

Radio Enters Battle Against Examination Bogey

Matriculation Lectures From 2YA Drew Forth Some Interesting Comments

There's no such thing at the moment as the "untroubled brow of youth." Seventeen-year-olds are wearing as many furrows above the eyes as Prime Ministers, and every reference library has its quota of youthful seekers after knowledge. No, this state of affairs has nothing whatever to do with the general economic conditions of 1934, for it is an annual occurrence, growing in intensity till the first week in December when the load is suddenly lightened—for better or for worse. It all has to do with that bogey of school life—the matriculation examination, which starts in a few days.

This year the New Zealand Broadcasting Board threw in its lot with the prospective candidates and organised a series of special broadcasts for matriculation students. The lectures were given by fully-qualified men from 2YA, Wellington, and rebroadcast by the other national stations. There were eight broadcasts all told—two in each of four subjects—English, history, geography and mathematics.

That the broadcasts were of definite value was evidenced by the results of questions that the headmaster of Wellington College (Mr. W. A. Armour) put to the boys in his matriculation forms. "Sixty-four of the boys who are sitting the examination listened in," said Mr. Armour to a "Radio Record" representative. "I asked them how many had actually enjoyed the whole series of broadcasts. Eleven said that they had—the others, while they admitted to listening in to the whole series and getting a great deal of useful advice from the talks, looked on them as rather a necessary evil. When I questioned them as to whether they had derived actual benefit from the broadcasts sixty-three, out of the sixty-four said that they had. It may be interesting to look at the actual opinions on each subject.

"From the history broadcasts 59 of the boys admit having benefited. The work was well covered, and the lectures were concise and clear. The only complaint seemed to be that there was scarcely enough time for the listeners to take the notes down.

"Comparatively few of the matriculation students at Wellington College are sitting the geography examination this year, so that only 16 listened in to the lectures on this subject. One lad said that he had not been particularly impressed with the talks, as the subject matter was all to be found in one of the text books he was using. Another complaint was that the lectures were not generalised enough, but I think most of the boys rather misunderstood the purpose of the broadcasts. They wanted the talks to cover more ground—they wanted new and strange facts—in other words, they probably wanted to be entertained to some degree. Actually the geography lectures were well handled and the ground was covered in a useful manner. They were principally intended to give assistance in preparing for the examination. From the remarks of the boys it would appear that the subject had been well taught in the classroom and that the principal statements

made by the lecturer had already been impressed on the pupils.

"All but six of the listeners to the English broadcasts were most enthusiastic about this series. The boys considered that the lectures were systematic, and some of them considered them the best of the series. The whole subject was covered and ample time was given to take down the notes. The only piece of real criticism was from a boy who said that the lectures were too general, that not enough actual examination 'tips' were given. Of course, there are some candidates who prefer to go into an examination room armed with a series of 'tips' rather than with any real knowledge.

"About 20 boys said they were benefited by the mathematics lectures. The complaint seemed to be that the lecturer talked a little too fast when giving the examples, but the methods suggested by him for setting out the papers were considered most helpful. The general comments on the series were that the lectures should be a little longer than half an hour, or, as an alternative, there should be more in each series. The inclusion of French, Latin and the sciences would also be a good move."

The headmistress of the Wellington East Girls' College (Miss A. M. Batham) said that the broadcast lectures had been of direct benefit to the girls in her school who had listened in. A new voice telling them essential facts had had the effect of giving them confidence and impressing on them more vividly certain points that they had perhaps not gathered in ordinary class routine.

"We have had many interesting comments on the broadcasts," said the general manager of the New Zealand Broadcasting Board (Mr. E. C. Hands), "and the results have been sufficiently encouraging for us to consider making the matriculation lectures a regular annual feature. We have been pleased to have the comments of various headmasters and mistresses, and their advice will certainly be useful in drawing up future broadcasts of this nature."

VILLAGERS feel that their lanes are part and parcel of their own homes, and to have them made unusable except by strangers dashing through in cars and motor-cycles is a real deprivation.—Mrs. Geoffrey Bosanquet.

RADIO EQUIPMENT FOR AEROPLANES

Pioneering Work by Otago Aero Club

(Special to the "Radio Record.")

The Otago Aero Club aspires to be the pioneer in New Zealand in the matter of equipping its planes and the aerodrome at Taieri with radio. With the assistance of three experienced experimenters, the club has already commenced testing on the ultra short-wave of 5 metres, and on a recent evening two-way communication between a plane flying round the Taieri plains and the ground station at the air port was established and maintained.

THERE are difficulties, however, that will have to be overcome before the system will work efficiently under all conditions. It has been found that 5-metre work successfully overcomes ignition and plane noises, but unfortunately such short waves can only be effective within visual range, as, broadly speaking, they must obey the laws of light. The question of power presents another difficulty that is engaging the attention of the radio men, who hope by careful study and thorough experiment to find the solutions of their problems eventually.

Tests will show what power will be necessary to give signal strength that will be sufficient to override any electrical disturbances caused by the plane itself. It is desired to equip the planes with apparatus that will communicate with and receive messages from the ground station on flights such as might be taken to Timaru, Invercargill, or Pembroke. The tests in the meantime are interesting, although still in the infant stage. The transmitting and receiving apparatus used on the plane is housed in the one container, which measures about seven inches square, while the aerial erected is some 43 inches long. At the ground station the aerial is suspended between a chair and a fence, which gives an approximate idea of its height from the pathway. Speech from the plane is well received, and at times the phones can be laid on a table, and the words heard several feet away. A recent flight lasted for twenty-five minutes, during which time splendid communication was maintained between the air and the ground. The power used at present is about one watt.

The Otago district offers a big obstacle to ultra short-wave work on account of its hilly nature. Once a hill is placed between the ground station and the cruising plane radio communication is automatically cut off, so that it has yet to be discovered what frequency will give the best results over a wide expanse of hilly country. It is not difficult to imagine the advantage to flying radio will be when the scheme is operating satisfactorily. It is understood that the club will not be handicapped by lack of funds to provide complete equipment when it is time to buy.