

Control of Radio Advertising

Deputation waits on Minister



The deputation was introduced by Mr. P. Fraser, M.P., who spoke in the highest terms of the service given by the Wellington B station, on probably the finest standard in Australia of New Zealand. It was of immense value in its social service, for the Smith Family, the Mayor's fund, the Central Mission, Red Cross, and other organisations had received from it more assistance than from any other single agency. He fully agreed that to have unrestricted advertising on the air would be most objectionable, but listeners had no objection to the sponsored programmes of really high quality now submitted. If these were restricted as suggested the station would have to close down. Parliament had intended, when adopting the Broadcasting Act, that B stations should be enabled to carry on. There were two means only whereby that could be done: either by subsidies or by permitting them to earn some revenue.

Help to Community.

THE Mayor, Mr. T. C. A. Hislop, had desired to attend, but was unable to do so on account of important business. However, he submitted his views in writing, stating that the station had built up a large body of listeners, and the service was very highly appreciated. Anything done to curtail its activities would, he believed, be resented by a large body of citizens. The station had been of inestimable help to the community in the manner in which it had placed its services at the disposal of public organisations, and in particular the Mayor, for raising funds for philanthropic purposes.

Professor H. H. Cornish said he agreed that blatant advertising was not wanted, but there was no objection to the skilful manner in which the sponsored quality programmes were offered. Competition with the YA stations he believed was essential to the maintenance of high standard from the Government stations.

Mr. D. McLaren also spoke of the wide appreciation of the service given and of the alarm which would be felt if listeners realised that there was a danger of the station closing down.

Alternative Station.

MR. H. D. BENNETT, also stating the listeners' point of view, said that the department had again changed its mind in regard to restrictions and threatened a rule which should simply mean the loss by listeners of the service they wanted most. The listeners, as partners in the broadcasting system, paid the piper, and they were entitled to call the tune. Because the Broadcasting Board had heavier compensation to meet than was anticipated it said it could not assist any but a few B stations, and what the listeners suggested was that things should be allowed to continue until the board had its finances in order. They were strongly opposed to an action which would mean that in the meantime the station that was wanted, as a most

A decision to limit the advertising allowed any "B" station to one sponsored programme a day resulted in a large and representative gathering waiting upon the Postmaster-General, Hon. Adam Hamilton, last week. It was stated that if put into operation this restriction would force at least 22W and the main Auckland "B" station off the air. After listening to all the arguments, the P.M.G. pointed out that control was essential, and that unless definitely applied would lead to complications. He agreed, however, to give the matter consideration.

valuable alternative station should be stifled.

Other Stations.

THE Minister asked whether other B stations would be affected.

Mr. C. G. Camp said that the main Auckland B station would definitely have to close.

The Minister, said Mr. Bennett, had said that he did not want the Wellington B station to shut down; the board said that no subsidy could be paid, and the Government proposed crippling restrictions. How could all those factors interlock?

Earning Revenue.

MR. R. J. BENNELL, Dominion chairman of the recent Radio Traders' Conference, placed before the Minister a resolution adopted at that conference urging that B stations should be permitted to earn sufficient revenue to carry on.

The Minister pointed out the difficulty of meeting the cases of other centres where there were as many as six B stations.

Mr. R. McKeen, M.P., said that some of those stations were not fit to be classed "B" a classification of secondary stations seemed necessary.

Mr. W. Appleton said that many people had been disgusted with the

old YA service and had discontinued listening until the B station came on the air; the YA service had vastly improved under board management, but the need of the alternative service was still very real.

The listeners all wanted the B station, said Mr. W. Nash, M.P. What was the reason for depriving them of the service which they wanted and for which in fact they paid their license fees?

Control of Advertising.

THE Minister said that he was in sympathy with much that had been said. He did not wish to see the station closed, for he recognised fully its merit and its services. Some control was obviously essential, and the question was where one was to stop. To lay down a policy for one station would lead to endless complications elsewhere unless great caution was exercised. The Broadcasting Board had adopted the policy that coverage had to be given before duplication of service was to be entertained.

Mr. Fraser: But in the meantime these stations must surely be kept alive.

The problem was to find the right balance between too much and too little freedom, continued Mr. Hamil-

ton. He agreed that there was no particular objection to the manner of broadcasting sponsored programmes in New Zealand, but the deputation would realise the difficulties which had to be met, for though, as had been stated, a high power B station was more costly to maintain than a small station, yet large and small would demand the same freedom. He would consider the representations carefully.

22W's Financial Position

IN reference to the statement that some B class stations were making profits from advertising, Mr. R. H. Nimmo advises us that this does not apply to Station 22W. He authorises us to say that the accounts show that a loss of nearly £1000 has been incurred by Station 22W since its inception, and that the position has now become so serious that an adjustment must be made.

In this connection it is possible that a development somewhat on the lines of a club movement will be initiated, as has been done in Auckland. Listeners in Auckland, to assist several B class stations there have banded together into clubs. In the case of 12R Club 2500 members were enrolled in two weeks. It is likely that a meeting will be held in Wellington in the near future to institute a 22W Club, in respect of which a possible fee of 5/- membership is suggested.

It is understood that numerous offers in the past of financial assistance have been received from listeners appreciative of 22W's service, but such sums as have been sent in have all been handed to charity.



The main studio of station 22W, one of the most popular "B" stations in New Zealand.