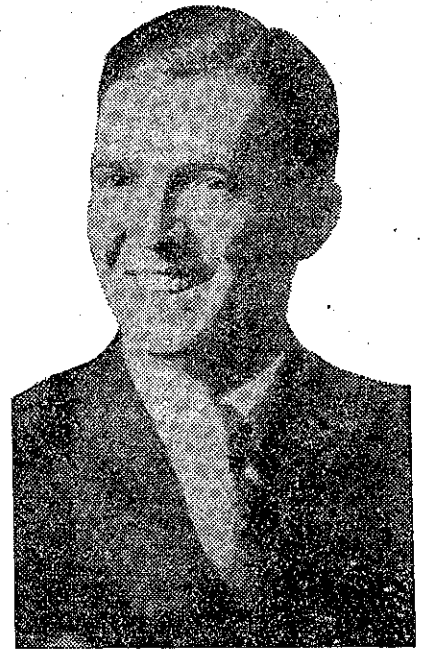


# VERSATILE ENTERTAINERS

## from Wellington

### The Record Players in Music, Story and Song

Fresh talent is to be introduced to the microphone of 2YA when the "Record" players commence next week a series of entertainments entitled "One Hour of Music, Song and Story." This is a popular programme combining some of the best talent which has appeared before the microphone in New Zealand. There will be abundant variety, sparkling wit, and talented vocal and instrumental artists. The director of the entertainment is Frederick W. Barker, already well known—though, perhaps, not recognised—to Wellington listeners. He has been in charge of the Ipana Merrymakers, so popular from 2ZW, and he has been heard from 2YA in that popular and versatile combination, the 2YAlcans.



F. W. BARKER,  
Elocutionist and entertainer, who will  
direct the "Record Players" in a new  
series from 2YA.  
—S. P. Andrew photo.

**F**EW radio performers in New Zealand have to their credit so widely diversified experience as Mr. Barker. His work on the platform commenced back in 1917 when, under the sobriquet of William Frederick, he made his debut in the Christchurch Competitions. The remarkable success he achieved in the elocutionary sphere led him to make an intensive study of that art. The following year saw him gaining in experience and, as a member of the Pom-Pom Pierrots, he was a well-known figure in the Christchurch district. Humorous numbers, in particular amusing characterisation and mimicry, were his forte, but he was often heard to advantage in Shakespearean and Dickensian recitals.

In later years he went to Auckland, and there became associated with the Little Theatrical Players. He rapidly achieved fame in that city. It was while there that he made his debut in radio work and acted as relieving announcer when Mr. Culford Bell, the regular announcer, was in the south. To such a degree did he throw himself into his work that it was not long before his efforts were recognised, and from all quarters came congratulations and praise.

The Press had a great deal to say about Mr. Barker's activities from 1YA. It stated that there was universal approval of Mr. Barker as an announcer and that intense disappointment would be felt if he ever left the station. It was also said that he possessed that radio personality, which is by no means common, and one writer went



This a never-to-be-forgotten occasion—the marriage of Frank Crowther to Miss O'Listener at the Wellington Town Hall last year. The bashful bride is none other than Mr. Barker.

—"Dominion" photo.

so far as to say his loss was one which largely discounted

many of the improvements which had been effected. While in Auckland Mr. Barker won the New Zealand championship in elocution, as he had done in Christchurch seven years earlier. He held classes in speech-training with the Dominion Motor Sales Staff of the Auckland Advertising Club.

Many listeners will remember him as a debater both from the Auckland station and in the city; particularly will it be remembered that he led a virile attack on the Time-payment system, both over the air and before the Advertising Club.

He introduced novelty into New Zealand radio, his most original effort in this direction being a broadcast chess game between station 1YA, Auckland, and the listeners. The station broadcast the moves and the listeners replied by telephone. The game was completely played in one night without interference to the programme.

**L**ATER, when Mr. Barker was in England, the Director-General of the B.B.C. told him that this was the first time that he had ever heard of this radio novelty, and expressed great interest in its procedure.

Going to England on a business trip in 1928, Mr. Barker had the unique honour of an interview with Sir John Reith, Director-General of the British Broadcasting Corporation. It may be remarked that this is most unusual, and at the time Sir John Reith mentioned that Mr. Barker was the first New Zealander whom he had interviewed officially on broadcast matters.

Mr. Barker's experiences of the B.B.C. are sufficiently interesting to warrant a special article which will appear in a future issue. Sir John Reith's opinion on announcing and pronunciation are vividly remembered by Mr. Barker.

Coming to Wellington after his return from England, he became associated with Albert Russell and Owen Pritchard in the Community Singing from 2YA. He assisted mainly with original stunts, chief of which was the marriage of Frank Crowther to Miss O'Listener, Mr. Barker making a most charming bride on this occasion. At the subsequent divorce of Frank Crowther, also held in the Town Hall, the wife of the former character became the prosecuting attorney.

In his association with the Ipana Merrymakers from 2ZW, on each Wednesday night, Mr. Barker has won his way into the favour of listeners to that station. The announcements between the Merrymakers' items are made by him, and in addition he gives an item in each programme. The popular appeal of this type of programme is evident by the large amount of congratulatory (Continued on page 21.)