

Notes and Comments

By
"SWITCH"

MR. J. H. OWEN, ex-president of the Amateur Radio Society of Wellington, is back again after a wonderful tour through Canada, Europe and England. He regards the broadcasting in Great Britain as the finest in the world; both in the quality of transmission and the nature of the programmes. "But," he said, "it must be remembered the British Broadcasting Corporation has a revenue of over a million pounds a year."

MR. OWEN states that a wonderful little church service is broadcast by 2LO, London, at 10 o'clock every weekday morning, but from which church it is relayed is kept a close secret. He says that in thousands of homes the service is looked forward to as part of the daily routine.

MR. OWEN was present at the studios of 2LO, London, and watched a studio concert being broadcast. He says the artists have become regular broadcast experts. They advance and retreat from the microphone when singing to prevent overloading of the microphone, without any signal from

the studio director. This renders monitoring almost unnecessary. Mr. Owen states it is a revelation to watch these performers.

MR. OWEN has brought back to Wellington a four-valve high-grade portable set, which he purchased in England. It is fitted with low-flament consumption valves and one screened grid. The full B battery potential is 120 volts. There is a neat 18-inch "loop" aerial attached to the set. On the return voyage from England, Mr. Owen, travelling on the new motor-liner Rangitiki, picked up broadcast station WLW, Cincinnati, Ohio, United States, at a distance of 1900 miles, reception being of loudspeaker volume.

MR. OWEN will give an address at the annual meeting of the Wellington Radio Society, dealing with his experiences and observations of broadcasting abroad. He may be induced to bring his portable receiving set with him to give the members a demonstration. This will be Mr. Owen's second address of the kind, having entertained the members of the society on his return from a previous trip to England.

THERE was one circumstance in particular which impressed Mr. Owen on his return to Wellington, and that was the admirable quality of the transmission by 2YA Wellington. He listened-in at a friend's residence, where a good set was operated. He declared that the tone of 2YA was well-nigh perfect.

MR. OWEN related that long-distance listeners in England enjoy a veritable feast of broadcasting from dozens of stations on the Continent every night. A seven-valve set, such as he had heard on his return to Wellington, if it were in England it would bring in dozens of Continental stations at good loudspeaker volume. The programmes from the Continental stations included grand opera from the theatres.

THE steady progress of the new A.C. type of set was noticed by Mr. Owen when he was in England. Owing, however, to the large number of stations well scattered over Great Britain, he found that the ordinary battery type three-valve set was the most popular, as three valves were quite sufficient to bring in the finest programmes that could be desired. There was now a marked demand at Home for purity of tone in reception.

TALKING about the Continental broadcast stations heard in England, Mr. Owen states that the slightest movement of the tuning dials brings in another station. So thick are they that despite the Geneva Conference to prevent heterodyning there are still some Continental stations whose wavelengths are so close to one another as to cause a heterodyne whistle. This is seemingly due to some stations being slightly off their allotted wavelengths. The variety of foreign languages heard, too, is simply bewildering.

A STRIKING esprit de corps is apparent among all members of the staff of the B.B.C. was noticed. "Everyone," he says, "seems to take a special personal pride in that wonderful broadcasting service, from the message boys up to the managing director."

TUESDAY evening, April 23, will be of special interest to lovers of Shakespeare, for on that evening the day very appropriately being St. George's Day and the birthday of Shakespeare. Mr. Byron Brown, president of the Amateur Radio Society of Wellington, will give an address on Shakespeare's plays in between the items of a Shakespearean programme. Mr. Byron Brown has been a Shakespearean student since his boyhood, and is recognised as one of New Zealand's most prominent authorities on the greatest of all playwrights.

WELLINGTON listeners obtain excellent reception of 4YA, Dunedin, regularly on Wednesday evenings, when 2YA, Wellington, is off the air on the usual silent night. "Switch" notices the good tone of 4YA, which appears to have become thoroughly rejuvenated.

