

Trade Effort to Help Radio



ON this page we publish the text of a circular issued by the Wellington branch of the N.Z. Electrical Federation. This circular, we understand, has been sent to prominent individual listeners, radio societies, and radio federations throughout the country. Copies have been forwarded to us by some of the recipients, as they considered the proposal so important as to warrant our being informed. The proposal certainly is an important one and worthy of discussion in its bearing upon the interests of listeners. In so far as it marks an effort on the part of the trade to secure the best possible organisation of radio in New Zealand, we welcome it and wish to assure the federation from the outset that the "Radio Record" is concerned to help every movement, from whatever source it springs, calculated to genuinely benefit radio.

The circular, however, if it means anything at all in its present form, will be taken to mean that in the view of the federation—(1) The programmes in themselves are unsatisfactory; (2) the transmissions of the YA stations are technically unsatisfactory; and (3) that complaints regarding these two points, when made to the Broadcasting Company by the federation, have been invariably shelved.

These are important and far-reaching statements, which we, as a radio newspaper specifically concerned with interests of our readers, may fitly investigate. The first two points may be discussed by ourselves on the basis of general knowledge. The third point is referable to the party principally concerned, viz., the Radio Broadcasting Company, whose statement is appended later in this article.

Quality of Programmes.

ARE the programmes of the YA stations unsatisfactory? Listeners themselves are the best judges of that. From the outset the columns of the "Radio Record" have been open to listeners for the expression of praise or blame on all aspects of the radio service. Readers will remember that in

grammes available to-day is, we feel, higher than ever it has been in the past. The best possible use would seem to be made of the talent available, supplemented by judicious incorporation of world masterpieces provided by gramophone records. Visiting artists, wherever possible, have been induced to appear before the micro-

"About thirty," was the prompt reply. We asked whether these had been received in writing or verbally. The answer was "Some of both." We then asked whether these complaints had been passed on in writing to the company, our object being to find whether the company had been remiss in attending to complaints placed before it by the federation. To this question we were refused exact answer, although it was indicated that some of the complaints had been passed on in writing and some by word of mouth to the director of the local station.

The real point, however, is this: Are the programmes being provided satisfactory to the general body of listeners? That is a question which can be answered only by the listeners themselves, and we specifically invite listeners to express their views on the question. Our inquiry is directed only to ascertaining the facts, the listeners may write us perfectly freely and frankly on the point.

YA Transmissions.

THE second point made by the circular has reference to the quality of YA transmissions. Are these rightly the subject of numerous complaints? This is a technical matter, upon which technical evidence should be submitted. During the passage of the transmitter for Station 2YB from Christchurch to New Plymouth, opportunity was taken of its stay in Wellington to broadcast simultaneously with 2YA. The purpose of this dual transmission was to enable Wellington listeners to test their apparatus on a transmission of lower power than 2YA. Results showed definitely that the trouble lay, not with the transmitter, but with the receiver. This does not mean that the receivers in general use in Wellington are incapable of receiving Wellington properly, but that too much power is frequently used in them for near-by reception of such a powerful station. Almost invariably better results were secured by valve users from 2YB than from 2YA, leading to the conclusion that to use one or two radio frequency valves within a close range of Wellington and then expect excellent reproduction, is unwise unless big power valves follow. In other words, the detector was generally overloaded.

PROOF of this is available from a lecture given by Mr. W. M. Dawson, the technical expert of Phillips' Lamps, Ltd. In a recent address to the Wellington Radio Society he remarked to the effect that if people would only look to their sets and provide adequate (or correct) power with apparatus capable of handling the volume, there would be few complaints regarding the transmission of 2YA. A little previously

THE NEW ZEALAND ELECTRICAL FEDERATION

Wellington.

OFFICIAL LISTENERS-IN.

Dear Sir,—

FOR a considerable period the Radio Executive of this Federation has received numerous complaints with reference to the programmes broadcast and the transmission of YA stations.

"When such instances have been submitted to the Company, the complaint has invariably been shelved, due to a large extent to a denial of the circumstances based on evidence submitted by one of the Company's official listeners. To overcome the difficulty, the Federation has decided to appoint official listeners, who will report direct to this office.

"To enable these reports to be of a uniform character a special form is being prepared, and this is to be completed for one programme each week, preferably Tuesday or Thursday, whichever period is convenient. The executive directs me to ask whether you will undertake to act as the official listener for the Federation in your district, and I shall be glad to receive your decision in the matter as early as possible."

our early days the volume of letters received by us and published in our Mail Bag Corner was considerable. A great many of those letters eighteen months or so ago made complaint of the quality of programmes submitted and contained suggestions where improvement might be effected. The vast majority of those suggestions, where possible, have been adopted. Apart from that source, the company has on its own initiative consistently striven to better the programmes given from all stations. As a result of this continuous effort, the standard of pro-

phone, the latest being Miss Harthy, the eminent Welsh singer-composer, whose broadcasts have been appreciated from one end of New Zealand to the other. The result of the steady improvement in programme quality is evidenced in the marked decline of letters of complaint received by ourselves from listeners. Of recent months this decline has been most pronounced, so that listeners would seem to be tolerably satisfied with the quality of programmes available. At the last meeting of the Wellington Radio Society, the fact that its meetings were poorly attended was attributed to one thing only, viz., that listeners were getting what they wanted and did not need to make complaints regarding programmes. "Give them rotten programmes, and we shall soon have our meeting fully attended," was the remark of the chairman. Again, there is the testimony of Mr. J. H. Owen, ex-president of the Wellington Amateur Radio Society, who left New Zealand a critic and returned, after experience abroad, a convert to the high general average under our conditions, of the service provided. And, finally, what of the distinctly good response in the renewal of licenses? Do these figures indicate dissatisfaction?

WITH this knowledge available to us, we confess to experiencing surprise on reading the federation's circular that "numerous complaints had been received as to the programmes broadcast." Our curiosity excited, we rang the secretary of this body to ask the number of complaints received.

Autumn Excursion

runs by Rail

The cheap railway fares operating from 9th to 18th May represent a big saving on ordinary travel rates. Although instituted primarily for the benefit of school children and parents during the autumn vacation holidays, they are available to EVERYONE—from and to all stations.

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