## 5,000 Listeners Record Disapproval of Rugby Broadcasting Ban

An extraordinary situation has arisen. The delegates to the New Zealand Rugby Union refused to grant an application made by the Broadcasting Company on behalf of listeners. Then, "Because the company was greatly concerned about the hospitals," the Management Committee resolved that the descriptions of the English matches could be broadcast if donations be made to hospitals! The Union takes the view that the whole question of broadcasting the matches centres round the hospitals, and that it would be a big factor to the company if the matches were broadcast. The first is wrong, the latter right, though not in the sense meant by the meeting.

Letters that have been received on the subject show that the broadcasting is eagerly looked for by listeners throughout the country, and not only those in hospitals. Everyone not in hospitals cannot attend the matches, yet they, too, have expressed concern and indignation at the Union's action. In the second place it would be a big factor for the company.

All four stations would broadcast; relay lines would have to be secured, stations would have to be on the air when they should be silent, and extra staff would be employed, and their reward—? To broadcast the matches will give Rugby football one of the greatest impulses it has yet had.



HE first application of the Broadcasting Company to broadcast commentaries of the matches in connection with the tour of the English team was refused by the New Zealand Rugby Union. Immediately the lis

tening public registered its disapproval in the form of letters of protest to the company, to the daily Press, and to ourselves. The reason advanced by the Union was that the gate takings of the smaller centres would be affected They held the view that the privilege of broad casting running commentaries should be paid for by the company.

During the Sarron-Donovan fight in Wellington Mr. G. Aldridge, secretary of the N.Z. Boxing Association, made an appeal to his un seen audience to express their opinion by writing to him. Altogether about 500 letters were received, each letter representing the views of a large number of listeners. It has been estimated that the number of opinions registered was 5000. The general feeling was one of very strong objection to the action of the Rugby Union.

Realising the amount of interest that the listening public were displaying in the matter the subject was brought up at the last meeting of the Union, and the daily Press reports the meeting as follows:—

"The Management Committee of the New Zealand Rugby Union last evening decided that if Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand would make a donation to provide radio sets for the use of patients in hospitals and charitable institutions, the Union would give it permission to broadcast reports of the matches played by the British team in the Dominion.

"There is a general impression abroad,' said the chairman of the Union (Mr. S. S. Dean), 'that the Management Committee are opposed to the broadcasting of matches on account of fear of pecuniary loss. This is quite erroneous, as the sending out of reports of matches will not affect us one iota. The broadcasting of matches played by the New Zealand team would affect other unions, with the result that when Test matches are played these unions' gates would suffer. Quite a number of unions have written to me on the subject. However, as the Radio Company have expressed such concern

for patients in hospitals, I move that we write asking them whether they are prepared to make a donation for the privilege of broadcasting the Test matches, the donations to be set aside to provide wireless sets in hospitals and charitable institutions. The Test matches will be a big factor to the Radio Company, and they should be prepared to make a donation for the privilege of reporting them.'

"Mr. H. S. Leith seconded the motion.

"Mr. T. A. Fletcher said the chairman had set out the position fairly and clearly. The

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Extract from a letter to Mr. Aldridge: "I might mention that owing to the great advertisement the fight had at New Plymouth through your splendid description, there was a big crowd went over from here especially for the Wellington fight. This is in itself a proof that broadcasting does not keep people away, but, on the contrary, excites interest and a desire to see personally what has been described. It is, in fact, a jolly good advertisement. I hope to have the pleasure of thanking you personally in Dunedin. I am certainly going to see the next match."

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Union's offer would test the sincerity of the Radio Company.

"The motion was carried unanimously.

"The North Taranaki Radio Society wrote, asking the New Zealand Union to facilitate the broadcasting of the principal matches during the coming season.

"The Buller Union wrote, stating that they were in favour of the matches of the British tour being broadcast where possible, as they would not have the opportunity of seeing them play."

## Newspaper Comment.

THE question of the broadcasting of the matches to be played during the forthcoming visit of the English Rugby team has been the subject for considerable newspaper comment.

The "Otago Daily Times" states:—"The chairman of the Otago Rugby Union said the delegates might give a lead on the question of broadcasting matches to the Union's delegates, who would be appointed to attend the annual meeting of the New Zealast Rugby Union. He personally would allow all matches to be broadcast. (Hear, hear!) They might lose revenue,

or they might not, by broadcasting, but it would certainly help to sustain interest in the game. There might be just a fear that commercialism was becoming too prominent an aspect in their game, to the detriment of the game for the game's sake. (Hear, hear!) He would move that it be an instruction to their delegates to the meeting of the New Zealand Union to support the broadcasting of the matches with Britain. It was also decided that so far as Otago was concerned, permission be granted to broadcast all matches."

The "Christchurch Times" on Friday last devoted a leading article to the matter. The editor wrote in the following strain, under the heading "A Point in Advertising":—

"The New Zealand Rugby Union seems to have slipped into deep water in its little argument with the Broadcasting Company over the broadcasting of reports of the international football matches this season. Its first view, that the broadcasting of reports would prejudice the attendance of matches, was understandable enough though rather shortsighted. But whatever case it had in this respect it abandoned when it offered to allow the broadcasting of reports on condition that the Broadcasting Company provided receiving sets and apparatus for hospitals.

"The Broadcasting Company, of course, is as much concerned with the provision of receiving sets in hospitals as newspapers are with the provision of spectacles for elderly readers. And we should imagine that the radio dealers and the opticians would have their own views on this matter. What interests us, however is the point that may appeal, probably, neither to the Rugby Union nor the Broadcasting Company, but it appeals to a newspaper and a newspaper's readers. If the example of the Rugby Union were followed, we should have the reporters excluded from playing fields on the ground that people might prefer reading the reports to seeing the matches.

'The fact is that whatever tends to stimulate public interest or to widen the interest in events or in any business must have the general effect of inducing people to become enthusiasts in the one case or purchasers in the other. This is the broad truth behind all publicity campaigns, and it is the justification for probably 90 per cent of the world's advertising. We are glad