

Our Mail Bag

Hints to Broadcasters.

Way-back listeners-in have little time to keep posted on all matters, sport and otherwise, and in my opinion it would be a great pleasure to hear on Saturday evening, after the results of the day's play, how the different teams stand in the competitions. This would take about 2 or 3 minutes for each centre, and would be much appreciated.

The wholesale prices of vegetables and fruit, as given three or four times weekly, are little use, as the prices given are wholesale, and when one hears that Delicious apples are 3s. 6d. to 6s. per case, and second quality 2s. 4d. per case, and then sends for a case or two, they are informed by the retailer that Delicious apples are 9s. per case, and that second quality are not stocked. The report, I think, is misleading to the listeners-in, and the time might be given to better advantage.

What about the foreign policy talk? Are they to be continued? I hope they will, as 15 minutes weekly to keep us posted in the latest about the Empire policy is surely well spent.

Many of the gramophone records come over the air marvellously well, and it is often impossible here to tell whether it is from an artist in the studio or from a record. Could not, however, a few more sacred or semi-sacred records be given? I have nothing but praise for your programmes, but could one evening a week not be set aside mainly for old songs and music: it would be as good as a tonic for many elderly listeners-in?—Listening-in, Olakune.

Church Services.

CAN you tell me why preference is given to the smallest, numerically, religious denomination in the matter of broadcasting their services? Taking the programmes from June 10 to July 1, we find that Church of England services have been broadcast three times, Methodist three, Presbyterian four, Congregational once, and Baptist or Church of Christ no less than five times. There are committees in connection with some of the radio stations to arrange the order of preference for services, but there appears to be no co-ordination between them all. This is a matter which the Broadcasting Company should take in hand immediately, for if co-ordination was brought about the present unsatisfactory state of affairs would no longer exist. Another matter which needs immediate attention is the way in which 2YA fails to keep anything like advertised time when transmitting its programme. Since the establishment of the beautiful orchestra at this station many of us make a point of "tuning in" for the request and repeat numbers, and it is very annoying to find, as happened on Friday, 20th, that they were "put over" fifteen minutes ahead of time. Attention to small details like this will tend to make listeners-in more contented than they are at present. Heartily congratulating you on your splendid paper.—Valves.

[On inquiry we find that during the period mentioned, namely, June 10 to July 1, denominations have been broadcast as follows:—Anglican 4, Presbyterian 4, Methodist 3, Baptist 2, Church of Christ 3, Congregational 2, Unitarian 1. The two largest denominations, therefore, have each been broadcast more often than any of the other denominations. Co-ordination of services between stations is not as simple a matter as it appears on the surface. When it is considered that at two stations six denominations are broadcast, at the third seven denominations, at the fourth only five denominations, it will be seen that it is not possible to maintain a regular rotation at each station, and at the same time co-ordinate the four stations. At three of the company's stations the broadcast of church services is in the hands of committees on which are representatives of six of the strongest denominations, and the company adopts whatever arrangement is recommended by the committees. The timing of the items on programmes is a very difficult matter, and although stations adhere as closely as possible to the published time, rearrangements of the programmes are necessary occasionally,

and that, of course, causes a variation in time. The published times are approximations, as it is impossible to estimate exactly the time which will be occupied by each item. The complaint made has been noted, and efforts will be made to avoid "beating" the programme time.—Ed.]

No Complaints.

RECEPTION here from 2YA is almost perfect, and we cannot wish for anything better. We get full tone right through the programmes without the hint of a fade or mushiness. Auckland and Christchurch reception here is not at all good—both stations fade badly. The innovation of the Studio Orchestra is no doubt a great asset to 2YA, and a treat for listeners-in. The programmes throughout the week are all that one could desire, and we spend many pleasant hours while 2YA is on the air, and all for the huge sum of £1 10s. Really, the Broadcasting Company should be had up for "profiteering." Carry on with the good work, 2YA. No complaints.—R.S.H. (Hawera).

More Gramophone Desired.

