

WHEN the Mauretania left England recently for her trans-Atlantic voyage to America, the B.B.C. broadcast from Southampton docks a description of the activities preceding her departure. The most dramatic moment of this "surprise item" for listeners, was the huge liner's own farewell, which consisted of three blasts blown on the ship's siren. A listener, in writing to an English periodical, states: "About fifteen seconds after hearing the three blasts from the Mauretania, we heard the original illustration of the slowness of sound waves when compared with the lightning-like speed at which radio waves travel.

THE thunderous roar of Niagara Falls, together with a description of the world's greatest "Festival of Lights," was broadcast recently by a network of stations extending from coast to coast of the United States. Microphones, placed in the Cave of the Winds and on the Falls View Bridge above the Niagara Gorge, picked up the noise of the falls, and relayed a description of the scene. One announcer was situated on the bridge, and he vividly described the spectacle which was brilliantly illuminated by billion candle-power searchlight, aerial bombs, and electrically-lighted aeroplanes. Another announcer, situated in the Cave of Winds, beneath the actual waterfall, broadcast a description of the deafening roar of the torrent, which could be heard as it plunged over the cliff.

EARLY in June of this year, an aeroplane equipped with a drag-line succeeded in picking up a bag of mail from a specially constructed pick-up platform on the deck of the s.s. Leviathan, while she was still some days out from port. It is planned to develop this service so that liners may be met some 500 miles or more from the coast, thus saving more than a day in the schedule of trans-Atlantic mail. This project is particularly interesting to radio enthusiasts, because without radio it would be impossible. The liner must first report her position—by radio. The plane must set its course for the point of meeting—by radio. On closer approach, radio direction-finding plays its part; and finally, communication maintained by means of radio.

IT is stated that the one official language to be used at the World Radio Conference to be held at The Hague shortly will be French. This has aroused protests, especially from America, as it is not easy to find men who combine the understanding of wireless technicalities with a fluent command of the French language. It has been suggested that use might be made of the system of translation used at the Geneva Conferences. Delegates are provided with head telephones, connected with sundry microphones, into which experts translate the speeches, sentence by sentence as they are delivered, into the required languages. The difficulty, however, of finding ready translators with the necessary technical knowledge of the intricate problems connected with radio, would still remain.

WHEN sound effects are required for the microphone, in nine cases out of ten nothing is less satisfactory than the real thing. With most loud noises



the genuine reproduction is far too loud, and "blasts" horribly. Synthetic railway trains, motor-cars, and so on are far more effective than the real article. In a recent "talkie" film it was found that the friction of silk stockings worn by a knock-kneed actress made a crackling sound which spoilt the reproduction! Riflefire or explosions of any kind present great difficulties to effects experts. The gunfire at Zeebrugge, in the St. George's Day programme at Home, nearly blew up the London transmitter, to say nothing of the damage done to the ear-drums of unfortunate listeners who were wearing headphones at the time.

MARQUIS MARCONI recently stated that television is not a practical impossibility, and that very shortly world-wide services would probably be established. He said in addition that the relation between television and films will be similar to that which exists between wireless and the gramophone. He is of the opinion that the future will undoubtedly bring greater and greater developments in wireless, and that many at present unknown departments of this branch of knowledge will be disclosed.

THE captain of the White Star liner Ionic, which recently berthed at Southampton after her long voyage from New Zealand, reported that on August 31 he received a wireless message from the master of the French steamer Germaine, asking urgently for surgical assistance. The Ionic was immediately headed towards the position indicated, and fell in with the Germaine that evening. The Ionic's surgeon boarded the French ship, where he found a member of the crew suffering from a deep ragged wound in his right hand, caused by an explosion. After the doctor had controlled the haemorrhage and dressed the wound, the Ionic proceeded on her interrupted voyage.

A CLEVER ruse which was successfully accomplished with the aid of radio during the late war was probably instrumental in protecting Fiji from German invasion. From information received it was known that the German warships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were in the South Pacific with warlike intent, and were making for Fiji, which was completely undefended except for a handful of men armed with rifles and machine-guns. So the Governor hit on a novel idea, and despatched the following message from the Suva morse station: "To the Admiral of H.M.A.S. Australia. Will you dine with me this evening?—Governor of Fiji." This gave the impression that the Australia was within a few hours' steaming from Fiji, whereas at that

time she was over 2500 miles away! The message was sent out three or four times, and of course, was not coded. The Germans never came.

A REPORTED proposal of the Soviet Government to erect a super-power broadcasting station at Moscow to transmit programmes in German, French, and Esperanto, has aroused acute discussion in certain French papers. The station, it appears, will be intended to "educate" Europe in the principles of Communism. The French Press declares that the project raises "a most important problem of international law—the right of a nation to broadcast in a language other than that spoken by its subjects." It is urged that the matter should be studied by European Governments and by the League of Nations without delay.

THE complete analysis of a world-wide study of thunderstorms shows that on an average there are in progress at any one moment about 1800 thunderstorms in different parts of the world. In association with these storms it is estimated that lightning flashes occur at an average rate of 100 per second. When regarded on this basis, it is quite possible to attribute all the numerous atmospherics heard on a wireless receiver to lightning flashes. Much research work is being carried on at present in an attempt to perfect a static eliminator, but as yet

no noticeable degree of success has been attained. It is quite probable that no satisfactory preventative of this annoyance will ever be invented, and atmospherics, like the poor, will always be with us.

ONE of the largest loudspeakers in the world is housed in the Science Museum at Kensington in London. The horn of the speaker is nine yards long, and is built on the lines of one which the designer constructed for his own private use. He installed this gigantic effort on the roof of his house, mouth downwards, and the sounds pass through a grating in the ceiling to the room below. It is reported to give remarkable purity of tone, and it is to be sincerely hoped it does. Otherwise, somebody must be horribly disappointed!

THE remarkable progress that has been made in the transmission by wireless of still pictures was demonstrated recently by the transmission from Sydney to England of the photographs of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Prime Minister of England, and Mr. E. T. Fisk, managing director of A.W.A. Limited. The Fultograph system was utilised, and the results were very satisfactory. This transmission, which took place from the short-wave station 2ME, Sydney, was the first of its kind in Australia. Nevertheless the distance was the greatest over which still pictures have ever been transmitted.

A NUMBER of English hotels have now installed coin-in-the-slot radio receivers for the entertainment of guests. The main receiving set, which is known as a radiomaton, is capable of efficiently operating 300 pairs of headphones, as well as four loudspeakers. Guests may now lounge in their rooms and listen-in to either the radio programme or to a relay of the hotel's dance orchestra. One penny is charged for five minutes' listening, and after this period the transmission is automatically switched off.

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