

Federal Radio Examiner Proposes To Interfere With Education In Ohio

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY is due to lose some of its best radio broadcasting hours if the report of Examiner Ralph L. Walker is sustained by the Federal Radio Commission.

In reporting the case the *United States Daily* on January fourteenth said:

The examiner recommended that station WEOA be allowed forty-two hours a week, six more than it has at present.

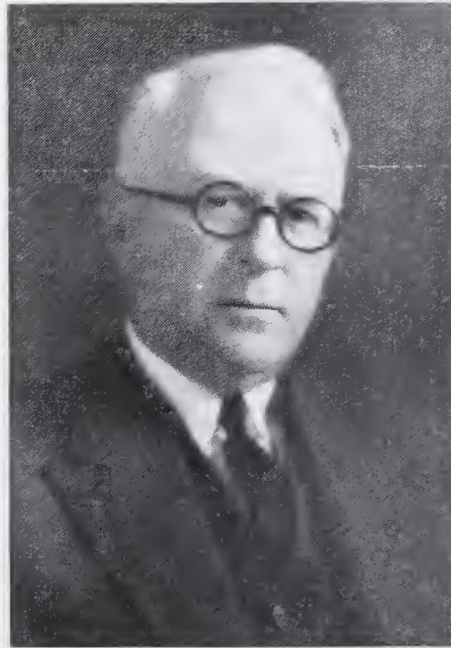
This recommendation authorizes the college station to operate six hours a day, seven days a week. Heretofore silent on Sundays, WEOA averaged six and one-third hours a day in its broadcasts. Investigations both in the United States and abroad suggest that Sunday programs should preferably be of the type usually designated as entertainment or religious, rather than strictly educational. The examiner's assignment of a six-hour Sunday schedule is a manifest example of the interference of the federal government in the educational affairs of a state. To use this time effectively the university will be compelled to change its programs from the strictly educational type, to a kind that at present it is not prepared to give. While a radio station operated by a university may vary its program by using a proportion of entertainment features, the very fundamental nature of an institution of higher learning demands a program which is primarily educational.

The new schedule provides for the use of the following hours: 9 to 11AM, 12:30 to 2:30PM, and 5 to 7PM.

Under the previous arrangement the university operated from 9 to 11AM, 12:30 to 2PM, and 4 to 5PM daily except Sunday; 7 to 10PM Monday; and 7 to 11PM Wednesday and Friday. In addition, during October and November the period from 2 to 5PM on Saturdays was used for broadcasting football games, while five periods between 8 and 9PM were used for broadcasting games during the basketball season.

The operating schedule requested by WEOA was for the hours 9 to 11AM, 12:30 to 4:30PM daily except Sunday; 7 to 10PM Monday and Thursday; 7 to 11PM Wednesday and Friday; 8 to

9:30PM Saturday, and, in addition, the hour 4 to 5PM Saturday during October and November. No Sunday time was wanted by the university station; it was deemed unsuited for its radio programs.



SENATOR JAMES COUZENS of Michigan, an outstanding citizen and statesman, whose devotion to youth is symbolized by the millions of dollars he has given from his personal fortune to advance the welfare of children. Senator Couzens sponsored Senate Resolution 129 calling for a thoro investigation of commercialized radio and the possibility of public ownership of broadcasting facilities.

The director of the educational station carefully prepared a plan for use of the time requested, and, in addition, secured competent engineering evidence as to the technical efficiency and superior coverage of WEOA in comparison with the commercial station with which it shared time. The examiner did not seek the advice of competent educational authorities concerning the value of the programs broadcast by the university. Among other conclusions, he arrived at the following:

The service rendered by Station WKBN [a commercial radio station sharing time with the university] is more diversified and of more general interest than are the programs of Station WEOA [Ohio State University].

Profit-making was the primary aim of the commercial station attempting to secure a change in the hours of the university station. One commercial representative was heard to remark that the station would have to have more evening hours or it could not afford to continue operation. Not a word did he utter of a desire to secure more evening hours in order to render a more acceptable service to his listeners. On the other hand, the university authorities desired more evening hours in order to broadcast for certain groups of the Ohio population who could not be reached at other times.

In connection with the hearing, representatives of the commercial station spent approximately five thousand dollars for evidence alone, according to a prominent Washington radio attorney. It is manifestly contrary to public policy for an educational institution supported by state appropriations to spend large sums of money in legal battles of this sort.

The case was clearly drawn. The university had a wellprepared plan and a more dependable state coverage than the commercial station with which it shared time, but when it made a proper application to the Federal Radio Commission, the examiner not only did not recommend granting its request, but in exchange for some of the present hours, gave the educational authorities hours which they are not now prepared to use effectively. Findings like this have convinced educators that radio education will secure its rights from the Federal Radio Commission only when Congress passes a law giving educational institutions preferred consideration in the allotment of radio broadcasting facilities.