IT is with pleasure I renew my sub. to your most interesting and instructive paper. In reference to broadcasting, I have found no cause to criticise; certainly there are items, some "jazz," I do not care for, but somebody else does, no doubt. The programmes put on by the company's stations have shown a wonderful improvement during the last eighteen months, and now compare more than favourably with those from Australia, and, "whisper it gently," Japan. The only suggestion I can offer is that more use be made of the gramophone in providing our evening programmes, as these items come "over the air" remarkably well, besides giving listeners an opportunity of hearing the world's best (call it "canned" if you like), which we would not otherwise often get.—John Luke (Clevedon).

That "Birthday Party."

THIS radio is just one darned thing after another. There is always something doing. Shattering static, sun-spot cycles, Southern Lights, silent Aussies, Springbok successes, Sellen's skilful short-wave seekings, Stout's subtle screed, Smith's Southern Cross, Sunday concerts, super-this and super-that, and now we have "Ponty's Birthday Party." Bravo, Wellington Radio Society! But wait a moment. I see, according to the preliminary announcement, "an arrangement has been made with the Broadcasting Company to broadcast the ceremony." So it's to be a "ceremony." Well, I always did say that you city people take your joys too solemnly. Up here a birthday party is a "celebration." The last one up here can be summarised as seventeen jazes, sixteen fox-trots, fifteen songs, twelve gallons of beer, three fights, one broken rib, two ditched motor-cars and one police-court case. The only recitation was "Tahu" Jack's, whom we discovered standing in the moonlight at 2 a.m. handing out Bracken's "Not Understood" to our neighbour's prize Berkshire boar. Not much "ceremony" about our birthday parties. I see the Wellington Society's secretary "has specially written and arranged a most novel and original programme to be broadcast on August 2." I notice, also, he has taken the very wise precaution of copyrighting it. But it is not clear whether he has merely copyrighted the printed particulars or the birthday party. Anyhow folks would steal the insulators off your aerial nowadays, and one can't take risks when scattering mental diamonds, so to speak, through the ether.

There is one aspect of the birthday party which has got us all puzzled, and there has been no beer consumed over this topic than any other since neighbour Bob's cow "Strawberry" went unexpectedly dry in November, 1923. The preliminary notice states: "An actual birthday party will be broadcast. The gentleman, at whose house the party is to take place, shall be known as 'Ponty'; and he lives about three miles from 2YA broadcast station. . .

The party will be true to life in every respect, and there will not be a dull moment during the ceremony. . . During the birthday ceremony there will not be any break nor any dull moments, as the microphone will be left switched on to 'Ponty's' drawing-room right through." But we read the other day that the station manager of 2YA, Wellington says the entertainment will be given in the studio. Then how the heck can "the microphone be left switched on to 'Ponty's' drawing-room right through" at "Ponty's" house, three miles from 2YA? We have to believe the station manager as the Broadcast Company is not the concern to start bluffing the listeners. We read, also, "The party will be true to life in every respect." If that is so you city folk entertain some very mixed company—run your eye over this list—"Amongst the guests invited to 'Ponty's' party and from whom it is expected many interesting items will be heard are:—Count Zermelt, whom 'Ponty' met in Paris in 1915. 'Ike,' a wealthy investor, and speculator in real estate. Sir Ronald Inchcliffe, rich banker from New York. Jim, member of a touring show and leader of the orchestra. Ivory Tickle, the human piano. Bill, the radio engineer. Snowy, a friend of Bill's. 'Kruschen,' an old salt of the sea, the comic man on board the ship Good Hope. Mr. Haslam, teacher of singing. 'Nosey Parker,' cadger of cigarettes. . .

