

A Newsletter from London

(From Our Special Correspondent.)

London, Nov. 14, 1934.

Famous Broadcaster.

THE King, the world's most famous broadcaster, will speak as the head of an Empire-wide family party on Christmas Day. To his Majesty this heart-to-heart talk with his peoples in all lands is the most important event of the year. He likes to be alone at the microphone. He retires into a secretary's room at Sandringham, and there addresses the microphone quietly and affectionately. Members of the Royal Family, in the great hall, hear the message just as millions of the King's subjects do—by radio.

Actually, the exigencies of broadcasting make it necessary for one B.B.C. official to be close at hand. He is Mr. Gerald Cock, the B.B.C. director of outside broadcasting, personally responsible for the biggest juggling feat of radio in history—this year's Christmas Empire hook-up. Three years ago there was a trace of nervousness in his Majesty's manner as he approached the microphone. Now he is perfectly confident. Among broadcasting experts his voice is acknowledged to be ideal for the microphone, the deep tone and deliberate manner blending with deep feeling and obvious sincerity to give him that indefinable quality "microphone personality." The B.B.C. originally mooted the idea that the Queen and Princess Elizabeth should also speak into the microphone, but it was eventually decided that it was best that it should be a talk from the head of the Empire family alone. The King allows nothing to detract from the importance of the occasion, and will not broadcast himself beforehand for some months. Other members of the Royal family follow his example.

"Under Big Ben."

PERHAPS the best known family in the Empire is that of Mr. Howard Marshall, the genial giant who gives the Empire talk "Under Big Ben" every week. His sons, Tim, aged seven, and Andy, aged four, are the two main characters in this weekly causerie. Mr. Marshall tells me that his method is to approach the microphone and just "burble" about England in the changing seasons and his home and family.

But in his artless way Mr. Marshall plays on the heart strings of millions of listeners as his huge "fan mail" at Broadcasting House shows. Mischievous Tim, by the way, is shortly being packed off to a preparatory school at Rottingdean, and is probably ultimately destined for Haileybury, his father's old school, or the Nautical College at Pangbourne.

Why the Secrecy?

WHY is the B.B.C. secretive about its Empire announcers? There are two schools at Broadcasting House—pro and anti-publicity. At the moment, as far as the Empire side is concerned, the antis appear to be slightly in the ascendant. But the same battle was fought on the home programme side. Eventually after many conferences and with much trepidation the B.B.C. revealed in its official publication the names of the five senior announcers.

That was after eleven years of broadcasting. I predict that the history of the Empire service will be somewhat similar. But I can hasten the course of evolution by disclosing one of the dreadful secrets myself. The senior Empire announcer is one Captain W.

"Radio Record's" London Letter

The writer of the notes on this page is a London journalist, Mr. L. Marsland Gander. He is radio correspondent to a big London daily and is in close touch with happenings at the British Broadcasting Corporation. These notes are exclusive to the "Radio Record."

Shewen, an ex-army officer. And (cross my heart) the B.B.C. refused to tell me that!

By the way there is a notion abroad that B.B.C. announcers earn fabulous salaries. They don't think so. I doubt whether the senior announcer of the home service, Mr. Stuart Hibberd, receives more than £1000 a year, and the others proportionately less as they proceed down the scale.

About Finance.

FINANCE is a vexed question at Broadcasting House. The staff do not think they earn enough salary; the B.B.C. don't think they get a big enough percentage of the ten shillings license fee; artists and speakers also think they are underpaid. A fairly well-known London journalist who broadcast to Empire listeners told me that he received three guineas for five minutes and six guineas for a quarter-of-an-hour. As a disinterested party, it seems to me that Empire listeners themselves get the best deal out of the B.B.C., for, at present at any rate, they get something really good for no payment at all.

And it is going to get better and better.

Sporting Broadcasts

New Zealand daily: Sporting results (if any): 2YA, 3.0, 4.0; 1YA, 3.15, 4.30; 3YA, 4.30; 4YA, 3.45, 4.45. All YA stations between 7.0 and 8.0.

Australia: 3DB, 8.0; 3AR, 9.0; 2FC, 8.40 (Sat. 8.10 and 12.15); 5CL, 9.5; 4QG, 9.10 (Tuesday and Saturday).

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31.

1YA, 10.30 a.m.: Auckland Trotting Club's summer meeting—relayed descriptions from Alexandra Park. (Commentary by Gordon Hutter).

3YA, 10.15 a.m.: Progress reports on Plunket Shield cricket—Canterbury v. Wellington.

3YA, 1.15 p.m.: Review of morning's play in Plunket Shield match.

4YA, 10.30 p.m.: Auckland v. Otago—descriptions of play given at varying intervals during the day.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 1.

1YA, 11.30 a.m.: Auckland Racing Club's summer meeting—relayed descriptions from Ellerslie racecourse. (Commentary by Gordon Hutter).

3YA, 10.15 a.m.: Canterbury v. Wellington in Plunket Shield cricket—Progress reports throughout the day.

3YA, 12 noon: Canterbury Park Trotting Club's meeting—relayed descriptions from Addington. (Commentary by Mr. F. Jarrett).

4YA, 10.30 a.m.: Auckland v. Otago in Plunket Shield cricket—commentaries given at intervals during the day.

2BL, 9.20 p.m.: Relayed to National stations. Resume of the day's play

in the Sheffield Shield match, New South Wales v. Queensland, played at Sydney.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2.

1YA, 11.30 a.m.: Auckland Racing Club's summer meeting—running commentaries relayed from Ellerslie racecourse. (Commentary by Gordon Hutter).

3YA, 11 a.m.: Plunket Shield cricket progress reports—Canterbury v. Wellington.

3YA, 12 noon: Canterbury Park Trotting Club's meeting—running commentaries relayed from Addington. (Commentary by Mr. F. Jarrett).

4YA, 10.30 a.m.: Auckland v. Otago in Plunket Shield cricket. Commentaries at intervals during the day.

2BL, 9.20 p.m.: Cricket resume.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 3.

3YA, 10.30 a.m.: Canterbury v. Wellington, in Plunket Shield cricket, progress reports given.

3YA, 1.15 p.m.: Review of morning's play in the Plunket Shield cricket match—Canterbury v. Wellington.

3YA, 7.15 p.m.: Review of the day's play in the Plunket Shield cricket match—Canterbury v. Wellington.

4YA, 10.30 a.m.: Auckland v. Otago in Plunket Shield cricket—commentaries broadcast at intervals during the day.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5.

2YA, 2 p.m.: Great Britain v. New Zealand. Running commentaries of the Test Golf contest, relayed from Heretaunga golf links. (Commentary by Mr. H. A. Black).