

Radio in Southland

Considered Unsatisfactory by Correspondent

A CORRESPONDENT from Hawera wants to know what is wrong with Southland. The latest returns for receiving licenses show Dunedin 2958 out of a total of 43,040. Of Dunedin's tally, I believe, some 700 belong to Southland. If an investigator from the north had visited Southland this summer, he would have found reception conditions, such as he might have been lead to expect, from the number of licenses in the district; that is, very poor. It is not worth while tuning in until darkness sets in, owing to rapid fading, and unfortunately for radio reception in the south, at mid-summer, this doesn't take place until 9.30 p.m. It requires a lot of enthusiasm to keep a radio set going under these conditions. If no improvement takes place, I, for one, do not intend to replace B batteries in the spring, as the game is not worth the candle. Why does this poor reception exist in the south? you may ask. No doubt there will be several opinions about this; some may even say it doesn't exist, but I will just quote from the editorial of the February number of that well-known American radio authority ("Radio News"): "The average 500-watt broadcast transmitter cannot be heard consistently over a distance of more than about 50 miles."

Nothing but multivalve sets are any good for Southland. Take a low average of £20 for a complete set, and we get a total of £14,000 invested by 700 listeners-in; and now for the annual upkeep. I see one correspondent works it out at £15 7s. per year, but we will be moderate and say £10 per year, including license fee. That makes £7000

per year. Do you wonder there are not more listeners-in down south? It strikes me that too much money is being invested in receiving sets and their upkeep, and not enough in supplying power to broadcast stations. Radio is developing rapidly, and it behooves the Government to approach the Broadcasting Company to instal more power at their weaker stations, and at the same time, if necessary, extending their license by an additional number of years to compensate for this.

I am enclosing a circular I received through the post a day or so ago re a Southland Broadcasting Association and broadcast station. I have promised support to the extent of £1 ls. per year, but have very little confidence that the station will ever get going, owing to lack of support, through the small number of license holders in Southland; but believe that if it did; crystal set users would keep it going after the first year. I make no apology for writing at this length, as I wish to see broadcasting available all over New Zealand, and furthermore the listener-in as a whole is in the game for keeps, while the Broadcasting Company has a limited existence on its present contract.—A.R.

THE circular referred to sets out that "steps are being taken to establish a Radio Broadcasting Association in Invercargill with the primary idea of providing Southland with a better radio service than is being obtained at present.

At first the expense of installing a worth-while plant was a big hurdle, until an offer was received from a prominent Invercargill business man, which immediately placed the idea within a measurable degree of accomplishment.

Stated briefly, this gentleman offered to donate a 500-watt station, completely installed, of the latest and best design, with but one condition—namely—"That sufficient support was forthcoming to cover the upkeep of the station."

This it is proposed to obtain by an annual subscription from each radio license holder in Southland, and by donations from radio dealers and others. If sufficient support is received, the station will become an accomplished fact.

The committee have been assured of the whole-hearted support of the Invercargill Orphans' Club, the Operatic and Dramatic Society, and other musical bodies of Invercargill; as well as the Rugby Union and the Boxing Association.

Now, Southland, it's up to you—with your support the station will be established—without it the project will fall through. The whole proposition is purely voluntary, and all programmes and services of local artists will be entirely on that basis.

The present committee wish it to be clearly understood that this station will belong to every listener-in who subscribes, and will have an equal voice in its management.

There are, roughly, 700 license-holders in Southland, and the support of at least 500 of these is necessary to enable the station to function successfully.

Now, all you radio enthusiasts—cease growling about poor reception from Northern stations. Give this project your hearty support by filling in the enclosed form, and posting it to Box 99, Invercargill, at your earliest convenience.

It will be your station—so give it your very best assistance.

Yours faithfully,

On behalf of the Committee,
CHAS. A. LOCKHART.

This movement gives point to our advocacy earlier this year that the next phase of development should be the provision of relay stations at the main provincial centres, where population warranted. Invercargill certainly deserves consideration in such a development, but as our correspondent rightly points out, no company could be expected to undertake such extension or increased power without adequate protection and adjustment of its contract.

Auckland Notes

(By "Listener.")

MR. LEN BARNES took over command at 1YA this week, and Aucklanders are expecting him to be more than a station director. He has been heard here on the concert platform in the past, and many have enjoyed his items contributed frequently at 2YA. Now we want to hear him from our own studio, and doubtless it will not be long ere he finds time from his routine duties to supply what will be most welcome contributions to our nightly programmes.

THOSE listeners who have come into personal contact with Mr. S. J. Hayden, who left on Sunday night to take charge at Dunedin, will sincerely regret his departure. Mr. Hayden was invariably courteous—at times to those who expressed petty dissatisfactions in a far from similar manner. He had the welfare of the station thoroughly at heart, and from the amount of time he spent at duties in 1YA, one wonders if he really saw much of his own home. Now, however, he has taken unto himself a wife, the wedding being celebrated on the day before he left for the South.

ON Tuesday night, through the courtesy of the Allan Wilkie Company, listeners were enabled to listen to a scene from Henry V, relayed from His Majesty's Theatre. The atmosphere of the play, as conveyed by the loud-speaker, was surprisingly good, but unfortunately parts of the dialogue were far from distinct. Whether this was due to the pace of the spoken words or to the acoustic properties of the theatre it is hard to decide, but the relay certainly emphasised the fact that, for the production of radio drama, the studio itself is by far the best place. To-morrow night we shall be able to make further comparisons, for then the Little Theatre Society will broadcast "Outward Bound" from 1YA itself.

SUNDAY afternoon's re-broadcast of KDKA was another feather in the cap of 1YA. It was a most successful achievement. The evening re-broadcast, however, was rendered impossible by disturbed atmospheric conditions. To alleviate the disappointment of listeners 1YA conducted most successful broadcasts of both 2YA and 3YA, the southern stations coming in through the local station quite as well as they were received direct. More of these efforts would bring north and south closer together in spirit and sympathy, and do much to obviate provincial jealousies which still flare up at times.

THE high barometric pressure which has been reigning here for many days may be a contributory factor to clarity of the atmosphere, for overseas reception has been phenomenally good for this period of the year. Australian stations have been audible at good strength before nightfall, and later have come in with surprising volume.

THE Tuesday evening relays from the Majestic Theatre usually provide something out of the ordinary for local listeners. This week Miss Madge Clague has been the vocalist at the theatre, the reproduction of her songs from 1YA was as real a treat to her large unseen audience as it was to those in the Majestic who applauded so vociferously.

WHEN 1YA shuts down on Sunday night there is bound to be considerable disturbance in local listening conditions. The clocks go back on Sunday morning, and all, from "one valvers" upwards will be anxious to find out how 2BL comes in now that it is half an hour nearer us once more.

THE next fortnight offers for dealers, radio societies, and all concerned for the welfare of broadcasting, a golden chance to impress upon all and sundry the necessity for an immediate renewal of the expiring license, or the procuring of a new one and the joining of the growing band of listeners who are nightly catered for in such a thorough manner.

MAKING comparisons between British and American broadcasting, the chief engineer of the B.B.C. declares that the broadcasters in America who are "selling time" (hiring their stations out for advertising or propaganda purposes) are rapidly becoming rich and powerful, and are spreading their network over the whole country.

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