

## Can Literature be Broadcast?

(Concluded from front page.)

many admiring citizens find profoundly distressing, outrageous, and immoral. Only less controversial are questions of religion, of birth-control, of party politics. With most of these subjects, however, the short story is not very likely to deal; for the writer of fiction, the subject of sex remains the most important of controversial topics.

The directors of broadcasting concerns, like the editors of popular magazines with large circulations, do not like controversial contributions which may offend a substantial proportion of their public. Their objection eliminates another large class of artistically admirable short stories. Almost as widely unpopular as the shocking story is the too true, the cruel, the tragic, the sordid story.

The great majority of films and magazine stories have happy endings for the good reason that the great majority of kinema-goers and magazine readers do not like unhappy ones; they are mostly remote from reality, because most people do not like to have reality shown to them. The wireless opens for a public as large, mixed, and indiscriminate as the kinema or the big magazines. This public contains the ordinary percentage of shockable, tragedy-shy reality-haters, to whose preferences and dislikes due allowance has to be paid.

This means that yet another and important class of short story can seldom or never be broadcast. When the necessary discounts have been made we discover that the only short stories that are ever likely to be freely broadcast are stories of less than five thousand words dealing conventionally and not too realistically with safe subjects of an untragic and optimism-producing nature.

In other words, the only short stories that are ever likely to be freely broadcast are short stories of exactly the same kind as are now published in the popular magazines. For those who are interested in literature and the realities with which literature is supposed to deal, it will be a matter of perfect indifference whether such stories are broadcast or not. They know in advance that practically all the short stories in which they are interested are not likely to be broadcast at all. When they wish to read the stories that interest them they will turn, as they have always done, to books.

ONE of the great charms of literature is that it is an art which can be appreciated in silence and solitude. It need not, like music, be performed. Once a book is printed there is a direct communication between author and reader. The broadcasting of stories has the effect of interposing a quite unnecessary interpreter between reader and writer; it breaks the silence, intrudes on the solitary privacy in which the literature-lover is privileged to enjoy his favourite art.

Personally I would never dream of listening to a story if I could read it to myself. Even a good story. And in practice, as we have seen, the majority of stories read into the microphone are likely to be as poor as the majority of stories published in the magazines or turned into films, and for the same reasons—first, because there are not enough good stories being produced to supply the daily demand, and, second, because, even if there were, most of them would be very distasteful to a great many people. A publisher need not consider the many people to whom the book he is publishing will be distasteful. Only those who like the author's work will buy the book; he is publishing for a limited audience.

But an editor who is selling two million copies of his magazine, a film producer who is catering for a world-

## Radio Society for Auckland

### Proposal for Formation

A LISTENERS' league was formed in Auckland some time ago to safeguard the interests of listeners, and now that its purpose has to a considerable extent been fulfilled, it has apparently ceased to function, says an exchange.

A proposal is now on foot to begin a radio society in Auckland. Various well-known amateurs and those interested in the welfare of wireless, both as a business and as an interesting hobby, are now busy arranging a meeting of listeners, and it is expected this will take place in the next week or so. Such a society would have a much wider field of activity than the listeners' league could have.

One idea is to have a members' workshop where tools would be available for amateur builders and any desirous of making small alterations and repairs to their sets. Possibly the establishment of a technical library through which the latest overseas magazines could be borrowed, might later be considered. Such a society can be an active force for good in the preservation of kindly relations between listeners and the Broadcasting Company. Suggestions for improvements, or complaints when these are deemed necessary, could be made quietly and with good effect through the executive.

Much smaller centres than Auckland have radio organisations, some of them with transmitting stations, and the establishment of a local society would help to create a spirit of co-operation with IYA and the company.

