

Editorial Notes.

Wellington, Friday, October 20, 1933.

IN these notes last week we referred to the battle that is waging at the moment between English theatrical managers and radio interests—a battle that one of the British Broadcasting Corporation's publications refers to as a "Press-created war." We stressed the fact that a star whose personality has been built up by the theatre cannot be permitted to squander his or her value over the radio, but we did fail to mention that many stage stars would be quite incapable of "putting over their acts" for the benefit of a radio audience.

English newspapers seem to have thrown open their correspondence columns lately to persons who are busily comparing radio vaudeville with the music-halls. Broadcast variety, however, is as different from stage variety as chalk from cheese, and the theatrical magnates who condescendingly offer to "come and show the B.B.C. how to put it over" generally fail to appreciate this fact.

How many of the acts on the average vaudeville programme are actually suitable for broadcasting? A large number—acrobats, jugglers, conjurers, dancers—are ruled out for obvious reasons. Next come comedians whose acts depend to a large extent on make-up and mannerisms—it would not be fair to put them on the air. And then there are the slightly risqué artists—all right in a crowded music-hall, with quick "black-outs" and changes—but rather different in one's own home where the correct atmosphere is totally lacking.

Words and music. On these two essentials depend the success of radio vaudeville. And in this realm the variety programme comes up against the problem of a shortage of material, intensified by the fact that most of the lighter music is broadcast in the ordinary portions of the programme. A vaudeville programme must be mainly humorous—and here broadcasting is faced with the same inadequate supply that is confronting both the theatre and the cinema.

The music-hall artist can use the same material again and again. After he has handed out the same jokes a few hundred times in London he can tour the provinces, still with the same stock of quips. But not so the broadcast star, who has an audience of a million or so listen-

ers at once, and cannot possibly use the same lines more than four or five times—and then only after a long space of time.

Variety has not yet been widely exploited in the Dominion—New Zealand has not been educated

Books to Read

Literature in Demand at the Moment

THIS list, supplied each week by the Wellington Public Library, indicates books that are in general demand at the moment, and may serve as a guide to those readers who are looking for new and interesting literature.

GENERAL.

The Moscow Trial, by A. J. Cummings.—Mr. Cummings was one of the two English journalists who were granted permission by the Russian Embassy to proceed to Moscow to report the trial of the British engineers involved in charges of sabotage. This book is an eye-witness account by a trained observer of one of the most dramatic trials of the century.

What would be the Character of a New War, by Sir Norman Angell and international experts.—This book deals, in a cold and scientific way, with the horrors which will be inevitable if another war occurs. No one could read Dr. Woker's contribution on chemical and bacteriological warfare without deciding to do one's utmost to prevent such abominations.

FICTION.

Mr. Pete and Co., by Alice Hegan Rice.—A novel by the author of the world-famous "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch." With unflinching sympathy she reveals to one half of the world how the other half lives, and triumphs by winning the affection of both. Mr. Pete is a vagabond, the black sheep of a blue-blooded family, and the story deals with his adventures.

Two Black Sheep, by Warwick Deeping.—An intensely human story of two erring mortals and what they made of their lives. Its dramatic quality increases as the narrative draws to its climax, and the vividness with which the various characters are delineated is equalled only by the ingenuity of the plot.

to the music-hall idea as England has—but the time is coming when variety will occupy a big place on radio programmes in every part of the world. This country has a shortage of performers suitable for vaudeville (a third-rate performer can ruin even the best of material), but, as time goes on, there is no rea-

son why there should not be an occasional shipping of artists across the Tasman to give New Zealand just that touch of originality that our programmes sometimes need.

IN a corner of one of the rooms at the New Zealand Broadcasting Board's head office at Wellington lies a heap of gramophone records that New Zealand listeners will never hear. A pretty bulky heap it is, too, running into some hundreds of records.

Why won't they be played over the air in this country? For the very simple reason that each one of them contains at least one line that would offend the susceptibilities of listeners gathered round the family fireside. As we remarked above, England is turning more and more to variety and, in consequence, greater numbers of vaudeville records are being turned out. But it must be remembered above all else that a quip that would "bring down the house" at a music-hall would be greeted in awkward silence in one's own home. Many of the records at the board's office were made specially for broadcasting and are, for the most part, delightfully funny. But one line, possibly, is in bad taste—and the record must return to England unheard.

Radio is a welcome guest in the home—but it must not offend the host and hostess by telling unpleasant stories or singing risqué songs. Dorothy Brunton recently refused to play a part in the play "Dear Enemy" in a Sydney broadcast, when she discovered that certain swear words had been cut out. Her contention was that these words were allowed in the theatre—why not over the air? The Australian Broadcasting Commission replied that the theatre was one thing, the home another. If radio was to remain a fireside companion, it must be kept above suspicion—witty, perhaps, but never vulgar.

The New Zealand Radio Record

P.O. BOX 1032, WELLINGTON.

Published Weekly.

Price 4d.

Literary communications should be addressed: "The Editor"; business communications to "The Manager"; technical communications to "The Technical Editor."

Advertisers are asked to note that alterations of advertisements should be in hand Friday of each week for insertion in the succeeding issue, printed Tuesday, bearing Friday's date. No responsibility is accepted for blocks remaining unclaimed three months after last insertion.

RADIO PUBLISHING COMPANY OF NEW ZEALAND LTD.,
P.O. Box 1032, Wellington.