

Notes and Comments

By
"SWITCH"

A CHRISTCHURCH visitor, who has been doing a good deal of listening in in Wellington, informed "Switch" that the capital city is remarkably clear of local electrical leakages, but Christchurch has rather more than its share. 2YA, Wellington, is now being heard with good volume in the southern city, and multi-valve set owners derive a considerable amount of entertainment from the Wellington station.

MR. Laurence Halbert, announcer at 2FC, Sydney, one of the most correctly-speaking announcer in Australia, says:—"If the announcer does trip—and he often does—over a word, what happens? By the following mail comes a badly punctuated, and, as a rule, ungrammatical, letter from an irate old gentleman, whose ear has been offended by the said mistake. Remember, he may make a mistake himself when making up his cash book, and possibly a very

silly one, like a simple addition; but a few minutes' work, a deft rub of the eraser, and no one is any the wiser. But when the announcer makes a mistake the whole world knows it; it has gone, and no power on earth can recall it—it's rather terrifying in its potentialities." Perhaps some of our New Zealand critics will give thought to this remark.

NEW Zealand home-constructors have good reason to be pleased that the Japanese radio regulations are not in operation in the Dominion. A Japanese experimenter, before he begins to build his set has to place his credentials before the Chief of the Bureau of Communications, and receive a permit. When he has built his set it has to receive the seal of the authorities before he is permitted to use it. He is not permitted to alter his set without official sanction, under risk of a heavy penalty.

A SHORTWAVE beginner mentioned to the writer recently that reception came in "gusts," and he was anxious to know whether this was due to a faulty valve or battery. The gustiness he referred to is characteristic of a good deal of shortwave reception, and is merely accelerated fading. It is one of the disappointing features of short-wave reception. Those who do not operate a short-wave set may have observed this gustiness when short-wave rebroadcasts are heard from 2YA, Wellington, and they have sometimes erroneously attributed it to local trouble.

MR. Robert Allen, of the Samoa Public Trust Office, Apia, reports: "An interesting point in reception here is that by putting in a broad tuning aerial coil and tuning midway between 2FC and 2YA, Wellington, I am able to hear the post office clocks at Sydney, Wellington, and Apia, chiming 8, 9.30 and 10 respectively and simultaneously."

A WELLINGTON listener, who counts himself merely an average person, with the average amount of musical appreciation, urges "Switch" to draw the attention of banjoists and of other instrumentalists who specialise in one instrument that they have available a wide scope of music suitable to their individual type of instrument without straying into realms unsuitable for their particular line. "The banjo has its limitations and it is showing up these limitations to ask it to reproduce certain music," he concluded.

THE above criticism was shown to a local musician of ability and experience. He concurred with the protest. After consideration he gave the following to "Switch" as his studied opinion:—"The eternal fitness of things is always paramount in the mind of the true artist, whether in music, painting, drawing, sculpture, or even architecture. Yet this breach of judgment on the part of instrumentalists is all too frequent. Let me quote an example. Not so long ago I heard a mandolin duo attempt to play the 'Miserere' duet from 'Il Trovatore'. The result was an utter travesty. There is an abundance of delightful music particularly suitable for the mandolin without trenching on grand opera. It is a wonder that someone has not yet attempted to play excerpts from 'Norma' on the bagpipes."

AN American visitor to Wellington who modestly admits some knowledge of banjo playing, while as a matter of fact he is an exceptionally good performer, was asked by "Switch" as to his opinion upon the playing of a hymn on the banjo. He said that the banjo owed its origin

to the negro slaves in the Southern States of America, and was first extensively used for devotional music or, as it is now known, as "spiritual" song, but this was vastly different to the hymn heard on a banjo over the air recently. The negroes also played a certain type of dance music and "nigger" songs of a most distinctive kind.

SOME theatrical people still retain the notion that radio is a rival and not an ally to the stage. Mr. Howard Milholland, manager of KGO, Oakland, California, asserts that radio is a wonderful aid to both the theatrical and the concert stages. He points out that entertainment seen and heard in the company of a large number of people heightens emotional reaction, and so we will always have theatre audiences and concert audiences. Radio serves to advertise the stage, and to whet the appetite of listeners for more than what is actually put on the air.

2FC, Sydney, announced a new idea recently in a "slumber music" session. It was introduced at the end of a Sunday evening session. The items comprised gramophone records specially selected with music of a restful character. No items were announced, each record following the other without intermission. The idea was tried out as an experiment, and its continuance will depend upon opinions sent by listeners.

