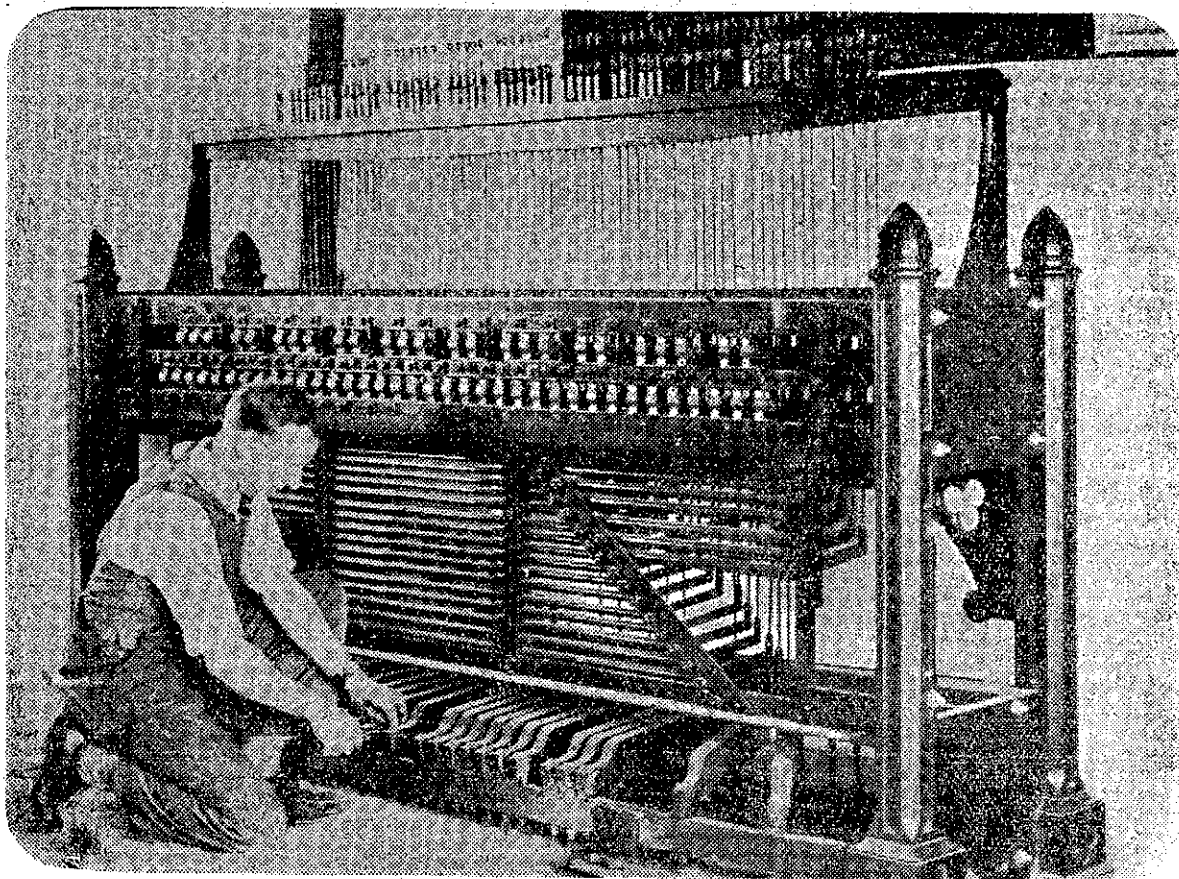




Adjusting the delicate mechanism of the clavier of the War Memorial Carillon.

Broadcasting the Carillon

THROUGH broadcasting, great interest in the Wellington Carillon has been aroused throughout New Zealand. Listeners in all parts of the Dominion—from the far north to the south—have written to the Board stating how they had been looking forward with the keenest anticipation to the first broadcast on Anzac Day, and how much they have enjoyed the music from the bells. It is certain that since the official dedication ceremony, full justice has been done to the Carillon by 2YA, and pleasure has been given to many thousands of people who had no opportunity of otherwise hearing the bells. Even in the precincts of Wellington itself, from comments heard on every hand, it is abundantly clear that without broadcasting, very many people would be deprived of the pleasure afforded by the Carillon.

On Anzac Day, 3YA, Christchurch, carried out a rebroadcast of 2YA, thus bringing the Carillon within the hearing of crystal set users in that city.

As far as the broadcasting is concerned, the results exceeded expectations. Carillon music is exceedingly difficult to broadcast or record satisfactorily. The bells sound out of tune, due to the fact that the overtones of the various bells are not always in true harmonic series. The consequence is that if two bells are played together, it may so happen that although the fundamental tones are in harmony, the overtones will not be and will tend to be discordant.

Despite the fact that carillon music is exceedingly difficult to broadcast, many appreciative letters have been received by the Radio Board concerning the quality of the relays by 2YA of recitals played on the War Memorial Carillon. In the accompanying article are outlined the methods by which the board's engineers successfully overcame the technical difficulties encountered during their endeavours to ensure that listeners should hear the full beauty of the bells.

The reverberations of the bells also present a problem to the broadcaster. These reverberations, together with the overtones, are part of the music of bells and cannot be eliminated.

The technicians of the Broadcasting Board, under the direction of the Chief Engineer, Mr. J. M. Bingham, spared no effort to make the broadcast a success, and were rendered every possible assistance by Miss Gladys Watkins, the carilloneuse. A great many tests were carried out, and the technicians climbed up and down the ladders in the Campanile on Wellington's Mount Cook so often that they estimate they climbed a height equal to that of the real Mount Cook in the Southern Alps.

The microphones were tried out in many positions, and ultimately it was found that a location in Mount Cook School was the best. The microphone placed there was shaded and a special sound focusing device, was erected. The result, as listeners know, was very satisfactory, considering the inherent difficulties of the task, and the background of noises from the crowd. Compared with the recordings made of the playing of this and of other carillons, the local broadcast was superior.

IT is worthy of note, too, that the choir, which was a hundred yards away from the microphone, broadcast exceedingly well.

When Miss Gladys Watkins made the recordings she played very many hours for test purposes, so that, under (Continued on page 27.)