

Notes and Comments

BY
"SWITCH"

THE ALLAN WILKIE CO'S broadcast from the Grand Opera House, Wellington, last Friday evening, was an outstanding success. Every word of the two scenes of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" was heard distinctly by "Switch," who must compliment 2YA's technical staff for the excellence of the relay.

CIRCUMSTANCES prevented the writer from attending the New Zealand swimming championships at the Te Aro Baths last Saturday, but a view of the baths was obtainable from his balcony. The writer's loudspeaker reproduced the 2YA broadcast of the swimming events, and so it was interesting to see what was happening while listening to a very complete description by radio.

THE enterprise of 2YA, Wellington, in having its own reporter to "cover" the big 3-mile swim in Wellington Harbour for the Kellerman Cup, was much appreciated. It was made possible for 2YA to broadcast a description of the race before the first newspaper reporting the swim was selling on the street. The 2YA report was thorough, and had quite a professional touch. This is the sort of enterprise which makes broadcasting popular.

"SWITCH" has a bouquet to throw at the director of 3YA, Christchurch, for the "old-time" night last week. This is the kind of programme which even the younger generation enjoy.

THE Rev. Frank Gorman, the "Singing Parson" who appeared on the vaudeville stage in Wellington, some years ago, and also toured in the drama, "The Silence of Dean Maitland," is now broadcasting from 3LO, Melbourne. He is singing anything from jazz to grand opera. He has as a partner Miss Sadie McDonald, who sings well, and is a gifted violinist.

THE transmission by 2YA, Wellington, has been super-excellent lately, the tone and volume being all that could be desired. Still, "Switch" had to listen to complaints from two listeners, who said that the tone of 2YA was wretched. An inspection of the grumblers' sets was made. In one case, the "C" battery was tested, and found to be exhausted. In the other case, no "C" battery was used at all, although, the type of valve and "B" battery voltage required $4\frac{1}{2}$ volts bias.

LISTENERS in and around Wellington have lately been obtaining a fair amount of entertainment from the Australian stations after our own have closed down at nights. The loudest is still 2BL, Sydney, with 2FC, Sydney, and 2GB, Sydney, third. Of the Japanese, "Switch" receives JOHK with the greatest volume. Static has been mild, considering the time of the year.

WITH the approach of autumn, Wellington broadcast listeners will be turning their thoughts to long-distance reception. Distant stations once located should be "logged," so that they can be found again without much twisting and twirling of dials. Many multivalve sets have dials on which the call signs of various stations can be pencilled. This method is the best, but those who have dials upon which it is not possible to write, can use a note-book for a log.

THE pursuit of long-distance stations has its attraction and few listeners with multi-valve sets do not sometimes engage in this diversion. One of the main difficulties in finding long-distance stations is the phenomenon of fading. On some nights many stations have long cycles of fading, and if one tunes on to the wavelength of a station previously "logged," it requires patience to hang on until sufficient time has elapsed for it to recover from a protracted fade.

SOME listeners are obsessed with the desire to construct accessories for their sets where it is not practicable or profitable to do so. A listener showed the writer a letter from a friend, who desired data for making a "B" battery charger, and also the correct mixture for the powder for inserting in the distilled water of the charger. These chargers can be purchased complete for about 15s., and the boracic powder for same goes with them. Various attempts made locally to substitute for the proper powder commercial boracic powder and certain mixtures, have proved a failure.

ANOTHER Wellington enthusiast has spent much time endeavouring to construct an electric gramophone pick-up, but although he displayed considerable ingenuity, it turned out a failure when tested, in comparison with a commercial article. The pleasure some folk obtain from constructional work compensates them for the time and patience expended,

but there is a good deal of avoidable disappointment, which is the result of attempting the impossible.

