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—AND—

Electric Home Journal

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RADIO PUBLISHING COMPANY OF NEW ZEALAND, LTD.,
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WELLINGTON, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1930.

ANOTHER BROADCASTING PROBLEM.

THE troubled sea of New Zealand broadcasting does not appear to be settling. Only a few weeks ago we learned that the Performing Rights Association was going to push its claims and that the "B" class stations would go off the air on September 1. The situation was finally adjusted, and the "B" stations are still operating. Then followed the unexpected and far-reaching statement that at the expiration of the Broadcasting Company's license it would not be renewed, that the Government would directly control broadcasting and that "B" stations were to be encouraged. Following this was the amplified statement that all was in the melting-pot. Now comes the ultimatum from record distributing companies that after November 1 free supplies of their records to all broadcasting stations must be cut out completely. In this respect no distinction has been made between "A" and "B" stations, and many of the latter have intimated that it will be impossible for them to continue after the date nominated.

That the Government was anxious to stabilise the position was assured a deputation of the Listeners' League who waited upon Mr. Taverner, Minister for Public Works, but just what this will mean in terms of direct action has yet to be seen. In the meantime stations either pay retail price for the records of the companies issuing the demand or cease to broadcast them. It appears that only the main record companies have made this demand.

As Mr. Taverner states, just what power gramophone companies or the Performing Rights Association had under New Zealand law is not perfectly clear. In effect the demands are directing retailers as to what they shall do with property they have paid for and just how far this demand is legitimised under New Zealand law remains

to be seen. Violation of the demand would probably bring about the cancelling of the record supply—it is hard to conceive that it could do else—and on a large scale this must reflect upon the sale of the records and give the unrestricted records prominence on the market.

One of the main points advanced by the gramophone companies is that, at present, records are used indiscriminately and that, in certain areas, broadcasting commences before breakfast and continues till 11 p.m. and sometimes later. It is asserted that listeners become tired of the records and sales are killed thereby. Furthermore the indiscriminate broadcasting of request programmes is obviating the necessity for listeners to purchase records. This statement is borne out by a distributor of a well-known electric radio set. He asserts that the sales of gramophone and radio combinations are in inverse proportion to the number of radio stations in the district. Thus Dunedin, with the most stations, handles very few combinations, though the solo radio model sells well. In Wellington, where there is only one station, the sale of combinations is greatest in proportion to solos. This fact agrees with a statement made by one of the music houses to the "Record" that their sales of records had been greatly increased as a result of broadcasting, and that they considered any records loaned to the station did them good service. From this angle unfavourably in the interests of listeners and indeed the stations have it seems conclusive that the large number of stations has reacted brought about their own doom.

There is another and very unfair aspect of the situation. Records broadcast must be bought at retail prices. This may seem a good move on behalf of the companies, but how does it affect the position? Many "B" stations will be unable to pay for the records and the owners must either close down or receive a subsidy from the Government. When it is considered that money spent on records cannot be directed into other amusement all stations must suffer, and if the "A" stations must be subject to another drain, the quality of the broadcasts must necessarily fall. Thus the listener will suffer and already, in many cases, he complains of the quality of the fare. But the main injustice is done to organisations that are not music houses. These latter purchase their records at wholesale rates and even supposing they keep a separate library for no other purpose than broadcasting, they are on a definitely better footing than other stations. They are given a unique monopoly and whether the Government will tolerate this remains to be seen. It is significant that whereas many "B" stations not interested in the sale of records consider they will have to cease operation a new station, in which a Wellington music house has interests, is under construction, and we are assured it is to be completed and to go on the air from December 1.

The radio trade, especially those members who are interested in broadcasting, are being handicapped and an advantage is given the retail gramophone business. On the surface it appears that the warrants issued by the gramophone companies have been brought about by a motive that takes into consideration only the record trade, and has entirely neglected the listener, the radio trade and broadcasters. How this will ultimately act on the public and react upon the trade of the companies concerned must be left to the imagination. In the meantime the position remains.

Hum Level

Reduction in Transmission

FROM time to time listeners have written either to us or the Broadcasting Company commenting on the noise level in the transmissions of some of the stations. Many have remarked that 2YA is particularly bad, and the hum is sometimes most annoying. To combat this the chief engineer of the Broadcasting Company paid a special visit to Wellington recently, and has succeeded in greatly reducing the noise level. This is due mainly to the great distance between the studio and the transmitter, and the necessity for using a long land line. There are always parasitic noises on these, and when

they are amplified at the transmitting end the noise level is fairly high.

To overcome this amplifying gear has been transferred from the station on the hill to the modulating room of the studio. This means that the percentage of noise to signal has been materially reduced. Listeners will no doubt note the greater clearness of 2YA's transmission as a result.

Celebrities Broadcast

IGNACE Paderewski broadcast a piano recital in London recently to the delight of British and Continental listeners-in. Bernard Shaw recently appeared before the microphone, and is quoted as saying he enjoyed the experience. His hearers liked his talk.

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