

What the Papers Say

Detailed and Favourable Review of Broadcasting Proposals

"Evening Star," Dunedin

IT is nearly a year since the Hon. Mr. Donald (Postmaster-General) announced his ideas for taking over control of the radio broadcasting service in New Zealand and making it an activity of the Post and Telegraph Department when the contract of the Government with the present company terminates at the end of this year. Not much has been heard of this bright suggestion since then; the whole matter, we have been told, is under the consideration of the Government; and the fact that the Government has now asked the existing company to express its views on how the service should be continued will be read as an indication that in the circles nearest to him, among his own Ministerial colleagues,

Mr. Donald has been unable to make converts for his scheme. That is just as well, because the last thing this country wants is more State services—it has already too many of them; and to a Government control of broadcasting there are very strong objections, both material and associated with principle.

The bait of the Postmaster-General, designed to make his scheme attractive to the general public, was an offer to provide ten new minor stations at provincial towns and to raise the power of three of the city stations, which do not stand in need of such an improvement. We pointed out at the time that the new stations and improved stations could not be had for nothing, and that the Government had no money to spend on such luxuries. Government expenditure on them would be no less than a crime in the present circumstances, when the task which makes most worry for our rulers—and also for ourselves—is retrenchment in every direction.

SO much for the most material objection to Mr. Donald's idea. The objection of principle is given new force from an incident which occurred last week. An address which was given by the retiring president of the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce was broadcast, in spite of the fact that it contained strong political comments, which are supposed to be prohibited by the broadcasting regulations. That was the result of forgetfulness or of misunderstanding. Despite all the reasons for assuming that the chamber of commerce address would deal entirely with commerce, and not with politics, precautions were taken against it, and they miscarried. It is natural to suppose that henchmen of the Labour Party, who, with elections approaching, have made the most of it, were not more annoyed by it than the Broadcasting Company in seeing its rules flouted. That invasion of the air by politics could be called an accident. Nothing like it—or nothing that we can remember—had occurred previously in six years. But what would the chances be of this or the other political party

having its susceptibilities outraged, not rarely but often, with Government control of broadcasting? The servants of any Government could not expect to displease it by lauding its political ideas above all others. If the propaganda were subtle it would be only the worse. It has been suggested that, in the event of the Government taking over control, it would not attempt to prescribe the actual broadcasts, but would leave that to others. But the more consideration is given to it the more must such division of authority be judged impracticable, and no Gov-

ernment department which gets its hands on half of a public service is likely to be satisfied long with less than the whole.

Rugby Broadcast

ARRANGEMENTS have been made to broadcast five of the matches which are to be played with the visiting Australian Rugby team. These matches are:

August 29 v. Canterbury, at Christchurch.

Sept. 5 v. Wellington, at Wellington.

Sept. 9 v. Maoris, at Palmerston North.

Sept. 12 v. New Zealand, at Auckland.

Permission to do these matches has been granted by the controlling unions—the New Zealand Rugby Union and Canterbury Rugby Union.

ernment department which gets its hands on half of a public service is likely to be satisfied long with less than the whole.

The Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand has done very well for half a dozen years. It has built up, out of almost nothing, a service highly creditable to this Dominion, and, as the balance-sheets which we publish in another column indicate, it has not grown rich on it.

Licensed listeners have increased from 3000 to 60,000, and, in terms of the understanding given when first legislation was promoted, the natural thing to do now would be to let the company carry on. There is a claim, however, to a greater voice of the licensed listeners in its direction, and this would be met by the proposals which the Broadcasting Company has drafted at the Government's invitation. These would provide for a public company, with larger capital, in place of the private company, the listeners being financially interested and having equal representation on the board of directors with the present management, except that this management would elect the chairman, thus preserving a casting vote. The functions of the Government would be limited, as they are at present, to general regulation, which makes its natural province. It is suggested that there should be eleven new relay stations for the benefit of country

There may be room for criticism, in detail, of the scheme which is now proposed, but it should be infinitely preferable to any which would make for complete Government control.

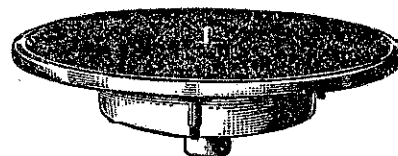
"Otago Daily Times"

THE Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand has, at the invitation of the Government, made proposals regarding the future of broadcasting control which seem to embody most of the advantages of the British system. They involve, however, a definite departure from the British system since they contemplate the continuance of broadcasting in New Zealand under the management of a public company, with a capital larger than that with which the present company is provided. They offer an improvement on the British plan in one respect, in that it is suggested that

listeners-in should be enabled to acquire half the shares immediately available in the new company, and to elect four out of the eight members of the board. Listeners-in would thus be given a voice in the direction of a business the purpose of which is to serve their interests. To the principle of making broadcasting a profit-earning concern there does not seem to be any legitimate objection, provided that the rights of the public are protected through a limitation of the dividend payable to a specified maximum, and also through the reservation to the State of a fixed proportion of the license fees of listeners-in. The adequate representation of the listeners-in upon the governing body should ensure that every effort would be made to satisfy public requirements.

The possibility against which all thinking persons in New Zealand are most anxious to guard broadcasting is that it should be allowed to become subject to political control and interference.

The creation of anything resembling a new State department, designed actively to control radio broadcasting, must be strongly resisted on the grounds of economy alone, since ex-



Constant Speed---The Secret of Perfect Pitch Reproduction

In the new Hammond Electric Phonograph Motor you will find many outstanding and radically different features. Probably the most important is the accurate speed of rotation. No other type of phonograph motor for home use has quite attained this ideal. Its accuracy is the result of the utilisation of the frequency in the alternating current for speed control. No mechanical governor is employed.

Other advantages are: Absence of noise, simplicity and ruggedness of construction, permanent lubrication, small space required, ability to play records backwards, and lastly, LOW COST and low current consumption.

The
HAMMOND
Perfect Pitch Synchronous Electric
PHONOGRAPH
MOTOR Price **£6**

We Invite Your Inquiry. Liberal Trade Discounts.

Dealers should apply for Price and Particulars to:

H. W. CLARKE, LTD., 182 Wakefield Street, Wellington.