

to make is the warning that neither the Post and Telegraph Department, nor Cabinet, nor any conceivable committee of Parliamentarians is likely to do anything but bungle the job of reorganising the programme policy, and they must all leave it alone. A State Department, or a branch of a State Department, ought no more to control what goes into the microphone and comes out of the loud speaker than it ought to control literature, art, the pulpit, or the Press. It will be reassuring to hear—if it is the truth—that there will be no such attempt."

The "Sun":—"Broadcasting has now become a national affair, and it is right that it should be under some form of Government supervision or control. Provincial listeners-in will feel themselves entitled to these extra services; but the cost of broadcasting is going to be heavily increased. The position would then be that the Government would either have to increase the license fees, or, failing that, rely on a large increase of licensed listeners-in. The number of licenses now held is in the neighbourhood of 50,000; but the Postmaster-General in his statement said that he thought the number could be increased to 100,000. If that can be done, there should be no reason to fear fee increases; but on the other hand there is everything to be urged in favour of a reduction in license fees for crystal sets."

"Star," Dunedin:—"The Broadcasting Company has been far from satisfying all its listeners; that would be an impossibility for any control. In the service which it gives, however, the company has very greatly exceeded the minimum requirements made of it by its contract, and the tendency has been continually to do more. The company has borne the labour and the cost of putting broadcasting on an established footing; in those inaugural years it has had no opportunity of earning the limit of profits allowed to it by its agreement; and it appears unlikely that its money would have been put into such an enterprise if it had not had good reason, from a previous Government, for thinking that, provided the best was made by it of early difficulties, its contract would be renewed. The calculation may have been made that, now that the heaviest spade work has been accomplished, with a department already in being, to take over the service and with the fees from listeners and dealers which it would receive, the Government would stand no chance of losing by its assumption of control. But the improved stations and the new stations which have been foreshadowed cannot be had for nothing; the time is the worst of all times for new Government expenditure on what is, after all, merely a luxury; and Government calculations of the financial prospects of new enterprises that are embarked upon can be sadly belied in practice. A Government broadcasting service, there is reason to fear, would be most likely to become a very routine, unadaptable service once it had been established. It would be no new experience if it should prove much harder to obtain improvements of it than from a private company; and it is not clear but that the services of the present company might be relieved of their chief hindrances to improvement by a revision of its contract with the Government."

"Star," Auckland:—"Many New Zealanders may ask why the Government, which has its hands so full of difficulties, should add to them by taking over the broadcasting stations and services. It is true that the company does not satisfy everybody, but it is reasonable to suppose that the service will improve still further, and what broadcasting system is there that is not a target for criticism? The Government cannot think that it is going to have an easy time as entertainer. The only justification for this unexpected change is the intention, expressed by the Postmaster-General, to add to the number of stations and bring all humble customers into the system. This should be a popular move. On the other hand, with one's experience of Government enterprises, one cannot help feeling doubtful about the finance of the scheme and the quality of the pro-

find another State service on his hands for subsidies. The Postmaster-General can be given credit for the best of intentions, even if he has acted precipitately, but it may be hoped that he will take time to reconsider what appears to be a hastily-conceived and ill-advised decision."

Amateur Song-Writers

ABOUT 250 entries were received for the IYA song-writing competition, which aroused much wider interest than was anticipated. When the awards have been made there will be a further competition for the musical setting. Finally the prize song will be broadcast with its best musical setting.

Readings from IYA

A REGULAR feature of the IYA programmes which is deserving of more notice than it is apt to get, is the literary selection given by the announcer, Mr. Culford Bell, during the afternoon session. Some particularly good essays on a wide variety of topics are secured for this, and last week we were given an excellent short story, "Call Up" congratulates Mr. Culford Bell on his consistently well-selected readings, and also on his very capable delivery of them.

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Recordings of Overseas Programmes

WE understand from the Broadcasting Company that the special equipment required for reproducing the electrical recordings of overseas broadcasting talent, which was the subject of investigation by Mr. A. R. Harris during his recent visit to America, is now in New Zealand, and the first installation will shortly be made at 2YA.

It is also understood that the sample recordings of overseas programmes procured by Mr. Harris have also arrived, and that they will be appearing on 2YA programmes as soon as possible after the equipment has been installed.

grammes. It is important to know what the taking over and the additions are going to cost the country and what are the estimates of annual revenue and expenditure. Moreover, in State control of a monopolistic publicity and entertainment service there is an obvious danger to freedom of thought and expression."

"Dominion," Wellington:—"Much water will flow under the bridge and, incidentally, a general election will be held before January, 1932, when the present Government proposes to take over the radio broadcasting service. Listeners should therefore not worry overmuch at a hypothetical event still far removed in time. Apparently the Government intends not only to elaborate the existing stations but to add seven new ones in provincial centres, each as good as or better than those already functioning in Auckland, Christchurch or Dunedin. That will cost money when State funds are supposed to be low. As a matter of fact the present licensee is reported to be willing to make these extensions. If that is so, why should the State step in to create a new department, more officials and fresh liabilities and at the same time lose the tax revenue it draws from the present company? The answer may be service. But since when did the State give better service at the same or even at a much higher price than private enterprise? Listeners should be very critical of this suggested transfer to officialdom and the general taxpayer on his guard lest he



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