

Filling In Report Cards

Short-Wave Club Lectures



THE first monthly meeting of the New Zealand Short Wave Club, held on Wednesday, March 18, was a great success. The room at the Y.M.C.A. was packed to capacity with short-wave enthusiasts, including several transmitters, and altogether a very enjoyable evening was spent. The chair was occupied by Mr. F. W. Sellens.

It was suggested by the secretary that special representatives of the club should be elected in each centre to look after the affairs of the club generally. This suggestion was the subject of a short discussion, but when Mr. Donnelly placed it before the meeting, as a motion, seconded by Mr. Saunders, it was carried without dissent.

The attraction of the evening was two lectures, one by Mr. Roy Clarke (2AW) and one by Mr. S. H. Perry (2BC). The latter demonstrated the strength of the "R" signals, and, in this, was assisted by Mr. Olive Iddell (2B1).

The following notes represent observations from both lectures. Report cards are of great importance to transmitters, whether they be amateur or professional, and their compilation is a matter where accuracy is the prime requirement. Right from the onset the listener, intent on bagging a number of Q.S.L. (acknowledgement) cards should refrain from over-exaggeration and over-enthusiasm in reporting on a station. If the transmission is being received badly do not hesitate to say it, but it is not necessary to go so far as to say what the trouble is considered to be (should this appear to lie in the transmitter). Often the operator, having accurate meters, is more in a position to know how the signals will be received than the person who is receiving them. What he wants is collaboration and locality reports.

For the convenience of those sending in a report, listeners' Q.S.L. cards are issued by both the Short Wave Club and the N.Z.A.R.T. The card of the Short Wave Club, which is reproduced here, is obtainable by all bona fide members of the club. For broadcast

DX-ers, the "Radio Record" is preparing a special Q.S.L. letter.

The Report Card.

GOING through the items on the card we find that it is in the first place distinctive. This is important, for each station endeavours to attain some degree of originality, and when a wall is covered with a large number of artistic cards from all over the world

R—Audibility.

- R1—Faint signals; just readable.
- 2—Weak signals; barely readable.
- 3—Weak signals; but can be copied.
- 4—Fair signals; easily readable.
- 5—Moderately strong signals.
- 6—Good signals.
- 7—Good strong signals; readable through QRM and QRN.
- 8—Very strong; readable several feet away from phones.
- 9—Extremely strong signals.

it is indeed attractive. The Short Wave Club's card will be in two colours.

Upon the card is space for the address of both the receiving and transmitting stations and their calls. In the case of the Short Wave Club, all stations are designated by the excellent system of numbering which uses the letters N.Z., a number, and a district letter. Thus Mr. Donnelly, who has the honour of being the first person to join, will use the number NZ1W (W for Wellington).

The date is of paramount importance. An undated report is quite useless, and will not bring back the desired reply card.

Nor is it of much value without the time the transmission was received. It is much better to state this in the time of the country of origin, but in doing this there are pitfalls in the way of

summer-time adjustments, but if it is stated that the time is standard for the country or district of origin, there is little chance of confusion. The calculation of time is not easy, but the "Radio Record" d.x. clock will solve the problem. Where there is any doubt convert into Greenwich standard time or local standard time and say this. Space is provided under "HRD."

It is usual to state whether the transmission is in Morse (C.W. for continuous wave) or speech and music (Pone for phone), and the type of receiver used. Generally speaking, in the case of factory sets it is enough to state the make and type, but in the case of the home-made sets other information is required. State the name of the circuit and the number of valves dividing them up into radio, det. and audio. The usual set is the Schnell detector and one audio. With this it is possible to "comb the world," as Mr. Clarke puts it. Another audio valve puts the signals of the stronger stations on the speaker.

When commenting on quality, it is important to state the make of transformer used. Thus the transmitter receiving a report from a listener saying that his quality was lacking in bass and stated that he was using a certain make of transformer that was known to the engineer to cut off the bass he would be able to interpret that report in a different sense.

