

# The First Radio Wedding



EVER since the inception of Station 2YA there has been an "Aunt Gwen" who has gladdened the hearts of thousands of children through the medium of the microphone. There was probably no personality better known to the children of New Zealand than "Aunt Gwen" of 2YA, and it is not surprising then that her wedding and the consequent departure from her post was filled with interest. Realising the widespread interest of this event, the Broadcasting Company wisely suggested a broadcast of the wedding. Such a broadcast had not been attempted before, with the result that the interest in Wednesday's event was twofold.

The ceremony was scheduled to take place in St. Paul's Pro-Cathedral, Wellington, at 3 p.m., Wednesday, but long before that time a great crowd had collected, and by 2 p.m. there was scarcely standing room in the large cathedral. Just before the ceremony there were collected outside the church a crowd that stretched from the doors right across and down the wide street. There were probably 2000 spectators.

A mighty cheer went up as the bride approached, and the interested spectators crowded forward to catch a glimpse of one many knew only through 2YA.

THE broadcast from the cathedral commenced with the strains of the organ, at which Mr. Robert Parker officiated. This part of the broadcast was not the least interesting of the afternoon's relay, for it was one of the very rare occasions when Mr. Parker, who is probably the most noted musician in the Southern Hemisphere, has broadcast. Listeners who are musically inclined would appreciate the feeling and technique which characterises Mr. Parker's renderings.

THE wave of excitement that was set up with "Aunt Gwen's" approach to the church ran through the church as she moved up to the altar on the arm of her father. Interest was not solely on "Aunt Gwen," for there was a very large number of visitors who were anxious to see Mr. Stennett, the bridegroom, who was attended by Mr. R. S. Allright (of the Melodie Four) in the capacity of best man.

The service, performed by Archdeacon Innes-Jones, came over the air perfectly, and listeners were for the first time in broadcasting history able to hear the decisive words "I will."

At the conclusion, the Archdeacon gave a short address, adjuring the newly-wedded to keep their faith in and to practice prayer, and to neglect no opportunity that may occur to join God's people in praise and worship.

THE bridal pair left the church to the strains of the Wedding March from "Lohengrin," and the chatter of the vast concourse gathered outside was distinctly audible.

The bridal party looked very beautiful as they left the church, and it

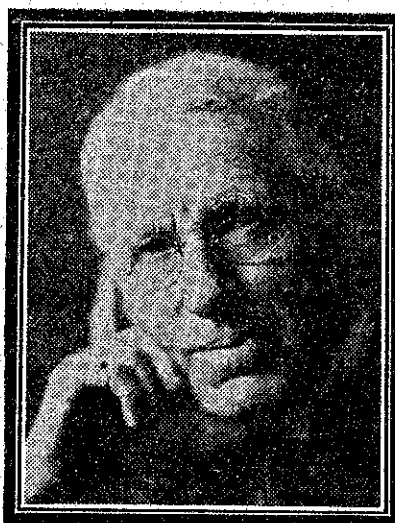
The widespread influence of radio broadcasting was evident by the interest centering round the wedding of Miss Gwen Shepherd, "Aunt Gwen," of 2YA, which event took place Wednesday last, when some two thousand interested spectators assembled in and about the Pro-cathedral, Wellington, to witness what proved to be the largest public wedding for very many years. It is estimated that the vast audience to that event numbered over 30,000.

needed a television equipment to convey to listeners the colourful scene.

The bride was wearing a gown of ivory net and Honiton lace over georgette. The long skirt of the net reached in deep points nearly to the ground. The gown was finished with a large bow of shell pink and white satin on the left side. Her veil of ivory net was lightly embroidered in silver and fell

caped, and the vast crowd melted far more quickly than it had collected.

Here a kindly and considerate thought on the part of the bride and bridegroom must be noted. Although Wednesday is normally a silent day at 2YA, Mr. Collins, the operator, was perforce in attendance, and "Aunt Gwen" performed a characteristically gracious and kindly act in stopping at the



MR. ROBERT PARKER, C.M.G.

One of the most distinguished musicians in New Zealand: His rendering of the Wedding March will long be remembered by those privileged to listen in to Aunt Gwen's wedding.

from a coronet of pearls. She wore a string of pearls and carried a beautiful bouquet presented by Mr. R. A. Nicol.

