

SPECIAL AUSTRALIAN SUPPLEMENT

National Broadcasting System Looking Over Australia's A Class Stations

The first part of the following article was supplied to the "Radio Record" by Major W. T. Conder, general manager of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. The portion dealing with the Melbourne national stations was supplied by the Victorian division of the A.B.C.

BBROADCASTING started in Australia towards the end of 1923, when private companies began to operate under licenses from the Government, their revenue coming from specific licenses to listen to their stations, all sets being sealed to one or another of the existing wavelengths. This practice was followed for only a short time, after which a general listening license was issued, and the resultant revenue apportioned between the various stations operating. This method was not by any means unsuccessful, and by June 30, 1928, there were 270,507 licensed listeners in Australia.

About that time, however, the Commonwealth Government decided that broadcasting had become a matter of too great national importance to be left any longer entirely in the hands of commercial companies, and took over on a valuation the complete equipment of the A stations; it did not, as yet, seek to control directly the provision of programmes, and these were arranged for it for the next three years under contract.

On July 1, 1932, however, the Australian Broadcasting Commission, which had been called into existence shortly before by an Act of Parliament, began its official function of providing programmes from the 12 national stations, while the Postmaster-General's Department, to which the technical operation of these stations had already been entrusted, remained responsible for that side of the work.

The Commission consisted of a chairman, a vice-chairman and three ordinary members, all being people of public standing appointed by the Government in Council to form a board of supervision. The actual personnel of the staff remained much as it had been under private control.

When the Commission was appointed there were 309,945 licenses in force, re-

presenting 5.62 per cent. of the population of the Commonwealth. This total had been reached in slightly more than eight years. The fact that the total number of licenses is now close to 700,000 and the percentage, accordingly, slightly in excess of ten, is a strong indication that the work of the Commission has not been altogether unsuccessful, for its third year of office has not yet concluded. Of course, it must not be forgotten that there are in this country some 50 B stations, all providing regular programmes; no doubt they contribute substantially

to the total, and stations of Melbourne, are broadcasting to 228,000 listeners in Victoria programmes of entertainment and educational value. On about three evenings a week 3LO, the senior Victorian station, has the responsibility of initiating the national programme, which is relayed over the land-line network of 4800 miles of special telephone channel to all national stations in other States of the Commonwealth. So that simultaneously the

item is heard far north of Rockhampton (Queensland) to far west of Geraldton (Western Australia), by a potential audience of 681,634 listeners.

On October 13 last 3LO commemorated its tenth anniversary. It had opened in 1924 with a historic broadcast — the farewell to Grand Opera of the late Dame Nellie Melba in the role of Mimi in "La Boheme." Since then this station has consistently set a standard for all other stations in the originality and popular appeal of its programmes. It has been fortunate in having had practically throughout its existence, first

as a privately-owned A station and then as a Government concern, the continuity of supervision by Mr. T. W. Bearup, manager for Victoria for the Australian Broadcasting Commission, who drafted its first programme, and is still guiding its much more varied forms of entertainment to-day.

Since its introduction ten years ago, wireless broadcasting has made rapid and continuous progress in Victoria. From the small beginnings of amateur experimenters it soon passed to the stage when private companies were granted A class and B class licenses to broadcast, and when those citizens who owned receiving sets paid fees for the privilege of listening to the programmes provided.

Following are the licenses in force in Victoria since the inauguration of broadcasting:—

1925	.....	20,289	1930	.....	140,072
1926	.....	64,587	1931	.....	137,205
1927	.....	118,905	1932	.....	130,592
1928	.....	137,758	1933	.....	171,318
1929	.....	142,750	1934	.....	226,625

Message to N.Z. Listeners From A.B.C. Chairman

The following message has been received by the "Radio Record" from Mr W. J. Cleary, chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

IT gives me great pleasure to extend cordial greetings to New Zealand listeners. Close and firm bonds of interest and friendship have always existed between these two neighbouring outposts of the British Empire. I feel sure that the advent of broadcasting has made, and will continue to make, those bonds both closer and stronger.

We in Australia have warmly welcomed the courteous co-operation invariably offered to us by the New Zealand Broadcasting Board, to which we wish all success in the valuable work which it is undertaking. If, as we are assured, our own programmes are often heard undistorted even over that wide sea which separates us from your Dominion, we earnestly hope that this has not only added something to the pleasure you derive from broadcasting, but also given you a more intimate glimpse of our outlook and activities, and so helped to reduce the distance between us.

(Signed) W. J. CLEARY,

Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney.

to the license increases, but, at the same time, when one realises that in the three years immediately preceding the constitution of the Commission the increase in licenses was only .79 per cent. of population, and that in the two and a half years of the Commission's operation the increase was 4.52 per cent., one can scarcely deny that by far the greatest influence is wielded by the national service.

One interesting feature of the work of the national service is the development of musical combinations, which include symphony and concert orchestras, a military band, dance bands, choruses and choirs, and already excellent results have been obtained in this manner. The work will be continued and expanded in the future, and will, no doubt, do great service to music in this part of the world.

Melbourne's National Stations

FOR an average of about 82 hours a week 3LO and 3AR, national sta-