

WITH the advent of pictures of the Byrd Expedition to Antarctica in New Zealand, renewed interest will be taken in that great adventure. This makes it timely to give something of the radio side, by which regular communication was maintained between Little America and the world at large. That feat increases in magnitude as the details are known. No less than 825,000 words of press matter were successfully transmitted by radio from Russell Owen and received in New York, but, in addition, more than 3,000,000 words of private messages were interchanged, all being handled gratuitously by the "New York Times" Radio Station.

The man in charge of the radio side in New York was F. E. Meinholtz, whose photograph appears on this page. For every night throughout the 18 months during which Byrd was at Antarctica, Meinholtz was on deck in the "New York Times" receiving station, tirelessly experimenting to find the proper wave-length with which to communicate with the men in Antarctica. On some nights he sat for 12 hours, from 7 in the evening till 7 in the morning, patiently tinkering hour after hour, hoping for a clear signal. It often happened that an entire evening's work resulted in only one complete sentence being secured. Most of the time, however, the signals were as clear and distinct as though they had come by land-line from Chicago. There were only two nights in the whole 18 months when communication was not successfully established with Little America.

Mr. Meinholtz is a tall and rather heavy-set man, and talks enthusiastically to the point. In the course of an interview with "Editor and Publisher," he reviewed the long story of the preparation made for the radio communication with the exuberance of a schoolboy. He is proud, as he certainly has a right to be, of the new page in radio communications which he has helped materially to write.

MY biggest thrill of the whole expedition," he said, "was in the perfect manner in which we communicated with them. I didn't think it was possible. When I undertook the job I was a little pessimistic, and I told Mr. Ochs that if we could get in touch with Little America for a few minutes twice a week we would be lucky. But he told me to go ahead and do what I could. I supervised the construction of all the radio apparatus the expedition packed along, and picked the men to handle the job at Little America—they were old friends of mine. I didn't know until they were actually settled in Little America whether the thing would work. But it did! Now I'm entertaining radio experts from all over the world who come in here to see how it was done. It was the fact that we kept up communications so consistently that stumps them all—and stumps me, too. And the fact that there were so few 'repeats' made it seem all the more marvellous. We very seldom, except on some bad nights, had to ask Hanson to repeat his messages.

"When I came to work at 7 in the evening."



Mr. F. E. Meinholtz at the short-wave set with which he maintained contact with the Byrd Expedition.

F. E. Meinholtz, manager of the New York Times radio department, tells of the midnight vigils when he spoke to Little America, in

## The RADIO SIDE of BYRD'S STORY

Meinholtz said, "the day's activities in Little America were just getting started. It was noon down there. Three hours later or so, when it was 3 o'clock in the Antarctic, Russell would have the first part of his story written and Hanson would be shooting it through to make the deadline on the "Times" mail edition at 10.40 p.m. From then on the editorial department would get the story in small sections for the various editors. The story was usually complete for the 3.30 a.m. deadline, although the pages were sometimes held open for awhile if the reception was slow."

The men at the "Times" were imbued with the adventure, and were out to make as perfect a record on their side as Byrd and his men made at the South Pole. They worked long hours over their complex apparatus to bring in the stories.

A year before the Byrd expedition started, Meinholtz had perfected his equipment, and had experimented with the Norwegian whalers in the Antarctic. Then he went about assembling the 75,000 dollars (£15,000) worth of radio equipment which the expedition took along. He was in constant communication with the ships on their way down, as well as after they got there.

Then came the dash to the Pole on Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1929. And Meinholtz transcribed the most thrilling radiogram of the expedition: " . . . Airplane Floyd Bennett, in flight, 1.55 p.m. G.M.T., November 29, 1929 . . . My calculations indicate we have reached the vicinity sugar fishing humidity for survey atkinson camp well. Will soon turn nominate piney onalaska trigger flunky diamond sugar billet." Which, when translated, said: "My calculations indicate that we have reached the vicinity of the South Pole. Flying high for a survey. The airplane is in good shape, crew all well. Will soon turn north. We can see an almost limitless polar plateau. Our departure from the pole was at 1.25 p.m."

"All the big news broke on holidays," Meinholtz observed.

The greatest difficulty in transmission was during the long Antarctic night. It was hard to get signals through and to receive them during this period, and it took many weary hours experimenting with waves before even the smallest message could be received.

Approximately 20,000 messages from mothers, fathers, sweethearts, wives, societies, etc., were sent to the men in Antarctica. The original manuscripts of these lay filed in a huge box in the studio as the interview was given.

Meinholtz was a telegraph operator in St. Louis prior to the War, and had worked for all the newspaper offices in that State. He joined the Navy during the war, and was placed in charge of the Naval Station at Bar Harbour, and undertook trans-Atlantic radio service there. After the war he visited New York and accepted a position as manager of the "Times" Radio Department. He has held this position for the past 10 years.

AS showing how assiduous the Radio Department of the "Times" now is in its task of gathering news for its readers, it may be mentioned that, following on the Byrd Expedition, which was a major activity, the "Times" Radio Station is in constant communication with the Bartlett Expedition in Newfoundland, which is getting ready for a geographical trip to Greenland. On a huge map of the world in the radio room, pointers show the locality of this and other expeditions with which the station is also in contact. For instance, there is a slip of paper showing the location of the Dickey Expedition on the Orinoco River, in Venezuela. In Lima, Peru, Yancey, the aviator is in communication, and over in Ireland a slip indicated the starting-point of Captain Kingsford-Smith's flight, now a matter of history.

One of the most pleasant souvenirs of the station is a personal message from Admiral Byrd, dated December 20, 1929, reading as follows:—

"I think the work your outfit has done up there has been remarkable, and you have certainly stuck by us. (Concluded on page 2.)