## Nationalisation of Radio

CAPTAIN P. P. ECKERSLEY, Chief Engineer of the British Broadcasting Corporation, in a recent newspaper article, writes: "Having organised the whole of Great Britain, the next step forward seems to me to be the linking up of national systems, so that they could interchange programmes with one another. There is no technical reason why the whole of Europe should not be joined up in this way."

wide public, a wireless director who is broadcasting over whole countries and continents, have no such freedom. They are not appealing to a special but to a mixed and general public. They must hit on a kind of lowest common measure of artistic excellence. They cannot afford to purvey outstanding originality, because, except in rare cases, outstanding originality (especially in literature) is liable to offend at least as many people as it pleases.

We are thus forced to conclude that, so far as literary art is concerned, the broadcasting of short stories is as irrelevant as the publication of short stories in popular magazines. The thing may be done, and may even prove a popular attraction; but that it can in any way either assist or harm the cause of literature I greatly doubt.

## The Queen Broadcasts

HER Majesty the Queen recently unveiled her first war memorial, and for the first time her voice was heard on the wireless. The memorial is that which has been erected on Tower Hill, London, in honour of those members of the merchant navy and fishing fleets who lost their lives during the war and whose only grave is the sea.

The Queen's devotion to duty was shown by her decision to fulfil this engagement in the midst of her anxiety over the King. Dense crowds congregated at the memorial and along the route from Buckingham Palace to express their appreciation of her act, and to join with her in paying tribute to those whose heroism was equal to that displayed by the soldiers on the battlefield.

Her Majesty's tribute to the men of the merchant navy and fishing fleets, whose master is the Prince of Wales, was heard not only by the relatives and friends assembled at the memorial, but by thousands of men, women, and children seated in their windswept cottages along the coasts of England.

Some of those whose names were engraved on the stone belonged to these fishing folk, and though they could not see their Queen they heard her voice.

## Australian Features

OUTSTANDING features from Sydney stations for the period February 24 to March 2 are as follow:—

### Station 2FC

Sunday, February 24, 8.30: Classical programme arranged by Horace Keats.

Monday, February 25, 9.15: "The Bohemian Girl."

Tuesday, February 26, 9: Minnie Hamblett, English pianiste.

Wednesday, February 27, 8: Classical programme arranged by Oliver King.

Thursday, February 28, 8.30: Browning Mummery, tenor.

Friday, March 1, 8: Theatrical transmission.

Saturday, March 2, 9: Dance Band.

### Station 2BL

February 24, 9.30: Nance Marley, contralto.

February 25, 8: Wuriltzer organ.

February 26, 8: Orchestral music.

February 27, 8: H. W. Varna Company, "The Bells."

February 28, 9: Alfred Cunningham, baritone. Farewell appearance prior to his departure for Canada.

## A Forward Move

AN experimental shortwave station operating on 45 metres, in Portugal, calls "PIOA Lisbon, Portugal," after every number. The announcement is made each time in Portuguese, Spanish, French, German, and English—in that order. This is a forward step in short-wave broadcasting, as most of these stations announce in their own language only, and are, therefore, difficult to identify by foreign listeners. The anti-Esperantists will smile at the omission of the "universal language" from the list.

## DEPARTMENT OF TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS

**When TRAVELLING in New Zealand book you tour with**

**The Nearest Government Tourist Bureau . . . .**

### BOOKING BUREAUX AT:—

AUCKLAND	Government Life Insurance Bldg., Queen St.
TE AROHA	Whitaker Street
ROTORUA	Fenton Street
WANGANUI	Rutland Buildings (Opp. G.P.O.)
WELLINGTON	Dominion Building, Wakefield Street
NELSON	Hardy Street
CHRISTCHURCH	83 Cathedral Square
GREYMOUTH	Mackay Street
DUNEDIN	Rattray Street
INVERCARGILL	Esk Street
NAPIER	Hastings Street
WESTPORT	Next Bank of N.Z.

### AUSTRALIAN OFFICES:—

SYDNEY	London Bank Chambers, 20 Martin Place
MELBOURNE	Dominion Chambers, 59 William Street
ADELAIDE	Director South Australia Intelligence Bureau
BRISBANE	King House, Queen Street
PERTH	285 Queen's Buildings, Murray Street