

The B.B.C.

(Continued from page 1.)

more level-headed.

Many talks are given in America, but they deal with lighter subjects than do those broadcast by the B.B.C., and are treated unconventionally. In this respect the basic differences between the two systems is well revealed. It has always been the B.B.C.'s policy to concentrate on the educational side of radio, but in America, the stations must sustain the interest of the greatest number of listeners for the largest amount of time.

Solid though it is, the B.B.C. has its enemies. One has only to read the daily papers and the correspondence columns of the wireless periodicals to appreciate this point. With all their resources the Corporation cannot please everyone. Perhaps the most serious series of attacks is being made by Captain Eckersley, formerly chief engineer of the B.B.C., now a consultant in chief of several radio publications, and a virile writer. He has an engagement with a certain paper to write an article regularly on broadcasting, and this more often than not is severely critical of the B.B.C.

One, I remember, was protesting against the practise of giving a short metronome signal during the tacets. This was to let people know that although they could hear nothing from their speakers, their receivers had not gone wrong. Eckersley remarked, "For God's sake, if we are going to have a silence, let's have a complete silence!" . . . Eckersley is a good engineer. . . .

You know probably that the regional scheme is operative in the Old Country. Briefly this scheme—incidentally an idea of Eckersley's—is to provide the major portion of England, Scotland and the North of Ireland with alternative programmes. One or sometimes both originate from the London studios—at present Savoy Hill, which will be replaced by the Broadcasting House in the near future—and are relayed to all the small stations, who rebroadcast them. Usually one programme goes out over all the country, and this is known as the national programme, whilst the other, which sometimes originates from London, and sometimes from the local station itself, is known as the regional programme. In any case the regional programme is interrupted to give flashes of local news.

The idea is something akin to the American chain system, but it endea-

vours to give two alternative programmes. More often than not, however, the same programme is put on both waves. At other times a programme broadcast one night on the National channel, will be put over the regional the next night. This is often the case with specially good plays.

When this fact is borne in mind, the completeness of the organisation which produces the programme is all the more amazing.

Many departments are engaged. There are separate ones for drama, orchestra, review, vanderbilt, music, talks, both adult education and talks on topical themes, outside broadcasts, school broadcasts, children's hour, and many others. Programmes are first arranged by the different departments in collaboration, and submitted to one man who, if necessary, revises it, to give what he thinks the best balance. The rearranged programme is then passed on to the chief programme organiser for his approval. With him rests the final responsibility of the programme matter.

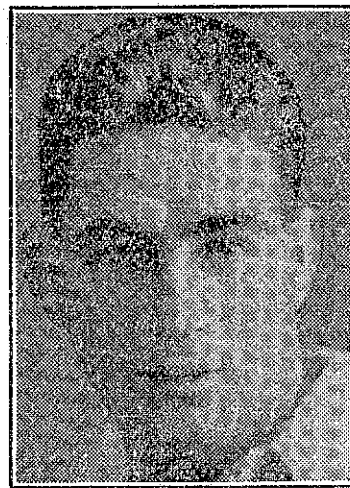
I can quite see the enormous difficulties under which any radio controlling authority in this country must work after seeing this huge organisation maintained by the B.B.C. to supply two programmes a day. In N.Z. twice this number of programmes have to be compiled by an organisation which, compared with the B.B.C., is minute.

One thing you do not have to worry over out here is the problem of copyright. An annual fee is paid to the Copyright Association, and there the matter ends. In England, however, a copyright department is maintained, and its officials are continually interviewing authors, composers, playwrights, etc., in an endeavour to solve copyright problems. And believe me, they present some problems, too. Many of the difficulties have been surmounted by having special works written for broadcasting. There are now a good many works specially written for the B.B.C., and I think if the N.Z.B.C. could get hold of some of these, which I am sure they could for a very reasonable sum, there would be provided a wealth of new matter for our radio artists to perform. Most of the works are performed once or twice, and then filed in comprehensive libraries.

Many popular outside relays are and at others a portable transmitter is used to broadcast the descriptions on short-wave from where they are picked up by the main stations and rebroadcast. Outside broadcasting is an art

in itself, and in England has been very highly developed.

A big wireless van with all necessary equipment is maintained. I had arranged to accompany the engineers on one of their trips, but unfortunately it rained, and the broadcast was off.



.. CRICKET ..

C. S. Dempster

—a member of the N.Z. cricket team which toured England—will talk from 2YA on

Saturday, January 2,
at 7 p.m., on

THE FIRST TEST

In England there are no bans on the broadcasting of any form of sport, probably because the B.B.C. is such a big organisation that it can afford to pay for any such privileges.

The Orchestra.

THE B.B.C. orchestra is an example of how far the organisation can go in creating its own combinations. This is now one of the first orchestras in the world, for it ranks with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra and the Berlin State Orchestra. Playing under the distinguished baton of Sir Henry Wood, the orchestra is a brilliant combination of 180 performers. Every player is engaged on full time, and when it is realised that the smallest salary is over £10 a week, some idea of the quality of the artists can be gauged. A large portion of this outlay is returned from public performances, for the orchestra is regularly engaged at concerts which are usually broadcast. Incidentally, too, the combination does a fair amount of recording.

Out of season the orchestra is subdivided into groups for specific purposes.

There may be Orchestra A, a group of 80 instrumentalists, who broadcast symphony works and the like, Orchestra B, 50 artists, who play lighter works of the Strauss type, and Orchestra C and D, each of 35 players, who do even lighter works, but not dance numbers, for this is left to a special orchestra which, like the main orchestra, is one of the best known in the world. Playing under the conductorship of Jack Payne, the combination is heard regularly in the best dance halls in London, from whence relays to the broadcast station take place. Exactly the same care is taken of these relays as of those from the Queen's Hall, and it is this meticulous care which makes the British broadcasting what it is.

I think as far as New Zealand is concerned, the adoption of the B.B.C. principle is a good thing. Radio will advance more rapidly because we will have their vast experience to work on. Radio must progress—at present it is only in the toddling stage, and it is up to us to help it toward an early maturity. One advantage the B.B.C. possesses is that, because they have the money, they can afford to secure the services of the best brains in England.

But we are, I feel, on the right track, and we can anticipate that within a few years New Zealand broadcasting will be a B.B.C. in miniature.

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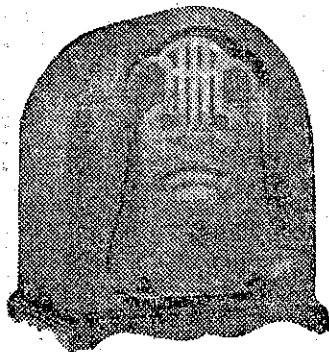
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