The Phonographic Record

The Journal of The Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

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VOLUME 16 ISSUE 6

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

At the last meeting of the Vintage Phonograph Society it was agreed that a notice of motion to raise Subscriptions to $7.00 be carried to its annual meeting.

Supplies of spare parts have increased of late and we have been fortunate to be able to fill all orders for petal horns.

We have good supplies of metal grills for Amberola 30's, and reproducer holding screws for Edison models. We would like to thank all those who wrote in reply to our request for needle roller bearing to fit Edison Standard. We are grateful for the number of replies.

Could we make another request and this is for more material for inclusion in this; your magazine.

We are pleased to advise that the following items have been recently supplied to our stock of parts.

Gem Cranes
Cast Foot Assembly (Plated)
Legs for Carrying Handles
Thread Screw Covers
Leather Driving Belts
Transfers "Thomas A. Edison"
"Edison" Suitable for Cases
Gold Lines
Petal Horns
Witches Hat type Horns
Leather Elbow
Amberola 30 Front Grille
Amberola 30 Top Grille
Posters 4 Varieties Good Value at 50c each
Needles Limited Supply (Loud tone)
Pennants (Suitable for Blazers etc. two varieties)
HMV Screw and Clamp Sets
Gem Lid Screws
Edison Reproducer Screws
Records $5.99 each
Great Sounds of the Century
Old Time Dancing: Ivy Moloney Dance Band 33 1/3 L.P.

Parts, Records, and posters are dispatched to members the third week of each month. Postage is not included in any of the above mentioned items.

AMBEROLA 30

On my last visit to Auckland I was able to bring back a very nice model Amberola 30 with a Woledge stand.

These were kindly donated by Mrs Webb whose husband (Bill Webb) is a founder member of the Society. Bill is now a resident of the Auckland Masonic Hospital. The Woledge stand is one of many manufactured in Christchurch and sold by the late C. E. Woledge for $6.00. These were made of solid oak and made in such a way that they could be dismantled for transfer and reassembled again where needed. This we had to do to bring the Society's one home by Air along with 40 cylinders.

We would like to say a very grateful thankyou to Mrs Webb for such a generous donation.

It was agreed at our last meeting to have a small metal plate made and attached to this machine in honour of the donor.

ILLUSTRATIONS

WOLEDGE PEDESTAL:

Mr C. E. Woledge designed this type of stand for the Amberola 30 Cabinet Cylinder machine. He sold them in his shop for £3.00) i.e. $6.00 and as far as we know were only sold in New Zealand.

The one given to us by Mr Webb is among the few that have been discovered and we have no idea how many were manufactured.

N.B. Three illustrations of this Pedestal are included on the illustrations page in this issue.

SAVOYARD:

Bill Hoffman, a keen collector of early radio and phonographs, has kindly sent to us an unusual illustration of a music box which he calls a "SAVOYARD". He says (shown in the illustration):— The boy's hand holds the crank in the rear and appears to be playing the organ, his wrist is joined to the handle to allow the hand to turn.

The box is really a 12 inch Poloyphon Box.

The boy is a Terra cotta colour and very colourful. One of his nicer pieces.

(Information and illustration supplied by Bill Hoffman).

TALKING DOLLS:

On the left of the illustration is Mrs Gene Ballard with her eldest Granddaughter Barbara. Barbara is holding a Kay Starr talking doll while Mrs Ballard, herself, is holding the other.

Both dolls belong to the Ballard collection. Also illustrated is a pull string talking doll that says "Mama" and "Papa". The doll has a bisque head and glass eyes, cork plate under its wig, and pierced ears.

The composition body has been cut open for insertion of the voice box.

There are today modern dolls of this Type which with the aid of a small record inside say a wide range of words at the pull of a string.

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BERLINER DISC PHONOGRAPHS

1904 Intermediate Monarch No. 47:

Another model from Larry Schlick's excellent collection. This, an English Victor, has a round identification decal clearly visable on the side of the case, to the right of the winding handle.

The working on the decal is "Intermediate Monarch Gramophone". The case, which is about the same size as the Victor II, measures 13½" x 13½" by 6" high.

The metal horn measures 23" long with an 18" flare.

Further information, on this or other models would be appreciated.

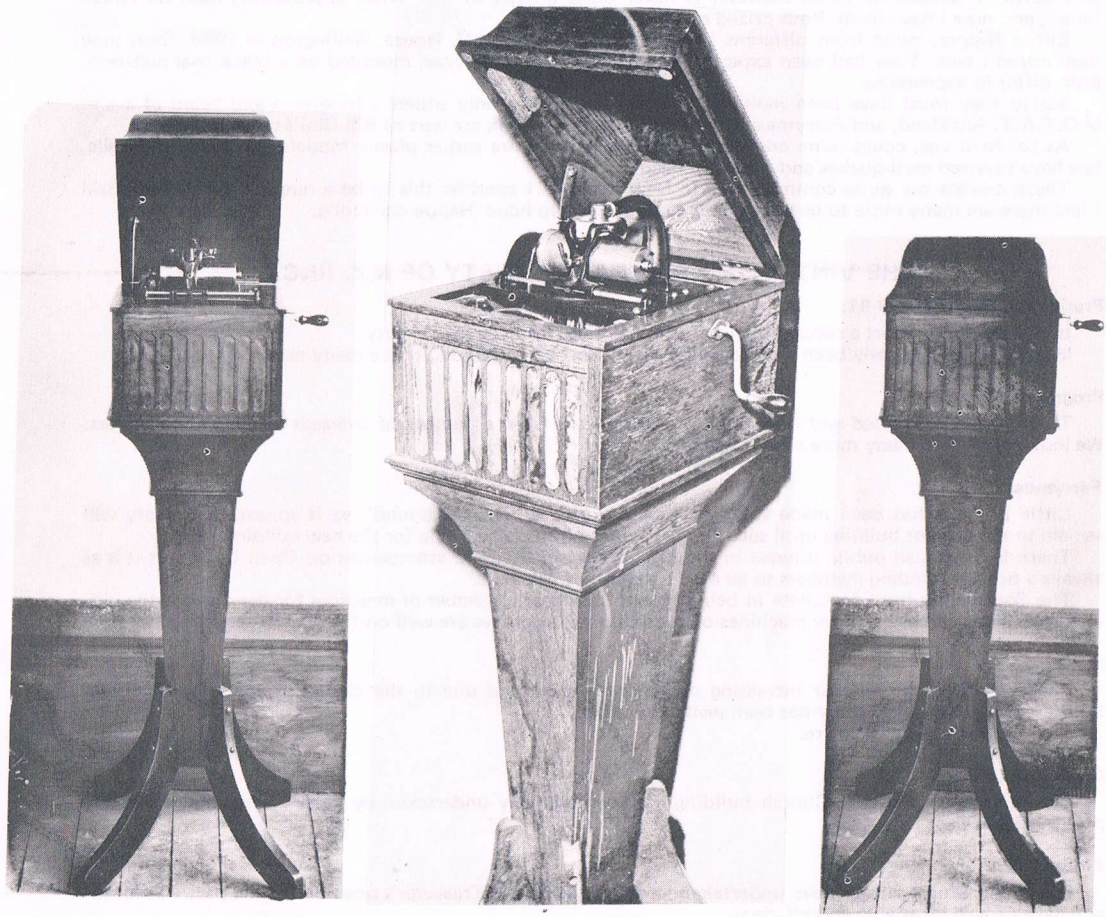
WHERE HAVE ALL THE NIPPERS' GONE?
by Mark Dawson

Having acquired the collectors' bug there had always been one record shop, that always caught my attention.

