

# The Future of Broadcasting

## Trend towards Unification



HE changes wrought and to be wrought by radio are almost beyond imagination. There is, perhaps no invention that will surpass this in far-reaching effect upon our civilisation. "The last decade has been a kaleidoscope of evolution and to-day we stand at the brink of a titanic realignment of the communication and entertainment worlds with the versatile vacuum tube as its cornerstone." In these words "Radio Broadcast," one of the leading American magazines, sums up the position of broadcasting to-day, and of the future adds: "We cannot escape the conclusion that this decade will prove the most significant to the history of the stage, the screen, the phonograph, and the broadcasting industry."

Radio has risen rapidly; one cannot say that the development is a prologued boom, though these distressing booms have affected radio as they have affected any other industry. Reference to the figures relating to the growth of radio in this country, will bear this out, but in this, as in most countries, the boom periods have passed and radio is settling down to become one of the most important phases of the lives of the community. Radio has risen from being a humble sideline to a premier place in every progressive nation. Twenty years ago, man was astonished to hear the tapping of the Morse code over the air to be interpreted by a crystal. These were the days when radio was considered the pastime of the wealthy experimenter or the scientist "with peculiar views."

The application of the vacuum tube—the valve, has changed and raised radio from the doubtful experimental stage to the stage of a public utility, and as such a definite addition to the wealth of the world.

Five years ago, the phonograph industry, then almost at a standstill was revitalised by the adoption of the methods of the broadcasting studio in the recording and audio system of the radio receiver for the reproduction. More recently the motion-picture industry, by an almost identical process, has incorporated sound entertainment as an integral portion of the screen reproduction, and it is in consequence enjoying an increasing revival.

From our own point of view the advent of the talking film may or may not be an advantage, especially in view of the remark made by the president of a well-known amateur radio society. "May we be spared from the talking film, the silent one is bad enough, but to be inflicted with the sound of some of the voices which are no better than a rip saw going through a kerosene tin..." But that is by the way.

### The Trend Towards Unification.

"SLOWLY but surely, drama, concert, vaudeville, motion picture, phonograph and broadcasting are being drawn into the vortex to form a huge, unified entertainment business, destined to

"NOW that the ends of the earth are being drawn together by radio communication, and now that the nations are seriously considering a method of settling disputes in a more rational manner than by attempts at mutual extermination and irrational wholesale destruction, it behoves us to try and cultivate an international sentiment—that is to say, to extend friendly co-operation and mutual assistance beyond the limits of the family, tribe, and nation, as heretofore, and begin to treat the whole earth as a unit in which humanity is striving to develop its better qualities, and to rise to a higher state." . . . Sir Oliver Lodge in opening an article to "Popular Wireless" on the subject "Radio and Co-operation."

reach the staggering proportions in volume of business as to achieve undreamed of heights in the character of entertainment and education which it brings to the home."

This the American journal considers to be the mission of radio, but it has perhaps stopped too soon. Radio has a far greater mission than that of entertainment to fill—entertainment must take a secondary place. Radio with its far-reaching influence, its rapidity, its certainty, for the hasty reader must not jump to the conclusion that because he has to suffer indifferent transmission occasionally, that radio is not reliable, we speak of the future, and then not of the distant future, cannot remain merely entertaining.

As a means of international business communication, it is destined to alter international relationships, to mould a commercial code of its own.

As a complement to aviation, the future means of transport, a hundred examples of the service already rendered by radio could be quoted, but they would be little more than another infliction of facts that have already been presented with the local colour surrounding the incident. On the value of wireless to shipping there is likewise little need to dwell.

The trend of the wireless development is the unification of the scientific and the artistic. Some few years ago wireless was purely scientific, just as television is to-day. To-day it has been unified with the artistic, with amazing results.

Radio means unification, it is the means of drawing together the arts and the sciences to result in a combination

that will be one of the most useful ever created or evolved by man. To-day all the important phonograph companies are in the radio business. Concurrent is the talking film movement utilising, and employing the inventions of radio.

### Natural Alliances.

WE may again quote our American authority on the question of unification. "From the standpoint of efficient and economic operation, unification of broadcast studio management, concert bureau direction, recording of musical accompaniment for sound pictures, phonograph recording and vaudeville management is a natural alliance. These are technically similar and nothing could be more natural and logical than a merger of these activities."

"The leaders in the radio field have at no time been in greater need of unified public support and of intelligent management of their public relationships. . . . We may look forward to centralisation of broadcasting, motion pictures, phonograph reproduction and ultimately television, provided that this service to every element of the public, every taste, every strata, and every shade of religious and political belief is considered in proportion to its needs."

### Results of Unification.

PERHAPS the most significant portion of the views of "Radio Broadcast" is the consideration of the results of unification. "To the radio manufacturer, the combination of these now separate industries promises an immensely increased volume of trade, and less seasonal fluctuations in production. To the home user of radio equipment, it will offer a more versatile source of entertainment of both aural and visual character. To the artist it will mean a wider range of activity instead of being restricted to a single field of entertainment, such as recording, screen, or theatre. The unit of sale in radio equipment will raise many-fold, and a billion dollar industry will soon appear."

"Every element of the industry will enjoy greater prosperity, proportionate to the greater diversity and service which it renders."

In view of the trend of radio in New Zealand at the present time, this view

is of no casual interest. The paper has pointed out in emphatic terms that a service unified in all its functions is the ultimate development of radio. This is only after years of the keenest of radio competition, for as all readers will know, there has been, until very recently, no attempts at co-operation among the various stations. All have striven against their neighbours in their attempt to command the audition of the very large number of listeners.

What has been the result? Failure!

Competition has already had to be replaced in several cases, and the Radio Corporation of America, a combination of stations has appeared and is increasing its hold over American broadcasting.

This was no more than was to be expected, for sooner or later competition must, if uncontrolled, kill itself. The struggle for the mastery of the air in that country resulted in the Radio Convention, which ordered off the air many stations, and severely limited the hours of other.

This is the experience of broadcasting in America, and in view of this, it is incumbent upon every New Zealand listener to see that his country bene-

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