

Amongst the Listeners

This is the Listener's Corner. It is available for reports of receptions from individuals; the correspondence of Leagues of Listeners and reports of their proceedings; constructive criticism or suggestions for the betterment of radio in general and the consistent improvement of the service that broadcasting can render in our community life. We wish this page to be the meeting-place of listeners and officials for the better understanding of points of view and the problems of others.. It is a "Service" page, and we invite you to make use of it. Address all communications: Editor, "Radio Record," P.O. Box 1032, Wellington.

HAWKE'S BAY NOTES

By broadcasting the description of the Hawke's Bay and Wairarapa Shield match at Masterton on July 9, the Radio Broadcasting Company made a lot of friends up this way. One cannot help but offer congratulations to the company for its efforts, but it should be the announcer who should get most of the credit for this. The reception was good, but from a station like 2YA we expected it to be so, and it was not so much the transmission which gained so many friends for radio as the gentleman who described the game. Why, he had the stay-at-home crowds in Napier and Hastings almost as excited as if they were actually seeing the match. At times, though, his voice was blotted out by the local crowds giving vent to their enthusiasm when the tide turned in favour of "the Bay."

With the description of the Trentham races following, a great demand has been created for receivers, and dealers are in hopes of a rosy time. If the Broadcasting Company could realise as we listeners do what a difference 2YA is making, no time would be lost in bringing the three other stations into line. If this were done, and done soon, and the quality of the programmes correspondingly improved, there would not be such a cry for Government control, and radio licenses would soon reach the desired 40,000. It's worth thinking about, anyhow.

Local listeners are still on the job with their growl about the proposal to observe a silent night at 2YA. Why should it be so at this station or any of the other main plants for that matter? It all piffle to talk about closing down for overhaul. Surely an afternoon off, with all the mornings of the week in the same box is sufficient for this. How does 2BL manage for an overhaul? They don't even have the morning free, and it is hard to see why an up-to-date station like 2YA should be any different.

Although it may not be generally known "abroad," the Hastings Radio Society, which has developed into a pretty strong body, is now working hard for the erection of a station of its own, and the sole reason for this is that the present broadcasting hours and programmes are not meeting with requirements. In New Zealand there is no musical entertainment between 4.30 p.m. and 8 p.m., and this does not cater for farmers, school children, hospital patients, and so on, when 8 o'clock means time for bed, and it is

to fill in this gap that the Hastings Society is moving. The society has already secured permission to erect the plant, and at present is after sufficient funds to install it, and have a little in hand to carry on. The proposed plant will have an output of 50 watts, and at the moment it is intended to be on the air from 6.30 p.m. to 8 p.m., three nights per week. As will be readily seen, there is to be no competition with the main stations, so the proposal should meet with full favour. Just now, the society is awaiting receipt of its articles of incorporation, and when these come to hand, and the body is

RADIO CLUBS AND LISTENERS' LEAGUES

The following are the secretaries of various leagues and clubs. We would be glad to have a full list for the benefit of readers, and to receive notes of doings for publication:—

Mr. J. N. Leet, 141 Featherston St., Palmerston North.
Arthur D. Ford, P.O. Box 37, Christchurch (Canterbury List. L.).
E. H. Culver, P.O. Box 136, Hastings (Hast. Rad. Soc.).
W. H. Quickfall, P.O. Box 41, New Plymouth.
T. W. Stringer, P.O. Box 512, Auckland.

on a sound footing, debentures are to be issued. No difficulty is anticipated in "raising the wind" as soon as the "big push" starts.

The incorporation articles provide for the Hastings Society changing its name to "the Hawke's Bay Radio Society," so the whole province will be its area. I hope this does not clash with the ideas of our Napier friends, who, by the way, seem to have come back to life, under the name of the Napier Listeners' League.

The Hastings Society installed a receiver in its club room on the occasion of the broadcast of the shield match on July 9, and a collection was taken up in aid of the local unemployment fund. Despite a couple of trouser buttons and more than a few half-pennies, and still more browns and church coins, the total came to £4 0s. 6d.

