

The New Zealand Radio Record

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N.Z. RADIO PUBLISHING CO., LTD.,
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WELLINGTON, FRIDAY, MAY 31, 1929.

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING SERVICE.

IN last week's issue we were able to publish details of the change that will be inaugurated in the Australian service in the immediate future. The Commonwealth Postal authorities will, as from July in Sydney and from August in Melbourne, take charge of the existing stations, and operate them henceforth on the revised basis. This will mean that the Government will collect all revenues, and will maintain and operate the various broadcasting stations. It will not, however, make itself directly responsible for the provision of programmes. The right to supply programmes will be made subject to tender, the sum of 12s. of each listener's fee of 24s. being used for this purpose. The balance of the 24s. will be divided in the proportion of 8s. to the Government for the maintenance, operation, and extension of the broadcasting service, particularly in the provision over a period of three years, of an adequate number of relay stations, and 4s. to cover incidental expenses in the collection of fees and payment of the agreed upon royalty to Amalgamated Wireless in respect to its patents.

THIS change constitutes a vast experiment in the administration of a broadcasting service. It does not go so far as the system established in Britain, of creating a special authority to wholly administer broadcasting. It divides the functions of the service between the mechanical side and the musical and intellectual side. While the mechanical side is important, listeners will agree that the real flesh and blood of broadcasting is in what is broadcast, that is, the programmes themselves. Australia proposes to sub-let the duty of providing programmes to private enterprise in the form of tenders for each State.

FROM the point of view of the political administration of the scheme, this is a clever move. It entrusts to those who are specialists in the handling of musical and other talent the organisation of the programmes. It does more than this. It creates an authority or body outside the State against which will be directed all the complaints which may arise concerning the programmes made available. It is in that, that cleverness is displayed in diverting attack from the Government-administered programme service. In the event of dissatisfaction, it will be open for the Government authorities to retort that they are not directly responsible, and use popular agitation as the occasion for pressure upon the programme organiser. Naturally,

in such an arrangement, the programme organiser will largely find his hands tied in rebutting criticism.

THE conditions of Government control ensure a good deal of Government supervision, and a heavy responsibility will be laid upon the Commonwealth Postmaster-General and his advisors as created in various States. To assist the Government, and provide a means of effective co-operation with the programme organiser, committees are to be set up in each State by Government nomination. It will be their duty to keep under close supervision the programme organiser, and see that all points of the contract are fully observed. In addition, they are to have the opportunity of censoring programmes and the contractor "will require to take into consideration any representations made by the local committee." Furthermore, the new contractor "shall do all in his power to cultivate a public desire for transmission of educational items, musical items of merit, and generally for all items and subjects which tend to cultivate the mind."

OBVIOUSLY, harmony and tact in a high degree will require to obtain to ensure the full success of such a system. The multiplication of personalities in executive positions necessarily brings to bear new points of view and conflicting aims. Under the terms of reference, it is not clear whether the contractor will require to "obey" as well as "take into consideration" the views expressed by the committee. If the contractor, in his judgment, finds that after "taking into consideration" the views expressed, he is not able to observe them, or deems it unwise to comply with them, then a difficult position may be created. At this stage, of course, the possibilities only can be indicated. The whole success, or otherwise, of the scheme will depend upon the tact and discretion of the committees appointed and on the efforts of the successful contractor for the provision of programmes.

UNQUESTIONABLY, the Australian experiment will be watched with interest in New Zealand. On the administrative side, it would seem that New Zealand is making rather more rapid progress in the direction of linking up all centres with a view to simultaneous broadcasts than is Australia. As our Postal Department is able to provide land lines between different centres capable of effective transmission for radio rebroadcasts, so use is made by the Broadcasting Company of the facilities available. Australia, of course, has greater distances to contend with, and it has been found necessary to indicate a period of three years for the provision of the relay stations contemplated. In New Zealand, the indication has been given that the radio policy for this country to pursue for the theoretical covering of the field is the provision of relay stations in strategic provincial centres. They will be an ultimate development of the future.

ONE additional feature of interest in the Australian development is that the principle is affirmed that the bigger centres of population must make some small sacrifice for the benefit of weaker centres. Thus, Melbourne and Sydney are asked to endure material reduction in their station time to permit of Perth, Adelaide, and Brisbane receiving more extended hours. This principle is sound, and the only possible one in a unified development of a big-scale organisation. It is under the same principle that for the present the revenue available for New Zealand radio service must be concentrated in the four centres, and patience exercised by provincial areas for the provision of those relay stations recognised to be desirable.

"Hinemoa" to be Broadcast

THE first concert of the 1929 season of the Wellington Harmonic Society, assisted by 2YA Orchestra, will be given on Saturday evening in the Wellington Town Hall. The whole programme will be relayed by 2YA. This will be a unique entertainment in that, with a few exceptions, every item will be from the works of Alfred Hill. The chief feature of the evening will be the presentation of the cantata, "Hinemoa," which will occupy the whole of the second half of the programme.

The words of "Hinemoa" were written by Mr. Arthur H. Adams, Alfred Hill being the composer of the music. A synopsis of the story will be found in the programme pages of the "Radio Record."

This will be the first occasion on which "Hinemoa" has been broadcast in its entirety in New Zealand, and the presentation by the Wellington Harmonic Society should be particularly enjoyable.

The soloists for "Hinemoa" will be:
Hinemoa Mrs. J. F. Woodward
Tutanekai Mr. R. R. Orr
Tiki Mr. E. J. Hill
Tohunga Mr. C. W. Svenson
Mr. Temple White will conduct.

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