

Notes and Comments

By
"SWITCH"

AN Island Bay listener reports to "Switch" that his receiving set picks up a considerable amount of interference from the trolley pole wheel of passing trams. The sparking of the wheel as it vibrates along the overhead wire reproduces loud clicks in his speaker. The trouble cannot be eliminated.

MR. G. ROBERTSON, general manager for New Zealand for Amalgamated Wireless, Ltd., returned to Wellington recently after a month's visit to Australia. He is a great believer in the future of broadcasting in Australia.

THE need for broadcast stations of much greater power than the present big stations in Australia was Mr. Robertson's impression. The Commonwealth is a vast continent with great distances to be reached by radio, and the range of the existing stations is insufficient. The Australian Government intends to erect relay stations up-country,

but even then greater power should be employed than at present.

THE first annual report of the Indian Broadcasting Co., Ltd., shows a loss of £12,500 odd. The debit balance is attributed mainly to the inevitable expenses incurred during the initial unproductive stages of the company's existence. "Piracy" is admitted to have seriously affected the revenue.

A MELBOURNE writer says: "You often hear it mentioned that many artists repeat themselves from 3LO, Melbourne. Unfortunately this is inevitable. When one realises that every baritone and every soprano and contralto have respectively the same songs, and that successful broadcasting singers must have about 150 numbers in their repertoire, the problem is understandable. Nearly every budding soprano who appears for a test at 3LO sings the same numbers as the thousands who have been through the same ordeal before, and in most cases when a suitable voice is selected the singer has only half a dozen of the more or less popular songs to his or her credit, all of which have been sung so many times over the air that listeners are tired of the repetition. So there you are. Admittedly the problem is acute, and the hunt by singers for 'unsung' numbers goes on in perpetuity." If a city like Melbourne with nearly a million inhabitants is up against this difficulty one can realise the problem which confronts our New Zealand directors.

IN many countries abroad greater power is being used for broadcasting than was thought to be possible only a few years ago. While there were some critics who found fault with the Radio Broadcasting Co. of New Zealand for erecting a 5000-watt aerial power station at Wellington on the plea that its power was too great, the tendency all over the world is for still greater power. The Swedish Government has now let a contract for a 60,000-watt aerial energy broadcasting transmitter at Stockholm.

A FRIEND 'phoned "Switch" the other night to know the mathematical relationship between wavelength (metres) and frequency (kilocycles). Nearly all the latest receiving sets have their tuning dials marked with a scale of kilocycles, and some beginners are experiencing difficulty in locating distant stations, although they know their wavelengths. To convert wavelengths (in metres) into frequency (in kilocycles) divide the metres into 3,000,000, and the results will be the frequency in kilocycles with the last figure as the decimal figure. To ascertain the wavelength from the kilocycles marked on the tuning dial, divide the kilocycles into 3,000,000, and the result will be the wavelength in metres.

TO illustrate the above formula, an example will be cited: A listener hears a station at a point on his tuning dial marked "940." He should divide 3,000,000 by 940, and the result will be a shade over 319 metres. To reverse the procedure, a listener knows that the wavelength of a station is 319 metres, but he cannot find it on his tuning dial. He should divide 3,000,000 by 319, and the result will be kilocycles, which are marked on his dial. Some factory-built sets are not adjusted quite accurately, but the tuning dial will prove to be close enough for all practical purposes. Some overseas stations, also, are not exactly on their allotted wavelengths, but the difference is not great.

THE intercolonial 'Varsity football match was splendidly "covered" by 2YA, Wellington. One circumstance,

however, was pointed out to "Switch" which the announcer might bear in mind for future occasions. He occasionally referred to the "white" or "green" (alluding to the colours worn by the respective teams). Those who were late in tuning-in missed his mention of the colours worn by the teams, and when he said "White has got the ball" or "The Greens are now doing well in the scrums" many listeners were mystified. A good plan is to abstain from mentioning the colours of the teams while the game is in progress. Still, these remarks do not detract from the able description of the game.

AN Australian writer, when referring to the world's record of listeners per head of population in Victoria, claims that it is entirely due to the good broadcasting services by 3LO and 3AR, Melbourne. "Switch," however, submits that there may be other contributory factors such as the greater congestion of the population in Victoria as compared with New South Wales. The area of Victoria is 87,884 square miles, and that of New South Wales 310,700 square miles. Victoria is almost exactly the size of England, Scotland and Wales combined, while New South Wales is five times the size of England alone. And none of the big Australian stations employ more than a third of the power of 2YA, Wellington.

THERE is another possible factor that places Victoria with such a high ratio of listeners per head of its population, and that may be the greater prosperity of the people as compared with New South Wales. Further, New South Wales with a milder winter climate and more numerous seaside resorts and greater opportunity for yachting and boating offers greater allurements to the public to spend more of their time away from their homes. "Switch" is inclined to believe that Victoria's world record of 8.17 quota of listeners per 100 of population cannot definitely be attributed to the merit of the Melbourne broadcast service unless all of the possible contributory factors mentioned by "Switch" can be definitely disproved.

"ADVENTURE" (Wellington City) suggests to "Switch" that the 2YA, Wellington, director may be able to dig up someone who can relate some interesting adventures which are authen-

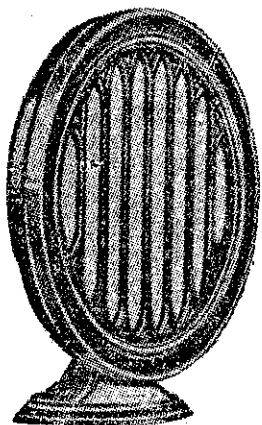
tic, as is done frequently by the Australian stations. One man in Melbourne, he says, relates some narratives of actual pirates in days gone by, and another man has been giving some most interesting descriptions from 2FC, Sydney, of his experiences with an exploration party in the vast, unknown wild north-west of Australia. He says: "We would all sit up and listen to stuff like that from 2YA, Wellington."

A FAULTY 'phone jack caused a Kilbirnie listener endless worry until he located the seat of the trouble. The jack was examined by "Switch," and it was obviously a "cheap" line. The metal leaves were made of soft material, which had very little spring in it. Moral: Never economise in purchasing parts which have a critical function to perform.

WE had a try, some time ago, in New Zealand to get the educational authorities to introduce broadcasting into the primary schools as a medium for instruction; but as the test was carried out only with 2YA, Wellington, during the daytime, the authorities were disappointed because reception at far-distant schools was marred by static. The test should have included all four stations. According to the latest news from Home, the co-operation between the educational authorities in Great Britain and the British Broadcasting Corporation has grown to such a degree that the B.B.C. has found it necessary to establish a department under full control of its educational officers. In the U.S.A. the broadcasting companies have also broken down the departmental opposition, and in almost every State regular periods in each day's school hours are given up to lessons by wireless.

THERE was a big laugh from 2FC, Sydney, on a recent night. It appears that when a relay was being carried out from the Sydney Town Hall, Cec. Morrison, the dance band conductor, finding his seat too low, annexed the detachable seat of the chair used by the announcer, Mr. Halbert. The latter returned hurriedly to the stage, and failed to notice that the bottom had been removed from his chair. He sat down suddenly, and fell through the seat of his chair, his legs sticking up in the air. The Town Hall rocked with laughter as Mr. Halbert was pulled out of his awkward predicament by two members of the band.

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