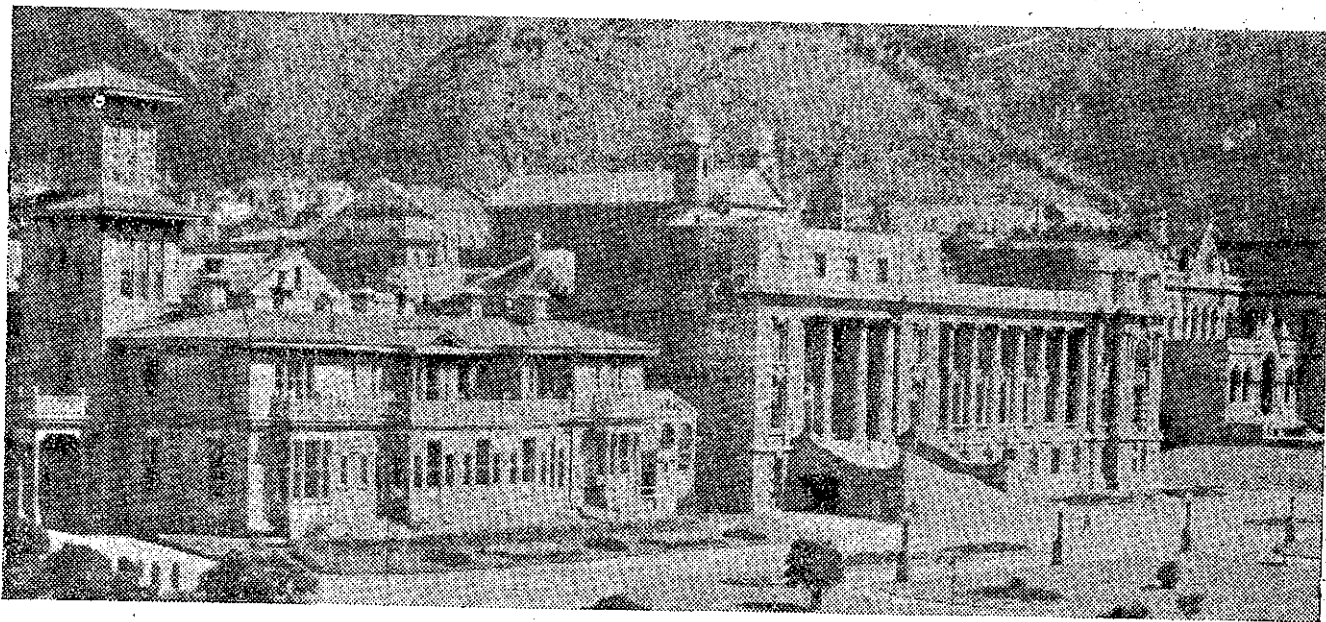


# VOICE OF PARLIAMENT



## *How Radio Brings The Debates Into The Homes of Listeners*

**T**HE conversation had turned on Parliamentary broadcasts in New Zealand.

Somebody in the fireside circle had casually thrown out the question: "How many people listen-in to Parliament?"—the age-old question of broadcasting to which officials, performers and advertisers would all like to know the answer, as far as their own sessions are concerned, and cannot be told.

Even parliamentarians would like to know how many listen to **THEIR** sessions . . . those amateur radio trials that take place inside the building of grey stone in Wellington and are broadcast all over New Zealand.

### View of a Lady

**H**OW greatly the parliamentary broadcasts have influenced listeners so far is hard to say. How greatly the broadcasts have influenced members of the House is easier to say.

The striking lady in the fireside circle had something to say about that. She thought the speeches in the House were longer than before the days of broadcasting. She had listened-in to the broadcast of a debate on the maternity services.

"One member," she recalled, "spoke very fully. He spoke with emotion of the time he himself had first become a father. He described his feelings with faithful detail, and I must say they did him infinite credit, but I could not see that it was necessary to describe them at such length. Members of all parties spoke of motherhood with great respect, and no doubt my sex should be grateful to them for their tribute, but I doubt if this really advanced the business in hand. Isn't broadcasting responsible for this?"

It is difficult to think otherwise.

**H**OW the debates are broadcast, on the other hand, is a matter that is quite definite. There are numerous theories about it. Some people think that the microphone slides on an overhead wire and stops in front of each speaker as he rises to contribute to the debate. Others imagine a microphone on each desk. Some think one

**FIVE** microphones in the Legislative Chamber, a radio technician sitting quietly before a mixer panel in a chair on the floor of the House, an announcer speaking in muted tones . . . and so, quietly and without fuss, radio brings the voice of this New Zealand Parliament, arguing out the problems of the country, into the actual homes of listeners. How this twentieth century marvel is brought about is told in this article written for the "Record" by:—

**JACK DAW**

microphone picks up the speeches from all parts of the House.

The manner in which it is done, however, is simple and effective. There are five microphones in the chamber. Four of them are stationary

microphones, suspended at regular intervals from a wire that runs the length of the chamber. These microphones are alive on the two sides that face the members in the benches. Besides these four, there is another microphone on a stand on the table in front of the Speaker. This can be passed down to the Chairman of Committees (when the Speaker is absent) on the seat just below.

In a corner of the chamber on the floor of the house, and just below the members' benches, sit the NBS announcer and the radio operator. The five microphones in the House are all governed from the mixer panel in front of the operator.

There are five dials on his mixer, each one controlling its own particular one of the five microphones. By turning dial 1 the operator can make the corresponding microphone "come alive" or "go dead"; by turning dial 2 he governs microphone 2, and so on.

### Conversation Pieces

**N**ORMALLY, only one microphone in the chamber is fully open; that is the microphone nearest the member who happens to be speaking. If all four main microphones were left on, too much noise would be picked up, and, besides this, private conversations of members conferring at the other end of the room while a member was talking would be picked up and broadcast to all the country.

All the time, however, the Speaker's microphone is left slightly "open," so that his remarks to the member addressing the House can be quickly brought up to strength and clearly broadcast.

The operator sits alertly at his controls. While a member is speaking at one end of the chamber there may be a lengthy interjection from the other end. The operator immediately livens up the microphone opposite the member interjecting, so that his remarks may be heard by listeners.

Sometimes the interjection is brief and almost over before the microphone at the . . . (Continued on page 40).