

This Week's Special Article

Broadcasting May Ring the Death-Knell of the Demagogue

LATELY we have heard a great deal about the use of radio broadcasting for political purposes. Some hold that broadcasting is a legitimate and inevitable ally of democracy in practice—a means by which everyone with a sense of civic and national responsibility can make himself familiar with the pros and cons of opposed policies and vote according to the dictates of his conscience and intelligence. Others hold that, in its political uses at least, the air is merely a stamping ground for conflicting propaganda and private electioneering.

For my own part I take a more optimistic view than either of these. I think that, even if they who so eagerly use it now do not realise it, the air will prove the graveyard of the demagogue.

The mass meeting strained through the microphone loses its magic. A vast number of listeners is relatively unaffected by the tension of the crowd gathered in a hall. A crowd, as a crowd, is easily stirred, its power of intellectual analysis dulled. But the man at the listener's end of the radio is more mentally alert and more emotionally quiet. That remote and unexcited view of party politics given by broadcasting emphasises mercilessly the logical weaknesses of the party system.

Too often it provides us with a spectacle of adult men outvying one another in a vote-catching

WHETHER or not you agree with him, W. Philip Carman in this unusual article brings a new light to bear on broadcast electioneering. The laws of mob psychology, he says, do not apply to the elector sitting quietly in his home. And one day the world may be a better place for it.

competition. One leader addresses us with earnestness, sincerity and idealism. Yet, to satisfy the disinterested and intelligent listener there is in his speech too much sentimentality, too many half-truths, and too blatant a spirit of myopic disparagement of his opponents. His political opponent replies soundly and high-mindedly, but again this myopic viewpoint discloses a thinly-veiled appeal to man's materialistic self-interest.

Intent upon scoring a point off the other party; painting themselves white and their opponents black, it is still apparent that both are really a mixture of various shades of grey! Like schoolboys, "our gang" is always the "goodies"; the other gang is the "baddies"!

We shall not grow up so long as we cling fearfully to the type of democracy in which all parties have one eye on the votes and one on the affairs of the country.

If the democratic principle is to survive, a Parliament must legislate fearlessly, resolutely, justly, without fear of alienating the electors!

We must face the fact, and face it clearly, that humankind is not yet mature enough to inherit the promised land. It has not wandered long enough in the wilderness. It has not yet learned the lessons of experience. It has not yet learned not to put its trust in princes—even though the princes may be elected to power by a democracy.

But science, it seems, is making it possible for us to examine ourselves and our "princes" a little more clearly. (Continued on next page.)

In the Wake of the Week's Broadcasts

Good piece of recording was the NBS wax impression of the voice of John Flynn, in his talk on the Australian Inland Mission from 2YA last week, under the title "The Flying Mantle."

RECORDING WAS WELL MADE.

Had I not known it was a recorded talk, I would certainly have imagined that the quiet, modest, impressive voice of the famous preacher who believed in practice, was coming to my ears directly through the microphone instead of first on to a recording. The voice, although so quiet, gave a vivid picture of the growth of the mission and listeners formed a remarkable im-

pression of how the great spaces of Inland Australia were studded with wireless beacons for the hospital ships of the air.

Dr. J. Kennedy's talk on St. Thomas Aquinas in the "Whirligig of Time" series from 3YA last Wednesday evening was, to my mind, hardly a success. When an expert treats a subject like this, he often seems to think only of the serious student and forget the layman.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS LOST THE RACE.

Admittedly, it is difficult, but need the life and work of St. Thomas have been treated so academically? The trouble seemed to me to be not so much with the subject mat-

ter as with the method of presentation. The sentences were long and involved, and were delivered in what someone described as "the typical pulpit voice." But, worse than this, the speaker had over-written his subject (a common fault). One could imagine him, every now and then, catching sight of the studio clock and putting on speed. If the delivery was lacking in tonal contrast, it was distinctly not lacking in contrast of tempo. Toward the close, the talk became quite an exciting race against time. A long excerpt of Latin verse was squeezed in (rather novel this), and then—boom! went the eight o'clock chimes, and that was the last we heard of St. Thomas Aquinas, cut short in full flight.