

"THERE were many remarkable features in the election which is now over, apart from the confusion of issues and of parties. The most remarkable, I think, was the change it indicated in the mechanism of elections. It was a pretty general experience that public meetings figured much less prominently than usual in the struggle," writes Mr. A. G. Gardiner, in the "Star" (London).

"It was not merely that they were fewer in number. That was notoriously the case," Mr. Gardiner goes on to say, "and may be explained in some measure by the circumstances of the election and the bewildering cross-currents that afflicted the party machines."

"But more significant than the infrequency of the meetings, especially in the country constituencies, was the small attention that the platform attracted in the campaign and the striking decline in the personal intercourse between the candidate and the electorate. In many constituencies canvassing was hardly attempted, and I remember no occasion when there was such marked economy in the distribution of election literature."

"Those features, no doubt, are partly explainable by the vast increase in the electorates, which makes personal contact with the voter difficult, if not impossible. But they are mainly due to another fact. Broadcasting has, in this election, established itself as the chief instrument of electoral controversy—more powerful than the platform or the Press, more penetrating than the canvasser, more personal than the direct contact of candidate and voter."

"If meetings have been fewer and less important, it is because they have largely lost their function. The voter no longer needs to leave his fireside and go out into the night to have his share in the great controversy."

"He can have his evening meal in peace, whet his appetite for the fray with a little preparatory music from the B.B.C. orchestra, and then, with his feet on the fender, and with his pipe in his mouth, and surrounded by the family circle, he can have the argument presented to him in his own sitting-room, not by the stumbling oratory of the local candidate, interrupted by the irrelevance and disorder of a public meeting, but by the Hectors and Achilles of the fight, speaking to him quietly and personally, without interruption and without the mob emotion

of a crowd to distract the mind and cloud the issue."

"This is a momentous change. It is a change which has come to stay and which must increasingly influence the temper of controversy. I think it will influence it for the better. It is an appeal to the individual reason rather than to the crowd emotion. It substitutes argument for rhetoric, and authoritative statement for the irresponsible assertion of the platform."

"The Honourable Mr. Slumkey or Mr. Pott may commit himself to any nonsense on the platform of the village schoolroom at Wallop Well with perfect security. He will not be reported and is in no danger of contradiction. 'If you are making a statement in print,' said a famous mob orator to a young candidate for Parliament when they were leaving a meeting together, 'you must be careful of your facts; but on the platform, my boy, you must let the millions fly.' That represents much of the political controversy of the past."

"But if Mr. MacDonald or Mr. Baldwin or Mr. Henderson commits himself to a declaration on the wireless there is no escape from it. It is not merely that he has a responsibility which the local candidate has not; it is that he is heard by millions of the instructed as well as the uninstructed, not in the heated atmosphere of a meeting but in the cool and judicial atmosphere of the parlour."

"In coming thus into direct relation with the individual voter, the political leader not only subordinates the candidate but incurs a new and heavy responsibility. He may quite conceivably turn the scales of an election for or against a given issue by a good speech or a bad. I do not think it can be doubted that the course of the recent election has been more influenced by the broadcast addresses than by any other fact. This means that henceforth the politician who wishes to influence elections must study a technique of oratory entirely different from that of the past."

"The wireless is a great leveller. It knows no distinction of persons, and is the most ruthless enemy of the

spell-binder. It strips him of all the stock-in-trade of his craft—the mob emotion of a great meeting, the sense of the hero advancing into the arena, the arts of gesture, the gifts of personal appearance and dramatic bearing, the clapping and the singing; the feeling of battle. He is a voice—nothing but a voice."

"A lonely voice without fanfaronades to announce it or impress you with its importance and celebrity. If you like it you listen; if you don't like it you flick a gadget and reduce



AILEEN WARREN,
a pianist well-known to 3YA listeners, who will be heard in several numbers on January 14.

it to silence. It does not address your emotions. It addresses your mind. If it fails to do that its failure is absolute. Rhetoric and declamation are equally fatal. They fall still-born from the impersonal mouth of the loudspeaker."

"All the affectations and insincerities of matter and manner, the portentous drop of the voice, the dramatic pause, the thrilling query, the awesome whisper—all drop stone dead before that little party in the parlour. Nothing 'gets across' except the qualities of clear statement and plain, unadorned sincerity of utterance. Humour must be sparingly used, and, even so, must be of the true vintage. Mere anecdote is a bore and facetiousness an offence."

"The merest shade of condescension is aggravated, and vulgarity is thrice vulgar. During the past election we have had an extraordinary experience of what constitutes effective and ineffective speech on the wireless. I shall not say who in my judgment passed the ordeal best, though I am quite clear on that point. But it was the man who was at once most direct, unaffected and obviously sincere. It is no bad omen for politics that the

Radio in the British Elections

Advantages of the Microphone

chief instrument of political controversy in the future has so acute an ear for the truth or falsity of those who employ it."

Empire Broadcasting

Construction of New Station

THE new Empire broadcasting station which the British Broadcasting Corporation is erecting at Daventry will comprise two transmitters, each capable of working on a number of wavelengths. Thus the various parts of the Empire will be reached at times suitable for local reception.

It is expected that the station will be available for use in a year's time.

In a recent article in the "Radio Record" it was stated that the new high-power radio station for broadcasting throughout the Empire will cost about £42,000, while the annual maintenance charge will be about £23,000. The British Broadcasting Corporation has announced that it will itself bear the whole of the expense. The question of expense has hitherto been the cause of the delay.

The scheme was discussed at the last Imperial Conference, and there have been negotiations with the Dominions and colonies since. The British Broadcasting Corporation, it is understood, now takes the view that it is more than ever essential at present in the interests of trade and sentiment that Empire broadcasting should be placed on an adequate basis, and that at this moment British listeners will not object to bearing the cost.

The station will have four short wavelengths in order to reach the various parts of the Empire, and it will be very powerful. The programmes will be sent out during the whole 24 hours of the day. Their nature has not been decided upon, but they will be largely of entertainment interest. Even with this limitation it is recognised that the proposed station will have a distinct value for British trade from an indirect advertising point of view. But there may be direct trade propaganda.

The British Broadcasting Corporation is, of course, strongly opposed to this in Great Britain, but it takes the view that trade propaganda abroad in the general interests of the community is on a different footing, and it would be willing to include general British trade propaganda in Empire transmissions.

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