The Fess Bill [S.4] is a step in the right direction. It was designed to meet just such situations as the one described. It is calculated to protect the rights of educational stations before a commercially-minded Federal Radio Commission. The situation in case suggests that in spite of commercial ballyhoo to the contrary, there are other than financial difficulties which are crowding educational stations off the air.

Is a Radio Budget Justified?

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SINCE THERE IS a very wide range of difference in the extent to which land-grant colleges are making use of the radio as a supplementary means of extending education, it follows that there will be a corresponding variation in expenditures for this purpose. The following situations, and perhaps others, exist at present within our institutions:

[1] Colleges owning and operating radio stations on a fulltime basis.

[2] Colleges owning or sharing in the ownership and operation of radio stations on a parttime basis.

[3] Regular participation in the program of one or more commercial stations.

[4] Occasional participation in the programs of one or more commercial stations.

Since our own institution falls within the first classification, my discussion will be confined to that type of situation. It involves the maximum radio budget.

Danger—We seek in vain for examples of adequately financed college broadcasting stations. The great danger of the present moment lies in the fact that opinions are being formed, policies developed, and rights in the air determined on the basis of meagerly financed educational broadcasting on the one hand, and abundantly financed commercial broadcasting on the other hand. As yet we are quite unaware of the potential possibilities of education by radio.

While I recognize that educational broadcasting over so-called "chain" or commercial stations is now developed and susceptible of further development, and that it will have an important and legitimate place in a complete radio service originating in land-grant institutions, yet I dissent from the opinion that this arrangement can ever completely fulfill the need. I support, rather, the contrary view that the institutions are justified in owning and operating their own stations in order that they may render a service of primary importance which is not likely to be obtainable from commercial stations.

Programs filling state needs—To illustrate my point, we are now giving a course in poultry husbandry over our college station in which upwards of six hundred poultrymen have definitely registered. Hundreds of others are undoubtedly

listening in and receiving benefit. Many of the registrants have purchased textbooks. They are receiving supplementary literature and assigned readings. We have considerable evidence that this

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is not an indifferent class, but rather that it consists of a group of persons trying to make a living in the poultry business, eager to learn, and following closely the lecture course offered by the head of our poultry department. In four centers, groups are assembling to listen to the lectures and then discussing them. We have had other radio classes in other subjects and we are therefore not going beyond our experience in citing this as a field of large potential possibilities. Such courses constitute a legitimate, justifiable, worthwhile use of college broadcasting stations. On the other hand such programs, in the nature of the case, are not appropriate for chain broadcasts by commercial stations. In fact, offering such programs over stations which seek primarily to attract general audiences would only serve to create prejudice against the programs. Furthermore, our agricultural and home economics programs are intended for Oregon farmers and homemakers. We do not intend them for the people of other states, or expect colleges

in other states to seek to instruct our people. Our whole system of experiment stations is predicated upon the principle that special and local problems require solution and, accordingly, we have set up separate organizations in the separate states to solve these special problems.

Commercial stations inadequate—Since the special service to limited groups cannot appropriately go out as network broadcasts, there remains the possibility of using commercial stations when they are not broadcasting chain programs, or broadcasting over independent stations that are not affiliated with a chain. When the matter is narrowed down to this point the inadequacy of the commercial station for our purposes becomes apparent. In the first place the big stations are broadcasting chain programs a good share of the time. We cannot be permanently satisfied with anything but the best time for our special purpose, and the big stations cannot give it to us and at the same time be chain stations. When we eliminate the chain stations and place our reliance upon the independent commercial stations, I believe all will agree that this is a very uncertain and precarious reliance.

I feel that the conclusion is warranted, therefore, that the needs of the land-grant colleges from the standpoint of rendering a localized service cannot be met by commercial stations. Furthermore, the type of localized service to which I refer is the most important of all possible service by radio.

Dollars and cents—How much can land-grant colleges afford to invest in radio equipment and operation? This is a question worth settling in general terms, even if there are many institutions which cannot immediately secure the funds which might legitimately be so expended.

Heretofore we have not been dismayed by the fact that an addition of a thousand students calls for the erection of one or two new buildings costing a hundred thousand dollars or more, or necessitating an increase of fifty thousand dollars a year in operating expenses. On the basis of relative values can we not lay down the proposition that an investment of between fifty and one hundred thousand dollars in radio equipment, and

that an annual operating budget ranging from twenty-five to fifty thousand dollars are justified, and that this expenditure will provide new and supplementary educational facilities and services at a lower cost than others we are now rendering? Radio need not supersede other types of service. In numerous instances costs can be reduced by remote control arrangements connecting institutions located near each other.

