

"Cape Town Calling"

SCREENING DIFFICULTIES

THREE STATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

IT was on September 15, 1924, that broadcasting of the professional variety was born in Cape Town. Since that time a great deal has happened.

Johannesburg was the first centre in South Africa to start real broadcasting; Cape Town came second shortly afterwards, and Durban made up the trio about a year later. There has always been friendly rivalry among the three stations, for until last year, when the African Broadcasting Company, with Mr. I. W. Schlesinger at the head, came along and took over the trio under one management, each station was under separate control. Competition was not altogether harmful. It prompted each station to look to its own laurels and blaze its own trail.

Taking the three centres separately, one can truthfully say to-day that each station has made astonishing progress. With limited power and unlimited space, however, one can do little with three broadcasting stations, each separated from the nearest by something like 1000 miles. Thousands of South Africans have never heard real broadcasting. The radio problem of South Africa is vast distances, scanty and scattered populations, and abnormal atmospherics. Three small stations working along different lines could never hope to serve the country adequately. Experts prophesied that it could never be done on a remunerative commercial basis; but then Mr. Schlesinger appeared on the scene. He believed it could be done. He formed a company and bought up everything, lock, stock, and barrel, as a nucleus. Since that time he has been steadily moving. How exactly he intends to energise the isolated farmstead aeris from Namaqualand to Zululand with the necessary power to give intelligent speech, pure music, and "astatic" entertainment remains to be seen; but he has certainly made a beginning. Johannesburg is to have a super-station of 25 kw. ready within the next few months, and the old JB outfit will go to Bloemfontein.

In 1924 a wealthy citizen offered to present the Mother City of the Union with a transmitting outfit, which the City Council refused. Those were hectic days. Everybody wanted wireless, but nobody would take on the broadcasting job. Suddenly there emerged certain courageous individuals who, as heads of the Cape Peninsula Publicity Association, talked wireless from morning till night. Seeing a novel medium through which to advertise "The Glorious Cape" afresh, they persuaded everybody that broadcasting should be done by them. The idea was generally accepted, and away they went. No profits were made and everyone rallied round to help. Our public-spirited friend did not exactly make a present of the transmitter to the city, but he helped the C.P.P.A. very considerably by way of a substantial advance.

It must be mentioned that the Cape Town Broadcasting Station is one of the comparatively few which never uses a lettered call sign. "Cape Town calling" was the first call. It is still the call to-day.

CAPE TOWN, it must be remembered, nestles at the foot of Table Mountain, and is flanked on either side by Devil's Peak and Lion's Head. The mountainous Peninsula running south

Indian Broadcast

INFINITE POSSIBILITIES

COMMUNAL LISTENING SET

IN writing on broadcasting in India it is the future which dominates the position, says Mr. Eric G. Dunstan, general manager, Indian Broadcasting Company, in "World Radio"; there is little past to talk about, and the present is not altogether happy.

A beginning was made in 1927, when towards the end of the year a service was started from two stations, one at Bombay and one at Calcutta, and that service continues, although it has received a temporary check owing to lack of finance. But neither station has ever ceased to transmit programmes, and now that steps are being taken to provide the extra capital necessary, the programmes will shortly be restored to a full basis, and we hope the service will soon be extended to two more stations.

British Broadcasting Corporation tradition and example have provided the foundations on which we have to build, and the quality of the programmes has been surprisingly high; an unexpected supply of artists and material for broadcasting has materialised, and on the Indian side of the programmes we have only just begun to discover the talent and material; the demand is creating the supply.

At the end of February we had about 7000 licenses, and at present there must be nearly 10,000; and now that the Government have started prosecuting "pirates," the figures will probably improve more rapidly. But in a vast country like India one cannot expect to achieve great things in under a year, with so new an invention as broadcasting, which, even to us sophisticated Westerners, seems a miracle, and to an Eastern is incredible magic—until he has heard it with his own ears. With only two small stations, over a thousand miles apart, in a country the size of Europe, exclusive of Russia, and with a population of over 300 millions speaking more than 200 different languages, it will be some time before any but a small proportion of the population will hear broadcasting for themselves.

