

Editorial Notes

Wellington, Friday, September 16, 1932.

ARISING out of the questionnaire comes the problem of local artists, for listeners have indicated that records are preferred. But recordings only are fair neither to New Zealand talent nor to listeners for their number is definitely limited, whereas though artists who broadcast really well are very scarce, the latter are in some way different at each broadcast. The psychological point of view enters into the question—one often feels he is getting better value for his thirty shillings by listening to flesh-and-blood artists. But the point at issue is that listeners want no half-measures—the best or nothing. Comes the big question, what is the best?

THE suggestion has been made in various quarters that the Board is not endeavouring to obtain the cream of New Zealand's talent, but is content to engage low-paid artists. Nothing is farther from the actual state of affairs. The Board's instructions have been "engage the best," and we believe that their staff has made every endeavour to do so. To some degree we can understand the attitude of those making the charge, for they are not taking into consideration the aptitude of the artist for broadcasting work. Microphone technique is not simple, calling as it does for not only a particular natural aptitude but, for perfection, a special training. Many artists who are locally considered to be distinctly superior to any broadcast artist fail lamentably when put to the microphone test. Every station in New Zealand has examples of this. In countries where broadcasting is more developed

special classes are held to train the broadcasting aspirant. We believe the Board has spared no pains to engage the best, and its policy of sending on tour those artists who are really outstanding is to be commended. It is expensive, but we believe listeners realise and appreciate.

A STATEMENT has been made, unfortunately without reference to the facts, that the radio public as a rule is not given the opportunity to hear the best artists available in the Dominion. "On rare occasions only is an attempt made to get them to perform, the trouble being that the fees offered are not sufficiently attractive." This statement is as damaging as it is untrue. The Board does not restrict artists to a certain low fee as is popularly imagined, but separate arrangements are made according to the artist's ability. In view of this fact, the statement is not fair, either to the artists or to the Board.

THE comments in the Press concerning the questionnaire are interesting. Most writers seem afraid that the Board will place too much reliance on the results and will henceforth not use discretion in the selection of items and the balance of programmes. One statement goes so far as to say that it is to be hoped that the programme organisers will "read it carefully, mark it 'contents noted,' and put it away." It is most unlikely that the Board will make its programmes in mathematical accordance with the results of the questionnaire, which indicates tastes and preferences in a general manner only. It is not suggested that there should be sweeping changes made, for with perhaps the exception of band music, the programme balance is roughly in accordance with listeners' preferences. This view is strengthened by the fact that 60 per cent. did not return the paper, and of this silent majority it can generally be assumed that they are fairly satisfied with existing conditions. Results compiled in a statistical form do not always reflect the true state of affairs, but, that the Board knows this, and will take it into consideration in defining future policy, may be accepted without reason for doubt.

THE conclusion of the general manager that the percentage of crystal sets is apparently too low and that valve amplifiers have not been included has been challenged. The point is made that, because the number of crystal and valve outfits now marketed are very low, it is rating the intelligence of the amateur set builder very low indeed to make

such an elementary blunder. Considering the fact that some 18 months ago, when the cost of the multi-valve sets was high, there were several makes of a.c. two-valve sets marketed and sold in large numbers, the conclusion of the general manager has some weight. Few of those purchasing such a receiver knew or wanted to know that it contained a crystal detector.

In Phase and Out

By "Quadrant"

"ON behalf of the 2ZW Radio Club—"
click.

HAS any Wellingtonian tried taking off his aerial, turning up the volume and then listening to 2YA? It makes a big difference sometimes.

J. M. BARRIE'S "What Every Woman Knows," is to be broadcast from 3YA shortly. This is capital. We mere men would never know what every woman knows unless it is broadcast occasionally.

ON the new frequency 1YA comes in quite loud on my modest little set. The awful whine has gone and so has the aeroplane propeller that seemed necessary before, to blow the signal down to me. I hope neither exorcism comes back.

THE racing announcer at 2YA certainly knows the game, but I wish he would be more happy about it. Last Saturday I felt almost as miserable as the weather and didn't have a jolly time at all. There must have been some happiness at Hutt Park for I heard a laugh occasionally. Is mirth disallowed?

ALBERT RUSSELL is coming back. Surely that means a community sing broadcast from the wharf.

I COUNT myself a lucky listener. I was in a dealer's shop when Mr. Ninnis spoke during the 2YA school session on "Bird Life in the Antarctic" and I declare that I have not been entertained so well for some time. Even the stern refractious dealer said: "Give us more of that and radio will boom."

AFTER throttling down my set to a comfortable speed, I was enjoying Ted Priestley's account of the Cinderella Ball when the station switched over to broadcast a talk on the spy system. Too bad. If a comprehensive account of the ball could not be put over 2YA, why was the local "B" not let into the picture?

WHEN I heard "Liebestraum" announced at 2YA, I nearly switched over for something of more recent date, and less hackneyed. I'm glad I didn't though, for it was Frank Crowther's own arrangement, and he and his talented little band made a great job of it. Thanks, Frank.

OF all the stories told by Dr. Lewis at 2YA the one that amused me most was that of the child whose parent had been asked to wash her before sending her to school. The note to the teacher requesting that she "wash her—not smell her" was pure American in its brevity.

ONE day last week my door bell rang. A bright young man courteously asked me, "Have you a radio set?" Fearful lest it was the authorities, I tremulously said "Y-yes."

"Then you have heard our appeals for the 2ZW Club, perhaps..."

That was the last straw. This radio club business is getting beyond a joke.

SWEET are the uses of anonymity. Said the editor to me the other day: Quadrant, I have had numerous requests for your name—from a dainty maid, "Please will you introduce me to Quadrant?"; from an injured 'personality,' "Who is this man Quadrant? I'll find out and make it hot for him!" From a prominent business man, "Yes, I knew it was he who said it. Anyway, who is he? I want to tell him what I think." From one of my friends, "Tell me, who is your Quadrant? He knows me, for I have seen myself in print more than once." Funny, isn't it?

DEAR Quadrant,—You know that we in Auckland have a lot of stations to choose from if we are lucky, and a lot to sort out if we are unlucky. I am unlucky and get them all at once. Here is what I heard the other night: "A trough of low pressure is situated between the shoulder blades running south toward the waistline. In areas to the north-west and north-east shoulder-straps may be experienced with secondaries tending to move outward." From which I infer that cold will be felt in many places with a northerly aspect.—Yours, Mixum.

DEFINITION of an optimist: One who commences breakfast sessions at 7 a.m. and really thinks he is playing to breakfasters.

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