

Politics Affect Australian Radio Service

License Fees Go To Treasury

WHEN the Federal Government took control of broadcasting in Australia two years ago assurances were given that all the money paid by listeners for license fees would be devoted to the improvement of transmission and programmes, states the "Sydney Morning Herald." An arbitrary division was made, and of the 24/- license fee 12/- was allotted to the contracting company for the supply of programmes, including management, office rents, and other expenses. Of the balance the Post Office Department was to pay the royalty fees to Amalgamated Wireless, Limited, for patent rights, provide transmission stations, land lines and other facilities, including experimental work for the improvement of broadcasting in Australia.

The Postmaster-General, Mr. J. A. Lyons, in the House of Representatives recently, stated that from July 17, 1929, to October 31, 1930, there were issued 422,102 listeners' licenses. These figures excluded Tasmania, where the contracting company, the Australian Broadcasting Company, Limited, did not assume control until December 14. After the Post Office Department had paid all charges against its proportion of the 24/- license fee, there was a balance of £70,000. This money had been paid into the Federal Treasury.

LISTENERS are perturbed at this action. The assumption is that the money has gone into the Federal revenue accounts, and so is lost definitely to broadcasting. Different organisations are giving serious consideration to the matter, so as to preclude the possibility of listeners being taxed for the raising of revenue for purposes other than the provision of programmes and the development of broadcasting in Australia.

Under the terms of the contract made between the Post Office Department and the Australian Broadcasting Company Limited, 16 relay stations were to be erected during the currency of the contract, which expires in 18 months' time. The only relay station yet erected is that of 2NC, Newcastle, and the date of its opening is still indefinite, in spite of the fact that the engineers of the Post Office Department, who undertook the erection of the station, have had several consultations with the expert whom the contractors sent from London to assist the official experts. [This station was finally opened in the middle of December.—Ed. "Radio Record."] The Postmaster-General now announces that it is expected three more relay stations will be completed within the next nine months. No information is available as to when, or where, the remaining 12 relay stations promised are to be erected. Hence, the whole position regarding the future of broadcasting in Australia is uncertain and unsatisfactory. Protests are to be made to the Federal Government upon this matter by representatives of listeners and of the radio trades.

Burns Concerts from all Stations

Studio and Relayed Programmes

SCOTTISH concerts to mark the 172nd anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns will be broadcast by all YA stations on Saturday evening, January 24. 1YA and 3YA have each arranged studio programmes, while 2YA and 4YA will broadcast on relay concerts which have been organised by the local Caledonian Societies.

Highland pipers will contribute to all programmes and Scots distributed throughout New Zealand, from the North Cape to the Bluff, will revel in the music of peace and war for ever associated with tartan kilts. The bagpipes will bring back to listeners many sad and proud memories.

The programmes will be typically Scottish, but they will appeal to all. The writings of the famous ploughman poet, while immortal to all Scotsmen, play no small part in the life of the British people in general. As Sir James Barrie once said: "We have all to take the kerf for the exciseman." Poems composed by Burns are held dear by all and in songs such as "Auld Lang Syne" the English and the Irish join as lustily as the Scots, laugh as heartily over "The Deil's Awa," are thrilled by "Scots Wha Hae," and are touched by the pathos of his tender love poems. Who does not appreciate the sentiment in "John Anderson My Jo, John," the "Address to the Deil," the story of "Twa Dogs," the address to a field mouse turned out of its home by the plough, or "Tam o' Shanter"?

*While winds frae aff Ben Lomond blaw, I sit me doon tae pass the time,
An' bar the doors wi' drivin' snaw, An' spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
An' hing us ower the ingle, In hamely wastlin' jingle.*



“UP STREAM”

A British Drama

Produced from 4YA

Friday Jan. 23

by

Major F. H. Lampen.

The Players:

Major F. H. Lampen, Mr. J. B. McConnell, Mr. E. W. Robbins, Mr. O. L. Garden, Mr. D. Wrathall, Mr. William Ruffell, Miss Isa Duff.

The Scenes:

Act I.—Scene: Interior of the general store at San Antonio.

Act II.—Scene: In the forest, towards midnight: Act III.—

Scene: Gillespie's general store, as in Act I.

Murder Trial Broadcast

American Sensationalism

WOULD the broadcasting of an actual murder trial prove an acceptable entertainment to a New Zealand radio audience? Such a thing is contemplated in some quarters in America under the plea that it is advisable at all times to give matters of public interest the widest possible airing.

Whatever may be said for and against the suggestion, quite apart from the fact of whether it would be permitted in New Zealand, it is well known to radio listeners in this Dominion that the Broadcasting Company has from the outset set its face against the dissemination of anything that can be harmful to anyone who may hear it. A broadcast audience is of a very heterogeneous nature, and the susceptibilities of all types of people, old and young, of both sexes, have to be taken into consideration. Radio broadcasting has vast potentialities to work for the weal or the woe of humanity, and the R.B.C. has an unwritten motto that its aim is the welfare of all listeners.

Apocryphal, this, and notwithstanding the rumoured extension of broadcasting activities to include the sordidness of a murder trial (though such trials in America have not the significance that they have in the British Empire), it is interesting to learn that the Broadcasting Company's latest advice from U.S.A. indicates a mellowing of the broadcast programmes there, bringing into them more of the spirit which inspires the service in New Zealand. There is lately a marked decrease in the sensational drama features which have up to now characterised the programmes in the States. The explanation lies, not in a desire to raise the standard of the programmes for the sake of listeners, but in the desire of the firms who sponsor programmes to get better value for their money. The pendulum will probably swing back again, for where advertising provides the "sinews of war" to a broadcasting station, the advertiser calls the tune.

In America, the Ever-ready Hour, which was the first to popularise, in 1920 and 1927, dramatic presentations with musical background, has been the first to drop them. Now, feature after feature in continuity programmes has dropped radio drama in favour of innocuous entertainment.

It is not implied that the continuity programme has been thrown overboard, lock, stock and barrel, but merely that its position in the forefront has been relinquished. Nothing of outstanding character has taken its place. If anything, advertising is becoming more and more objectionable. There is no longer any attempt at so-called indirect advertising. The good-will which once could be earned by a well-conducted radio feature is no longer considered worth going after. In its embryo days the American method of supporting broadcasting showed great promise. Advertisers outdid each other in seeking to make the grandest gesture to the American audience.

Advertising was confined to mention of the sponsor of the programme and what his product was. But cupidity got the better part of judgment and the results are making themselves felt.

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