

Editorial Notes

Wellington, Friday, October 14, 1932.

ONE of the most notable features of the past six months has been the increase in the number of talks and their intrusion more and more into the entertainment portion of the programmes. This development seems to be appreciated by listeners principally because the talks are less specialised than of yore and are appealing to the imagination. A wide range of subjects is covered by the present talks—adventure, sport, education, travel, politics, women's interests and others. The standard of the broadcasts is becoming increasingly higher, and so it should for the lecturer is as much before the public as is the artist, and must be prepared to face the same criticism. As in music, the listener wants the best and the explanation that so and so is a notability in his or her line cuts no ice.

GENERALLY speaking the successful talks broadcaster complies with three requirements. First his delivery. Many an interesting subject is ruined by poor delivery and conversely many a dull subject is made interesting by good delivery. Secondly the matter must interest the majority of listeners—the talk must be from one man in the street to another, from the outside in. Thirdly the length must be adjusted to the subject matter and the delivery. There are talks to which one can listen for half an hour or longer without becoming bored—there are others where ten minutes is ample. To be successful a talk must grip the imagination of the listening public. Few people will listen because the subject is good for their well-being. This applies more especially to educational broadcasts which in many cases are unpleasant because they are delivered with the sole purpose of educating, the lecturer imagining his audience consists of so many little tanks that must be filled from the well of knowledge. Educational talks can succeed only if the appeal is to the imagination

and the subject matter is regulated to interest people. And the public must not be talked down to—that is reminiscent of the old-fashioned schoolroom which one and all hated.

IT will be argued that just as one should do many things he does not like because it is good for his mental discipline he should listen to talks that are good for him. This is the angle taken, with some measure of success it is true, by the B.B.C., which attaches great importance to the National Lectures which are broadcast three times a year, and afterwards published. These lectures are intended to provide first-class contributions to thought and knowledge from persons of the highest standing in the English-speaking world. Allowance is made for their lasting an hour more or less so that the speaker may have an ample opportunity of developing his subject at reasonable length. The first of these national lectures broadcast by the late poet laureate, Robert Bridges, gave the public an advance prose version of his thoughts on beauty published later in his great poem, "The Testament of Beauty." The B.B.C. having an annual income of more than two million pounds with which to provide two programmes, can quite comfortably give the public what it ought to want. Successful talks broadcast by the B.B.C. include the serial story—the detective story was very popular—war escapades, and popular science talks. All three subjects grip the imagination. In this respect the schedule of talks now being broadcast by the Radio Board is commendable, including as it does such topics as the Secret Service, the North-West Frontier, sea stories, famous trials, Maori legends and sports. These are definitely entertainment and as such are worthy of a place in the concert portion of the programme, provided of course that the lecturer possesses the ability to broadcast successfully.

ONE other class of talk remains, and that is the women's sessions. If there is any session that depends more than the others for its success on intimacy between lecturer and public it is this. Women's interests are different from those of men, and to be successful the talk must be a woman-to-woman affair into which man must not pry either in the organisation or in the presentation. The session planned and run entirely by women is the one that appeals forcibly—a man is not even wanted to announce the musical items, men being excluded from this session altogether. Subjects for talks are legion. "They range from discussions of the new frocks at a Hollywood afternoon tea to personal chats on milady's cosmetics. The

value of heavy science talks is questionable; the juice of two lemons means infinitely more than 10 per cent. citric acid. Radio programmes correctly organised and run can change the whole complexion of household work. Through judicious treatment household duties can be scientifically regulated, and take the place of haphazard and tedious labour. Certain hours should be set aside for marketing, cleaning, cooking, and sewing. The various problems that women meet such as varied menus, recipes, figures on the household budget, clothing, furnishings, are ones that the radio can solve. But is it helping? If not there is need for immediate action for after all it is the women who decide whether or not we shall have a new radio this season.

In Phase and Out

By "Quadrant"

SZIGETI—the greatest broadcast yet.

SOMEWHERE I read that radio had put up the birth rate. Perhaps that is where all the squealing has been coming from lately.

THE closing thought for the final mid-day 2YA community sing was, according to the announcer, "Abide with me and the King." At least he might have put the King first!

CLIVE, your eloquence when the stations first went over to the Town Hall Tuesday last was astounding. Try writing a description of the New Zealand bush.

I WANT to know what wrestlers' eggs are like. According to a Wellington announcer the other night the contestants were laying all over the ring. I heard a lot of cackling, too.

ANNOUNCERS defined: No. 1, "taxi-cable income"—income that goes out when you have a private car and ought to use a taxi. But I doubt that 2YA's acting announcer meant that when he was talking about the Budget one night last week.

MAJOR LEWIS'S talk on the Secret Service captured my imagination, but I want to know what happened to the mother and daughter he caught spying. Were they let off with a caution or put against a wall and shot? It is the old-fashioned movie style to leave the story at its most interesting part.

"APPRECIATIVE LISTENER" writes: "Just a word of appreciation of 22W's 'by the way verse,' and the night will be filled with gladness," etc. An interested listener is wondering whether the announcer has any other similar verses at his command.—Or, better still, if he has on tap a free and ample supply of the "gladness."

SO Will Bishop is going to produce "The Dumb Wife." Quite a change for Will; he always gives one the impression that wives are very far from being dumb. I think there must be a catch in it somewhere.

IS Szigetti really ambidexterous, Mr. Editor?

"NEUTRON" says that 1YA's programmes were pretty thin a fortnight ago, and as a little incentive tells us that the Dominion's largest city should be able to do better than that. But it isn't bulk that counts—its initiative, and some stations lack it tremendously: a little goes a long way, too.

HOW incredulous! A woman announcer was reading out a recipe and came to this: "One teaspoonful of white vinegar—white vinegar—I have never heard of it before, but that is what is here." No, if a woman is to put over recipes she must be a practical cook—and not talk about the juice from an onion either.

DOES 4YA's new announcer refuse to recognise jazz as music? Said he the other night, "This completes the musical portion of our programme, and we now commence our dance session."

YOU know how, with approaching darkness, the radio will gradually build up in strength until the volume has to be adjusted. Such happened Sunday last during the Sunday School anniversary relay from 2YA in a certain suburban home. The speaker was growing more and more eloquent, and the radio louder and louder, till at last father, who had just returned after an absence of several weeks, and consequently had every right to monopolise the conversation, could bear it no longer. "What is the matter with that man does he think God will be able to hear him better if he shouts! We are no deaf as well—turn it off"—which dutiful daughter straightway did.

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