

# The New Zealand Radio Record

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## Home Journal

(Incorporating the "Canterbury Radio Journal.")

P.O. BOX. 1032, WELLINGTON.

Literary communications should be addressed: "The Editor"; business communications to "The Manager"; technical communications to "The Technical Editor."

Advertisers are asked to note that alterations of advertisements should be in hand Friday of each week for insertion in the succeeding issue, printed Tuesday, bearing Friday's date. No responsibility is accepted for blocks remaining unclaimed three months after last insertion.

Published Weekly. Price 3d. Subscription Post Free in advance, 12s. 6d per annum.

RADIO PUBLISHING COMPANY OF NEW ZEALAND, LTD.,  
P.O. Box 1032, WELLINGTON.

WELLINGTON, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1931.

### THE POLITICAL SITUATION AND BROADCASTING.

ONCE more the future of broadcasting becomes involved in political developments. In the reorganisation of Cabinet, necessitated by the Coalition, changes of personnel will have a direct bearing upon the attitude of Cabinet to the Broadcasting Bill brought down by the late Government. The prime factor in influencing the Coalition was the financial condition of the country, this having become definitely worse than had so far been revealed. Under those circumstances it can be taken as certain that economy will be the first consideration, and that no action is likely to be taken which, directly or indirectly, will tend to increase the liability or responsibility of the State. It seems to us, therefore, at least likely that the proposal for the organisation of a new company, in which listeners will have the opportunity of securing share-holding and a direct voice in the election of four directors on a geographical basis, will come to the fore. That proposal, as we remarked on its presentation, embodies some very attractive features. It limits the dividend-earning power, while retaining the incentive to good management and economical administration. It gives the listeners a direct voice in management, and an opportunity for the expression of their views. It relieves the State of any responsibility or commitment, while laying down a definite series of contractual obligations involving steady performance by the company. From the listeners' point of view, the whole necessity of the moment is the development of the service itself, and the necessary extension of stations and programmes. These objectives can be attained most satisfactorily, and without any confusion of change-over, by a process of evolution from the present company's organisation. Listeners will have a greater say in representation than under the Board scheme, where the fundamental weakness of political appointment and influence jeopardises what should be merely a business organisation. In the political change that has developed, listeners are therefore closely concerned.

AN item of cabled news which appeared last week will also appeal to radio listeners. In the House of Commons the Chancellor, Mr. Philip Snowden, announced that the position of the British Broad-

casting Corporation had been reviewed in the light of the financial emergency, and the Corporation had agreed to an arrangement by which, out of the total revenue from wireless licenses next year of £2,250,000, the public funds would receive £1,000,000. In discussing the Broadcasting Bill recently submitted to Parliament we stressed the possibility that under one of its clauses it would be open for the State at any time to raid the listeners' funds to an extent greater than is now the case. This is what is now to be done in Britain under pressure of political necessity. Their license fee is 10/- per annum. Under the sliding scale that hitherto has obtained, the British Broadcasting Corporation has actually received of that sum in recent years only from 64 per cent. to 67 per cent. Under the rearrangement outlined by Mr. Snowden, the percentage is to be reduced apparently to well below that figure—to something about 55 per cent. This makes the license fee another means of taxation. While the B.B.C., by virtue of its tremendous revenue secured from a large population, may be able to afford this payment to the State, New Zealand is in a very different position. The interests of the services require the concentration of the fullest possible amount of money into the service, rather than allowing the State in any shape or form to make any raids upon the money available. With a definite contract in force between the State and any company, listeners would be safeguarded from any Government yielding to the temptation of appropriating radio moneys. The British incident, too, shows that the claim that the B.B.C. is not a State department is extremely thin. In emergency the Government acts as if it were one to all intents and purposes and in New Zealand the same experience would doubtless follow. Forewarned is forearmed.

### Jottings

**HAROLD PRESCOTT**, tenor, well known in musical circles throughout New Zealand, has acquired a singing teacher's practice on the West Coast. He will be a loss to 3YA listeners.

Community slugs are now being held in Christchurch on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12.30 to 1.30 p.m. All four centres now indulge in this exhilarating pastime, and broadcasts are carried out by the YA stations.

The first of the W.E.A. weekly talks, under the new system of co-operation between the association and the Broadcasting Company, will be broadcast from 3YA on Monday, October 5, from 7.30 to 7.55 p.m. In future the book review talks at this station will take place on Thursdays instead of Mondays.

### VK2ME

#### Appeal to Listeners

A SYDNEY station that has a large circle of New Zealand listeners is VK2ME. The correspondence received by that station from New Zealand is voluminous, and greatly appreciated by the management. Letters of correspondents are of definite value to such stations as a check upon their transmissions. We are advised that, if listeners who are interested enough to write to either VK2ME or VK3ME at any time, would give particulars regarding the quality, the signal strength, and the fluctuations, if any, of reception, at the same time giving an indication of the type of receiver, and especially the number of valves employed, the information would be of considerable value.

### International Short-Wave Network

CONVINCED that a tremendous market exists in America and abroad for short-wave radio sets, two American radio companies, one in Boston and the other in New York, have entered into a co-operative arrangement to develop an international relay broadcasting network, using the four relay short-waves now assigned to aviation radio. American programmes will be sent abroad on a regular basis, and American listeners will be urged to acquire receivers that will not only tune domestic short-wave stations but also the short-wave broadcasters of foreign countries.

It is explained that under the rules of the Federal Radio Commission programmes relayed by short-wave must be non-commercial in character. The returns to those who seek to develop the short-wave transmitting and receiving field will come entirely from their market for receiving equipment. Just as regular broadcasting was first developed without advertising to stimulate the sale of radio sets, it is believed that once the public is aware of the excellence of the short-wave programmes relay broadcasting can be developed in the same way.

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