

# Notes and Comments By "SWITCH"

WITH the arrival of autumn, broadcast listening is coming into its own again. The Australian stations, particularly 2BL and 2FC, Sydney, are giving New Zealand listeners abundant variety, although, of late, there has been too much talk-stuff. Not infrequently one may drop 2BL because of a playlet being put across and when 2FC is tuned in there is some man giving out a travel talk or a lecturette.

THE writer has heard several Wellington listeners discussing the whistling competition held by 2BL, Sydney, on a recent evening. There were five entrants, all males. All except one sang a song and refrain, and then whistled the refrain. A prize of two guineas was awarded the listener who guessed or "most nearly guessed" the order of merit of the competitors as adjudged by public vote. While two of the competitors whistled only fairly well, all sang excellently. There is an inclination on the part of whistlers to add embellishments, of a kind, to the actual music. A truly artistic whistler has no need to add variations to create effect.

THE re-broadcast of 2XAF, Schenectady, United States, by 2YA, Wellington, on a recent Sunday afternoon, was about the best of its kind "Switch" has heard from 2YA for a long while. The American short-wave station was transmitting dance music by a very fine jazz band, and the music itself had a haunting melody—possibly one of the latest American dance hits. The reproduction was loud and there was a minimum of the characteristic "surging" of short-wave reception. If only for the sake of owners of crystal sets, "Switch" compliments the 2YA people upon their success, which was relished also by valve-set owners.

"SWITCH" submits that during the ensuing winter the New Zealand stations might do well by rebroadcasting occasional items from the Australian stations after they have been taken over by the Commonwealth Government. Possibly the Commonwealth Government would grant permission for an occasional re-broadcast by the New Zealand stations. The Australian stations will be on higher power after June, and a re-broadcast such as 2YA gave us on the occasion of the return to Australia of the "Southern Cross" would be much enjoyed by all.

WELLINGTON'S "great voice," 2YA, faced one of the severest north-westerly gales we have had for years last week, and no wonder first the lead-in and then the station aerial were carried away. "Switch" knows of several Wellington listeners' aerials which also come down that night. One listener was blaming 2YA for losing volume long before the accident at the station. It occurred to him, however, to have a look at his own aerial, and when he went outside in the dark it caught him under the nose somewhat painfully.

AN up-country moving-picture show proprietor who was visiting Wellington the other day remarked casually and confidentially to "Switch" that "of course, you know, 2YA has an unpleasant metallic sound. This broadcasting can't touch gramophone reproduction." The movie man was not a listener-in, but had heard 2YA from neighbours' outfits. "Switch" explained that the best transmission was frequently ruined at the receiving end by poor loudspeakers, improper battery potential, unsatisfactory valves, transformers, etc. He let the movie man hear 2YA with a high-grade outfit, and the latter gentleman exclaimed, "This is more than reproduction. This is the real thing!"

TAKEN on the whole, the Wellington radio traders take an interest in ensuring good reproduction from the wares they sell; they realise that broadcasting as a popular pastime is bound to suffer in repute by mutilated reproduction. Loudspeakers which have failed to make good have been dropped, and rubbishy transformers and valves are seldom seen nowadays. "Switch" made a recent round of in-

spection among the radio shops lately, and noted the high quality of accessories now stocked. What a contrast with the class of goods on sale in some shops four or five years ago!

A BUDDING young radio inventor called on "Switch" recently to show him a single-valve set which he had built up, which certainly performed astonishingly but required careful handling and is forbidden for use on an outdoor aerial by the Government regulations. The young inventor, however, was somewhat crestfallen when it was shown that his outfit embodied the well-exploited autoplex circuit which he had unconsciously copied. As he wanted a circuit for use with his out-door aerial, he has discarded his "invention" and is now making a good job of a two-valve Browning-Drake circuit set.

