

The New Zealand Radio Record

(Incorporating the "Canterbury Radio Journal.")

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WELLINGTON, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1929.

OPENING OF 4YA.

ELSEWHERE in this issue a full account is given of the opening of 4YA, Dunedin, which took place on the evening of October 16. This station is conveniently situated on an upper floor of a modern newspaper building in Dunedin, and, by reason of its arrangements, takes rank as the most efficient and compact unit of the four stations now operating in the Dominion. Advantage has been taken of experience gained in the other stations, and elsewhere in the world, to arrange all details of studio and transmission apparatus on the best lines, and it is felt that a creditably high standard in lay-out and resulting performance has been attained. Listeners in the northern part of New Zealand who enjoyed the opening night's concert report that transmission from the new-comer is admirable; that strength is more than up to expectations, and that in the Wellington area, at any rate, the volume as received was greater than that from 3YA, Christchurch. The quality of transmission on the opening night was excellent, and static alone prevented the evening's reception taking rank as practical perfection.

THE speeches delivered were worthy of the occasion. It was impossible for the Postmaster-General, the Hon. J. B. Donald, to visit Dunedin, but, speaking from his office in Wellington, he delivered his address. His voice was transmitted over the wires of the Post and Telegraph Department to Dunedin, and there rebroadcast by 4YA. From that rebroadcast they were relayed back again to Christchurch, and there again transmitted by 3YA. Advantage was taken of this method of transmission to explain to listeners the procedure of conveying the Postmaster-General's voice from Wellington to Dunedin, and over the air to listeners. This phase of the speech was interesting from its indication of the technical skill involved in the transmission of voice by wire over such distances.

DEALING specifically with radio, the Postmaster-General took the opportunity to point out the short period in which radio had been in effective operation. Although markedly a new-comer to modern civilisation, radio has leapt into the forefront as a requisite of every-

day life, and within a decade from its practical commercialisation takes rank as an essential. New Zealand, he pointed out, has not lagged behind the rest of the world in this field, and with the rapid approach of licenses to the 50,000-mark, pride may be felt in the standard attained. It was pointed out that co-operation between the Radio Broadcasting Company and the Post and Telegraph Department over recent months has resulted in a number of concerts of definite merit being given from provincial centres to listeners. These performances have been made possible by the increased technical efficiency of the Post and Telegraph Department's apparatus. This field is being expanded, and the Postmaster-General indicated that it is hoped other centres will speedily be linked by improved land-lines to such a degree as to permit of the field being widened still further.

ON this point it is timely to refer to the scheme advanced by the Radio Broadcasting Company some time back for the provision of relay stations in selected provincial centres. That scheme was the result of careful thought and calculation, and showed that the Broadcasting Company was prepared, with the necessary business revision of financial arrangements, to find the capital required for the provision of these extra stations, and to expand its services in the direction of establishing a more complete network of stations throughout the Dominion to serve a wide circle of listeners. Owing to the peculiar geographical configuration of New Zealand and of the area served by the existing radio stations, much of the area covered is unprofitable, as the sound is disseminated over water barren of population. To reach those large provincial areas, which offer the best undeveloped market for radio, the provision of land-lines and local relay stations is necessary. It would appear that the Post and Telegraph Department is steadily equipping itself to provide the necessary network of efficient land-lines capable of serving a broadcasting chain. This is necessarily a work of considerable magnitude, and time must be given for its completion. On the assurance of the Postmaster-General, it can be taken that due progress is being made in this direction, and that revives the hope, that, when the time is ripe, the mature scheme placed on record earlier by the Broadcasting Company will be adapted and developed to meet the needs of the situation as it may then exist. That scheme would have the effect of placing in a number of provincial areas the means of enjoying the programmes of the main centres. Further, it would permit of their local talent being developed and made available to city audiences, thus at one sweep widening the reservoir of talent available for broadcasting purposes.

COMPLETION of the Dunedin station fulfills the original obligations entered into by the Broadcasting Company with the Government. That scheme has attained a high degree of efficiency; but, in view of the expanding desire of the public for the benefits of radio, it is necessary to envisage further developments. In view of the political and financial condition of the country, the time may not be opportune for prosecution of this further effort. It is, however, due to listeners and the Company to place on record the fact that a scheme has been submitted for consideration on a basis which, given the necessary adjustments, the Company is prepared to follow to finality.

THE hope was expressed by the Postmaster-General in his remarks that, with the attainment of 50,000 licensed listeners, it might be possible to adjust the license fee in a downward direction. It is questionable in our mind whether, having regard to the need of expanding the service by providing provincial stations, this would be desirable. It might be preferable to maintain the license fee on its existing level, and devote the revenue so derived to expanding the service in the direction indicated. Cheapness to a point is certainly desirable as conducing to the popularity of radio; but we do not imagine that the few shillings that would be saved to listeners by an adjusted fee would popularise the service to a greater degree than would the provision of increased facilities and an extended service. We are inclined to think that listeners would prefer to continue paying 30s. and secure longer hours of operation and more provincial relay stations, rather than have the few shillings that might be saved by a reduction. This is essentially a matter for close computation; but our present view is that the radio listener is not so hard pushed as to make the saving of so small a sum desirable. He would, we think, prefer to see the money put into better national equipment in the shape of more relay stations, longer hours of operation, and the importation, when practicable, of outstanding artistic talent.

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HE KNOWS!

"He that knows, and knows that he knows, is a wise man; follow ye him!" Mr. Sidney Hall, dentist, Levin, knows that Sydal is good for keeping the hands soft and free from cracks, chaps and roughness. "I find it most beneficial and have used it for 25 years," he writes. Good example to follow.