

Radio in the Far West

American Methods Severely Criticised



RADIO" and "The Air" are our names for the broadcast transmissions, and I should say they are as good as any; although it is said by some that, in the late presidential election in the U.S.A. Governor Smith, the unsuccessful candidate, lost a number of votes because he spoke of the "Raddio"!—so powerful is the influence of ether.

Here in British Columbia, away up country, we are within reach of a really large number of broadcasting stations both Canadian and American; but our mountain ranges and our lakes run for the most part north and south, so it is the American stations that come in best. Our Canadian stations lie east and west of us. Calgary, in the province of Alberta, comes in fairly well; Vancouver only sometimes. If, therefore, we want an evening's straightforward radio, we switch on to one of the American stations; and that means Salt Lake

City, Seattle, San Francisco, or Los Angeles.

We are a very English community here in the Okanagan Valley, so that if you know anything at all of Eng-

MUCH interesting and enlightening information concerning the conditions and varied standards of Canadian and American broadcasting is afforded by this article, which appeared in "Wireless World." A good deal of unjust and unnecessary criticism has been levelled by New Zealand listeners at the methods adopted by the R.B.C. in supplying broadcast entertainments, and the following account shows that, imperfect though our system may be, we have much to be thankful for.

lish people out of England you will know that we are very strong in our likes and dislikes, and when we have been listening, say, to a whole winter's programme from these American sta-

tions, it will be readily understood that "things are said." I think we are very grateful for the really marvellous range of programmes provided for us, and I have never once heard anything from any of the big American stations that could cause a moment's discomfort or uneasiness to the man who listens in this side of the border. The programmes are arranged by the various mercantile corporations, and they are essentially a means of advertisement. The nature of the broadcast and the amount of advertising matter will therefore vary according to the character of the firm or the corporation.

Some of the best things are put on by the banks and by the powerful oil companies; and a very few words about the bank's business, or about the advantages of the oil, are all that accompany the symphony concerts which are the speciality of these institutions.

But they all have their turn, even down to So-and-So's pickles, a particular line of underclothing, or the This-and-That washing machine. Quite a small experience of radio will make you wary! You are listening, may be, to the "Venusberg" music from "Tannhauser," beautifully rendered; the "Pilgrim's Chorus" is to follow; but before that begins the announcer must give you a cute little dissertation on the merits of X's soap, taking it for granted that there is no other kind of soap in the world, and that you certainly have never enjoyed a decent "wash" unless you have come across this particular brand. This is quite legitimate advertising, no doubt; but you listen to the "Pilgrim's Chorus," when it does come on, with a vague feeling that you have got a dirty neck.

THE kind of English spoken by the American announcers is not of the quality which you hear from 2LO. If not exactly infinite in their variety, the voices are greatly diversified, and we all have our favourites. There is the voice with a smile, that is cheering to hear for a few nights, but which palls dreadfully after a time. There is the pained, hurt, and aggrieved voice, as of a man having to read his own death sentence; and there is a voice for every stage between these extremes. Only very rarely do we hear the soft Southern drawl which in itself is perfect music.

This past season we have suffered from a superfluity of soprano singers. Some are good and worth listening to; others, many others, are neither good nor worth listening to; and it is sad to hear courtly and gallant old gentlemen switching off in disgust and muttering threats and slaughterings against "these squawking females." Indeed, these sopranos are so rife that many of us would prefer a saxophone, than which no more powerful indictment could be framed.

But our greatest grumble is that the announcer will not leave our poor intelligence alone. We are not allowed to listen to a Chopin's Nocturne without being told who Chopin was (pre-

Auckland Notes

(By "Call Up.")

DURING the holiday period IYA is broadcasting special early church services for the benefit of families at the seaside. Many holiday-makers nowadays have wireless sets with them, but the usual church services are at times which do not, as a rule, fit in with beach routine. People holiday-making at the beaches are in the habit of leaving their shacks before noon and not returning till dark, spending the whole day outside on the beach. To meet these cases it was decided to broadcast from the IYA studio three special morning services at 9 o'clock. The first was conducted by the Methodists on January 5, and the second will be given by the Church of England on January 19, and the third on February 2 by the Presbyterians.

A correspondent to the "Radio Record" says many listeners, particularly those born in England, are looking forward to the broadcasting of the English nightingale record. Perhaps the IYA authorities will be able to arrange a broadcast of a real nightingale, as the birds brought out here some time ago have been heard on several occasions lately, and have apparently become acclimatised. Nightingales have been broadcast in England, and incidentally heard by one or two fortunate listeners in New Zealand, and there seems to be a chance therefore that IYA may be able to give us a treat at some future date.

sumably it is he who is meant by "Show-pang"), and we must be informed what a nocturne is. And then, perhaps, we are told that we are to hear "Nocturne," by Chopin—as though he wrote one only!

To have our intelligence improved in this way is bad enough; it is worse when our emotions are got hold of and straightened out. For instance, they are going to play a Minuet of Beethoven's, but before we get to it we are told what our reactions should be to "this piece," and so stereotyped is this kind of advice that in nine cases out of ten a man may safely wager that he will hear, at least once, phrases such as "delicate cadences," "swinging lilt," "felicitous movement," "swaying rhythm," "charm," "romance," "quaint." These grumbings, after all, amount to very little in comparison with the abundance of the musical feast provided by the many stations we tap here in the North-West.

The most impressive broadcast I ever heard was late on the last night of the Old Year, when New Year messages were being sent out from the Edmonton Station to listeners in away up among the isolated settlers and officials in the Yukon and North-West Territories, close by the Arctic Circle. Many a heartache must have been lifted that night when those lonely people heard over the radio the names of their home-folk who remembered them. The Spirits of the Air fulfil their kindly mission nowadays, not only in fairy tales but in real life.

For Sale or Exchange.

See page 32 for column of casual advertisements.

RADIO LISTENERS' GUIDE.

1929-30 Edition of the Guide has been well received and repeat orders are coming in rapidly.

The "Guide" is of more than passing interest—it is **AN AUTHENTIC REFERENCE WORK** that can be called upon to answer all those questions that trouble the amateur wireless enthusiast.

Secure Your Copy Now!

(Available from dealers and booksellers at 2/6 or 2/9 Post Free from the publishers.)

(Postal Coupon for Country Readers.)

"N.Z. Radio Listeners' Guide, 1929-30."

"RADIO RECORD,"

P.O. Box 1032, WELLINGTON.

Please post me immediately.....copy [ies] of your 160-page illustrated reference work "The N.Z. Radio Listeners' Guide, 1929-30" at 2/9 per copy posted. I enclose herewith postal notes for..... (Add exchange to cheques).

Signed.....

(Write address clearly).....

..... 17—1