

Recorded Programmes for the Empire

Details of Comprehensive Scheme Now Available



I recently announced the formation in Britain of a company aiming at supplying overseas radio stations with recorded British programmes. This organisation is "Colonial Radio Programmes, Ltd." While we think a better title, provided it were possible, would have been "Empire Radio Programmes, Ltd."—for that word "Colonial," surprising as it may seem to Home friends, is not popular in the Overseas Dominions—we hope the new organisation will fulfil a useful function. Offers from the new firm are already available in New Zealand and while actual business may not yet result, listeners may be assured that no opening of securing suitable overseas items is being neglected.

An article in "The Radio Times" of January 8 gives the following details:—

Dominion and Colonial listeners will not, after all, have to wait until 1933, when the new B.B.C.'s high-power shortwave transmitter will be completed at Daventry, to hear the voice of London.

A scheme has just been launched which will work in co-operation with and supplement the B.B.C.'s short-wave service. A new organisation, Colonial Radio Programmes, Ltd., has undertaken to transcribe electrically British programmes in this country, which will be distributed to Dominion and Colonial broadcasting stations all over the world.

In the summer of last year, while producing in the studios of the National Broadcasting Company, an official of the new company was greatly impressed by the possibilities of the circulation of programmes by the method now known as electrical transcription. Many of the smaller broadcasting stations in the U.S.A. are not associated with the networks of the great programme-supplying concerns, the National Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting System. This is either because suitable land-line connections were not available or because the cost of maintaining land-lines over enormous distances was too high. By electrical transcription, however, complete programmes are recorded on either disc or film, and copies or prints of these programmes are circulated through the

ordinary postal channels to a large number of broadcasting transmitters.

Advantages of Recordings.

BROADCASTING by electrical transcription has a number of advantages:—

(1) The cost of each programme is shared among the stations through which it is broadcast, and thus a great saving is made in the running costs of individual transmitters.

(2) The listener is certain of obtaining a well-rehearsed and finished production, for should an artist fall ill his recording is only postponed, and the actual broadcast is not affected.

(3) Land-line expenses are avoided, since each station is supplied with a set of records.

(4) Programmes are available for broadcasting at any time of the day or night, and repeat broadcasts involve no extra expenditure.

(5) Artists are prepared to appear in the recording studio during the morning and afternoon for a lower fee than in the evening, when they would have to sacrifice other engagements to appear before the microphone.

It is by this method that programmes are now being circulated throughout a

great number of stations in the U.S.A.

Cannot be Detected.

IT must be clearly understood that technical arrangements make it impossible for the listener to detect that he is listening to a recorded programme. There is no break in the continuity, and extensive tests have shown that such a broadcast is often of a superior quality to an actual production in a studio, where accommodation and facilities are limited. It is possible that a number of these programmes distributed by Colonial Radio Programmes will be sold by Dominion and Colonial stations to local advertisers. For this purpose, a certain number of musical intervals are allowed in the programme, during which advertisers' announcements can be superimposed in the local studio.

American programmes electrically transcribed in New York are already being broadcast in New Zealand and other parts of the Empire, and it is the hope of Colonial Radio Programmes to supersede these with all-British programmes. An official of the company visited a number of the Dominions and Crown Colonies last year,

when he had discussions with broadcasting authorities, radio manufacturers, the Press, and Government departments controlling broadcasting. On all occasions he was informed that a great demand existed for British programmes throughout the Empire, which would help to strengthen the bond existing between the people of Great Britain and their brethren overseas.

Opening Overseas.

IT must be remembered that, to provide an efficient local service in the Dominions and Colonies, it would be necessary to have a great number of transmitters, which would involve heavy technical expenditure. The revenues of the broadcasting companies, therefore, which are often limited, are thus heavily drawn upon, and an insufficient sum is left to provide a programme service as good as might be wished.

Another difficulty with which the Dominion and Colonial broadcasting organisations have to contend is that of lack of artists. First-class performers are naturally more limited than in Europe and America.

By associating themselves with this scheme, stations overseas will be able to obtain first-class programmes at a cost far less than that at which they could possibly produce them in their own studios. A great number of difficulties had to be surmounted before the scheme could be drawn up on concrete lines. The greatest was that of international copyright. This has now been overcome, and arrangements have been made by means of which copyright fees will be paid in this country according to the number of stations over which each programme is broadcast.

Type of Programmes.

IT may be asked what relation this scheme bears to the B.B.C. short-wave service. The new transmitter at Daventry is intended to serve those listeners throughout the Empire possessing short-wave receivers. In this way, listeners out of range of the ordinary colonial stations on the medium band will be able to tune in straight to London. Numerous stations will also relay speeches of international importance and topical events from the London studio, but only during certain hours.

By electrical transcription all-British musical programmes will be available throughout the Dominions at any time of the day or night. These will be relayed by the local stations and, therefore, not picked up by those listeners equipped only with short-wave receivers. Colonial Radio Programmes intend to use only British programmes and British artists.

The majority of programmes electrically transcribed by Colonial Radio Programmes will consist of wireless plays, revues, vaudeville, and special musical events which cannot be obtained on ordinary gramophone records.

Music-Lovers' Competition

An Interesting Novelty

AN indication was given last week that a comprehensive competition of an interesting character was to be launched in the near future. It is now possible to give some further details concerning this innovation. The competition is to be called a "Music-Lovers' Competition," and arose out of suggestions received by the "Radio Record" from time to time to the effect that a competition under this title would be appreciated. From the suggestions made a plan was formulated and submitted to the Radio Board. The Board and management, on going into the matter, proved very receptive to the idea, and willingly adopted the proposition as an innovation calculated to interest listeners and provide an attractive feature sustained over a number of weeks.

THE competition in brief provides for selections of approximately one minute each to be made from musical numbers and songs and given over the air from each station. The test is for the listener to identify these extracts and name them on a list to be kept till the end of the competition, when the full lists are to be sent forward in competition for the monetary prizes to be awarded. One competition will be held from each of the YA stations, i.e., 1YA, Auckland, 2YA, Wellington, 3YA, Christchurch, and 4YA, Dunedin. Different selections will be given from each station and each station will run on different nights, so that listeners who are particularly interested and feel confident of their musical ability will have the opportunity of listening to not only one station but all stations.

ORGANISATION of the competition is now proceeding, and fuller details will be given next week. As some assistance to listeners there will appear in each week's "Radio Record" prior to the competition a list of musical numbers from which the items to be actually given will be chosen. Competitors will be able to compete without reference to this list, but as the exact wording of a title is sometimes in doubt, the list is provided primarily with the idea of ensuring accuracy and facilitating entry. The competition will be open free of entry fee to everybody, with only two exceptions: namely, members of the staff of the radio stations and members of the staff of the "Radio Record."

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