

# Our Short Wave Corner

Mr. F. W. Sellens writes:—

Wednesday, July 4.

A letter from the British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C.) was received by the last mail. The times of transmission are given as follows: New Zealand mean time, 5.30 till 7.30 a.m.; 7.45 a.m. till 10.30 a.m.; and 11 p.m. till 12 p.m., except Sunday and Monday.

These times are previously given, except for an interval of fifteen minutes from 7.30 a.m. till 7.45 a.m.

A correspondent asks for the signal strength of stations heard to be given sometimes. As this may be of interest to others, I will do so. Perhaps it would be as well to publish the British "R" system, which has come into general use in all countries. The meanings of the several "R" signals are as follows:—

- R1—Faint signals, just audible.
- R2—Weak signals, barely readable.
- R3—Weak signals, but readable.
- R4—Fair signals, easily readable.
- R5—Moderately strong signals.
- R6—Strong signals.
- R7—Good strong signals, readable through lots of interference.
- R8—Very strong signals, several feet from the phones stuff.
- R9—Extremely strong signals.

Readability or intelligibility is also important. The strongest signals are not always the most intelligible; this may be the fault of modulation at the transmitting station, but more likely in the case of such stations as 5SW, PCJJ, 2XAF, etc., caused by interference or atmospheric. The system I use in reporting to stations received is the one I have heard 5SW and 2XAF using during their two-way telephony tests, that is, the percentage of readability.

While writing of reports to stations, I think it is "up to" all listeners to send in reports to distant stations. It is the one thing he can do to assist them to improve their transmission.

A system appreciated is a graph, showing on the top Greenwich mean time, and signal strength in the "R" system down the side. This shows at a glance the variation of volume from time to time, and is both instructive and interesting to the sender and receiver. My log for the past few days has been bare of anything of importance, the "flue" being hard to get rid of.

As briefly reported last week, the proceedings (latter portion) were heard of the Democratic convention through 2XAF and KDKA. A newspaper representative gave a summary of the day's business, and in his description said the business had been very orderly, etc. As a correspondent from Cromwell, who was "on the air" earlier than me, said there were a few fights, and some of the delegates had to be ejected, and that the uproar was terrific at times, the speaker must have been "pulling our legs."

This was the first time that KDKA, on about 26 metres, has been heard for a long time. After the convention finished, they gave the weather report, and then closed down at 8½ past 3 a.m. by a gong.

Saturday, June 30.

2XAF on 31.4 metres, were heard with their usual "Palmolive Hour," closing at 2.31 p.m. R2, KDKA were also heard about the same strength, and signed off at 2.58 p.m., at about strength R3. PCJJ commenced their special New Zealand and Australian programme at 3.30 sharp, with the National Anthem. Their volume at this time was very loud; with two stages of audio it was comfortable loud-speaker strength. The full programme, which consisted of gramophone items, and calls to towns and individuals, was clearly audible on the speaker till I closed down for tea at 5.30 p.m. On returning to the set at 6.15 p.m., an Aussie was on this wavelength without any sign of PCJJ, so they had either faded out or gone off the air before their due time—6.30 p.m. At 8.30 p.m. it was the loudest and clearest of any short-wave station received excepting 3LO and 2MB, which are next door neighbours as radio goes.

Sunday, July 1.

2XAF was heard at good strength relaying an hotel orchestra. The crowds at the hotel were very noisy, apparently having a good time. An amateur spoilt the latter, and best part of this transmission by calling "Hullo" on the same wave-length. Strength, R 5-6.

Monday, July 2.

3LO Melbourne, with its weekly test, was quite good, as usual, but faded a lot. R9.

Tuesday, July 3.

5SW was tuned in at about 6 a.m. at R1, and increased to about R3 at 7.25 a.m., when an orchestra was weak but clearly heard.

5SW was heard at better strength, but was subjected to a lot of interference.

