

Clergymen Express Opinions On Church Broadcasts

Canon Percival James's Views Are Discussed

In a recent issue of the "Radio Record" Canon Percival James, of St. Paul's Pro-Cathedral, Wellington, made certain suggestions for the reorganising of the broadcasting of church services. To-day we publish letters of reply from Archbishop Averill, of Auckland, and the Rev. W. Bramwell Scott, of Trinity Church, Wellington. Archbishop Julius, of Christchurch, was asked for an opinion, but he said that "Church broadcasting is new, and a younger man must deal with it. I am of yesterday—or the day before." The Rev. Jonathan H. Haslam, president of the Methodist Conference, was also approached for an opinion but, as Mr. Haslam has not yet been on the air nor has a radio set in his home, he does not feel that it would be becoming for him to express an opinion. Bishop West-Watson, of Christchurch, is a radio listener of less than a fortnight's standing and, by reason of his short acquaintance with broadcasting, he also feels constrained to remain silent on the subject.

To the Editor,

Sir,—I find myself largely in agreement with the views expressed by Canon Percival James regarding the broadcasting of church services. I fully realise how much the broadcast services are appreciated by the sick, the aged and the dwellers in country districts, far remote from the places where church services are held, and for their sakes I should be sorry to see a less number of services broadcast.

Doubtless there are very many who would not be included in the aforementioned category who do appreciate the services and sometimes the sermons even if they are not in the habit of attending Divine service. I cannot understand how any reasonable being could regard such broadcast services as in any way a substitute for the worship of Almighty God or attendance at the Sacraments.

I quite understand how difficult it must be to allot the privilege of broadcasting church services when there are so many applicants for the honour. I suppose even broadcasting authorities desire to give heed to the wishes of their subscribers, and consequently, more consideration should, I think, be given to the numerical strength of the various churches and denominations. The religious census returns may not be the perfect or ideal way of allotting the privilege of broadcasting but it might well afford some guide in the matter.

With regard to having one representative for every church or denomination irrespective of its numerical strength on the "Church Committee" for arranging the broadcasting of services, I cannot think that it's fair or just. There is much to be said for Canon James' contention that the broadcast service should be entirely separate from the ordinary evening services in the

churches. Many of them at present, are quite unsuitable for broadcasting. I should prefer a special broadcast service lasting about 45 minutes from a church rather than from a studio. Why could not such a service be held from 8.30 p.m. to 9.15 p.m.? If possible the service should be conducted by the same individual on four consecutive Sundays. The children's service is very important and much valued. It might even be more helpful to have a short Sunday morning service, say, from 9 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. in place of the morning services as they are now broadcast.

I am entirely in agreement with Canon James re Sunday broadcasting in England. In addition to the services, lectures, addresses, etc., I listened in on every possible occasion when I was in England to a short service every Sunday night which to my mind was a gem. If I remember rightly the service took place after 10 p.m. and lasted possibly ten minutes, but I could never forget the impression made upon my mind by that wonderful finish to the Sunday broadcast.

I desire to thank you for your obvious desire to give the broadcasting of religious services a "fair run."

Your faithfully, A.W., NEW ZEALAND.

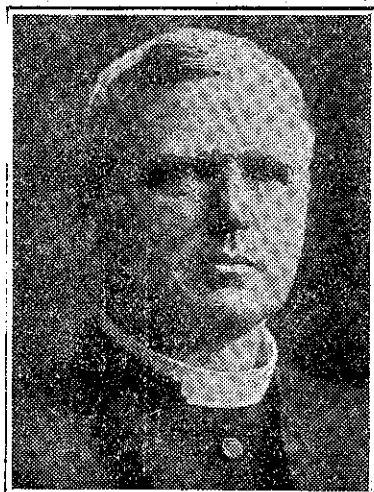
To the Editor,

Sir,—I am on holiday and have had—for me—the novelty of "listening-in" to a number of church services in various centres of the Dominion. Canon James' article in your issue of March 1 has helped to crystallise my views on the matter of church service broadcasts. From the Anglican point of view there is much to be said for his contentions. Perhaps a Methodist may be allowed to give his viewpoint.

I prefer the broadcast as part of the ordinary church service. The time allowed has been more than sufficient for my service. The ordinary church service is likely to be more inspirational than the one turned on specially for listeners-in after the close of the main service. The difficulty of reconciling the claims of the regular church congregation with the unseen "listener-in" is overcome by conducting the service for the benefit of the "listener-in." On more than one occasion I have given my service an Anglican turn, particularly on Whit Sunday, because I realised that many Anglicans would be amongst my hearers.

With regard to the allocations of services I agree with the Canon that the smaller denominations have more

services than they are entitled to proportionately. At the same time it must not be forgotten that the Anglicans and Presbyterians have one service every Sunday from one of the YA stations and that is a concession not enjoyed by the Methodists, for example. I listened-in from Dunedin one Sunday evening and heard services in all four centres and these included an Anglican and a Presbyterian service. If 2YA gave the Anglicans 46 services and the Presbyterians a similar number where would the Roman Catholics and Methodists come in, to say



On the left is the Rev. W. Bramwell Scott, of Wellington, who agrees with the recently-published view of Canon James that the smaller denominations in New Zealand have more Sunday broadcasts than they are proportionately entitled to. . . On the right is Archbishop Averill, of Auckland, who thinks there is much to be said for the contention that Sunday evening broadcast services should be entirely separate from the ordinary evening church services.

(Contd. on p. 57.)