

The Psychology of Listening

Mental Fatigue

THE term "colour blindness" is a familiar one. The term "tone blindness" is not so familiar. And yet the human ear, like the eye, has its distinct limitations.

The noise of city life has compelled us to be less sensitive to sounds for the sake of our nerves. We must ignore most of the noise in order to be comfortable, and this is impairing the function of hearing, we are told by psychologists and physicians. Then also, the ear has its limitations of responsiveness to pitch. Persons with unusually keen ears can hear tones as high pitched as 10,000 cycles, while others can hardly

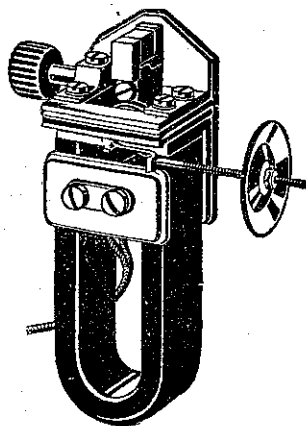
perceive tones higher than 5000 cycles. Such limitations of the hearing faculty made radio reception a matter of psychology as well as of acoustics. The early types of reproducers or loud-speakers were not acoustically capable of accurately reproducing low notes. When such a note was played in the broadcasting studio, it was reproduced not as a tone of the same frequency but as a harmonic of this tone. Such tones sound "tinny" and the listener becomes mentally fatigued without knowing the exact reason why. His mind unconsciously "manufactures" from the harmonic the fundamental tone it represents.

Since the lower notes are not received, the music is high pitched, and prolonged listening to it is tiresome, although here again the listener may not be conscious of the reason.

THE State Radio Society of Denmark pays a subsidy of 5½ millions annually to the Royal Theatre.

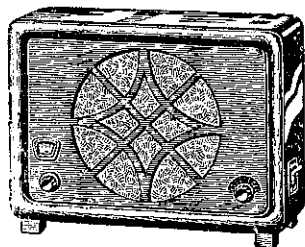


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Electricity and Civilisation

Marvels of Science

WE live in an age dominated by science (remarks an English writer). Because we live so rapidly we rarely pause to think about the marvels which enable us to do so much, but if we do we are struck by one very forcible fact. Of the many discoveries of modern science, which means most to us?

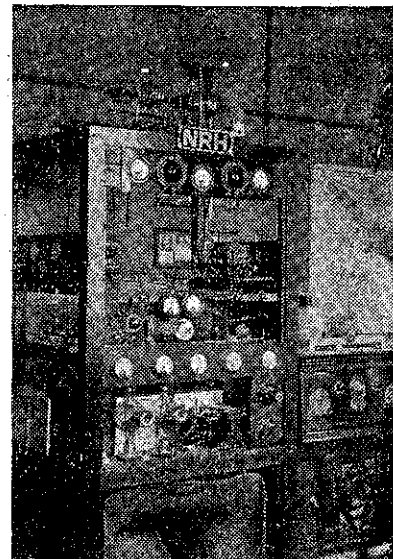
Electricity, surely. By means of electricity we can drive a sewing-machine or a battleship. That little torch the doctor uses to examine your throat—it is lit by the same means as the Paris Opera and the street lamp. Electricity enables us to talk to our stockbroker across the street and send our S.O.S. across the world at the pace of 186,000 miles per second! It will warm your sitting-room, it will cook your breakfast, and it will shatter crude ores and make them disgorge their molten metal for the uses of man.

A Realistic Radio Play

MUCH consternation was occasioned in Berlin recently through circulation of a rumour stating that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Curtius, had been murdered in Geneva. It was subsequently discovered that the broadcasting of a realistic radio play entitled "The Minister Murdered" had been taken by the majority of listeners as actually true.

Japanese Broadcasting Develops

SINCE the Broadcasting Corporation of Japan has taken over the control of the radio system in that country, its development has greatly progressed. At present there are over 700,000 registered licenses, thus ensuring an income of 8,500,000 yens (approximately £850,000). Ten-kilowatt stations have been erected at Tokio, Osaka, Nagoya, Hiroshima, Kumamoto, Sendai and Sapporo and a further six smaller relays will be in operation shortly.



The transmitter of the famous little Costa Rica station, NRH, about which an article appears on page 13.