The German station thought to be RSR on about 41 metres, was putting out a lot of talk. Strength about R4. PCJJ was first heard at 5.30 a.m. at R4 and increased to about R7 at 7.38 a.m., when they closed down with the Dutch National Anthem. There was a slight fade. Intelligibility about 90 per cent. During the evening there were not any S.W. stations heard, but harmonics of 4YA could be tuned in almost as easily as those of 2YA; in fact, reception was better on a harmonic than natural wave-length.

Thursday, July 5.

RSR was again heard, but only talk. R2-3. 5SW was R1-2 at first, and improved to about R4 at 7.30 a.m., when a lady was giving a monologue which was about 50 per cent. readable. 2BL on its harmonic, about 44 metres, was fair speaker strength. Some good band selections were heard from RFM on 70 metres, but static was very bad, too much so for listening-in.

Friday, July 6.

PCJJ was about R5 at 5.30 a.m., increasing to R6 at 7.30 a.m. Fading very slight. 5SW was spilt by morse. There is a powerful morse station very near 24 metres, which causes a lot of trouble when trying to listen to 5SW.

Mr. Sellens in Reply.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking those of your readers who have protested against the recent remarks made by Mr. Olaf E. Stout, both through the "Radio Record" and direct to myself. Criticism is not objected to, but surely if it was thought necessary, it could have been expressed in another manner. Notwithstanding Mr. Stout's statement that the "Short Wave Corner" "consists in the main of uninteresting and bald statements of fact, etc.," I have received a number of letters asking me to continue.

I agree that there is often a lack of "newness," but one can listen quite a lot to ordinary programmes and not hear one item of real news. Again, when something of importance is heard, it is often not fully intelligible, as, for instance, a speech heard recently from a university dinner through 5SW, when the speaker's name and the name of the university was missed on account of surging, which is nearly always noticed on short-wave reception, especially when signals are weak.

The writer belongs to both classes of listeners that Mr. Stout refers to. From 8 till 10 p.m. the dials are not twiddled, but the full evening's programme, usually 2YA, is enjoyed.

When it comes to short-waves I am a "dial twiddler" out and out and enjoy it. Where the entertainment comes from does not matter, a local amateur or the most distant station, "Chinese, Dutch or Yiddish."

By the way, the Dutch are about the most progressive people under the sun as regards short-wave transmission, two-way telephony tests having been overheard between Holland and Java some months ago.

As suggested, descriptions of short-wave stations would be very interesting, but where is this information to come from? "The Radio News" (U.S.A.) recently commented on the lack of news in this respect. This is where the "dial twiddler" scores. Stations are heard and located before any mention of them is seen in the Press.

In looking through the latest issue of an American call book (distributed in Wellington to-day) at least two short-wave stations had their wave-length wrongly given, both having been heard within the last week or two and wave-length noted. This proves that reports in this instance appearing in the "Short-Wave Corner" are more up-to-date.

The other suggestions are good, and perhaps Mr. Stout will start the ball rolling with a contribution. Full descriptions, as far as possible, have been published from time to time of broadcast items of special interest, and you will probably remember that the writer has been lucky enough to have been able to supply quite a number of news items at various times, and hopes to be fortunate enough to be able to do so again. This is usually not so much skill, as luck in being on the job at the right time.—F. W. Sellens.

Appreciated in Christchurch.

ON reading your issue of the 22nd inst., I was surprised, to say the least of it, to see a scathing criticism

Bouquets or Bricks.