We can't imagine a rich New York banker and a real live count appreciating the company of 'Nosey Parker,' the cadger of cigarettes, even at an actual birthday party. Of course a good deal has been done in this ultra-modern age to break down social barriers, but up country here you'd never see our district doctor singing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" with the borough dustman, even at a very private birthday party. I saw it stated somewhere that there are to be ladies also present at Ponty's birthday party, although, mind you, Ponty's wife was "enjoying herself in Auckland." It is unheard of up here for a husband

With entry upon our second year renewal of subscriptions is very actively in progress. A great number of readers are taking the opportunity of advancing suggestions in connection with broadcasting. We wish to make it known that these suggestions are greatly appreciated, and in every case are sent on to the proper quarter. Where use can be made of matter in the "Mailbag Section" that is done, but with the special pressure obtaining at the moment we are unable to give space to all matter that is coming forward. We wish readers to know, however, that no suggestion is ignored—all are given consideration.—Editor.

to entertain ladies (even accompanied by gentlemen) when the lady of the house is away, especially as the wife was "unaware that her home was to be the scene of an uproarious party." Still, as she is enjoying herself in Auckland, I suppose it is a case of tit-for-tat. There is one guest in particular we can't get the hang of, and he is the "human piano." Does this signify that when the night is well advanced the others will stretch this gentleman out and tickle music out of him? However, real party or bogus party, we're going to be present that night at Ponty's turn-out, if not in body at least in spirit, for we're ordered a case of whisky for the occasion, and we'll endeavour to swallow both the party and the whisky—"Merenha," Tetahi, Taranaki.

2YA Orchestra.

WITH reference to your reply in the "Record" of July 13 of my criticism published on July 6, I may say that I do not consider that I have arrived at any wrong conclusions. The whole point depends on what is classical and what is light opera and dance music. My classification differed from yours, and I think the great majority would easily list one half of the items in your popular list as classical or semi-classical. The difference between my time, 2½ hours, and your time, 3½ hours, is caused by the inclusion of trio and solo items evidently by members of the orchestra, while I dealt solely with orchestral items. In any case, your time, 66 plus 121 minutes, only amounts to 3 hours 7 minutes, and not 3½ hours. My reference to the 3LO Synco-Symphonist was not in any way a comparison of the merits of the two orchestras, but was merely to show that 3LO devotes a great deal of time to jazz and comedy items, and has been and still is the most popular station in Australia, and consequently is giving the most general satisfaction to listeners.

My main point, and this is not only my own opinion, but the opinion of many local listeners, is that we should get more dance music and musical comedy and jazz items than we are getting.—"Wanganui."

Some Suggestions.

WOULD it be out of place for me to suggest that 2YA be asked if it is possible to arrange for one evening, say, every two weeks, for a programme of waltz or dance music played by the station orchestra. This, I feel sure, would be welcomed by a good many listeners. Some of the items put over lately, although quite good in their way, could have been replaced by much brighter music, hence my suggestion. It might also be possible to put the programme on at 7.30, as the writer, being one of those on the land, is seldom able to listen to the whole

programme. Would you also oblige me by answering in your columns what is a reasonable charge (cash) for re-charging a wet battery (A). There is quite a lot I could say in reference to 2YA programmes, but am in hopes that there will be a decided improvement when the official listeners-in get busy.—"Hopeful."

[City charges are: 60 amps. 2/6, 80 amps. 3/-. 100 amps. 4/-. Country charges may fairly be higher, allowing for conditions and facilities.—Ed.]

Who is This Stranger?

COULD any of your readers identify this station for me? I just picked him up at midnight, July 3, on about 378 metres, and transmitting mandolin music with banjo accompaniment. They were good speaker strength at times, but fading was intense, and Morse and static interfered with speech, but that didn't matter much as all talking was in Spanish or some such language.

At no time was English spoken when I could hear them, and they closed down at 3.30 a.m.

On passing down over 40Q they were easily found coming in stronger than Brisbane at the time. A very excellent class of music was played and came over as clear as a bell.—N. C. Winstanley (Picton).