NOW the autumn is with us the Australian stations have been coming in excellently. Even 5CL, Adelaide, which has been under a cloud for many months, is asserting itself after 11 o'clock nightly. 2BL, Sydney, is just about the loudest Australian heard in Wellington, with 2FC, Sydney, a good second, 4QG, Brisbane, next, 3LO, Melbourne, and 3AR, Melbourne, being fourth and fifth, respectively. The best low-power station in Australia heard by "Switch" is 2UE, Radio House, Sydney, which has lately received ahead of 2GB, Sydney.

MENTION was made in these notes recently of a whistling competition held by a Sydney broadcast station, and heard in Wellington. A prize of £2 2s. was offered for the listener who not only placed the five competitors in the order of merit allotted by the judges, but also whose envelope was opened first. The latter condition was desirable, as no fewer than 82 listeners placed the competitors in the correct order. The number of listeners who attempted to win the £2 2s. was only 2023—a surprisingly small number.

THE famous 2BL, Sydney, cannot escape the inevitable critic, but, of course, no one expects to please everyone. Here is what a Sydney listener writes in the Sydney "Wireless Weekly":—"No wonder people go 'crook' about the music from 2BL. It is very bad. There is too much of this classical stuff nowadays. We people look forward to a bit of lively music through the day—not all this classical stuff. We are always glad when station 2UE comes on at night and in the day. It is a pleasure to listen into the station. They have a good selection of records, which I think 2BL could get if they liked. Even stations 2GB and 2KY have a better selection of records. When 2UE comes on you can put away your phonograph for one night. Hoping

2BL will wake up to itself and put on some popular music."

A BEGINNER recently asked "Switch" for a list of the chief Australian stations with their wavelengths and power. The writer trusts the following will suit his request:—

Stations.		Metres.	Power.
Melbourne	3LO	371	5KW
	3AR	484	5KW
Sydney	2FC	442	5KW
	2BL	353	5KW
Adelaide	5CL	409	5KW
Perth	6WF	1250	5KW
Brisbane	4QG	395	5KW
Hobart	7ZL	516	3KW

The power given in each instance is according to the Australian system of rating, which, as compared with the New Zealand system, is in actual practice over-estimates the power, in some cases by as much as threefold. The New Zealand system gives the actual aerial power of each station. A full list will be published in the new "Guide."

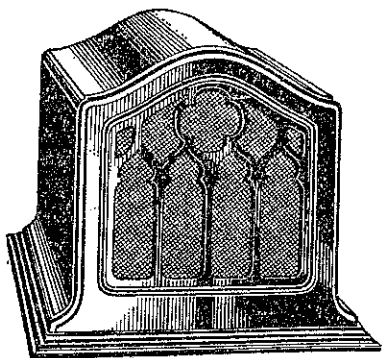
WRITING upon radio plays an Australian writer says:—"I have heard plays in which several people, with the same type and pitch of voice, were taking parts. The result has been nothing but confusion. Indeed, I think there is no way in which producers err so much as in indiscriminate choice of voices. I have also noticed that most attempts at character-sketching over the air have resulted in a meaningless flow of jargon-like diction through my loudspeaker, of which I could distinguish, perhaps, one word in each sentence. Moreover, I have found that uncouth bellowing into the microphone, although it may seem to suggest a turbulent nature, does nothing but reproduce the effects of a thunderstorm on my loudspeaker. I have listened-in to hours of this."

A FRIEND asked the other day: "Where are all the wonderful circuits the American and English radio journals brought out each month in years gone by?" Yes, oh, where are they? With the arrival of the A.C. set it seems that they have all been concentrated to the super-heterodyne, the neutrodyne and the tuned radio-frequency circuits.

AN epidemic, which takes the form of the question, "What station was it I heard, etc.," appears to have broken out among listeners. These folk cannot as a rule give even the approximate wavelength, and as for the "call," they are not infrequently unable to state even one letter. It could be only guesswork to answer these questions.

"MUSICAL" (Kilbirnie) has sent in to the writer a plea for the inclusion of some choice grand opera records in the late-in-the-evening weekday gramophone programmes. He says: "If the dance records can be obtained, why cannot some grand opera items be included? People do not want to dance continuously. They prefer to rest between times, and I am sure some good operatic numbers would be generally acceptable occasionally between dances."

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