

Returned Soldiers' Choir

Unique Dunedin Combination

DUNEDIN has the unique distinction of having a choir composed of returned soldiers—the only such choir in the British Empire, and it is an excellent choir, too.

One of the finest tributes to it came from Mr. Peter Dawson, who, during his recent visit to New Zealand, attended a practice of the choir. After hearing the singing of two part-songs, Mr. Dawson, in the course of a few remarks, spoke in very favourable terms of the quality of tone, precision of attack, and general balance of the choir, and stated that in all his travels in the British Empire he had never experienced such a surprise as the ex-service men had given him that evening. He was quite genuine when he stated that in all his numerous engagements with other choirs in England and Wales he had never heard anything to surpass the Dunedin Returned Soldiers' Choir.

The choir was founded in 1919 under Mr. Paget Gale, but it was first suggested on a transport which was carrying New Zealand troops to Gallipoli. In their care-free manner the soldiers were holding a community sing, during which a digger expressed the wish that if they survived the war they would form a Dunedin choir. They knew that behind the clouds the sun was still shining. The soldier who then made the suggestion is now a member of the choir.

That was the genesis of the splendid organisation numbering 60 voices, one of the best choirs in Dunedin. Every member was on active service. "No distance of place or lapse of time can lessen the friendship of those who are thoroughly persuaded of each other's worth," wrote Southey, and in this choir these veterans of the war find great pleasure. Enduring friendships have been formed.

In 1924, the present conductor, Mr. John Leech, took over the reins. Mr. Leech is well known as conductor, lecturer, and tenor vocalist. He received his musical education in Manchester, England. The choir's accompanist is Mr. Charles A. Martin, Mus. Bach., L.A.B., who has a splendid reputation as an accompanist.

A concert by the choir will be broadcast by 4YA on Wednesday, August 26.

The St. Kilda Band

Famous N.Z. Combination

IN last week's issue of the "Radio Record" we printed a photograph of the St. Kilda Band. This band, always a welcome performer at 4YA, has had a very interesting career from its early days when it was known as the Mornington Band. It has always acquitted itself well at contests and won the highest laurels. At the Dunedin contest of 1926 it won the New Zealand championship shield, and three years later, at Wanganui, in 1929, it created a furore throughout New Zealand by winning both contest selections, and the drill and music in the quickstep.

It is interesting to know that this band has retained the drill championship for the last four years. This passes a tribute to the band's popular drum-major, W. Donaldson. For some years now, the band has held the two Hawke Shields, both of these shields being for the North and South Islands, and are awarded to bands winning both test selections, quickstep and drill; in other words, for everything for which a band competes at a contest with the exception of the hymn test.

In Dunedin the St. Kilda Band is always in great demand, charity work being a great feature of the band's activities throughout the year.

It is very interesting to know that the St. Kilda Band has retained the same bass section for the last nine years. This is surely a record for a New Zealand A grade band, and the personnel of the band has remained almost unchanged for some considerable time. Mr. B. Smith, tenor horn, has retained the New Zealand championship for the last three years, and

at the last contest gained one mark off the possible, while Mr. G. Lowry, who plays the flugel-horn in this combination, is the present champion of this instrument. Mr. G. Christie, cornetist, was last year's runner-up for the championship, and Mr. J. Marshall, trombonist, has been runner-up for two years in succession. The business initiative of Mr. A. G. Homer, who for the last four years has been the secretary of the band, and of Mr. W. Paterson, treasurer, has placed the band on a very sound footing. All this, combined with the splendid esprit-de-corps, finds the band in a very happy position.

Mr. James Dixon is indeed a brilliant conductor. The first time he handled a baton was as the eighteen-year-old conductor of the Roslyn Choir. His band experience was gained in the Kaikorai Band, in which combination he was "G" trombone player. Prior to the war, he was appointed deputy-conductor of the Kaikorai Band, which at this time had the brilliant G. B. Laidlaw at its head. At the outbreak of the war Mr. Dixon went to the front, and in France was appointed conductor of the band of the 2nd Battalion New Zealand Rifle Brigade. In a contest in France, wherein fourteen bands were engaged, Mr. Dixon's band gained second prize. Mr. Dixon furthered his studies while in England, and on returning to New Zealand joined both the St. Kilda and Kaikorai bands.

He was eventually approached by the St. Kilda Band, and was asked to take the position of conductor, the position which he has held for eight years. Mr. Dixon is well known throughout the band world as a very fine conductor. His strong personality has undoubtedly had a great effect in placing the band where it is at the present day.

The Radio Problem

Report by Associated Chambers of Commerce

RECENTLY a letter was forwarded to the Postmaster-General by the secretary of the Associated Chambers of Commerce on the radio situation. Listeners possibly have been surprised at the intrusion of this body into radio matters, and the nature of its comments, but that surprise will be deepened when it is known that this unusual action was apparently inspired by the more unusual course of a request for such action having been made from official sources—either ministerial or departmental—at least, that is the statement emanating from the Associated Chambers.

On this point the following letter has been forwarded to the Postmaster-General by the Radio Broadcasting Company:—

The Hon. J. D. Donald, Postmaster-General,

Parliamentary Buildings.

Wellington.

Sir,—We have been advised that a committee representing the executive of the Associated Chambers has been requested by the Government to report on the broadcasting problem.

At the telephoned request of the secretary, we forwarded them complete copies of the company's balance-sheets covering the period of its operations. We were further requested to give our authority for the Post and Telegraph Department to disclose to the committee such confidential affairs of the company other than that disclosed in the balance-sheets. This we declined to do, our reason being that it was not our right to suggest what the department should or should not do—that right being exclusively to the Government. We are not aware of any information the department could supply such as would usefully supplement the full and complete details set out in our balance-sheets; but you will realise that even if there was such information, it is not for the company to instruct the department in regard to the use to be made of it.

We have perused the letter addressed to you by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of New Zealand, and it appears to us that there is a possibility of some of the statements therein being understood to imply that the company's financial position has not been fully and freely disclosed.

So that you and your colleagues shall be fully advised as to the position and as to our reason for declining to give the authority asked for by the committee, we are therefore writing you direct, and shall be glad if you will be good enough to place the facts before Cabinet, together with the information that the company's books at all times have been freely available for official inspection and that every item of expenditure has been open to official audit.

Yours respectfully,
THE RADIO BROADCASTING COY.,
OF N.Z., LTD.

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P.O. Box 1082, Wellington.

The Demonstration Concert

of the

Wellington Competition

Society's

1931 Festival

will be relayed by 2YA on Saturday.

August 29

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NO!
Pulmonias
PASTILLES are INVALUABLE

