"Forget Television Just Now"

Mr. E. T. Fisk, "Big Shot" In Australian Radio Drops in on New Zealand

OF course everybody who has owned a broadcast receiving set has heard about, thought about and looked forward to owning some day a television set. Some people have even been chary about paying a high price for a modern broadcast set, thinking that in a year or so it will be out of date, owing to the possible advent of combined televised and ordinary apparatus. Well, forget it—for about ten years, anyway!

We have the word of somebody who knows that it will be about a decade before radio television is possible on a commercial scale, within reach of the resources of the average family coffers. Mr. E. T. Fisk, managing director of Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia), Limited, passing through New Zealand last week on his way to England, assured us that the whole question of television may be shelved, however regretfully, by the general public, and left to the hundreds of experts all over the world to puzzle out over the next few years.

By television Mr. Fisk does not mean merely the transmission of a single picture at a time over thousands of miles of nothing. Television, in the ultimate, means the faithful transmission and reception over long distances of at least twenty-five pictures a second, each one broken up by lines numbering at least 240 to the inch—a combination of the cinematograph and the newspaper half-tone block, turned into radio-electrical energy, and converted to moving pictures by the receivers. In an uncertain, groping sort of way, experimenters have found it possible to produce over distances up to 25 miles something of the sort of thing they have in mind. They are not stuck at this point, however.

Be it ever so slowly, they are progressing in their work from week to week, increasing their knowledge, stumbling on difficulties, but seldom stumbling on solutions; for the solutions of their problems do not lie in flukes. Mr. Fisk is convinced that only by steady evolution along the lines on which experimenters have started will commercial television be achieved. One hurdle alone may require years of trial and research. That is the effective range which has been possible so far. For all the conquest of distance possible with ordinary wireless telegraphy and broadcasting, the present range of television is no more than that of optical vision, and like ordinary human sight, television cannot yet "see round corners" or through hills.

However, Mr. Fisk has more cheering news than that about television. Interference, for instance. Radio engineers have exhausted every channel of investigation connected with electrical interference in broadcast reception, and they are satisfied that the need for correction lies not in the sets, but in the source of the interference, whatever it be.

MR. E. T. FISK.

It is possible to make your set near enough to static-proof—if you are prepared to spend enough money But for the listening public as a whole, the cure lies in the prevention.

"We have done all we can to stop the nuisance of interference, and the results of our inquiries have been submitted to local bodies who use or control electricity," said Mr. Fisk. "We have proved that the only reasonable way out is to have the sources of interference shielded individually, as in the case of trams, X-ray plants, electric motors and the like. It will, of course, involve probably more money than most local bodies of large current users are prepared to spend, but the solution now lies between the listeners and the local bodies, or whoever is responsible for the sources of interference."

In Goulburn, he said, the public had approached the users of big current until practically the whole town was effectively screened, and now Goulburn was probably the "cleanest" town in Australia as far as broadcast reception was concerned. It was now purely a question of some agreement being reached between listeners and local bodies—the worst offenders. The public would simply have to "keep at them" if they wanted to finally eliminate the nuisance.

Shortwave reception has gripped Australia with its novelty as it has New Zealand. Mr. Fisk remarked on the great proportion of shortwave or all-wave sets being sold, as compared with those covering the usual broadcast band. Although the quality of reception in many parts of Australia of overseas shortwave broadcasts was really good, most people appear to be purchasing the all-wave sets more for the novelty than for any superior service over the air.

"Whole-world" transmission service, which had unquestionably inspired the shortwave craze, was no new thing. Mr. Fisk explained that his company had instituted the idea more than five years ago in Australia, providing at different times of the day broadcasts for several different parts of the world. Others had followed the lead, and England and Germany had developed the idea on a large scale. With other great countries doing the same, the probability was that the programmes would become more and more propagandist, but the scheme, by virtue of the competition in standards of broadcasts, would help the advance of radio science.

Co-operation between radio laboratories and air services in Australia was being continued as far as equipment was concerned, but radio beacons for aeroplanes had not yet been generally supplied. During the Centenary Air Race there had, of course, been sufficient equipment for effective air navigation by beacons across the continent, but at present

(Continued on Page 58.)