THE "HOWLER"

HOW TO CHECK HIM

LECTURES AND TUITION NECESSARY

The "Howler" is one of the chief causes of listening difficulties. How can he be checked? Detection and tuition, supplemented by lectures, may do something.

The lure of distance reception must be recognised as one of the attractions of broadcast listening. Few who purchase a four or five-valve receiving set are content to listen only to the New Zealand broadcast stations, let alone confining their patronage to one station solely. In metropolitan and country town areas the besetting difficulty is to obtain entertainment from distant stations, even New Zealand stations, without interference from howling valves. As the popularity of broadcast listening increases the trouble becomes more aggravated, until it has in some districts attained the proportion of a serious menace to broadcast listening.

WHO ARE THE CULPRITS?

One of the worst offenders is the owner of a single-valve regenerative receiving set. With the plate (or anode) voltage of his valve frequently in excess of due requirements he sets out to "rake in" distant stations. To pick them up he increases the filament volt-

age of his valve or forces regeneration until the valve oscillates, and when the "carrier" wave of the station is picked up he fills his neighbours' loud-speakers or head-phones with blood-curdling howls. The ideal adjustment for reaction is to bring it close to the point where oscillation commences, but if the receiving equipment is then unequal to the task of reproducing the music, the operator of the set forces his valve into slight oscillation, and is content to hear some kind of "mushy" music, while he afflicts his neighbouring listener with howls. If his detector valve plate voltage is too high he cannot adjust his valve to its most sensitive point without "spilling over" into oscillation.

ANOTHER BORN.

Another gentleman who occasions a considerable amount of interference is the self-imagined genius who is out to revolutionise radio by some marvellous discovery overlooked by Marconi, De Forest, Armstrong, and others. He is for ever tinkering with and altering his circuit; he winds some wonderful coils and transformers and then sets about to startle the world. The only people this pest startles are the other listeners in his district, for the howls which his set radiates rival those from a steam siren. There are, of course, very capable amateur builders and experimenters to whom the above does not apply.

AN INNOCENT DISTURBER.

An innocent disturber of the peace of other listeners is the novice who operates a neutrodyne or Browning-Drake (another form of neutrodyne) which is not correctly balanced, or neutralised. He has bought his set from the importers, and after a little necessary tuition gleefully reaches out for the LX (long-distance) stations. In many instances his radio set has not been neutralised with the actual valves he is using. And some makes of valves, owing to mass production, vary considerably in characteristics. This results, in many instances, in an unbalanced radio frequency circuit so that the should-be harmless "neutralised" set is a veritable box of howls and squeals.

TO LOCATE HOWLERS.

"Howlers" can be located if competent men, with proper equipment, are

WILFUL OR ACCIDENTAL?

Instances are well known in New Zealand in which "howlers" have been definitely located and proven, beyond doubt, guilty. Investigators have asked them to tune their sets, and they were shown to be causing interference. The investigators have then spent some time demonstrating the correct method of tuning and tutoring the "disturbers," yet on the following evening, through lack of skill, or intelligence, the offenders' valves were howling as lustily as ever. In Auckland, the stations outside this city are, sometimes, overwhelmed with a veritable tumult of howls.

TO REDUCE INTERFERENCE.

There are various suggestions offered to reduce the howling valve nuisance. A house-to-house visit by radio inspectors would enable them to ascertain whether untutored people are causing the trouble unknowingly. While there may be some persons, as in the Christchurch example, who cannot be taught or led, there are others who would benefit by a little expert guidance. Though one demonstration is worth a score of lectures by broadcast, it must be recognised that a broadcast lecture covers a wide area simultaneously, and is far less costly than a systematic house-to-house visit. In addition to explaining how to tune a set without causing interference, the lecturer could also describe the test to ascertain whether a neutrodyne is correctly balanced. Those whose sets were not properly neutralised could be advised to engage someone expert in such to readjust their circuits.

