

Straight and Level

THAT enterprising firm Think Electronics Ltd., designers of the Meeting Simulator (Straight and Level, December 12), have announced an important new product. Known as the Air Trumpet Mk 1, it has a wide variety of applications. And, like all good ideas, it is very simple.

It comprises a high fidelity tape-recorder, a compressed-air generator, and an immense loudspeaker. The tape-recorder is of transistorized felt, and is worn as a hat. The compressed-air generator can be easily stowed in a waistcoat pocket; and the 250-decibel loudspeaker—being automatically inflatable—is easily concealed when not in use.

By means of the Air Trumpet, claims Think's boss, Sir Harold Digit-Smith, "managements can throw away their costly brochures, press handouts and house magazines, replacing them by a few picked men equipped with Air Trumpets." This publicity-corps d'élite would be responsible for seeing that the firm's Message—personally dictated into the Air Trumpet by the managing director—is put across where it is most needed.

For example, an Air Trumpet operator could crouch in the shrubbery outside a customer's office-window and—without fear of detection—emit at five-minute intervals 250 db bursts of such Messages as: "The turbofan is only a by-pass jet with a fancy new name." If, after three weeks, this had not sunk in, the Air Trumpet has a volume-control which can increase the noise-level to 350 db.

● During the recent blizzards, when some parts of the country were cut off, the Automobile Association offered to drop supplies from their Auster to the isolated citizens of Braemore, Caithness.

There was a most indignant objection from Mr. John L. Russell, County Clerk. He said: "If the A.A. want to provide a flying grocery service, that is their affair. . . . There are many households in isolated positions who are quite independent in wintry conditions. Independence will be destroyed, and terrific problems will be created in the future by this intervention. . . ."

"Sorry I spoke," a spokesman for the A.A. might well have said.

● Here's the rosy future envisaged by Andrew G. Haley, president of the International Astronautical Federation, when he spoke to the American Rocket Society recently:—

"We believe space exploration and settlement will dignify and enrich mankind, erasing forever devastating economic problems and affording vistas of the mysteries of creation immeasurably more challenging and interesting than we now

conceive of, and so engender a measure of tolerance and compassion that man will rise above his past."

But how about the following opinion?

"The first overt or actual violation of the rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to international treaties was occasioned by the U.S.S.R.'s use of the frequencies of 20.005 and 40.002 Mc/s . . . contrary to international law. There can be no doubt as to the use of these frequencies by the satellites 1957 Alpha (Sputnik 1), 1957 Beta (Sputnik 2), and 1958 Delta (Sputnik 3) . . . On no occasion did the U.S.S.R. apply to the appropriate agencies of the International Telecommunication Union at Geneva for permission to use the frequencies 20.005 and 40.002 Mc/s . . ."

What a contrast! Who made the second statement? Had he not heard Mr. Haley's views about tolerance? As a matter of fact the speaker was Mr. Haley—and on the same occasion, but before he got to the bit about dignifying mankind and engendering tolerance.



All those cracks about space-footballs may not, judging by this picture, have been wide of the goal. It shows the "spherical medallion symbolizing an artificial planet" which is on board Russia's Planet X at this moment. If anyone ever succeeds in retrieving it, the ownership should not be hard to establish

People have recently been so beastly to B.E.A. about their girls' uniforms that I have pleasure in complimenting the Corporation on a progressive fashion note. Traffic staff who qualify in a foreign language are entitled to wear the flag of the appropriate country in the form of a shoulder-badge. They are also entitled to an increase in pay



● "First student ever to solo in a jet aircraft without first receiving 30 hours of primary instruction in a prop-driven aircraft was 2nd Lt. Gene D. McGinnis. He soloed in the T-37 at Bainbridge . . . after 10 hr 1 min dual instruction." —U.S. "Air Force Times," January 13, 1959.

Steady on! In November 1955 Acting P/O. P. Foster, R.A.F., went solo after 8 hr 20 min dual instruction in a Hunting Jet Provost.

● Those airline people who claim to belong to the "low-fare school" are always complaining about artificially high rates of depreciation for modern airliners. They're probably justified; but the value of plenty of other things can drop at an even more extraordinary rate.

Four days before Christmas I heard one dustman say to another that he was now selecting the pick of last year's airline calendars. (Suitably framed, many of these would pass for genuine works of art, worth at least a few guineas. Few hearts, one imagines, could remain unmoved by such handsome scenes of faraway places.)

As I throw away the old year's calendars I always sadly reflect on the arbitrary nature of the depreciation policy that condemns such masterpieces to a premature fate. Somebody in S.A.S. must have had the same feelings, for their 1959 calendar comprises an anthology of folk tales, gloriously illustrated by Otto Neilsen, which can at the year end be converted into a hard-cover folio. Thus have the Scandinavians solved the problem of how to extend the depreciation period of a calendar beyond 12 months.

● "Of course, we expect to have a few Thors blow up on the stand."—Maj.-Gen. Bernard Schriever, reporting on his return to New York about progress with the Thor bases in England. Perhaps the *New Statesman* (see this page last week) was right about Thor.

ROGER BACON

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

COUNCIL FOR BRITISH PLANE OPERATORS

THE COUNCIL FOR BRITISH PLANE OPERATORS give notice that they have received the undermentioned applications to operate scheduled air services:—

FROM Provokair Ltd. of 12A, Gasworks Road, Sootby, Lincs.:

APPPLICATION No. 200472/35 for a Normal Scheduled Service from London to New York at a frequency of 20 flights every hour, increasing later in accordance with traffic demand, using Anson, DC-8, Boeing 707 or VC.10 aircraft, at a return fare of £18 10s. for a period of 20 years from February 1, 1959.

APPPLICATION No. 200472/36 for a Normal Scheduled Service from London to Paris at a frequency of 60 flights every hour, increasing later in accordance with traffic demand, using Tiger Moth, DC-9, D.H.121 or Bristol 205 aircraft, at a return fare of £1 2s 6d, for a period of 20 years from February 1, 1959.

THESE applications will be considered by the Council for British Plane Operators, and a copy of the Air Corporations Act will be forwarded to the applicants in the meantime in case they have not read it. . . .