

Coverage Commission Investigates South Island

Difficulties to be overcome before complete coverage can be accomplished

Conditions for radio reception in New Zealand vary considerably. Due largely to the very varied topography of the country places as near to one another as 2 miles may have remarkably different radio conditions, and in many cases there is no doubt that the present system is not giving a dependable service. There are places where daylight reception is almost impossible: other places where static and power interference mar anything but the strongest stations, and many of these fade. On the other hand, there are places where reception of both New Zealand and overseas stations is steady and reliable.

One could not anticipate from theoretical considerations alone the variation in signal strength as one goes from place to place, and we are firmly convinced that it would have been impossible for anyone to sit in an office and plan on economic and practical lines efficient radio coverage for this country. It has been necessary for us to meet personally people in all parts of the country to get a true perspective of radio reception conditions in New Zealand. We carried an efficient set with us for use as a standard check set where necessary, and took every opportunity of checking reception on various types of receivers which were kindly placed at our disposal, but even allowing for variations from day to day, could not help but remark on the difference we noticed from one district to another.

Our itinerary started in Dunedin on March 16, and through the co-operation of the Post and Telegraph Department, whose officers arranged in advance the majority of our interviews, we were able to cover practically all parts of the South Island in just about three weeks. We derived our information from reliable sources wherever available, including radio dealers and representatives of the listeners. Naturally, we found that the dealers were very valuable to us, as, in selling and servicing sets, they acquired an intimate knowledge of the district in which they were situated. Together with experienced listeners, they readily furnished the information we required, and co-operated to the fullest extent.

The Commission appointed to investigate the coverage problems in New Zealand—Dr. M. A. F. Barnett, of the Scientific and Industrial Research Department, and Mr. A. Gibbs, M.I.E.E. Chief Telegraph Engineer of the Post and Telegraph Department—returned to Wellington on Saturday morning, having completed investigations in the South Island. The Commissioners will remain in Wellington for a few days, and will then start off on their survey of the North Island.

The Commissioners, in talking with the "Radio Record" over the week-end, mentioned a few interesting points with regard to their work in the South Island. While it is impossible to forecast their report in any way, listeners should find their remarks of considerable interest.

Our observations were based mainly on the performance of the YA and "B" stations, for, in order that the country may be efficiently covered, one must make the fullest use of all available information as to reception from different sources and on different powers and frequencies.

All parts of the South Island were visited, and our itinerary included the following centres:

Dunedin, Milton, Balclutha, Clinton, Gore, Mataura, Edendale, Wyndham, Invercargill, Riverton, Orepuki, Tuatapere, Otatau, Winton, Tapanui, Kelso, Heriot, Lawrence, Roxburgh, Miller's Flat, Alexandra, Clyde, Cromwell, Pembroke, Hawea, Tarras, Oamaru, Kurow, Waitaki Hydro, Redcliffs, Waimate, Glenavy, Oamaru, Maheno, Palmerston South, Waikouaiti, Timaru, Pleasant Point, Fairlie, Geraldine, Ashburton, Christchurch, Springfield, Otira, Greymouth, Kumara, Ahaura, Reefton, Westport, Inangahua Junction, Lyell, Murchison, Nelson, Collingwood, Takaka, Motueka, Havelock, Blenheim, Picton, Seddon, Ward, Kaikoura, Waiau, Culverden, Hawarden, Amberley, Kaiapoi, and back to Christchurch. Many outlying places were communicated by telephone from the above-mentioned centres.

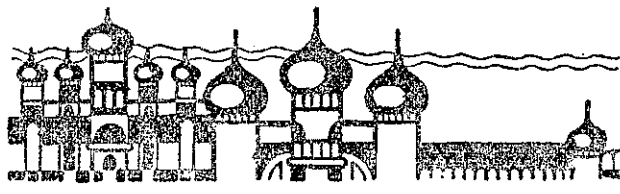
It is inexpedient at the present moment to generalise upon our investigations, as it will take some time to collate all the material we have and use it as a basis in making recommendations for a national service.

As previously remarked, we were well received at all places, and it was evident that listeners generally appreciated the advisability of setting up a commission to investigate thoroughly the question of coverage so that technical developments might take place along sound and efficient lines.

The setting-up of a Board of Control was, as far as we were able to judge, regarded as a wise step and one that would ultimately lead to the development of radio broadcasting along progressive lines.

New Zealand is a very difficult country for which to provide an efficient radio service. Its topography presents many difficulties, but we believe if the problem is tackled in the right way it will only be a matter of time and money before conditions will be materially improved.

To anticipate our report or any part of it at the present moment, is quite impossible. We have gathered a wealth of information regarding existing conditions in the South Island which will be of great value, and which will be used in the best interests of the future development of broadcasting in New Zealand.



A Programme of

RUSSIAN MUSIC

Comprising vocal and orchestral numbers' will be presented from 4YA on Wednesday, April 20, at 8 p.m.

