

other hand, it is claimed on behalf of the gramophone companies that the records are gold only for private use, and that the "public performance" or broadcasting of a record is another act, against which they can protect themselves by legal process. To clarify the position for the future, it is understood that all gramophone records will bear a stamp specifically stating that they are not to be broadcast except by permission of the manufacturer. We anticipate and hope that the whole position will be the subject of a speedy, amicable arrangement.—Ed.]

### Gramophone Records.

THE announcement of restrictions on the broadcasting of gramophone records will come as a bombshell to most listeners, although it will not altogether surprise many who have followed the course of events in recent years between the Performing Rights Association and the broadcasting companies.

This action is due to a concerted and no doubt word-wide effort on the part of the gramophone companies—a powerful organisation—who are seriously concerned over the shrinkage in their revenue. In their efforts to prevent the landslide they point to the broadcasting companies as a contributory cause of their troubles, alleging that the broadcasting of popular records affects the sale of such records to the public.

This in itself is a moot point. When a popular "talkie film" of a musical nature is displayed, gramophone dealers have reported an increased demand for the records, and the same applied more or less to broadcasting.

The reduced turnover of the gramophone companies is governed by the same cause as that affecting other trading concerns to-day—namely, the financial depression which has reduced the purchasing power of the individual. Records being more or less of a luxury would naturally occupy a leading position in the list of personal economies.

It is to counteract the results of the depression that the gramophone companies are clenching at any course of action which in their opinion will increase sales. But what of the listeners? Are they to stand by without protest, and see one of their best forms of entertainment taken away or restricted in such a manner that the broadcasting companies and listeners would be reduced to marionettes controlled by strings pulled by the gramophone companies?

It is an impossible position. It affects New Zealand to a greater extent than most other countries owing to the fact that the only other alternative, the almost exclusive use of local talent, is so limited in its scope by virtue of our isolation and small population, that the revenue from license fees would ultimately be seriously depleted with disastrous results to the future of broadcasting in this Dominion.

I make this statement with every respect for local talent, but it will be generally agreed that the record brings the world's best to our fireside. The gramophone companies will admit, too, that the development of the wireless valve has revolutionised the gramophone and revitalised an industry which had not made much progress for many years. When the panotrope and wireless gramophone combination reached the market a few years ago, the sale of records was such as to enable

the gramophone companies to declare dividends of sixty and seventy per cent. The gratitude of the gramophone companies is certainly not reflected in their present action.

What is the remedy? Whatever steps the New Zealand Government

### Empire Broadcasts

IN preparation for permanent Empire broadcasts, for which it is building a special station, the B.B.C. begins experimental transmissions on January 4, 1932.

may take will not permanently cure the difficulty. It would only be a palliative, and to that extent it is highly desirable that legislative action be taken in New Zealand as quickly as possible to save the B stations being forced out of existence and to smooth the path of the new Broadcasting Control Board which takes office on January 1.

The birth and early infancy of the new board already shows signs of trouble and travail, but with careful feeding and nursing by the listeners and all concerned, the baby will no doubt grow into a healthy youth and repay its foster parents for all the care and attention lavished upon it.

So much for the palliative, but what of the cure? If the rights of the Performing Rights Association are not to be looked on as an incurable disease affecting listeners the world over, the remedy will have to be effected by joint action. New Zealand is not the only country affected.

The movement is world-wide. It calls for discussion by Britain and the Dominions at a round-table conference, and in this connection may well form one of the subjects at the next Imperial Conference. Until this bone of contention is finally disposed of, listeners may expect a continual recurrence of the trouble in one form or other. By throwing their weight into the controversy, the voice of public opinion expressed through the listeners will force a solution of the problem.—I. Meltzer.

### An Advocate of Moderation.

ACCORDING to a recent "Radio Record," the gramophone companies have placed a ban on the broadcasting of recordings without their permission, claiming that this is detrimental to their sales. There is certainly some truth in this, as it is a well known fact that some B class stations absolutely murder the latest hits by giving us them for breakfast, dinner and tea until one gets tired of hearing them. But if the stations were limited to, say, three broadcasts of a popular hit per week there would not be the same tendency to kill a recording. But there are two sides to every argument.

It is equally true that broadcasting, judiciously regulated, can, and does, aid sales of recordings. As an example, take the recording "Good-night, Sweet-heart." This is, I believe, the latest hit. It has been played not more than five times a week by Dunedin B class stations, and the result is that up to last week-end the recording could not be obtained in Dunedin, all stocks having been sold out. In fact, I know of one concern who had an order placed for thirty of this item to arrive, and

out of that thirty, twenty were already sold. So that it would appear that if the use of these recordings of popular hits were regulated, the broadcasting of these items could materially aid the sales of recordings.

It would be rather a pity if the B class stations were forced to close owing to their inability to fill their programmes, since they depend upon recordings for practically all their present programmes, as, personally, I consider that these stations give listeners better entertainment, the ordinary YA station broadcasts being slightly heavy at times. Besides, one is always sure of light music from some of the B stations. I quite realise that the YA stations try to please everyone, and that

this is a hard thing to do. They do it very creditably. But I do think there are too many vocal items in proportion to instrumental ones. However, I may be biased in favour of instrumental items. There is one thing, however, I do not like, and that is the present series of international programmes broadcast from 4YA every Monday. I do not consider that these are nearly as good as the first international programmes with the Lockharts, Hy-Wide and Handsome, etc. They may, however, suit some.—DX640C (Dunedin).

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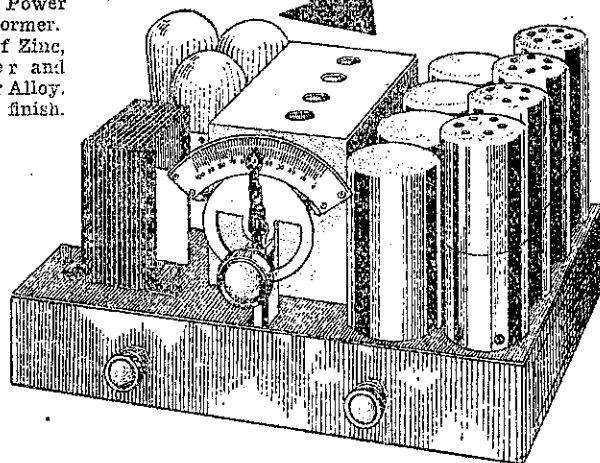
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