



# 10 YEARS IN ENTERTAINMENT



## In Ten Years' Broadcasting

Victoria, Wellington, and the new studio in Featherston Street were opened. In Dunedin the old station, 4YA, having been remodelled and modernised, was opened in the Dunedin Exhibition grounds under the call sign VLDN, but at the close of the exhibition the station was dismantled and reopened on the original site under the old name on May 3, 1926.

Since then, all these four stations have either had more power and new transmitting equipment, or this move is in immediate prospect. 1YA's new 500-foot mast at Henderson needs no introduction to New Zealanders, and Christchurch's 350-foot towers are not yet old enough to be rusty. Dunedin's improvements are being carried out at Highcliff, where another single mast will soon be rearing 500 feet skyward, and probably shortly after that is finished work will start on Wellington's new transmitting plant, which will be the most powerful of all, and may boast the tallest aerial.

Naturally, it would be worse than useless to increase power and technical perfection if there were not the organisation behind the broadcasting service from the entertainment and instruction side. New Zealand has been fortunate in that it has not only a wealth of local talent upon which to call for items, but has also the opportunity—which is not provided in all countries—to use gramophone records of the world's greatest artists. When in the early days gramophone records were not allowed to be used for the concert sessions, it was essential to have everything a flesh-and-blood studio performance. But now records of the ordinary gramophone type play a big part in radio entertainment. In fact, the alternative stations confine themselves almost solely to recordings for their daily sessions. Nor can we overlook the advent of longer recorded features from England and America, which are broadcast in such series as the "Japanese House-boy," "Eb and Zeb," and "The Causes of War."

When the Broadcasting Board took over the control of national broadcasting in place of the company in 1932 listeners of course, looked to something new in ideas and programmes, and three years ago the schematic schedule of programmes was first introduced. The need for alternative services was recognised, and shortly afterward the lower-powered national stations were instituted, 2YO in February, 1933; 1YX in July, 1933; 3YL in January, 1934, and 4YO in March, 1934.

The establishing of the first Broadcasting Board, by the way, is said to have hung in the balance in Parliamentary lobbies for some time. The decision was made in favour of a Government board, and since then the policy and programmes have been, broadly speaking, under the direct control of the board, the membership of which has only recently been renewed. Exercising their prerogative, as in other cases of departmental control of business, the public have

showered their suggestions, helpful or otherwise, on to the board. But a body of men who are chosen for their special qualifications are hard to move quickly, and it is to be expected that changes must be slow and sure. The "progressive conservatism" with which the Broadcasting Boards have moved since they were first instituted must be acknowledged as responsible for the present standard of New Zealand's broadcasting.

Neither is this empty flattery, for we have been shown that although many may not be pleased with this or that on their bill of fare from national stations, generally speaking these stations are, over a given period, providing a splendid variety of items and artists which, taken together, compare favourably with those of any other sizeable country in the world.

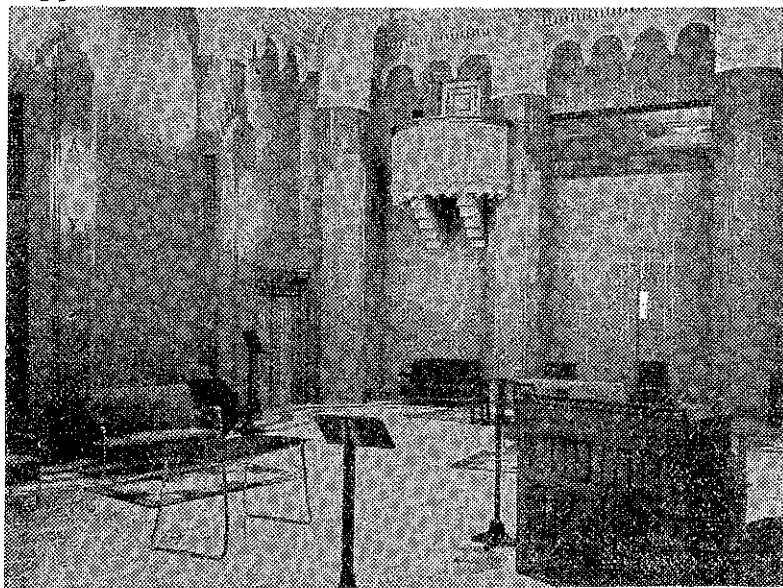
We have, indeed, much to be thankful for. Being in what may be called the back end of the world, New Zealand

is not privileged by having as residents those who are numbered among the premier comedians, singers, bands and orchestras of the modern world. But owing to the proportion of recordings used in the national transmission, we are not deprived of the enjoyment of their talent. They are brought to us in their hundreds. In addition to this, New Zealand has been provided with studio "appearances" during the last two years of many people whose names mean more than nothing in the world of radio. This, in fact, was one of the great steps forward in the service provided to Dominion listeners by the national stations—one which might be allied with the rebroadcasts of overseas events.

For the first few years of broadcasting here it was practically unknown for one YA station to rebroadcast another. Each had to struggle along on its own. But since the institution of regular Empire transmissions from Daven-try by the British Broadcasting Commission, the New Zealand authorities have made free use of the electrical recordings from England in the afternoons, with the result that a few hours after the Press cables arrive listeners may hear the whole of some important event described by an expert in the particular line, or the speakers on an important occasion exactly as they broadcast.

It is timely to remind listeners of the universal service which they may receive, for in those countries which are commonly looked upon as providing a standard of transmission "which New Zealand might well emulate" it is found, upon analysis, that their daily programmes are usually no better, and in some cases "worse" than our own. For instance, an inspection of the B.B.C. broadcasts over a period of a week will reveal that very little time is devoted to humorous and comedians' items. Dance music does not play a great part in the scheme of things there. Australia provides largely "serious" programmes over the national stations, and those who tune in to America will, in a large number of cases, find themselves (Continued on page 24.)

### The Dominion's National Service Does Not Lag Behind That of the World's Leading Broad- casters



After ten years Auckland has a studio building the like of which does not exist in Australia or New Zealand. This picture shows the spacious main studio of to-day's 1YA. The control room is beyond the glass on the right of the observer's "box."