

# What the New Year holds for RADIO

*In this outspoken article the likely features of the 1931 season are critically examined. Some are classed as improvements*

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*and others are questioned. It is an interview with a gentleman well-known in N.Z. radio circles, who for various reasons wishes to remain unknown.*



**R**IGHT from the onset, let me say I don't know. No one knows; there are some clear indications, but, like the weather, radio is likely to change without taking anyone into its confidence. It has not done so for quite a long while, but there is no foretelling when it is going to do it again.

The year just passed has, more or less, been an uneventful one. It has seen the universal application of the screen-grid valve to the electric set, and this has made a receiver that is as powerful as noise will allow. Here we raise an important point. Can radio progress much further without a sweeping change that will carry in its stride interference of all nature and, of course, static? Manufacturers and engineers are inclined to think not. The modern receiver is sensitive, it will bring in all the noise there is going, it is easy to operate, it has a fairly natural tone, and it can separate stations that are on adjacent frequencies, and unless one takes some care in dialling he is likely to cause distortion through the very simplicity and selectivity of the machine.

**S**O much for the 1930 instrument. What are they going to do with it to make a 1931 model? There will no doubt be alterations in the design to make it look different—that is one of the essentials of any new models, whether it be motor cars or milking machines. Generally speaking, it seems that there is a great deal of waste space in the modern set, and one of the advances of the new year will be to eliminate much of the waste. This means that the cabinets will be smaller. And probably plainer, for set manufacturers are beginning to realise what furniture manufacturers realised many years ago, that the plainer the article the neater it looks and the more it will be appreciated by the housewife who has to keep it clean. Already there have been some of the new smaller machines on the New Zealand market, and the trade reports that they are taking well. Only a couple of days ago, I was in a wholesale warehouse and could not help remarking that the sets appeared much smaller than they were last time I was there a few months ago. It was then I was told that size was to be one of the trends in 1931.

This idea of smallness can be overdone, as it undoubtedly is with the midget sets. In many, not all, efficiency has been sacrificed in order to preserve smallness. There is a certain amount of space required for components, which, if cramped, must be made less efficient, and this crowding has been carried to extreme in this receiver. Few of the big American manufacturers have brought out these small sets.

In talking about the new sets we must mention the superheterodyne, for according to the reports in the American magazines this is to be a superheterodyne year. Actually the effect this will have upon New Zealand sets is doubtful. Do we want superheterodynes? If so, why? We shall not stop to consider the technical features of the receiver; sufficient to say that it works on an entirely different principle from the usual set, which we chose to call



*One of the features of 1931 will be considerable increase in the power or radio broadcast stations. This can be brought about only by an increase in the size of transmitting valves. The one shown in this illustration is the new 200-kilowatt valve to be installed in KDKA. The small valve, third, from the left, is an a.c. screen-grid, while the third from the right is the 250 power valve.*

the "t.r.f." or tuned radio frequency. In the super-het. there are only one or two tuned stages—that really means condensers that we have to rotate when a station is desired—whereas in the t.r.f. set there were four or five. If these were not all in line, and it is difficult to keep them so all over the range to be tuned, much of the power of the incoming station or noise cannot be tuned in. With the superheterodyne this difficulty does not occur, and it is consequently a little more sensitive and a great deal more selective. But do we in New Zealand want sets more selective? In America and England, yes; but out here, where there are few stations, no. So there is no point in making our sets more selective, or, for that matter, more sensitive.

But there are other "improvements" that the manufacturers are introducing. One is tone control. In plain language, this provides a means of making your set sound (Concluded on page 2.)