Displayed inside, high up on a shelf sat two perky looking Nipper plaster dogs which to now I thought never existed. Up there in Napier earthquake country. Feeling rather envious, I enquired 'boldly' to the assistant on hand at the time seeking if I could acquire both. The reply was of course a flat no! I practically gave up hope.

Recently, though through another leisure time activities, I have become acquainted with the shop owner who had now sold out, but still had the two dogs safely at home.

WOLEDGE STAND



LABELS FROM MR D L TAYLORS COLLECTION

On being offered some trnedy price from a Wellington Antique Dealer, he was determined one day to pop down to dispose of them. However it never quite arrived to this. After approaching him, we talked 'shop', and now I have them. Both prized pieces.

Either Nipper, came from different locations. One from H.M.V. House, Wellington in 1958. Even then they weren't new. They had been expertly repainted in that same year, mounted on a black oval platform. Both differ in appearance.

Surely they must have been individually hand made. The only others I have seen and heard of are in M.O.T.A.T. Auckland, and Ferrymead Christchurch which I think are part of Bill Dini's collection.

As for their age, could some one show some light. There are earlier plaster models, but being so fragile, few have survived earthquakes and the scrap heap.

These models are quite common here in New Zealand. I consider this to be a rare and lucky find. Still I feel there are many more to be uncovered, so don't give up hope. Happy collecting.

THE VINTAGE PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY OF N.Z. (INC.)

President's Report 1980-81:

It is pleasing to report a successful year for the Vintage Phonograph Society.

Meetings have generally been well attended and it has been gratifying to see many new faces.

Programme:

These have been varied and interesting including visits from a number of overseas members and visitors. We look forward to many more such occasions.

Ferrymead:

Little progress has been made with the building of the "Hall of Sound" so it appears to Society will remain in the present building until such time as finance is made available for the new building.

There is continued public interest in the display, especially good attendances on Open Days, but it is as always a problem finding members to be on duty during week-ends.

The Society has been fortunate in being able to purchase a number of machines for the display, the ultimate aim being to have Society machines only on display, a goal we are well on the way to achieving.

Parts:

There seems to be an ever increasing demand for these and due to the efforts of Joffre Marshall and Stuart Hobbs, our parts supply has been well maintained.

Thank you Stuart and Joffre.

Church Building:

The maintenance of the Church building has been willingly undertaken by Peter Mattison and the Display by Gavin East.

Finance:

Diane and Stuart Hobbs have undertaken jointly to fulfill the Treasurer's position for the past 14 months and have proved most able and efficient.

Secretary:

Mrs Lindsay Drummond has continued to support our Society in every way possible and her efficiency is greatly appreciated by all members both here and overseas. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks to Lindsayfor a job well done.

Finally, I would like to thank all members, the Executive and their wives who have worked so well together during my term of office.

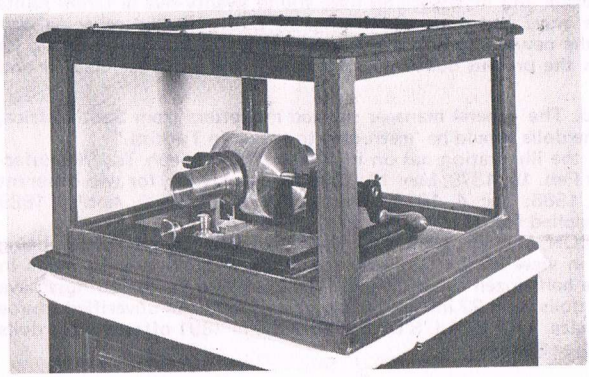
W. T. Norris

TALKING DOLLS

Edison, Thomas Alva. 1878-91 +. Orange, N.J. Invented and manufactured phonograph dolls. In 1878 he obtained a British patent for a "phonographic" doll that would reproduce sound, having a "phonet" to move its lips. HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE, January 27, 1891, tells about Edison's first doll: "The first talking doll that Mr Edison modelled bore as little resemblance to the doll that he now manufactures as the wood doll of the cave-dwellers bore to the dainty creature of the French court. Mr Edison knew much more about phonographs than he did about children's nurseries, and his idea of a doll would have seemed very crude to the critical and educated mind of the present-day little girl.

INTERMEDIATE MONARCH

NO.47



EDISONS FIRST PHONOGRAPH FORT MYERS MUSEUM

SAVOYARD MUSIC BOX

"He made a tin cylinder about six inches long to hold the phonograph, with a little funnel at the upper end through which the sound was to come. It looked for all the world like a miniature stove-pipe with a letter V stuck on top of it. He then intended to have a head, arms, and legs attached to this and call it a doll. . . . The absurdity of the thing had only to be shown to Mr Edison for that model to be promptly given up."

In 1887 *William White Jacques* applied for a U.S. patent for a combined doll and photograph, which he assigned to the Edison Phonograph Toy Manufacturing Company of Maine. The patent was granted in 1888, but this doll differed markedly from the doll actually produced by Edison in New Jersey. The Jacques patent drawings indicate a doll with a shoulder head on a stuffed body, and the sound funnel coming up into the head.

The improved doll actually made by Edison and begun in the fall of 1889 is described in an 1891 HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE article as follows: "A body of tin, shaped precisely as a human body is formed, was made. Great iron presses, some of them weighing five tons, were used, and steel dies for stamping out the different parts were constructed. Sheets of tin go into these presses, and after forty-five different operations they come out cut into half a dozen pieces, which fit together and make the cover for the phonograph.

"Next, one of the members of Mr Edison's company went to Europe, and visited the shops in Germany where dolls' heads are made of bisque. He gave orders for all the work that two large makers could turn out for a year, in advance, and returned home. American manufacturers agreed to furnish the wooden arms and legs, and Mr Edison proposed to make the phonographs. But all the work was not ended there. The machinery that Mr Edison had invented to make the phonograph had to be changed to suit the new shape the talking-machine was to bear. This all took time and many thousands of dollars, but at last it was finished.