To a suggestion on our part that he had heard one of the Japanese stations, Mr. Winstanley replied: "I'm afraid you are wrong. The nearest Jap. station to 40Q and below it comes in about 3½ points on the dial, and the stranger is between the Jap. and 40Q, as I had all three stations on this particular night quite clearly. I have since had the stranger twice, but not so clear, probably because I have not waited up so late. And then, again, the music from the stranger was beautiful, a description which cannot with any stretch of imagination be applied to any Jap. station. Then the language was entirely different from the Japanese; at times the strength of signals was pretty well R3, and perfectly clear, so I could not mistake the language very well."

[Can any reader oblige.—Ed.]

Aerial on the Ground Still Worked.

DURING a recent wind storm my aerial mast was blown down, but this was unknown to me, and I continued to receive the various stations with the usual clarity and strength. Next morning I found that the 14 gauge bare copper wire was lying on the surface of the ground. As time did not permit re-erection, there it remained. The same afternoon two cars and a small motor-lorry ran over the wire. The difference to reception was negligible; in fact, that evening (Friday), 2YA was at its best. This recalled experiments that I carried out in Taranaki in the years 1921-23. A single-wire aerial was erected 160ft. long, 70ft. high at the end near the set, and 15ft. high at the far end. This latter was earthed by means of connecting the wire to a length of galvanised water pipe of 8ft. and driven well into the ground. The set was connected in the usual manner. This arrangement was very satisfactory, and yielded louder signals. Unfortunately, the mast was a live gum tree, and in the heavy winds persisted in breaking the thread.

The next try-out was the use of the same length of aerial shunted by a variable condenser between the aerial and the ground, and a variable high resistance to ground at the low end. I had read experiments with a resistance in the Beverage Antenna. This aerial was only successful on certain stations. But connecting the aerial direct to the grid of the first valve, and the earth to the filament and shunting the condenser as above and eliminating the variable resistance, made the weak stations seem splendid. Shortly the writer hopes to erect a 40ft. Laker steel mast, using 12 insulated stay wires, the base of the mast supported by a 40,000 volt insulator—this latter had two petticoats broken and the Power Board had to discard. As several petticoats remained intact, it will make an ideal insulator. Four stay wires will be hard drawn copper, No. 14 gauge, and these will serve as the aerial, being led down the mast to the set. This umbrella type should prove A1. Should this latter come up to expectations I will gladly furnish details.

In regard to Mr. Pierce's system, were he to insert a good variable resistance in circuit with his various taps, there is little doubt that he would be able to balance the circuit. Under test, the earth in one part of the country, is, say, 1 ohm resistance. Except on rare occasions, anywhere within 100 yards of that spot will also test 1 ohm. A damp place is not always a good ground. Here in Arapuni, I have seen ordinary electric hand lamps not waterproof, burning under water, these latter becoming submerged before an electrician could remove them. We found on many occasions that river would not serve as an earth.—C. R. McDermott, Arapuni.

Some Suggestions for 1YA.

MAY I suggest (a) Exact standard time to be announced, not just "Station time"; (b) relays from other stations, for variety; (c) definite times for announcements, news, results, etc., say 7.30 p.m., 9 p.m. and 9.30 p.m.; (d) definite statement Saturday evening that from "going over" to Dixieland to closing time, only dance items will be given from 1YA; (e) definite statement at 7.30 p.m. of any postponement of lecture or special item? Best wishes for second year of "Radio Record".—W. H. Waddell.

[We understand in regard to the announcement of the time, every endeavour is made to state the correct time, and the station clocks are checked regularly every day by the scientific time signals broadcast from the Observatory at Wellington. The time

is introduced by an announcement that it is studio time, but this coincides with exact standard time. In regard to the broadcasting of news, it is contended that the company has adopted a scheme which is giving satisfaction, namely, the allotting of special half-hour sessions each evening from 7.15 to 7.45 p.m. in the case of Auckland for the purpose of broadcasting news items. In respect to the relay of dance music from Dixieland from 1YA, the orchestra at the Cabaret is co-operating with the station as fully as possible with a view to reducing to a minimum the intervals between dance numbers. The requirements of a cabaret, however, do not necessitate continuous music, and in the circumstances such intervals as are observed must be filled in by the station with the broadcasting of music or news items from the studio.—Ed.]

