

The Broadcasting Service in New Zealand—1924 to 1934

IN two different corners of the earth have sprung up broadcasting organisations that are very similar in their essentials. The British Broadcasting Corporation began life as a private company—the British Broadcasting Company—and the New Zealand Broadcasting Board was originally a private concern and known as the New Zealand Radio Broadcasting Company. Both have the same ideals—the using of wireless for the entertainment, enlightenment and education of the listening public; and both concerns are equally determined to keep their programmes clear of commercialism.

It was in the early twenties that New Zealand first came to realise the value of broadcasting, and one of the first men to judge the important part it was likely to play was Mr. A. R. Harris, a well-known Christchurch

business man and New Zealand representative of an electrical firm which has played a big part in the progress of wireless. Another man who early saw the possibilities of this new medium was Mr. William Goodfellow, one of the leading figures in New Zealand's dairying industry. In 1924 he put to Mr. Harris a scheme for the erecting of a small radio station at Hamilton to supply the dairy farmers in the vicinity with a musical programme.

Mr. Harris went into the scheme and presented a full report to the Government, with the request for permission to build a small station in Hamilton. A reply was received from the Post and Telegraph Department pointing out that it could not see its way clear to grant provincial broadcasting rights, as it was desired to develop a wireless service over the whole country and controlled by one company. Another syndicate appeared in the field, and for some time New Zealand's broadcasting service was in the melting pot. Mr. Goodfellow was anxious to go ahead with his original scheme, but he was eventually persuaded to interest himself in a scheme for a Dominion-wide service.

Mr. Goodfellow had already offered to erect a suitable station in Auckland, and the Government suggested that, if he would consent to build a similar station in the South Island, it would deal in future with him and with Mr. Harris. A company was formed within 30 days of the signing of this agreement with the

Government, and one of its first steps was to enter into negotiations for the purchase of the small stations that were then in existence in several cities. Little trouble was experi-



The members of the New Zealand Broadcasting Board, which was set up in December, 1931, to control the national broadcasting service: (from left to right) Mr. E. C. Hanas (general manager), Mr. H. D. Vickery (chairman), Mr. L. R. C. Macfarlane and Mr. G. R. Hutchinson. Mr. Macfarlane, who represents the southern listeners' interests, returned last week from a visit to England.

enced in Christchurch and Dunedin, but Auckland and Wellington traders held out for the fullest possible prices.

The Auckland and Christchurch stations were eventually put on the air and a new era of broadcasting in New Zealand had begun. The company was also operating more or less obsolete plants in Wellington and Dunedin, and giving the public as good a service as the apparatus would permit. However, as soon as the Auckland station was opened, and before Christchurch was on the air, arrangements were set in train for the building of a big station in Wellington. Under its agreement the Broadcasting Company was required to build a station of not less than a half-kilowatt, but it decided on the erection of a station with 10 times that power. And so, in 1927, 2YA came into existence—the largest and most powerful station in the Southern Hemisphere—and costing many thousands of pounds.

When the Radio Broadcasting Company was formed a five-year contract with the Government was entered upon. By December, 1931, the company had reached the end of its charter. "The Broadcasting Company has now reached the end of the charter granted it by the Government, and it has pleasure in