OCCASIONALLY we notice performers for the Broadcasting Company request listeners per microphone to write them stating whether they enjoyed their contributions or not. Now, sir, as is patent to anyone who considers the position, this is wrong in principle, and open to abuse in practice. It is the Broadcasting Company which is directly responsible to the listeners for the broadcast service, and therefore, if the company is to be in a position to gauge the acceptability of various items, listeners should address all comments to the station director or the general manager, Christchurch, and never to the performers. Most of us are satisfied that the company is out to do its best for the listeners, and if the comments of the listeners are to be diverted to the performers, the company is going to be robbed of such useful guidance as is available from the opinions of listeners. It must be remembered, too, that the performers are the paid servants of the company, and if the comments of the listeners are to go to the performers, the position would be analogous to an hotel proprietor posting up a notice: "All complaints with regard to the cooking should be addressed to the chef." This, it will be evident, opens the way to abuse. The performer could brandish the possibly few bouquets to the public gaze (and to the Broadcasting Company), and the performer could quietly drop possibly the more numerous bricks heaved at him into his waste-paper basket. You see, this sort of thing tends to have a sinister effect upon the programme. The company could be deceived by an unpopular act obtaining false kudos. I would strongly advise listeners to ignore these performers' requests for personal letters, and, instead, write direct to the company. I am sure we are all out for good programmes, and anything we can do to assist the Broadcasting Company should be our bounden duty, to do it. As to those gentlemen who solicit a personal letter, I think their requests should be prohibited by the company for the very obvious and worthy reasons I have given. Anyhow, I shall always address my own comments to the company or to your very valuable journal, whether they are bouquets or bricks.—"Anti-flam," Waipawa.

A Backblock Appreciation.

YES, we are enjoying the wireless, like many other people living in the backblocks. Radio is a great blessing to us in many ways. Having been isolated for about 20 years from the privileges of church and music, that we are extremely fond of, radio is a great boon to us. We have the last night's concert to think about during the day, and looking forward to the evenings knowing they will be just as good, we finish our work, get tea, build up a big rata fire, get comfortably settled in our easy chairs, and then listen to such glorious music and singing. It is simply wonderful. Often we are glad to say, "Thank God for radio." Sunday is our best time. The beautiful music and singing, also the Sunday evening concerts and the beautiful organ music; it brings back to me such a glow of memory of my young days. For years, ever since I left Yorkshire, I have longed to hear a peal of bells. Radio supplies this excellent

by Mr. Olaf E. Stout, of the short-wave corner of the "Radio Record." I do not know if that gentleman was "pulling our leg" when he wrote that, but I would like to say that the short-wave corner is the best article in the "Record." As a short-wave enthusiast, I appreciate Mr. F. W. Sellens' weekly reports very much and they are the first columns I read on buying this publication each week, and I find the notes very valuable. As an instance of this, I tuned in a station on 41 metres last Thursday morning with all announcements in a foreign language that I could not recognise. On referring to the short-wave corner, I noticed that Mr. Sellens had heard a station, RSR in Germany, on the previous Thursday on approximately the same wave-length and at the same time. In this manner I am able to identify many stations, thanks to Mr. Sellens. I am not the only enthusiast in Christchurch who appreciates these notes, as I have heard expressions of appreciation on many occasions from other listeners regarding the corner. As a further proof of their value, I must say that I keep all the back numbers with the number of the page containing the short-wave corner marked in blue pencil on the front so as to enable me to refer to any of these notes at any time without the trouble of hunting through the pages.—R. T. Stanton (Christchurch).

New Short-Wave Station.

ON reading your letter in the "Record" about the short-wave station, I wish to tell you that I, too, have picked up this stranger on about 24 metres. One morning I listened until about 8.25 while the station was at good strength and modulation. As Mr. McDiarmid (Hamilton) says, it was much louder than PCJJ. This station is just above 5SW.—D. R. Gardner.

Printed and published for the New Zealand Radio Publishing Company at the registered office, Wakefield Street, Wellington, of the Wellington Publishing Company, by Archibald Sando, of 47 Freyberg Street, Lyall Bay, FRIDAY, JULY 13, 1928.

