

Extension of Service

(Continued from front page.)

"The directors of the Radio Broadcasting Company, having been desirous of extending the advantages of their service to the primary producers of the Dominion, have asked me for advice and assistance in drawing up the scheme. Feeling confident that I could rely upon the co-operation of the New Zealand Department of Agriculture, the agricultural colleges, the Agricultural and Pastoral Association of Canterbury, and other similar bodies, I have accepted the duty, for I feel that we have a splendid opportunity of assisting the primary producers and of benefiting the Dominion in general.

"In the past a great deal of useful work has been done by the scientific investigator, but there has been some difficulty in bringing the results of his work prominently before those who have to put them into actual opera-

tion on the farm or station. It seems to me that the broadcasting service offers unique opportunity of bridging this gulf, and it is of particular importance at the present time to take advantage of this opportunity. We have reached a time in New Zealand when the old haphazard methods of farming have ceased to be profitable.

"The natural facility of the soil has been largely exhausted, and if farming is to be successful it is essential that the results obtained by scientific investigation must be put into effect. Other points of special importance naturally arise. At the present time there seems some danger of the wool industry being seriously affected by artificial fabrics such as artificial silk and wool, and it will be a question for our wool growers to consider how best to meet this position; either by improving the quality of the wool and endeavouring to produce it more economically, or if that is found impossible, to direct their efforts in some other direction.

"I should like to express my appreciation of the work that has already

been done in the way of educating the farmer. A great deal has already been done by the Department of Agriculture, by the Lincoln Agricultural College, the Canterbury Progress League and other bodies, and there is no desire in any way to enter into competition with this or to overlap it but, if possible to help in making it more effective.

"It is desirable to have a committee to guide and assist us in finding out the information that will be most worthwhile to the farming community and how best it can be supplied. There is plenty of scientific information available of the utmost value, and we want to know how best to pass it on for the benefit of the primary producers.

"The lectures or talks will, in all probability, be short, not more than fifteen or twenty minutes each, and we hope to draw up a programme for the whole year with the object of broadcasting the information at the most suitable seasons. An endeavour will be made to build up a large body of intelligent listeners who will co-operate and take an interest in the work that is being done. Possibly some method can be devised where such listeners can send in questions about any point on which they require special information, and then these can be answered either by direct correspondence, or, wherever they are of general importance, by broadcast.

"Again there is the possibility of publishing the lectures after they have been broadcast. This might be done in the "Radio Record," or, perhaps, in some of the daily papers and would be effective as supplementing the actual lecture itself.

"Another very important point is the broadcasting of the weather forecasts. Dr. Kidson, Director of the Meteorological Department, has promised to give every assistance in this way. During the last harvest special weather forecasts for farmers were sent out and proved of great service and there would seem to be a possibility of further extending this method and of thereby saving the farmer from much loss that might otherwise occur.

"In the meantime the broadcast lectures will be devoted mainly to the ordinary farming and agricultural pursuits, and it is hoped afterwards to extend it to other departments, such as horticulture, growing tobacco, the beetroot industry, and so on."

MR. A. H. Cockayne, Assistant Director-General of Agriculture, who had been asked by the Minister of Agriculture to attend the meeting, said he was anxious to know how best the officers of the department could assist the committee in carrying out the proposals made. For some considerable time they had been broadcasting a talk from the Wellington station on one evening a week, and there had frequently been difficulty in securing lecturers owing to the fact that officers were often away from Wellington on duties connected with the department. He wished to know if the committee would supervise and arrange for the radio talks at all the four stations or not, and if it was necessary that the lecturer himself should give the talk, or whether this could be done by the announcer if a typewritten MS were sent in. On behalf of the depart-

ment he said they were willing to fall in with any satisfactory arrangement, and to assist the movement in every possible way.

In reply to Mr. Cockayne, Mr. A. R. Harris, general manager of the Broadcasting Company, said that there were three factors to consider in the broadcasting of information of this character: desirability, acceptability and practicability of the matter to be broadcast.

As to the desirability there was probably no doubt in respect to the broadcast of information concerning development of primary production. With regard to the practicability of the broadcast, whether from the studio or by relay from the colleges or institutions concerned, the company could decide, also the time of day. From information gathered, 7.30 p.m. was the best time for the farming community. It was in respect to the acceptability of the matter to be broadcast that the company particularly sought the assistance of those present.

The company desired the advice of a committee as to what the farmer wanted, when he wanted it, and how he wanted it. It was not the company's intention to overlap the work already being done by educational institutions, Government departments and farming organisations, but to broadcast to the farming community acceptable matter that was already available. Mr. Harris assured those present of the company's support in anything they proposed.

Dr. Chilton said that the intention in his mind was that the scheme should be a Dominion one. Replying to Mr. Cockayne, he said that it would not be necessary for those who prepared the talks to broadcast them. Mr. John Deans said that Lincoln College would be glad to assist. He asked how many farmers had receiving sets and Mr. Harris replied that they had no list of farmer listeners-in. Mr. Cockayne said that the number was very large, as everyone knew who moved about.

Mr. Turner said that the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce would give all possible assistance. As they would have noted, the Chamber recently published the first bulletin of its Agricultural Economics Committee, and he suggested that the Advisory Committee to be set up might be able to use the information contained in some of those bulletins.

It was resolved, on the motion of Dr. Chilton, seconded by Mr. Hewlet: "That this conference approves the extension of the public relations scheme of the general manager of the Radio Broadcasting Company to include a Primary Productions Committee in extending its services to primary producers.

The following sub-committee was set up: Dr. Chilton (convener), Messrs. Alexander, Lyons, Olimie, McGillivray, and Herdman.

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee was set down for the 31st instant.

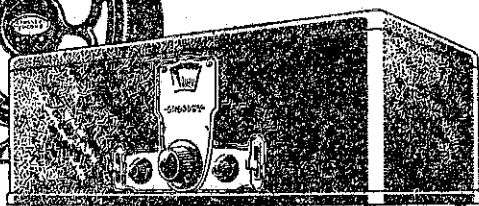
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