Oregon's objective—Our aim in this state is an all-state station used jointly by the institutions of higher learning and the state offices and commissions located at the state capitol. Its program will then include daily, except Sunday, broadcasts from the campus of the University of Oregon at Eugene, by means of remote control facilities; daily, except Sunday, broadcasts from the state capitol at Salem, to be participated in by numerous state offices and commissions such as the governor, secretary of state, state treasurer, state superintendent of public instruction, librarian, department of agriculture, department of police [for educational purposes only, not including apprehension of criminals], highway commission, industrial accident commission, state forester, fire marshal, corporation commissioner, public service commissioner, department of vocational education; and participation by three state normal schools and, if desired, by Willamette University, a privately endowed Methodist college located at Salem.

The combined program resources of the educational institutions and public agencies enumerated above, including the leased wire connections with the market news service of the United States Department of Agriculture, will permit full compliance with the twelve-hour minimum program service required by the Federal Radio Commission, and provide the citizens of the state of Oregon with an educational and service program of inestimable value.

\$50,000—The thirty-sixth legislative assembly of Oregon authorized the state board of higher education to extend the facilities of the station to other institutions of higher learning and to various state offices as outlined above. A reduc-

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tion in available funds precludes the immediate consummation of the expansion program. The remote control facilities mentioned, and appliances called for by a recent order of the Federal Radio Commission, will altogether entail additional capital outlay approximating fifty thousand dollars. A like sum will be required for annual maintenance and operation costs, exclusive of the payment for the time of faculty members and public officials appearing on the programs.

Service record—KOAC is wholly dependent upon public funds or private donations for support. It was first established in 1922, when a fifty watt transmitter was built by the State College physics department. In the fall of 1925, a five hundred watt transmitter was placed in operation, and the program enlarged. In the summer of 1928 the present modern Western Electric equipment, with a thousand watt crystal-controlled transmitter was purchased and installed in the new physics building on the campus. The station and studio equipment, exclusive of the building in which it is housed, represents an investment of approximately \$35,000.

Twenty percent of Oregon's radio audience is within a radius of fifty miles of KOAC; 89 percent of the state's radio audience is within a radius of seventy-five miles of the station, and 97 percent is within a hundred mile radius. This includes the city of Portland, over the larger portion of which KOAC is well received. Excluding Portland from the consideration altogether, 47 percent of the state's radio audience remains within the hundred mile radius from the station.

Popularity—Reliable checks indicate that the daily farm broadcasts, the market news reports, the homemaker hour, the 4-H Club programs, the business reviews, the special lecture courses on various subjects, and other program features, are widely received and greatly appreciated by the people of the state.

As the above statements indicate, the record of the station is one of progress. Notwithstanding large reductions in contemplated expenditures for other higher educational activities, a 50 percent increase is contemplated for the maintenance and operation of KOAC for the year beginning July 1, 1931. In view of the number of persons reached, education by radio is relatively inexpensive.

Filling a need—The programs described will be of special interest and benefit to the citizens of Oregon. Their local application, which adds to their value, tends in fact to render them in appropriate for chain broadcasts covering groups of states. It is our experience and judgment that it is only by owning and operating its own broadcasting station that the state of Oregon can best be served with educational programs such as those contemplated in plans for expanding the scope of KOAC's schedule. Loss of any part of the time now assigned to the station, or any other circumstance preventing the final consummation of our objectives, will be distinctly against the public interest, convenience, and necessity which Congress, by its enactments, has sought to safeguard.

EDUCATION BY RADIO is published weekly by the National Committee on Education by Radio at 1201 Sixteenth Street, Northwest, Washington, D. C. The members of this Committee and the national groups with which they are associated are as follows: Arthur G. Crane, president, the University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, National Association of State Universities. R. C. Higgy, director, radio station WEAO of Ohio State Univ., Columbus, O., Association of College and Univ. Broadcasting Stations. J. O. Keller, head of engineering extension, Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pa., National University Extension Association. Charles N. Lischka, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, D. C., National Catholic Educational Association. John Henry MacCracken, vicechairman, 744 Jackson Place, Washington, D. C., American Council on Education. James N. Rule, state superintendent of public instruction, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, National Council of State Superintendents. Thurber M. Smith, S. J., St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri, The Jesuit Educational Association. H. Umberger, Kansas State College of Agriculture, Manhattan, Kansas, Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities. Joy Elmer Morgan, chairman, 1201 Sixteenth Street Northwest, Washington, D. C., National Education Association.

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Going Over the Heads of Parents

The home is the richest soil ever given for the growth of human life. It deserves every aid and protection, that wise and devoted parents may rear intelligent and upright children. Is not high-powered advertising aimed at children over the heads of their parents a menace to the integrity of home life? Can we afford to allow smartalecky salesmen on the air to invade our homes—even on Sunday—and to destroy the ideals of sincerity and good taste which are at the heart of sound character?—From *Special Bulletin Number Five* of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.