"After the tin body comes from the presses, the different parts are soldered together, except in the back, where a little door that opens and closes is left to allow the phonograph to be repaired if it should ever get out of order. In the front of the body, between the arms, there is a number of perforations, like those in the top of a pepper-box, to let the sound out.

"The phonograph consists of a small wax-covered wheel, which revolves on a little steel rod. One end of this rod sticks out of the back of the doll, and is turned by a key when the doll is made to talk. At the tip of this wheel is a tiny needle, which fits into minute grooves that are cut into the wax, as in the big phonographs. Above this needle is the artificial diaphragm, and above that the funnel through which the sound passes.

"When the key is turned, the wheel revolves, the needle follows in the grooves, moving the diaphragm up and down as the human diaphragm moved when the words were first spoken, and in a tiny Punch and Judy tone, the doll recites a verse from Mother Goose's rhymes. . . .

"By an ingenious mechanism a spring may be touched when the verse is ended, and the wheel is forced back to its oroiginal place, ready to go through the same performance again."

In 1890 about 500 people were engaged in the manufacture of phonographs and talking dolls at the Edison Establishment. Half were employed in the manufacture of each article. It took eighteen women just to recite the nursery rhymes for the cylinders to go into the dolls. The factory had a capacity of about 500 talking dolls a day; this would mean over 100,000 in a year.

The 1891 HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE'S article continues: "The talking doll in its present form has proved to be such a success that Mr Edison has thought it worth his while to invent a new doll that will be as nearly perfect as machinery can be. The improved doll will be ready for the public in a short time. . . . In the first place all the improvements are in the internal machinery. The new phonograph will fit into the dolls' bodies which the company still has on hand. The doll phonograph will be an exact copy of the real phonograph reduced to one-fourth the size. The big phonograph contains a cylinder large enough to allow a person to talk into it for four minutes without covering the wax surface with lines. The little phonograph as a one-minute cylinder. It is about four times as big as the present doll cylinder.

"This is not the only improvement. Mr Edison and his associates have found twenty-five different faults in the present doll. Some of these faults are grave and some are trifling. Mr Edison has found some way of remedying each one of these faults, and the new doll will not get out of order without good cause. Its machinery will be precisely like that used in the present doll, excepting that it will be larger, heavier and more durable.

"This new doll will go all over the world. The general manager showed me letters from South Africa, China and Turkey. The last letter asked that the dolls should be 'instructed to speak' in Turkish."

The mechanism inside the doll shown in the illustration has on it "Edison Phonograph Toy//Manufacturing Co.// New York" and the patent dates Feb. 19, 1878; May 18, 1880 (appears twice, for two different patents, apparently); May 22, 1888; Nov. 27, 1888; Dec. 4, 1888 (also twice); Feb. 5, 1889; April 2, 1889 (four times); July 9, 1889; and other patents applied for. (See Ill. 507.).

F. A. O. Schwarz, in YOUTH'S COMPANION, May 29, 1890, advertised these phonograph dolls as being "French jointed dolls," which is interesting in view of the fact that the heads were apparently made in Germany and the bodies in America. All the half dozen or so Edison dolls examined by the authors have *Simon & Halbig* heads, mould No. 719. These dolls were 22 inches tall and cost $10.00. An unverified source reports that they were also made in a 30-inch size. THE DOLL'S DRESSMAKER in 1891 offered these dolls as premium prizes and gave their value, dressed, as $20.00.

Talking Dolls:

Dolls that can talk have challenged man for centuries. The principal methods of making dolls talk are by pulling strings, exerting pressure on some part of the body, moving one or more of the limbs of the doll, or by changing its position. Bellows were used to produce sound at an early date, and in the 19th century reeds were placed in dolls' bodies and sound produced by blowing across them. The most realistic types of talking dolls were those that contained a phonograph. *Jean Maelzel* patented a talking doll in 1824 that operated when its arms were moved. *Theroude* claimed that he invented the talking doll. In the 1850's the *Motschmann*-type dolls had "voices" that sounded when the head was pushed downward. *Jumeau* made talking bebes as early as 1865. At this date, the bebes would probably have had kid bodies. It is not known when Jumeau started to make his talking bebes with the two strings from a jointed composition body. This pull-string type of talking doll was made in the mid-19th century and was popular from the 1880's up to World War I. PLAYTHINGS in 1903 reported that "Modern Parisian dolls move lips and speak articulated sentences." These were probably phonograph dolls. They spoke in French and German. A French patent for dolls with moving lips was obtained as early as 1890. Another doll said one word when its right arm was raised and another word when the left arm was raised. In 1877 *William Harwood* made a talking doll in America.

1904: A doll would call "Mama" when it was picked up. It was silenced or regained its voice if a catch at the back of its head was moved.

1906: A new talking doll raised one leg to say "Mama" and the other leg to say "Papa".

1908: Doll would talk when rolled from side to side; formerly it had talked only when changed from a horizontal to a vertical position, or vice versa. Another doll said "Mama" when one foot was pressed and "Papa" when the other foot was pressed.

1909: A German patent pertained to a doll's head with automatic "voice" and movable mouthpiece with tongue and teeth, operated by the pressure of a lever at the back of the neck.

1916: Advertisements stated that the voices of dolls made a sound for a longer period than formerly.

1924: PLAYTHINGS reported that Paris dolls shouted when they were picked up. They spoke very good French, to the extent of four words, and also sang a bit of a French song.

"THE WORLD RECORD CONTROLLER – THE WONDER OF THE CENTURY"

I think it would be readily admitted by the most biased 78 collector that the main disadvantage of early records was their very limited playing time. Little wonder then that there were so many attempts to obtain a lower duration whether by means of a longer record (e.g. 36" Pathe) or of finer grooves, as in the case of the Edison long playing Diamond Disc with 450 grooves to the inch. A different approach to the problem was made by Noel Pemberton Billing the inventor of the "World Record Controller". Billing worked from the basic assumption that disc records were unsatisfactory, technically in that the speed of the groove passing beneath the needle is decreasing as the distance from the centre of the record is reduced. (2 II R and all that!) (This incidentally was one of the reasons why Thomas Edison believed in the superiority of cylinders over discs). Billing therefore set about to devise a means of governing the rotation of the turntable to obtain a constant linear speed. The result was a mechanism announced to the world as the "World Record Controller".

George Frow, in the April 1970 edition of the "Hillandale News" has written a most interesting article on Billing and the introduction of his invention in England. I wish to follow this up now with details of the World Record Controller as it was announced in Christchurch, New Zealand. According to Frow the invention appeared in October 1922. In the "Gramophone Gossip" column of "The Sun" for July 26th, 1923, appeared the following item which the Christchurch newspaper appears to have been reprinted directly from the London "Observer".

