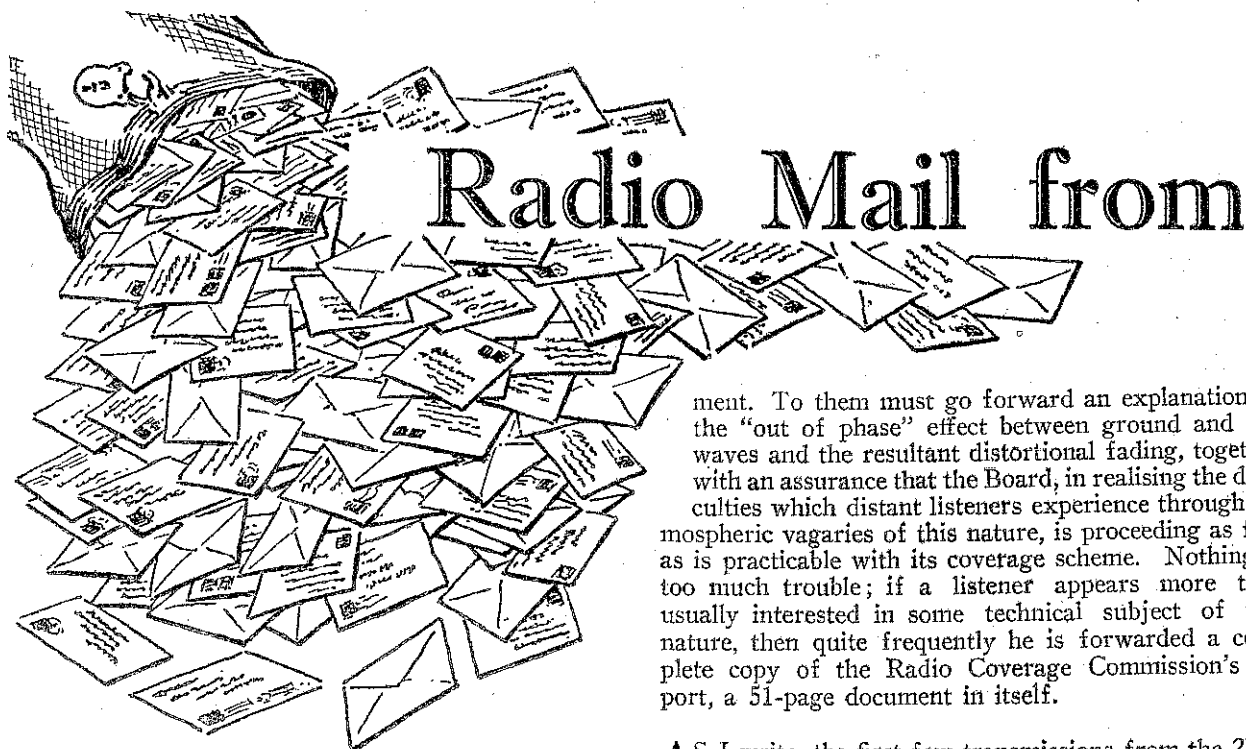




A DAY or two ago, the editor of the "Radio Record" casually suggested that I might write a brief article on some aspects of the inside routine of the Broadcasting Board's service, and, in particular, the handling of correspondence. Quite a simple request, really, from the editor's point of view, but the difficulty is to know where to start.

The Board's mail bag usually bulges, and hundreds of letters go through the Wellington head office every week. When anything extra special is broadcast—the Christopher Wren broadcast, the Spivakovsky-Kurtz Trio or the like—our correspondence grows and we are kept more than busy coping with it. Then, on American mail day are the forty or fifty DX hunters, most of them describing themselves as, "the world's greatest DX fan," who have all heard 2YA; many of them have heard 1YA, 3YA and 4YA to such advantage that sometimes their requests for verification contain items which were never broadcast from any one of these stations. These reports come within the purview of the various station directors concerned, who despatch verification cards to the senders of those reports whose data can be confirmed, and tactful letters to those who are certain they heard "When the Moon Comes over the Mountain" from 2YA at 10 a.m., when in reality a wool sale was being broadcast.

Strange as it may seem, the volume of mail varies considerably with the seasons. During the summer months all is well with reception conditions, generally speaking, in the Dominion, but with the approach of winter distortional fading becomes more marked, and brings with it its series of complaints from listeners in country districts, who feel sure that something has gone wrong with the transmitting equip-

ment. To them must go forward an explanation of the "out of phase" effect between ground and sky waves and the resultant distortional fading, together with an assurance that the Board, in realising the difficulties which distant listeners experience through atmospheric vagaries of this nature, is proceeding as far as is practicable with its coverage scheme. Nothing is too much trouble; if a listener appears more than usually interested in some technical subject of this nature, then quite frequently he is forwarded a complete copy of the Radio Coverage Commission's report, a 51-page document in itself.

AS I write, the first few transmissions from the 2YA auxiliary have been completed, and the morning mail brings comments from all parts of the North and South Islands, reporting on the signal strength and quality of the station. Just as surely, it brings complaints from others who find that the new transmitter is interfering with their reception from some other station, as often as not some favourite American transmitter from whom the DX hunter obtains a regular thrill between 7 and 8 p.m. Little do some of these listeners realise how well off they are in being able to receive American stations, forgetting, on the other hand, that there are many listeners whose locality will not permit of reception of such distant stations, and who, for this reason, welcome an opportunity of an alternative service from 2YA's news session.

Then there are the multitudinous complaints of interference: many and varied are the sources to which listeners attribute their troubles. I can recollect one complaint of this nature where the listener considered he was hardly done by in having all but sixteen of his American stations blotted out by interference from a nearby source! These complaints are duly forwarded to the proper authorities, and then starts a further chain of action which it is not within the province of this article to discuss.



MR. S. J. HEYDEN, Assistant General Manager of the New Zealand Broadcasting Board, and the writer of this article.

"There is a buzzing noise in my set. Do you think I need new valves?" queries another man. Follows a letter from a listener in Karori who has lost his dog and would like a broadcast announcement made. Others are asking for appeals, some for deserving objects, others more limited in their application. Misappropriated motor-cars, requests for announcements concerning missing persons—some authentic, some not—requests for particular items; letters asking "whether you were off the air last night, as I could get not a sound from my set," requests for announcements concerning jubilees of