



MR. G. McNAMARA
Head of Post and Telegraph Department,
under whose purview the national development of radio would fall under the Government plans
—S. P. Andrew, photo

other words, the Government has decided to plunge into an experiment involving an unknown expenditure, without even adequate appreciation of the complex and harassing difficulty of arranging hundreds of programmes annually, to suit a catholic variety of tastes in a vast audience of extremely sensitive critics. If the Broadcasting Company had relinquished its license in despair, there might have been some excuse for the Government's calling on its technicians to keep the service going, but its action in deliberately assuming the responsibility is incomprehensible. There has never been a more foolish example of State interference in a field positively marked for private enterprise nor one that will be more vehemently condemned by the general public."

THE "Times," Christchurch:—"It is not clear from the Minister's statement whether he proposes to continue the present policy of entering into a contract with a broadcasting company or whether he proposes to saddle the Post and Telegraph Department with the business of broadcasting. His remarks left room for the latter inference. Public opinion, however, will certainly not tolerate any extension of Government activities in this direction. It is perfectly proper for the Government to maintain control of broadcasting, to insist on the provision of suitable equipment, to arrange the hours of broadcasting, and to see that the stations provide a satisfactory service. A Government broadcasting service, on the other hand, would be an incessant nuisance. As for the B class stations, the Minister seems to be contemplating a move that would simply make for confusion. If minor stations are licensed they will either have to carry on under present conditions, which means that they cannot be commercially profitable, or will have to be subsidised out of license fees from listeners, impairing the efficiency of the main stations; or else they will have to be given the right to broadcast advertising. Once a B station becomes commercially attractive there will be a rush for permits to broadcast, and it will be impossible for the Government to deny licenses to any if it

KEEN interest has been displayed by the Press in the announcement regarding radio made by the Postmaster-General. Leading articles have appeared in most influential papers, and almost wholly look askance at the idea of the State intruding itself into this field. In view of the importance of the matter to listeners we give excerpts from leading papers:

The "New Zealand Herald" states:—"The scheme is either grossly extravagant or too pretentious to be realised, and therefore represents promises that cannot be fulfilled. Mr. Donald admits that the provision of programmes has still to be arranged, but professes to be confident that, with suggestions from members of Parliament and others, this will be a simple matter. In

Still in the Melting Pot.

FOLLOWING on the announcement made on Monday, October 6, as to the Government's intentions regarding radio, the Postmaster-General has announced that the scheme is still "in the melting pot," and he preferred for the present not to elaborate the scheme in detail as it had not been finally worked out. However, the idea was that the Post and Telegraph Department would assume control of the technical side, attending to such matters as keeping the equipment in order and up to date. No plan had yet been developed as far as the broadcasting of programmes was concerned, but it was not intended that the department would conduct that part of the business. Mr. Donald expressed confidence that his department could attend to the technical work at the broadcasting station without any material increase in staff.

Subsequently, in the House of Representatives the Hon. J. B. Donald, in reply to an urgent question by the Leader of the Opposition, Right Hon. J. G. Coates, agreed that no financial commitments would be made by the Government concerning its plans for the future of radio broadcasting control until Parliament had had a chance to review any scheme drawn up. Drawing attention to the Postmaster-General's outline of the Government's intentions concerning radio control, Mr. Coates said expenditure would be necessary to give the scheme effect and in addition the question of policy was also intruded. He asked that before any commitments were made concerning expenditure full particulars of the Government's proposals should be placed before the House, including the estimated capital cost and the annual charges. Parliament would be rising shortly and he felt that the House should at least have a chance to examine the proposals. Not until it had had that chance should the Government take any action. Mr. Donald said he would give the assurance asked.

State Control of Radio

Ministerial Scheme not yet Mature

Parliament to discuss Proposals before final Commitment

issues one. The Minister has only to study the conditions obtaining in North America to realise that there is a real danger in weakness on this subject."

THE "Press," Christchurch:—"In announcing the Government's intention of placing the control of broadcasting in the hands of the Post and Telegraph Department, the Postmaster-General gave the odd impression that he was driven to speak before he was quite ready. The sketchiness of this "policy statement" was one sign of haste. The fact of its preceding any notice to the Radio Broadcasting Company, although the Minister "would have liked" to notify it first, was another; and when Mr. Donald collects himself and is able to fill out some of the blanks in his story, he may explain why he could not wait to tell it more completely or even delay it long enough to break the news to the present licensee, as he wished. However it is carried out, the change announced is sufficiently important and threatens a sufficiently great public expense to make it highly undesirable that there should be a rash or uncertain step at any stage. So far, it is not easy to be confident. Even



HON. J. B. DONALD
Postmaster-General, whose radio plans have excited general interest and controversy.
—S. P. Andrew, photo

if it is a habit of Mr. Donald's, which he illustrated a few days ago, to be a little uncertain of what he should say and when to say it, the Government appears to have made up its mind to undertake both great responsibility and great expense, and yet has decided "nothing definite . . . concerning the actual plan."

"Perhaps the most necessary suggestion (Conclusion page 2.)