



Mr. Shaw displays the intricate wiring system in a custom-made organ.



The designer is shown at the console of one of the organs, which he plans to begin producing commercially.

Basement Workshop In Aldershot Serves As Custom Organ Factory

What started out to be a childhood hobby may yet blossom into a lucrative enterprise for a 33-year-old Hamilton man.

He is English-born Neil Shaw who emigrated to Canada nine years ago. An employee in the electronic tube division at Westinghouse, he now lives in Aldershot.

Mr. Shaw traces his interest in music to his family background. His father is a choir master in England; his grandfather was also a choir master and his great grandfather was both choir master, organist and composer of hymns.

SINCE EARLY childhood, Mr. Shaw was interested in organs. He wanted to build one himself.

"My first venture at making one was unsuccessful," he confesses, "due to lack of technical knowledge."

In 1956, however, the "old flair" came back to life. "In Canada I earned the money which I needed for experimenting," he said.

The major problem he faced was to find the correct circuits in organ construction. This involved six months of research.

"Working for my own pleasure and satisfaction," he took a year to complete his first electronic organ which is being used temporarily in an Aldershot church.

FOR MRS. SHAW those were trying days. Their apartment kitchen table (prior to moving to Aldershot) was converted to a

work-room bench. "And I had all the cleaning to do!" said Mrs. Shaw.

Professional musicians who saw the organ were amazed at both the originality of design and construction. They agreed that "it plays like a pipe organ and sounds like one." They were amazed, too, "at the pipe organ realism achieved."

"The idea to build for commercial use dawned on me," says Mr. Shaw, "when my musician friends suggested it." He found the prospects promising.

HIS THIRD "full church-sized organ" is just finished. It is to replace his first on loan to an Aldershot church. This time, he used the basement of his new home for a work shop; much to the relief of his wife.

"For an electronic organ, it is unusual," Mr. Shaw explains. The latest oak-stained organ has 46 stops, 184 tubes, 6 separate amplifying systems, 12 pre-set buttons, 26 speakers and a total power output of 240 watts.

How much time did he spend on it? "Well, working one year, six days a week with an average of four hours per day. All in my spare time." And the cost? "\$4,700. Of course, on the retail market it will fetch \$10,000."

MR. SHAW CLAIMS to be the "only one who builds custom-commercial electronic organs in Canada." That means, according to church or private specifications.

What of his future plans? To find a work shop and go into commercial production.