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—AND—

Electric Home Journal

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WELLINGTON, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1930.

SHORT-WAVE BROADCASTING.

LISTENERS will have been interested in the experimental transmissions carried out last week and to be repeated again this week between 2YA, 2ME, Sydney, and W2XAF, Schenectady. A certain degree of success was achieved in last week's experiment, and it is to be hoped that conditions will permit of still greater success being attained in the further tests. The purpose of these tests is to ascertain the possibility of Rear-Admiral Byrd, immediately on his return to Dunedin, coming before the microphone at 4YA and addressing the radio audience, not only of New Zealand but of the United States, on the results of his long visit to Antarctica. The American radio audience is naturally keenly desirous of hearing Rear-Admiral Byrd as soon as possible, and it is hoped that by means of his speaking to 4YA, and that being picked up by 2YA, either direct or by land-line, thence relayed through 2ME, Sydney, W2XAF, Schenectady, may be able to receive the Rear-Admiral's voice and convey his remarks to radio listeners in the United States. That is the purpose behind the tests, and it is sincerely to be hoped that the technical skill and atmospheric conditions will be such as to enable a successful outcome to be attained although it may be that full success will not be achieved until Admiral Byrd reaches 2YA.

OPPORTUNITY has been taken of this proposal and the experimental tests to revive in the public Press the suggestion that New Zealand should instal a short-wave broadcasting station, in order to enter the circle of nations enjoying such a service. The comment has been made in the course of this Press discussion that New Zealand

would benefit very largely by the provision of a short-wave broadcasting station in the matter of publicity, and the "Radio Record" has been criticised for observations we made some two or three weeks back to the effect that, so far as listeners in this country were concerned, the preferable and more economical course would be pursuance of the policy instituted by the Radio Broadcasting Company of arranging for New Zealand programmes to be given by stations in the United States and re-transmitted in New Zealand. We still hold to that view in the circumstances of the case.

WE are not in the least to be taken as being averse to the establishment of a short-wave broadcasting station in New Zealand for publicity purposes, provided the cost of establishment and the maintenance of that service is derived, as it should be, from the National Publicity Funds or from some special arrangement, and provided the station is not placed in such a position as to interfere with existing stations. If it is proposed, however, that the fund contributed to by the 50,000 radio listeners for the provision of a radio broadcasting service for their own entertainment in the Dominion shall be raided for the provision of a short-wave broadcasting station to confer publicity benefit upon the whole of New Zealand, then we do enter an emphatic protest. The Press discussion to which we refer has ignored this very salient point, and while discoursing in generality upon the benefits to be conferred upon the Dominion by the provision of a short-wave broadcasting station, carefully avoided any discussion of the practical matter of ways and means. That, in our view, is the crux of the question. On a special occasion, such as the return of Rear-Admiral Byrd from the Antarctica, unquestionably the eyes and ears of the world will be turned towards New Zealand. But how often does an event of that importance occur? In the broad question of the establishment of a short-wave broadcasting station for conveying to the world programmes from New Zealand, we take quite an academic interest, although we have yet to be convinced that the world is very anxious to hear regularly from us. The responsibility for that provision does not fall, however, in our view, upon either the Radio Broadcasting Company or the circle of radio listeners. The Radio Broadcasting Company is concerned wholly with the domestic market. Its resources, supplied by the 50,000 listeners, are taxed to meet the demands of that market. Listeners are only too familiar with the occasional criticism demanding improvement in the programmes. What would be said if the thousands of pounds necessary for a short-wave broadcasting station were diverted from programme supply to that objective? The question needs only to be asked to be answered.

IF Press correspondents critical of our attitude are so keen for the provision of a short-wave broadcasting station for general publicity purposes, then their endeavours should be directed towards inducing the Government to make special arrangements with the Company. It is a publicity question. The National Publicity Fund should be charged with the expenditure. In Australia a very powerful company, Amalgamated Wireless, Limited, maintains its short-wave experimental station as a subsidiary to other objectives. It has established Beam services between Great Britain and Australia, and this experimental station has a definite commercial aspect. In New Zealand the condition is different. Here the proposal, necessarily, boils down to a national effort.

IN the particular case now under review, the provision of means for enabling Rear-Admiral Byrd to discourse to his American friends, the Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand is only too anxious, as it has shown, to afford every possible assistance. The tests in progress demonstrate that, and, needless to say, will be continued to the limits of practicality in the effort to please and serve the people of the United States.

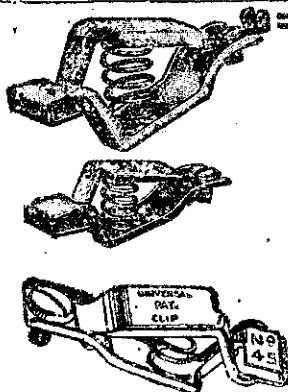
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