HOW TO START

CARE IN INSTALLATION

THE LISTENER'S DUTY TO HIS NEIGHBOUR.

Some useful advice for the amateur is given in this article. His own pleasure and that of his neighbour depends upon his knowledge and skill.

All who are concerned in any way with wireless broadcasting—engineers, writers, consultants, and listeners—are asked almost daily by somebody for advice in the choice of a wireless receiving set. And most of those so questioned will agree that very few people have formed, before putting the question, even the vaguest idea of the sort of set they want, what they are willing to pay for it, or what service they expect to receive from it. Among those who do not listen, or listen only occasionally, to the broadcast programmes there is still extreme ignorance of even the most elementary facts relating to the process of broadcasting.

For the listener the receiving end is the business end in broadcasting; and thus, while it is not essential to know anything about what happens in the studio to make the reception of broadcast sound possible, it is certainly very desirable to have some knowledge of what a wireless receiving set is, what it can and cannot do, and how to make it function before buying it. No two people appear to want exactly the same sort of set, and the ultra-enthusiastic appear never to be satisfied with what they have got. And yet from an examination of the market it would seem that every possible taste can be satisfied and want supplied.

The other day there was published a schedule of wireless sets on sale. It filled 17 closely printed quarto pages. Over and above the sets therein described new circuits are discussed with elaborate detail and many diagrams appear in the technical wireless papers every week. There seems to be no limit to the range of variety in design. But it is not for this reason that there is confusion in the mind of the potential buyer; that confusion, one would suggest, exists because he does not really know what he is seeking.

Investigate the Market.

Before buying a wireless set one should hear as many different types as possible, and it is more satisfactory to hear them in private than in a shop, and best to hear those that are owned and operated by people having a musical sense as well as technical knowledge in wireless matters. A very great deal of the criticism levelled against the quality of broadcast music should be directed, instead, against listeners who have poor musical taste and are satisfied with bad reproduction arising from careless manipulation of the set. They are responsible for many an empty pair of ear-phones. Perfect reception depends mainly upon the skill of the

listener-in and his manipulation of his equipment.

Having chosen a set to meet his requirements, the listener will find that he cannot spend too much care in the process of its installation, and that he must be ready to exercise considerable patience in adjustment and tuning. Most of the reputable vendors will help in installation. To study the needs of his equipment, and to act upon instructions are duties that he owes to himself and his neighbours.

Always Buying More.

There are few things less stable than the requirements of the listener. His first set is rarely long retained. It is supplanted by something more elaborate. Some like complications and are attracted by a multiplicity of knobs; others are all for the extreme of simplicity. In the writer's experience three sets were installed in a single week recently in different houses in the same street. In no case did the question of expense arise.

In the first case the set is a simple crystal one with a valveless amplifier working a loud-speaker.

In the second the set is of the valve type, having no exterior connections and being fitted with a single knob tuning control.

In the third the set is equipped with the best available aerial and earth systems, and is a flexible four-valve instrument. Each of these sets is particularly suited to the special needs of its owner and gives complete satisfaction. In other cases it is the appearance of the set that matters most; and in some it appears that even anything will do if it reproduces dance music sufficiently well for it to be danced to.

Over and above the general questions

NOTICE TO READERS.

Correspondence and matter intended for publication should reach the Editor not later than Saturday for the next week's paper. We go to press Monday night.

—THE EDITOR,

P.O. Box 1032, Wellington.

of design, performance, and cost there are those of the varying merits of valves, accumulators, batteries, and other components. These are the concern of the enthusiast of long experience. The task of the beginner is to get the best that he can out of the set that he has, to study its moods and vagaries, to treat it with the care that a piece of delicate mechanism deserves; and to remember, above all things, that the greatest disservice he can render broadcasting is to be satisfied with bad reproduction.

