

A Radio Ramble

(Continued from cover.)

at 11.30 a.m., if I could arrange to come. I was there to the minute and the "Chief," as he is called, was most affable, and soon we were discussing radio from many points of view. He was interested to hear reports of short-wave reception, and I was able to interest him in the experiences of some of my Wellington friends, who make a hobby of this side of radio. Eckersley, in his enthusiasm, came out of my depth in technical matters, but I gathered much information from the experimental short-wave work. The B.B.C. began its work at 11.30 a.m. in November, 1927, and has continued five days a week since then. So far, no guarantee of a regular world service is possible, due to the fact, though much experimenting has been done, it is still only a "stunt." Much remains to be discovered in the construction of sets capable of receiving these short waves. When this is accomplished the B.B.C. would endeavour to give the Colonies a full and adequate service.

After touching on the subject of television, and one or two other matters, I thanked Captain Eckersley for granting me the interview, and he expressed his good wishes towards radio in New Zealand.

THE following week I attended at the Savoy Studios at 8 p.m. with a pass admitting me to a half-hour session of a vaudeville entertainment. Some twenty-five visitors were seated on chairs at the back of a small studio. It was difficult to tell who the performers were. One after another humorous songs, comic talks or recita-

tions were given by professional artists, who were seated with the guests. They were just ordinary-looking people, but when they faced the microphone they were utterly oblivious to their surroundings, and just talked or sang their clever items to the millions of invisible listeners all over the Kingdom. The orchestra in the background were ready to take up the running, immediately the items were finished, when the announcer during a period of fading music called upon the next artist. All went quietly and smoothly from start to finish. Then we left, and the rest of the performance of music was given from other studios, or relayed from some concert hall or theatre.

SOME of the notable outside broadcasts during the past year were the series of concerts from the Queen's Hall, under the baton of Sir Henry Wood, the People's Palace, and the Arts Theatre Club, Rugby Football Internationals from Twickenham, athletics from Oxford, Cambridge and Stamford Bridge, the boat race, racing from Epsom and Doncaster, tennis from Wimbledon and the Baldoock Smith fight at the Albert Hall. "Abide With Me" was relayed from Wembley, sung by an audience of 90,000 people to the accompaniment of massed bands. Many more of these interesting relays were given from various parts of the Kingdom, including the Searchlight Tactoo at Aldershot, which is a most impressive spectacle.

The announcer in London rarely gives the station's number, 2LO. He invariably says "London calling," or where a simultaneous broadcast is being given, say of the weather report, or special news, to all the stations in the Kingdom he says, "This is London calling the British Isles."

Visit to Daventry.

MY visit to the great broadcasting station of Daventry was a delightful experience. Major Atkinson kindly planned out the day, and I left Euston at 12 noon by train for Northampton, arriving at 1.30. Here a B.B.C. motor-car met me, and we arrived at Daventry (pronounced locally Daintree) at 2.15, leaving by car at 3.40 for Rugby and reaching Euston at 6 p.m.

Daventry is situated in the heart of a rural district on rising ground, almost in the centre of England. Mr. Skinner, the engineer, who was in charge, kindly showed me round and gave me details of the wonderful plant. Three D.C. generators are used of 10,000 volts each. I was told that the water-cooled glass transmitting valves cost £75 each, and that 21 of them were embodied in the transmitter, whilst 30 of the same valves were kept on hand for emergency. This item alone represents a value of £3800. Standing within the field of the aerial coil a neon tube glowed when held seven feet away. A half-inch spark was created through the body when standing on a china insulator. The aerial, which was a T one, was 500 feet high.

5GB, which is the experimental station at Daventry, is only a few hundred feet away, and broadcasts daily at 482 metres, whilst 5XX broadcasts at 1562 metres. Alternative concerts are transmitted from these stations so that listeners-in can have the choice of two programmes. For this reason, Daventry is referred to as a twin wave station. After a cup of tea I took leave of my genial engineer friends, and was driven off to Rugby, where I took the train back to London. The number of licenses issued this year is 2,500,000, and is always increasing.

