

Notes and Comments

By
"SWITCH"

AN inquirer has asked "Switch" to explain the differences between a "portable" and a "transportable" receiving sets, the terms being employed in the English radio journals. The "portable" set is of such weight and size (and is fitted with a single handle) as to be easily carried about the street. The "transportable" set is larger and heavier, and although it is too heavy to be carried about by a pedestrian it is easily transported in a motor-car. The "transportable" set is particularly suitable for transferring from a city residence to a seaside or up-country "bach."

ACCORDING to the official figures for the month of March, which have just been issued by the Commonwealth Postmaster-General's Department, the world's record quota of wireless licenses in Victoria per one hundred of population has been raised still further and now stands at 8.09. Analysing this remarkable quota, it means that one wireless set is installed to every three houses in Victoria, for according to the late Sir George Knibbs's statistics, an average of over four people reside in every house; but as a very large majority of the licenses are in the metropolitan area, it would appear that every other house in Melbourne and the suburbs has a wireless set installed.

INTERFERENCE from morse transmission by warships in port at Wellington has been rife of late during the broadcasting hours of the New Zealand stations. These ships have most powerful transmitters, and they seem to radiate on various wavelengths. 3YA, Christchurch, is a severe sufferer, and many a Wellington broadcast listener has reason to regret the stay of the warships at Wellington.

THOSE who endeavoured to listen-in to "outside" stations last week were subjected to an unpleasant bombardment from the ether. These atmospheric disturbances have a sinister effect upon the sales of sets to beginners, and it sometimes happens that a beginner will form quite an erroneous opinion of broadcast listening if they chance to encounter heavy static when listening-in for the first time.

THE grand organ in the Wellington Town Hall is seldom heard on the air, and this is rather to be regretted as it broadcasts perfectly, judging by its performances through 2YA, Wellington, on the few occasions when the citizens of Wellington are permitted to hear their own instrument per medium of radio. The Anzac Day afternoon service at the Town Hall enabled us to hear the organ under admirable conditions.

MR. E. M. CORNISH ("Brookdale," Masterton) writes to "Switch":—It was with considerable amusement that I read in the "Radio Record" that anyone should object to an occasional "honk" from a passing motor-car being heard during an item. We live 21 miles from Masterton, out in the country, and when we hear the "honk" of a car over the wireless we smile and

sometimes say "Hear the car!" It's so familiar and seems to bring us nearer civilisation. A neighbour was so used to the "honks" over the wireless that when a real one "tooted" at their gate no one took any notice! Good luck to 2YA."

THE above correspondent's counterblast to those hyper-critical listeners who object to a faint "honk" being heard during a studio concert at 2YA, Wellington, shows that the slight extraneous noise is by no means objectionable to everybody. The same folk who object to the "honk" from a loudspeaker probably in many cases chatter away while a concert is in progress. "Switch" can recall being present at a listener's house when someone protested against the intrusion of a feeble "honk," and the same person almost completely spoilt every item by incessant talk!

LISTENING to 4QG, Brisbane, at 11 o'clock the other night, "Switch" could distinctly hear music and talk from a Japanese station which continued to be audible through the music from 4QG for nearly half an hour. As a rule only a heterodyne whistle from the Jap. can be noticed on top of 4QG, but on the occasion referred to the Eastern music and speech was quite distinct. The Jap. is probably JOGK, Kumamoto, operating on about 380 metres. 4QG, Brisbane, is supposed to be on 385 metres. Both or one of the stations is off its listed wavelength.

IT may be a coincidence that the Jap station JOGK, Kumamoto, frequently closes down almost simultaneously with 4QG, Brisbane, and "Switch" has on many evenings endeavoured in vain to get the Jap. after 4QG, Brisbane, has signed off. Very rarely has JOGK been heard by the writer after the Brisbane station has closed down, although the loud bubbling heterodyne whistle of the Jap. was audible a few minutes before. The two best Japs, according to "Switch's" experience are JOHK, Sendai, which seems to be on about 375 metres, and JOAK, Tokio, on 345 metres. One published list gives JOAK on both 345 and 875 metres, but the Jap. pronunciation of the "H" sounds like "A."

SO an Invercargill man claims to have invented a static eliminator, and he "is absolutely satisfied with the results it produces." One can only hope that disinterested experts are similarly satisfied. What may be called a "family failing" of all so-called static eliminators hitherto placed on the market is that while they reduce static they also reduce the volume of reception in a similar proportion. A colossal fortune awaits the inventor of a static eliminator that is a proved success.

ABOUT a year ago a "static eliminator" invented by a Wellingtonian was being offered for sale by a local trader for a few shillings. The theory of the device was quite unsatisfying, but out of curiosity "Switch" gave the thing a trial. Of course it was a fail-

ure, and the dealer who had it in stock wisely declined to recommend it to his customers.

THE all-electric A.C. sets are steadily gaining ground in Wellington and the trade find beginners are more interested in the new development. The main difficulty with those who have battery-type sets and want to purchase A.C. sets is what are they are to do with their old sets. However, apparatus has been now produced which will readily convert them.

THE departure of H.M.S. Diomedea from Wellington was hailed with delight by many listeners residing close to the city. The warship's Morse was a frequent source of annoyance to listeners, breaking in as it did on top of broadcast reception. The cruiser's transmitter is exceptionally powerful and when she was lying at the wharf many a local loudspeaker jumped with the hammering of her Morse.

A VAUDEVILLE figure once well-known in New Zealand, the coloured comedian, Charlie Pope, died recently in Melbourne. He was heard in nigger minstrel songs from 3LO, Melbourne, not so long ago. Pope and his partner, Irving Sayles, were undoubtedly the greatest coloured comedians seen in New Zealand. Sayles dropped dead in the street in Christchurch a number of years ago while on a vaudeville tour of New Zealand, after having dissolved partnership with Pope.

THERE is an interesting little story connected with "Dem Golden Slippers," which was told by the late Charlie Pope, who for many years was a member of a minstrel troupe touring the United States. One night, during the interval, one of the niggers called for pencil and paper, and sat down at the table. "I'm going to write a song," he announced, "that'll sell for twenty dollars." The song, "Dem Golden Slippers," was written and immediately

sold for twenty dollars (£4), proving a wonderful success, and, arranged as a waltz, polka, quadrille, and lancers, was heard in every dance hall on both sides of the Atlantic, and proved a veritable gold mine to the enterprising person who had purchased it for £4.

A WELLINGTON listener complained to "Switch" that reception all round had gone "off" considerably of late. He was told that there had been certain vagaries in long-distance reception, but things were not so bad as he considered them. Eventually the listener disclosed the fact that his valves had been in regular use for two and a half years! The normal life of a good valve is about 1000 hours, which at, say, three hours' use nightly, works out at a little less than a year.

A LISTENER recently told "Switch" that he could not get the "outside" stations as well as formerly. On being questioned as to how old his valves were, he said they had been in operation only six months, and as a good valve of reputable make should last a year, the trouble could not be in his valves. A further questioning disclosed the fact that his set was in use about seven hours daily, which aggregates over 1200 hours in six months—200 hours more than the average 1000 hours' life of a valve.

A DOGMATIC intolerance of "talk" subjects still obtains among a small section of listeners, but prejudices would be overcome if they would take the trouble to listen to some of the very attractive talks put on the air by the New Zealand stations. A Sydney writer says: "Hitherto there has been a good deal of exception taken to the inclusion of both talks and readings, and in the early stages of broadcasting those protests were in many cases well founded. Greater care is now taken in the choice of both speaker and subject, and as a result the short talks, readings, and lectures have gradually established their popularity."

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