

Radio Means More Than Entertainment

Recently, Mr. E. T. Fisk, speaking from 2FC, Sydney, officially opened the Perth Radio Exhibition. A few years ago this task, which now is looked upon almost as commonplace, would have been regarded as more wonderful than the Magic Carpet. In his opening remarks, reproduced below, Mr. Fisk traverses the salient features in the development of radio communication, particularly as regards Australia and New Zealand. We are isolated countries and we little realise how much radio means to us.

THE sounds you hear at the present moment are caused by small electrical impulses which have travelled along a wire more than 2000 miles in length, forming a continuous physical connection between the city of Sydney and the city of Perth. With the aid of electricity and electrical waves my voice, which normally could be heard only over a radius of a few yards, is now being listened to across this great distance and over an area of thousands of square miles. Each syllable spoken here in the Australian Broadcasting Company's studio in Sydney is reproduced in Perth in approximately one-ninetieth part of a second of time. To the human senses this would appear to be instantaneous. By such means distance is overcome and isolation is destroyed.

Many of the problems which are troubling the world to-day are due to the distances separating human beings in ideas as much as in physical geography. Confusion in action arising out of confusion in thought is due to great numbers of people viewing their common problems from different aspects and being unable to understand each other's point of view.

Although such difficulties appear to have grown more intense in recent years, the scientific and industrial development of electrical communication is advancing with even greater strides, and there is not the slightest doubt that the rapid progress being made in wireless throughout the world will be one of the greatest factors in bringing peace and harmony to the human family. Everything possible must be done to stimulate and foster the development of this great art and this important industry. Such development can be encouraged best by allowing the individuality and enterprise of our people the fullest practicable measure of freedom, by encouraging technical skill and invention on the one hand and commercial adventure and enterprise on the other hand.

Wireless communication offers greater advantages to Australia perhaps than any other country in the world, and in these days when we are compelled to dwell almost constantly upon our real or imaginary shortcomings as a nation, it is pleasing to be able to say authoritatively that in Europe, Asia, Africa and America Australia is well and favourably known as holding a position among the advanced countries of the world in all branches of radio and wireless.

There are people still living in Australia who can recall the days when the only means of communication between this country and Great Britain was by a laboriously written manuscript carried



Mr. E. T. Fisk, of Sydney, one of the most outstanding figures in contemporary radio. Through his initiative the wireless telephone and Beam wireless have been brought to Australia and New Zealand.

by sailing ships on perilous voyages occupying from three to six months. Moreover, as soon as one of those ships was lost to sight over the horizon friends and relatives of those on board were totally ignorant of the good, or bad, fate of the voyagers until some other sailing vessel brought tidings from a distant port weeks, or perhaps months, later.

About 50 years ago the first cable connection was made between Australia and England, and, although the methods of communication employed in those early cables are now obsolete and messages frequently occupied many days in transit, the cable was faster and more certain than the best mail packet by wind and sail.

Time does not permit of historical details, but it is well worthy of mention that Great Britain pioneered the Eastern cable to Australia, while Canada pioneered the Pacific cable to Australia, and Australia pioneered direct wireless communication between the heart of the Empire and all the Dominions.

UPON the opening of the Beam Wireless service between Australia and England a late postmaster-general of Great Britain stated:

"Ever since the scheme of an Imperial wireless chain was first discussed Australia has led the way."

Those who can in their own experience or by study look backward 50 or 60 years and make the necessary comparisons will see at one end of that period Australia as an isolated country, far removed from the world's great centres, both in distance and in time, and at the other end a modern community equipped with an efficient Beam Wireless system capable of transmitting messages almost instantaneously across half the earth operated at high speed by automatic machinery and handling millions of words of commercial, social and news telegrams per annum. To-day, in addition to these Beam services working direct to London and Montreal, we also have a wireless telephone service, through which approximately half a million ordinary telephones in homes or offices throughout Australia can be used for direct personal conversation with any one of approximately thirty million homes or office telephone users in Great Britain, on the Continent of Europe and in North America. Ships at sea in all parts of the world, including the great Atlantic "greyhounds," are able to communicate direct with our up-to-date Australian coastal wireless stations. Most of the British possessions in the Pacific Islands are in regular communication with Australia through our commercial wireless services. Wireless is employed from police headquarters in many of our capital cities in touch

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