Regular Religious Service.

ONE feature of the daily programme which I have omitted to mention is the broadcasting of a religious service from Daventry at 10.15 a.m. It was started as an experiment suggested by correspondence in the "Radio Times," and such was the appreciation of thousands of the public that it has been decided to adopt it as a regular feature. It is listened to by countless people, including invalids in their homes, hospital patients, and many others. This policy has the support of a vast majority. There is a Religious Advisory Committee, as we have in New Zealand, which guides in the choice of speakers and other questions; and sectarian propaganda or argument is strictly excluded. The service is conducted anonymously; no one knows whence it comes. It consists of a hymn, a few prayers, a psalm, another prayer, and a closing hymn or organ voluntary. The service does not follow the liturgy of any church.

THE B.B.C.'s activities in regard to publications is considerable. The "Radio Times," like our "Radio Record," is published weekly. "World Radio," a weekly paper, features programmes of foreign and Dominion stations, and encourages listeners' interests in international understanding. "The Listener-in" is another weekly paper devoted to technical and popular subjects. Books and pamphlets dealing with music, talks, and technical matters are published. Librettos of broadcast opera are issued every month at 2d., post free. The B.B.C. Handbook is an annual, and is a most interesting publication. Major Menzies asked me

to accept a comprehensive set of these publications, and when they arrive I hope to hand them over to our Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand.

A TOUR of a month was made of Belgium and France, down to the Riviera, visiting Monte Carlo, Mentone, Cannes and other resorts. Several visits were made to the Annual Radio Exhibition held in Olympia, where over 200 firms exhibited their latest sets and apparatus. This enormous hall was crowded day and night for two weeks with a vast public interested in this entertaining science. I sent some details of this show to the New Zealand "Radio Record."

A Portable at Sea.

BEFORE departing from the Old Country I purchased a portable wireless set of four valves, one of them a screened grid. We left Southampton on March 17 in the new liner Rangitiki of 17,500 tons. The weather was rough, and I found that it was impossible to "tune in" in any interior part of the ship, owing to the amount of absorption by the vast fabric of surrounding metal, coupled with the interference from the large electrical equipment. On deck, however, I was able with a little difficulty to log 5XX Daventry and Radio, Paris. In four days we reached Madeira, where a day was spent in sightseeing. Several fine hotels exist in this picturesque island, which belongs to Spain. It is a popular health resort for tourists, mainly English, who may desire to escape the winter. Native boys dived great heights from the steamer's decks for coins thrown by the passengers, whilst vendors of baskets, birds, monkeys, cigars, lace, fruit, etc., plied their calling from boats alongside.

The usual sports were held, and we reached Colon, on the Atlantic side of the Panama Canal, after seventeen days. A note in my diary indicates that Miami Beach was logged on the set four days before Colon was reached. Here were assembled a large portion of the United States Navy, which had just returned from the Pacific side after a big review. Ten sea planes entertained us with numerous flying stunts. After a few hours ashore for a drive and some shopping, we entered the canal, and were soon rising in the Gatun Locks to a height of 85ft., on through Culebra Cut to Pedro Miguel Locks, where we were lowered 27ft., then to the Miraflores Lock, where a further drop of 58ft. brought us back to sea level.

BALBOA was reached in about eight hours after steaming some 50 miles through the canal. Here we spent the night alongside the wharf. Most passengers went ashore to visit the cabaret, or pictures at Panama. The Pacific Fleet of the U.S.A. made a fine searchlight display. A fancy dress ball was a great success.

My last station logged was Cincinnati, Ohio, which I held for ten minutes. It was faint but clear. In ten days we reached Pitcairn Island at midnight. Three boatloads of natives came on board, and after two hours we left for the last stage, reaching Wellington in another ten days. After a most pleasant voyage we were glad to find ourselves back in New Zealand. We had been away a year.

Dominion Service.

MAY I say here that as a radio enthusiast I have returned to New

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