

## CAMERAS IN KHARTOUM

While Terry Barritt of the T.D.U. was demonstrating in freezing cold at Leipzig, Derek Harper was sweating in the heat of the Sudan.

ONE SECTION of the Company that gets at least its fair share of variety is Broadcasting Division's Television Demonstration Unit. For instance, one morning in March, I was doing some



ABOVE: *Derek Harper and Ron Staples operating TV demonstration equipment in the van. BELOW: Heavy machinery being set up on the exhibition site in the Khartoum Technical Institute. The van was on the right and a classroom was used as a studio*

routine maintenance in the Sound Room at the Kensington television studio with the snow falling gently outside. The telephone rang—and one week later I was sitting in T.D.U.'s television control van in Khartoum, with the temperature at something like 140°! The shade temperature outside was 110°, but the van was not in the shade, shade being rather scarce around that part of Khartoum and in addition we had all the equipment on. Not that we were without air-conditioning, but the air was so dry that this unit made very little difference to the temperature.

Ron Staples and myself, with the help of our agents, Mitchell Cotts and Co., and members of the staff of Radio Omdurman, were showing television at the Engineering Exhibition being held at the Khartoum Technical Institute. The one-camera demonstration that was originally planned had grown into a full scale three-camera studio production



affair (at least, if not quite full, certainly large scale).

Khartoum is a place of fantastic contrasts. Set hundreds of miles from anywhere, in the middle of a burning desert (if you think 'burning desert' is corny, you should just try it. I did, and it is!), the town is yet green and pleasant, thanks to the millions of gallons of water which are used weekly to irrigate every public and private patch of greenery. Practically all the cars are new, shiny models, but donkeys and a few camels share the roads with them. Though the major thoroughfares are asphalted, they are intersected at intervals by unmade dirt roads, even in the busy shopping centre. The city is built on the block pattern, distorted where it meets the Nile. Mud huts on the outskirts give way to fine, modern, but generally low buildings in the centre, though electric power cables are thickest along the streets lined with ages-old-looking mud walls, and the sound of Sudanese music, broadcast from Radio Omdurman, is all but deafening in the cool (80°-85°) of the evening.

To say that the 'locals' were interested in television would be understating the case. While the television receivers were



*A shot from the screen of the crowd seeing themselves on TV for the first time. These are mostly Technical College students [All pictures by the author]*

on, the rest of the exhibition was almost deserted. Most popular, not surprisingly, were the 'see yourself' periods when the cameras were turned on the crowd. They indulged in a 'wave at the camera' spree—a pastime not unknown at home! The climax of our operations was the 'V.I.P.' evening when we broadcast to a select audience, a discussion in English on 'Marconi's in the Middle East', a short cabaret show, a discussion in Arabic entitled 'Do We Need TV?' and a very long programme of Sudanese songs sung by the local 'Johnnie Ray', Ahmed Mustafa.

Looking back, there are two most memorable things: the feeling I had as I tried to direct three very inexperienced cameramen, and vision mix, i.e. select the picture for transmission, during the Arabic discussion—of which I understood not a word—and the sight of Jimmy, the proprietor of the cabaret, compèring, in very broken English, an audience-participation game called—as near as I can spell it—'Bead de Glogk'.

DEREK HARPER



*Ron Staples fitting up a sound cable in front of the control van near the Mitchell Cotts stand*