



Published Weekly
REGISTERED G.P.O., WELLINGTON, N.Z., AS A NEWSPAPER.

Vol. II., No. 36.

WELLINGTON, FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 1929.

Auckland City Council and Radio

AUCKLAND and other listeners throughout the country have been disappointed for some time past at the non-appearance on the air of the Auckland Municipal Band, which formerly was a popular feature of 1YA programmes. Alternative methods were adopted by the Radio Broadcasting Company to supply the desire for band music, and negotiations have been in progress since with the Auckland City Council in an effort to induce that body to waive the exorbitant and increased fee asked for the right to broadcast the performances by the Municipal Band. These negotiations have so far failed of success, but the present position is that the full council has referred back to the sub-committee dealing with the matter the report presented on the subject.

THE following statement covers the whole ground concisely and authoritatively, and will show listeners in detail the steps that have been taken by the Radio Broadcasting Company in connection with the matter and the efforts made to secure for the radio audience the privilege of hearing the Auckland Municipal Band, which incidentally is maintained by the Auckland ratepayers for the support and betterment of music.

ORIGINALLY the city council permitted the broadcasting of the band's Sunday evening concerts (for which no charge is made for admission) free of charge to the company, the company paying all costs incidental to the broadcast. Later the council asked for payment, and the company agreed to pay £300 per annum for the right to broadcast all band and organ performances, exclusive only of the performances given at the Zoo.

Under this arrangement a total of forty-one performances were broadcast from March to August, 1928, inclusive, equalling eighty-two broadcasts per annum.

IN September, 1928, the Council raised the question of a larger payment, and finally stipulated that the fee should be fixed at £750 per annum for a total of thirty-seven band concerts, only eleven of which were to be Town Hall concerts,

plus a number of organ recitals which past experience had shown to be unsuitable for broadcast purposes.

This amount was considered by the company to be altogether excessive, and negotiations were suspended. However, it was decided to approach the council again in an endeavour to arrive at a more reasonable arrangement satisfactory to all concerned, and with this end in view a representative of the company met in conference a special committee of the council, the Mayor presiding.

AS a basis for discussion the company's representative submitted a proposal for the payment of £352 16s., representing payment at the rate of £7 7s. per concert for a minimum of forty-eight performances, viz., 20 Saturday evening band concerts and 20 Sunday evening ditto (all Town Hall), one band Christmas carol performance, six organ recitals with Municipal Choir, and one Christmas carol concert with organ and choir.

It was pointed out to the committee that only the performances set out in this proposal were of real use and value to the company for broadcasting purposes.

THE committee submitted a counter proposal providing for the payment of a lump sum of £500 per annum for eighty-eight concerts, including thirty-seven organ recitals of doubtful broadcast value.

THE company's representative submitted that the inclusion of a larger number of performances which were virtually worthless to the Company materially reduced the prima facie value of the committee's proposal and consequently rendered such performances as could be broadcast to the satisfaction of listeners unwarrantably expensive.

The company's offer of £352 16s., based on £7 7s. per concert for 48 concerts covered the twenty Sunday evening band concerts for which no charge was made for admission and which ought, therefore, to be available for broadcasting free of charge to the company.

THE granting of the right to broadcast the free Sunday evening concerts could not possibly involve the council in any financial loss, but would on the contrary prove advantageous to the city by reason of the valuable publicity which would result.

The company's offer figured on the basis of the concerts for which the council charged admission—morally the only concerts for which there should be any charge for broadcasting—would represent the payment of approximately fifteen guineas per concert.

Such a payment is obviously largely in excess of any loss which could possibly result from broadcasting.

Evidence was given that the broadcasting of band concerts in another city had resulted in a substantial increase, instead of a falling off, in the takings.

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