

Three and a half million pounds a year flow into the coffers of the British Broadcasting Corporation . . . and yet this huge concern is hard pushed to make ends meet . . . read what Trevor Lane has to say to-day about television in London and the radio service in South Africa.

WHEN Lady Louis Mountbatten visited New Zealand a few years ago, I asked her if she had been particularly impressed by anything in this part of the world.

"Yes," she said. "It may only seem a small thing, but the cheerful music which is broadcast by the Australian and New Zealand radio stations early in the morning is something which I like immensely. Why can't we have the same in England?"

IN London I met Sir Stephen Tallents, of the British Broadcasting Corporation, and I told him of Lady Louis's remark. "I don't think Englishmen would appreciate musical comedy with their breakfast," he said. "Australians and New Zealanders are different."

With which I heartily disagree. Listeners, like human nature, are fundamentally the same the world over. I found the same grouches about radio programmes in London and Capetown, Paris

and Bombay, as I heard in Melbourne and Perth and Auckland.

A RADIO official I met in South Africa agreed with Sir Stephen Tallents . . . he said South Africans would object to jazz bands with their bacon and eggs. The radio editor of a big Capetown paper said the official was talking through his hat—every day the paper had letters asking why South Africa had no early broadcasts; why listeners were forced to tune into a foreign station at Lourenco Marques for breakfast music.

In both England and South Africa, where radio starts its day at 10 a.m., I was loud in my praise of the excellent breakfast sessions provided by all the radio stations in the

Antipodes. I refuse to see any logic in the suggestion that, because Australians liked radio with their breakfast, Englishmen wouldn't. It seemed as reasonable to assume that, because Americans and New Zealanders and Chinamen liked Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers on the screen, Frenchmen and Irishmen and Scandinavians wouldn't.

BUT the BBC has more worries at the moment than the question of early morning broadcasts. Two biggest drains on the finances of the giant corporation are Empire services and television.

Ten years ago, when it was first suggested that the BBC might transmit shortwave broadcasts to the Empire, the Dominion Prime Ministers, in

London for an Imperial Conference, were approached for contributions. They promised to think the matter over.

IN the meantime the BBC went ahead with an experimental service costing a modest £250 a year. The depression came along and the Dominions wrote hurriedly to London . . . they regretted that the financial situation made it impossible for them to contribute.

Nevertheless, the BBC continued to expand the service, the growing cost of which was met out of the British listeners' licence fees. Today the Empire broadcasts from Daventry cost £250,000 a year and the stations are the most powerful in the world.

The British Government contributes a fairish sum of

ones sending out daily television programmes.

I SPENT several days at the studios at Alexandra Palace and I was astounded at the progress made in this newest science. Television is not only HERE, but it is as perfect as the talking picture you see at the newest luxury cinema—and usually far more interesting.

Television has made British radio manufacturers as apprehensive as a Jew at a Nazi picnic. Each one is turning out a wary number of television sets, expecting at any moment that some new and startling advance will make present equipment obsolete.

Packaging

money, but the Dominions still contribute nothing.

However, Empire broadcasting today has a force and significance far beyond its value as an entertainment medium. Every day, powerful transmitters in Germany, Italy, Russia are pouring out propaganda—and Britain must keep her place in this subversive race, too.

IN television the BBC has hatched an even greedier chick. In fact, I was told by an important broadcasting

THE London public is taking a long time to become television-minded. I have met people in Kensington and Surbiton who still do not believe that television is an accomplished fact, despite details of programmes published in the daily papers and the notices displayed in the big stores and hotels: Television Broadcasts Daily. The price of a set is another stumbling block—there are few reliable ones below forty guineas.

Since Empire broadcasting grew to its present size and television became an accomplished fact, there have been many headaches at Broadcasting House, the imposing headquarters of British broadcasting (left). Money, money, money . . . the worry of you and me . . . has become the worry of the BBC directors, too.

official in London that, if there is one thing that will force the corporation into broadcasting commercial programmes, it is television.

Beneath the single grotesque mast at Alexandra Palace lie television studios and laboratories that eat up money as quickly and easily as a cat laps up cream. But there is one great satisfaction—the British system is far in advance of anything else in the world, and the London studios are the only

Ordinary programmes are being pinched, for every penny must go into the maw of this lusty infant. The BBC's summer schedule is the lowest-priced on record—big and expensive stars have been jettisoned, records are being used to an increasing degree, new talent, more interest in getting on the air than in the fee it receives, is being given its chance, outdoor broadcasts, novel and cheap, figure largely.

