

Government Control Not Wanted



VIGOROUS protest against the declared intention of the Government to take over the control of radio broadcasting from the Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand, Ltd., combined with a certain amount of criticism

of the company, was made by speakers at the annual meeting of the North Taranaki Radio Society.

After discussion the following motion was passed: "That in view of the announcement by the Postmaster-General that the Government intends to assume active control of radio broadcasting in New Zealand, this meeting records its emphatic disagreement with such a proposal and urges that as the present licensees have pioneered the service up to date they be given an extension of their license for a further period, after which the position could be reviewed if necessary."

"The intention of the Government is not yet clear," said Mr. F. T. Davis, president of the society, in moving the motion, "since nothing has been put forward beyond a statement that the Government will take over the control of radio broadcasting. It is felt the proposal is not in the best interests of radio broadcasting in New Zealand. Broadcasting is not the kind of thing the Government will be successful in running. Government activities indicate that their control of broadcasting will become stereotyped, and in broadcasting the Government would probably get out of touch with public needs."

"Ever since the Government's proposal has been known I have given it deep consideration," said Mr. E. J. L. Payne, vice-president of the society, seconding the motion, "and I can see no good reason for the change. The proposed scheme will not be any better than the present. Entertainment is beyond the scope of the Post and Telegraph Department, which is overburdened already."

"Playing With a New Toy?"

"THE financial position is unsatisfactory and retrenchment is the order of the day. Why should the department seek to dabble in an expensive service such as broadcasting? Is it merely the desire to play with a new toy?"

The time was not opportune for such a change, Mr. Payne continued. The department could better serve the interests of listeners by entering into a new contract with the Radio Broadcasting Company. It should give the company a freer hand and encourage it to set up relay stations such as the Government proposed to do. The public was tired of being experimented upon. The company was willing to give listeners a good service, and he would not like to exchange the present service for a departmental one.

In the early days of the society, said Mr. C. H. Croker, it would be remembered there was criticism from various directions upon the control of broadcasting. The matter was still in the air, and the Government proposals had not yet been heard. He thought it would be rather premature to take action at present.

Taranaki Radio Society's Decision

AT the annual meeting of the North Taranaki Radio Society, a powerful body of Taranaki listeners who control 2YB, a motion, in no uncertain terms, was passed objecting to Government control. "It is merely the desire to play with a new toy," summed up one member. The opinion of the meeting was that the R.B.C. be re-licensed and given to understand that service extensions were required.

Mr. J. A. Pigott: It is better to let our wants be known now than to try to obtain redress after the alteration has been made.

Mr. A. Dunkley reminded the meeting that the views of the department had not been heard and that the question would be one of the first to be discussed in the coming session. It was the general opinion among a certain class in the country which was interested that when the proposal of the Hon. J. B. Donald was put forth the Radio Broadcasting Company would respond with a better service.

If the company were allowed to carry on the service would remain constant. As it was they were getting the service improved after the company had been "shaken up." He did not think the Government would take over the control of broadcasting. Those present should be guarded in passing a resolution which might not be the opinion of the rest of the society.

Reception of YA Stations.

"THERE is one thing," Mr. Dunkley added, "and that is that we should urge the Radio Broadcasting Company

to give a better service. There is no doubt it has done the pioneering, but the Wellington station is far from satisfactory from Taranaki's point of view, Auckland is patchy, and Christchurch is the only one we can rely on to receive with any degree of clarity, and that is subject to fading. Improvements by the company have not been commensurate with the increase in the number of licenses issued. We should not praise the company too much."


Mr. R. Day asked if the Government had "done its job yet by cutting out howlers."

The experience of the society had been, Mr. Davis replied, that the Government officers had been only too pleased to assist. The Government did not receive much from the license fees and it was not to be expected it would do a great deal.

Mr. I. W. B. Roy considered the society should support the motion. The service in the past had not been all that it might have been, but there was one aspect to be considered. "If the Government takes over control," he said, "there will be no guarantee of any improvement in the service. If an extension of the license is granted the Radio Broadcasting Company, the company will be faced all the time with the possible seizure of control by the Government. That fear should be a spur to the company to give improved services."

The president said it was true the society had started because of dissatisfaction with the service provided for this district, but that dissatisfaction was not the fault of the company. It was caused more by faults in the mechanical side due to natural causes and not necessarily by the quality of the programmes. He agreed that the company had had to be pushed at times before it made improvements and that state would continue, but its lease of life had been only temporary, and it would have been foolish for it to undertake extensions and incur a large expenditure when it might lose control in a short time. If the license were renewed for a short time the company would still feel doubtful of the security of its tenure.

Mr. Roy, the president thought, had hit upon the weak spot in Government control. It would be a very hard job to move the Government once it had control. Every argument was in favour of keeping control out of the hands of the Government. The operating side at least should be in private hands.



The WATERFALL

A
One-
Act
Radio Play

Written by
Marie Gaudin

And produced by
Zoe Bartley Baxter

at IYA,
Wednesday, July 8.

Being
an Incident
in
New Zealand
Bush Life.

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