

A New Era in Marine Communication

Wireless Telephony at Sea

WITH the introduction of wireless telephony at sea, marine wireless communication has made its most important advance since Marconi first installed telegraph apparatus on board ship more than thirty years ago.

The use of wireless telegraphy eliminated the isolation of ships at sea by providing a means of immediate communication between ships and from ship to shore, an innovation which has revolutionised the conditions of sea travel during the present century. The wireless telephone does more. It places the marine traveller in direct personal communication with his friends and business associates ashore, or on other vessels suitably equipped, as easily as though he and they were at home or in their offices. It opens a new era in marine communication, as surely as the telephone ashore opened a new era in domestic and business communication. The rapid extension of the present telephone facilities at sea, both in the number of ships fitted with the new radio telephone and the number of countries with which they are linked, is a future certainty.

Within the next few years it is probable that passengers on any of the principal passenger liners will be in a position to "ring up" any telephone subscriber in practically any country in the world, while the ship is steaming on any of the seven seas.

A Convincing Demonstration.

THE remarkable equality of the telephone service already available through the new equipment was de-

monstrated to thousands of wireless listeners in the British Isles recently, when a conversation between a passenger of the White Star liner *Homeric* in mid-Atlantic and Mr. Harold Nicolson, in the B.B.C. studios at Savoy Hill, London, was broadcast. Every word of the Homeric passenger's vivid description of the sea scene before him and of the day's happenings on board was as clearly heard as the questions and comments of Mr. Nicolson speaking into the microphone in London. Particularly noticeable was the clarity of the speech from mid-Atlantic and the absence of "background"—that annoying hum or crackling which sometimes ruins long-distance telephony even by land-line.

The telephone equipment of the *Homeric*, the first liner to be so equipped for commercial purposes, is identical in its main features with the apparatus used by the Marchese Marconi on his famous yacht *Elettra*. In his recent experiments Marconi has spoken from the Mediterranean to Sydney, London, Bombay, Montreal, New York, Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro. Thus it may be seen that the installation is capable of a world-wide range. Wireless experts who have heard conversations carried on by its means have been amazed at the clarity and steadiness achieved, and have declared it to be far ahead of

any telephony hitherto carried on from a ship at sea.

Though great interest centres on the use of telephony on such ships as the *Homeric*, telephony at sea is not likely to be restricted to larger passenger vessels. It is already widely used on small vessels on which no skilled operator is carried, the Marconi Company having designed and constructed self-contained transmitting and receiving equipments which require no more experienced manipulation than the ordinary domestic telephone.

Use by Whaling Fleets.

SETS of this type have been used for the past two or three seasons by whaling fleets in the Antarctic. They are normally operated by the harpoon-gunnery and have proved invaluable in the process of hunting, by making it possible for whole fleets to co-operate in the search for whales, and at the same time to keep in touch with the floating factories and the bases ashore.

Prior to the introduction of wireless telephony in this arduous industry, it sometimes happened that one whaling vessel would discover a whole school of whales while other sought in vain. Nowadays a telephone call across the southern seas concentrates all the fleet immediately on the site of the rich hunting area, with the result that record seasons have been attained. By

means of a simple code system, special hunting information may be restricted to the vessels of a particular fleet, while general information or calls for assistance can be broadcast.

Another important use for wireless telephony at sea was recently introduced when the new White Star liner *Britannic* was equipped with radio telephone equipment for the period of her trials, to enable the technical experts and observers on board to keep in touch with the builders' yards, where similar equipment was installed. So valuable did this innovation prove in passing immediate information regarding progress between the ship on trial in the Clyde Estuary and the yards in Belfast, that the builders, as soon as the trials were completed, arranged for similar facilities on board the steamer *Innisfallen*, which they had just completed.

Future Importance.

IT is evident, therefore, that the wireless telephone is destined to play an important part in the future of all departments of marine communication, especially having regard to the general increase in "the international telephone habit" following the development of overseas telephone services. The efficiency of the installations is demonstrated by their proved utility under all conditions of working, and their reliability by the fact that the design of the equipment employed is based

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THE 2YA ORCHESTRINA.

Under the baton of Signor A. P. Truda, they will present from 2YA on January 5th instrumental selections in keeping with Mrs. Daisy Basham's lecture-recital on "Old English Song."

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