

Seeing Radio from a New Angle

The Other Man's Point of View

By "CALL UP"

IN a previous issue, the writer tried to show how the radio viewpoints of different people did not agree. The angles taken by the educationalist, the gramophile dealer, and the layman were so different and interesting that I have collected further viewpoints from men prominent in Auckland's radio world.

The next man whose viewpoint I sought was Mr. T. T. Garland, better known to Auckland children as "Uncle Tom," and to adult listeners as a humorist. "Uncle Tom," as he prefers to be called, was asked to give his point of view on broadcasting for children, and the sincere way in which he gave it proves that his heart is in his job, or hobby, as he calls it, of being a radio "uncle."

"I believe," he said, "that more adults than children enjoy the children's hour, but this must not be taken as any evidence that the children's hour is not a success. There is a quality in the children's hour which makes it quite different from any other broadcasting hour, and which makes a tremendous appeal to both young and old. The quality I mean is the intimacy between those in the studio and those listening in the homes. It is one hour without any of what may be termed the official routine of broadcasting. The entertainment is more spontaneous, there is more originality, and a more human element.

It is this charm of getting closer, this more personal touch, which gives the children's hour its influence to attract listeners of all ages. If radio can exercise any moral influence on the world I feel sure that the children's hour is its best and greatest medium.

"In conducting a children's hour one's subject is primarily entertainment, with a little education in the background. However, when at its best it becomes something a little more personal than pure entertainment. I always picture to myself, when I am before the microphone, an ordinary middle-class sitting room, with dad reading the paper, mother sewing, and the children listening. I am sure this helps to give a better 'atmosphere' than if one imagines one is addressing an audience of thousands of children. In fact, I think the children's hour should be called the 'family hour.'"

Other remarks of "Uncle Tom's" were that he considered that a slightly later hour than 5-6 p.m. would be more suitable for the children's hour; that he has enjoyed his hobby being an "uncle" tremendously during the whole of the three years he has been pursuing it; and that more important than the elimination of the silent days is the provision of Sunday morning programmes, for this is the time in the week when most people are in their homes.

THERE are few listeners who are not interested in some sport or other, and who do not enjoy a certain number of the sporting broadcasts. In looking for someone to buttonhole for an opinion on radio from the sporting man's angle, I naturally thought first

of Mr. Gordon Hutter, whose able broadcast descriptions of various sporting fixtures have won him great popularity.

Mr. Hutter is a versatile sport and is entitled to speak on behalf of all sportsmen. He has broadcast descriptions of racing, trotting, Rugby football, swimming, motor-bicycle races, tennis, boxing, wrestling, yachting and cricket, and what is more, he has actively participated in these sports. He sailed in the yacht "Joan" in Sanders Cup races, won the Grammar School boxing tournament as a boy, has played senior grade cricket in Auckland, has been captain of the Orlenhams Life-saving Club, wrestles regularly with Ebert, the well-known German professional, and has played both Rugby and Association football, hockey and tennis with more than average success. Surely this record will take some surpassing.

"In regard to the old question: 'Does broadcasting harm attendance?' I have the proved and confident answer 'No.'"

"Broadcasting benefits attendance, as has been proved time and time

again. Take wrestling, for instance. At the first big match in Auckland, before they were broadcast, there were only about three hundred people. Now, one can hardly get a seat.

"The football, wrestling, speedway, and cricket people do all they possibly can to help us and nothing seems to be too much trouble. The attendance at all these fixtures is satisfactory, and the moral is obvious.

"Broadcasting sporting fixtures is by no means an easy job. Football broadcasts are the easiest to do and give the best results, but cricket is hard. The races and trots were all right when we were allowed on the course, but it is a different story now. For Ellerslie we set up the 'mike' on the verandah of a private house which faces right across the course to the totalisator. With a powerful telescope I can read the figures on the 'tote,' although they are the best part of a mile away, while I follow the actual race with field glasses. Unfortunately the crowd on the inside of the course obscure my view of the straight except for the jockey's caps.

"The Takapuna and Avondale

courses are comparatively easy to see from the outside, but the trotting course at Epsom is extremely hard and I can hardly see anything of the races. The traffic officers sometimes try to move us on, but we are used to this annoyance and can cope with it. At boxing and wrestling contests one of the hardest things to do is to keep some of the language used from going over the air. We also have to be pretty quick sometimes in saving the 'mike' from being smashed. Not long ago it was knocked over by the contestants in one match, but no harm resulted.

"I do not know the position in regard to the other stations, but I think IYA gives just about the right proportion of sporting items. Everything of special note in any branch of sport is done if possible, and I think the sports get their fair share of the broadcasting hours."

THE presentation of plays has for some time been a prominent feature of the IYA programme, and I interviewed Mr. J. M. Clark for his views on radio from the dramatic point of view. Mr. Clark is well qualified to speak on anything to do with plays, having been connected with the stage for over fifty years and having learnt most of what he knows of acting from none other than William Hoskins, the man who taught Henry Irving and who has been widely acclaimed as the greatest actor of his age. Mr. Clark has produced about half a dozen full evening plays from IYA.

"Soon after the present IYA opened," he said, "I suggested that good plays would prove acceptable to listeners if well done. I was told that it was thought to be quite impossible to expect listeners to spend a whole evening listening to a three-act play. Later they began to present short sketches and one-act plays, and then I was invited to produce some long plays, being distinctly told to confine myself to light pieces. However, I later put on Gilbert's 'Pygmalion and Galatea,' written in blank verse, and this was a great success in spite of pessimistic anticipations. Finally I had the temerity to produce 'Paola and Francesca,' a real tragedy, also written in verse form. This also was a success. The successes of these two plays makes me inclined to think that the public can appreciate better quality than is popularly supposed.

"I think that radio will evolve a new type of drama for its own special purposes; in fact, this has already happened.

"However, special radio plays can never bring authors the same monetary reward as stage productions, and no doubt this will stop many clever writers from attempting special work for broadcasting.

"Two points for which I am a great stickler in producing plays for broadcasting are that the voices of the different characters must be plainly distinctive from each other and that the plays must be thoroughly rehearsed. If a play is merely read it cannot be expected to grip the listeners. It

(Concluded on page 40.)



IYA Trio who appear regularly, solo and in combination, will be heard in many delightful numbers this week.