

STATIC

by
"SPARK"

THE round-by-round description of the Sharkey-Schmelling boxing bout by 2YA was a triumph, and the pity of it was that it did not occur on a Saturday afternoon, when more would have been able to hear it. An excellent rebroadcast would have been possible, but I presume permission for this was unobtainable. The transcription, however, was a great success, and all concerned are to be congratulated.

I NEVER listen to Mr. J. W. Fergie from 2YA without wondering why the crest or brand of our railways is not N.Z.N.R. instead of N.Z.R. A name is a wonderful thing and were our steel road and its appurtenances invariably referred to as our National Railway, the people would shortly realise that they own them, and are responsible for them. In season and out of season this should be broadcast, and just as often should the Broadcasting Board remind listeners that broadcasting belongs to them. Happily for the taxpayer broadcasting cannot be a liability, but the railways have been and can be again and again. But what would New Zealand be like without the long view having been taken, or again as Mr. Fergie remarked, what would it have been had there been no Royal Navy. Both services can be a liability, but they insure our being. The motorist may fairly claim that by taxation he has helped to make many country roads a real asset to the nation—in fact some are luxury racing tracks—but no motor service would assert, with the capital cost of the road a taxpayer's liability, that it is not competing unfairly with the railway running parallel to the road. In my opinion, all motor services competing with the railway should be regarded as "express transit," and paid for. The extra cost should be attached to wipe off the capital account of the road and the motor transport company charged rent of the road on a mileage basis.

A LIVELY discussion was under way as to who was the most powerful person in Britain, and a North Briton asserting that Scotland had annexed England in 1707 favoured the Prime Minister, who is also from the "Land of Cakes. He changed his opinion, however, after hearing Sir John Reith, also a Scot, make his final speech from the B.B.C.'s old headquarters at Savoy Hill. The Director-General is prob-

This Week's Winning Par.

THIS week's prize of 5/- goes to DX29W (Wanganui) for the following:—

This afternoon I was walking up the street with a friend who is a radio enthusiast, and I mentioned that WOWO was putting on a DX programme for N.Z. on Wednesday at 10 p.m. and we would get it here about 3.30 p.m. on Thursday. He looked at me unbelievably, saw I was serious, and exclaimed: "Gee Whiskers! It takes long enough to get here, doesn't it?"

A prize of 5/- is awarded weekly to the contributor of the best paragraph with a radio interest. Address contributions to "Spark," Box 1032, Wellington.

ably the most criticised man in Britain, and no one has been in a more favourable position to mould public opinion. Sir John is not easily moved from a decision, and made up his mind at the start that he would not be a party to under-estimating the public intelligence. "Radio," he says, "can make democracy safe for the world," and Sir John and his staff are endeavouring to make radio safe for democracy.

THE relay of the opening of the Winter Show by 2ZW was made so realistic by the narrator that I feel attendance is unnecessary. If I do go, however, I intend to see the soap stall last, the description of which was almost overwhelming.

THE final programme transmitted from the old headquarters of the B.B.C. was one that stirred the emotions. Its character illustrated the development of British broadcasting. Inevitably the occasion had a note of sadness, but listeners and artists alike said good-bye to the eight studios in the old building with the knowledge that there were twenty-two better ones in the new premises. Before there was uttered the solemn prediction of the future of broadcasting, a typical item was given from each studio. At the conclusion of the item the engineers were heard to drop connections and close the doors for the last time. The last words spoken from the old building and the motto of the B.B.C. gained an added significance when heard at one minute past midnight, as an epitaph, to the nine years in which entertainment and information had been distributed from the fam-

ous building on the Embankment. "Nation shall speak peace unto nation . . . Good night."

THAT famous composer, Rachmaninoff, was in London a few weeks ago, and in an interview expressed the opinion that broadcasting is bad for art. Rachmaninoff hates the idea, for he says that nothing can convince him that the result is artistic. How he reconciles this position with his agreement with the gramophone people to make his records is hard to follow. Is it temperament or is it insufficient inducement? Or, does the stand make for increased sales of recordings?

I NOTICE in this Friday's programme for 2YA that Mr. de Mauny's orchestra is playing Coleridge-Taylor's "Incidental Music to Othello." Practically everything that Coleridge-Taylor composed is interesting music because, as he once wrote to the committee of the Birmingham Musical Festival: "I would not compose until I felt I had it in me to compose." Well might the Lord Mayor of the city declare: "We must respect the man who makes such an assertion." And our respect is the greater when we remember he was not more than 25, but at the time had already his now famous "Hiawatha" to his credit.

The son of a Sierra Leone negro, who married an Englishwoman, his talent for music was manifested at six years of age as the following story reveals. One day the conductor of a Croydon theatre orchestra, looking out of his window, saw a little, curly-headed, black-faced boy holding a small sized violin in one

hand and playing marbles with the other. He called the boy in and put some music before him, and was delighted to find that he could play it in perfect time and tune. From that time the child, whose name was Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, was earmarked for music. While still at school he led the class-singing with his violin, and began to appear in public. Some few years later he was enrolled by a local benefactor, as a student of the Royal College of Music. As a student of the college the youth produced the first part of "Hiawatha," a work that exhibited both racial and individual qualities, and attracted immediate admiration. It was in the Hall of the Royal College that it had its first performance. Stanford conducted, and Sullivan was present. The evening was a triumph and heralded his brilliant career. That was in 1898, when Coleridge-Taylor was twenty-three. He lived only fourteen years more, dying, like Purcell, at the age of thirty-seven. It has been said that not long before he passed away he sold the copyright of all his works for the sum of £100. Within a few weeks of his untimely end a fund was opened on behalf of his widow, who found herself in reduced circumstances. Thus not only did music lose a powerful disciple, but his dependants were never to reap any benefit from his life work of composing.

In the twenty years since his death Coleridge-Taylor's music has come to occupy an almost unique place in the affections of cultured music-lovers. He was in later life a fervid apostle of colour, his negroid origin being a matter of intense pride to him. A believer in the folk-song element in art, his aim was to do for negro music what Dvorak had done for Bohemian, and Grieg for Norwegian. If for no other reason the music for "Othello" must command our respectful attention, and I do not doubt the 2YA orchestra can give a good account of itself in this colourful composition, on July 1.

BRITISH sponsored programmes from French stations, for French and British listeners, are likely to be much curtailed in the near future. The canny Gaul, although welcoming the income that these programmes have meant to his nation, is now finding that France is slipping in radio development upon national lines. There has been so much correspondence, deprecating the commercialisation of radio by a for-