"Megohm" Appreciated.

WHILE renewing my subscription to your paper, I would like to take the opportunity of making a few comments on the work the "Radio Record" has done, and is doing, so ably. When I first sent in my subscription I expressed the opinion that your paper would fill a long vacant position. I am pleased to say it has come right up to my expectations in every way. I have been connected with wireless for eight or nine years, and although not one of the most ardent of "radio bugs" I have always kept more or less up-to-date with the advance of wireless both in New Zealand and elsewhere, so that for my purpose the general news of the "Record" has been very helpful to me. My spare time is very limited, and so I am not a very regular listener. Hence the programme portion is perhaps the least important to me, but when any item or event is particularly wanted it is very helpful to know just when it is coming off, without having to waste perhaps half the evening for it. In this way, I think the method of timing the items must be very much appreciated by all.

However, the most important section to me, and that to which I always turn first on opening the paper, is that conducted by "Megohm." I have built several of the components described at different times, generally with good success. When I have failed it has been owing to some alteration of my own, and I think "Megohm" is highly appreciated by many more people than who take the trouble to record their thanks.

I don't know whether you could arrange an article on "Screening" at some time, but as I am situated, one end of my aerial and my set is within 50 yards of one of the Lake Coleridge 11,000-volt lines, and I have often wondered just how much effect this has upon my reception. One thing is certain, that whatever kind of set I have used, and I have used a good many, I have only had fair results, and never anything outstanding, and so I have come to the conclusion that the power line is responsible. Otherwise my aerial is clear of all trees and buildings and situated about three-quarters of a mile from the Port Hills. The aerial is approximately at right angles to the power line, and no hum is evident at any time.—D. H. Lane (Christchurch).

"Megohm" will prepare an article on "Screening of Aerials," to appear at an early date.—Ed.]

Popular Music Wanted.

ON behalf of many listeners in this district, I can endorse the remarks of "Wanganui" in your issue of July 6 re the station orchestra. A perusal of this week's programme certainly shows that the orchestra is not overworked, and the promised half-hour of dinner music would certainly go a long way to popularise station 2YA, that and a more judicious balance of music by the orchestra. We are getting too much of the heavy classical music. Give us more light opera and dance music, and I am sure the Broadcasting Company will be catering for the majority of listeners; the only complaint I ever hear of the orchestra is too much classical music. Just one more comment. When will Station 2YA engage the services of a real expert to operate the transmitting station. The distortion of 2YA, the most powerful station in New Zealand, is shocking, and absolutely nerve-racking. Last week in this district it was a nightmare and spoilt all programmes. We will live in hopes that the honorary listeners will soon enlighten the Broadcasting Company. The transmission from 1YA and 3YA is miles ahead of 2YA. In this district it is always clear, although it does fade.—R. C., Ihurua.

Old Favourites Missed.

I HAVE much pleasure in stating that we derive many an enjoyable entertainment from 2YA. We have had our set since the beginning of last December. We miss some of the good singers, Miss Norah Green and Dr. Arthur Coe, whom we have not heard for quite a time. We also do not hear so many violin, cello, or flute solos, which come in very clearly. We think most of the items played by the orchestra are very good. The gramophone items played by orchestras do not come in very clearly, especially those with bass instruments. Anything in the nature of violin solos, trios, or singing, not choirs, come in well. Auckland and Christchurch fade, and lately Christchurch has been very mushy. We are very sorry to hear the number of licenses that had decreased and hope they will soon return to normal. We would not like to be without radio. In a country place one is in touch with the outside world.—G. B. Curnow (Koromiko).

"Through Booking" of Goods by Rail

Sending goods in bulk or parcels from any station of the North Island to any station of the South Island is very easily and economically done to-day by means of the Railway Department's reliable "through booking" system. The consignor is saved from all worry about shipping, and has the assurance of satisfactory service. It pays manufacturers, business men, farmers and others to take full advantage of the Railway Department's facilities for goods traffic.

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