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The Claims of Provincial Areas

WE are glad to publish in our columns, on the next page, a letter from a listener criticising our article in connection with the effort being made by the owners of certain "B" class stations to agitate and organise with a view to securing a subsidy from the funds contributed by listeners for the maintenance of the broadcasting service.. We are quite glad to receive and publish this letter, although it is critical of our own views, in order that listeners may be induced to study this question from all angles. It is a very important question, striking at the whole root of the efficiency of the present broadcasting service. We are not in the least concerned with the interests of any individuals or firms in this discussion. We are concerned wholly and solely with the general good of the broadcasting service as it affects listeners themselves, and therefore are quite prepared to give full publicity to capably-expressed views on the question from whatever angle they be advanced.

THE writer of this letter writes strongly from his point of view. He is suffering from a disability which he desires to see rectified. He is a keen radio enthusiast, and enjoying radio as he does, desires to secure better reception for himself, and to see the number of listeners in his locality increased. His point of view is one with which we can all sympathise. He may be taken as typical and representative of a definite class of people. Their plight constitutes a problem which certainly requires to be tackled. The time is coming when it will have to be tackled, and the question is just what is the best way of facing the problem.

OUR correspondent assumes that we are antagonistic to all "B" class stations, wherever they are situated. In that, he is in error. That is not our attitude at all. We have no antagonism or opposition at all towards "B" class stations. We oppose them only when they enter upon a demand for subsidy from the funds provided by listeners for the maintenance of the broadcasting service. That opposition on our part would be the same whether the broadcasting service is maintained by a company under contract from the Government, as at present is the case, or by the Government, or any other central interest. Our attitude is dictated by realisation of the fact that in the existing stations of New Zealand, a service satisfactory to listeners and the public in general can be provided only by central control, and

adequate organisation and administration of the funds available. That system would not prove possible by the provision of a number of isolated, independent and scattered "B" class stations nibbling at the stability of the central fund through demands for subsidies.

Relay Stations Required.

THE problem presented by our Hawke's Bay correspondent is, in reality, that of the provision of relay stations for the major centres of population outside the principal cities. It is an open secret to those familiar with the conception and plans of the original broadcasting service of New Zealand that the provision of relay stations at suitable provincial centres was contemplated as an integral part of the original scheme. It will be agreed, however, that the original scheme has had to evolve as means permitted. The major centres of population from the business point of view obviously required first consideration. Stations, therefore, have been established at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, and their service has been improved as funds have advanced. The capital put into the venture has been, as all listeners know, vastly increased over that originally contemplated, and by that expansion a better service has been given the community than originally aimed at.

THE need for growth within the point of business stability will be recognised. The progress made in respect of numbers

of listeners has been fairly satisfactory, but there is still a gap to be bridged before fullest stability and expansion can be assured. This gap is due in part to the number of pirates who are avoiding their obligations, and thereby reducing the income of the broadcasting service and preventing the provision of those extra facilities for provincial centres.

Must Be Complete Scheme.

WITH our correspondent, we realise the problem of the provincial listener, and desire attention to be given to those needs. That problem, however, must be tackled on a consistent, comprehensive, and business-like basis. The points for the provision of relay stations must be carefully selected in relation to the greatest good of the greatest number. Economy of administration and avoidance of clashing with existing stations must be preserved by the relay stations co-ordinating with existing main stations. By such co-ordination and co-operation with the Postal service and existing stations, economy in the provision of transmitting plants will be attained as well as efficiency in administration. Programmes from relay stations will be more cheaply available than original programmes provided by independent "B" stations. The "B" stations that are at present operating have probably not been faced with a demand for copyright fees, but so soon as they become possessed of revenue, either by subsidy from the funds of listeners or advertising, that de-

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