAK), Osaka (JOBK), Nagoya (JOCK), Keigo (JODK), Hiroshima (JOFK), Kumamoto (JOGK), Sendai (JOHK), Sapporo (JOIK).

The first-named one, and the one most often heard in this country, has been incorporated in the Kanto division. This station commenced operations three years ago, after a temporary location a mile south of its present position.

#### General Organisation.

IN order to keep pace with the rest of the world, an organisation, the Central Broadcasting Bureau, was, in 1924, floated in Tokio. Since then considerable progress has been made. The broadcasting service was inaugurated primarily for the public service, and the new system has been strongly supported by the principal newspapers, banks, and the leading business houses, while Government supervision is exercised with regard to programmes and the financial side of the venture. Eighteen months later the broadcasting service was reorganised.

#### JOAK.

SOME particulars regarding the activities of the Tokio station, which, incidentally, can be heard on a crystal set at a distance of 75 miles, may be of interest.

Broadly speaking, the transmission falls under three general heads, viz., news bulletins, educational programmes, and entertainments. The news service comprises the latest reports regarding recent happenings, items of general news, special announcements, and varied information concerning the stock exchange market conditions and prices of important

commodities, including rice, raw silk, and cotton.

The educational side has received careful consideration, and includes children's hours, foreign language courses, French, English, and German, special literary and artistic programmes, and popular science and domestic subjects. Japanese classical literature and the history of foreign music are also included. Men announcers are engaged as a rule, but one woman officiates during the children's and the women's hours.

#### Japanese Instruments.

THE other side of broadcasting is represented by excellent concerts. In the early stages of broadcasting in Japan, the sound effect of the Japanese musical instruments was a source of grave difficulty. These instruments, such as the "shamisen," which resembles a banjo, the "hue," a kind of bamboo flute, the "tsuzuma," a drum beaten by the hand, and the "koto," a harp with thirteen strings, possess on the whole a small volume of tone, for which reason they must be balanced very accurately before the microphone. The unusual effect of one of these instruments was demonstrated to listeners-in to 2YA when one was put on the air during the visit of the Japanese fleet.

In addition to concerts of Japanese music, however, European concerts are a feature of the programme, and the names of the great masters are familiar to listeners. Japanese bands have reached a high standard, and very many can look back on the enjoyment received from the band music recently broadcast by 2YA. Plays written especially for broadcasting are highly appreciated.

#### Allocation of Time.

APPROXIMATELY seven hours a day are devoted to the programmes, while during the week-end and public holidays this is increased to ten hours. According to the most recent statistics the number of licensed listeners within a radius of 100 miles of Tokio constitute 60 per cent. of the total listeners through Japan.

Translated into English, the introductory announcement is "JOAK, JOAK, this is Tokio Broadcasting Station. Good morning everybody." The closing announcement is the same, except "evening" instead of "morning."

ON the night of September 19 listeners in the Mount Victoria area were startled by someone transmitting "V's" (three dots and a dash) on top of the broadcast wave-length band. The transmitter was using a valve and was tuned very broadly, for it could be heard over a wide sector of the dials of receiving sets. He emitted a long wailing note before he got on to the "V's". This gentleman, who ever he is, is canvassing for trouble, and if he can be located at least half a dozen listeners are determined to report him to the authorities.

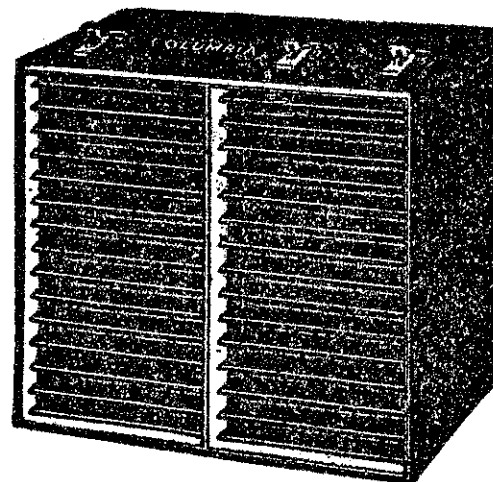
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