

Auckland Notes

(By "Call Up.")

THE rebroadcast of the King's speech from IYA on Tuesday night was a great performance. After the first part, when static was noticeable, the broadcast came through remarkably clearly. It is easily the best rebroadcast from a short-wave which we have had, and all the local listeners who sat up to get it were amply rewarded. At times the speech came through so well that one might have thought the speakers were in the next room. Mr. Wilford's speech was especially clear. After the rebroadcast, when IYA officials were indulging in hot pies, peas, and coffee, messages of high praise for the station's effort were received.

THE Northern Boxing Association refused to allow the fight between Billy Thomas (Wales) and Lachie Macdonald (New Zealand) to be broadcast from the Town Hall on Monday night, and it is a point of interest that they had an exceptionally poor house. The fighting was hard and willing, and would have given excellent material for a broadcast commentary.

THE Sanders Cup and the two M.C.C. cricket matches in Auckland are among sporting functions to be broadcast from IYA in the near future. The Takapuna races are also to be broadcast—from a position outside the course!

THE patience of a busy staff at IYA is often taxed by listeners who persist in ringing up to ask fatuous questions. For instance, on Tuesday night a well-meaning lady rang up.

"Is the King's speech to be broadcast to-night?" she asked.

"Yes" (patiently and politely).

"Is it from the Naval Conference?"

"Yes" (patiently and politely).

"Will the King be speaking?"

"Yes" (still politely but not so patiently).

SOME interesting programmes have been arranged for broadcasting from IYA during February. These include a special Dickens night by the Dickens Fellowship on February 7, the famous writer's birthday; a whole night devoted to pantomime, and items by Elton Black and Bennetto. The latter are two professional artists well known in England, who will broadcast both comedy and straight stuff. Mr. Owen Pritchard, IYA programme organiser, has worked with them previously when they appeared on the same bill.

THE report that programmes are to commence at noon, and that the silent nights are to be abolished this winter, has naturally been well received locally. The increased hours, however, will put a severe strain on the supply of local talent, which even now is found to be so comparatively scarce that approximately eighteen hours a week are devoted to gramophone records. Even the task of selecting the gramophone records is no easy one, for about one hundred and fifty different records are played from IYA in an average week. The New Zealand station managers and programme organisers have to use their artists like a cricket captain uses his bowlers—give the best ones a turn, then let them rest while the change bowlers (or artists) carry on, and then put the best ones on again for another spell.

If Dickens Had Broadcast.

As Versatile an Entertainer as a Writer

ANNOUNCEMENTS to the effect that a Dickens night is to be featured from both Australian and New Zealand stations appear elsewhere. Now that attention has been focussed upon this master, not a few listeners will try to imagine what the result would have been had Dickens actually been able to broadcast.

Suppose he had been born a century later. Suppose that instead of finding himself growing up in a period when enraged workers were smashing factory machinery, when the triumph of coal and iron was only beginning, when Chartism was rife, and when imprisonment for begging was common, he had found himself in an atmosphere of jazz, cocktails, women in business, impressionism in art, musicians writing symphonic works descriptive of football matches—what influence would it have had on the development of his genius?

It is an interesting speculation. For without a doubt, Dickens would have been as unexcelled over the ether as he was in the medium which he was forced by Fate to choose. He would make an ideal broadcaster. He was a great speaker. One has only to read some of his collected speeches to realise his command of word and thought, and those who heard him tell of the hold he had on his audience, compelling them to tears or laughter.

In the present broadcasting programmes there are one or two artistes who seem to have caught the public imagination by providing material peculiarly suitable for performance in front of the microphone, and in almost every case their success can be attributed to one factor. It is almost always because they take their material from real life, subjecting it, of course, to the rigid selection which is the secret of all art.

The Ideal Broadcaster.

IT is only thus, by taking a widely human attitude, by embracing all the little comedies and tragedies which are likely to come the way of the average man and woman, that it is possible to appeal to so diverse a body of people as the immense radio public. The ideal broadcaster must be a mirror in which is reflected humorously, whimsically, tragically—it does not matter much which—the world in which he moves and lives and has his being.

If one takes this to be a roughly accurate definition of the really successful radio entertainer, it inevitably follows that Dickens would have felt quite as much at home in front of a microphone as he did in his study with pen and paper. He was as much at home as he was at his reading desk when he thrilled his audiences with his rendering of the murder of Nancy by Bill Sikes—and roused them to roars of laughter when he presented Pickwick, Sam or Tony Weller. His rendering of the "Christmas Carol" will never be forgotten by those who heard him.

