

A FRIEND has sent "Switch" the following news item: "A feature of the last radio show held in New York was the release of a large silver balloon from the roof of the building. A radio valve and a letter containing an open cheque for one hundred dollars were attached." He adds that a certain company proposed to release large silver balloons to which advertisements were to be attached simultaneously with the release of the radio show balloon, but they could not obtain delivery of their balloons in time. The writer suggests that such tactics would not meet with public approval in New Zealand. Still, America is a land of "stunts" and all's fair in business enterprise over there.

"SWITCH" has heard 4YA, Dunedin, testing on a much shorter wavelength than 463 metres (646 k.c.) utilised by the station for a considerable time. The wavelength on which 4YA was testing appeared to the writer to be about 296 metres (1010 k.c.), but this is only an approximation. Wellington listeners assessed the volume of 4YA on the shorter wavelength as fully double that on 463 metres.

IN New Zealand bush fires are not such a menace as in North America or in Australia. In the latter country the devastation wrought by bush fires every summer is appalling. The position is regarded as so serious that the assistance of the broadcast stations has been enlisted. Recently the Victorian Government's Forest Commissioner, Mr. W. W. Gay, broadcast a message from 3LO, Melbourne, warning people to exercise care in the use of fire in the forests and country districts generally. Broadcasting has thus once more proved its value to the community.

SOME comment has reached "Switch" regarding the relay of the Wellington Harbour Board's jubilee function on Somes Island. Complaint has been made of excessive parasitic noises in the broadcast and the difficulty in hearing some of the speakers. This is just another instance of the difficulties with which broadcast technicians have to contend, and for which many listeners make no allowances. Somes Island is in the centre of the land-locked waters of Wellington harbour, and is connected with the city by a submarine telephone cable, which has an "earth" return, instead of the circuit being completely metallic. Through the "earth" the commutator of the Murray automatic telegraph machine intruded on the broadcast transmission. The speakers at the function could not in a number of cases be reached by the microphone.

IN America some of the finest broadcast stations yet erected have been defied by "blind spots" and "distortion areas." The big broadcasting companies with untold finances have sent their scientists to investigate these places, and without exception have endorsed the complaints of those listeners located in the said areas. In Victoria the proprietors of station 3LO, Melbourne, spent a considerable sum of money investigating similar complaints, and the results of exhaustive tests confirmed them.

A PROMINENT New Zealander, often heard from 2FO, Sydney, is Mr. Frank Hutchens, a distinguished pianist. He was born in New Zealand, but received his tuition at the

Royal Academy of Music, London. He won many scholarships, and appeared as a recitalist with great success in London and on the Continent. During a brief visit to America he broadcast from WEAF, New York.

IN these hard times one comes across some regrettable cases where talent is unable to find employment. The other day "Switch" heard a man playing a piano-accordion on the edge of a city footpath while a friend went around with the ubiquitous hat. There was an excellent response on the part of the side-walk audience. But the point which appealed to "Switch" was that the performer would make a hit on the air, for he was a musician of marked ability.

SOMEONE has posted the following clipping from a New Zealand paper: "There is no doubt that too much provision has been made in the past at our broadcasting stations for the pleasing of the frivolous, and that the more serious minded have received scant consideration. The frivolous form but a small percentage of the people, but their demands are generally the loudest, with the result that they have been catered for too much, and many people have refused to purchase receiving sets and take out licenses on this account." This is a perfect gem! Only a few days ago "Switch" saw letters in the daily Press complaining that there was far too little jazz. The writer does not know in which paper the above clipping appeared, but he would like five minutes' talk with the person responsible for it.

SO the amateur transmitters of Wellington have challenged the members of the Amateur Radio Society of Wellington for a cricket match. At the moment "Switch" does not know whether the society can muster an eleven, and when he suggested the match to some of the members casually they had various alternative suggestions. One proposed a draughts tourney, another a bowling tournament, and the fourth suggested a debating contest. The subject for debate hinted on was, "Was Steinmetz correct in condemning the ether theory for the transmission of radio news, and did he establish proof of his own thesis that broadcasting was accomplished by the extension of the magnetic field generated by the transmitter?"

"THE great voice of the south," 2YA, Wellington, will shortly have its call letters showing at night time on the front of the transmitting building on the top of the Roseneath hill

overlooking the city. The illuminated characters are of gigantic proportions, and will be visible on clear nights for many miles. The station, with its towering masts, occupies a commanding position. It is the most striking object seen by passengers arriving by steamer in the harbour. Even travellers arriving by train can see the station from the carriage window before they reach the city.

A WIDELY-KNOWN radio enthusiast, Mr. Geoffrey Shrimpton, plays a prominent part at the Wellington dirt track speedway. He occupies the position of announcer, and his voice is heard by thousands of spectators who attend the meetings at the Stadium. In the centre of the grounds there is a 30ft. metal pole, at the top of which there are about a dozen loudspeakers pointed in every direction. Mr. Shrimpton sits at a table a few yards away, and with the aid of a microphone announces the starters and their colours, with their handicaps, and the results of each event. Various interesting announcements are also made from time to time, including the extent of the injuries, if any, when a rider falls. Mr. Shrimpton displays an apt and ready wit which frequently provokes roars of laughter, and keeps the spectators in a merry humour.

THAT Mr. Geoffrey Shrimpton, announcer at the Speedway, is one of New Zealand's leading amateur radio experts, is just what one would expect. He is a son of Mr. E. A. Shrimpton, formerly chief telegraph engineer of the P. and T. Department, who was the first man to officially control and regulate radio in New Zealand, and who is, himself, one of the pioneers of radio transmission and reception in the Dominion. His son, "Geoff," as he is popularly called by innumerable friends, is known as ZL2XA in the amateur transmitting world, and his Morse and phone work has been heard in many distant lands. Many a time in the prehistoric days of listening in New Zealand, "Switch" would hear "Geoff" transmitting on 'phone and broadcasting records from his studio at his suburban home at Rongotai. Those were the days before the amateur transmitters were banished to the ultra-short waves.

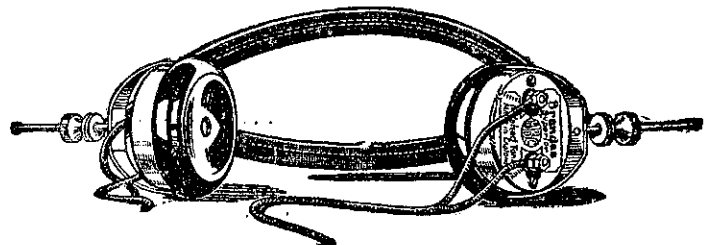
THE early days of broadcast listening in and around Wellington, before the advent of the "YA" stations, were blighted by interference from spark-transmission by the Government Morse station ZLW, located on the Tinakori hill overlooking the city. Spark transmission is inherently broad in tuning, and owing to the great power employed by ZLW its transmission crashed in at any point of the tuning dials of receiving sets for many miles around. There was no escaping it, and many a local programme was spoilt by it. When, however, ZLW was converted from spark to valve transmission this trouble was eliminated. Despite local electrical interference from power line leakages, which by the way do not interfere with reception of 2YA, present-day listeners in Wellington live in a paradise compared with six or seven years ago.

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