

Short-wave Jottings

MR. A. P. MORRISON (Brooklyn) writes:—In recent reports I have stated that the new call-sign of 2ME was PK2ME, which at different times I had heard operating in Australia, but Mr. Sellens told me it was VK2ME, and since listening to them I have taken particular notice of the call, and found my mistake. VK2ME it is.

Most of the short-wave stations this last week have come in with good strength, with the exception of PCJ, Holland, last Saturday, 16th. He could not be heard at all by me. The following items of interest to SW listeners are from the last edition of "Radio News," "Old Faithful," of the short waves: Short-wave broadcasting, though a novelty to most of the general public as yet, is nevertheless practically as old as broadcasting on the present "regular" band which centres somewhere below 360 metres. As with the latter, station KDKA, whose transmitters at East Pittsburgh, Pa., was the pioneer and still a leader.

In the spring of 1922, only a few months after KDKA had commenced systematic broadcasting to the public on a longer wave, H. P. Davis, vice-president of the Westinghouse Electric Manufacturing Co., the owner of the station, conceived the idea of using radio relays to link together stations for simultaneous broadcasts. Dr. Frank Conrad, the technical authority to whom has been entrusted the direction of the necessary engineering development, was convinced at once that the short-waves (then dismissed contemptuously to the realm of amusement, rather than experiment) would offer a solution.

An experimental short-wave station, KDPM, was put in operation at Cleveland to work with KDKA. And in the following year at Hastings, Neb., KFKX undertook a regular schedule of rebroadcasting KDKA's nightly programme as transmitted and received on short waves.

It was not long before the success obtained warranted an attempt to relay a programme for international broadcasting; this was accomplished on December 31, 1923, when a New Year's Eve programme was transmitted by KDKA and successfully rebroadcast at Manchester, England. On December 12, 1924, the regular short-wave programmes were picked up and rebroadcast at Johannesburg, South Africa, at a distance of nearly 9000 miles, and in the following month KDKA was received and rebroadcast in Melbourne, Australia, thus spanning the diameter of the world. Each of the feats set a record in international radio telephone work.

Into the White Wastes.

SINCE 1923 the short-wave transmitter of KDKA has been engaged in a work which exceeds in human interest, undoubtedly, its many scientific and engineering achievements—that of keeping in touch with civilisation its pioneers in the frozen Arctic. It began with the distribution by the Canadian Westinghouse Co. of receivers to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; now traders, explorers, missionaries, and others rely upon the messages thus sent to them for news and entertainment, especially in the midday night of the northern winter.

In fact, many lives have been saved through the directions sent out from this station for the organisation of relief expeditions at posts capable of aiding isolated parties whose plight would not otherwise have been known in time. At present KDKA is transmitting also "Far South" programmes for the benefit of Commander Byrd's expedition; these transmissions represent a most carefully-prepared series of distance programmes. To reinforce the service of KDKA, the Westinghouse stations WBZ, Springfield, Mass., and KYW, Chicago, are also equipped with short-wave equipment, which is kept ready for use.

MY log for the week is as follows:—

Thursday, February 14.

7.30 p.m.: DHC, Germany, was heard calling Sydney; a little later VK2ME was heard to reply; strength from both stations was good. DHC was a little stronger than Sydney; he asked 2ME to wait a moment because they had developed an interference at their receiving station, and that they wished to make adjustments to their aerial. It proved afterwards that this interference was too great, so the test was not carried any further.

9.30 p.m.: A Dutch station carried out a duplex telephony test with ANE, Java. The Dutch station was operating on 16 metres, modulation and strength were good from both stations; strength varied from R6 to 8. As regards call of station in Holland, I heard it a good many times sounding like PCK; if that is the correct call, he is a new one to me. 10.30: RFM, Russia was heard at R8. Some good music.

Amateurs heard, 3AF testing with 2AX, Palmerston North.

Friday, February 15.

6.30 a.m. I looked for 7LO, South Africa, but failed to find him. I have not heard him for a good many mornings now. 7 a.m. Big Ben was heard to strike at 5SW. Afterwards a lecture was delivered on religion; strength

has improved somewhat this last few mornings, and on this particular morning he was R7 to 8.

7 p.m.: D.H.C. Nauen, Germany, were conducting another test with VK2ME, Sydney; both stations at R8 to 9. This test concluded at 8.5 p.m., New Zealand time.

8.10, PHL, Holland, was heard with music, strength varying from R6 to 8. Fading was in evidence. One fault with this station, is that he does not give his station call frequently enough. Sometimes he plays as many as six items of music before he announces. 8.45: 20A, Lower Hutt, testing on 70 to 80 metres, band strength, R8, but modulation could be touched up a little, but for all that he is quite good. 10 p.m.: Japanese station on 30 metres strength R.6 to 7; call, I did not get.

