

Sporting Voice of the North

Gordon Hutter . . . The Man with a Fan Mail like a Film Star's!

THERE dropped into Wellington the other day the Sporting Voice of the North—in other words, Gordon Hutter, popular sports announcer at IYA, Auckland. Wrestling has been one of Gordon's hobbies since he was "knee-high to a grasshopper" and his southern visit was something of a busman's holiday, for he was in front of the microphone for the Walker-Varga wrestling bout at the Wellington Winter Show Stadium the other night.

"Truth to tell," he said to the "Radio Record," "I've never heard a wrestling broadcast in my life. I'd like to listen in one of these days to see how bad—or perhaps how good—I really am. I've been at the mat game since I was a bit of a kid, and I've had a shot at most other sports, too, so I've got some idea what I'm talking about when I get in front of the 'mike.'"

"I know all the matmen in New Zealand at the present time, and I usually have a try-out with them at the gym. at the Hotel Auckland. The season will be finishing soon and round about the end of October the wrestlers will be packing their bags and getting back to the United States for the season there."

And, although the fans clamour for wrestling broadcasts on all and every occasion, the man at the microphone can make things uncomfortable—for the wrestler. Gordon tells the story of a trip he made down from Auckland with a well-known wrestler. The man fought in Wellington and the announcer on the job was in his most jocular mood. "So-and-So's doing fine," he remarked several times, "and the little blonde in the front row is giving him plenty of encouragement." Anyway, the wrestler and Gordon journeyed back to Auckland, and a very peeved wife met them at the station. "Who's this blonde that the Wellington announcer kept talking about?" she wanted to know, almost before her brawny spouse had stepped off the train. And it took a whale of a lot of persuasion to make that wife understand that wrestling announcers often say things merely to keep the listeners amused.

WHAT about the fan mail? Well, it looks as if Gordon Hutter, Esquire, will soon require a post office

box all to himself. From all over the country they come—queries on this, queries on that. How old is Count Varga? What was the hold that Mamos tried out in the second round of that match in Christchurch? Could a listener in Taihape have a list of the bouts that Walker has figured in? Are Blake's whiskers real? And so they go on—to the tune of 500 or so a week!

(An interval here while Gordon spoke on the phone to a well-known wrestler. "Hello. You want me to eat with you at half-past five? Good-o, but remember, if you're cooking it yourself, no garlic in it. You might like it—but I don't!")



—S. P. Andrews, photo.

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"You can't give the Auckland people too much sport," he continued. "They'll listen in to anything in the sporting line and we've put over most every sport there is. Wrestling is, I suppose, one of the most popular of the broadcasts because it moves along quickly and gives the listener plenty of thrills. The wrestlers are usually there to please the lookers-on and, if the announcer is quick on the uptake, he can pass on the little pieces of showmanship to the radio fans."

Gordon Hutter has been at the announcing game for just on seven years, and he knows what the public wants and gives it to them. He's had offers from Australia and America—but home ties have kept him securely in this corner of the world. There's no doubt about his versatility at the microphone—in fact, a letter in to-day's correspondence pages talks about him as the "best sporting announcer in Australia or New Zealand." Gordon

Hutter's name probably crops up oftener in the correspondence columns than that of any other person connected with broadcasting. Any criticism of his work, however slight, usually finds a dozen radio fans rushing to his defence.

The "Radio Record" wanted a photo of him. Sure, he'd drop in at the photographer's and have it taken. "Oh, by the way," he said, as he left, "I've got berth No. 13 on the Limited back to Auckland to-night, so I've made arrangements for someone to take my place at the Ellerslie microphone to-morrow in case there's anything in this unlucky number business!"