ONE may doubt the sincerity of a few listeners who have written to the Wellington Radio Society stating they decline to join that body, as it had attempted to stop the re-laying of football matches on Saturday afternoons. If those self-same listeners had attended the Radio Society's annual meeting that exceedingly ill-advised motion would not have been carried. As it was, the older and more experienced members of the society voted against the motion, which had as one of its sponsors a listener who had only just joined the union.

FILM actors and actresses in their anxiety to learn if they had the same appeal in their voices that they have in their shadow personalities, have been making secret visits to KGO, Oakland, California, the home of the radio drama in the west. Several of the stars temporarily joined the ranks of "KGO Players," believing that in the radio drama they have a great medium to train their voices for the talkies. Assumed names were used so as to obtain an unbiased reaction to their work, and to avoid contract entanglements.

A CITY listener who lately visited Masterton was astounded at the excellence of reception in that town during broad daylight. All the YA stations were available from the loudspeaker early in the afternoon. 3YA Christchurch came in with such volume as to be intolerable, and had to be toned down. A Wellington radio technician informed "Switch" that his sets increased in volume 100 per cent. in reception of long distance stations when transferred from the city to up-country.

AN interesting experiment recently took place in Moscow, when a short-wave telephony transmitter was taken up by an engineer in an ordinary gas balloon. Communication with the earth was easily established, even at heights exceeding 4000 metres (13,000 feet). Two-way communication was maintained continuously for two days and two nights on a wavelength of 43 metres, the transmissions being simultaneously picked up by Odessa, Vladivostok, Minsk, and Leningrad.

EVEN if your loudspeaker or headphones show no signs of damage from a fall, the concussion weakens the strength of the magnets within each. Listeners should take care not to bump, jar, or drop either a loudspeaker or a pair of headphones. There is a method of restoring weakened magnets, but it involves some mechanical skill in removing magnets from loudspeakers or headphones.

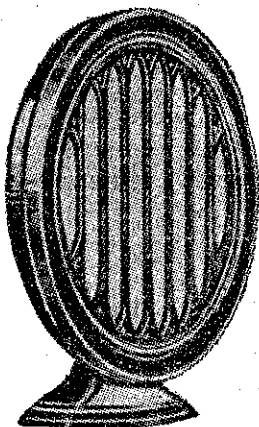
MR. R. O'DEA (Whangamomona, Taranaki), writes "Switch":—"The enclosed paragraph, clipped from the New York 'Nation,' of February 18, 1929, may be of some use for our 'Notes and Comments.' I always enjoy reading your newsy pars, and have picked up many valuable hints therefrom. 'Radioing to a man 13,000 miles away to get him to radio 13,000 miles back to a man at close hand in order to get the latter to hang up his telephone receiver'—this is the extraordinary happening reported by Commander Byrd in a recent dispatch to the New York 'Times.' The 'Times,' it appears, found difficulty in receiving the wireless messages from Byrd which are sent by him every night from his position in the Antarctic ice, because of the peculiar conditions around its building in New York City. The employee receiving these messages found that he could get them quite clearly in his home in Astoria across the East River from Manhattan, so clearly that by placing his telephone receiver close to his radio receiving instrument the Byrd dots and dashes could be heard perfectly in the 'Times's' office. One night, however, the 'Times' wished to call its employee in Astoria. There was only one way to do it. The newspaper radioed to that one of Byrd's ships which was receiving, and asked it to telephone over the ice to the other ship to tell the employee in Astoria to hang up his receiver. Two minutes later the man in question rang up saying: 'Byrd says you want to talk to me!' Thus is space annihilated. Who could have conceived a few years ago that one might send radiogram messages 28,000 miles in two minutes to ask a man only about three miles away to hang up his telephone receiver?"

WHEN aerial insulators are being cleaned, sandsoap, pumice or other abrasive substance should not be used for the purpose, as it tends to remove the glaze from the surface of the insulators. The glazed surface breaks rain up into drops and thus prevents a continuous wet surface being formed, which would cause a leakage across the insulators.

DO any of our New Zealand radio "aunts" want to adopt a nice well-grown boy? "I like you as an aunt, but I'd like you better still as a mother," wrote a 17-year-old Filipino boy from Manila recently to Aunt Betty (Ruth Thompson), of KGO, Oakland, California. "If you will send me third class fare I'll go to the United States, get a job, and be your son." And he enclosed his picture.

AN ex-British Navy and Army man, Captain J. H. Watson, of Sydney, who is over eighty years of age, and rather guiltily admits to being the culprit who first introduced rabbits to Australia, is to be personally interviewed before the microphone of 2BL, Sydney, on the evening of May 30. Listeners in New Zealand will be interested in the idea, and no doubt a good few sets will be tuned in to 2BL to hear the interview.

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