GRAMOPHONE GOSSIP:

Mechanical contrivance becomes every year a more important agency in spreading musical knowledge and improving musical taste and an occasional consideration of progress in invention and improvement in method is of value. Three activities (says Dr P. A. Scholes in the London "Observer") are especially in my mind at the moment – those of the gramophone makers, those of the player-piano makers, and those of the wireless broadcasters.

In the world of the gramophone there are just now two startling revolutions to record. The first is due, I understand, to Mr Pemberton-Billing, who has overcome one of the greatest defeats of the instrument, or rather of its records – the limitation of these latter to a three-and-a-half to four-and-a-half minutes run. We all know how irritating this has always been. Playing, for example, the excellent Scriabin-Coates-Columbia "Poem of Ecstasy", we were broken off four times (the record being in five parts) to reverse or change our disc, and possibly also to replace our needle and to rewind. And so with other records of all makers: any work of considerable length was either most inartistically broken into sections, or else, to avoid this, cut down drastically before recording, in a way of which its composer would have been little likely to approve.

The new invention is simple and effective, and its principle is easily explained. Let us think for a moment of a disc as so much music paper and of its markings as crotchets and quavers. These latter are, then, run out on a spiral stave, 900 feet in length. But they are spread very unequally parsinnoniously at the outer rim, generously at the centre, for the speed of the revolution being constant, the needle when at the circumference has to traverse about 50 feet of disc a second, while approaching the centre it traverses only about 15, which disparity has to be provided for in making the record. Thus there is an immense waste of stave space at the circumference; this diminishes, gradually as the performance continues.

What is wanted, obviously, is a means of reducing the rate of revolution at the start, and then gradually and imperceptibly speeding it towards the finish; this done, the notes could be spread equally over the whole long line of stave, with the result that a great many more of them would be accommodated in its earlier portions. The new invention, which has this in view, takes the form of a small controlling attachment capable of being fixed in a few minutes by any person of ordinary intelligence (I have done it myself) to any standard make of gramophone. It is simple, consisting of little more than two wheels and a governor.

The next reference is from the same newspaper for August 23rd, 1923 and includes an illustration of the controller fitted to the deck of a gramophone. The full text of this news item is printed below — Note how similar it is to the report from Dr Scholes.

Toscha Seidel, whose illustration is featured in this week's notes, is one of the most brilliant violinists the musical land of Russia has ever produced. He was born in Odessa in 1900, and when a small child of eight, had thoroughly mastered the highly technical Beriot Concerto, playing it with a brilliance and a depth of insight that astonished all who heard him. Four years later Professor Auer, at his first acquaintance with Seidel's playing, accepted him as a scholarship pupil and coached him for his debut in Christiania in 1915. Then Toscha Seidel rose instantly to the heights of glory as a musician. He toured throughout Scandinavia, and after that, in 1918, went to the United States where he has remained till 1921, since when he has been engaged on a world tour. Seidel's art is human. In this he differs from violinists who have achieved fame by the startling machine-like precision of their playing. Where they have cold-blooded exactness, developed maybe to genius, Seidel has "soul" and while he may not depart from the composer's intent he adds his own wonderful personality to his rendition, and thus provides warm-blooded, living, breathing music that thrills by its very humanness of quality.

Seidel has made many records, possibly the best of which is: Schummann's little epic "Traumerei", with its reposeful, quiet and haunting sweetness that suggests so well the ecstasy of day dreams. Among his other recordings are the wonderful "Romance" from Concerto No. 2 (Wieniawski, Op. 22); Kreiskler's famous "Caprice Viennois"; the "Indian Lament", in G Minor, by Dvorak (No. 7238); the "Serenade" (Schubert-Elmun) (No. 7211); Cui's fanciful composition "Orientale" (No. X214); the "Gipsy Airs" (Zigeunerweisen), of Sarasate.

It is worthy of note that Seidel's admiration for the gramophone as a means of popularising the classics is genuine and unaffected.

One other point to note here is the somewhat extravagant claim made about the playing time — the heading says "Records that will play **90** minutes" (my emphasis) and yet in the text only "three to five times as much" is claimed. If we take the playing time of an ordinary record as four minutes this, multiplied by a factor of 5 gives only 20 minutes or 40 minutes for both sides of the record. It would seem that the person responsible for the 90 minute claim must have been anticipating special records with finer grooves to achieve this playing time.

On August 25th, 1923 Robert Francis Ltd, announced in large three column advertisement that they were agents for this new invention (and for the first time it's commercial name is given).

Notice that now the playing time is only claimed to be "from 10 to 60 minutes" and in much smaller print is the statement "At present Robt Francis have 12in World Records that play twenty minutes. Supplies of records that play sixty minutes are expacted shortly."

Five days later no mention is made of the 60 minute records and the advertisement only claims "20 minute continuous playing". On September 1st, 1923 another advertisement from Robt Francis again illustrated the controller and this time quoted the price — £4-4-0 for the complete controller. No price shown for the records merely the words that they "are no dearer than ordinary records" and what was the cost of an "ordinary record" on September 1st, 1923. In that same advertisement Robt Francis were advertising 12" Zonophone records for 7/6, 12" HMV records at 9/6, 11/6, 13/6, 16/—, 19/— and 22/—. Despite a thorough search of newspaper advertisements for many months the actual price of the records has not been found.

From quotes in an English Catalogue as having the 12" records at 5/—, 7/6 and 10/—, and 10" records at 3/6, 4/— and 5/—. I have been unable to find any further references to the World Record Controller in the files I have searched and this would appear to tie in with Frew's account of the demise of the company. He says "In 1924 it was forecast that a new speed controller would appear with an electro-motor drive incorporated, and that the new 18" records would run for ¾ hour a side, but the World Record Company, with it's works at Mortlake, London, and showrooms in Piccadilly was already running into trouble and went out of business soon afterwards".

The heading for this article was taken from the advertisement of September 1st, 1923. For my own part I wonder what happened to all the controllers and records which Robt Francis had.

A. J. R.

POINTS FROM LETTERS

We have had a most interesting letter from Mr Bernard Wiese (dated May 30 1981) who lives in ALBERTA Canada.

He says it's spring in the U.S. now and we have just finished planting our crops. We grow much the same crops as in N.Z. We had the mildest Winter on record and very little snow has fallen this Spring so far.

The photographs we have included with this issue are:—

1. a cast iron Record Display. The only one Bernard has seen.
2. a Columbia Disc machine which has a case of pressed metal with a leather like finish around the middle portion. It has an all brass petal horn and the usual Columbia tone arm and reproducer.
3. Columbia Q in a card board case. This was thought to have been made for the mail order trade.

