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—AND—

Electric Home Journal

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PRESS VERSUS RADIO IN AMERICA.

NO other country has shown the stupendous development in either the radio or Press field that the United States has. These are two mighty forces, and concern is felt by leaders on both sides as to the ultimate outcome of development. It is undoubted that the growth of radio has been facilitated by the vigour put into its encouragement by numerous leading American papers. By establishing their own radio stations many papers sought to render a service to their community and establish themselves more favourably in the minds of their readers. Of the scores of such stations that were established in the early years, a limited number only remain prominent among the leading 150 stations which now, it is admitted, dominate the air in the United States. Some two years back the number of stations listed exceeded 800, but that number has steadily declined with the growth of amalgamation and co-ordination, and the inevitable elimination of weak individual units.

TO-DAY, therefore, the position is becoming clarified, and protagonists on the side of Press and radio are assessing the factors which determine future growth. Radio in the United States has been largely built to its present standard through the advertising revenue provided by what are termed sponsored programmes. For instance, huge national organisations will provide artists of note for a certain regular hour each week, advertise them extensively, and give the hour to the American public with but slight mention of their product. That is advertising in its finest development. Other advertising is of a cruder and more direct nature. Nevertheless both types exist, and have grown immeasurably in volume in recent years, until to-day the advertising revenue at the back of radio broadcasting stations runs to between four and five millions sterling per annum. Simultaneously with that development, the advertising revenue of the Press has shown a decline, although whether this is attributable to diversion of moneys to the radio field or a natural decline through business factors cannot be definitely stated.

THE position, however, is so thought-provoking that at a recent conference in Washington a debate occurred between a prominent editor and the head of the National Broadcasting Company. From the address of the latter an interesting glimpse is obtained of the broadcasting situation in the United States. According to the statistics advanced by Mr. Aylesworth, president of the National Broadcasting Company, there are to-day in the United States about 14,500,000 radio sets; it is claimed that 80 per cent. are in use more than 2½ hours a day, and that an average of about

four people listen to a radio set during that period. The radio audience, therefore, is conservatively set at approximately forty million Americans for 2½ hours per day. The National Broadcasting Company does not in itself own the chain it operates. It links up approximately 75 stations, independently owned, with a programme service. Twenty of these stations are owned by newspapers. In discussing the future of radio, Mr. Aylesworth said that the ideal news feature of radio was a sporting event planned a long way ahead, with announcers sent to the field of action, in order to give a detailed description. In spite of the interest evoked by such a radio broadcast, he contended no disservice was rendered the Press by minute-to-minute description. The public bought their papers as before for detailed reading. Neither did the broadcast affect attendance. Tex Rickard, the famous promoter, long held that it would, but he changed his mind on the night of the Dempsey-Tunney fight, when the attendance of the public topped all records in spite of the fight being broadcast.

IN the course of his speech, Mr. Aylesworth made a contrast with the situation in Britain. Naturally enough, he claimed that the situation in America was better, and attributed the fact to newspaper backing. In this Mr. Aylesworth may be credited with a little natural partisanship. Whereas admittedly Britain has but some two and a half million licensed listeners compared with the fourteen and a half sets claimed in the United States, these figures may not be absolutely correct. It is known that there is a considerable amount of piracy in Britain, and the actual number of sets might easily be three million. Similarly, the fourteen and a half million sets credited to the United States are doubtless based upon trade sales. Many of those sets unquestionably will have been discarded, so that the figure given is doubtless on the high side. Allowing for those factors and the relative difference in population, however, it can be believed that the situation, from the numerical point of view, in the United States is very satisfactory to the trade. The credit for this may be given largely to the fact that American organisations held the primary patents in connection with radio, and, having at their door a huge market and the economic possibility of mass production, they were able to exploit their field more quickly and effectively than Britain. In the quality of programme and service to the listener, in the use of radio as an educational factor and a source of musical culture, Britain will more than stand up to any comparison with the United States, where the listener, as Mr. Aylesworth himself admits, suffers from a plethora of stations and a plenitude of hours—some stations running 20 hours out of the 24. Much capital invested in stations will, in his own words, fade away, and as they go the responsibility of those remaining will intensify. Britain's service was organised from the beginning. America's service is becoming organised through pressure of necessity.

British Rugby Tour Children's Session

"Radio Record" Score League of Nations Project Cards

IN connection with our announcement that score cards issued by the "Radio Record" were available on request to listeners forwarding a self-addressed envelope, several subscribers have written suggesting that the score card should be enclosed with the "Radio Record" when being posted each week. This would certainly be an efficacious and economical method of distribution, if it were not for the fact that the postal regulations prohibit this course being taken. In those circumstances the best we could do was to supply our bookseller agents with bulk quantities for distribution, and announce to our regular subscribers that score cards might be procured either from booksellers or ourselves.

A MEETING of the 4YA Children's Session Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, June 5, Captain Chandler (representing the Salvation Army) presiding, and there were also present: Miss Hare (representing the Y.W.C.A.), Miss Feichley (representing the Girl Guides' Association), Miss Dutton (representing Presbyterian Social Service), Pastor W. D. More (children's session organiser), Mr. Mackenzie (station director).

Mrs. Denton Leach, representing the League of Nations, was also present, and she spoke on the desirability of interesting the young people in the work of the League of Nations. Various suggestions by which the aims of the League could be advanced were discussed.