

# Service Section

Readers with special problems in the care and maintenance of radio receiving sets are invited to send inquiries to the Editor of "The Listener." Names and addresses are required. Wherever possible, replies will be given, either in "The Listener" or by letter.

**M. CAMPBELL** (Auckland) writes as follows: I am fond of classical orchestral music. Many items come through (from Auckland stations) quite satisfactorily. But more frequently than I like, there occurs this feature, that the bass booms out and the first violins squeak like mice. Tonight I listened to Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto played by Artur Schnabel with the Philharmonia Orchestra, from 1YD (Auckland). In the first movement particularly (but also in the second) the double bass and the tympani sounded like a bass solo, with orchestral and piano accompaniment. The first violins did not have anything like the volume they should have.

This very feature is marked almost always when I hear one of my favourites, Schubert's C Major Symphony, "The Great." It does not matter what the orchestra is; almost always the bass is too heavy by far, and the treble portions too light; and much of the brilliant orchestration depends on the first violins being adequately heard. But other items have come through magnificently; well balanced and satisfying; though the quality has not been uniform.

I have spent pounds on my set, had a new loudspeaker; had the treble boosted; yet the trouble is the same. Now I would like to know whether it is:—

- (1) A fault in my set.
- (2) A trouble arising from atmospheres between the station and my set. (I live in a quiet neighbourhood with nothing I know of to cause trouble.)

## "People is the Craziest Monkeys..."

**LEW LEHR'S** comment is echoed by Peter Harcourt, a New Zealander who has recently come home after several years in England as a writer. In one of his series of talks *Not in the Guidebook*, which will be heard shortly from 2ZB, 1XH and 3ZB Women's Session, Peter Harcourt talks about the strange characters of London, among them Prince Monolulu, the African bookie, who always wears feathers and a robe, and the little gaudily-dressed Chinaman who carries a parasol tied to his head. Then he tells of the odd occasion when he overheard some old Cornishmen talking in a pub. They were solemnly discussing the trip one of them was going to make—to England. This man was admitted by the others to be much-travelled. He had made the same journey, into Devon (some thirty miles away) before the Kaiser's War, and in that village this made him an outstanding personality.

Peter Harcourt found London itself a fascinating city. On his very first morn-

(3) Something in the transmission system at the station.

(4) The nature of the needle used.

(5) The fault of the record; perhaps an old, used one; or perhaps one of the last to be struck off the matrix in manufacture.

(6) The fault of the placing of the instruments in relation to the recording instruments at the making of the record.

(7) The acoustics of the room where the record is made.

(8) The peculiar quality of the instruments of any orchestra.

(9) Something to do with the rate at which the bass notes reach my set as compared with the treble.

If you can give me any light on this subject, and better still, if anything can be done to improve it, I will be grateful.

*In radio reproduction two predominant considerations determine the relative volume of bass and treble. First, placement of the instruments in relation to the microphones. Second, the amplification in the electronic chain from microphone to loudspeaker at low and high frequencies.*

*In recording and broadcasting, the placement of microphones is usually decided by a musician and technician in co-operation, the aim being to give the conductor of the orchestra, for example, the effect he wants. Individual opinion enters strongly here and the artist must be free to express his own personality.*

*It is the aim of the engineer to preserve this expression—which means that his equipment must give equal amplification to all frequencies. In broadcasting and recording, this objective is usually attained, but in the radio receiver economic considerations set a limit. The usual radio receiver is built in such a way that it is possible to tune in a large number of stations, and this requirement imposes a restriction on the response to the higher frequencies.*

*It is likely that the correspondent would get greater enjoyment from a good local station receiver fitted with a high fidelity amplifier and speaker. A radio dealer specialising in this field should be consulted, but it must be realised that the cost of such equipment is high.*

ing there he looked out of his window which overlooked a bomb-site. Everything of value had been stripped from the devastated buildings, but a looter had just sneaked in. A policeman had seen him, and for a quarter of an hour the New Zealander watched the police manoeuvres to outwit the thief. Just as the man reached the last wall before the open streets a police car swept round the corner, pulled up silently and the thief clambered painfully over the wall right into the arms of a waiting constable.

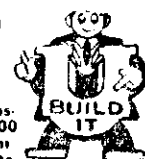
Then there's the story of the young man taking his girl out in the days of horse-drawn buses. She knew nothing of London; he knew little but tried to impress greatly nevertheless. Under his guidance the Law Courts became the Old Bailey, St. Paul's Westminster Abbey and so on. When they drove round the Victoria Memorial he was stuck. She gazed at him expectantly but he had to admit defeat, whereat the long-suffering driver just in front turned round and said: "Ah now, guv'nor, why don't you tell 'er it's Marie Lloyd?"

Peter Harcourt's six talks about people and places which are *Not in the Guidebook* will begin from the 2ZB Women's Session on Tuesday, March 8, from 1XH on March 23 and from 3ZB on April 18.

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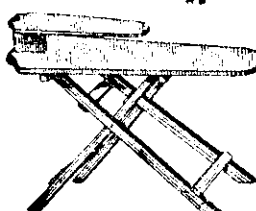


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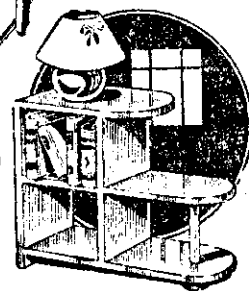


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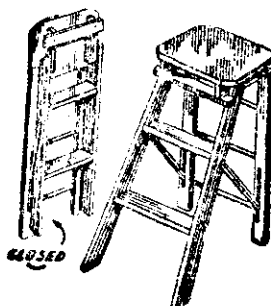
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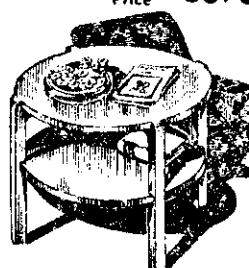
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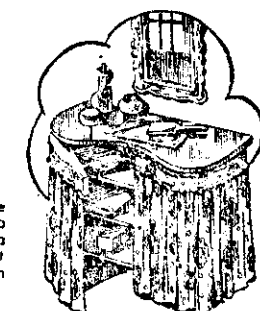
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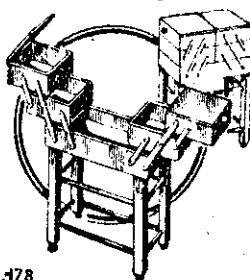
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