

Auckland Notes

(By "Listener.")

SOME time ago an Australian writer devoted considerable space to adjudging opinions upon the unpopularity of pianoforte items as a class. His chief deduction was that in supplying music for broadcasting the performer studied his own appreciation rather than that of an audience the majority of whom were capable of enjoying items of a less classical nature. Locally there has been little to cavil at in pianoforte broadcasts, but there has been quite an object lesson to listeners upon the appreciation of organ music. There was a time when we had regular municipal organ recitals on the air, and it must be frankly admitted that the majority of set owners sought elsewhere for their radio entertainment when these were in progress. The programmes were in the main quite above the musical taste of their scattered audience, and the relaying of the recitals was in itself often unsatisfactory, despite many tests and experiments. Now we have regular organ broadcasts from the Tabernacle organ, at which Mr. Arthur Wilson presides, and there is quite a different story to be told mainly because the organist "plays down" to his audience, and, where he wishes to develop their appreciation, he delivers a brief and interesting explanation of the piece which he is about to render. Certainly Mr. Wilson has done much to change listeners' views upon the subject of organ relays.

DURING this week IYA has sponsored a series of talks upon vocational training, these having been delivered by prominent Rotarians of the city. While none of the speakers has propounded any definite scheme for the solution of juvenile unemployment, each has emphasised some phase of it,

and suggested lines upon which remedies might be found. One of the most interesting in this way was Mr. C. F. Bennett, who spoke most incisively upon existing conditions and the possibilities which the land held. The greatest benefit which will accrue from these talks is the community service they will render in focusing a large body of public opinion upon a problem which urgently demands solution.

LAST week we had a demonstration of how wonderfully effective the human voice can be upon the air. The occasion was the broadcasting of a radio drama, and the artist whose thrillingly effective elocution so stirred listeners was Mr. George Warren. In the writer's opinion it was the finest thing in vivid impersonation that has yet been heard from IYA.

THE formation of an Auckland Radio Society will be of great benefit to local listeners. The society has much wider aims than had the Listeners' League, of which so little has been heard recently, and the members of the new body will be able to do much, not only in the encouragement of listening, but in the more difficult field of educating the big body of listeners who know little or nothing of how their sets function. All success to the efforts of the enthusiasts who brought the society into being.

IYA has added another to its long list of meritorious achievements. On Tuesday last it relayed most successfully 2YA, which was broadcasting a reception to the delegates attending the medical conference at Wellington. Almost every word came through splendidly. There was very little of fading, and the small amount of interference noted suggests that such rebroadcasts may soon be a regular feature of our programme. It was probably the first occasion that Aucklanders had

Allan Wilkie Replies to Criticism.

IN his address from 2YA, Mr. Allan Wilkie referred to certain criticisms that had appeared in "The Dominion." The critic of that paper replied through last week's issue of the "Radio Record"—but now Mr. Wilkie has something more to say.

SHOULD actors be heard or seen off the stage? is the query with which Mr. Plimmer commences his reply to the little lecturette I broadcast on Sunday evening. Why not? I should certainly be delighted to hear Mr. Plimmer discourse on the subject of journalism. Who is better qualified to discuss his profession than the man who has made a life-long study of his particular job?

Really, Mr. Plimmer (I regret I do not know you well enough to return the compliment and address you by your Christian name), what has the fact that the rather spiteful little tattle of a well-known's vocalist's autobiography (written by her secretary), which has caused a mild storm in a tea-cup, to do with this particular case? The lady in question is not an actor (ress), nor did my address consist of gossiping personalities. And while on this subject of an actor being heard or seen may I say that I have gleaned far more useful information and instruction regarding the art of acting and the stage in general from such books as Colley Cibber's "Apology" and Macready's Diary, to name but two, than I have from the articles of professional dramatic critics, always excepting such men as Hazlitt, George Henry Lewes, Charles Lamb, etc.

Mr. Plimmer's reply, however, is full of inaccurate inferences and misstatements, e.g., "Perhaps it was unfortunate for Mr. Wilkie that he could not stick to Shakespeare." May I ask what other subject my address touched upon? Again, "He went out of his way to endeavour to convince listeners in that I, as critic of 'The Dominion' for over twenty-one years, had only a superficial knowledge of Shakespeare." I did nothing of the sort. This is a gross perversion of my statement. In fact, a few lines further down Mr. Plimmer quotes my words verbatim, "The statement as a whole is based on a superficial knowledge of the determining factors in Shakespearean productions." Which is a very different thing from alleging that Mr. Plimmer possesses a superficial knowledge of Shakespeare.

EVEN such Shakespearean authorities as Professor Bradley, Raleigh and Dowden and Quiller Couch are the last people I should consult as to the merit of the individual plays as popular

heard the voice of our Prime Minister since he has assumed office.

THE decision of the P.M.G. to refuse sanction to the proposals made regarding "B" class broadcasting has caused no heartburnings here. Those who know the capabilities of the plant at IYA and are aware of the eagerness of the staff to step into the breach on all special occasions when extra service is warranted, feel that the Karangahape Road station can supply all of our wants, and will develop as these wants increase.

I would much prefer to rely upon my practical experience as a Shakespearean producer covering as long a period as Mr. Plimmer's record as a dramatic critic. A short passage is torn from the context and the pith of my argument is omitted. This quotation is labelled as my "crown of folly" and the critic concludes with "Could a statement be more stupid?" Is it possible to over-stress the incomparable intellectual virtues of Shakespeare?

No, it is not, but it is possible for the dramatic critic to over-elaborate the theme, so that to the plain man in the street the criticism reads like a continuation of his school studies.

Should he want to know the source of the play and discourse on Shakespearean philosophy, misdoubt, together with a synopsis of the story, he can obtain all this information from a shilling text book.

I will maintain that the space allotted to the critic could be better employed in a detailed analysis of the acting instead of a sprinkling of adulatory and condemnatory adjectives regarding the principal characters and the remainder dismissed as "also rans."

Finally, may I suggest the reason why certain critics dislike actors to be seen or heard is because they fear it will shake their carefully built up assumption of infallibility on the principle of "I am Sir Oracle, let no dog bark."

The actor's world may be a small one, but it has the advantage of being considerably wider than that of the average critic, whose horizon is bounded by the limits of his home town.

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