

The New Zealand Radio Record

(Incorporating the "Canterbury Radio Journal.")

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EXPANSION OF RADIO.

WITH the imminent introduction of Dinner Sessions at each of the four YA stations, a milestone is established in New Zealand radio. This will give a definite addition to the radio programmes, which will do much to increase their popularity in both city and country circles. Supplementary to that enterprise, the Radio Broadcasting Company is embarking upon the provision of a special service for rural listeners. Already there has been established in Christchurch a Primary Productions Committee, charged with the duty of organising this service. That committee will be duplicated in due course by similar committees in other centres, preparatory to thoroughly organising the diffusion of available information for agricultural and pastoral listeners, as provided by existing sources of supply.

THESE two major developments, covering the special needs of both city and country listeners, will initiate a progressive move on the part of dealers. Dealers in country towns in particular will, we think, be able to institute a special campaign for bringing under the notice of farmers in their areas, not only the musical and entertainment value of radio, but its definite commercial value in the provision of such services as weather reports, and more especially the special series of lectures to be given regularly later from all stations. This organisation of agricultural information is calculated to financially benefit every farmer in the Dominion by enabling him to increase his own individual production by the adaptation of scientific information and practical procedure developed by others, and thus contribute to national prosperity. We feel sure that this service will in itself prove a strong selling point for radio, if properly exploited by country dealers in contact with the farming community.

THESE progressive moves by the Company and the additional enthusiasm directed to selling radio by dealers, prompt inquiry as to whether the third party in the radio triumvirate—the Post and Telegraph Department—can do anything to assist the further expansion of radio. It was indicated at the recent radio dinner that there was one special direction in which the dealers considered the Department could render assistance. This was by a variation from the present hard and fast rule governing the issue of licenses to end definitely as on March 31 each year. It was represented that the more liquid provision of licenses on a point to point basis would contribute definitely to ease in the selling of radio and a greater gross revenue. It is proved each year that a considerable volume of revenue is lost by the interregnum which occurs after March 31. While listeners last year responded remarkably to the appeal to renew promptly, and thus permit the maintenance of the radio service on an uninterrupted standard of performance, it yet cannot be denied that many payments lapsed that should not have lapsed, and in many cases, we imagine, when renewal was ultimately made by listeners at a later period, they escaped with smaller payments than they were entitled to pay, having regard to the continuity of service they had enjoyed.

ANOTHER point in which departmental assistance can be intensified is, we think, that of the unlicensed listener. The opinion is generally held amongst those who give this matter much thought that the number of radio pirates in the Dominion is greater than it should be. In some cases this act of piracy is committed thoughtlessly. We have heard of cases in an important provincial town where respectable and reputable citizens failed to appreciate that they should pay for the radio service because their particular town did not possess a station. They considered it quite right that residents in Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin should be licensed, but as their own particular town did not possess a station, why should they pay? The weakness of this reasoning is so palpable that it needs only to be mentioned for the fallacy to be exposed. As a matter of fact, the distance listener to the YA stations is the one who more than any other should pay, because it is to give him the service that the power—which involves cost—is put behind the stations concerned. In the cases reported to us, this phase had only to be pointed out for a license to be taken out; but the point is that this particular gentleman and others with him had been operating radio sets with aerials in full view of the public for over twelve months without inquiry having been made as to whether a license was held or not. It is also within our knowledge that one of the heaviest buyers of a certain class of radio set recently introduced on this market is in a provincial town in a province enjoying the lowest number of licenses. This fact certainly carries the inference that, if a provincial town can supply a volume of trade, fully comparable with that of the major cities, its number of licenses should be greater than it is.

THE revenue being drawn by the Post and Telegraph Department from its association with the radio service is now considerable, although we are aware that it is claimed by the Department that even so this branch is not profitable. The question to our mind, however, is, Would it not be profitable if steps were taken to ensure registration of radio users with 100 per cent. efficiency? The general standard of efficiency maintained by the Post and Telegraph Department in those business activities which are essentially its own is so great that we have no doubt that if the Post and Telegraph Department were entrusted with the conduct of radio as a definite branch—which is not a course which we think desirable for other reasons, but we make this supposition to illustrate our point—then we imagine that little leakage of revenue would be permitted. No less a standard of efficiency should obtain under the present circumstances. We are hopeful that now that the future of radio is so bright, by reason of the expanding service being provided by all stations, the Department will see its way to meet the radio trade by more elasticity in the matter of the license term, and more especially embark upon a strong campaign for the stopping of that big leak in radio which is affecting the service rendered to every existing licensee. Further expansion and further enterprise on the part of the radio service depends upon revenue. If that revenue is provided, then all contributories will benefit.

THE stand taken by the Wellington Magistrate last week in imposing a penalty of £10 on an individual who operated a set while unlicensed marks an encouraging appreciation of the weight of this offence. Only too frequently in the past it has happened that when the P. and T. officers have done their duty and brought offenders to book, Magistrates have imposed fines that were woefully inadequate. The standard set in this case should encourage the Department to prosecute its cause with rigour and undoubtedly will have the effect of impressing upon others who may be unlicensed the necessity of immediate registration.

Old-Time Dance Programme

Special Attraction Arranged for 3YA

A PROGRAMME which will stir the reminiscences of the older generations has been arranged by 3YA for Saturday, September 14. It will take the form of an old time dance evening, when those who once tripped it gaily to a time and rhythm unknown to dancers of the present day, will be able to listen in to schottisches, Alberts, barn dances, mazurkas, lancers, waltzes and quadrilles and military two-steps, once dear to the heart of lovers of the light fantastic. It is difficult to secure the instrumentalists to play a dance programme of the old style, but 3YA has been able to engage the Williams Orchestra for this evening and a rare old treat is in store.