

Mr. Savage Takes Over Portfolio of Radio: Director Wanted

Broadcasting Board Abolished—National Broadcasting Service Is New Title

The week gone by has been a momentous one in New Zealand broadcasting. The Dominion enjoys the distinction of being the first country of importance in the world to appoint a Minister of Broadcasting—a suggestion that was made in the editorial columns of the "Radio Record" last November—an office that has been taken over by the Prime Minister (Rt. Hon. M. J. Savage).

THE FIRST DAY OF JULY SAW THE ABOLITION OF THE NEW ZEALAND BROADCASTING BOARD AND THE TAKING OVER OF THE NEW ZEALAND RADIO STATIONS BY THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING SERVICE, THE NEW TITLE OF THE CONTROLLING BODY.

Next move—an eagerly awaited one—is the appointment of a Director of Broadcasting for the Dominion.

THE Prime Minister has taken a keen interest in broadcasting matters for years, and there is satisfaction in many quarters that he has taken over this new and important portfolio.

The "Radio Record" takes particular pleasure in this announcement as it was this paper that first suggested the appointment of a Minister of Broadcasting.

In the issue following the General Election in November last, an editorial said:

It may seem worthy at this juncture to consider the appointing of a Minister of Broadcasting, as distinct from the office of Postmaster-General, a portfolio quite onerous enough without having added to it the ever-growing responsibilities of a national broadcasting service. There are 170,000 radio licences in operation in the Dominion and more than half a million listeners, and, adding to these the Dunedin assertion that Labour won seats in the south through its platform championing of the B station cause alone, it would seem that a portfolio of broadcasting could be an increasingly important one.

The new Broadcasting Act makes provision for an Advisory Council to act in collaboration with the Minister, but the establishment of such a body has not been made mandatory. It is understood that it will be some time before such a council is appointed, if at all.

The appointment of the new Director of Broadcasting, at a salary rising from £1500 to £2000 a year, is causing considerable speculation. The position is to be

advertised for in both Australia and New Zealand, and the applications will close not later than Tuesday, July 21. In some quarters it is suggested that a suitable person is already in mind—an Australian who has had considerable experience in broadcasting in Sydney. However, there is nothing to confirm this.

To a representative of "The Standard" Mr. Savage said: "We recognise that broadcasting is a big problem, and we want to see that it is conducted on proper lines in this Dominion. For that reason we want a Director who understands broadcasting in all its phases. He must be a topnotcher."

First Suggestions for Broadcasting Portfolio From "Radio Record"

Two men are shortly to be appointed by Cabinet to conduct a valuation of New Zealand's B stations. One of these shall be a qualified technical man and the other an accountant. Upon their report will be based the Government's decision as to the purchase price to be paid, or, if the owner does not desire to sell, the amount of the subsidy. "We want to buy the stations," said Mr. Savage, "but there will be no element of compulsion about it."

The C stations—commercial stations, that is—are also beginning to figure in the limelight, the Minister stating that the first C station will be opened in Auckland. Others

will later be installed in Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. In regard to Wellington, he stated that it was the intention of the Government to establish a new station in that city for the purpose of carrying out commercial broadcasting. Possibly the Government would utilise the existing auxiliary station 2YC for that purpose, he said. When the new station was opened at Titahi Bay this year, Wellington would be in possession of two non-commercial stations and a commercial station.

The names of the members of the Advisory Council—if there is to be one at all—are still unknown. Maybe, there has not been even so much as a tentative selection made. The "Radio Record" made some suggestions some months ago. The paragraph read:

The Labour Government seems rich in men who have had actual experience of broadcasting. The Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. M. J. Savage, is no stranger to the microphone—and he has also given considerable thought to the problems facing broadcasting in a country such as this. Mr. E. J. Howard, the new Chairman of Committees, has spoken up strongly when broadcasting measures have been before the House in the past, and the keenness of the member for Christchurch South to see the New Zealand service brought to full fruit should be valuable in the near future. Mr. J. A. Lee, Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Prime Minister, is well known in the Auckland studios, where he delivered a series of interesting talks recently. Mr. Lee should be able to lend valuable help, too.

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