Saturday, February 16.

Did not listen-in in the morning.

3.15 p.m.: A station was heard on 22 to 23 metres. When first hearing him, I thought it was W2XAD. After listening for some time, I heard California mentioned. I thought this must be Mr. Sellens's friend of Saturday, February 2, K.G.O. The next announcement I heard "Station KGO, California." The next item was by an Italian operatic singer, I listened to him for one hour. Strength was not great, so there was much said that I did not catch. At 3.15 p.m. he was R6 to 7, but to me he decreased in strength, and could not be heard after 4.20 p.m. As Mr. Sellens says, nothing was mentioned re these s.w. stations when he heard them, and such was the case with me.

This station, KGO, California, is one of the pioneer stations of America on its broadcast band. I remember, years ago, this station was one of the wonder stations. At that time I was in the Wairarapa, and I could bring him in as clear as a bell on one valve, transmitting dance music from St. Francis Hotel, California, but now he is not heard so much in New Zealand. The reason, I suppose, is too many transmitters around him. At any rate we hope his s.w. transmitter will be heard in New Zealand at good strength later on. His s.w. plant is now rated at 10,000 watts.

5 p.m.: W2XG, Rocky Point, was heard on word test. R8, on 33 metres.

5.15 p.m.: Station on 52 metres, with music, probably WLW, Cincinnati, strength R5 to 6.

9.30 p.m.: DOR, Germany, was heard on 41 metres, with his usual long talk. R7 to 8.

10.30 p.m.: JOAK, Japan, was heard on 37 metres, with some of his Japanese operatic music. R7.

Sunday, February 17.

3.30 p.m.: W2XAF was heard, but at that time strength was only R5 to 6, so did not bother with him.

3.35 p.m.: KDKA was tuned in with surprising volume for that time of the afternoon, and was transmitting dance music from William Penn Hotel, Pittsburgh. This concluded at 4 p.m., New Zealand time. Afterwards KDKA called the Byrd expedition, asking for

a report on reception of ex-Governor Hughes's speech (which was probably broadcast before I tuned KDKA in), but numerous difficulties were experienced by KDKA in hearing either of the s.w. transmitters of the expedition, namely WFBT and WFAT, operating on 33 metres. KDKA first tried to receive them at the control room at that station, but were not successful, so asked WFBT to give another long call in a series of dashes, and then KDKA. He would listen for them at their receiving station, situated five miles from Pittsburgh. They failed to receive a satisfactory message, so KDKA stated they had 40 to 50 messages for the expedition and that each message was numbered, first message number one, and so on, and stated if any message was not received on account of fading by them, they could call up their receiving station and the message would be given again. Five messages were given, and then KDKA called for WFBT (City of New York), to call the receiving station again, but was not successful again, so carried on with messages.

Before KDKA finished with the Byrd Expedition he called a Mr. Ross Skinner on board the Franconia (this gentleman is on a long voyage, I believe), and read a message to him, and then Mr. Skinner's sister, Nora, spoke to him for a little while. KDKA then carried on with the expedition messages, and before closing down at 5.25 p.m., New Zealand time, he asked WFBT to call the receiving station on 22 metres, and give them a report. KDKA was 100 per cent. readable with increasing signal strength.

7 p.m.: The 41-metre station DOR, Germany, was heard. This station gives its call the plainest of any foreign station I have heard, and anyone tuning him in while he is on these talks and pausing as he does would probably mistake him for the other German station, RSR. His strength is always good R8 to 9.

9.30 p.m.: Another Jap. was heard on 35 metres, but his transmission was very noisy, R6 to 7. 9.45: RFM Rps—(Continued on page 31.)

Exide

BATTERIES

MEAN DEPENDABILITY.

Installed at 2YA Wellington.

All sizes. From 9/- each.

EXIDE SERVICE STATION

79 Kent Terrace, WELLINGTON.

COMRIE, SMITH & WARDLE LTD.

'Phone 23-323. 77 KENT TERRACE, WELLINGTON.

MOTOR REPAIR SPECIALISTS.

All Makes of Radio Batteries, and Motor Accessories Stocked.

Whippet Service Station.

Authorized Chevrolet Station.

Printed and published for the New Zealand Radio Publishing Company at the registered office, Wakefield Street, Wellington, of the Wellington Publishing Company, by Archibald Sando, of 47 Freyberg Street, Lyall Bay, FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 1929.