

World Radio

(Continuation of Front Page.)

crowded with a number of competing stations, and it was difficult to say just how far each individual station secured an audience. The authorities in Canada were investigating the B.B.C. method, in order to see whether a national scheme for improvement could be effectively put into operation. In the States no fee at all was charged, but in Canada a fee of one dollar was supposed to be collected. It seemed, however, to be more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Unquestionably, the system of national unified control was the only possible system and New Zealand should never entertain departing from it.

Praise for B.B.C.

COMING to the B.B.C., Mr. Owen said that it was impossible to refer to that organisation and service without speaking in superlatives. A wonderful, even marvellous, service was given. A spirit of great earnestness animated the officials of the Corporation in their enthusiastic endeavours to serve the public. They did not resent criticism or suggestions—in fact, the letters that were published in the "Radio Times" showed that it was recognised that all individuals were entitled to express their views on the programmes, and that expression was appreciated as a help in enabling the Corporation officials to assess the programmes and their appeal. The popularity of the service was very marked, listeners now totalling some 2,400,000, with numbers still growing.

A system of simultaneous broadcast of contrasting programmes was now

in force. This meant that listeners practically all over the country, at any time, had the choice of two programmes, which were in marked contrast the one to the other. London was linked up with relay stations at various strategic points throughout the country. These provincial centres drew largely upon London programmes for the more outstanding items, but each maintained its local character by giving, at set times, local news, and utilising outstanding local talent. The network of relay stations was most remarkable, and the effect was that listeners in the area served by, say, Belfast could receive London programmes as relayed by Belfast with as much clarity as listeners in the suburbs of London would receive the programme of 2LO direct. He spent a little time on the Isle of Man, staying at a farmhouse. He arranged for the installation of a good receiving set, and regularly tuned in to Belfast or other stations. The inmates of that farmhouse, who had not previously experienced wireless, were so captivated that they would not allow him to remove the set on his departure, but took it over.

The standard of programmes maintained by the British Broadcasting Corporation was very marked. The aim was to make broadcasting a definite instrument of national advancement and national service. The very best was given in the way of music, and moreover, a strong effort was made to make available the best lecturing talent of the country in artistic and educative talks.

Outstanding Courtesy

ARMED with a letter of introduction from the Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand, Mr. Owen paid

a visit to the headquarters of the British Broadcasting Corporation at Savoy Hill. He was given a very courteous reception, and afforded all facilities for making contact with the British system of broadcasting. A special privilege enjoyed by Mr. Owen was a half-hour interview with Captain Eckersley, the distinguished and able chief engineer of the Corporation. The manner in which Mr. Owen was accorded this interview spoke volumes for the courteous consideration extended by the authorities to overseas visitors. On Mr. Owen being asked if he desired any special assistance, he intimated that he would like, if possible, an interview with Captain Eckersley. It was explained that the chief engineer was a particularly busy man and, in point of fact, was leaving for Geneva the next day to attend one of the numerous conferences on radio matters there held in connection with European broadcasting. The promise was made, however, that Captain Eckersley would be informed of Mr. Owen's call and his desire.

By the first mail next morning, Mr. Owen received a special letter from Captain Eckersley stating that, although he was very busy, he would be glad to see Mr. Owen at 11.30 that morning. Mr. Owen was not slow to take advantage of the opportunity.

Captain Eckersley, he found on acquaintance, to be most charming and capable, and a very pleasant half-hour was spent. The captain was particularly interested in short-wave reception in New Zealand, and specially inquired Mr. Owen's experiences in that direction. Mr. Owen was constrained to admit that his experience had been limited to occasional experiences at friends' houses. Captain Eckersley mentioned that a good deal of criticism had been directed against the B.B.C. for not maintaining a regular short-wave broadcasting service for the rest of the world. The reason why this was not done was that considerable improvement had yet to be effected in the standard of receiving sets to ensure satisfactory reception in all parts of the world. From the transmitting point of view it was contended perfection had been attained, but it was useless maintaining a service until satisfaction could be assured at the receiver, wherever situated. In the meantime, therefore, short-wave was an interesting stunt, but further progress was required to warrant uniform operation. Experimental transmission from 5SW would be continued, and doubtless the necessary improvement in receiving sets would follow.

Asked about television, Captain Eckersley indicated quite clearly that in his view perfection in television would ultimately be attained, but that in the present state of development sufficient satisfaction could not be assured to warrant regular transmission. Mechanical difficulties had to be overcome by those who were pushing the science. The B.B.C., he indicated, was quite sympathetic to this new phase of broadcasting, and stood ready, when the time was ripe, to render the necessary service.

Of special interest to Mr. Owen was a visit to the station at Daventry. Two stations were really in existence there side by side, viz., 5XX Daventry, and 5GB, the latter being mainly for experimental work. The officials

Public Visit YA Studios

KEENLY curious as to the how and the why of broadcasting, many listeners are availing themselves of the opportunity of visiting the studios. For long they have been at the receiving end and they have been puzzled by the mystery of how sound can be carried by perfectly soundless waves from the studio to their homes, so, when the opportunity of being shown over the studios has presented itself, the invitation has been accepted with alacrity.

Some are now more informed on the technical side, some are not, but all have enjoyed the visit immensely. They have at any rate seen where the broadcasting starts from, even if they do lose track of the sounds while they travel from the aerial to their receiving sets, and are somewhat at a loss to explain why they should then again be audible from a loudspeaker.

Of course, to all, the way in which a studio concert is "staged" has been most interesting. They have seen the little microphones whose tireless ears absorb all that the artists sing or play. They have found it interesting to attempt to trace the conversion of energy from the singers to the re-creation of their voices in the homes of thousands of listeners throughout New Zealand and overseas. And, as they have thought of it all, they have marvelled.

When an artist sings he causes mechanical vibrations of his vocal chords, which produce sound. The sound strikes the microphone and causes an electric current to be produced, which is exactly like the sound. This is amplified many times and caused to modulate or mould the high frequency carrier wave of the transmitter in accordance with the electrical low frequency current produced by the microphone. This high-frequency modulated current is supplied to the antenna, from where it is radiated into space in the form of electrical magnetic waves. These waves travel with the speed of light to the receiving sets, where they are changed to low frequency currents, so that they can operate a loudspeaker. This means that the electrical energy is converted into sound and radiated on the air to the ear in the form of sound waves identical—or should be, if the set is efficient—with the sounds emerging from the mouth of the singer in the studio.

A Sunday Talk

An interesting talk will be given by Mr. Arthur Hirst, F.R.S.A., on the evening of Sunday, the 14th inst., at 8.56 p.m. His subject will be "The Place of Fine Art in General Education."

at this station gave Mr. Owen a very warm welcome. It seemed that comparatively few visitors were received there these mainly being foreigners interested in the technical side. Every facility was given even to those to see and learn all that was available. "We have no secrets," one of the officers said. "We are quite ready to show everyone everything that we have, in order that broadcasting may be advanced."

Mr. Owen will, it is hoped, be able to give listeners in general further experiences at a later date.

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