But when we have got a hold, when we have got the stations to give a real service to the whole of India, what a

for forty-five miles lies behind the Table, so that a great part of the Peninsula is badly screened from Cape Town. Away to the north there is an unbroken view for forty miles across the Cape Flats (not a thickly populated area), and on the distant horizon the Hottentots Holland Mountains raise their peaks to the sky. Beyond is deep land. So it will be seen that to house a transmitter in the city itself suggested a very limited range for good reception. But it had to be done. The transmitter is at the top of a five-storied building on the main street, and there, after many months of experiment to find a suitable "earth," and eliminate screening from neighbouring iron roofs, it settled down to a steady radiation, which is now more or less constant. Purity is studied before power. There are many listeners in the South Peninsula who get very poor reception, but this cannot be remedied. Think for a moment of a mountainous triangular Peninsula with a broadcasting station tucked away at one end. Draw a fifty-mile ring round Cape Town, and you will find three-quarters sea and one-quarter land, and most of that quarter is mountainous. That is Cape Town, where 99 per cent. of the total subscribers to the broadcast station are within the city and immediate vicinity. The area of this station, however, wherein listeners are called upon to pay, is much bigger than the whole of the British Isles, where there are twenty-odd stations. True, there is a zoning system—3s. per annum nearby, down to 2s. 6d. in the back of beyond—but most people pay willingly. Several times the suggestion has been made to remove the Cape Town transmitter out on to the Cape Flats, but whether this would improve matters to such an extent as to warrant the expense is doubtful. If power were increased in so doing is another story.

THE detailed working of the Cape Town studio is thoroughly as up-to-date. Transmissions have been as successful, as varied, and numerous as any station anywhere. The bulk of the spade work has fallen on the shoulders of the present studio director, Mr. R. S. Caprara, who is a remarkable genius at his job, his right-hand man, Mr. R. J. Borthwick (station engineer), "Auntie Lex," of the children's hour, and the announcer, Captain Gordon Bird, who has earned the reputation of being the breeziest wit and cleverest announcer in Africa. These four have carried the burden.

Things have changed with the advent of the A.B.C., but in the minds of the old staff the problem is the same: How to improve programmes and transmission, to give a better service to those who get good reception, and to extend that service to the vast open spaces beyond the hills—Rhodes's great Hinterland.

While there was no money this vision was obscure. To-day, with money, it is still obscure. We hope it will not be so for long.

magnificent prospect there is for broadcasting in a country where 95 per cent. of the population is illiterate and consequently learns all it knows through eyes and ears!

The Communal Listening Set.

ONE of the first and most important developments will be the communal listening set, installed in every village within reach of the transmitter and maintained by Government assistance and perhaps paid for by some instalment plan.

At present the women in purdah have no touch with the world outside their own zenana quarters, and consequently have little opportunity for education, or even amusement. Broadcasting will bring to them what it has brought to the blind and bed-ridden in England: release from the bondage of their own little rooms, and a share in the life and happenings of the community from which they were previously barred.

A people who, in the main, can neither read nor write, can make little use of newspapers, and rumour is their only purveyor of information, and seldom tells the truth; but a service of broadcasting will bring news into every town and village of India, not in the form of rumour, but as an authenticated, truthful, non-propagandist news bulletin.

By far the largest proportion of India's people are agriculturists, and to them the weather is of paramount importance; news of the imminence of the monsoon, the annual rains, or even of casual rains, is news of a fresh supply of life-blood to them. Weather reports and forecasts will be one of the most valuable features of broadcasting in India.

The Only Means of Education.

IN many of the outlying villages there is nothing in the nature of schools or education, because either it is impossible to get the teachers to go and teach there, or it is too expensive; but when the communal listening set becomes an established fact, broadcast education will be better than none.

There are large numbers of Europeans and Indians who pass their lives in districts entirely cut off from the world. To them broadcasting means the end of their isolation.

The majority of Indians can afford little from their meagre incomes for entertainment or enjoyment, and the establishment of broadcasting will mean a new era for them, and must change their whole outlook on life.

In fact, taking the whole world, I doubt whether it is possible to find any other country where there is such a tremendous future for broadcasting, the possibilities are infinite. Nothing can prevent the progress of Indian broadcasting, which can so easily, so effectively, and so economically fill many gaps in the average Indian's life.

