

"Constant Criticism of The Broadcasting Board"

Mr. L. R. C. Macfarlane Discusses Attitude of Press in New Zealand.

"Does the Press appreciate broadcasting problems and policies?" was the title of an address given at a Christchurch Businessmen's Club last week by Mr. L. R. C. Macfarlane, of Culverden, the South Island member of the New Zealand Broadcasting Board. Mr. Macfarlane defended the policy and actions of the Broadcasting Board, and briefly criticised the attitude of the newspapers. He concluded by saying he had been very kind to the Press. The New Zealand Press, he added, called for a lot of criticism, and he had said very little.

"It is quite certain," said Mr. Macfarlane, "that the Press does appreciate broadcasting problems, but it does not always say so. It is rather dangerous to tackle the Press, because, like a woman, it always has the last word, but the Press is obviously up against difficulties in the shape of new inventions. In the dull old days we felt it necessary to buy two newspapers a day, but that is not so to-day. I do not say that the controllers of broadcasting feel themselves opposed to the Press. There is definitely a place for the written and a place for the spoken word, but the Broadcasting Board can look after the latter, and I am sure the newspapers will look after their own business with the written word." Mr. Macfarlane added that the two services could work in harmony. Healthy criticism was necessary and desirable, but critics should be certain of their facts.

Mr. Macfarlane said that members of the Broadcasting Board were trustees for the listeners. They had to run a service which must first of all be financially sound. The board could have been extravagant and could have tried to give the people everything they wanted in the first few years, but the guiding policy had been based on sound finance. At the same time, however, the board had been progressive and had grappled with the problem of diversified interests in a determined manner. This policy had been carried out scientifically, and wide use had been made of the advice of experts who had travelled throughout the Dominion and examined local problems from the North Cape to Bluff. It should be remembered that broadcasting was only in its infancy and that New Zealand, as far as possible, had moved parallel with developments overseas. The Dominion's own difficulties, however, could be solved only by special study.

The real test of the success of the board's work, said Mr. Macfarlane, lay in the "gate"—the cash returns. There could not be much wrong when licenses were increasing as they had done in the last two years, and when the board expected an increase of at least 20 per cent. during the present year. Nearly every second house in New Zealand possessed some sort of set.

The board had been doing all it could to cope with the problem of radio interference. The Government had set up a radio interference com-

mittee, which it was hoped would be able to effect necessary adjustments, but the difficulty could not be solved without legislation giving the right of entry to private houses. The country did not want anything so drastic, but the board was confident that the prob-

Eleven Orchestras Employed by B.B.C.

The B.B.C. has now formed a new permanent orchestra which is to be used for variety programmes and revues. It is expected that this combination, which, it should be pointed out, is quite distinct from the new Empire Orchestra, will be heard in the Empire programmes shortly. From the date of its introduction to listeners, this orchestra will take over much of the work at present performed by the B.B.C. Theatre Orchestra, which will thus be released for more concert work.

At the end of the year, therefore, the B.B.C. will have available the following permanent combinations: The B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra (119 players); The B.B.C. Theatre Orchestra; The Wireless Military Band; The B.B.C. Dance Orchestra; The Variety Orchestra; The B.B.C. Empire Orchestra.

In addition, permanent orchestras are employed at the Regional studios in Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh, Cardiff, and Belfast.

lem would dissolve as people realised that radio was essential and that certain regulations were desirable.

The encouragement of local talent, educative talks and general culture, humour, the arrangement of programmes and controversy over the air were all touched upon during the talk, and it was emphasised time and again that it was the intention of the board to give the best possible service while

FIFTY YEARS ON THE STAGE

Marie Tempest, England's Greatest Comedienne

Miss Marie Tempest, probably the most famous of English actresses, celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of her first London stage appearance shortly. It is forty-seven years since she played the leading part in "Dorothy" at the Adelphi—this year she came back to the Adelphi in another role, still the leading one. Below is reprinted a short essay on Miss Tempest by James Agate.

ANY estimate of Miss Tempest's genius must be based on her essential quality as an actress, with which is bound up the power to resist the passing of the years and the changing of fashions. An actress who has been the rage of London for a twelve-month or less may not have abiding genius but only a flash-in-the-pan talent. The delightful lady we celebrate here has been a great artist for as long as all of us can remember. At the present time she is playing the leading part at the Lyric, and at this moment is on the stage of the very theatre at which she was playing leading-lady forty-five years ago—a record which no other living English actress can begin to approach. The play was the comic opera, "Dorothy," and for some time after this Miss Tempest appeared almost entirely in opera, singing the leading roles of Carmen, Manon, and Mignon.

In 1899 Miss Tempest severed her connection with musical plays, I think because the management wanted her to appear with one knickerbocker turned up! Mary—as her friends call her—thought this was "infra dig," and the result was one of the biggest storms in a teacup that can ever have occurred. The loss to the musical stage was the legitimate theatre's immediate gain, for Miss Tempest straightway proceeded to triumph as Nell Gwynne, as Peg Woffington, as Becky Sharp, and as Polly Eccles. And I have to say that any actress who can succeed in those four parts must be a comedienne of the very first class.

In watching Miss Tempest play you must all have sensed that she possesses a quality which has almost vanished from the English stage—the quality of breeding. This quality is as hard to define as it is easy to perceive. No sensitive person has ever failed to remark it, though none has ever been able to say exactly what it is. Instinctively you know quality in a racehorse, a piece of jewellery, and in what used to be called a fine lady. It is the royalty of art, and in the art of the theatre its last repository is Marie Tempest.

keeping its finances sound. As the people became more educated to broadcasting the service would improve, and when they demanded some innovation they would find the board ready to give it. Mr. Macfarlane thought the quoting of facts the best reply to the constant criticism which had been levelled against the board.