

Editorial Notes

Wellington, Friday, November 18, 1932.

IN an overseas radio publication, we notice that while the B.B.C. is making plans to celebrate this month the tenth birthday of British broadcasting, a contributor to the "Manchester Guardian" has announced his intention of celebrating in the same month his first ten years of Not Listening. Whether genuine or not the idea has a neat humour; it may even startle us, used as we are to day by day listening, to talking and reading about the programmes, to be reminded that there are many thousands of people in whose lives broadcasting plays no part. The rapid approach of the license figures to the 100,000 mark seems to indicate that this aloof minority (or is it majority?) is daily dwindling. According to the most generous estimate the number of actual listeners in New Zealand is 400,000, reckoning a household of four to every license taken out. If we exclude children too young to listen, the question as to whether listeners constitute a majority or a minority of the population remains in doubt. It must be born in mind, too, that a large number who are not licensees or their families are to a certain degree constant listeners. There remains, however, an enormous body of non-listeners about whom the contributor to the "Manchester Guardian" has reminded us

THE regular listener will begin to wonder about these strange beings to whose lives radio is of no significance, who do not set their watches by the city chimes, gather their news from the news session, switch off in horror a whole evening play, postpone dinner parties to listen to graphic word-pictures of Russia, travel through Europe with someone recently returned, digest slowly the reproduced talks, write to the "Radio Record" about the scandalous lack of dance music on Sunday afternoon or the behaviour of their calves when the carillon chimes are broadcast. Are they the happier or less cheerful, wiser or less informed, nobler or ignobler members of the community? A tried and interminable subject for discussion.

THE outstandingly successful G5SW rebroadcast last week will recall to many the days of 1922, when to hear the faintest of signals on a crystal set was an experience,

and the first programmes were greeted with an approval that is, alas, often denied to their successors of this latter day. In 1922 broadcasting was quite plainly magic, for though wireless telegraphy had existed for almost a quarter of a century and wireless telephony was already an accepted fact, no one had visualised the use of the ether to convey entertainment from a single point into millions of homes. As a novelty and the subject of general discussion, broadcasting in 1922 claimed column upon column of space in the newspapers. To-day it is hardly regarded as a fit subject for a paragraph. If one, reflecting back over the years, feels that broadcasting in 1932 is a less fascinating entertainment than broadcasting in 1922, let him compare the scope and variety of programmes then and now. Should he discount the natural excitement once attendant upon a novelty, he will decide that broadcasting has lost none of its magic in the ten years of its growth. The simplicity with which it is now possible to listen, even to events taking place in the other half of the world, does, it is realised, constitute a danger; for what is simple and plentiful is apt, in a contrary world, to become negligible.

THE practice of recording programmes for circulation among radio stations has hitherto found little favour in Europe, although it has been for some years popular in the United States of America, where small stations in outlying areas have welcomed the programme material. It is, therefore, a matter of outstanding interest and some novelty that the B.B.C. should recently have decided to supplement with recorded programmes the proposed broadcasting service from the new Empire short-wave transmitter at Daven-try. These programmes, which will be produced with all the available artistic resources of the B.B.C., are to be recorded on discs and circulated to all stations overseas which subscribe to the service. The advantages of this method of distributing programmes from the Home Country are several and manifest. The original programme will be available for broadcasting at any time, and will be received by the local listener at perfect quality. The B.B.C. has decided to initiate this service in response to the increasing demand of overseas stations for Bri-

tish programmes. The discs recorded for this purpose will, of course, be made solely for broadcasting; they will not be available for purchase by the general public.

THE scheme is an ambitious one.

It marks a further forward step in the linking of our widely-scattered

Empire by means of modern invention. The programmes recorded will contain much that is national in character, as well as entertainment of a general and topical character. It is hoped to inaugurate the new service within the next few months and that, later, it may be paralleled by a similar service enabling B.B.C. listeners to hear programmes produced and recorded in the Dominions.

In Phase and Out

By "Quadrant"

"RECORDS," said the questionnaire. "Records," said the questionnaire, repeats IYA. "Records . . . recor . . . , rec . . . , r . . . " but they have forgotten to change the records.

2YA regularly does its Boy Scout act by broadcasting the carillon every Sunday afternoon. The act, of course, is to someone other than the listeners.

A CERTAIN 2YA Aunt annoys a large number of her listeners by obvious "dog." "Refined," for instance, is pronounced as it is spelled, not "refained." The effect of this kind of thing on kiddies is far from good.

SO they broadcast the amateur golf finals as we suggested several weeks back. The Board is to be congratulated on its interprise—the broadcast without a doubt went over well.

WHEN Madame Annette Chapman sang Schubert's "Serenade" and Brahms's "Wiegenlied" on Monday at 2YA, it just showed us all how difficult it is to sing some of the old classical songs that we found so easy to whistle in the days of our youth.

I WAS pleased to hear one of the Grand Opera stars speaking from 2ZW on the operatic programme last week. Now that we have seen opera and heard solos and choruses by the company, we can appreciate the work such broadcasters as Cesaroni have done in keeping this side of music alive.

"SOSTENUTO" in last week's mailbag deplores the musical tastes of "Neutron" and myself. I am very sorry my plebeian tastes offend his musical sense.

P.S.—I know he is a musician because of that long word he uses as a nom de plume.

MISS ALMOST ENGAGED: "Daddy, it was sweet of you to buy me this nice wireless set. And can I really take it with me when I get married?"

Father: "Of course, my dear, but don't broadcast the fact too much, it might spoil your chances."

TWO minutes' silence. . . . Slowly the traffic stopped. At first people wondered what it was all about. Realisation. Silence. Even the radio was silent—but were we remembering? I think not. A generation is growing up

which has not known war, and all this is incomprehensible . . . dead.

AERIALS—Just look at them when you are out walking next Sunday. Big, little, straight, bent, shared and unshared; they are everywhere in evidence. In one particular Wellington locality, almost every house in one portion of a street has one, and a veritable forest of masts disfigures the arresting beauty of multi-colour, multi-shaped roofs.

WHEN will the Tourist Department's representatives stop talking about "the wondrous beauty of New Zealand's enchanting scenery" and really tell us what we want to know? For example, how one gets from the lodge to the Chateau proper on a wet week-end without getting covered in mud and severely disarranged.

FROM a talk broadcast by IYA I learn that a Dominion Parliament can lengthen its own life and increase its own pay, but it cannot alter the salaries of judges of the Supreme Court. That would require a special Bill and the assent of the British Parliament through the King. So it's not much good a judge asking for a rise.

DEAR QUADRANT.—I'm in trouble. I want you to help me out! You seem a decent sort. The other night a party of young ladies from 2YA sang out greetings to various grandfathers and friends, and to my astonishment a fresh young girlish voice called me up—me, well over 50. I have not been near Wellington since the war, and am hopelessly at a loss as to the sender of the call. Anyway, I want you to thank her for me.—Revitalised (King Country).

[I have to be careful what I say about or to young women now. My wife has returned from Day's Bay. But I'll do my best.—Quad.]

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