There is space for general remarks, but the essential facts required are listed separately, in abbreviations. The amateur transmitter uses many abbreviations, some of which sound rather strange to those not accustomed to them. These are employed solely to save space and time. The amateur is advised to use them in filling in cards, as not only are both time and space saved, but the receiving station immediately recognises that the listener knows something about the game, and that his report can be accepted as having some weight. This not only ensures a reply card, but also a prompt and courteous reply. Furthermore, the language can be understood by transmitters of all nationalities the world over.

Travelling down the individual items on the Short Wave Club's card, the terms are:

Q.R.N. (static) is graduated into free, light, bad, etc. This is fairly important, for if, later on, it is stated that signal strength is, say, R6, it indicates that, were there no static, the signal would be much stronger, for it is often necessary to tone down the set to receive signals when static is bad. The listener should tune off the station being received and estimate the amount of static without a station, then turn back and see how the station is being affected or how the static appears to be affected by the station. Q.R.M. is interference. This is important for the same reason as static. It denotes interference from electrical devices, other stations, etc. Q.S.A.: Readability or the ability of

the listener to distinguish the Morse or the speech, etc. Although to some extent it is dependent upon audibility, it is quite distinct. Because a station comes in at R8 it cannot be taken for granted that readability is perfect. Often this is as low as 2 or 3 on the Q.S.A. scale, and the listener should not hesitate to state this. "R" Audibility. Denoted by the numbers 1 to 9. R10 never appears, for it is the maximum, and in Wellington could be taken as the signal of 2YA. Should another louder station come along, it would be necessary to revise the numbers so, for this reason, R10 must never be used. R9 is the strength of a good local, and from this the grades go down with fairly big steps to R1, which is just readable. Though intended for phones, the terms can be applied to speaker reception, and it must be stated clearly which the numbers refer to.

Q.S.B. means "Do the signals waver?" and includes fading, fluctuating, or rise and fall due to other causes.

QRH means the wavelength heard upon. If possible give to the nearest metre, otherwise quote the band used viz., 3.5 m.c. (80 m.), 7 m.c. (40 m.), 14 m.c. (20 m.), 28 m.c. (10 m.). 4MC denoting megacycles. It is safer to state the band upon which the station is heard rather than the exact wavelength, as this is often hard to determine.

QRI means tone which in C.W. grades from PDC (clear, high-pitched, sweet, and no ripple), DC (a stage less perfect), NDC (high-pitched whistle, but ripple noticeable), fBAC (decided AC ripple, but some whistle in the note), RAC (rough, no whistle, poorly filtered signal).

Modulation. This is a difficult matter to assess, and it is folly to tell the

QSA—Readability.

QSA1—Hardly perceptible; unreadable.

2—Weak; readable in patches.

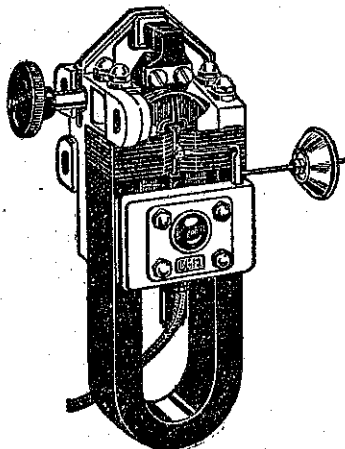
3—Fairly good; readable with difficulty.

4—Good readable signals.

5—Very good signals; perfectly readable.

A carefully prepared card is always welcome—a poorly filled one is a waste of time and money.

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engineer what percentage of modulation his wave is; he can do that much better than the listener. A well-modulated station can be received with the reaction condenser well back from the oscillating point.

In filling in any report it is essential that the terms used should be comparative. If the listener is in a bad district, and does not receive any stations well, this should be mentioned, and if a station is known to both transmitter and receiver it should be used as a basis of comparison. Thus, a listener out of Wellington could compare the station with 2YA, which could be always taken as a standard. It is not much use, however, telling an American engineer that he was louder than 2YA.