Mrs. Claude C. Moss ("Aunt Huia," sister of the bride) was matron of honour and wore a frock in a deep shade of pink silk net over crepe de chine. French flowers in pastel shades decorated the frock, and she wore a wide hat of crinoline straw. She carried a bouquet of rose pink sweet peas. Three small bridesmaids, Ailsa Woodward, Sonia Findlay, and Patricia Luke, attended, wearing frocks of frilled pink taffetas all in the same shade, wide pink crinoline hats finished with band and long ends of blue ribbon. They carried Victorian posies of pink sweet peas.

ONCE outside the church the whole scene was one of great animation. Photographers with their tall unwieldy cameras seemed to be everywhere, and confetti covered far more than the bride and bridegroom. On all sides there was a pressing crowd, and there was great difficulty in negotiating the car through it. The car finally es-

caped, looking very radiant and beautiful, to receive personally Mr. Collins's congratulations and good wishes.

THE reception at the home of the parents of the bride was another feature of the unique broadcast, and while the host and hostess were receiving the guests, Mr. Drummond, announcer of 2YA, described very ably the brilliant scene as the visitors moved to and fro on the lawn, meeting the bride and bridegroom.

Hosts of congratulatory telegrams were now being received and read out from all over the Dominion, from Sydney, Melbourne and other parts of Australia, and one pathetic one, complaining, "We kids don't like that naughty man who is taking you away, Aunt Gwen."

Another from Taranaki read: "Please convey to Aunt Gwen heartiest congratulations and best wishes from all Taranaki listeners. All sets will be in tune with 2YA this afternoon."

On behalf of the Radio Broadcasting Company, Mr. W. R. Harris, wired: "Members of the staff of the Radio Broadcasting Company in Christchurch

are very interested guests at yours, the first radio wedding in New Zealand, and join with me extending to you best wishes for a very happy future."

The guests then assembled and honoured the toasts of the day. There were a number of speeches, and these were all broadcast. Archdeacon Innes-Jones was chairman. The toast of the "Bride and Bridegroom" was proposed by Captain A. V. Hale Monro, and replied to by Mr. Stennett. Mr. Guy Monro proposed the toast of "The Bridesmaids," and Mr. R. S. Allright replied. Mr. H. A. Huggins proposed the toast of "The Bride's Parents," which was endorsed by Major Eric Reeves and replied to by Mr. Shepherd.

ON behalf of my wife, said Mr.

Bruce Stennett, and myself I want to thank you for the cordial manner in which you have honoured the toast to our health and future happiness. We seek happiness in our new life and I feel that the good wishes you have expressed will contribute in a large measure towards accomplishing that end. You have all helped to make this occasion one to be long remembered and cherished by us and, indeed, it will form part of the basis of our future.

I want to thank those Radio listeners who have bestowed so many kind acts and who have sent messages of kindly thought. Particularly do I want the children to hear my words of thanks. All those boys and girls who have listened to the Children's Hour with much interest and who have made Aunt Gwen's work at 2YA such a pleasure. We give them our best wishes and hope they shall be very happy always.

I also want to express my appreciation of Mr. Allwright for the excellent manner in which he has carried out the responsibilities of best man. His assistance has been invaluable in helping to bring this event to such a happy conclusion.

Above all we extend our grateful thanks to you for the delightful presents. We accept these gifts with the good wishes accompanying them. We look forward to the future with high hopes and the graciousness of all will be cherished as a lasting memory.

THE station director, Mr. J. Davies, addressed a few appreciative words on behalf of 2YA:—

"It gives me very much pleasure, as station director of 2YA, with which Aunt Gwen has been associated for nearly two years, to convey to her the heartiest good wishes for her future happiness and prosperity from the staff of the station and myself.

"In her position of organiser of the children's session, Aunt Gwen speedily attained a high standard of efficiency and established through the microphone a wonderful intimacy with her youthful listeners. Thousands of letters regularly received convey the appreciation evoked by her sincerity and sustained enthusiasm.

"A very remarkable expression of interest in her was afforded at the Radio Exhibition last winter, when, at short notice, it was announced that Aunt Gwen would be available to meet the children and parents, and on the two afternoons she was the centre of