

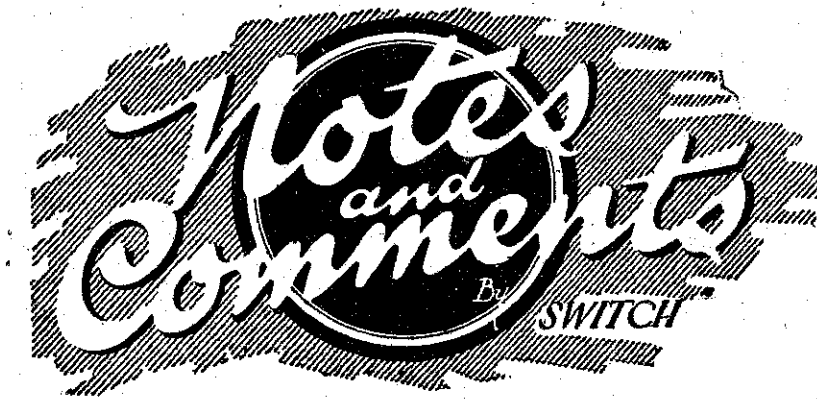
LISTENERS unfamiliar with the history of broadcasting will be interested to know that in June, 1920, the Marconi Company gave the first actual broadcast concert at Home from their experimental valve-transmitting station at Chelmsford, England. Among the performances on that famous occasion was the great Australian prima donna, Dame Nellie Melba, whose voice was heard a considerable distance across the Atlantic and in many parts of Europe. What wonderful strides have since been made in broadcasting!

A RECENT cable message published in the New Zealand press announced that Frances Alda, the New Zealand prima donna, was retiring from the stage. The New York "Radio World," just to hand, states: "At the end of the season, Mme. Frances Alda, noted operatic and concert soprano, will retire from the Metropolitan Opera Company, and devote her entire time to radio broadcasting. After twenty-one years on the operatic stage," said Mme. Alda, "I am giving up work with the Metropolitan to devote my time entirely to broadcasting. The first of six Puccini operas was recently broadcast. It was 'Madame Butterfly.' Mme. Alda sang the role of Japanese sweetheart to the American naval officer."

THE "talkie" relays by 2YA, Wellington, from the Majestic Theatre, Wellington are really excellent. The enunciation of the screen artists is cleanly put across from 2YA, and one can hardly credit that the enactments are not taken from a stage performance in the living flesh or from a film and loudspeakers. One cannot help noticing, too, the advance in the technical skill of voice production by the "talkie" producers.

RADIO possibly made and saved fortunes during the recent panic on the New York share market. The mail brings news that the recent New York stock market break so taxed the facilities of radio transmitting stations sending special messages to brokers and stock owners aboard the ships, that the day and night operators were forced to operate on 12-hour shifts to put all the messages through.

HERE is some trenchant criticism which appeared recently in the Melbourne "Argus":—Listeners must have been distressed by a distasteful innovation in the programme broadcast from 3LO last night. Some nameless person exchanged cheap patter with the announcer between the different items. Nothing more effective could have been designed to destroy whatever was good in the programme. One of these 'comic' interludes preceded the playing of the movements from the second Beethoven quartet. The patter was in the worst of taste, and a flippant gesture in the face of the Beethoven music, which, however, was ably played by the Australian Broadcasting Company's string quartet. A repetition of cheap patter broke in upon the last note of the slow movement, and served as an introduction to the most exquisite of Shakespeare's songs, "Come Away, Death." Newstead Rush sang the song well. It is incredible, but after the Shakespearean song the anonymous comedian asked the announcer, "Why does a Chinese baby make more noise than any other?" And listeners were pre-



sumably expected to laugh when he was told: "Because it's a little 'yeller.'"

WHEN atmospheric conditions become more favourable for long-distance reception one may expect to hear of many New Zealanders picking up some of the super-power American stations which have recently come on the air. The new 50,000 watt transmitter of WFAA, which is located eighteen miles northwest of Dallas, Texas, is now on the air. This transmitter, built at a cost of 270,000 dollars (£54,000), is the South's first high power broadcaster. The frequency of 800 kilocycles (374.8 metres) is used.

THE recent relay by 2YA, Wellington, of the concert from Otaki was a pronounced success. The Maori items were particularly pleasing, and came through well. One speaker caused amusement among radio folks by opening his remarks with "Ladies and gentlemen, and listeners-in." Of course the gentleman did not desire to convey that listeners-in were not ladies and gentlemen, but the joke got across splendidly, especially on account of its innocence. These relays, if only on account of the variety they afford, are immensely popular with listeners, and there is the psychological effect created by a theatre audience which enhances the popularity of relays.

THAT the New Zealand authorities were wise in keeping a strict control over indiscriminate advertising by radio, and the limiting of broadcast stations in the various centres is increasingly apparent. The New York "Radio World" reports, that, "Too many broadcasting stations and too much advertising are the leading complaints of radio listeners in the vicinity of San Francisco concerning the ills of radio to-day, according to a survey made by the Commonwealth Club of America in San Francisco, the results of which were transmitted to the Federal Radio Commission. It is one of the first such surveys to be made."

RECEPTION from the Australian stations has continued bad for several weeks, and this has synchronised with the abnormal sunspot activity reported by astronomical observers. Strangely enough, the sunspots have coincided also with exceptionally stormy conditions in both the northern and southern hemispheres. During past years "Switch" was able to obtain very fair reception of four of the Australian stations

keep the station on the air until 1 a.m., and the cheerful musical items were appreciated in many homes.

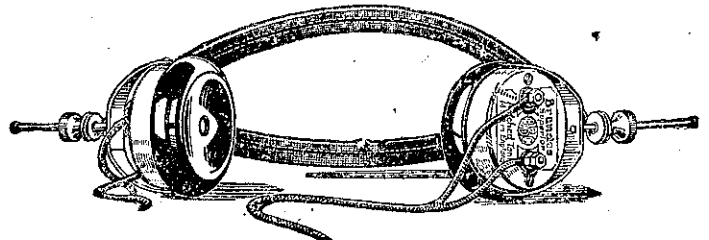
AN example of the national character of broadcasting was provided recently when Sir Joseph Ward broadcast a speech, or rather a New Year's message, to the people of New Zealand per medium of a relay by 2YA, Wellington. The Prime Minister, who is recovering from a severe illness, was seated in his residence at Heretaunga, which is about 14 miles air-line from the 2YA broadcast station. The message was re-broadcast by 3YA, Christchurch, and was heard throughout the Dominion.

THE latest mail from Australia brings news that the existing broadcast transmitters at 5CL, Adelaide, and 4QG, Brisbane, are shortly to be superseded by more efficient transmitters. The new 5,000-watt equipment for 5CL is almost completed, while the new transmitter for Brisbane is now being constructed. Reception from 4QG should be greatly improved in New Zealand when the new plant is installed. Even with the old transmitter during certain periods of the year 4QG is heard louder in Wellington than any other trans-Tasman station.

THE largest and most powerful station in the world, built and established so far is at Rugby, Warwickshire. It covers an area of 1000 acres. Eighty large transmission valves are used. Each one of these consumes more than 1000 times the electrical energy of the ordinary wireless receiving valve. Twenty-five miles of wire for the aerials are suspended between twelve great steel masts, each 400 yards apart. Each one of these huge lattice-work structures is six times as high as the Nelson Column in Trafalgar Square. There is a lift inside each mast to carry electricians and other workmen to the top. This station is for simultaneous broadcasting to all parts of the British Empire.

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