

STATIC

by
"SPARK"

I HAVE read that the parabolic "mike" gathers sounds from varying distances and makes a coherent ensemble, but being as a child in the matter of microphones and their scientific placing, I am diffident about suggesting that such an instrument might have been useful at the Symphony Orchestra's last memorable concert. In the organ concerto there was a very irritating lag in the organ, which was the more regrettable as the work was so ably performed. I would not suggest that this was due to our city organist being unable to keep pace with the conductor, who was afar off. The mirrored reflection of the beat travelled at the speed of light, but there is no doubt about the notes of the violins arriving at the microphone before the notes from the organ. Listeners unaware of the placing of the orchestra with reference to the organ, might be led to think that the orchestral unit was endeavouring to finish first. It appears to me that if the pipes of the organ were damped with cotton wool the instrument might be moved into the orchestral stalls and thus not suffer the handicap of being placed behind scratch. "1812" did not impress me one little bit. Frankly it was too beefy for my loud speaker.

ETHER was once defined by Lord Salisbury as a word designed to provide a nominative case for the verb "to undulate." Dr. W. F. G. Swann, of the Franklin Institute, has now Americanised this as follows: "The ether is a medium invented by man for the purpose of propagating his misconceptions from one place to another. Of all suitable fluids invented for the stimulation of the imagination, it is the only one which, so far, has not been prohibited."

AT short notice Dr. J. Hight took the place of Dr. Hansen at 3YA and expanded his recent talk on "London and New York." Dr. Hight is always interesting, and in these brief talks he has been delightful. In his appreciation of New York's architecture, which the American has cause to be proud of, and some cause for patriotic boasting, the Professor has not failed to value the utility characteristic of the city's great and wonderful creations. His very English audience in Christchurch might have suffered some pain, however, when reference was made to the symphonies in stone that England glories in. These were built by our common ancestors and the American is thus permitted to take as much pride in them as we may. I'm sure Dr. Hight has not exhausted the sub-

The Week's Best Par

Dad on Wireless

DAD, who is a great wireless enthusiast, is wont to read aloud any new radio advertisement that he may see in the newspapers. The other evening he had just commenced to read aloud: "What can you get on *your* radio," when Ma turned round as though she was waiting for this opportunity and quietly informed him that, as a rule, she gets about six "Radio Records," a "Radio Guide," several newspapers, pen and paper, and also his pipe and tobacco on our radio every morning. Dad has taken the hint and now our radio is always tidy in the mornings.—"Suesette."

This paragraph won for "Suesette" Spark's 5/- prize, which is awarded to the best original par of the week. Address "Spark," Box 1032, Wellington.

ject, and everybody would like to hear more of the "pincushion in profile."

THE broadcasting position in Europe is causing much concern to all affected interests and the proceedings of the International Wireless Convention, to be held in Madrid next month will have the attention of all broadcasters. Everywhere there appears to be a race for aerial power supremacy. Ireland has just completed her Athlone 60 k.w. station, which may in the future be increased to 120 k.w. Germany is about to see the realisation of her plan, with the 150 k.w. stations in Hamburg and Berlin and the completion of stations ranging from 50 to 150 k.w. in Leipzig, Breslau and Munich. Poland has her 157 k.w. transmitter, Denmark one in the 100 k.w. class, and Luxembourg is erecting a station, for sponsored programmes, that will have an aerial energy of 200 k.w. In addition to the new regional station at Falkirk of 60 k.w., Britain proposes building two more super-powered stations, and the Ferrie plan for France, which proposes to establish stations in the 100 k.w. class all over the country, in a manner similar to that obtaining in Britain and Germany, is merely awaiting stability in political circles for the materialisation of the programme. Italy has almost completed her network of super-power stations; Hungary is replacing her 20 k.w. transmitter with one of 150 k.w. rating, and a

network of subsidiary stations. Norway and Sweden have an increased power plan and Spain is awaiting a favourable opportunity to establish a national network of stations ranging from 10 k.w. to 100 k.w. In Europe to-day quite simple sets can receive stations a thousand miles distant, although separation is difficult. The crowding of the waveband allows a channel of 9 kilocycles and interference is common with the increase in aerial power. Added to these disturbing problems is the Russian plan to compel Western Europe to listen to her propaganda. The Soviet stations at Moscow and Leningrad are a continual source of annoyance to listeners in other parts of Europe, and possibly interfere greatly with her own stations as well. Russia does not belong to the International Broadcasting Union and in consequence has not accepted the terms of the Prague Agreement, which regulate the wave length and suggest a limit of 150 k.w. power. Russia uses any wavelength and her new main stations are said to have a power of 300 k.w. Representations have been made to Russia by the diplomatic corps of various countries without avail, and Russia's extremely aggressive political propaganda is disseminated wirelessly throughout Europe in the more commonly spoken languages. All protests are met with increased activities and it is stated that new stations of 1000 k.w. and over are contemplated. How the Madrid Convention will propose to subjugate the Russian remains to be seen.

RESUMING his talks on "Man and His Social Institutions," Professor T. A. Hunter, from 2YA, subtitled his last talk, "Poverty in an Age of Plenty," and in this it was clearly shown how man's permanent institutions may be a hindrance to his social progress. In preceding talks it was shown how man organised his institutions to support and preserve the individual and the race. Attention was directed to the contradiction of the modern world which had progressed so marvellously in the application of physical science, but which had failed to progress to a similar degree in social science. In other ages man's economic theories had been dominated by an idea of scarcity. This had good reason for existence. For tens of thousands of years primitive man spent practically the whole of his life trying to satisfy hunger.

Even when our ancestors settled down to cultivate the agricultural arts disasters were frequent, and although one region might have been ample, other parts suffered from famine and limited transport means were unable to adjust a balance. Storage and saving therefore became innate in man and his economic theories were reflected from this characteristic.

Times, however, have changed, and the difficulty is the recognition of this fact. The problem of production has undergone a revolution, but the problem of distribution remains to be solved. Man has now the power to produce enough for all, and his means of transport are capable of dealing with any difficulty that may arise in respect to regional scarcity.

The present generation has grown up in a world of science and is unaware of the revolution that has taken place, as may be seen by the practical non-adjustment to social institutions that the change demands. As an instance of this change it is estimated that the work done annually in the United States would require the physical energy of 3000 million slaves were it not for the application of science to production. This estimate is based upon present day business principles, which are by no means perfect, and it is contended that by the application of scientific principles production could be still further very largely increased—and this in addition to the destruction of commodities that accompanies a fall in prices. Even this country has a carry-over of 200,000 bales of wool, and charity asks for old woollen garments to keep some of its citizens warm.

In an age of plenty we live in an