

The other Friday night a reserved session of 4YA's programme was taken up by a talk on sunspots by Mr. M. Geddes, director of the Aurorae and Zodiacal Light Section of the N.Z.A.S.

Hardly sounded thrilling, but once again it proved that so much depends upon the speaker when it comes to giving radio talks. Possessed of an excellent radio voice and a true sense of proportion in assessing relative values, Mr. Geddes gave one of the most interesting talks heard from 4YA for a long time. Technicalities were avoided wherever possible. The speaker exploded the belief that sunspots affect the weather, which must have come as a blow to those "weatherwise" ones who foretell violent changes whenever sunspots are discovered. Mr. Geddes led up to aurorae and how they were created by the influence of the sun. As the present is a period of maximum sunspot activity, aurorae are likely to be frequent for some while, and as these phenomena have a definitely adverse effect on shortwave broadcasting the speaker dampened listeners by telling them that shortwave reception was liable to interference for some time to come.



Momentary dissatisfaction with New Zealand programmes led me to make three or four interesting discoveries on shortwave last week. The first was when I switched across about 8.30 one morning and found

EXPLORING ON THE SHORT WAVES. myself listening to the "Voice of Republican Spain" broadcasting in

English from Madrid. It was a cheerful, clear and confident voice, telling of victories against the Fascists, and, although it was obviously talking propaganda as hard as it could go, one left it with the feeling that Franco is still a long way from being master of Spain. On Saturday afternoon, being uninterested in recitals of race results, I turn-

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We are all bound by the cruel prejudices of the herd—and as cruelly bound by the irrational conviction that we must be unconventional. As D. H. Lawrence said, we run round like the ass, either in one direction or another, treading round and round in the treadmill. "The ass goes one way and threshes out the corn from the chaff. The ass goes the other way round and kicks the corn into the mud."

What are we going to do about it? Well, perhaps the first thing is to let the object lesson of radio electioneering sink in—and realise from it that parties, factions, classes, pulling one against the other will never make our country truly prosperous and truly happy. So long as we think exclusively in terms of capitalist, communist, socialist, nationalist, atheist, pacifist, militarist "ideology" we can never learn to pull together. Perhaps one day soon we shall transcend the haltered conceptions of life to which we have hitherto been bound by lack of detachment and start to learn the art of living together, in the way that rational human beings certainly will do when the human race has reached maturity

ed the switch and found myself in Moscow for the English session, where Commissar Molotov (translated) was giving a glowing account of education in the U.S.S.R. for the benefit of the Soviet Congress of School Teachers. Exploring again on Sunday afternoon, I arrived at America in time to hear Congressman Herman Fish, of New York, urging all good Republicans to support the Wages and Hours Bill. And so back, via Guatemala, to the more orthodox diversion of 2YA. A little of this shortwave touring goes a long way, but it's nice to fall back on, especially when the reception is good, as it was last week.



Is it really imperative that a station should keep to the split second in presenting its programmes? Perhaps the NCBS have to be more precise than the NBS stations in keeping up to time

TOO MUCH OF A TIME COMPLEX. where advertising contracts are involved, but on Sunday such considerations do not matter,

as advertisements (fortunately) are not put across. 4ZB apparently got a few seconds behind last Sunday, which was serious. So serious indeed, that a record to which I was listening was clipped short. No sooner had it been cut off in its dying moments, so to speak, than a man started speaking. half-way through a sentence. It was John Stannage giving the last of his radio-operator talks. No introduction, no nothing—just a hasty scamper to make up those lost seconds. A small thing, but extremely irritating to listeners.



It has often, quite properly, been said that a singer, a pianist, or an instrumentalist may be a very fine performer on the concert stage, yet lack something when it comes to facing a microphone. I was inclined to think that an instance bearing out this statement was supplied by

CONCERT STAGE AND MICROPHONE.

3YA the other night when Cynthia Herbert-Smith gave listeners a choice of Brahms. She began extremely well, but there was a recurrence in some of her work of a slight fumbling with the keys, particularly in the right hand. She played strongly and faithfully, but appeared to lack confidence. I am not aware that she has had any extensive experience of broadcasting, so possibly more microphone work will eliminate the fault.



I thought the performance of the Dunedin Glee Singers (conductor, Mr. H. P. Desmoulins), broadcast by 4YO the other Monday night, was not so good as others. Their liveliest number was the popular "Sing a Song of Sixpence," but it was not their happiest, for there was a prevailing tendency to get out of tune. I liked the Celtic funeral number, "Ossianic Procession," even though it got off to a bad start; the

rise and fall of volume were well maintained. Of special interest was "The Shepherdess," Dr. Galway's musical interpretation of Alice Meynell's poem. Dr. Galway, Dunedin's city organist, wrote the music specially for Alfred Walmsley's Madrigal Club. It has now been published by the Oxford University Press, and, inspired by the Madrigal Club's success, the Glee Singers attempted it, with satisfactory results. It is a slow number, with contrasting pace in the body. If anything, the Singers were inclined to over-accentuate the more rapid movement.



After hauling a microphone and sundry other pieces of radio gear up the spiral stone steps of the Christchurch Cathedral tower the other night, to let 3ZB listeners know something more

WORKING UP IN THE SKY. about the Cathedral bells than their mere sound, Ian MacKay went

through a very unhappy quarter of an hour. First of all, under the direction of the bell-master, Mr. G. Claydon, he tried his hand at ringing and, through not letting the rope of the big bell slip through his fingers at the right time, he shot, with all his 14 stone, 12ft. into the air. So far so bad. Then came a ladder-climb up to the balconies. One hand was on the rope and the other held the microphone, and an electric torch was tucked under one arm. All the bells in the tower were rung and the swaying of the whole of the upper works was not very pleasant for the man from the earthquake district of New Zealand. MacKay carried off the relay very well, however. He told listeners that if they heard a strange thumping sound coming through their sets, it would undoubtedly be the rapid beating of his heart, as the stone work on which he was standing moved and creaked. But it's not so bad as it sounds, for all stone towers carrying heavy bells are so constructed that they "give" with the swing of the bells. And so the cathedral tower, passed scores of times a day by many thousands of people, took on quite a different angle as 3ZB presented it, per microphone.

My first hearing of a George Edwards production came to me last week through courtesy of 2YD. It was called "Knights of the Round Table—Tristan and Isolde," and was the "amateur" version in 10

GEORGE EDWARDS minutes of the WAS great love stories

DISAPPOINTING. of the ages, ranking with Antony and Cleopatra, Aucassin and Nicolette, and the late King and Mrs. Simpson. Frankly, however, as George Edwards produced it, the story left me extremely cold. Most of it was in the Elizabethan "s'death and odds-bodkins" style, the tale had no subtlety, and was merely bald narrative, and the sentiments expressed by the chief actors were so banal as to be boring. This, of course, was not the fault of 2YD, which is rapidly winning a wide public as a station with the brightness of the commercials without the tedium of advertisements.