Service in Ceylon.

CEYLON was determined not to be out of the running in the broadcasting race, and, as the result of the report of a Government Committee appointed to inquire into the matter, the chief engineer of the Telegraph Department was authorised in August, 1924, to proceed with the work of establishing a broadcasting station. Broadcasting was started officially in December, 1925, when the station was opened by H.E., the Governor (Sir Hugh Clifford). Prior to this, however, a limited service was given by an improvised transmitter of about 3 kw. power. Good though its results were, the power was not great enough to ensure good reception throughout the island.

The power of the permanent station is 1.75 kw. input to the oscillating circuits. The aerial masts are 300ft. high and 600ft. apart. A wave-length of 800 metres was decided on after due consideration of the radiation efficiency of the aerial. The main studio is situated in University College, Colombo, and a small one for talks and news is in the Central Telegraph Office.

The great problem of providing programmes was, if not solved, at least rendered less difficult, by the ready provision of the services of talented amateurs, who deserve all credit for their valuable gratuitous work. In spite of the immense difficulties of the situation a broadcast service of about 1000 hours per annum has for some time been given, and every effort is being made to increase the popularity and usefulness of broadcasting in the island.

HIGH POWER STATION

COMING FOR CANADA.

OCCASIONALLY—very occasionally—the British settler, thousands of miles from his homeland, can for a few brief moments bridge half a continent, and an ocean, and listen to the familiar strains of some old English ballad broadcast from the Motherland. As improvements are made, and difficulties overcome, Canadian wireless enthusiasts look for the day when London and the rest of the Empire can be tuned in at will.

CECA, one of the oldest broadcasting stations in the Dominion, is understood to be negotiating for the erection of new apparatus which will make it one of the most powerful stations in Canada. At present its transmissions, with a power of 0.5 kw., reach both coasts consistently, but when, at the end of the present year, it moves into new quarters on top of the twenty-two story building now being erected for a Toronto newspaper, it is understood on good authority that a completely new station will go "on the air."

Radio in Malaya

FIELD FOR WIRELESS

A QUESTION OF TIME

IN one department, at least, of radio matters, Malaya has achieved world importance, says Mr. Hubert S. Banner, in "World Radio." In 1925, as the result of representations made by an emissary of the League of Nations, Singapore was made the site of a central epidemiological bureau, which aimed at the co-ordination of the maritime public health legislations of the various Far Eastern administrations. Before the end of 1926 weekly telegraphed epidemiological returns were coming in from nearly 150 Eastern ports within four days after the end of the week to which they bore reference. The Governments of Indo-China and of the Netherlands Indies, by courteously undertaking to broadcast the collated reports each week without charge, brought the costs of the scheme to a minimum.

Private wireless in Malaya, however, has had to struggle under severe difficulties. With very limited means at its disposal the Wireless Society of Malaya carried on amateur broadcasting for a period of over two years, putting out bi-weekly concerts. In the middle of 1927 a Johore member, with a Reinartz circuit detector and two stages of low frequency, with semi-vertical aerial of 24 feet, listened to London. This was the first recorded occasion, though late in the previous year a Singapore enthusiast had called together a large gathering of people to listen to 2L.O., only to find out, after all, that it was 3L.O., the Australian station!

IN March, 1927, it was definitely announced that in accordance with the recommendations of the Malayan Wireless Committee approved by the Government, an exclusive broadcasting license would be issued to one company for a period of five years. The company would have the right to broadcast advertising matter to the amount of 10 per cent. of the total daily broadcast time. The company was floated under the title of The Malayan Broadcast, Limited, with headquarters at Kuala Lumpur, Selangor.

It can only be a question of time before Malaya takes its place among the most important broadcasting centres of the Empire, for it is a country whose prosperity in relation to area and population is nothing short of phenomenal. Covered with jungle a bare half-century ago, Malaya to-day—and in area it approximates only to England (without Wales)—shows an annual total of imports and exports between £200,000,000 and £300,000,000. Indeed, the country's whole history is one of extremely rapid progress.

THE oldest European settlement in Malacca, whose ancient buildings, still standing, can tell a story as romantic as any in the world. Taken by the Portuguese under d'Albuquerque in 1511, it passed into Dutch hands in 1641. It surrendered to the British in 1795, was handed back to the Dutch in 1818, and came finally into British possession in 1824. The first seat of British Government, however, was established at Penang in 1786, whence it was transferred early in the following century to Singapore, founded by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819.

