

building, and shortly afterwards listeners heard that great tongues of flame were licking through the upper story windows. From his vantage point, Mr. Drummond could see the flames were shooting perilously close to the power lines, and warned listeners that if the station went off the air it would be due to a power shortage. The station operators in preparation for this contingency brought out the emergency battery gear.

The shouted orders of the firemen, the hiss of the hoses, the roaring of the fire supplemented by intermittent explosions, combined with the sight of huge gouts of flame silhouetted against red-glowing clouds of smoke and accentuated by the darkness of the night, formed the basis of a superb commentary by the 2YA announcer.

To broadcast off-hand a description which would convey in full to listeners every feature of such a scene was undoubtedly a difficult task, but Mr. Drummond proved fully equal to the occasion. His picturesque, vivid account was as thrilling to listeners as if they had been eye-witnesses of the spectacle.

Later it was announced that the Miramar Fire Brigade was on its way to assist, and within a few minutes the engine siren was heard in the street below. The engine pulled up almost underneath the studio window, and the hoses run out, as the announcer aptly described, like motor tyres which appeared to shrink as they rolled along.

Throughout the broadcast the street noises and the shouts of the firemen formed a realistic background to the commentary.

Toward midnight a subdued red glow showing through the second story windows indicated that the fire was eat-

ing its way downward. The glow however, did not increase, and soon died away, for firemen within the building had succeeded in controlling this new outbreak.

Excitement was caused among the crowd when an unconscious fireman, evidently overcome by smoke, was carried by several of his comrades from the burning building. Restoratives were applied, and under the influence of these, and of the fresh air, he soon revived.

As the fire was spreading, the pumping engine was commissioned and fresh hoses, spouting water at the rate of hundreds of gallons a minute, could now be brought to bear on the conflagration.

On one occasion listeners were told how a fireman at the back of the building was playing a hose on the furnace within, and how several times the water spouted through the blazing front windows to the discomfort of those onlookers directly in its path, but to the amusement of the more fortunate.

Shortly after it was apparent that the blaze was diminishing, and that the firemen in their fight against enormous odds were, as the announcer put it, "winning out." The crowd began to disperse, and once more Featherston Street became a maze of traffic and people—homeward bound. And thus ended one of the most thrilling "stunt" broadcasts ever put over the air.

The following curious incident, which occurred during the evening, is worthy of mention. An employee of the Loan and Mercantile Agency, who lives at Karori, a suburb of Well-

ington, was called from his bed at about 11.30 p.m. by a long-distance call from the head of the Blenheim branch of the firm. The latter, who had heard the broadcast commentary, wanted further particulars from a man who lived in Wellington, and who knew nothing of the fact that his firm's building was on fire!

On another occasion one of the operators at the transmitter on Mount Victoria, a mile away, phoned the studio to say the transmitting room was hazy with smoke. In addition to numerous phone rings from local listeners, distant calls were also received at the studio from listeners in Auckland and Christchurch, remarking that the broadcast was coming over well, and was one of the most thrilling ever heard.

Youthful Traveller

A Letter to Aunt Pat

AUNT PAT, of 3YA, Christchurch, was surprised to find in her mail the other day an envelope bearing Norwegian postage stamps. The letter was from Helga Kirby, one of Aunt Pat's many willing helpers, but now on a visit to her grandparents in the land of the Vikings. Helga, who is between 8 and 9 years old, was a delightful little radio performer. She frequently sang French songs and her voice has a most fascinating lilt.

Writing on June 4, her letter reads as follows:—

"Dear Aunt Pat,—Here we are in Norway and enjoying ourselves fine. On our way we have called at many places. One place interested me very much—that was Pompeii. It is a ruined city now and has been for two thousand years. There is not one standing building to be seen, all of it is broken down. In London we went to see changing the guard at Buckingham Palace. It is very nice to see them all standing at attention. We next went to Petticoat Lane, which is known nearly all over the world. On Sunday night we went to Hyde Park to hear many speakers talking about different places of the world. We also went into St. Paul's Cathedral, where the King and Queen go to church once a year. Inside the church some great people are buried.

"We stayed in London three or four days, then went to Sheffield. After staying there for a night we took another train to Newcastle, where we boarded ship for Bergen. We did not have any time to waste in Bergen for the boat reached the shore at 7 a.m. and the train left at ten past eight the same morning. Coming to Oslo we saw beautiful scenery. I am sure the scenery there is better than the whole of New Zealand's scenery put together.

"We went through 184 tunnels and arrived in Oslo at half-past nine. On Sunday we went to see the 17th May celebrations; that is a great day in Norway. After the procession we went for a walk around the King's Palace and many other places in Oslo. At night it does not get dark at all. Love from Helga."

Future for Radio

(Continued from page 1.)

have a network of hook-ups right throughout the United States. Whenever I went I found the broadcasting studios open to the public, and the companies quite interested in showing visitors through their equipment. The broadcasting is naturally carried out on a big scale, and the studios are conducted with the most up-to-date efficiency. One programme follows another with absolute speed and accuracy, this being effected by light flashing from one studio to another as soon as a programme is finished.

"One thing that greatly impressed me was the splendid English spoken by the various announcers. They took the utmost trouble to pronounce their words accurately, and I believe that ultimately the influence of radio and 'the talkies' on speech the world over will be very considerable. This attention to clear English diction was very pleasing. In the Paramount studios on Long Island I had the privilege of looking over the latest Western Electric equipment for recording sound. By an ingenious but simple new invention a material advance in the elimination of 'buzz' in the silent parts of talkies has been effected. By the radio camera, which I mentioned earlier, it is possible to photograph by television both the subject and the sound and then later transmit both of those."

Mr. Cody returned convinced that the next five years will see an extraordinary expansion of radio in New Zealand. So far he thinks the surface only has been scratched in this Dominion. We are not nearly so radio-minded, he says, as is the population of the States. There, of course, they have a multitude of stations and the choice of a wide range of high-class artists. The programmes, generally speaking, were of a particularly high class.

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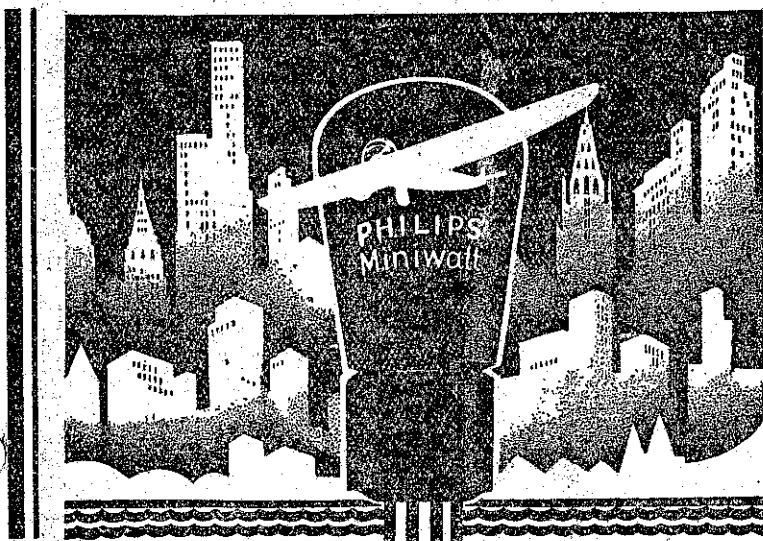
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