

Notes and Comments

By "Switch"

THE thousands of New Zealand licensees who listen nightly to the Australian broadcast stations will be interested in the news that the first meeting of the new Commonwealth Advisory Board has lately been held in Sydney. The purpose of the board is to exercise supervision over the provision of broadcast programmes, and to advise on the reconstruction of wireless broadcasting in Australia. A general policy was agreed upon which has been submitted to the Ministry before further steps are taken.

AN interesting use for the microphone is in connection with the testing of gear wheels for motor-cars. A special development of this application has been made by Professor Porter, head of the Physics Department of Syracuse University, U.S.A. The tester sits in a double-walled soundproof box and listens to the whirr of softly engaging gears picked up by the microphone and stepped-up through three stages of power amplification, whilst at the same time he watches the vibrating finger of a gigantic dial that measures the current consumed in reproducing the sound. A description states that small currents that whisper through the loudspeaker in hoarse static-like murmur reveal, by pitch and intensity, the most minute roughness on the surface of the gears as they glide over each other at a speed representing a car velocity of 40 miles per hour. Adjustment of the transmitting apparatus is very delicate, and care has to be taken that it does not pick up and reamplify its own sound or the very small vibrations that penetrate the test-house from the factory.

A WELLINGTON listener who has just returned from a tour of the North Island reports that reception of the Australian stations at places outside the capital is twice or even three times better than in Wellington. Wanganui, Patea, and New Plymouth, give extraordinary volume from Australian stations. On the East Coast several of the Yankee stations are heard nightly as soon as darkness sets in.

A FRIEND who is in the novice stage remarked recently: "I can't imagine how I would put in the evenings if my radio set were taken away from me. Nearly every evening I can get three of the New Zealand stations, and

it is very seldom that I am unable to bring in six or seven of the Australian stations on the loudspeaker. What an extraordinary fund of entertainment is obtainable from a £50 set and an annual license fee of 30s. And there are still thousands of people in Wellington who have not listened in with a first-class radio set."

THE Commonwealth Government is considering a proposal to establish a wireless telephone public service between Tasmania and the mainland. It is regarded as a much cheaper method than the cost of a submarine cable for telephone purposes, even if certain difficulties in connection with such a lengthy cable could be overcome.

HERE is the dictum of one of America's leading studio directors: "The rise and fall of the voice as in ordinary conversation must be avoided by the radio dramatic reader," says Howard Milholland, studio manager of KGO. "Tones over the air must be kept at an even volume, colour being brought to the readings by tempo and through the reader's own personality."

OLD SOL, who is held to be responsible for the static which interferes so frequently with long-distance radio reception, is to come under the scrutiny of a huge telescopic lens. This is the largest telescopic lens ever made in the United States, and, has been turned out by the Bureau of Standards, where glass makers have completed the delicate task of cutting a fifty-pound piece of glass from the two-ton disc recently cast in one of the bureau's laboratories for a telescope at Ohio Wesleyan University. Polishing the huge glass and giving it the proper parabolic surface will be the next stage of the development.

THE greatest radio chain ever linked for the broadcast of any event was assembled for the Republican notification ceremonies to Herbert C. Hoover on the night of August 11 at the Leland Stanford Junior University Stadium at Palo Alto, California. Re-

ports from the American Telephone and Telegraph Company long lines department, the National Broadcasting Company, the Columbia System, and companies which own and operate short-wave stations indicate that 107 or more broadcasters throughout the country were working in unison. Short-wave transmitters heard consistently at the Antipodes and intervening points were expected to carry the ceremonies to the entire civilised world, providing weather conditions were favourable.

DURING the nation-wide broadcast of Mr. Hoover's speech more than 88,000 miles of programme and telephone co-ordinating wires and standby circuits for emergency use were in use. There were 46,000 miles of wire to carry the actual words of the speaker and the music; 22,200 miles more of telegraph lines to co-ordinate the network at the last minute and supervise its operation during the broadcast period of one and one-half hours, and about 20,000 miles of programme wires, balanced and prepared for emergency use in case an interruption in the main lines occurred. There were 600 men in charge of the lines all over the country, who were prepared to shift the circuit around any trouble point and save the programme. The voices of the speakers and the music were kept at a suitable "level" in the wire lines by 264 repeaters—valve amplifiers—placed along the lines.