FIRST AID

DISABLED RADIO SETS

First aid treatment for "sick" radio sets that will enable the man who has only a slight knowledge of radio to recognise the trouble and make the necessary repairs was prescribed by Lee Manley and W. E. Carity at a meeting of the American Institute of Radio Engineers. They pointed out that the sets as a rule do not go bad of themselves. The failure usually occurs while some operation is taking place, such as plugging in the loud speaker, tuning the condensers, or making a change in the battery connections.

If the set has been in operation for a month or six weeks, and has been giving satisfactory service for that period, the cause of failure is generally due to the weakening of the batteries.

If the set has been in operation for a period of six months or a year the possibilities of trouble will increase. If the failure has been gradual, the first thought would be that the tubes were worn out.

Trifles Cause Trouble.

If the breakdown is sudden, a mechanical failure might be expected in one of the movable connections, or pigtails, of a transformer may have burned out. If the trouble is due to a noise condition, the failure might be ascribed to dust or dirt accumulations on the condenser plates or other important parts of the receiver. The defect might also be due to a corroded soldered connection. It will require, as a rule, a rather long time for a soldered connection to corrode to such a degree as to cause this condition.

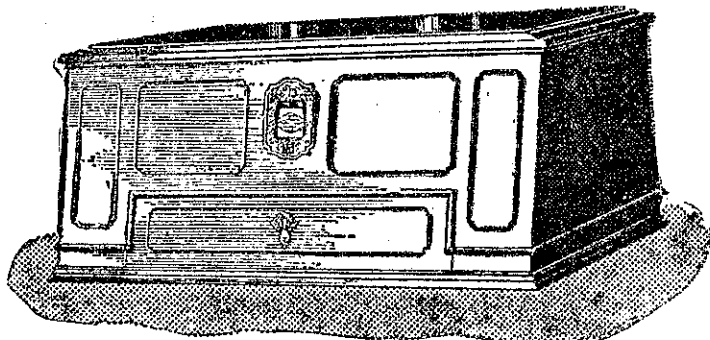
The local atmosphere conditions under which the set has been operating may have some bearing on the cause of failure. If the set has been operating near the seashore, and has been subjected to the action of salt atmosphere, sufficient corrosion may have taken place in the connections or other metallic parts to introduce high resistance or leakage paths. Moisture may saturate the cheaper grades of insulating material to such an extent as to cause high-frequency short circuits.

Worn Mechanism.

If a set has been operating for a long period of time and has given satisfactory results, and then develops noises and scratching sounds, one should not look for a loose connection in the wiring of the set, but rather for an open circuit in the moving parts. Worn mechanical parts are often mistaken for loose connections in the wiring. The wiring is absolutely stationary, and it is not likely that it will be disturbed in the ordinary use of the set so as to cause a failure due to a loose connection.

Vernier drive-shafts and vernier plates will wear loose, and while apparently they are making perfect contact to the metal surfaces of the condenser, still when the set is brought into a critical condition, as is the case when receiving distant stations, noises will occur that might be thought due to a loose connection in the wiring.

BREMER TULLEY



Counterphase Eight

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THE SET THAT RECEIVED NEW YORK AND CHICAGO.

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THE SET THAT WILL GIVE YOU SATISFACTION.

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TAIHAPE, 13/5/27.

"With regard to the reception of Canberra Broadcast on the Counterphase Eight: The items were picked up by Mr. —, Taihape. He commenced listening in about 11.45 a.m. and picked up 2BL (Sydney) immediately. He heard them describing the Federal Hall and the position of the different stations. The band and procession announcing was heard quite clearly, and then the Duke's opening speech, followed by a bugle call. They listened to Sydney all the afternoon. Since then, Mr. — says, he can get Sydney any afternoon he tries. I have heard the set on one occasion, and New York and Chicago were just as clear as 1YA, Auckland. Mr. — says he picked up 27 American stations the first Sunday night he tried the set. I would not be surprised if he picks up London with the results he is getting."

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New Zealand Wholesale Agents:

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Wright's Building, Fort Street, Auckland.

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