From the time of federation onwards progress has gone ahead by leaps and bounds. Where formerly there were no means of transport, save rivers and perilous forest paths, to-day there is a network of 4000 miles of excellent metalled roads and a railway system extending over 1200 miles and linking up with the State Railways of Siam. More than 2,000,000 acres of the jungle have been cleared and planted with rubber, putting Malaya in a position to supply approximately half of the world's rubber supply.

Another department in which great progress has been made is tin mining. It is on record that as early as the fifteenth century Chinese miners were working the Malayan deposits, and it was in order to adjust the quarrels between rival gangs of Chinese miners that Britain first interposed in the affairs of what are now the Federated Malay States. Since then rapid advances have taken place, and to-day, with up-to-date machinery and methods, Malaya supplies about one-third of the world's tin requirements.

In a country, then, of such unparalleled prosperity and future promise, it may surely be prophesied that one day broadcasting will truly come into its own. Merely as a sidelight, to indicate that matters are moving in the right direction, it may be mentioned that imports of electrical apparatus into Malaya in 1927 totalled £25,101, as compared with £493,289 during the preceding year.

SEVERAL European stations employ a ticking clock or metronome as a means of identification. The Vienna metronome, for instance, ticks 44 times in ten seconds. The Frankfurt metronome ticks at the rate of 32 per ten seconds, whilst at Breslau the rate of ticking is 40 times in ten seconds.

Canada and Radio

THE BOON OF WIRELESS

DRYNESS FAVOURS DX WORK

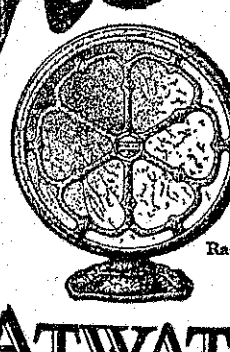
IN no country more than Canada has wireless broadcasting revolutionised the life of a large section of the community. To the lonely farmer, trapper, and prospector in the vast prairies and northlands, wireless has meant a link with the outside world. There is scarcely a farmhouse from coast to coast without the magic little cabinet that sets the miles at naught. Music and entertainment from the great cities during the long winter evenings—market reports, weather report, and the like during the day, are eagerly looked for by the thousands who in former years made the annual trip to town merely to renew old contacts.

Undoubted blessing that it is, wireless, so far as Canada is concerned, has brought with it its share of problems. Canada's great southern neighbour, the United States, has established broadcasting stations at strategic points between the Pacific and the Atlantic, the large majority of which can be heard by Canadian listeners. Thus Canadian stations have been forced to improve the quality of their programme to attract listeners, but with the wireless enthusiasts there is always the lure of distance. To many, the quality of the programme is but a secondary consideration, the primary consideration being the distance from which it is heard. In Canada long-distance reception is possible with amazing clarity—perhaps due to the dry, cold air in winter.

A POWERFUL chain of broadcasting stations is maintained by the Canadian National Railway, stretching from Moncton, New Brunswick, in the east, to Ottawa; thence across the Great Lakes to Winnipeg; and finally to Vancouver. Wireless has become an integral part of Canadian national life. Political speeches from both sides are broadcast during election campaigns, particular care being taken to give each side a fair hearing. So far, the question of broadcasting Parliamentary debates has not been seriously mooted, but even that may come.

Of the practical uses of wireless in Canada there are many. Ottawa is kept in daily communication with the far-flung northern police outposts situated in Canada's Polar domain—one within a few hundred miles of the Pole itself. Men of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who return from a year's vigil in these solitary northern wastes, where winter is perpetual night, are unanimous in saying that wireless has in recent years been the one factor that makes life worth living for them. At Christmas powerful broadcasting stations send them seasonable wishes and messages from their loved ones, sometimes in the form of actual verbal greetings. One of the grimmer uses to which wireless has been put, has been in aiding the police in the capture of criminals. To-day, the mounted policeman, no less than last century, "gets his man," for with a chain of wireless stations scattered strategically over the northland there is small chance of escape for the evildoer.

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