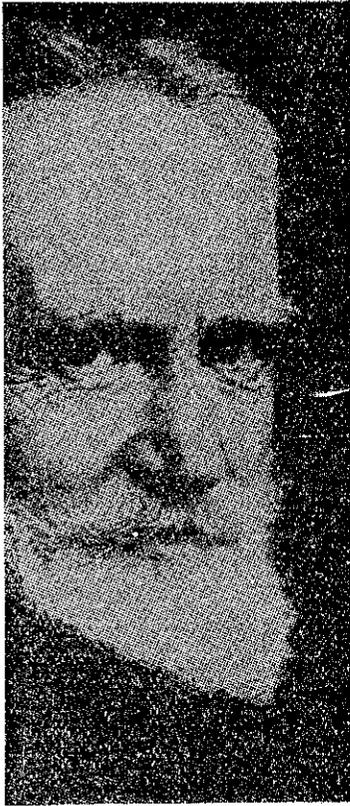


# Radio Makes Possible a National University

## Home Study Circles for N.Z. Listeners



George Bernard Shaw.

There is a loudspeaker and an air of expectancy. says the chairman. They settle themselves for an intellectual treat, as the voice from London begins:—

"Your Majesties, your Royal Highnesses, your Excellencies, your Graces and Reverences, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, fellow-citizens of all degrees—I am going to talk to you about Democracy."

It is George Bernard Shaw himself addressing the great new "National university" of wireless listeners, and helping to "break down the traditional barrier between education and entertainment." Do you think him presumptuous to open his remarks as if the whole population from the King to the humblest citizen must be listening? But that is his little joke, and the sort of joke he delights in. It is George Bernard Shaw all over.

Here in New Zealand we cannot yet listen to Shaw himself, though even this may be possible before long if the present progress of technique continues. But those who hear 1YA will shortly enjoy a series of talks on the life and work of Shaw by Rev. William Constable, who, besides being a great student of Shaw and an excellent speaker, has personally met the subject of his talks.

This, however, leads one to say something of the idea of these talks generally. In England it has been proved that a considerable section of the listening public desires in the broadcast programmes not only entertainment but food for thought. Not that there is any hard and fast line between the two. It is the old story of amusement versus education, on which subject the writer once made the brilliant remark that he "didn't see how one could be educated without being amused!"

An increasing demand for informative and stimulating talks has been one of the most interesting and impressive developments of broadcast service in England. The talks are arranged by a full-time staff of experts, who are experts not only on building programmes to suit all tastes, but also in selecting speakers who can talk attractively—without academic nonsense or pedantry. The more important of the talks series have been supplemented by "Aids to

*A new series of talks, organised by the W.E.A., is shortly to commence from 1YA, and listeners are invited to form groups so that, by discussion, and correspondence and organised reading, they may derive greater benefit from them. As the essence of all intellectual progress lies in disagreement and discussion, no better topic than "G. B. Shaw" could have been taken as an opening. Many people violently disagree with many of Shaw's ideas, but there can be few, however, who will not be interested in Mr. Constable's presentation of Shaw, even if they do not see eye to eye with him.*

**A** DOZEN people sit comfortably round the fireside in an English mining village.

"Are we all ready?" Study" pamphlets, available to listeners beforehand, and giving in outline the subject-matter of the series, descriptive lists of books that may be consulted, and questions suggested for discussion. This last point indicates a most fruitful feature of the scheme. For, beside individual listeners, people have been invited to form groups for joint listening and discussion.

**T**HROUGH the generosity of the Carnegie Trust it has been possible to foster the formation of these groups by providing the necessary listening sets on loan. The number of such listening groups has passed the 1000 mark, and a few months ago there was held at Oxford a Summer School devoted entirely to the training of listening-group leaders.

Beside the "Aids to Study" pamphlets already mentioned, the British Broadcasting Corporation publishes a 3d. weekly paper, "The Listener," which contains a verbatim report of the more important talks, excerpts from other talks, articles on related topics, book reviews, etc., and generally serves as a medium of contact between those who broadcast and those who listen. An interesting section is given to correspondence, in which listeners are encouraged to criticise views expressed in the talks, and the speakers can reply to the points made. The quality of the intellectual fare which broadcasting in England provides may be indicated by the fact that the present writer, as one engaged in adult education finds "The Listener" an almost indispensable source of inspiration and stimulus in his work.

In what has been said above it may seem that the writer is holding up England to the disadvantage of New Zealand. This is no part of his intention. In any case one has to remember that we are a small country without either the financial or the cultural resources of the Motherland. The realisation of the immense possibilities of wireless in directions other than purely light entertainment, which came gradually in England, can only be expected to come even more gradually with us. It must be confessed indeed that those of us who are engaged in W.E.A. work were at first very dubious of the effectiveness of such a medium. The personal contact of the tutor with his group is such a vital aspect of our methods that it seemed hopeless to expect much result from a series of brief talks in which the voice of the speaker was divorced from his actual presence, and the give-and-take of question and discussion. However, the difficulty of reaching those in the country (Concluded on page 2.)

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