LETTER FROM O. C. WILLIAMS

Mr Williams is an avid cylinder record collector and has written to me giving information on Mould Numbers etc on cylinders. We had some Billy Williams Cylinders which were played at a previous meeting, and my mention of this has brought me the reply which is printed below.

"Yes, Mr Norris, I was aware that the number following "patent" on the end of the Blue Amberol records was a mould number, and that there was a detectable difference in some recordings made from different moulds. This was especially noticeable in records such as these of Billy Williams with "patter", which varied slightly between two different moulds from the same recording. The number finely serised on the forward polished end of the Blue Amberol gives a clue to whether the particular record was a re-issue of an earlier Wax Amberol. For instance, on Irving Gillettes' "Harp that Once Thro' Taras Halls", the number inscribed is "4M 730 — 2 — 1" and if you look up this record in the Wax Amberol catalogue, you will find it issued as No. 730. Apparently this number was marked in the master cylinder, and appeared on all records made from it, including the wan amberol original issues, but it is hard to find on these, because of the softer surface and the whitish coloured "bloom" always present on the surface of a wan amberol record.

But this number, if you look carefully for it on a Blue Amberol, is an infallible guide as to wether that particular record is a re-issue of a wan amberol. Another example is "Marching Thro' Georgia" by James J. Harrison and chorus, where the inscribed number on the leading end of the record is "4M 733 — 2 — 1", and the wan amberol catalogue contains this record as No. 733. I've checked this on many records and it's always quite reliable. I'm not quite sure what the "2 — 1" refers to, possibly "take" numbers, or some identification or coding used by the recording staff. The mould number on the end of the record is some times quite high, so apparently quite a few moulds were made for the one recording."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In Vol. 6, issue 5, the Zonophone puzzle plate record was detailed, and Vol. 10 issue 1 showed the Berliner version. I have in my collection a Regal "Double Track Record" which is clearly a type of puzzle-plate. It is G21026, and the tracks are:

1. Elizabeth (From Wonder Bar)
   (a) F/T by the Rhythmic Troubadors (set needle at "A" on outside edge)
   (b) Song by Lawrence Allen (set needle at "B" on outside edge).
2. Love is like a Song
   (a) and (b) as for side detailed above.

I also must ask that you correct the information shown on page 54 of volume 8 issue 1, where Michael Tucker's listing of names and motive power used for Edison Cylinder Phonographs records that the Amberola 60 has a single spring motor. I am fortunate to own one of these, and it has a double spring motor, in all other regards being identical to an Amberola 30 except in cabinet and horn size. My machine may be seen in George Frow's book "The Edison Cylinder Phonographs 1877-1929" written in conjunction with Albert Sefl, on page 109. This book also states that a double spring motor is used.

In addition, I must express doubt about the statement by C. E. Woledge on page 16 of Vol 2 Issue 2 that the Amberola 60 was so called because it sold for £60 in New Zealand. I cannot accept that Edison would set a model designation based on the retail price in such a small country, especially as my machine carries the usual gold identification plate naming the machine "Amberola 60". This model was not produced until late in 1928, and it is possible that Mr Woledge may have been describing a different machine, as his comments

relate to the period before the 1914-18 war. Perhaps the machine in question is the model A-1; if so it is quite misleading to refer to it as a "60" in view of the fact that a later model was so officially designated. Nor can I accept that the Amberola 60 sold here for £60, as its price in the U.K. was only £16 – and £44 seems very expensive for freight. As the Amberola A-1 sold in 1909 for £42 in mahogany or oak, and £52 in Circassian Walnut, I am even more sure that Mr Woledge may have given this model the "Amberola 60" tag locally, as £18 seems far more reasonable for freight, even in 1909, given that the A-1 is a floor model, whilst the "60" is a table model.

Kindest regards,
Roger Cole.

Editor: Amberola. I was sold in New Zealand for 60 pounds and is the model Mr Woledge mentions and talks about in articles. These were indented through Australia which was the cause of the high price. The Amberola 30, 50 and 75 we also understand were sold for these prices in the United States.

TIN FOIL

Quite a number of these are known to exist, and more seem to turn up as time goes on and so there is always the hope for any new collector of phonographs to come across one.

The one illustrated, is the original! It is kept in a glass case in the Fort Meyers Museum in California.

The following text and illustration were taken from an Early Copy of the Encyclopedia Brittanica and how the phonograph was invented from an early year book dated 1879.

One of the simplest forms of the phonograph is shown in fig. 19. It consists of a rigid spindle S screwed for about one-third of its length, and fitted to work smoothly but tightly in the frame **f, f**, which is securely attached to a sole plate P. On the spindle a drum D is fixed, the axis of which coincides accurately with that of the spindle. On the surface of the drum a screw is cut of precisely the same pitch as that on the spindle. A fly-wheel W is fixed to one end of the spindle, and is provided with a handle H, by which the spindle and drum can be conveniently turned. One of the bearings has either a screw thread cut along it, or is fitted with one or more studs which work easily, but without shake, in the screw thread. When the spindle is turned, it receives a transverse motion, and a point fixed relatively to the sole plate P and touching the drum traces out a spiral on its surface, exactly coinciding with the screw thread cut on it. A mouthpiece M, like that of a telephone transmitter, provided with a diaphragm of parchment or similar substance, is mounted on a lever, which is pivoted at **h** and provided with a set screw **b**. A blunt needle point is either fixed to the centre of the diaphragm or carried by a light spring in such a way as to press on the centre of the diaphragm with the needle point projecting outwards. To use the instrument, the drum D is covered with a sheet of somewhat stiff tinfoil, and the mouthpiece is adjusted as shown in the figure, with the needle point over the hollow part of the tinfoil, and fixed by the set screw to make a slight indentation in it. The drum is then turned and words spoken in a somewhat loud and clear tone in front of the mouthpiece. The vibrations of the diaphragm cause the needle point to make indentations more or less deep, according to the intensity of the sound, in the surface of the tinfoil. If the mouthpiece is then raised, the drum turned back to its original position, the mouthpiece lowered so that the point rests on the groove which it previously made, and the drum again turned, the diaphragm, acted on by the needle point passing over the indentation, will give out the same words which were spoken to it.

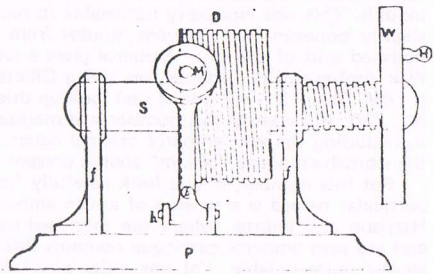


FIG. 19. Edison's phonograph.

(T. GR.)