"So Sanely British."

FOR he was, above all, a mirror in which was perfectly reflected the age in which he lived; its characters,

its institutions, its virtues and its vices. He took for the raw material of his novels those things which, by the very nature of his audience, the broadcaster must choose. He portrayed the everyday lives of everyday people of his own generation, just those kind of people whose descendants now switch on the wireless every night in their countless thousands.

He had the faculty of reflecting the life of his day and creating characters, which even if sometimes a little exaggerated, yet live and are vividly representative of their times.

His whole character and outlook, so sanely British, would endear him to listeners if, by some miracle, he could be projected into the twentieth century. And what a wide field he would find to-day for his wholesome satire and the cheerful optimism which he could show even in the face of the depths of misery!

He would have no difficulty in finding modern counterparts for Mr. Bumble, that parochial functionary who could be human but only showed it at very rare moments; or for the improvident Mr. Micawber; or even for that humbug, Mr. Pecksniff. His hatred for shams and his reforming zeal would find no lack of subjects to-day. But where he reached one person by his novels, he could to-day reach fifty via the microphone. Would he be the sort of man to miss such an opportunity?

In any case he was as successful aurally in his own day as he was in the medium of the written word. His readings and his lecture tours met with great receptions wherever he went, indicating that he had the makings of a wireless "personality." Even to-day, nearly sixty years after his death, I find no lack of interest in my own stage interpretations of his work.

It seems impossible that any man could achieve a reputation, in his own lifetime, more brilliant and widespread than his. One cannot help feeling, however, that had his genius flourished a century later, his radio reputation would have been even greater!

THE International Consultative Committee of the Technique of Radio Electric Communications has classified wireless waves as follows:—Long, 3000 and upwards; medium, 200 to 3000; intermediate, 50 to 200; short, 10 to 50; ultra-short, below 10, affect the weather!

Rev. J. Robertson, M.A.

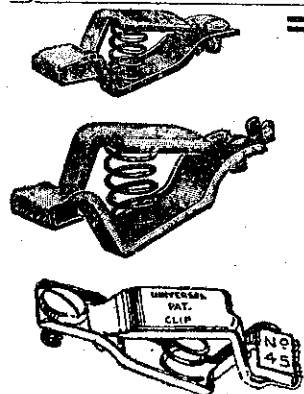
Early Departure for Sydney

ONE of New Zealand's radio personalities, the Rev. J. Robertson, M.A., pastor of Oxford Terrace Baptist Church, Christchurch, is leaving shortly for Sydney, where he is taking charge of one of the largest Baptist Churches in that big city. He is leaving New Zealand because the winter in these isles is too rigorous for the health of Mrs. Robertson. Since coming to Christchurch from Australia a few years ago, Mr. Robertson's voice has become very familiar to listeners throughout the whole of New Zealand, for he has been an exceptionally popular preacher "on the air." He is gifted with an admirable radio voice and presence, which his church has become noted for its excellent choir and congregational singing.

The Rev. Robertson has always been a staunch supporter of the policy of broadcasting divine services, and he has been a member of the 3YA Church Committee, the first of such committees to be formed in New Zealand, since its inception. But not only as a preacher is Mr. Robertson known on the air. He has delivered interesting lectures concerning Australia, and as "Story-man" he is beloved by all children who tune in on Friday evenings to 3YA. Mr. Robertson's departure will be greatly regretted by all radio listeners throughout the Dominion, and their best wishes will go with him on his return to Australia. Mr. Robertson was a chaplain with the Australian troops during the war.

Personal News

THE number of New Zealand broadcasting artists who go overseas, where they invariably are successful, is surprising. This is indicative of the high standard of talent in New Zealand and of the fact that the leading artists in this Dominion are to be heard on the air. Auckland has of late lost several excellent performers and others are about to travel abroad. Miss Gladys Gamman is going Home next month in order to acquire further training in elocution. Mr. Reg. Richards, a leading baritone, is leaving for Sydney. Among recent departures for Australia have been Miss Beryl Smith and Miss Lilian Quinn. Miss Ailsa Nicol, a highly gifted 2YA vocalist, is also about to visit the Old Country to further her musical training. Mr. Austin Blackie, the well-known Wellington tenor, recently went to Australia.

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