

Electricity in the Home



R. DANA in his address said: "Hullo, New Zealand! When I said good-bye to you last night I thought it was for ever, but here I am back again. Although I cannot see your faces, I have the newspaper man's imagination and I can see people in city and country, on river and on seashore, tuning-in again to hear the voice of a friend from America. This morning I have had a most interesting conversation with one of the professors of your college. He is a man who believes that Horace Mencken and Sinclair Lewis are writing the current history of America, and doubtless if he were queried would say that Professor James and Woodrow Wilson must incorrectly, if at all, reflect the status of the American movement and the progress of the American nation.

"That, however, is not the matter from an interesting conversation with this gentleman upon which I wish to deal. He told me this morning that New Zealand must be content to go along about as she is now; that this urgency for progress, this irritation for improvement, really means very little in the life of this Dominion, and that there were some things which it would be far better if they had been left as they were—let us say a century ago, or perhaps he meant two or three centuries ago. I frequently hear people talking about the good old days, and I wonder whether they mean the time when a man was hung if he stole a sheep or a lamb; or the time when the favourite form of punishment was to hitch your man between two powerful horses and pull his body apart; the time when wealth and power and greed were rulers of the earth, and nobles splashed their mud upon the peasants, who, though they might hate and were

AN unexpected treat was accorded listeners just before Christmas by a particularly interesting talk on "Electricity in the Home," being given by Mr. Marshall N. Dana, Associate-Editor of the "Oregon Journal," Portland, U.S.A. Mr. Dana is one of the most interesting and breezy radio personalities that has appeared before the microphone at 2YA. This is explained in part by the fact that he is no stranger to the microphone, being a regular talker from the radio station in his home city, where he gives a weekly feature on modern topics. Mr. Dana has a special interest in electricity, both from the business and social side, as he is president of a power and irrigation corporation, with a capital of 50,000,000 dollars. He is, however, specially attracted to electricity by its possibilities for service to the human race, and his address had for its keynote that thought.

bitter, dared not make response or utter resentment. I would like to suggest to the gentleman who has no optimism about the progress of New Zealand, particularly at this Christmas season of brightness, happiness and joy—and let me say that in my judgment, brightness, happiness and joy are worth far more than a merely pessimistic analysis of the source and impulse that lie back of a smile—I would like to suggest to him that at this Christmas season he take his joy out of it by reading Christmas stories again, and that he dwell upon the character of Mr. Scrooge, for, despite the fact that some of the things they had in the long-ago were good and will remain, like their literature and their poetry and some of their fiction, I would not trade this electric-lighted day for the candle twilight of that day. I would not trade the brightened opportunity for the satisfaction of human interest and comfort and luxury for the time when self-repression was ruling and limitation of opportunity the law. I would not trade this day, when we are beginning to learn man's possible control of the resources of nature, and hence multiplication of man power by the use of the powers of nature, for that long-ago when to speak of the powers

of nature in any other than the supernatural sense was to be called a witch. You remember the day when Aladdin rubbed the lamp and the genius came at his summons, and opened to his astonished gaze visions of the caves that were glittering with lights and with gems. You remember the day when Benjamin Franklin tapped the heavens with a key and drew forth a spark, as though it were the might of a distant star. You remember that that day was an omen of the day in which we live, "We talk to-day about the "pacific era." Let me say to you that we of the Pacific area, citizens of the Pacific, and brethren and pioneers of the day that is just dawning, would have none of the accomplishments of which we dream unless we remember that day. We owe all of the means of accomplishment to the wizard powers of electricity.

"I WANT to say to you that there are waiting upon the steps of New Zealand a great and marvellous company of bright, alert, swift, beautiful servants of man; and not only servants of man, but servants of woman. They have manufactured a name for these little folk, these peculiar folk that are waiting in intelligent company upon the steps of New Zealand. They are called robots. One of these robots at Washington, D.C., opens a door at the command "Open Sesame," and no hand touches the knob. One of these robots reports by telephone at stated intervals the depth of water in one of the main reservoirs to the city office scores of miles away. One of these robots, called "Metal Mike," guides your good ship Aorangi across the Pacific Ocean with such skill and fidelity that there is no variation in its course.

YOU have these electrical robots in small number in New Zealand at the present time. I have seen them at work on your dairy farms, milking your cows, and carrying that milk, without the touch of a human hand, to the cans for transfer to the dairy factory. And I have seen them, in somewhat limited degree, at your dairy factories; but I think I must confess that to my mind the New Zealand dairy farmer is more progressive in his use of mechanical and electrical device than are some of the factories. The time is going to come when these robots will enter in great number into your life, and you will find that they carry no national brand and bring no national prejudices; that they are international in their character, universal in their service, and belong to the present day of progress. Let me add in this brief moment that these robots will enter not

only the dairy, but they will enter the dairy homes. They will not only lift the burden from the backs of men, who would be animals of drought without them; but they will lift the burdens out of the hands of your housewives.

I want to say to you that if your dairy farmers are entitled to electric milking machines, your housewives are entitled to electrify their homes.

THE day when the greater use of the electrical robots will come is when the New Zealand Government has completed its present power programme, when it has extended the amortisation basis to the cost of those installations over a longer period, for after all it is not nearly as important to pay quickly for those installations as it is important to give the people in the greatest possible degree the largest quantity of power at the smallest cost, so that they can use it for their interests, their comforts, and their luxuries. In my home in Portland, a country home overlooking a beautiful river—where also the roses bloom, but not at this season of the year—we have a furnace that heats our house, and it is controlled by an electric robot. It turns on the heat in the morning, and keeps it at 70 degrees throughout the day, and at 10.30 in the evening it turns it off. I do not have to shovel coal, I do not have to light the gas. All I have to do is to wind the clock every Saturday night, and the genius of electricity does the rest of it for me. In the kitchen of our home is an electric range, and Mrs. Dana may set a clock, put the roast in the oven, and all the vegetables and other things, and when the time comes this electric robot will turn on the current and the food will be prepared to that very choicest brown which we men most enjoy; and all the time she can go out and play golf or enjoy a "pink tea." Further, in our home electrical current sweeps the floor, it dusts the ceiling and walls, it does the washing and ironing, and even dries and curls our hair! Further, it not only cooks our food, but it refrigerates it to keep it sweet and wholesome and in healthy condition. We use electricity for everything that we possibly can. We do not drink as much tea as you good people do here. We drink coffee. But if we wish to have a cup of coffee, we plug the percolator into the wall, and in a very few minutes that coffee is streaming forth, which, mixed with your good cream, would taste vastly better than much of the coffee which we have encountered in your country.

While the aroma of coffee from the percolator fills the morning air with fragrance, toast is crisping in the toaster and bacon and eggs are giving a savoury promise of pleasure on the burner which acquired ruby heat at the touch of a button.

And if we want a little more heat round the house, we take a portable radiator.

At the end of the day when the good man returns from his work, he sits down before his radio and draws upon the ether and the talent of distant cities for music and entertainment that bring to him both rest and recrea-

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