TAKEN FROM THE YEAR-BOOK OF FACTS OF 1879

How the Phonograph came to be Invented:

An English patent of 1877, taken out by Mr Edison, clearly shows that his mind was being prepared for the conception of the phonograph. In that patent he describes a means of recording ordinary telegraph signals by a chisel-shaped stylus indenting a sheet of paper, enveloping a cylinder or plate, along the line of a groove cut in the surface of the latter. These indented marks were to be capable of re-transmitting the message automatically over another wire if required. Here then was the soil prepared, and the vibrating disc of the telephone was the seed needful to germinate the phonograph. That seed was dropped into it by accident. "How did you discover the principle?" asked a newspaper reporter of Mr Edison. "By the merest accident," replied the professor. "I was singing to the mouthpiece of a telephone, when the vibrations of the voice sent

the fine steel point into my finger. That set me to thinking. If I could record the actions of the point and send the point over the same surface afterward, I saw no reason why the thing should not talk. I tried the experiment first on a strip of telegraph paper, and found that the point made an alphabet. I shouted the words 'Halloo! halloo!' into the mouthpiece, ran the paper back over the steel point, and heard a faint 'Halloo! halloo!' in return. I determined to make a machine that would work accurately, and gave my assistants instructions, telling them what I had discovered. They laughed at me. That's the whole story. The machine came through the pricking of a finger."

THOMAS ELVA EDISON (Part 2)

Experiments:

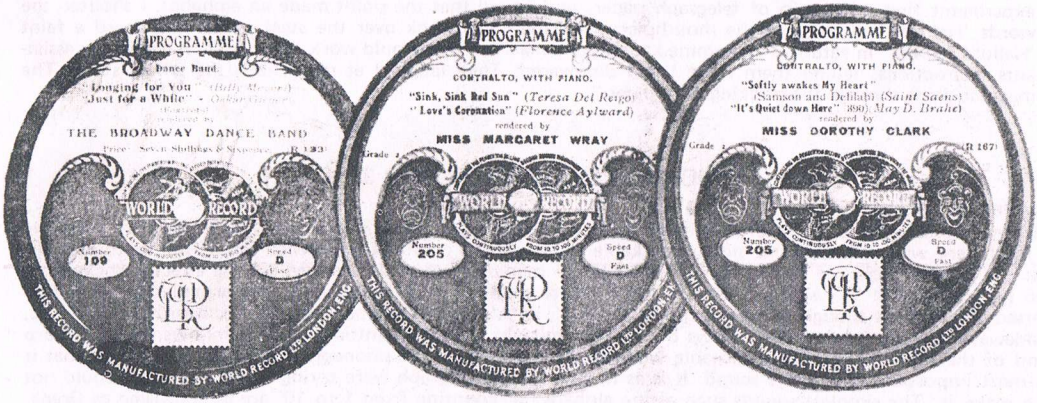
Many interesting experiments were made with the phonograph, and it was soon found that by reversing the machinery while working the most remarkable sound effects could be produced. One writer on the subject says: "It is impossible for the human voice to be so manipulated as to produce sounds exactly backwards. Even with the letter 'A', which is one of the simplest sounds made by the voice, the articulation cannot be reversed. At the first thought it would appear that 'A', is 'A', no matter how it is said, backwards, or forwards, or sideways, but the phonograph shows this to be a mistake. The little intonation that follows the first sharp sound of the letter is scarcely noticeable when spoken, but when the phonograph is reversed it seems that it is a most important part of the sound. It is as though the phonograph were trying to say 'ear', but could not quite make it. The simplest sounds such as the alphabet or counting from 1 to 10, are as confusing as Greek, and a complete sentence is worse than unintelligible. Musical sounds are reversed in the same way, and the intonation of a banjo makes that instrument sound like a church organ, while piano music would be thought to come from a harmonium by nine out of ten musicians. Such pieces as "Home Sweet Home", "God save the King", and the like lose their identity completely. In some cases music that is entirely new and very sweet is produced by the reversing process. This opens a new field for composers, as they can take ideas from a reversed phonograph without being accused of plagiarism."

Amusing incidents at the Factory:

One engineer at the factory, who may be called Steve because his name is something else, is frequently detailed to take visitors about on account of his fund of information and his clear, lucid manner of explanation. On one occasion he escorted a guest from the West – a light haired little gentleman, who seemed duly impressed with all he saw, but made no comment. He was apparently drinking in and criticising every word which young Steve uttered, and that usually confident gentleman grew nervous and suspicious. "This fellow he thought must be some smart electrician, and he is just taking all my statements with a huge grain of salt." At last when they arrived back at the office, and Steve was feeling limp and tired, the little gentleman held out his hand and said – "I am exceedingly obliged to you. I don't know much about the electrical trade. I am a barber. If you ever come to Chicago, look me up." Steve had recovered from this, and was beginning to look and feel like himself once more, when he was again detailed to escort a visitor through the works. This was a silent and undemonstrative man, who paid considerable attention to rather insignificant machines and details. Consequently, Steve rather hastily concluded that he had another barber to amuse. Moreover as the quiet visitor showed little or no surprise at, or appreciation of, the many really remarkable machines and operations, Steve was aggrieved, and for the honour of the works determined to shake some enthusiasm out of him. So he proceeded to load him up with many wonderful stories. He pointed out a dynamo so powerful t..t it never had been and never could be run up to full capacity, it being utterly impossible to control the current. He gave a dissertation on the incandescent lamp and its manufacture asserting that its discovery was due to the accidental observation of a lightening flash playing on a two pronged fork in a pickle bottle. Waxing eloquent, he rose on his toes, stretched out his right arm, and exclaimed – "And so, that inestimable boon to mankind, the incandescent lamp was born". At this moment the visitor stepped up to a workman, who was winding coils, slapped him on the back, and said – "Hello, Dan". The man started, looked up and his face flushed with surprise and pleasure as he grasped the outstretched hand. "God bless my soul, it's my old boss," he exclaimed. "Mr Edison, how are you?" Steve staggered back and sat down on a casting. He tried to think it over, to recollect some of the stuff he'd been telling – but his mind was a blurr. One thing only stood out distinctly, he had told the "Wizard of Menlo Park, the inventor of the incandescent lamp, that it was the evolution of a pickle bottle and a two-pronged fork. Then he disappeared. A week or two later he received from Mr Edison a book on electrical wonders written for juveniles, on the fly leaf of which was a pen drawing of a fork in a pickle bottle, and below the inscription: "And so that inestimable boon to mankind, the incandescent lamp was born.? Some time in the future perhaps, that little book may fetch a round sum of money. At present no money could buy it.

