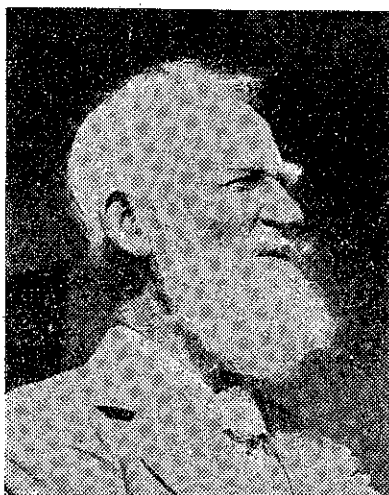




ENGLISH VISITORS TO NEW ZEALAND SHORES.—Here are three well-known personalities who have appeared before New Zealand microphones during 1934. On the left is Captain Taprell Dorling, who is better known as the author, "Taffrail." Captain Dorling was in the Dominion in the autumn, gathering material for a new book. In the centre is George Bernard Shaw, the man who "gave away about £100,000 of free copy to New Zealand newspapers" during his stay. He spoke from 2YA, which was linked with the other national stations. Mr. Malcolm MacDonald (right) is a son of the Prime Minister of Great Britain. He spoke over the national chain last week.

Broadcasting Progress

the accompanying notes, on some occasions, they have maintained an excellently high standard throughout the year.

In the field of grand opera the policy inaugurated last year has been continued with great success. Nearly every Sunday night, from one of the four main stations, a complete recorded version of one of the world's masterpieces of grand opera can be heard; in this way listeners have had presented to them operas by Verdi, Bizet, Mascagni, Puccini and Wagner; a musical treat that has been much appreciated. An excellent feature, too, has been the presentation of abridged versions of some operas, including Strauss's "Die Fledermaus," and several others which were previously practically unknown to listeners.

The Savoyards, too, have been well catered for; nearly every week there has been "An Hour with Gilbert and Sullivan" on the air from either the main station or the auxiliary in each centre, and these presentations, specially recorded with the Savoy cast, have brought the real "G. and S." atmosphere to listeners, who have the opportunity of seeing and hearing the "real thing" all too seldom.

There have, as usual, been relays from various musical society concerts in all centres throughout the year, and these have proved as popular as in the past. Concerts by musical societies in this country reach a very high standard in many cases, and some outstanding performances have been relayed.

In the field of radio drama some advance has been made, though the real enthusiast in this direction will hardly agree that anything like the right proportion of radio drama is included in the programmes as yet. One of the outstanding radio shows of the year was the relay of an open-air performance of "As You Like It," presented in Auckland by the British Drama League, and produced by Mr. J. M. Clark. In England, Shakespeare has been proved to be the most popular radio playwright, and it is a disappointment to many that more of his plays are not produced in this country. Several of the plays presented showed signs of insufficient rehearsal, and some were definitely not worthy of a place on the programme,

but the proportion of those worth hearing has certainly increased. New Zealand is extremely rich in amateur actors and producers of real talent, and with the performers available it should be possible to produce any type of play successfully. An encouraging feature of the radio plays of the year was that several of them were purely local work, including a three-act drama by Mr. F. M. Renner, of Wellington, which was performed with great success by a good cast, and several one-act "thrillers" by local writers, some of which were worth hearing, while others were not so successful. A good feature was the production of Sheridan's "The School for Scandal" in Wellington, relayed to the southern national stations. The adaptations and production of this play was done by Mr. Victor S. Lloyd, who is well known to listeners to 2YA for his excellent radio productions. Another notable performance was that of the medieval morality play "Everyman" from 3YA last week. Produced by Miss Marjorie Bassett, with an outstanding cast, this was a most interesting production.

The drama side of the entertainment has also been assisted by the B.B.C. recorded programmes which have been obtained from time to time. These have all been well received, the most popular probably being "Sir Christopher Wren," which has been revived many times since it was first broadcast. Of the new series which are at present being broadcast, those that have been heard so far have all attracted large numbers of listeners, "Flags on the Matterhorn" being an especially fine programme. Another impressive B.B.C. programme is to be heard within a week—"We Shall Remember Them," a programme in memory of those who fell in the Great War. Writings and music specially selected from the works of the greatest English poets, authors and composers, spoken and played by the best artists obtainable, make this finely-conceived programme a thing to be remembered.

Listeners, of course, are not always satisfied with the programmes—it would be funny if they were—but the great majority of intelligent license-holders recognise that an excellent service is being given them, and gladly give praise to the board for what has been done, at the same time applauding the decision that, to avoid anything like a stereotyped form of programmes, the schematic programme plan is to be revised early in the New Year. Listeners, remembering the programmes they have heard during 1934, will be able to look forward to even better entertainment in 1935.