

# Notes and Comments

BY  
"SWITCH"

THE Sunday afternoon gramophone concerts by 2YA, Wellington, have brought to light an increasing interest in the selection of the items. A gramophone enthusiast claimed to "Switch" the other day pride of place among exponents of the "Prologue" to "Pagliacci" for Laurence Tibbett, the Californian baritone. His record of this operatic number is said to be the premier H.M.V. effort of 1927. In his own words, "Switch's" informant stated "Tibbett has the richest baritone voice of the purest and most even quality I have yet heard from the disc." This critic said he thought some of the Sunday items were far below the average public taste.

A WELLINGTON city business man who is a discriminating critic of broadcasting and music stopped "Switch" in the G.P.O. the other night to tell him how much he enjoys the Sunday afternoon concerts from 2YA, Wellington. "There is no session from the local station to compare with the Sunday afternoon concert," he said. "Owing to the electrical method of reproduction and the fact that I use a crystal detector I get the effect of the gramophone artists being actually in the studio. I prefer the pick of the world's talent to local performers."

WELLINGTON listeners who sit up late may be able to hear 6WF, Perth, during the next winter. The Australian Government have purchased 6WF and will carry on the station till the Government's plan for taking over all the "A" class stations is completed. 6WF at present operates on such a long wavelength that the ordinary set in vogue in New Zealand cannot tune it. The probabilities are that the wavelength of 6WF will be reduced to within the standard wave band.

"R.T.S." (Christchurch) sends details of a method of overcoming the interference on the short-waves experienced by a Wellington listener, who, as mentioned in these columns recently, cannot eliminate 2YA, Wellington. The particulars have been passed on, and if they are a success publicity will be given to them.

COINCIDENCE occurred in connection with the paragraph in last week's "Radio Record" which

appreciated. Personally, the writer was rather disappointed to find no carols from 2YA in the early morning of Christmas Day, for last year this early morning Christmas music was very impressive.

THE unsettled weather seems to have interfered with reception in general, and this can be taken as one of the worst summers on record for all-round reception. Even the New Zealand stations have been patchy, but strangely enough, 2YA is always found with wonderful volume and clarity in the afternoons. At night there is a different story to tell. The "Aussies" also have had "fit" and starts, but on Friday night last were heard with great gusto.

mentions the habit of the mason bee which, on capturing a spider, paralyzes it and stores it up as food for its young. A Wellington listener's son showed the writer a large black spider which he had rescued from a mason bee. The spider, although quite paralysed, was manifestly alive, and on being placed in a bottle of spirits gave just the slightest reaction with its limbs.

THE inventor is an individual who should not be lightly discouraged, but when he comes along with a "static eliminator at a cost of a few shillings" it is time to reach for one's shotgun. A budding Marconi approached the writer recently with such an allurement, and a try-out on "Switch's" equipment was reluctantly agreed to by the writer. It was the same old story—a reduction of static was obtained only by a corresponding reduction in signal strength. The inventor was not discouraged, however, for he departed with an undertaking to perfect his idea!

"LISTENERS' TALES" and "fishermen's tales" are now regarded as synonymous expressions. A Wellington listener was enthusing the other day on the "good loudspeaker strength" with which he brought in 2BL, Sydney, on the previous evening for the entertainment of a few guests. "Switch" was sufficiently curious to question one of the guests whom he met later. The "good loudspeaker strength" as interpreted by the said guest was faint audibility, ten feet from the loudspeaker! The truth is that the Australians have been under a cloud for several weeks. "J.L." (Hastings), writing in last week's "Radio Record" tersely reports "Aussies inaudible," and we accept his word.

QUITE a number of Wellington listeners mention having lately received 2GB, Sydney (316 metres) at greater strength than 2BL, Sydney, and 2FC, Sydney, on some evenings. This has also been observed by the writer, and he has frequently preferred to tune in 2GB, when it is at its best, than to pursue the other Australians. 2GB employs only 3000 watts power as compared with 5000 watts, the power of 2BL and 2FC. 2GB was the first Australian broadcast station to embody crystal-control of its wavelength, and is the only Sydney station so equipped.

LISTENERS residing in the Mount Victoria area are again being troubled with some kind of man-made electrical interference. It has not been very constant, but when it breaks loose interference is severe from about 371 metres downwards, and on the shorter wavelengths it increases in intensity until it fairly roars in. There is almost continuous interference on the shorter wavelengths, although of a mild character, from a pulsating noise, in the same area.

VARIOUS radio friends endorse the statement published in these columns recently regarding the unsatisfactory quality of the tone obtained

from carefully constructed exponential horns. If "R.R." (City), "S.N.G." (Petone) and "Diaphragm" (Kilbirnie) tested various units they would probably find one that would suit the acoustical properties of their home-built exponentials. So far the best results heard by "Switch" were obtained from an American unit specially designed for exponentials.

AN enthusiastic advocate for gramophone broadcasts writes: "I am pleased to observe the recent advocacy of the inclusion of some of Alessandro Valente's tenor records in the programmes from 2YA, Wellington. He is a recently discovered Italian operatic star who promises to succeed Caruso, and, owing to his voice being electrically recorded I believe his items are superior to Caruso's. Two discs of Valente's voice have been released. They comprise one 'La Tosca' solo, one 'Pagliacci' solo, and the other disc comprises two excerpts from the last Puccini opera, 'Turandot.' He was the first to record 'Turandot' tenor solos. All his records are accompanied by a magnificent Italian operatic grand orchestra."

BROADCAST station KGO Oakland, California, formerly heard far and wide in New Zealand, in the good old golden age of reception, and now picked up by a privileged few, has at last put its finger on a reverberation in its studios which has caused no end of trouble to the station staff. This particular resound seemed to trace itself to the piano, but even after several exchanges had been made the elusive noise remained. An expert piano tuner trying to catch the noise finally summoned all the KGO pianists. Eva Garcia, the station's stellar

artist, was found guilty. Miss Garcia no longer wears beads, for sensitive microphones picked up a note in pitch with them and sent the vibrations over the air!

ONE can now tune in the Australian stations, faint as they are, with very little interference from howling valves. Apparently those who are responsible for the howling nowadays soon realise that the Australian stations are impossible, and after a few minutes' vain endeavour to tune them in close down for the night. If static could be induced to take nights off, also, things would be much more endurable.

THE most disappointed people owing to the poorness of reception in New Zealand this summer are the radio traders and purchasers of high-priced receiving sets. One trader informed "Switch" that he had lost the sale of several sets because they were unable to bring in the Australian stations with sufficient volume to satisfy his prospective clients during this summer. Beginners are not disposed to accept the true explanation that reception from across the Tasman was much below that of the average summer.

ONE of the "old-timers"—a broadcast listener of the 1923 vintage—remarked to the writer that he does not remember the Australian stations being so consistently weak since he first went in for broadcast listening. This summer, he said, filled him with astonishment. He has heard six New Year's celebrations broadcast from Australia, and this year's reception of these celebrations was not one-third as loud as the worst he had previously listened to.

## Railways Cheaper for Families

The Railway Department carries parents and ALL their children under 16 years of age for the price of three adult second class return fares. Learn all about this big concession.

Full particulars from any Stationmaster,  
Central Booking Office, Passenger Agent, or  
District Manager.