A FEW years ago, some Wellington "experimenters" wound their own audio transformers, and rather good jobs they made of them. These home-made transformers were better than most of the imported articles, but since then commercial manufacturers have made wonderful strides in the construction of audio transformers. The writer chanced to hear an old-time home-made audio transformer pitted against one of the latest imported transformers. Various frequencies were checked up, and the one-time efficient home-made article proved sadly inefficient as compared with the high-class imported article. How time changes things!

IF any listener desires to test the "A" and "B" voltages, his valves are getting, the following should prove interesting:—The voltmeter used to show whether the filament voltage to each valve is correct, should be connected across the two F terminals of the valve socket. The meter to measure the plate voltage on the detector valve should be connected between the "B" terminal on the primary of the transformer, and the filament positive lead. If the connections are made correctly, a multi-reading meter may be used. Such meters are available. There will be little current drain by the filament meters, but after obtaining a reading with the plate voltmeter, it should be cut out of the circuit.

A STUBBORN howling in a friend's loudspeaker puzzled him for days. He tested everything in the circuit of his set, excepting his dry "B" batteries. He was advised to put a voltmeter across them after they had been operating for a few minutes. He protested that the batteries could not be run down, as they were only two months in use. However, he yielded ultimately, and found they were beyond human aid! Of course, they should have lasted three or four times longer if originally efficient, but they were of a "cheap" make.

POWER-LINE leakages around Wellington are now not often sufficiently severe to interfere with long-distance reception, but there are still two or three areas in which they still break out at times. The duration of these leakages is, fortunately, seldom longer than ten minutes or thereabouts, and may be heard only once or twice in an occasional evening.

JACK ELLIOTT, the English champion boxer, now in Melbourne, having been persuaded by his opponents in recent fights to take a temporary rest from the ring, he has devoted his spare time to de-

scribing the Melbourne Stadium events. He has a distinctive style and an Oxford accent, and it is most refreshing to hear this sort of thing: "Dear me, how these two fellows hate each other! There will be murder done here to-night. There's a blow for you! This man will knock the other fellow's head clean off his shoulders. What? No, his head is still on. He missed, or I'm sure he would have killed the other poor chap." Yet, while this may be "refreshing," it is not a good way of describing a boxing contest, and we New Zealanders would not enjoy it, even when expressed with an Oxford accent.

LET the aerial down periodically, and clean the soot from the insulators. Soot is carbon, and is a good conductor. Don't expect a frame or loop aerial to work on a crystal set. And make sure that your earth connection is really so. Often a small fixed condenser of .0001 mfd capacity, in series with the aerial lead, will improve selectivity, and it cannot do any harm. Make adequate provision for the earthing efficiently (outside the building) of an outside aerial when a storm is in the vicinity. Do not be scared that your aerial is an attraction to lightning. On the contrary, a properly-earthed aerial is a certain protection to a house during a thunderstorm. Remember that all around you are overhead power lines and telephone wires which are seldom known to suffer from lightning discharges.

DO not run your aerial over a public highway, because the authorities will assuredly demand its removal. Never erect over power lines or telephone lines. If a gale brings your aerial down not only will there be a firework display but it will cost you good money. There is no need to use very heavy insulators—use rather a string of smaller ones. At the same time, do not forget that insulation of the aerial is of paramount importance. Include in the supports of the aerial a spring at each end (of the spring mattress variety), especially if a tree supports the aerial at one or both ends. A balance weight on the aerial halyard will keep the aerial taut under all weather conditions by allowing for contraction and expansion of the rope. A clothes line wire halyard is the best.

A New South Wales listener, writing to the press, places the position very aptly with reference to some people's growlings. He says:—"The majority of people with decent radio sets are quite satisfied with the programmes as they stand, and it appears to me as if most of the complaints come from people who are the owners of worthless sets or are too ignorant to realise the difficulties of arranging a programme for some weeks ahead. If they would only stop to think that the programmes are arranged to suit the requirements of thousands of listeners, and no two persons' tastes are alike, they would realise how egotistical they are."

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