

Board Control of Broadcasting

Bill Passes All Stages

IN moving the second reading, the Postmaster-General commented on the development of broadcasting in New Zealand. Broadcasting was a recent development, but it had already become an important factor in the social and educational life of the people. It had established itself on a firm foundation and was entitled to consideration as a part of the national life. Mr. Hamilton referred to wireless services other than broadcasting in New Zealand, and said that the Postal Department had about £64,000 invested in wireless.

Broadcasting was of both national and international importance and had consequently to be very carefully controlled. There were different forms of control in different parts of the world, and it appeared as if the general system of control was passing through a transition stage. Britain was the only country that had adopted State control, but Australia was moving in that direction, and the Bill, if passed, would place New Zealand on a similar footing to Britain. Broadcasting was of such a public nature that the State must inevitably take a large share in its control.

Referring to the agreement with the Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand, the Minister said the company had developed the service at a rapid rate. When it commenced operations there had been only 5000 listeners-in, and now there were 67,000. The company's license expired on December 31, and the time had arrived when the Government would have to make new arrangements.

There were two things the Government could do—either establish a board to control radio or form a public company for that purpose. One of the difficulties of public ownership was the question of sound finance. It was difficult to control a publicly-owned company because the public would want a good service without much expenditure. A great deal could be said in favour of a company, but it would be difficult for the State to enter into an agreement with a company that would be satisfactory both to the company and the Crown. The present company had taken a great risk when it entered into the agreement with the Government in the infancy of the broadcasting system, but the risk had been justified. The revenue from licenses now amounted to about £80,000 a year.

Purchase of Company's Interest.

THE company had hoped for a renewal of the agreement, but the Government had decided to exercise its right to purchase the company's interest. The price to be paid would be agreed upon between the Government and the company, if possible, and if that proved impossible it would be submitted to arbitration. The Government was proposing to follow very similar lines to those adopted in Great Bri-

The Broadcasting Bill, introduced some time ago by the then Postmaster-General, Mr. J. B. Donald, was, this week, again brought before the House by the Hon. H. A. Hamilton (P.M.G.). With slight alteration it passed through the remaining stages.

As a result, broadcasting in New Zealand will, from January 1, 1932, be placed under the control of a board of three, selected by the Postmaster-General, with an advisory committee of eight.

tain. There was some opposition to public control, but the broadcasting system was so essential a public institution that it would have to be controlled by the public.

In reply to a question regarding B stations, Mr. Hamilton said that was a matter of policy for the board. He believed the Government would get a good type of man for the board. He had received a great many applications for positions on it, but he had not considered them, and would not do until

the Bill was passed. The Government had lent £15,000 to the company, and that would go toward the purchase price of the system.

Dealing with the Bill in detail, the Minister said that it proposed to set up a board of three members, and not of four, as had originally been intended. The £1350 previously proposed as remuneration to the board would be retained, the chairman receiving £650 and the other two members £350 each. The board would have power to establish advisory committees wherever there was

a station, and these committees would help with the arrangement of programmes.

Advisory Council.

THE Bill also proposed to establish an advisory council of eight members, five from the North Island and three from the South. The council would only act in an advisory capacity to the board, but it was considered by the Government that some such system was necessary to enable listeners-in to have some say in the control of radio. The members of the council would be appointed by the Minister from nominations received from the various listeners' organisations. The council would probably only meet about once a year. Members would receive travelling allowances and probably a guinea a day while attending to the business of the council.

After a short discussion, during which no objections were raised to the principle of the Bill, it passed the second reading.

The Final Stage.

ON Thursday last the Bill came before the House again, and after a comparatively short discussion was put through its remaining stages and passed. During the committee stages several members made a plea for favourable consideration for the B stations. The Postmaster-General admitted that the B stations were doing good work, but said the policy in respect to them would have to be decided after the board had been set up.

It might be better to make arrangements with the B stations, and bring them up to a certain standard so that they would be able to carry on with the assistance of the board. His information was that there were about 36 B stations in New Zealand. Perhaps 12 would be enough to assist, but he did not know. If a standard were set up for 12, that might be sufficient to provide an efficient service. The B stations were doing valuable work, and 12 established on a sound basis would probably give quite a good service.

In reply to a question, Mr. Hamilton said the board would have power to assist these stations. The question of the land lines would be one for the board to decide. Mr. Hamilton pointed out that all the revenue did not come from listeners; a fair proportion came from traders.

On coming before the Legislative Council the Bill was accorded unanimous support. During the debate the Rt. Hon. Sir Francis Bell said it was not fair, as some critics had done, to abuse a company which had done its best under the circumstances. He was not associated with the company, nor did he know one person in it, but he thought that nearly every man and woman in New Zealand who had subscribed to the service was indebted to the company for its work over the last three or four years.

The views expressed by Sir Francis were endorsed by the Hon. G. Witty. (Concluded on page 30.)

Six Talks on

"The Life and Work of Bernard Shaw"

By the

Rev. William A. Constable, M.A.

Synopsis No. 6.—"St. Joan."

"ST. JOAN" was first produced in 1923 and published in 1924 with a preface on the history of Joan of Arc, her character, the treatment of her in literature, and the general message of her life for to-day.

In the play we have all the old brilliance and power combined with a mellowing influence that is at times distinctly poetic.

The conflict of character and ideals between Joan and her opponents is splendidly maintained—in spite of the fact that Shaw has made his task more difficult by trying to be fair to the opponents of "The Maid." Bishop Cauchon is drawn as a sincere churchman, anxious above all for the welfare of the whole Church, just as the Earl of Warwick is a study of the finer type of Feudal nobility. In making these two condemn the incipient Protestantism and Nationalism of Joan, Shaw is taking a license. But he confesses to this in the preface; for "it is the business of the stage to make its figures more intelligible to themselves than they would be in real life, for by no other means can they be made intelligible to the audience."

In the chaplain, De Stogumber, there is a little of the old satire of our English foibles—which may be overdrawn; but his transformation after the execution is finely dramatic, and his final appearance in the Epilogue is kindly and sympathetic.

Dominating the play is the splendidly drawn character of Joan—rising at critical moments to poetic heights in several great speeches (which will be illustrated from three of the scenes).

Some critics have doubted the necessity of the "Epilogue." But it is needed for the message of the play, that, though we might not have burned Joan at the stake to-day, we are not yet ready to welcome the true saint. "O God, that maddest this beautiful world, when will it be ready to receive Thy saints? How long, O Lord, how long?"

Art is the communication of the artist's experience to the reader. And with Shaw, the imaginative experience did not end with Joan's martyrdom, but included her treatment by posterity up to her canonisation as a "Saint" in 1920. Thus his own artistic sincerity demanded the addition of what he could only give in the Epilogue.