

Broadcasts for School Children

Recently 2YA extended its hours of transmission and commenced upon an important series of broadcasts for schools. In this article the Chief Inspector of Primary Schools gives his views on the subject.

THERE are, I think, great possibilities in the scheme. In England and elsewhere, school broadcasting has proved a great success, and there is no reason why it should not succeed to the same degree in our country. There are many difficulties to overcome, and it will be some considerable time before the scheme is properly in operation.

Teaching by radio does not end—nor for that matter begin—with the lecture over the air. The child, before he can assimilate, must be taught, and this requires the active co-operation of the teacher. This is possible only through extensive preparation on the parts of lecturer, Department and teacher.

Right from the onset we are handicapped and cannot give assistance in the most vital aspect—the purchase of radio equipment. Much as we would have liked to subsidise teachers and committees, this, during the present financial stress, is quite impossible. However, we are optimistic enough to imagine that ways and means will be found by the teachers and their committees to overcome this difficulty.

In some districts sets have been loaned to the schools; in others the pupils of small schools have gone to neighbouring homes where radio is installed. No doubt steps will be taken to ensure the regular reception of these broadcasts. 2YA, it appears, comes in satisfactorily in most parts of the country, for already I have had letters from far North and South reporting satisfactory reception.



MR. N. T. LAMBOURNE, the recently-appointed chief inspector of primary schools, believes that broadcasting to primary schools should prove most beneficial.
—A. F. ANDREW, photo.

Apart from the consideration of providing the set, the most essential factor is the co-operation of the teacher. Children will not sit for an hour and listen to someone talking. They want to be doing something. It may be following a lecturer in geography with a pencil and paper, or watching their teacher following the remarks by using a large map or illustration; it may be singing; it may be doing certain forms of handwork to the instruction of the lecturer. It may even be copying something that comes over the air. There are, without doubt, many ways in which children can be interested; they need not be kept sitting still, just listening to what is being said.



MR. T. STRONG, Director of Education, under whose purview broadcasts to school children were commenced.
—Crown Studio, photo.

Before these aids can be made use of, the teacher must be warned of the broadcast and given a chance to prepare for the lesson, as he would for one he would take himself. The logical way is to publish an illustrated booklet, outlining the subject matter of the talk, illustrating it, and asking typical questions to be answered after the broadcast. This is the system employed in England. In New Zealand, of course, this may not be possible for some time to come, but there is the monthly journal, the "Education Gazette," by which a fair amount of information can be conveyed to the teacher. Ways and means exist for making the scheme a success as far as the co-operation of the teacher is concerned.

By introducing to the children so many specialists a new fund of information is tapped. I have received a few letters from teachers commenting on Mr. Strong's remarks regarding weather and climate on Tuesday last. They state that those few remarks have opened up new channels they can explore. It will be remembered that Mr. Strong, in speaking of the weather, said that it would be a good idea if children in different parts of the country, wrote to one another and compared notes concerning, for instance, the effects of different winds, they would find out first hand many facts concerning our climate. It is the presentation of this idea simultaneously to the pupils in localities far distant from one another that encourages its adoption. And this simultaneous presentation can be brought about only by radio.

WE hope to do more than talk during the hour these broadcasts are taking place. It will be possible, I think, actually to conduct lessons. You see, it is not our intention to lecture—we propose to teach. We are opening up a new field with tremendous possibilities and not a few obstacles. We want the co-operation of all concerned, from lecturer to parents, and judging from the response and interest that has been shown so far we shall get it.

We are arranging an excellent schedule, and it can be seen that prominent authorities are co-operating with us. For the next two weeks the lectures and lecturers are:—

Coming educational broadcasts are: Tuesday, April 21, 2 p.m.—Mr. W. W. Bird, Superintendent of Native Schools and Island Education, "Geography of the Far North of Auckland."

Miss F. M. Hind, Normal School, "Heroes."

Mr. E. Douglas Tayler, Supervisor of School Music, "Illustrated Talk on Music."

Tuesday, April 28, 2 p.m.—Mr. W. S. La Trobe, Superintendent of Technical Education, "Tools."

Mr. R. J. Waghorn, M.A., Lecturer, Wellington Technical College, "Making Geography Interesting."

Mr. E. Douglas Tayler, Supervisor of School Music, "Illustrated Talk on Music."