

A Raid on Radio.

The leader of the discussion put a question «As an aid to education, does the radio have any value?» A general chorus of «No!» first greeted the query, but upon examination by the various occupational groups represented, it was found that, for instance, the farmers' broadcasts had a definite value and were in demand by the farming community. Gardening, health and home science talks, too, played an important part in teaching the casual listener something he or she did not know before—and that after all is an aid to adult education.

Commercial broadcasting came under some pretty intense fire and the general consensus of opinion thought that the actual advertising script was «tripe,» but the accompanying entertainment was often good. The usual argument about advertising raising the prices of commodities was developed but the solitary advertising serviceman present refuted the contention in a few well-chosen words. The evil of radio advertising seemed to be summed up in the opinion that the gullibility of women was exploited to the detriment of the male pocket.

In spite of the disfavour with which radio advertising seemed to be regarded it was generally agreed that more people listen to commercial broadcasts than otherwise—probably because of the more popular type of entertainment provided. The American trend in commercial broadcasts was deplored, however, and opinions on this matter were definite.

A suggestion was put forward that the handsome surplus revenue from radio advertising should be diverted to reduce listeners' licence fees, and to encourage New Zealand talent. Niggardly payments in vogue in New Zealand, it was considered, restricted NBS and CBS programmes to the mediocre, and the best local talent was not attracted.

Considerable argument arose over a proposal that the Government control of radio should be abolished. Instead, there should

be set up a Radio Commission somewhat on the lines of the BBC. State control of radio, it was held, tended to make it the tool of political parties.

Summing up the discussion, the following points were agreed:—

1. New Zealand should be a party to international control and development of radio.

2. Radio programmes should be balanced, catering for both entertainment and education.

3. School broadcasts are of proven value and their scope should be extended.

4. Adult education; broadcasts to definite groups fulfil their purpose and at the moment are sufficient in scope.

5. New Zealand talent should be encouraged to a greater extent. A reasonably good standard should be aimed at and higher fees to artistes and writers would probably not only achieve this object but also help to strengthen cultural groups in the Dominion.

6. There should be a non-political, non-commercial control of radio, although many felt that this would hardly be practicable now in New Zealand.

7. New Zealand should conduct a short-wave transmission broadcast to the Pacific area.

8. Radio advertising must continue because of financial reasons, although its present lack of good taste was deplored.

Stamp Deals

Export of stamps from NZ is prohibited as a wartime measure under censorship regulations. Normally, stamps cancelled or not could be sent to other countries either by letter or parcel post, provided such countries permitted the importation. It is understood that a free licence to sell or deal in stamps was formerly granted to applicants, but even if granted at present a licence to send stamps out of NZ would not cover the prohibiting order.