

NOTES FROM LONDON

B.B.C. And The Test Matches

Empire to Have Commentary on England v. South Africa Test Matches—What is the Ideal Interval Signal— Whither Television?

(Special to the "Radio Record" by Air Mail.)

This page was written specially for the "New Zealand Radio Record" by L. Marsland Gander, a well-known broadcasting writer in London.

London, February 26.

IT is a safe prophecy that the B.B.C. will have special commentaries on the England v. South Africa Test matches this summer, and that they will be relayed to Empire listeners either direct or in a recorded version, according to time factor. Last year Mr. Howard Marshall (of "Under Big Ben" fame) held a watching brief for the B.B.C. at the Australian Test matches. Whenever exciting things began to happen he called Broadcasting House on the telephone and came on the air with his commentary, which broke into the programme. In addition he gave the score and brief summaries at the lunch and tea intervals and other fixed times. The whole arrangement was most successful.

SPEAKING of Mr. Marshall reminds me that he has been threatened with a health breakdown, and was ordered by the doctor to take an immediate holiday. He was packed off to the Isle of Capri to recuperate—possibly beneath the shade of an old walnut tree. In the meantime dinner talks in the Empire programmes are being given by Mr. Cecil Maiden, a journalist who has written one or two books in a

light style on Continental travel, besides one novel. He is an authority on the waterways of England. His talks for the Empire, describing current events in England are called "English Diary."

I HEAR that on March 21 there is to be a relay to Empire listeners from the Imperial Press Conference in South Africa, and it is probable that General Smuts and Major Astor will both broadcast. In this programme will be introduced a talk by the lighthouse-keeper at Cape Point, the extremity of the Cape of Good Hope. The B.B.C. are now hunting feverishly for suitable relays from the Empire for inclusion in the home programmes. So far, it must be confessed their efforts have not been crowned with complete success. Something very characteristic and romantic is wanted. The B.B.C. want to take the microphone into the jungle; their latest hope is that when the beam telephone to Kenya is opened a rich field of possibilities will be opened.

WHAT is the ideal interval signal?

The B.B.C. is much exercised on this point at the moment. The Empire service used Bow bells; after a time the home stations grew envious and also adopted Bow bells in place of the muffled ticking of what was known at London headquarters as "the ghost in goloshes." Now opinion is violently divided among British listeners. Some

declare that the bells produce chronic melancholia; others that they are a constant delight. The B.B.C., after ignoring the storm for some time suddenly appealed to all the Regional stations in the British Isles to suggest their own interval signals. Results to the time of writing have been distinctly entertaining but impracticable, or likely to be intensely irritating. Whether any of the suggestions will be adopted is somewhat doubtful.

For instance, the Midland station proposes the soft murmuring of the River Dove over its bed; the Western station the roar of Atlantic breakers on the beach. Belfast, the shipbuilding centre, suggests the Devil's tattoo of a riveter at work. Scotland insists on the squeal of the bagpipes. There is also a strong school of thought which says that on the American principle there should be no intervals at all. Now it is the turn of Empire listeners to suggest a change. It is a question whether Bow bells are ideal. One alternative proposition is the opening bars of "Rule Britannia."

What various Continental countries do is instructive. The most striking signal of all is that of the Italian stations—a mechanical nightingale which warbles realistically up and down the scale.

WHEN will Empire listeners become Empire lookers? The report of the Television Committee which suggests (somewhat optimistically I think) that the range of high definition is 25 miles, makes it seem as if the answer to this query is "Never." But, just as the B.B.C. distributed to Empire stations gramophone records of typical programmes for local relay, so, I think one day they will send out B.B.C. films for televising by the local transmitters in all parts of the Empire.

Sayings of the Week

I KNOW nothing about Mr. Arliss's private life.—*Viscount Castlerosse.*

I THOUGHT no place on earth could be as gay as London.—*Miss Marion Davies.*

FLATS are not proper places in which to bring up a family, nor do they lead to a happy family life.—*Sir Raymond Unwin.*

I HAVE explained more precisely than anyone else (as far as I know) where and how Marx went wrong.—*Mr. Bernard Shaw.*

A MODERN young pig might easily become a drawing-room pet if only he were lighter and a little more shapely.—*Sir E. J. Russell.*



Here's a Pleasant Way
to **EARN** Your Hosiery
Instead of **PAYING**
For Them!!!

All you have to do—is persuade
two of your friends to each take
a one year's subscription to the
"Radio Record" at 19/6 and
send in their names and addresses
together with the two sub-
scriptions to Box 1680, Well-
ington, and in return receive a pair
of

Half-Guinea Hose
FREE!