A RADIO trader explained his views on the subject of poor reproduction to "Switch." "The majority of offending equipments," he said, "are home-made. The average home-Constructor never gives any thought to matching the impedance of his last valve with that of his loudspeaker. He never considers the characteristics of the valve or the loudspeaker, although he may buy high-class articles. Little wonder, then, that he gets poor tone. Further, he thinks any old 'C' battery potential is good enough, providing it is within a few volts of the correct mark. As a matter of fact, some valves are particular to within 1½ volts 'C' battery potential if they are to give the best tone."

A VALVE damaged by rough handling has been shown to the writer. It was jerked out of a tight-fitting socket by pulling on the glass bulb. This not only loosened the glass from the base of the valve, but snapped the small wires running to the filament. When valves are being inserted, or taken out of a valve socket, the base of the valve should be grasped and not the glass bulb.

A WELLINGTON listener has asked "Switch" whether he has been able to hear 5CL, Adelaide, lately, as the former thinks the sensitivity of his valves has decreased. As a matter of fact, it is several weeks since "Switch" has had even faint loudspeaker reception from the South Australian station. Possibly, as the winter comes on the station in the "Holy City" will return to its former state of reception.

OF late, Wellington listeners have found both 3LO and 3AR, Melbourne, very unsatisfactory. On a few nights when the hour is late, they yield weak loudspeaker reception, but this is marred by intense fading. On many evenings they are only just audible at times, and do not seem to improve even towards midnight. Peculiar atmospheric conditions seem to be the cause of these vagaries.

THE Australian stations, 2FC and 2BL, Sydney; 3LO, Melbourne, and 4QG, Brisbane, although rated at 5000

watts, have nothing approaching that power according to the New Zealand rating, which applies to the actual power in the stations' aerials. The power of the above-mentioned Australian stations is somewhere about 1500 watts—less than a third the power of 2YA, Wellington. Considering that the Sydney stations have to span about 1200 miles to reach Wellington, our listeners do exceedingly well to obtain such good average reception. The Brisbane station has to span about 50 miles across land before crossing the Tasman.

THE meetings of the Wellington Radio Society are almost invariably attended poorly, even when most attractive demonstrations and lectures are on the programme. The stay-at-home spirit is deeply embedded in the Wellington listeners, and scarcely anything will entice the average listener to a radio meeting. The recent meeting was attended by only about a dozen.

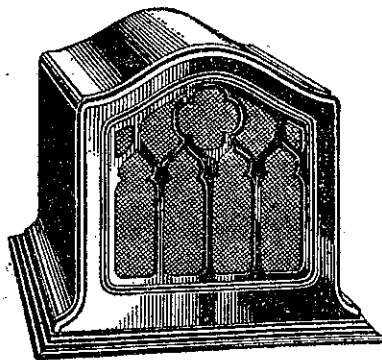
THE paper by Mr. Harry Hardcastle on the method of establishing international electrical standards and their meanings, read during his unavoidable absence, was much appreciated at last week's meeting of the Wellington Radio Society. Mr. Hardcastle was out of town on holiday, but he thoughtfully kept faith with the society by forwarding his carefully-prepared and instructive paper.

POWER-LINE leakages were the subject of complaint at the meeting of the Wellington Radio Society. "Switch" learns that, notwithstanding the complaints voiced at the society's meeting, the P. and T. Department's district radio inspector had not received any complaints. The Department's inspectors will readily respond to any SOS, and, in fact, are just as active as ever in the matter, having been dealing with causes of interference which they, themselves, discovered.

NEW ZEALAND having reverted to "standard time" last Sunday morning, we are now only 1½ hours ahead of Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, as against 2 hours during the operation of the Daylight Saving Act. Wellington listeners already notice an improvement in reception of the Australian stations, the "night-time effect" being a half-an-hour earlier.

AT the last meeting of the Amateur Radio Society of Wellington, a proposal to secure a permanent club-room at, say, £1 per week, and to increase the membership fee received little encouragement. It was mentioned that Christchurch had such an arrangement for some years past, and the speaker urged that the Wellington society should be able to emulate the Christchurch society. Something in Wellington seems to militate against the social spirit which obtains in each of the other centres. The comparative inaccessibility of the suburban areas in which the majority of listeners reside may have some influence in this matter.

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