

# Editorial Notes

Wellington, Friday, Mar. 4, 1932

WE confess we are curious to see exactly how the Advisory Council that has now been appointed (after a period of three months' incubation) will develop in relation to the Radio Board. Under the Act the Advisory Council is entrusted with the task of "advising the Board in respect of its functions." That is really the whole gamut of its instructions: There is no definition of its duties or other limitation whatsoever. The other sections of the clause devoted to its appointment are merely machinery details relating to the convening of the Council and the payment of its personnel in relation to expenses. The Board has been appointed to "carry on a broadcasting service and develop and improve it from time to time." The Advisory Council has been appointed to advise the Board in respect of its functions, i.e., the carrying on of the service; so that we have the spectacle of one body appointed to do the job and another body appointed to advise it how to do it. Our curiosity as to how this will develop is therefore justified. There never has been any shortage of advice in New Zealand as to how the broadcasting service should be administered and managed, and if the Council seeks to collect and tabulate this advice, it will have no lack of raw material on which to work.

**OBVIOUSLY** the Advisory Council was a concession on the part of the Postmaster-General to the popular clamour prevalent at the time of the passage of the Act for listeners themselves to have some say in the management of their own service. A major charge directed against the Company, it will be remembered, was that its management was aimed at private profit as well as to the service of listeners; those who were advocating the establishment of a Board urged that the funds provided by listeners for the maintenance of the service should be administered in effect by listeners for listeners through a Board to be appointed representative of listeners. The Government would not concede the point of popular selection of the Board, reserving the right of absolute nomination. It did, however, make the concession represented by this "Advisory Council," with the special purpose of providing therein an outlet for the representations of listeners. No principle of popular election was given; but the Government did agree to

take into account the nominations of such listeners' organisations as existed. In point of actual fact, the organisation of listeners to any practical effect and purpose as a body has been proved to be impossible, and certain "Listeners' Leagues" became little more than jokes, even to those who used them as a stalking-horse. In some parts, well established radio societies do exist, notably in country districts, and, being based upon devotion to the broad principles of radio, have done notably good work. It is pleasing to see representatives of this type of organisation filling places on the Council. The personnel of the Council has been well chosen from the geographical point of view, so that there will be no question of any dominance by cities and centres. Most of the names are fairly well known for one reason and another, and the whole would seem to give a fairly good range of radio views.

**THE** first meeting of the Advisory Council will, it is understood, be held in Wellington on March 10, so that a speedy indication may be gained of the lines upon which development is likely to proceed. On that date the Board, or a representative of it, we presume, will meet the Council, and doubtless hold a preliminary conference, outlining the fields upon which it conceives the advice of the Council might be of some value; thereafter we expect the Council will be left to clarify its views for presentation to the Board. Upon what lines can the Council most usefully proceed? Obviously the Board will remain the supreme financial power, and except upon broad lines will not refer financial issues to the Council. Finance is therefore ruled out. The coverage question is also at the moment in abeyance in that the work of the Commission that has been appointed must be awaited. Detailed discussion of programme policy is also, we think, unlikely to be referred to the Council, for it is primarily a matter of expert and detailed organisation. And if the proposal for a plebiscite which we mentioned last week is adopted, as we have every hope will be the case, then the mass of information thus gained by direct contact with listeners themselves will be far more valuable than even the mature suggestions of the Coun-

cil. What points, therefore, remain upon which the Council can be consulted? What are the major issues confronting the radio service?

**THERE** are several such outstanding issues, all of definite importance. Assuming that the Board (once it becomes aware of its financial obligations in respect of the purchase price of the assets of the old Company) finds itself in a position to set aside, say, £10,000 or £15,000 (these figures are purely supposititious for the sake of citing the question) for the development of the service; how can that money be spent? Would it give the greatest amount of pleasure and service to the listener by being devoted to extending the hours of the service of Stations 1YA, 3YA and 4YA? Or would it be better, having in view the necessity of making radio available in all parts of the country, to devote that money to providing or strengthening suitable transmission points in provincial areas, to make better reception available to populations hitherto inadequately served? Or, in the third place, would it be advisable to divert some part of the money at command to developing the alternative services provided in main centres by certain "B" stations? These are the major problems of the service as we see them at present, and the Board conceivably might like the Council to indicate an order of preference in which these tasks should be under-

taken. Judgment upon these points must be reached, not from any view of secondary interest, but wholly and solely with an eye to the national good and the best interests of the whole service. Listeners will agree that with limited finance the issue is difficult. All these developments may be required for the better operation of the service; each would yield a definite profit in extra service to listeners and the attraction of new listeners; but which will yield the greatest return in comprehensive distribution of a national necessity, and make radio available to most new listeners?

**AT** this stage we do not propose to do more than raise the question for general consideration. So far as the Advisory Council is concerned, while we admit our curiosity as to the direct lines on which it will develop, we feel that it contains in its personnel men with an enthusiasm for radio who are possessed of some weight and judgment. While the Board will certainly retain full business control, there doubtless will be general lines of policy on which the opinion of the Council can be sought with advantage. Further, the intimate presentation to the Council of the problems of the Board (which will be a necessary preliminary in certain cases if their advice is to have any value) will check ill-informed criticism on the part of any organisation with which the Council members may be associated. We trust that the Council will develop into a useful and capable body for the furtherance of radio.

(MUSIC LOVERS' COMPETITION (See Pages 1 and 2.)

## Specimen Entrance Sheet

(Use plain paper).

Name: William Whizzbang,

Address: 123 Marine Parade,  
Raetih.

1YA MUSIC-LOVERS' COMPETITION.  
(Alter name of Station as required.)

Item

- 1.....Annie Laurie.
- 2.....Schubert's "Wanderer."
- 3.....Gounod's Serenade.
- 4.....The "1812" Overture.
- 5 and so on.

Keep careful note of items for each competition entered until the end of the series, when the competitor's entry should be finally prepared and posted before a date to be announced, to the Editor, "Radio Record," P.O. Box 1082, Wellington, the envelope being marked "Competition."