

## Beam Wireless

### Proof of Value

THE value of Beam wireless in maintaining communication was strikingly exemplified in the past week by the occurrences following on the large scale break in the Atlantic cables by the severe earthquake experienced near the coast of Newfoundland. This shock had the unexpected result of breaking some 13 cables of the number which stretch across the Atlantic Ocean. Their repair will necessarily take some time, and will cost upwards of £100,000. Under ordinary conditions the loss of 13 cables would have imposed a very severe congestion upon the remaining number, and have held up business and private communications between America and Europe very considerably. Fortunately the Beam service was available, and proved itself fully able to meet all demands, avoiding any congestion. So satisfactory and remarkable was this service that comment was made upon it in the British House of Commons. The British Postmaster-General, in a subsequent debate on broadcasting matters and wireless communication methods, stated that the Trans-Atlantic wireless telephone service was steadily progressing. Very shortly it was proposed to introduce another long-wave and another short-wave channel of communication, which would make altogether five channels in operation from the Rugby wireless telephone station. The volume of business thus being transacted was providing a very satisfactory revenue, and this would lead to a reconsideration of the fees in the near future.

Experiments in the way of telephonic communication between Australia and London have been in operation for some time past, and have reached a high degree of efficiency. The Beam service between Australia and London is also operating at full pressure, and has had a marked effect in reducing the cost of communication between the Antipodes and the heart of the Empire. The volume of traffic being secured by the Beam service is remarkable, as is also its service in facilitating communication and permitting more extensive and ready business negotiations than has hitherto been possible. So far New Zealand has not benefited by the Beam service, except in a very minor degree. That position is not likely to endure without protest very much longer. Complications of course exist in connection with the cable service, but in view of the rapid advances being made in other parts of the world by the Beam service, and their effects in facilitating communication, a demand is likely to spring up before very long for an extension of the facility to New Zealand.

ON the shelf of every Radio Listener should be found the

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## Safeguarding Rights of Listeners

### Is Advertising Popular in America?

AN American paper, the "Oakland Tribune," recently conducted a questionnaire, with the object of ascertaining the views of radio listeners on a number of subjects. Circulars were sent to 35,000 individuals by the Commonwealth Club of California. The recipients comprised housewives, business men, shop workers, editors, and clubmen. The response totalled 6000, and these have been summarised by the journal concerned with rather interesting results. Hundreds of listeners professed saturation with jazz. Hundreds more evinced a decided preference for male singers, as compared with the

car transfers, and a tax on sports and amusement gate receipts.

These suggestions are again of interest in New Zealand, listeners as showing the feeling of listeners that some alternative should be devised to the radio service being absolutely dependent upon revenue derived from advertising service for its maintenance. Our own feeling on this matter is that the interests of listeners are of paramount importance in the radio service, and that being so, that means should be adopted for financing a service which is best calculated to preserve unimpaired those in-



MRS. LEONARD CRONIN  
Soprano at IYA.

—S. P. Andrew, photo.



MR. L. J. CRONIN  
Who gives humorous talks at IYA.

—S. P. Andrew, photo.

feminine voice. Others urged a strong censorship in the programmes. A summary of the pet objections recorded by listeners is of decided interest to New Zealanders. The paper says: "Pet peeves of those who tune in each day are many and varied. They include complaints as to too many stations, mediocre programmes, obscenity and smut, women announcers, too much advertising, high cost of sets, and too much preaching."

Some of the objections listed above will, we think, come as a surprise to New Zealand listeners. A desire was expressed for more educational talks, radio talks, classical and semi-classical music, less jazz, and the elimination of talking and tiresome announcing. Seven out of ten adults confessed that they were getting a thrill out of the children's hour.

One of the questions submitted to listeners was how an ideal radio service could be best financed without advertising, which, as listeners know, is the mainspring of the American radio service. The suggestions made included a tax on radio manufacturers or on set owners, a Government subsidy, the provision of radio clubs, slot machine sets, voluntary contributions, philanthropical subsidies, tax on phone bills, railroad tickets or street-

interests. There are three major ways by which a radio service can be economically financed: First, by revenue derived from the listeners themselves; secondly, by revenue derived from the sale of advertising over the air; thirdly, by a Government subsidy. If the methods of finance were to include either the provision of revenue from the sale of advertising time or a Government subsidy, then immediately a factor would be introduced which would establish conflict with the interests of listeners. The firm paying for advertising time would naturally expect an effective quid pro quo for its cash payment. Those interests would, therefore, immediately conflict with those of the listener. The owners of the broadcasting station deriving revenue from advertising would necessarily have to model their policy to accord, in greater or less degree, with the wishes of the advertiser. In that conflict the interests of the listener would necessarily take second place. Similarly, if a broadcasting service were to be maintained in whole or part by Government subsidy, then the authorities dispensing that subsidy would necessarily exercise an influence upon the character of the service given to listeners. We therefore come back to the point that the best means of pro-

tecting the interests of listeners is for the listener to be directly responsible for the revenue side of the radio service. Under those conditions those operating the service will necessarily mould the whole quality and type of the programme and the conduct of the stations, along lines calculated to appeal to the listeners themselves, and to induce the greatest possible number of listeners to patronise the service. Thus the fullest measure of independence and satisfactory service seems to be assured by the system prevailing in New Zealand, where those paying for the service are the listeners, and they in their numbers really dictate the character of the service provided; for it is only as a service is provided calculated to appeal to the greatest possible number of listeners for the greatest possible length of time that satisfaction will be given and good programmes maintained.

AS bearing on the foregoing and the suggestion that powerful advertisers necessarily, in their own interests, seek to exercise pressure upon radio programmes, we note from a recent issue of "Editor and Publisher" that a conference was recently held in America between thirty advertising managers who use radio advertising. Their complaint was that, when they purchased a network of radio stations, they sometimes found they were unable to secure complete coverage, because some local station included in the chain was unable to "deliver the goods" in connection with a national advertising campaign, by reason of having to switch the time to "a local advertiser with a pull." One of the advertising managers said: "There is too much politics and too little science in the buying of radio time. We are going to request that the national chains weld their stations into a compact national advertising medium, which will be delivered according to the terms of the contract, just as printed advertising is delivered. When this is done we can merchandise our programmes in advance and carry them out on schedule." This is admirable from the point of view of the advertiser who is paying the price, and to it no exception can be taken as a means of self-defence. We quote the passage, however, to emphasise the point that once a radio service relies upon advertising money for its support, then the advertiser calls the tune, and not the public.

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