

Special Service for Primary Producers

American Technique may be Adapted to Our Needs



R. A. R. HARRIS, General Manager of the Broadcasting Company, advises that the Primary Productions Committee recently organised at Christchurch under the company's public relations scheme, gives promise of accomplishing service of great value to the community. A meeting of the sub-committee set up to prepare a schedule of broadcasts has been held, and the local office of the Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural College at Lincoln have each undertaken to prepare at least one talk each month. A comprehensive report will be presented to the general committee at its meeting next week, and it is anticipated that a detailed schedule of broadcasts will be completed shortly.

THE Company is keeping in close touch with development in other countries, and has just received from its New York consultant, Mr. Edgar H. Felix, a considerable amount of material, including talks furnished by Mr. Morse Salisbury, of the United States Department of Agriculture. In his covering letter Mr. Felix says: "This work is based on several years of experience with broadcasting to farmers, and represents the development of a specialised technique which has demonstrated itself as increasingly effective. It must be remembered that any type of educational material is decidedly lacking in entertainment value unless it is especially prepared for broadcasting presentation. Naturally this technique is not limited to agricultural talks, and it is not difficult to adapt it to other fields of education. The important point is that, by the introduction of dialogue and the injection of personalities, much more effective radio presentation is secured."

The material received provides a most interesting and instructive study, and includes a list of American stations through which talks are broadcast, and samples of "Talks to Far-

mer," "Housekeepers' Chats," a series entitled "Outdoors With the Scientist," "Farm Science Snapshots," "Primer for Town Farmers," "Farm Flashes," and "4H Club Crier," the last mentioned being talks to juvenile agricultural clubs.

A Sample Talk.

THE specialised technique referred to which may be adaptable to New Zealand conditions presents talks in the form of a story or dialogue, or in some cases in the form of a discussion. For example, one of the "Outdoors with the Scientist" series commences as follows:—

"Announcement: We have a message from the weather man in the United States Department of Agriculture's 'Outdoors with the Scientist' radio programme to-day. This station's farm audience will be especially interested, as the talk deals with how the U.S. Weather Bureau helps fruit growers protect their crops from frost."

The lecturer then continues:

The other day the Weather Man and I were driving through a beautiful stretch of rolling orchard country. Buds were already beginning to burst on some of the trees. Things felt good. . . .

We came to Jed Brown's place. Mr. Brown's a farmer who owns a thriving orchard. He has money in the bank. Jed was standing by the front gate.

The Weather Man threw the car out of gear and braked it to a stop.

"Hello, Brown," he called, "how do the crops look?"

"Fine," said Brown. "How's the weather?"

Then we all grinned. We knew that these are two of the oldest greetings in the world.

"Well, Brown," said the Weather Man, "I think I can promise you fair weather for to-morrow."

"Crops are fair, too," said Brown. We were all feeling free and easy. Brown came and sat on the running board. That meant he had time for a few words. We also had 10 minutes to spare.

The Weather Man turned to Brown. "I know why you fellows are always asking about the weather," he began. "It's a natural thing to do. An extra quarter of an inch of rain at the right time may add thousands of bushels to your corn crop. A few degrees lower temperature may give the potato-grower a bank account. The direction of the wind is sometimes more important than the cost of farm labour. The weather's a matter of business to you fellows—you farmers. Am I right?"

"You're right," said Brown, "and I know why you scientists are interested in crops, too. A larger wheat crop will mean cheaper bread. A good crop year will also mean a good year for you. Am I right?"

The Weather Man smiled and nodded his head.

I figured it was time for me to get into this palaver. "If you fellows are through patting each other on the back," I said, "I'd like to ask a question."

They both turned to me.

"Listen," I said, "what would happen to this orchard if a good frost hit it to-night? Where would your science be then? What could you do about it?"

"I can't answer that in ten words," the Weather Man said. "It's quite a story."

"Go ahead and tell it," I said.

"In the old days," he began, "the prosperity of the fruit growers depended almost entirely on the weather. Good growing weather—no late frosts—meant a good fruit crop as a rule. Of course insect pests had to be considered. And the orchardist had to pay attention to his markets. But Jack Frost used to take a whale of a lot of profit out of fruit growing."

"Well, we haven't conquered frost, of course. But we have learned to take advantage of it. Nowadays, the big practical orchardists let the frost come—but they prepare for the freeze with oil burners and frost warnings. A battery of heaters in the orchard is generally enough to get Jack Frost down and hogtie him."

"That's all very well," I said, "but how do you know when to expect a visit?"

"That's where the Weather Bureau steps in," the Weather Man explained. "Last winter, in one very important fruit-growing district, weather observers made 91 distinct low-temperature forecasts. Ninety per cent. of these forecasts were correct to within one degree. Ninety-seven per cent. of them were right to within two degrees. When temperatures are expected to fall as low as 32 degrees in any district during the night a forecast is made and spread widely through that district. This forecast contains a definite statement, sometimes, to tenths of a degree, as to just how low the temperature is expected to fall. Eight specially trained Weather Bureau men are assigned to frost work. Their forecasts are amazingly accurate."

Real Work to be Done.

THE talk then goes on to discuss methods of combating frosts in the fruit districts.

It will be seen that this method of address is much easier to listen to than a straight lecture, and will hold the attention and interests of listeners.

Very encouraging reports have been received by the company with regard to work already accomplished in the direction of assisting primary producers, and as this branch of broadcasting represents a very real service to the country, it is intended to amplify and extend it as far as is practicable, the organising of Primary Productions Committees marking an important step in this direction.

Science Applied to the Farm.

ON Thursday, July 25, Dr. Chilton, speaking from 3YA, outlined the company's objective in relation to the man on the land.

"You are probably aware that the Radio Broadcasting Company is desirous of making its service as beneficial as possible to all classes of people. For this purpose they have established what they call public relations in connection with which committees have been set up at the main broadcasting stations for the purpose of advertising the company as to the matter to be broadcast. For example, they have committees connected with the churches consisting of representatives of the more important churches. These committees are purely voluntary, but are found to be very useful in suggesting to the company which services should be broadcast from time to time. Similarly, there are musical and dramatic committees, and others concerned with the children's session."

"In addition to this, the company is desirous of extending its service to all those engaged in any way in agricultural pursuits, and for this purpose a conference was held on July 2, at which there were present representatives of the main bodies concerned with agriculture, including Mr. John Deans and Mr. R. E. Alexander, of the Can-

KING IN RADIO

"King" all Electric Six and Seven-Valve Neutrodyne Receivers.

Just switch on to the home electric supply and this wonderful Electric Set, full of power and beauty of performance, will bring to every listener a new conception of what radio service and satisfaction mean.

Model H £41/7/6

Model J £47/5/6

Demonstration at any time.

CALL AND INSPECT.

F.J.W. FEAR & CO. THE RADIO PEOPLE

63 WILLIS STREET, WELLINGTON.

'Phone 41-446.