

The B.B.C. from a Different Angle

Visitor Asserts Government Control Has Ruined Programmes

While in Wellington recently, Mr. H. A. Bloxham, chief wireless operator of the Tainui, called on the "Radio Record" and in the course of conversation asserted that Government control has spelt ruin to the English programmes, which were practically perfect under private enterprise.

Mr. Bloxham has been acquainted with radio for seventeen years, during which time he has visited every country of importance, and has seen the growth of the various systems of broadcasting control. Basing his observations on this extensive experience, our visitor expressed in no uncertain terms disapproval of any system that is controlled by the Government or in which the Government has a large interest.

YOU have asked me for my opinion of the British Broadcasting Corporation, and in the same breath have assured me that it is the best system of broadcasting in the world. Maybe. But I think differently. You are surprised at this, but take away competition, and replace it with a corporate body without representation of the listeners and you see the chances there are for a broadcasting system to fail.

In the old days it was different—the traders who controlled the British Broadcasting Company and who were the pioneers of broadcasting in Britain, had a direct motive for improving the service. The more listeners they had, the more wireless apparatus there was sold. They harkened to listeners because it paid them to, and crude though broadcasting was then, we had a popular service. But the Government changed it all and instituted a Corporation—not a Government body, but next door to it.

It was all right for a time—they had capable men at their command and tremendous sums to play with. They could afford to engage the best artists, to pay royalties to the world's most prominent dramatists; they could erect transmitting stations that were flawless. And they did. They introduced the Regional system whereby nearly every important district in England and Scotland was to be provided with a first-class service, giving listeners the choice of two contrasted programmes—at least they meant to do this, but somehow it is not quite working out right.

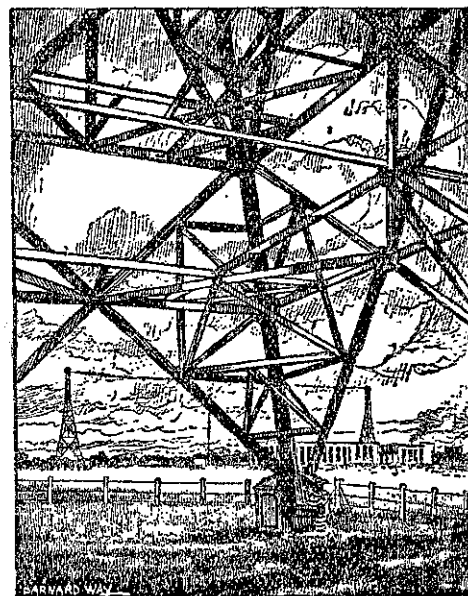
While on the subject of celebrities, I might mention that Sir Harry Lauder was paid £1000 for a single item. Think how far that money would have gone had a record of the great comedian been broadcast instead. Yet the public have no control over this kind of thing.

In my opinion the Corporation has failed. They have given listeners what they should like instead of what they do like—for one thing, too many talks. They say they are educating the masses by these talks and use the same argument to justify an excess of classical music. Personally, I like classical music and care to listen to nothing else, but tastes differ. Many want something different, but, as I remarked before, they do not get what they want. There is far too great a gap between listener and controller.

They have failed in another aspect—perhaps the more important one. They have lost many of their best men; men whose ability built the service until it came to be regarded as the world's best. It is not for me to discuss why they have gone, but the fact remains that they have and the service is the worse for their loss.

That the B.B.C. has not the popular approval can be borne out by reading the correspondence columns of some of the English papers. Complaints are endless, but there is no remedy, for they fall on unheeding ears. There is far too great a gap between the listener and the service. The board is comfortably settled, and it seems that (Concluded on page 2)

SEEN AT BROOKMAN'S PARK



PILLARS OF BROADCASTING.

An impressive close-up of one of the 200 feet high aerial masts of the London transmitter at Brookman's Park.

Reproduced from "The Radio Times."



"The bridge hand interrupted to listen to a broadcast talk." Mr. Bloxham asserts that one of the main failings of the B.B.C. is that there are far too many talks. From the B.B.C. Year Book