

## Earthquake and Floods

### New Zealand Stations give Commendable News Service

THERE have been two striking instances recently where the Broadcasting Company, as a disseminator of news, has played a very important part.

The first occasion was in connection with the earthquake at Arthur's Pass, and the other was on the occasion of the recent floods in Dunedin.

When the earthquake occurred, late on Saturday night, Christchurch felt the shock severely, and everybody in the city and district was anxious to know if any damage had been done. There were, of course, no newspapers on Sunday, so the wireless was relied upon by thousands of people. On Sunday afternoon and evening 3YA was able to tell listeners all about the extent of the damage at Arthur's Pass, and telegrams were sent to the other stations which broadcast the news also. The newspapers sold like the proverbial "hot cakes" next morning.

#### The Dunedin Flood.

ON the occasion of the floods in Dunedin last week, 4YA rose to the occasion splendidly, and the station remained on the air until after midnight, giving a nine hours' continuous service.

4YA's achievement was the subject of a congratulatory telegram from the General Manager of the Broadcasting Company, Mr. A. R. Harris, to the staff of the southern station, highly commending the initiative displayed.

HEAVY rain commenced falling in Dunedin at midnight on Monday, and increased to a torrential downpour on Tuesday afternoon. At 4.30 p.m. the station received the first report that water had accumulated at Kensington to the depth of about 2ft., and many residents were compelled to leave their homes. Towards evening the rain if anything increased in force, and suburban areas all over Dunedin were badly affected by flood waters.

By 6 o'clock 4YA were able to advise motorists of the dangerous conditions of portions of the roads about the city. Throughout the news session re-

ports regarding affected areas and state of roads were made from time to time as they came to hand, and by 8 p.m. an organised system of detailed reports from all parts of the city and as far as Waitati, 17 miles north, and Waipori, 42 miles south, were on the air. Arrangements were made with the Fire Brigade Department, the Otago Motor Club, the Railway Department, Tramway Department, Police Department, and City Lighting Department, to communicate reports of conditions to the stations, and with the assistance of listeners at various points of the affected areas in the city, 4YA soon became the centre of inquiry, and from the announcements made listeners were in a position to judge how the affected areas were faring.

#### The Service Extended.

AT 9 o'clock the announcement was made that, if necessary, the station would remain on the air after the ordinary hours of transmission, and reports were made frequently until 10 o'clock indicating that the flood waters showed no signs of receding. It therefore became evident that though the station's normal hours of transmission had concluded, it would be in the interests of listeners for the station to remain on the air in adherence to the company's policy of service to the listener.

Reports in regard to the train services were received, and broadcast up till the time of closing down. By midnight it became evident that the waters in the flooded areas showed signs of receding, and as the weather generally had a clearing tendency the station intimated that transmission would be discontinued as soon as final reports in connection with the train services were received. These were to hand by 12.30, and the station closed down at 12.40 with the definite assurance that there was no need for further alarm.

Continuous reports as to the position had therefore been made over a period of some nine hours, covering the initial report regarding flooded areas at Kensington until the weather showed definite signs of improvement.

loss of the three waves in this band (510,520,530 kilocycles) owing to the provisions of the recent Washington Radio Telegraphic Convention.

After experiment it was found that the separation between the fundamental carrier frequencies of station should be reduced from 10 to 9 kilocycles for wavelengths above 300 metres.

This, although not an ideal solution, has been rendered practicable owing to the greater degree of accuracy with which modern transmitters can maintain their carrier frequencies at the allotted figure. Thus five channels

A HUM from a mains unit which is being used to supply H.T. to the set can very often be reduced if the value of the detector grid leak is lowered.

## Wireless in Canada

### Royal Commission on Broadcasting

WHETHER Canada will have a national radio broadcast owned and operated by the Federal Government will be decided after thorough investigation of the whole question by a Royal Commission, the personnel of which was made public recently.

The Commission is composed of Sir John Aird, Toronto, chairman; Mr. Charles A. Bowman, editor of the "Ottawa Citizen," and Mr. Augustin Frigon, director of the Ecole Polytechnique, Montreal.

The work of the commission will be to inquire carefully into the relative merits of broadcasting by privately-owned stations and stations operated by the Federal or Provincial Governments. Not only will the Royal Commission consult with the Federal and Provincial authorities, but it will also visit Great Britain, the United States, and France. The visits abroad will be of brief duration to enable the Royal Commission to report during the next session of the Dominion Parliament.

In Canada 60 per cent. of the radio sets in operation are classed as urban, and 40 per cent. rural. There are 68

broadcasting plants licensed by the Minister of Marine. Thirty-two provide an intermittent service of low power and of purely local operation.

The Royal Commission will inquire particularly into the following questions:—

(1) The establishment of one or more groups of high-powered broadcasting stations operating as private enterprises, with the receipt of a government subsidy.

(2) The establishment and operation of such a system of stations to be owned and financed by the Dominion Government.

(3) The establishment and operation of stations by the provincial governments.

### Extensive Co-operation

GOVERNMENT utilities sometimes work with a fair degree of co-operation in foreign countries. Where railways, telegraph and telephone systems, post offices and broadcast stations are operated under the same auspices, there is opportunity for this. In Hungary, for instance, railway passengers find attached to each seat a pair of headphones which have been sealed in a sanitary wrapper. A rental of 12 cents an hour obtains the radio programmes from Budapest to while away the monotony of the trip.

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### European Wavelengths Change

IN order to prevent heterodyning among European stations, the wavelengths have been reallocated on the "Plan de Bruxelles." This was the result of a conference of the technicians representing European broadcasting organisations in Brussels in October last.

The basic principle has been to specify a minimum separation between the carrier waves, but an endeavour has been made to take into account as far as the available facilities will allow, of the present situation in Europe. In brief the chief difficulty lay in finding some nine additional waves about 300 metres, at the same time facing the