

CANTERBURY NOTES.

Australian Teachers to Broadcast

Mr. and Mrs. J. Alexander Browne Making a Tour of the National Stations
—Controversy Regarding the Broadcasting of Church Services—
Australian Singer's Earthquake Experience.

I SPENT a pleasant and most entertaining afternoon recently with that talented and clever couple, Mr. and Mrs. J. Alexander Browne. Mrs. Browne arrived in New Zealand on her first visit on Christmas morning to join her husband who has been engaged by the New Zealand Broadcasting Board for a further tour of New Zealand stations, much to the delight of listeners all over the islands. Mrs. Browne is thoroughly enjoying her holiday and in her own words "it is the best thing Mr. Browne has ever done when he sent for me to join him in New Zealand." Mr. and Mrs. Browne have been married ten years and together with Miss Agnes Fortune have a studio in Nicholas Buildings, Swanston Street, Melbourne. Mr. Browne was one of the original artists to broadcast from 3LO in Melbourne when microphone work was in its infancy, and visited New Zealand in 1922 with the American Chautauqua Company, "doing" ninety-five towns and putting on two shows every day. Mr. Browne is a no-nonsense genial Scotchman, who served for three years at the front, and as listeners already know, possesses one of the finest baritone voices ever before the microphone in New Zealand.

realizes just what is meant by the "Australian twang," although Mrs. Browne has a lovely speaking voice herself which suits the microphone to perfection. Mrs. Browne has given many talks from 3LO, Melbourne, and just recently put on a series of her own original



Mrs. J. Alexander Browne.

HIS recitals are a delight and for years he has been a teacher of singing and voice production in Victoria, Melbourne being his headquarters, together with his wife, who, as Miss Winifred Moverley, occupies the same studio, being one of the leading teachers of elocution and dramatic art, and both are members of the Victoria Music Teachers' Association. Mr. Browne is to give four recitals from 4YA Dunedin, in response to many requests from that town, and after that he will broadcast from the North Island national stations, while Mrs. Browne will put on the air some of the sketches for which she is famed in Australia. Mr. and Mrs. Browne have been teaching Australians how to sing and act since 1924 and adjudicating at the different festivals in Australia since 1927, and so popular is their judgment of the different classes that their services have been engaged from one festival to the other.

MRS. BROWNE'S team has won the "open scene" eight successive times at South Street, Ballarat, since 1915, winning the open scene at Bendigo in 1932 with the play "To Oblige Benson." The prizes for these scenes range from £35. "Open Scenes" in Australia are called "one-act" plays in New Zealand and Mrs. Browne is most enthusiastic over her work and leading such a full and busy life, is really enjoying her stay in New Zealand, the weather at present being "wonderful" to her. "At the present time," Mrs. Browne said, "physical culture is having a great run in Melbourne," and she is struck with the musical speaking voices of the girls in New Zealand, and since coming over

sketches, entitled "Poems and Thoughts for Just Plain Folk" which proved most popular with Australian listeners. During her New Zealand visit listeners will have an opportunity of hearing this versatile artist in sketches both original and otherwise.

BROADCASTING Church Services is becoming a burning question amongst the different religious bodies and the outcome is that churches will have stations. The Presbyterian Church is evidently not very cordially in agreement with the policy of broadcasting ordinary Sunday services, the General Assembly committee reported that "while it was probably too late to press for a reversal, the B.B.C. practice had much to commend it, in that except for special national services, the rule against broadcasting services during ordinary hours of church worship was strictly enforced," comments the January issue of "The Church News."

THE B.B.C. ordinary Sunday broadcast is usually from its own studio-chapels between 8.0-8.45 p.m. There is a Central Advisory Committee, whose executive director is the Rev. F. A. Iremonger, and the broadcasts are provided under the committee's supervision, the participating denominations being the Church of England, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational and Baptist. There is no strict rota, but an average distribution of preachers is maintained. In Scotland, however, there is a monthly Sunday evening broadcast from St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh. The Presbyterian Assembly's report stated that the facilities showed that the larger bodies were not

receiving opportunities proportionate to their census strength. One with a population percentage of 0.9 uses 8.1 per cent of the total number of broadcast services; another with 0.6 has 9.6 per cent; while the largest denomination, holding 41.2 per cent., has only 21.6 per cent of the services.

"IT is reasonably argued that an improvement upon the present rotas might well be made in view of these facts," says the "Outlook," "but the committee had a wider vision than mere proportional rights to the microphone. It commended the B.B.C. scheme of serial broadcast religious addresses. Our Church has men highly competent for such work and so have some of the sister Churches. The suggestion has been sent on for consideration by the New Zealand Council of Religious Education in default of any other inter-church body suitable. Courses suggested are education for Sunday School teachers and youth workers; as so much sporting information is broadcast, the religious community has a fair claim to at least a weekly session of church news. The logical outcome of the discussions is that the Churches, or each Church, should have a station of their or its own. Indeed, we regard the ultimate establishment of such a station as inevitable, and necessary to the Church's witness in this modern age. Something might be done by acquiring one of the B stations which are languishing on in hopes that Parliament will sanction sponsored programmes. A half-share of a low-powered B station is said to have a commercial value of about £500. In New South Wales there is a well-conducted Roman Catholic Station; the Council of Christian Congregations also have one, the Theosophical Society a large one reputed to be the best-equipped private station in Australia, under conditions returning a handsome profit."

MR. J. ALEXANDER BROWNE experienced the first earthquake of his life whilst singing before the microphone the other evening in Wellington at 2YA. The walls creaked and there was crackling under his feet and for a moment he was bewildered, but only for a moment. He just had time to realise what was happening, grabbing the microphone which was swaying ominously and his sub-conscious mind told him to "carry on." This he bravely did, the pianist recovering after losing a couple of bars, and Mr. Browne richly deserved the warm praise bestowed on him after his recital by the station director.

THERE is an increasing number of men and women of great capacity who obtain First Classes in their subjects, and who, when discussion turns to subjects of human concern, talk like children in a nursery.—The Archbishop of York.