

Dealers Want a Radio Board

Deputation Presents Views to Postmaster-General

IN outlining the views of the deputation, Mr. C. J. Ralph, speaking as chairman of the Central Executive, said that the question of broadcasting had been exercising the minds of an increasing number of people in New Zealand for some years. Interest in the subject had increased lately, as the system of control to be adopted when the company's lease ran out at the end of the year had soon to be decided. The trade section of radio had attained large proportions, and the revenue from this source had reached something approaching £10,000. A great deal of capital had been invested in the industry, and the traders were naturally very vitally interested in any radical changes in the method of control.

Radio had become a public utility and had to be looked at from a national standpoint. The resolution which he would place before the Minister had the unanimous backing of the radio trade in New Zealand. He wished to

THE viewpoint that the radio service of the Dominion should be placed under the control of a corporation of not more than five members, appointed by the Government, but entirely removed from political control, with representation of listeners, the trade and the Government, was placed before the Postmaster-General on Tuesday last by a deputation of radio dealers. The Minister, in thanking the deputation for the expression of its views, said that the matter was before Cabinet for final consideration, and so could not yet be discussed by him. He, however, expressed the opinion that the service should belong to the people, and they should have a voice in its control.

emphasise that it had been carefully thought out and discussed from all angles. The resolution was as follows:—

"On behalf of the radio dealers of New Zealand affiliated to the New Zealand Electrical Federation we submit that the national system—apart from the B Class station system—of radio broadcasting should be regarded as a public monopoly; that on the expiration of the licence of

the Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand, Limited, control should be vested in a corporation not exceeding five members, including the chairman, and appointed by the Government, but entirely removed from political control; that the secretary of this body shall be a registered public accountant, entirely under the direction of the corporation and not a Public Servant, and that the radio trade and listeners shall have representation on the cor-

poration. Further, that the dealers nominate three representatives to the Government for selection."

Mr. Ralph asked whether the Minister could elaborate on the views which he had already put before the public.

The Minister replied that he was sorry he could not do so. Parliament might think he was usurping their authority.

Mr. Ralph said that he hoped that when the proposals were in a more concrete form it would be possible to submit them to the trade to look over before being finally adopted.

B.B.C. Suggested as Model.

MR. R. H. NIMMO said that the service given by the Broadcasting Company had been inadequate, particularly as regards the requirements of dealers and demonstrators. Even now Wellington was the only centre receiving the service to which it was entitled, and there was no guarantee that this would continue. He claimed that a public utility such as broadcasting should not be entrusted to a private company conducted for the profit of its shareholders, but should be regarded as a public monopoly. The radio dealers considered that the nearest practicable approach to the ideal system was something on the lines of the British Broadcasting Corporation, and strict precautions should be taken to prevent any form of political control. Broadcasting did not lend itself to administration by a Government department, which had not sufficient flexibility. The proposed corporation would encounter no financial difficulty, as an ample revenue from listeners' fees was assured.

Although radio dealers had difficulty in deciding on the ideal system, they finally thought the most desirable of all feasible schemes would be one embodying four main features, viz:—

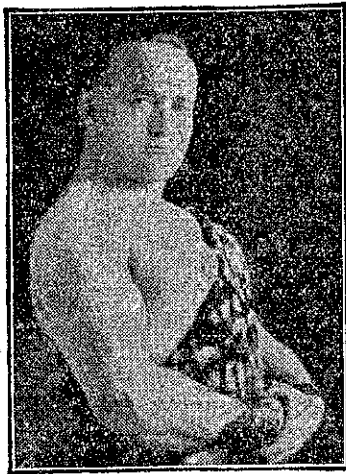
- (a) Public ownership and monopoly.
- (b) Direction by a corporation entirely removed from political control.
- (c) The radio trade and the listeners, to have representation on the corporation.
- (d) All property to be vested in the corporation and all surpluses to be used for the betterment of the services.

Non-political Control.

THE resolution which had been handed to the Minister had amplified these points in certain respects. The trade was definitely of the opinion that administration of the services by a Government Department was not feasible—there was a lack of flexibility and a danger that the whole thing would be tied up with red tape and officialdom. Also, the Minister in charge of the Department would no doubt be subject to pressure in favour of certain localities, particular artists, etc., and this pressure he would find it difficult to withstand.

Another thing which the dealers considered a sine qua non was that the

(Concluded on page 80.)



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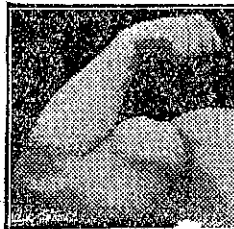
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