

Notes and Comments

By "Switch"

AN old-time "pro" operator tells me that he believes that the cause of some of the Australian stations gradually going off in volume is the natural deterioration of the transmitting valves. He recalls that some stations burst into wonderful strength for a few weeks and then gradually drop back in volume. The transmitting valves in the Australian stations get a good thrashing during long hours, day and night, and it is only to be expected that they will diminish in efficiency before long. "The only thing to be said about it," remarks the old-timer, "is that the valves should be pensioned off at an earlier stage than at present." This suggests the idea that not a few complaints regarding the falling-off in reception by up-country listeners in New Zealand are due to deterioration of their valves. Radio valves, even of the best make, begin to drop in efficiency after about 1000 hours' actual use. "Switch" tested some valves a few days ago which had been

worked for approximately 1800 hours according to the owner's computation. The test showed an emission of only 20 per cent. (one was only 8 per cent.) in the case of the majority of the valves. These valves were promptly placed on the "retired" list, and a new set restored reception to its former efficiency.

SOME strange ideas regarding valves pervade the minds of some beginners. A new listener, the other day, asked me whether valves which had been on the dealer's shelves for some months were likely to have deteriorated! He obtained the notion from a published statement that dry batteries are subject to deterioration through being kept too long in a deal-

er's stock, which is, of course, quite true in respect to dry batteries.

THE next "big" thing in broadcasting will be in connection with the return flight to Australia of the Southern Cross. As it is to be a daylight affair New Zealand listeners will not be able to get the running report from the Australian broadcast stations until nightfall. This will be when the flyers are nearing their destination.

The description of the arrival of the Southern Cross in Australia, broadcast by either 2BL or 2FC, Sydney, should prove thoroughly interesting to New Zealand listeners, and if conditions are favourable a rebroadcast by 2YA, Wellington, would please many hundreds of crystal set and one-valve set owners.

IT would be exceedingly fortunate if Amalgamated Wireless can contrive to broadcast all reports of the flight from their short-wave station, 2ME, Sydney. The short-wave transmission would probably provide good reception in New Zealand throughout the day. The return flight of the Southern Cross, too, promises to prove more exciting than the flight to New Zealand, owing to the prevailing westerly winds at this time of the year, which mean head winds to the flyers.

THE Sunday afternoon broadcasts by 2YA, Wellington, are immensely popular during these drab days, and one hears nothing but praise of the type of records selected. There is excellent variety—vocal and instrumental, and a considerable proportion of listeners are glad to be rid of the eternal jazz and fox-trot stuff for one session anyhow.

INTERFERENCE from electrical leakages from power lines is still being experienced intermittently in the Wellington suburbs though the trouble is not so bad as during the midwinter. Some nights, at all events, the interference is serious enough to blot out all DX reception while it is raging.

THE up-to-date electro-dynamic loud-speaker requires to have one of its coils energised by either a six-volt "A" battery or from the electric mains. A Wellington listener obtained success by energising the coil of his electro-dynamic speaker by means of a small battery charger without any other gadgets. No hum was audible from the loud-speaker, although the electric supply came direct from the mains through the battery charger to the speaker.

DURING the recent Tasman flight the patients in those wards of the Wellington Hospital which are equipped with the broadcast listening installation had a royal time listening to the reports from 2YA, Wellington. The various relays by 2YA in connection with the visit of the flyers and Tom Heeney fairly delighted the patients in the Hospital.

NOW the Auckland people are emulating Wellington folks by inaugurating a fund to equip the Auckland Hospital with a broadcast receiving installation for the patients. The matter

is being taken up enthusiastically by the public in the northern city. Good progress is being made in Wellington in raising the necessary £700 to equip those wards in the hospital in which the installation has not yet been fitted.

A PROFITABLE method of raising money for the extension of the Wellington Hospital broadcast receiving installation is adopted at the Winter Show, now being held at Newtown. A huge block of coal is on view and the public are paying threepence for each estimate of the weight of the coal. The person who estimates nearest to the exact weight of the block of coal will be awarded it as the prize. All hours during the show the estimates are pouring in, many people buying not less than four chances. It is a worthy object, and good luck to the scheme.

A GUERNSEY (Channel Islands) amateur claims to receive 3LO (Melbourne) regularly on short waves. At 8 p.m. on Sunday evening he hears 3LO announcing that the time is 6 a.m. Monday, and he then listens to 3LO giving, orally, the news received in Morse from Rugby. This note was published in a Guernsey paper, got across to 3LO, was republished in their own organ, which was received in England.

IT is important that the liquid in a wet "B" battery should not be spilt on the case, or a conductive path will be formed which may result in leakage of electricity. Perfect insulation is essential with H.T. accumulators, as any leakage, however small, constitutes a continuous discharge, so that even if the current is microscopically small the results can be quite comparatively serious in a few weeks. Wet "B" batteries require very careful charging at the correct rate, and should not be entrusted to a "handyman" whose experience of charging is limited to the larger and more robust motor-car or "A" battery type of accumulator.

COLOURED prisoners in the Ohio (U.S.A.) state penitentiary, as well as others have their sets. Several negroes who migrated north when they thought they could secure work and big wages, have their sets, and invariably tune in Atlanta, Memphis, Chattanooga, Birmingham and other southern stations. Some prisoners prefer KWKH at Shreveport, La. That is the station whose owner is always in a fighting mood and ready to jump anybody, anywhere, any time. The prisoners say: "We love a fighter and that guy Henderson is sure a champ." Whenever we can get Shreveport, we never worry about what we are missing." Warden Thomas does not object to the men having their radio sets. He will tell you that they improve the morale of the men. "When they are listening in on their radio sets," said the Warden, "they are not hatching plots to escape or make trouble. And the worst punishment I can inflict upon an unruly prisoner is to take away his radio set."

"MARITANA," "Samson and Delilah," "Ivanhoe," "Le Roi la Dit," "Flying Dutchman," and "Jongleur de Notre Dame," are among the operas to be broadcast from the B.B.C. during the next twelve months.

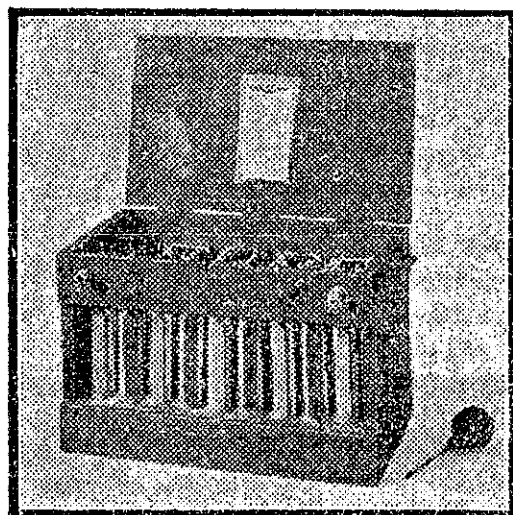
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