Edison has strong opinions on cigarette smoking, some years ago he said to an interviewer: "Smoking tobacco is a pretty good working stimulant. But cigarettes, they're deadly. It is not the tobacco, it's the acrolein produced by the burning paper that does the harm, and let me tell you . . ." his voice betrayed some feeling and his face grew grave – "acrolein is one of the most terrible drugs in its effect on the human body. The burning of ordinary cigarette paper always produces acrolein. That is what makes the smoke irritating. I really believe it often makes boys insane. We sometimes develop acrolein in the laboratory in our experiments with glycerine.

WORLD RECORDS.



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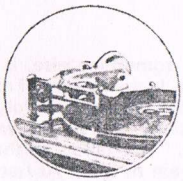

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can be fixed to any make of machine. It controls the speed of the record, enabling it to run from three to five times as long as an ordinary one with one winding, keeping the needle speed constant.

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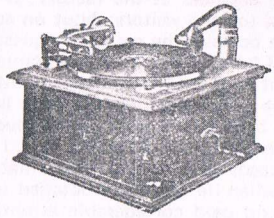

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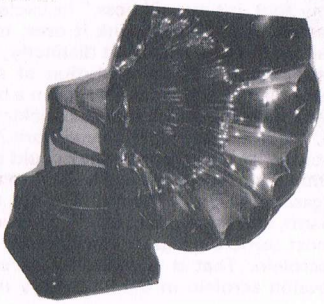
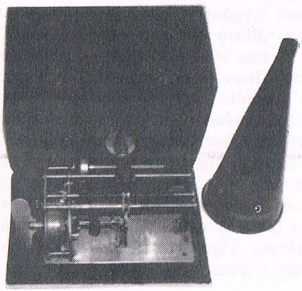


COLUMBIA DISC MACHINE



COLUMBIA

One whiff of it from the oven drove one of my assistants out of the building the other day. I can hardly exaggerate the dangerous nature of acrolein, and yet that is what a man or boy is dealing with every time he smokes an ordinary cigarette. The harm that such a deadly poison when taken into the system must inflict upon a growing lad is horrible to contemplate. The other day," he continued, "I found a package of cigarettes which someone had dropped on my office step. The very sight of it gave me a feeling of disgust, and I went back into the office and wrote this sign: A degenerate, who is retrograding toward the lower animal life, has lost his tack. And I nailed the package with the sign up in a conspicuous place. I was mad at first but I carried the thing through as a joke. The fellow whoever he was (and I never found out) must have been a facetious scamp, for he confiscated his cigarettes and nailed a cigar up in their place. The point of the joke of course, was that I smoke cigars down here in the shop nearly all day long."

Mr Edison is a close student of the newspapers, and has a habit of cutting out any paragraph (not necessarily of a scientific nature) which appeals to him. In going through some of his papers one day the writer came across the following paragraph which happily illustrates what Edison has always asserted viz, that it is worry that kills and not hard work. The inventor probably saved the cutting for the reason that it so succinctly puts into words his own thoughts, and for that reason I reproduce it here:—

One day while down town, he happened to see the 'shingle' of an electric belt concern — a belt you put around you, and which is supposed to cure any ailment you happen to be troubled with. Well thinking that perhaps there was something in the application of electricity which was new to him he went up to the office. A very pert young lady immediately enquired what she could do for him. "Well," began Edison, "I wanted to know how those belts worked, and I thought I might learn by coming up here." "Certainly," said the young lady, taking up a belt. "You see the current of electricity goes from the copper to the zinc plate, and then . . .." "Just a moment," said Edison, politely, "I don't hear very well at times. Did you say the current went from the copper to the zinc plate?." "I certainly did. Then as I was saying . . .," "Just one moment," interrupted Edison again. "Let me understand this. You say it goes from the copper to the zinc?." "Yes sir, it goes from the copper to the zinc." "But do you know, I always thought it went from the zinc to the copper." "Well it don't." "But are you sure?" Edison asked, smiling. "Well may be you know more about electricity than I do," snapped the girl, as she threw the belt down and glared at the 'Wizard'. "Perhaps I do," Edison admitted, and he turned and left the place. The incident however, in no way ruffled his temper. Nothing, indeed, puts him out, and the fact that he possesses so even a temperament is doubtless due to his unfailing fund of patience.

Some years ago, when the four leading Edison companies consolidated into one General Electric Company, with the capital of twelve million dollars, a good deal was written about the man who had been the instrument by which such a great business enterprise was possible. Edison's "twelve million dollar brain" became a saying, and lessons were drawn anent the value of first class brains. A few years ago Edison was a poor and obscure telegraph operator. Today by devising machinery of advantage to the human race, he is a millionaire, and the means by which others acquire immense wealth. Yet no one is injured. The new fortunes come from traits of observation and mechanical with what lay hid in the brain of one poor wise man.

As a matter of fact Edison does not think a great deal of so-called genius. "Genius" says some wise man, "is an infinite capacity for taking pains," but Edison goes one better when he says: "Genius is two per cent inspiration and ninetyeight per cent perspiration." And let the man who believes that he is no genius, or even particularly clever, take this wise remark to heart and he will find that Edison is not far wrong in his belief that is hard work that tells and the virtue that will eventually land one on the topmost rung of fortunes ladder.

Mr Edison is now engaged on what he considers the greatest problem of all — the generation of electricity direct from coal. The subject has occupied his attention for many years, and now that he has practically laid aside his work as a commercial inventor he is devoting all his time to the unravelling of this fascinating mystery. He has made some progress.

SOCIETY DIARY
by Gavin East

Looking back over fifteen years of meetings, it is hard to recall a programme more relevant and interesting than that given at St. Mary's Church Hall on Monday 23 March. Not only that, the experience has been and will be shared by many others, for I refer to the tape/slide set made by Ray Phillips which he left behind for New Zealand showing after his recent visit. The programme is basically a tour of the various Edison sites: a brief look at his birthplace in Milan, Ohio, then longer stops at Menlo Park (as rebuilt at Dearborn Village), West Orange and Fort Myers. Naturally Ray has made a special effort to photograph important and unusual phonographs. To single out a few, we saw the original Perfected wax cylinder machine of 1888 (shown in the well-known photo of an exhausted Edison) with its crude electric motor; a striking gold-plated five-inch mandrel electric model and the recording and reproducing phonographs for the Kinetophone system.

It is easy to think of Edison, especially in his old age, as being so preoccupied with his own increasingly eccentric phonographic activity as to be almost unaware that other companies existed. So it was interesting to see competitors' equipment which he had used. To produce anything like the necessary volume from the Kinetophone cylinders Edison had to buy the right to use Columbia's Higham friction amplifier — hence

EDISON DOLL

MRS BALLARD LEFT WITH TWO

STARR TALKING DOLLS

EDISON DOLL AND WORKS

PULL STRING TALKING DOLL

the appearance on the Kinetophone machine of what appears to be a BC Graphophone reproducer. Another surprise was in store at Fort Myers (this house, by the way, could pass as a New Zealand house of c. 1890) – besides the expected, a diamond disc machine said to have felt the great man's teeth, the unexpected in the shape of a Victrola School model.

