

Change Not Recommended

Deputation from 2YA Musical and Dramatic Committee Wait on Minister



VARIOUS aspects of radio broadcasting in the Dominion were brought under the notice of the Postmaster-General, Hon J. B. Donald, by a deputation from the 2YA Musical and Dramatic Advisory Committee on Wednesday, August 20. The deputation was introduced by Mr. P. Fraser, M.P. Mr. E. Palliser, chairman of the committee, said that the deputation was the outcome of a resolution carried by a majority at a meeting of the 2YA Musical and Dramatic Advisory Committee, urging that the Government discountenance any alteration of the system of control and management under which the service had been established in New Zealand.

Mr. Donald asked Mr. Palliser whether he had seen the Broadcasting Company's proposals for the control of the service, and he solicited Mr. Palliser's opinion of them. Mr. Palliser said he had perused the proposals, and, without having studied them closely, he thought they provided a satisfactory basis for successful negotiations.

Mr. Donald remarked that it appeared to him that the listeners would have no say in the control under the Broadcasting Company's proposals. The listeners would have four representatives on the Control Board, and the company would have four, but the latter would elect the chairman, and by virtue of his having a casting vote the company would be in the same position as at present.

A member of the deputation asked the Minister whether he thought that the company would ignore the rights or recommendations of the minority, Mr. Donald replying that he had not intended to raise an argument, but that was how the position appeared to him.

The Deputation.

MR. PALLISER then said: "This deputation represents the Musical and Dramatic Committee, which acts as an advisory organisation, distinct from but functioning in connection with broadcast station 2YA, Wellington. The members of this committee comprise representatives of most of the musical and dramatic organisations in Wellington.

"The committee meets every month and gives its services entirely gratuitously in making suggestions and discussing broadcasting of musical and dramatic items. It, in fact, gives listeners the benefit of the wide experience and specialised knowledge which members of such comprehensive committee have at their disposal. The functions of the committee are in detail:—

"(a) To co-operate with the Broadcasting Company with the object of

calculated to give quite an erroneous impression of the position with regard to the present broadcasting service.

"We beg to submit that while the radio trade has big interests in the success or otherwise of a broadcasting service, the fact remains that the service is a public utility and therefore is established for the general benefit of the community, and NOT for the radio trade, which is in some instances merely the mouthpiece of certain "B" class stations.

A deputation representing the 2YA Musical and Dramatic Committee waited upon the P.M.G. last week urging that the present system of radio broadcasting as administered in New Zealand be continued. The deputation was strongly opposed to Government control, and expressed disagreement with views voiced by a different deputation earlier in the month.

We were pleased to see that the deputation raised the point made in our columns a few weeks back regarding power interference. Listeners will no doubt be awaiting, with a certain amount of eagerness, the legislation on this subject promised by the Minister.

stimulating public interest and in furthering the musical and dramatic arts and to assist generally, and by the offer of constructive criticism.

"(b) The making of recommendations to the company in respect of musical and dramatic performances available for broadcasting and likely to be acceptable to the company, either by way of relay or from the studio during such hours as may be placed by the company at the disposal of the committee.

"(c) The consideration of applications for broadcasts made by amateur or dramatic organisations, and the making of recommendations as to the suitability or non-suitability of the matter to be broadcast.

"Statements have been published indicating that the Government proposes to terminate the existing contract with the Radio Broadcasting Company, and a new system of control of broadcasting and new regulations have been foreshadowed.

Deputation from the Trade.

"RECENTLY the Postmaster-General was waited upon by a deputation from the radio trade. Statements were made at the deputation which to our mind were unwarranted, and are

The Correct Perspective.

"THEREFORE, to place the matter in its correct perspective it is fitting to point out that it is the vast body of the licensed radio listeners, and NOT the radio trade which provides the bulk of the money now supporting the service. Some members of the recent deputation, including a shareholder in a "B" class station, went so far as to state that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the present broadcasting service. While we do not arrogate to ourselves the right to speak for the vast body of listeners throughout New Zealand, it is contrary to our experience to encounter substantial dissatisfaction with the existing service. On the other hand, we are brought into touch with a considerable number of listeners who appreciate to the fullest degree the service which has been rendered by the Radio Broadcasting Company.

Furthermore, we would direct your attention to circumstances, which would tend to show very clearly that the alleged widespread dissatisfaction is non-existent. For more than a year past a body known as the N.Z. Radio Listeners' League has been organising with a view to prevailing

upon the licensed listeners throughout New Zealand to weld themselves into one representative association, through which they could express their desires regarding the broadcasting service. Despite intense propaganda, private and public, and the energetic endeavour of an organiser who has visited the various centres, the fact remains that the response on the part of the listeners was absolutely small, and only an infinitesimal number were induced to join the league, although the subscription was a mere 2/6.

Change Wanted?

"NOW, Sir, if as has been represented to the Postmaster-General, there exists a genuine widespread desire on the part of licensed listeners for a change in the present service, the response to such heroic endeavours to popularise the league would have resulted in a membership of much larger proportions. In Wellington, alone, with its thousands of licensed listeners, the membership of the league amounts to a pitiful handful. The league also was extremely elastic as to its qualifications for membership. At a Wellington meeting—and in other centres—those present were asked to enrol their friends whether they were licensed listeners or not. This, of course, is obviously an attempt to bolster up the membership roll, while at the same time enabling people who have not contributed to the broadcasting service to have a say on the subject. It is also desirable that you should know that the organiser of the Listeners' League was simultaneously secretary of the "B" class stations' own association, and the interests of the "B" class stations are by no means identical with those of the Radio Broadcasting Company.

"We are here, Sir, to appeal to you for a fair consideration of the interests of all parties concerned, and therefore feel that you would not entertain any proposal that would involve an injustice to those who have pioneered broadcasting in New Zealand, and have established a goodwill for which they

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