

The New Zealand Radio Record

P.O. BOX, 1032, WELLINGTON.

Published Weekly. Subscription Post Free in advance, 10s. per annum;
booked 12s. 6d.

WELLINGTON, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1928.

THE COPYRIGHT POSITION.

IN another column we traverse at length the position relating to copyright. That statement will show listeners that they have had quite a narrow escape from suffering a complete cessation in the New Zealand broadcasting service. An application from the Australasian Performing Rights Association, Ltd., was addressed to the Supreme Court for an injunction restraining the Broadcasting Company from using musical copyright items. Under the then law that injunction, set down for hearing on October 10, could hardly have been denied. Fortunately there was still time in the last days of the session for Parliament to pass an amending law of a temporary nature. This amending law alters the basis of copyright from the drastic position it formerly held, to provide that till August of next year the position will be reversed. Those desiring to secure copyright fees from the broadcasting of music will for the future have to make claim upon a fund to be established by the payment of up to 7½ per cent. of the Broadcasting Company's revenue. This fund will be administered by a competent body, and claimants upon it will be required to prove their ownership to copyright. Formerly the onus of proof that copyright did not apply was upon the performer, not the claimant.

LISTENERS, we think, will agree that it is fortunate the position could be met in time. As we outline elsewhere, the Government has been fully aware of the situation for some years past, and legislation along the lines now passed was drafted some two years ago, but was not put into effect pending the outcome of the International Convention on Copyright, held at Rome a few months ago. New Zealand was represented at that Conference by Mr. S. G. Raymond, K.C., from whom recommendations will be received in due course as to the amendments required in our existing copyright law to establish equity as between the owner and the public.

AN interesting sidelight in the position as outlined is the tax upon its business organisation which these copyright demands have made upon the Broadcasting Company. To comply with the requirements of the Australasian Performing Rights Association, a wealth of detailed routine has been necessary, as well as the payment of some £3000 per annum. On the inception of the agreement between the Government and the Company, no such tax or detailed service was contemplated. These negotiations have extended over the past three years—the very period when fullest effort was necessary to establish and build the service—and it will be apparent to listeners that a great deal of time and effort, unproductive to direct and immediate broadcasting, has been involved. Several other major matters in a somewhat similar category have also needed attention, so that it is obvious, in the pioneering days of broadcasting, much effort has been required to secure right and just treatment for this new modern convenience. This glimpse behind the scenes will enable listeners to appreciate that all the problems of broadcasting have not been on the surface.

So far as the copyright issue is concerned it will be to the interests of listeners that this payment should be adjusted to a basis which, while being equitable to the individual owner of copyright, shall be fair to listeners themselves, and enable them to enjoy all that they wish in music. The amending legislation now provided will permit an absolutely free choice in music till at any rate August of next year.

40,000 Mark Reached Again

Satisfying Progress in September.

THE FIGURES for the end of September show that the radio licenses issued to that date totalled as follows:—

	Receiving.	Transmitting.	Dealers.	Total
AUCKLAND	13,194	50	384	13,628
WELLINGTON	15,286	49	568	15,903
CHRISTCHURCH	7,743	29	266	8,038
DUNEDIN	2,608	14	153	2,775
	38,831	142	1,371	40,344

The figures for the previous three months were:—

June 30	35,824
July 31	37,238
August 31	38,835

A sample copy of the "Radio Record" will be sent to new listeners on request to Box 1032, Wellington.

Does Broadcasting of Entertainment Affect Attendance?

Experience Emphatically Answers "No."

ARE the door takings at entertainments adversely affected by broadcasting?

ON the face of it there is only one answer, that answer being "Yes," but experience has shown that the answer is "No." So there is some excuse for anyone who says, without going deeply into the question, that broadcasting keeps people away from an entertainment.

The question arose in Auckland just recently in connection with the municipal organ recitals, which have been a failure, financially. Their non-success in this direction was attributed to broadcasting, it being considered that people preferred to remain at home and listen-in to going to the recital.

The result which has attended the broadcasting of Sunday evening band concerts in Wellington is a complete answer to the Auckland people, but it is curious that Auckland itself absolutely disproves that broadcasting militates against attendances at regular entertainments. The experience of the Auckland Operatic Society may be quoted. Permission was granted to IYA to broadcast the complete performance of the "Belle of New York" on a recent Saturday evening. By all the rules of the critics of broadcasting, the attendance should have suffered, for all Auckland knew beforehand that the broadcast was to be done. The attendance was excellent. It should be mentioned, as having some bearing on the result, that early in the season the society offered to permit the broadcasting of excerpts from their entertainments. Packed houses during the whole season were the rule. Subsequently, the society advised IYA that it was willing to have the entire production of the "Belle of New York"

broadcast, and to permit of the fact being announced in advance. This was done. And yet the attendance at the theatre was excellent.

Broadcasting being comparatively a new thing, there is a psychological effect produced which is not yet fully understood by organisers of public attractions.

This objection is, however, being fast lived down, for it is becoming rapidly realised that broadcasting is the best publicity anything can be given.

The value of broadcasting to boxing is now recognised. The Otago Boxing Association, which has had all its matches broadcast this year, has testified to the value of the publicity thus given owing to the great interest created.

A Rugby experience in Christchurch this season can also be recalled. Uncertain whether or not broadcasting affected the gate, the committee put the matter to the test one Saturday. At the very last minute the broadcast was cancelled, and no announcement was made of the cancellation until the station went on the air at the time advertised for doing the match. All who were staying away from the match in order to listen-in were therefore caught at home. What was the attendance like? A record for the season.

This line of argument could be pursued further, but on broad lines it may be stated without fear of contradiction that good broadcasts of anything that the public enjoys must be of great benefit to the entertainments broadcast. If listeners enjoy the broadcasts their interest is aroused, and they will prefer the actual performance to listening-in. If they do not enjoy the broadcast they certainly will not go to the next performance—nor even listen-in.

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