

THE NEW ZEALAND LISTENER

Although the *Listener* now has readers in many other parts of the world—Australia, Canada, the United States, India, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and even Iceland—it exists to serve New Zealand first, and during the year did a good deal to help New Zealand to find its own voice.

Among the developments of the year for which readers have shown special appreciation have been the regular appearance of a "Letter From London", a marked increase in the amount of space given to book reviews, articles written to help listeners to appreciate good music, and a constant flow of original contributions of good quality written by New Zealanders for New Zealand readers.

Circulation, advertising revenue, and public interest in the *Listener* increased during the year. The paper supply and a staff shortage were the chief problems. Although paper was easier to obtain in 1948 than in the previous year, the cost was higher than it had ever been, and the supply was never good enough to allow a reserve to be built up for the future. As a result there was not quite enough paper in sight to accept, without anxiety, the increase in size made necessary by the opening of new stations.

The staff shortage was even more acute than the shortage in the supply of paper. However, temporary assistance was obtained on contract, and there was an appreciable increase in the volume of contributed material. By these means standards were maintained in all departments.

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

ADVERTISING

The year's operations produced a new record in advertising revenue, despite the loss, through power cuts, of one hour and a half of revenue each day during the winter months. The Service was unable to place all the advertising offering, and the waiting-list of firms wishing to sponsor radio sessions is steadily increasing. Preference on the waiting-list is given to New Zealand firms which have commenced operations since the war, or whose activities have been retarded during the war years, and have had to rely on intensive advertising for general marketing purposes. The Service continued its policy of giving local advertisers every opportunity to use the air, and approximately 50 per cent. of air time was allocated to local sponsors.

A strong liaison between the advertising and programme departments developed from the appointment of a Sales Supervisor. A careful watch was kept over the type of programme sold to advertisers, and every effort made to maintain standards.

During the year certain advertising and commercial procedures were overhauled and brought into line with current advertising practice. Nearly two thousand varying rate-card charges were reduced to 205, a reduction which simplified the procedure for handling contracts, and at the same time lessened internal administration. The relationship between rate-card charges and sessions was consolidated, and decentralization was carried to the point at which stations now handle their local commission-bearing contracts. These moves, which normally might have been carried out over the last few years, had to be postponed until the staff position was stabilized after the war.

Station 3XC, Timaru.—During the year the first composite station, part National and part Commercial, was opened in Timaru. Within a few days all the feature time available in the commercial band was sold and nearly all the spot advertising schedules were filled.

PROGRAMMES

Feature Programmes.—All feature time on the Commercial stations is taken up by sponsors, and on occasions the Service has found it difficult to maintain the supply of certain types of feature programme. Dollar shortages have restricted the choice of markets, and Australian producers have been the main source of feature programmes.