

# STATIC

by  
"SPARK"

WHEN Mr. Gordon Short announced at the Hutt Liedertafel Concert (2YA) that he would play as a recall number "Musical Box," I'm sorry he did not describe what such a thing was. As the invention of the phonograph put the kybosh on the development of this mechanical musical instrument, there are more people who have not seen one than there are who have. I owned one long before the gramophone era. It was a nicely polished wooden box about eight inches long with a glass lid, and it emitted several tunes, two of which were "The Bluebells of Scotland" and "The Keel Row," so I think it must have come from North Britain. Inside the box was a brass rolling-pin thing, with the handles cut off and a piece sawn off each end. That is, it was a trifle shorter than the parallel part of a rolling pin. The roller had whiskers, not flowing ones, because they were of hard steel of low percentage ductility, but just as though it had not been shaved for three days. Alongside the rolling pin affair was another gadget like the elongated blade of a hair clipper. This gadget was a bit different though, for when you looked at it from the treble end the teeth became shorter as they receded, as though you saw it in abrupt perspective or through a kind of unanastigmatic lens. If all the teeth had been the same length, when you wound the rolling pin thing up you would have got one sound only and the time of the piece. When it went the teeth didn't go through the whiskers like a hair clipper reversed because the whiskers would have stopped it if they didn't break off. If they broke off there wouldn't have been any tune at all. Mine had several teeth bent or broken off, so it sounded very realistic and like a performer with poorly developed technique. It may be that only those who have seen one of these mechanical marvels will recognise this word picture, and as it is hard to explain, I can now understand why Mr. Short omitted to try.

WHEN listening to Mr. Drummond reading the news one evening last week, I was surprised to hear that the Australian police had recently made a "new" discovery, that Chinese were importing counterfeit Australian silver coins, mostly shillings, into the Commonwealth. We were informed that Australian silver coinage was very cheap in China, and anyone trafficking in the real article could make a profit of eight per cent. China has had twenty years of revolution, and that says mighty little for

## "Stations Identified"

THIS true story wins "Spark's" weekly 5/- prize for the best paragraph:—

An amateur dxer, having just purchased a radio, naturally spent a lot of sleepless nights seeing what the ether had to offer. Asked how he was progressing, he replied: "Fine; I have had the Japs., Manila, Bombay, etc." Asked how he identified them, he said: "Oh! I heard a noise at the frequency the salesman said they ought to be."

our big neighbour's currency. What intrigued me was the information that after exhaustive assaying it was found that the spurious "deeners" were three per cent. deficient in silver content. It therefore appears to me that China's revolution has been responsible for the time-honoured profession of counterfeiting in that country passing into the hands of simple thieves. Somehow I cannot believe that the discovery is a new one, unless it refers to the shortage of silver in the coinage, and it seems to me that the Australian police are merely reiterating to the public what clever fellows they are. The business has been going on for generations, and the traffic from China to Australia is not always by the direct route. Many an innocent traveller at Port Said and Colombo, after making purchases, chiefly rubbish, from native "box-wallers" has demanded British or Australian silver for change and often thereby absorbed a little of the counterfeiters' output. Most of the imitative Australian currency, manufactured very likely in Canton, goes direct to its projected destination and, being exact in weight, stamping and fineness—the traffic is a difficult one to stop. The intrinsic value of silver coinage is seldom worth more than a fraction of the face value, and recently the amount of silver in a two-shilling piece could be bought for a few pence. It therefore seems to me an amateurish sort of trick to endeavour to palm off short-weight and risk breaking a good connection. I have seen barrels full of silver coinage in China, reputed to have never seen its supposed country of origin, awaiting shipment to Australia and other countries, and I cannot believe that the Australian police have just heard about it. Now that a mild interest has been aroused in the business the Australian police should turn it to commercial account. A film showing all the ramifications of the industry, with a bright young

heroine awakening a Rip Van Winkle policeman to the Chinaman's wily ways, should prove a draw and advertise the police astuteness more than a cable message.

ON looking at the names of lectures and their subjects for broadcast from the YA stations this week, I was impressed by the appropriateness or otherwise of some of them. For instance, I notice that Mr. Woodyear Smith is to give us seasonal notes, and Mr. H. F. Toogood is to speak on the economics of rural roads. Any Wellington motorist will say that any rural road is better than Lower Tinakori Road, but we shall have to hear what Mr. Toogood says before we can judge whether rural roads are too good or not. Then again, we are to have Dr. H. D. Broadhead continue his address upon social life of ancient Greece. Mr. J. L. Passmore's name may be appropriate to his talk on motor regulations, and I shall be interested to learn whether he urges the Government to pass more regulations, or whether he urges the car owner to step on it. In the talk on the depression of the eighties—and after, Dr. W. Boroman may possibly tell us if our popular policy has been the right one, and every listener will be repaid for giving Dr. Boroman attention.

WHEN speaking for Mr. Lloyd Ross, Mr. R. McIvor (4YA) gave some very interesting facts concerning our present day economic problem in connection with the fallacy that more money was needed. In this talk it was clearly shown that an expanded currency would not adjust the balance and rectify the evils that arise from an unscientific method of distribution. The contention held by some that the banks were not functioning by reason of withholding credit was shown to be absurd, and the instance of the German inflation was pointed to as an example that demonstrated that more money does not solve this very intri-

cate problem. The W.E.A. lectures on this subject are always most illuminating, and it is a pity that static and fading so often spoil reception at this distance.

EVERY girl who loves chocolate creams may have listened to Dr. Guy H. Scholefield (2YA) with sympathy for the whale, which man's ruthlessness for commercial gain threatens to exterminate. Every girl can show practical sympathy by refusing chocolate cream made from whale oil. The grubby little boy is not usually particular where his sweets originate, but seeing that by woman's decree, the young white heron is allowed to live and great plumes no longer adorn their hats, the big sea mammals would have a longer purchase of life if the girls knew how much cream was made from whale oil.

THE Christchurch Community Singers have every cause to be elated at the success attending their sings and in being proud that their smaller city can at times beat Wellington's takings. £33 cash collected, with articles for later sale and a donation of \$40 worth of milk is a good haul for one day, and one may wonder if the success is not largely due to the Mayor's attendance in the appeal for his fund. I think that that had a great deal to do with it. Of course it may be because the Mayor is an M.P., and to try this out, all community singers could request that their local M.P.'s should come along and see what they could do. I know Dan Foley draws more than one three-penny bit in Christchurch, and Wellington can be proud of that, but if Dan continues to respond so freely to encores he will have shortly to enlarge his repertoire. The real test of Christchurch generosity will come when it has been combed as long as Wellington has by Owen Pritchard and Company, and if the Christchurch City Council starts to sell petrified and rather dear milk, that will be one item Wellington won't have to consider in gaining her capital position.

LEARNING to aviate by broadcast, under the wing of the Vacuum Oil Company from 2ZW was a novel and good show, so the next morning I fed my benzine buggy with Plume. It's not getting any Laurel kerosene to drink though as the smell hangs round too long.

SURELY the Wellington Automobile Club could supply its secretary with better avian data than that which emanated from 2YA. Mr.