

The New Zealand Radio Record —AND— Home Journal

(Incorporating the "Canterbury Radio Journal.")

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WELLINGTON, FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 1931.

PARLIAMENT AND RADIO.

ON Wednesday of last week listeners were accorded, for the first time in New Zealand history, the privilege of hearing over the air the Governor-General's Speech on the occasion of the opening of Parliament, within an hour of its being delivered to the assembled legislators. While on this occasion the speech was merely read to listeners from the studio—this being made possible by the courtesy of the Prime Minister, the Hon. G. W. Forbes—the time will doubtless come when the microphone itself will be permitted at the opening of Parliament, and listeners be enabled to follow the voice of the Governor-General for the time being as he delivers his inaugural message to Parliament. That practice has not yet been introduced in the British House of Commons, and that precedent probably governs the New Zealand situation. However, a start has been made in improving the intimacy of contact between Parliament and the people, and doubtless the microphone will come in the future into greater possibilities of service.

THE proposal has sometimes been made that the more important debates of Parliament should be broadcast. This suggestion has some little merit, but we are inclined to think the demerits outweigh the advantages. To many people it would be interesting to follow the course of a Parliamentary debate, but that degree of interest is not, we think, sufficiently widespread to make the service popular either as an entertainment or as a method of instruction. A few years ago one of the Austrian Parliaments decided to permit its debates to be broadcast. Legislators, knowing that they were "on the air" and that, among others, their constituents would be listening, set themselves to make a good impression. Some could not restrain their verbosity. They proceeded to talk, and showed signs of running to inordinate length. This continued till some of their constituents got on the telephone and passed the blunt suggestion back to the House and the member concerned that he was "talking too much." The promptitude with which members sat down after this expression of view from their constituents was amusing, and led to an abrupt termination of the practice of broadcasting debates. The time factor and the lack of

universal appeal, therefore, we think weigh against any proposal of Parliament itself being broadcast in so far as its debates are concerned. The picturesque ceremony of an Opening might possibly be achieved in the future, but scarcely more.

THERE is, however, one phase in which radio might, we think, be allowed to serve Parliament and the people. Listeners, particularly in such strenuous economic times as are now prevailing, do desire to be fully informed of the views of the principal political parties. Further, it is important that they should be so informed, and if possible achieve at first hand an impression of the calibre and views of the parties soliciting their suffrages. To achieve this end, the suggestion has been made that the leaders of each political party should be given the opportunity of attending at 2YA and delivering a direct exposition on constructive lines of their policies. These statements of their policy should, as far as possible, be non-controversial in so far as direct criticism of other policies is concerned. They should in the main be confined to a direct statement of the constructive courses of action which constitute the main planks of the party concerned. The British Broadcasting Corporation has permitted action along these lines. Radio in Britain has been made the medium on a number of occasions for direct explanations to the British electors of party policies. Further, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer has used radio for a concise explanation of the main points of his Budget. In the past New Zealand has been careful to preserve the air from controversial politics. We think, however, that in the national interest the time has come when a considered experiment might be made of allowing the principals of each party to address the electors over the air.

Sympathy from Japan Workers' Educational Association Talks

Arranged for 1YA

EVIDENTLY inspired by a "fellow feeling," the following, as a genuine expression of sympathy with radio listeners affected by the Hawke's Bay earthquake, would be difficult to excel. It comes from a well-known correspondent in Japan, Mr. M. Nakamura, and

A SERIES of twelve fortnightly talks on "Questions of the Day" will be broadcast from 1YA, beginning Tuesday, March 24, at 7.40 p.m. The speaker will be Mr. N. M. Richmond, B.A., Director of the W.E.A. in Auckland.

The talks will be in two series of six each, and listeners who are interested will be supplied with fairly full notes at a small charge. The talk on March 24 will be introductory, and those which follow will deal with the topics of democracy, unemployment, civilisation in America, art in everyday life, rationalisation of industry, thus completing the first series.

Listeners who find the first talk interesting should write to the Auckland office of the W.E.A., Old Grammar School, Symonds Street, for information about the series as a whole. At last year, facilities will be provided for the formation of discussion groups among listeners on the basis of the notes that will be issued.

The first talk will take a wide sweep, mentioning briefly some of the problems of to-day in the fields of economics, politics, art, and civilisation generally, and will inquire into the reasons why progress appears to be so slow. It will suggest that many of our social habits and institutions have not changed sufficiently in response to our changed environment, and that many vital instincts which used to find expression in these institutions are now in danger of suppression.

Notice to Readers

No Increase in Subscription Rates

READERS will have noticed the drastic increase in postal rates recently imposed. The doubling of rates and the addition of a weight limit on newspapers imposes a very heavy extra burden upon all journals that have been using the postal services.

In the case of the "Radio Record," however, we have gone closely into the position, and are pleased to be able to advise our regular subscribers who receive the paper by mail, that it is NOT our purpose to increase our subscription rate. This will remain at 12/6 per annum, post free, for prepayment. The increased costs that we have to meet will be met by drastic internal economies and readjustments.

is addressed to Mr. A. R. Harris, General Manager of the Broadcasting Company:—

"Our Press reported that there has been a severe shock of earthquake in your land. I write in haste to ask if your Radio Stations are all well. I sympathise with you and your listeners, sincerely, in the quake district, on the sad events."

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