THE cost of the record greatest radio broadcast network ever assembled, that which was linked together recently in the United States for Judge Joseph F. Rutherford, president of the International Bible Students' Association, was announced by his representative as "approximately 50,000 dollars (£10,000), paid by a multitude of Christians scattered throughout America." Ninety-six broadcasters carried the address from the Coliseum on the Michigan State Fair Grounds near Detroit.

REFERRING to the effect on radio by the arrival of the annual shower of meteors each September, Robert H. Marriott, Past President of the U.S.A. Institute of Radio Engineers, said: "The arrival of the meteors in the earth's upper atmosphere at great speed might result in what engineers call 'ionisation by friction or impact,' thus causing the Heaviside layer to be elevated or lowered. This condition naturally should be noticed on the short-wave lengths but not to any extent on the broadcast or longer radio waves. The phenomena is altogether likely to pass entirely unnoticed by millions of radio listeners."

AT Southampton recently a man was fined one hundred pounds for smuggling wireless valves into the United Kingdom.

THE Norwegian railways have been experimenting with short-wave wireless transmitters, with a view to providing reliable emergency communication in case of a telegraphic breakdown.

ROUMANIA'S first broadcasting station is to be erected at Bucharest before the end of the year.

AN "electric set," according to the Radio Manufacturers' Association of U.S.A. standard nomenclature, is a radio receiver operating from the electric light line, without using batteries. If it employs tubes which obtain filament or heater current from an a.c. line without the use of rectifying devices, but with built-in tube rectifier for plate and grid voltages, it is an "a.c. tube electric set." If it uses current supplied by a d.c. line it is a "d.c. tube electric set." If it is designed to be operated from batteries it is a "battery-operated set." If the latter is connected from a power unit operating from the electric light line and supplying filament and plate potentials to the tubes, it is a "socket-powered set."

PERMITS for the construction of two radio transmitting stations of 10,000 watts each, one in New York and the other in Chicago, and licenses for experimental operation on three short-wave channels, have been granted to the Universal Wireless Communication Company by the Radio Commission as the first step in a plan to set up a national radio communication network as a public utility. The call letters of the New York station will be 2XQ, and of the Chicago station 9XC. The short-wave channels assigned for experimental operation are 2140, 4280, and 8650 kilocycles.

THERE is a rift in the lute of new-found accord between Sir Thomas Beecham and broadcasting. The bringing together of the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Imperial Opera League went well up to a point. Where difficulty is being experienced is in connection with the claim of the British Broadcasting Company to control Sir Thomas. Savoy Hill takes its stand on the ground that where its money goes, or rather where listeners' money goes, there should be corresponding and predominant control. It is understood that in artistic work Sir Thomas Beecham will not tolerate any interference from Savoy Hill. He must have a free hand. The resultant situation is piquant in the extreme. Without the British Broadcasting Corporation bang goes the imperial opera scheme. With the British Broadcasting Corporation Sir Thomas is cramped. It is rumoured that Lord Beaverbrook is among the little group trying to patch up a "via media."

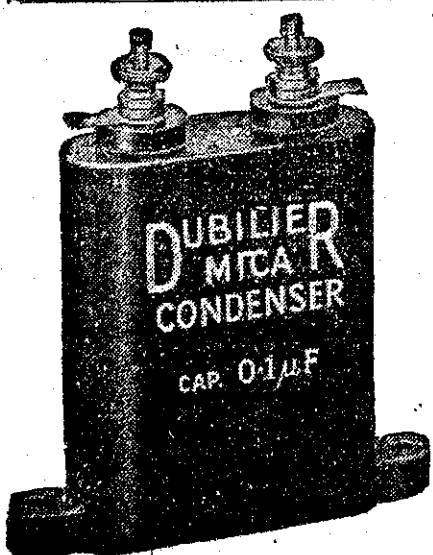
REGULAR wireless time signals were first transmitted by America in January, 1906, from the Navy Department station at Arlington.

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