Horological Journal.

ESTABLISHED 1858.

Published Monthly.

Price Fourpence. **Annual Subscription 5/-** (Post free).

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WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTORS—
United Kingdom—
Simpkin Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Ltd., 32, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4.
Australia—H. Pickering & Co., 61, Market Street, Sydney, N.S.W.
New Zealand—R. Hill & Son, Matlock House, Devonport, Auckland.

Note.—Communications for the B.H.I. (apart from the Journal), including payments for Annual Subscriptions to the B.H.I., should be sent to the Secretary, at 35, Northampton Sq., London, E.C.1.

Our New Chairman.

MR. F. HOPE-JONES, M.I.E.E., F.R.A.S., was unanimously elected Chairman of the British Horological Institute at the last Council Meeting, and it is felt that the Members and Fellows, as well as our readers generally, would appreciate a brief sketch of his career.

The following facts are mainly derived from the "Biographies of British Engineers," brought up to date with the assistance of a wireless man who knows his work in that field.

The subject of our notice was born in 1867 at Hooton Grange, Cheshire, the youngest of a family of nine, and was educated in Birkenhead in the same school as the present Lord Chancellor. He was associated with his brother, the late Mr. Robert Hope-Jones, M.I.E.E., in his application of electricity to organ-building, which did away with all the complicated mechanical and pneumatic action connecting the keyboards with the pipes of church and cathedral organs. Just as his elder brother had dispensed with all the mechanism of the organ and rendered it unnecessary, so it fell to the youngest of the family to relieve clocks of most of their superfluous wheels.

He came to London in 1895 and delivered his first lecture before the British Horological Institute in October of that year, thus launching the "Synchronome" system of electric clocks. Other lectures followed, notably those before the Institution of Electrical Engineers in 1899 and 1910, the latter being awarded an extra premium and earning him the distinction of membership *honoris causa*.

Previous to this, electric clocks had been a by-word for unreliability, and Mr. Hope-

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Jones complained in those days that the watch and clockmaking profession was still pushing them away with both hands, but these lectures dealt with the whole subject in an exhaustive manner and laid down fundamental principles upon which the science and practice of electric time service has since been established.

His contributions to scientific journals were also numerous, and as long ago as 1901, in an article on "Electrical Time Service" in Feilden's Magazine, he discussed Marconi's invention of Syntony just then announced, that is to say, the transmission of wireless signals on different wave lengths with selective receiving

apparatus and envisaged the possibility of wireless time service in the form of a transmitter on the Nelson Column in Trafalgar Square, broadcasting the message every sixty seconds "This minute has expired; let all clocks hitch on another tooth . . . . coded into a single dictatorial impulse which would radiate in all directions from public transmitters in the centre of every town."

When, therefore, in 1912 the first Conference was called in Paris to establish International Wireless Time Signals, Mr. Hope-Jones took the keenest interest in its proceedings and exposed the apathy and negligence of our Government in failing to offer to this world service any of the facilities which the British Empire possessed in abundance.

In 1913 he produced the "Horophone," a wireless receiving set designed to enable watch and clockmakers to receive the time signals from the Eiffel Tower. In this he was again "agin the Government," who would not give permission to listen to Paris except upon payment of a preposterous annual fee for a special licence. But he loves a scrap and is a bonnie fighter. No doubt he has a drop of the same Celtic blood in him as the Irishman who, hearing a noise in the street, sent out his little girl to see if it was a fight, "because if so, father wanted to be in it." The Post Office's proposed restrictions were killed by ridicule, but the incident revealed the policy of repression against all users of wireless and the need of organised resistance.

Hence, when the Wireless Society of London was formed in July, 1913, we find him as Chairman, a position he held for ten years, until the affiliation of 200 Provincial Societies was effected and the Society safely established as the Radio Society of Great Britain.

It was this organisation of the amateur enthusiasts of the country whom we have to thank for broadcasting. The strength born of combination gave them courage to overstep the terms of their licences and to broadcast among themselves. They not only showed us how to do it, but fought the Government for permission. In introducing a deputation at St. Martin's-le-Grand and presenting a petition from the wireless societies of the whole kingdom, he emphasised the fact that the only constitutional means of access to authority was through the Postmaster-General, and they intended to urge their plea with all the force of which they were capable consistent with constitutional methods. When William Willett launched his Daylight Saving project in 1907, giving his lecture before the British Horological Institute in 1911, he found a ready champion in our present Chairman, who gave evidence before the first Parliamentary Committee. From then until its introduction of the Act in 1916, one of his hobbies or pastimes may be described as answering the foolish questions of its opponents; not unnaturally, therefore, he has been requisitioned by the British Broadcasting Company to herald the bi-annual change on each occasion since they commenced operations.

On the first of these occasions (April, 1923) he concluded his broadcast by counting out from his watch the last five seconds before 10 p.m. The Announcers at 2LO carried this on, but it was an unsatisfactory method, valueless from a scientific point of view, and it was not long before Mr. Hope-Jones formulated his proposal to transmit G.M.T. by direct land line between Greenwich and 2 Savoy Hill. This was accepted by the B.B.C., and Mr. Hope-Jones was appointed in a consulting capacity as their Time Expert to carry out the detail of the plan. It met with the hearty approval and co-operation of our President (the Astronomer-Royal), Sir Frank Dyson.

Our Chairman is a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers (founded in the reign of Charles I.); Master of the "First Artificers" Masonic Lodge, also of the "Britannic" (No. 33), and much in demand as an after-dinner speaker. But he prefers to address the microphone, and his voice must be known to millions who have heard him on S.B. (simultaneous broadcast) from 2LO.

His versatility has earned him many friends, and he has been particularly fortunate in those associated with him in his life-long endeavour to achieve that elusive ideal—the perfect measurement of time. Among these may be mentioned Mr. G. B. Bowell, Sir Henry Cunynghame, K.C.B., and Mr. W. H. Shortt, M.Inst.C.E., all of whom have brought their contributions to the science before the British Horological Institute in the form of lectures. The Free Pendulum, which has recently broken all the world's records for accurate time measurement in the Edinburgh Observatory, is mainly due to his collaboration with the latter gentleman.

It formed the subject of a lecture by Mr.