

WHEN me neighbor starts to put up a aerial stick I knew it was time I gave 'im a few 'ints on radio reception. Believin' in comfort, I carried our dust tin down the garden for a seat. The wind blowin' the other way didn't make it unpleasant for either of us. He was busy knockin' two sticks together, when I said to be sociable like:

"Broadcastin' is a wunnerful business!"

"Yes," said 'e, "and it's only in its infancy!"

"Yer read that in the papers," I said. "Personally I reckons it's in its dotage, and for why? Because the 'ole business is a fake from A to Z, in all its P's and Q's, in the three R's, in everything except the £ s. d.

"That there inventor, Macaroni, started the business, and it's the biggest bluff since Julius Caesar built the pyramids to run into when the Babylonians started bombin' Palestine. He told the newspapers it was a museum to put mummies in, and everybody believed it.

"Well, this 'ere Macaroni chap explains it some-thin' like this. The lady soprano singer exercises her laryngitis in song in front of the microscope in the study. The voice goes along a 'ollow wire to the radio company's engine room, where the noises are shot into the atmospheric conditions prevailing—and go bumping along from wave to wave. Who ever seen waves that 'igh? Nobody did! They says, of course, these are invisible waves, what nobody ever seen. Yet somebody draws a picture of them for the 'Radio Record' a few weeks back!

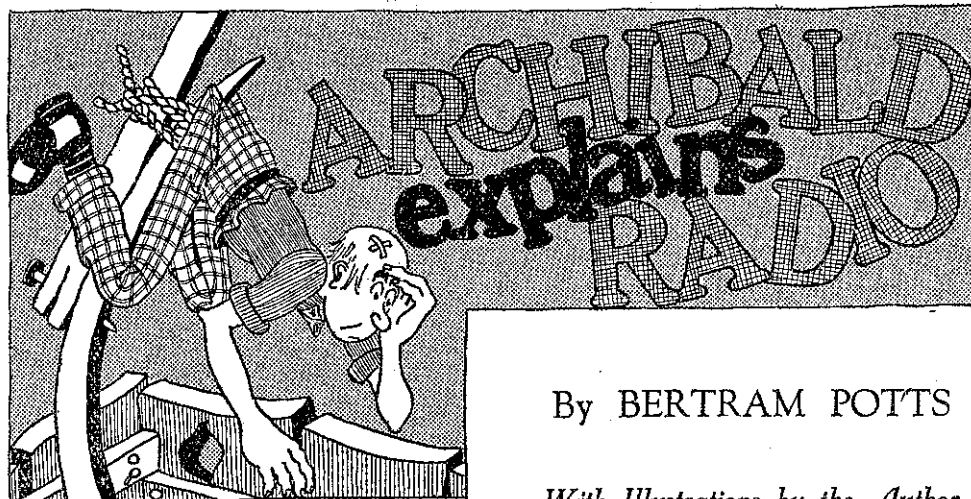
"If you 'ave a aerial stick in yer back garden, the sounds, what 'ave been 'ornpipin' along the waves, spot it in the distance, 'ops on to the wire, and slides right to yer set, and into some electric light globes, what don't even give enough light to read by! I reckon that there Macaroni 'as shares in every electric light works were globes are made.

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"ANYWAY, I'm tellin' yer what the papers says and not what I think. After the voice goes through the globes, it's supposed to get condensed in the condenser. What rot! 'Ave yer ever opened one of them there condensers? I've seen condensed milk, but never a condensed concerto. What did I find when I opened one?—just bits of tin and wire!"

'E asked me to give 'im a 'and to put the pole up and for ten minutes we was busy fixin' guy ropes and such like. When every-thin' was fast, 'e discovered 'e 'ad not tied his wire on the top. I offered to climb up, bein' light, but it was a mad sort of pole. It started to bend, and he said "drop off" or it would break. Wat with tryin' to let go and 'ang on at the same time, I got 'ung up by the pants on the sharp end of the lower post, where 'e 'ad tied the top part on. I felt a jackass tryin' to 'ang up with dignity. 'E 'ad the 'ide to laugh and I got annoyed. 'E tried standin' on the fence to lift me down, and in the end 'e cut me pants and let me drop off. Anyway I fell on 'is best cabbages and 'e got annoyed when I laughed.

In the end we fixed the aerial sticks before it got dark—and we listened in after tea. There was somethin' wrong with the set, for



By BERTRAM POTTS

With Illustrations by the Author

'e could 'ear nothin'. 'E 'ad a little workshop under the 'ouse, and we went there to adjust somethin'.

"I was tellin' you this afternoon," I said, "about the kidstake the radio folks puts over. The voice when it comes out of the condenser is very small now and looks round for the transformalin gadget where it's disinfected in case the singer 'as adenoids or

tonsolititis. This process is supposed to transform it—and in spite of what they says it don't get transformed at all, for it is still a voice when it comes out like it was when it went in!

"Well, when the soprano solo or quarto, or whatever it is, comes out of the transformer it is ready for the loudspeaker, as if it wasn't good enough when it was fust sung. It pops along a wire and when it sees that it 'as come to the end it drops off into the same song, what it was singin' when it fust left the study! What I wants to know is, how does the voice know which song it is, when it ain't got any brain to remember with? And why don't the second verse come through fust sometimes when they all go together into the accumulator? That's never been answered!

"I ET me tell yer the truth about the broadcastin' business and 'ow radio really works. The fust time I suspected something was wrong and fishy was when I visited a friend's set. He twisted the 'andles round and presently we 'eard some music. 'It's Three-'Ello Melbourne,' 'e says. Just then the music stopped and a man says it's '2YA, Wellington, now closin' down. G-o-o-o-o-d night' like as if 'e were paid by the minute and 'e was tryin' to get some overtime by makin' it spin out. Known' as it couldn't be the set what 'ad told a lie, it must 'ave been the station-pronouncer what 'ad forgot what station he was supposed to shout out. Anyway it filled me 'ead with doubts.

"Listen!" I continues. "I reckons when yer fills in the paper for a license, they secretly connects yer 'ouse up unbeknown to yer with 'ollow pipes. What's the army of men for diggin' in the road all over the town and country? I seen more trenches in Wellington than I seen in France and Belgium. They says it's the water or the gas! But most of them's broadcastin' men puttin' tubes into the streets. As soon as they knows yer thinks of buyin' a radio—for no man can keep it to 'imself—they connects yer 'ouse up on the quiet, and the inspector comes along and there yer are!"



"'Ow is it pirates get music without tellin' nobody?" asks 'e.

"Where do they buy the light bulbs for the set," I retorts, "the resistances and the static? At a shop! Well, what's to prevent the shopkeeper followin' them

'ome and there yer are! They work 'and in mouth with the navvies what connect the 'ouses with the 'ollow pipes.

I was standin' on a box tryin' to find the 'idden broadcastin' wire that I knew must be somewhere under the 'ouse, when I slipped off on to me 'ead, so I 'ad to go 'ome. It was a pity, for I could see 'e was not convinced, him not bein' a thinkin' type of man.

Yours faithfully,
ARCHIBALD.