

Giving New Zealand the

TO some readers no doubt the most interesting time-signal of the day is the mellow period when the town clock is about to strike 6 p.m. Then, in places where men congregate to forget for a brief spell their worries and cares an announcer (who possibly would not qualify for a similar position in a broadcasting station) wends his way through the jovial throngs with his stern, though courteous, reminder of "Time, gentlemen, please!"

In an equally courteous manner the announcer from 2YA informs listeners at stated periods of the day that "We are now standing by for the observatory time-signals." To many listeners these time-signals are a source of real annoyance, but if a few minutes' consideration is given to their significance and importance, it will be realised that they are a most important factor in the national broadcasting service.

In England, the time-signals from Greenwich have been superimposed upon the programmes, and there has been a long battle between the aesthetic and the practical, resulting at last in a victory for the aesthetic. The time-signal from Greenwich is one of the most useful things broadcast, but it has also proved, to sensitive listeners, one of the most annoying. Music-lovers frequently complained of the jarring effect of the well-known "pips" upon their enjoyment of the concert that was being broadcast at the time. Now the claims of the aesthetic are to be satisfied. Starting this month, a new system will be introduced. Except for the time-signals at 10.30 a.m. and 6 p.m., any time-signal which, superimposed on programmes, would have a definitely inartistic effect may be suppressed. If it is possible to put it out at the next quarter, that will be done, with an announcement making clear which quarter it is.

Even the two regular signals, at 10.30 a.m. and 6 p.m., may, in exceptional circumstances and after previous announcement, be similarly suppressed. How-

ever popular the "pips" may be, no one would wish to hear them superimposed, for instance, upon a speech from the King, or upon the Cenotaph service on Armistice Day. However, listeners who depend upon broadcasting for their knowledge of the exact time may be assured that the regular morning and evening signals will not be interfered with except for some very adequate cause.

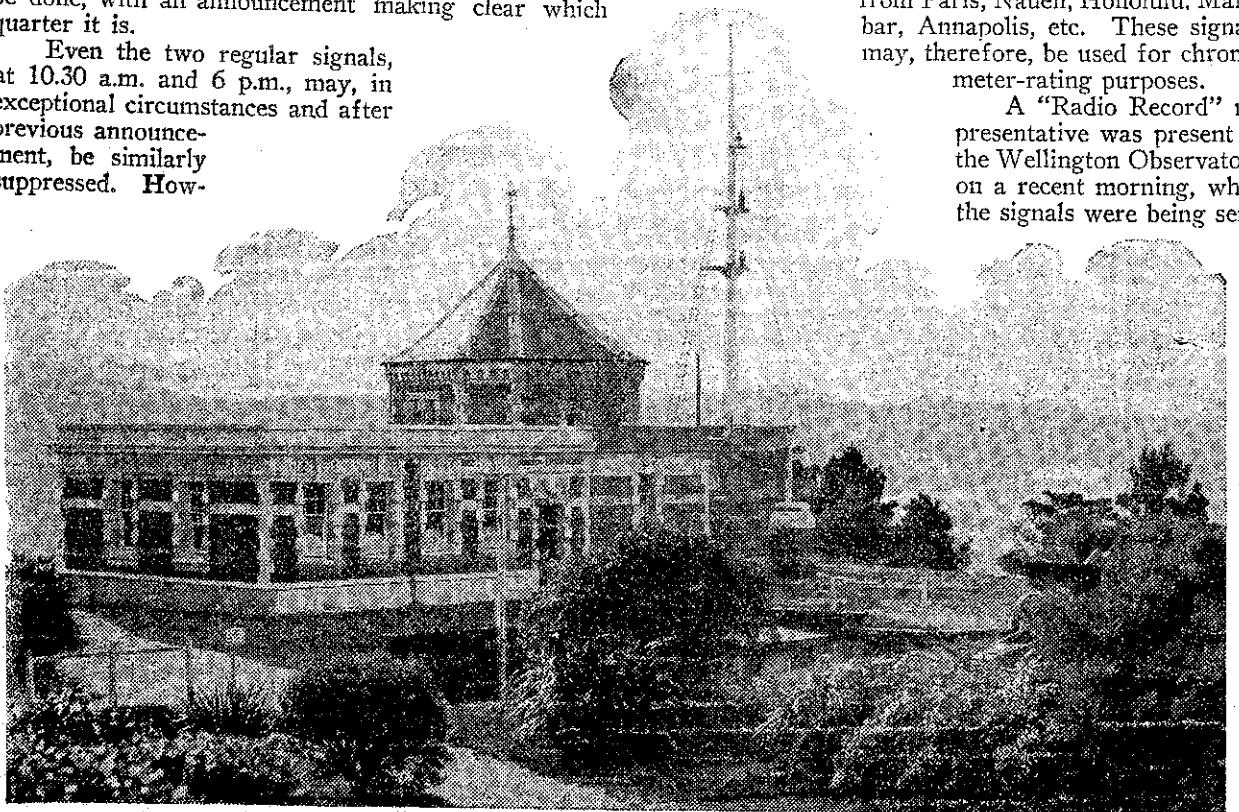
AS a matter of actual fact, few listeners realise the service which these signals render. Although it is quite true that they carry no special significance for the average listener, they are of great importance to shipping and to scientific bodies throughout the country, particularly to those engaged in seismological investigation.

In New Zealand the Broadcasting Board is co-operating with certain scientific bodies in various parts of the Dominion, and the morning time-signal, at 10.30, recently introduced by 2YA, was to a large extent introduced for their benefit, with a view to aiding the investigation of earthquakes and their effects—a subject, of course, of major concern to the whole Dominion.

The value of the signals to shipping is another factor which is not generally realised by those listeners who are apt to throw brickbats at the Broadcasting Board for superimposing this service on the daily transmission.

The time-signals broadcast by 2YA each day are from the Dominion Observatory, Wellington. The signals are as accurate as it is possible to make them, as the standard clock is checked frequently by astronomical observations and by comparison with time-signals from Paris, Nauen, Honolulu, Malabar, Annapolis, etc. These signals may, therefore, be used for chronometer-rating purposes.

A "Radio Record" representative was present at the Wellington Observatory on a recent morning, when the signals were being sent.



"TWEEN WIND AND WATER.—The Dominion Observatory, at Kelburn, which has a wonderful view of Wellington, the harbour and the surrounding hills. It is from this building that the New Zealand time signals are transmitted to all parts of the world.