Thanks to our projectionist Stuart Hobbs, who had taken the programme through a trial run beforehand, the evening saw none of those "This won't take a minute" hitches.

Your committee has recently taken advantage of an unexpected opportunity to boost the society's display collection by authorising the purchase of a Dulcephone horn gramophone. It surfaced at an auction in Christchurch and attracted a lot of attention, not least from local dealers. Joffre Marshall went to the sale with committee approval to bid to $500. This was not quite enough, so Joffre generously dipped into his own pocket to secure the machine for us for $600. You may rest assured that we don't spend this sort of money lightly! The Dulcephone, now being cleaned, is a strikingly handsome machine with a mahogany case and large spun brass horn. It has been suggested that, cleaned up and put on the market in Auckland, our purchase could fetch up to $1,000. Considering the reports we hear from up north, this is possible, so we can safely say that we have paid a reasonable price. On one level we can look at the Dulcephone as an investment, but the main consideration in our minds was its value as a display machine. It is possible that, when the Dini collection is displayed in its proposed Hall of Sound at Ferrymead, we will be able to compliment it (but avoid "competing" with it) by setting up a shop on the street frontage of the new building. We could set it up as an old-time gramophone shop and sell our posters, needles, etc. and at the same time serve as an entrance foyer to the sound museum. This proposal would give us much more suitable premises and free us from the struggle to keep the church in good repair. It would also free the church for restoration as the village church. Nothing concrete has yet happened, but a general meeting of the society has endorsed the idea of "moving house" at Ferrymead. It is important to remember that the Dini collection was left to the Ferrymead Trust, not to us, so our best approach is to work in with it while remaining independent. We need a small working display collection and this latest purchase goes a long way towards completing it.

RECORD LABELS (PART 4)
D. L. Taylor

This episode covers some of C plus D. Quite a variety this time, from the common ones (such as Columbia) to the extra-obscure (ERA).

ACOUSTICS:

Columbia Disc Record, single-sided, black and silver label with announcement at the start, made in USA about 1903? The unrecorded side shows a small picture of one of their factories.

Columbia-Rena, the usual bluish-black label, made about 1912? I have seen one example which had been overlabelled with the Regal trademark.

Dacapo-Record, dark green label with gold lettering, pre-WWI? The colour scheme and the general design are very similar to come Celebrity Zonophones. Perhaps this was deliberate.

Domino, black label with gold letters, made in USA; the disc is made of brown shellac.

ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE:

Collector has many rare duplicate **Gramophone Needle Tins,** most of them being complete and unopened. Numerous "Picture" tines (PTO) Contact. Alexander Van Tutschek, 174 Sunnyside Road, Lyndhurst, Johannesburg, South Africa.

WANTED:

Information on Player Attachments for Piano's, for example illustrations of early push-ups. Can anyone help? Please write to Secretary or Editor.

WANTED:

One set of governor springs for fireside motor.

WANTED:

One Reproducer carrier for fireside machine to fit a type "B" reproducer. Please contact T. S. Spackman, 34 Whakawhiti Street, New Plymouth, New Zealand.

WANTED:

Reproducer – combination type 'K' to fit Fireside Model A. Edison. Please contact: T. Spackman, 34 Whakawhiti Street, New Plymouth, New Zealand.

WHAT DID EDISON DO DURING THE WAR?

During the war, when things looked blackest, there came to my office, one morning, the representative of a great organization, which deals in news and sends it over the telegraph and cable wires to all quarters of the earth.

This man said to me: "Bad news is about to break in Europe. It's bad enough to shake the nerves of America, and Heaven only knows what effect it will have on France and Great Britain. A few words from Mr Edison, as to what he is accomplishing to help win the war, will do more than any other one thing to strengthen the resolution of ourselves and our Allies. Will you get him to make a statement?"

I tried to do so.

Mr Edison said to me: "You don't seem to realize that I am merely a subordinate in the Government service. The Secretary of the Navy is my boss, and he is the one who must do the talking. I have no right to say anything, and I never intend to say anything."

So far as I know, Mr Edison has never made a statement to anyone, in regard to the part that he played in the Great War.

When Cardinal Mercier was in this country last Fall, he stated, at a banquet in New York, that his visit to America had resulted in the realization of one of his greatest ambitions, namely, his desire to meet Mr Edison. His Eminence said: "Today I have a new joy, one of which I hardly dared to dream. I have met Thomas A. Edison."

The great Cardinal laid significant emphasis upon Mr Edison's share in winning the war, but no one, outside of official circles, seemed to know what Edison had done, and it was not until recently, when the Navy Department at Washington issued an official statement, that anyone — even Mr Edison's closest associates — realized the scope and success of his war work. Moreover, it is hinted that this official statement omits some of Mr Edison's most important contributions to modern warfare.

W. MAXWELL,
Vice-President,
Thos. A. Edison, Inc.

Edison Musical Monthly, June 1926

THE FOOLISHNESS OF YOUTH

At a recent conference in Hartford, Conn., of music supervisors, one of the speakers was almost moved to tears in his lamentation that the new popular pieces are degenerating in a musical sense and are poor in composition.

We are inclined to agree with the **Hartford Courant,** which says: The speaker voiced the sentiment of Mature Age, of that mature age which feels that its voice cannot be depended upon; of that age which does not attempt singing except under the mellowing influence of a banquet, but which retains some knowledge, acquired years ago, of rhythm and harmony.

To Mature Age, which is somewhere about 50, the titles of the songs so "popular" to day, are conducive to nausea and to hear a youth, as he goes along the street, ejaculate "ja da," suggests to Mature Age that the youngster should be sent to an institution at Mansfield. Age may be right so far as all this goes and yet age is prone to take this view of the utterances of youth, forgetting that in its younger days it was not always in love with wisdom.

Fifty years ago youth caroled "Shoo Fly" and "Captain Jinks," which songs lacked as much in the way of music and sentiment as the products of today. The Spanish-American War is twenty years back of us, and yet the soldiers who went forth to that, singing various things as to the likelihood of a hot time in the old town tonight, were not hymning a masterpiece; and, thinking of that popular song, one may feel that the songs of the great war from which we have just emerged show an improvement over that which is linked with the war with Spain.

Yet, as the old humn has it, "He that is down need fear no fall," so, having reached zero in the matter of "popular" songs, we may have touched a point where improvement may be looked for, and we shall produce something fit to be classed with the productions of Foster and Work. Now in the day of "ja da," that time seems a long way off, but a change is bound to come and it must of necessity bring something better than we now have. Being at the bottom of the hole, any movement must be upward.

Hartford Courant