

This Week's Special Article

"Wanted—An Editor"

Broadcast News and Common Sense

RADIO in New Zealand to-day is rapidly increasing its scope as a means of disseminating news, for radio coverage of important events has developed, and is continuing to develop.

But there are points in this rapid expansion of news service which seem, for the moment, to have escaped the controllers of broadcasting in New Zealand. There is the paramount issue of accuracy, and there is the matter of giving the public what it wants.

An example or two: During the stay in Wellington of the Empress of Britain, Station 2ZB secured a lively and informative talk from a passenger described as Sir Montagu Norman. Later, a correction to Sir Montague Burton was made. Sir Montagu Norman, as Governor of the Bank of England for the last nineteen years, ranks as one of the most important, if self-effacing, men in the British Empire. It is not unlikely that the announcement of his intended visit to the country would have stimulated acres of publicity. At this stage of the political year, his words of wisdom on financial affairs might have had a profound effect on political issues.

Sir Montague Burton, on the other hand, is comparatively unknown in New Zealand; and, except that his talk on European affairs from the station was capitably done, his visit was of no great importance.

Then, a couple of weeks previously, during a

H. M. POWER takes the broadcasting services of New Zealand to task for not applying the fundamental principles of news-editing to news sessions.

Sunday programme, the same station announced the death of Mr. Eric Riddiford, president of the Wellington Racing Club, on information supposedly supplied by an official of the club. As the good old cliché has it, the affair was grossly exaggerated.

In the first instance, the station had no come back, for it was a fault plainly committed. But in the second, the announcer justifiably passed the buck on to the informer. For all that, a news service demands that even the most innocuous sort of statement should be thoroughly checked before publication. A ship's passenger list would easily have prevented the Norman-Burton error; and a couple of telephone rings would have prevented the Riddiford mystery.

Now, here's the rub—in another way the NBS is almost as bad an offender! The finest instance I can remember in recent weeks concerned the railway crash outside Wanganui. By chance, I happened to be holidaying in the Marlborough Sounds at the time, and radio was practically the only contact with this world of wars and woe. At seven o'clock that night, therefore, a small group of us gathered eagerly around the set to hear full details.

I think the broadcast description of the accident lasted twenty minutes. From 2YA the announcer suavely surveyed the situation, soothing our palpitations with a description of the scene, the comments of the Minister for Railways, the comments of the General Manager of Railways, the announcement that a commission of inquiry would be set up immediately, details (Continued on page 38.)

In the Wake of the Week's Broadcasts

Radio talkers could learn a good deal from listening to the address given over the air by the Prime Minister last week. The manner of delivery in the main was easy, natural and conversational. The address was given with the sincerity which no one doubts though many hold mis-guided—and sincerity is a prime quality that somehow comes out in the tone of the voice. There was a pleasing variation in mood from humour to deep feeling. The voice was pleasing. Whatever one might care to think about him as Prime Minister, I can honestly name him as New Zealand's radio talker No. 1. And in this category, curious-

ly enough, he lines up with Hitler, Mussolini and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

No doubt about it, the 3YA orchestra has improved out of sight during the last few months. It has more solidarity and achieves a fine organ tone in its legato passages, alternating, necessarily, with enhanced brilliance in the more rapidly-moving phrases. But one might reasonably complain about the choice of works. The other night I heard the "Charles II" overture. The orchestra played it well, but, while Montague Phillips is in the top rank of composers, there are some of his works

that simply don't appeal to New Zealand listeners. Nearly an hour later the orchestra, after an interlude with some well-played Tchaikowsky, was heard again in the Mozart Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in D Minor with Gil Dech as pianist. Possibly a trifle heavy for general consumption again, but delightfully presented. Orchestras broadcasting—and to my mind there is no finer combination—have surely a library capable of showing off their musical worthiness without having recourse to obscure numbers. There is no need to "go all popular," but there is decidedly a call for "tuneful" works. A little more attention to choice, therefore, would make 3YA's orchestra the top-ranker in the Dominion. That's my idea, at any rate.