# Our Mail Bag

lently from Randwick. Then there is the community singing from Geelong and Ballarat, the singing by the various quartet parties, and the orchestras. Wellington is good, the concertina, mouth organ, violin, in fact, all are good. The bike pump and one-string fiddle came out very good. We have had some very good Maori music lately from Auckland. We like the contralto and tenor singing best. Those voices seem to come out far better with us. Perhaps it is the set or locality. Of course, some of the soprano solos are beautiful, especially some of them when they don't have to strain their voices. Last Sunday night at Auckland Baptist tabernacle, a lady sang, "Abide With Me." It must have been a joy to all that heard it. The Bohemian Trio is good. We do enjoy Uncle Leo's children's service on Sunday. Auckland is our clearest New Zealand station here. We can always get them very clear both day and night, when they are on the air. Anzac Day was very good. It was a credit to the announcer, who gave such a clear description of the programme of the day. In fancy we were there in that great crowd of people. Isn't Miss Ava Symonds good? We do enjoy that violin. I often wonder how "Danny Boy" would sound played on that fiddle, but I expect it would be useless to ask for "Danny Boy" from such a thorough-bred instrument. With us, when a minister is preaching and he raises his voice to drive certain arguments home, we don't hear near as well, but perhaps, again the fault may be in our tuning. Just now, Ingall's Hawaiians are playing. It makes a fellow feel good to hear such music, so low, liquid and clear. We are delighted with your "Radio Record." With it, we can choose from the programmes, when items are on that we enjoy most. Your "Listeners' Guide" I find so instructive, and full of good information on radio. But it does not explain why G.B. Sydney, will insist on pushing 3YA off the end of our aerial, and why, when he came pushing on 3YA's wave-length on Sunday night, we noticed how audible Uncle George was. The same time some one rung 2GB, and complained he could not hear him. But the beauty of radio is if a station breaks down, we can easily switch to another one.—George Nicholls, Collingwood.

Sanity First.

I WISH to convey to you my appreciation of your impartiality in publishing Mr. Stout's comment. Though it is true that every movement for human betterment has its martyrs, a little straight talk may help to keep them sane. We can appreciate the good work of Mr. Sellens and yet find it pitiable and disconcerting to see less capable adults childishly absorbed, spending every spare moment at dial twiddling, and becoming gradually dead to all other interests and to all the amenities of life.—"Observer."

Morse Lessons.

I WOULD like to endorse "NDB's" suggestion re Morse code transmissions. Since the trans-Pacific flight I know of four lads in this district who have commenced to learn Morse. I fancy one quarter-hour twice of three times a week would be sufficient if kept up, for, say, a couple of months. This would certainly be a novelty for the company, and would be much appreciated. Also, while making suggestions, would it be possible for the 2YA announcer to begin his 7 p.m. session by reading the weather report in the evening paper. Then if the official report turns up before 7.45 he could wind up with it. The 9 p.m. report is rather too late for country folk. Notwithstanding the noisy complaints, I consider the majority of the public think the Broadcasting Company is not doing so badly in its rather impossible task of being all things to all men.—D.I.B.

Tip About Exponential Horn.

I WOULD like to state that Mr. Sellens' articles are much appreciated by short-wave enthusiasts of this district. Just a few words on 2YA as regards reception. The station comes in with a roar, lacking in other stations, but distortion is not very great, in spite of surrounding hills and mountain ranges, also 6000-volt power-lines passing near the aerial. However, modulation is often bad, but for clarity and steadiness the Palmerston North amateur station 2ZF beats the lot. Concerning the Heene-Tunney fight, I feel safe in saying that local listeners are much excited over the proposed re-broadcast of same. Even if static and fading is rather fierce, I think that the average "fan" should not complain, bearing in view the difficulty of the feat. Also, it would be handy to know the time of the hoped-for transmission, as I, like, I presume, numerous other listeners, would count on entertaining

friends on that occasion. In discussing the exponential horn, as described in the "Record" of June 29, a friend of mine remarking on the subject said: "Just fancy having an instrument like that in one's house. Why, there wouldn't be room for the set." However, I find that the speaker can be installed by removing the man-hole covering, as numerous houses have in the ceiling, and placing some painted wire gauze over cavity, then inverting horn over same in the loft, that the clumsy appearance of such apparatus is eliminated. The gauze acting as a "blind," if coloured the same as the ceiling, is likely to pass as a ventilator. Wishing the "Record" every success.—Arnold Birss (Dunedin).

Artists appreciated.

JUST a few lines on my appreciation of the programmes being "put over." The orchestra is a continual source of enjoyment and such artists as Walpole, Stark, Two Boiled Owls, Warwick, Titchener, Haywood, Miss Stark and Mrs. Thomas, are a real pleasure to listen to. But where is Miss Nora Greene and Billy Hart. This lady has one of the richest voices in New Zealand and Billy is very popular. Miss Nora Greene went off when in illness, and has not been heard since, except from one of the band recitals. How about another play? Looking at the programmes as a whole, however, they are consistently good. Will that list of licensed receivers be published? The "Record" is a paper of considerable interest to all radio enthusiasts, and a few more read it, just quietly. Well, I do not wish to take up valuable space, so I will "close down," wishing N.Z.B.C. and your paper the best of luck.—"Grid-Leak."

A Suggestion

I SEE in this week's "Radio Record" Mr. Powell's inquiry re two stations. The one on 1YA's setting is very likely 3UZ, Melbourne, and the one on 2YA's, 5CL, Adelaide, as I have not seen these listed in Mr. Powell's log. Wishing the paper every success.—A. E. Ireland.

The Opening of the War.

I WOULD like to make a suggestion for what it is worth. I am a returned soldier living in the back blocks, and I can hardly tell you how much I enjoyed the band's rendering of "Namur" from 2YA on Friday night. In my thoughts I went back to the old army days—I "marched past" again and did "Piccadilly" in Sling. In how many different places and under how many different circumstances have I stepped to that tune? Might I suggest that the company put on a Diggers' evening on Saturday, August 4, from 2YA, Wellington. I would suggest a band to play all the old regimental marches and the numerous camp ditties during the evening, with perhaps a chorus of old camp songs (and songsters perhaps). I heard one such evening from 4QG last year, and they also had some scenes, such as "a 1914 recruiting office" with rather amusing dialogues with the examining doctor, etc. Hoping you may find it possible to do something on these lines and with thanks to the company for the past services.—Digger.

[A very useful suggestion. On reference to the director of 2YA, he immediately agreed to arrange an appropriate concert.—Ed.]

A Correction.

I SEE by my report on Mr. Pierce's earth I was the lucky one, but there are a few misprints stating that my aerial is 160ft. high. It is only 40ft.; also thus (1Y) is 1YA, and 1ZB, not 1ZU (KCO) KGO, and WGY. A listener (KEF, Murchison) had no success, and he reckoned that it was no good; it made no difference to his set. I am afraid he is sadly mistaken, as a DX listener in Napier operating a neutrodyne set uses this earth, and his results are wonderful. If the earth is properly installed, the results are just great. My total log now is forty-six stations, and I can hear many more, but on account of static can't get the calls. Since last writing, I can log 4QG, 2BL, 2FC, 3ZC, and 2ZF and 4YA in daylight. As to the Aussies, I logged 4QG last Sunday morning at 1.15 p.m. our time on church service, and I also heard the landing of the Southern Cross direct from Brisbane on phones. Mr. E. J. Crabb, Napier, is quite right as to helping "Youthful Enthusiast" as to the stations he can hear. They are all Yanks. I heard a few of them myself. As to station picked up below KFO, it is an Aussie—sounds like 3AS, but it is 3EF, Melbourne, and another, 7UZ, Tasmania, on about 210 metres, 50 watts, and another between 3EF and 7UZ. I heard him several mornings—a very blurry station; seems foreign. Cheerio.—S. Ellis, Okato.

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