

Making Good Use of Radio

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DURING THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF decided steps have been taken for the introduction of the use of radio into the public schools of Providence. Approximately three hundred classrooms in seventeen of the schools have loudspeakers connected with central radio sets in the principals' offices. These installations were made at a cost of more than fourteen thousand dollars, nine thousand of which was appropriated from tax moneys and five thousand contributed by the schools themselves. The teacher in each of these rooms may regulate the volume of her loudspeaker or disconnect it at her discretion. At the central set the principal or an assistant may send out to the rooms a program tuned in "from the air," phonograph records, or personal broadcasts from his microphone.

Equipping schools—These splendid radio installations have been made possible thru the cooperation of several individuals and groups. First, the superintendent of schools mapped out the co-operative plan and secured the interest of all who were to be partners in it. As indicated, a part of the financial obligation was met from tax moneys, while the balance was raised by school principals, teachers, and pupils. These funds were pooled with the superintendent, giving him greater purchasing power thru the seeking of bids. One of the deputy superintendents, with the aid of the Providence Trade School, designed ingenious devices for adapting radio sets and amplifiers, and made some of the work of installation a project for the students of the Trade School. This resulted in economies, and in outfits that are admirably suited to the purposes of the schools.

Preparation, reception, follow-up—The superintendent next brought together the principals of these schools for a permanent organization, to meet regularly and confer upon the educational uses of the new equipment. At the outset the superintendent stressed the importance of three steps for the radio listening lesson: preparation, reception, and follow-up. It is now more than a year since the first of these radio conferences was held, and a number of practical lessons in the use of the radio equipment have been learned.

The Damrosch Music Appreciation Hour over the NBC and the American School of the Air over the CBS are so wellknown that it is unnecessary to dwell upon them. They are practically the only programs from the radio broadcasting stations in this vicinity that are properly planned for classroom reception. There is much that is of educational value in the programs that

the commercial broadcasters are sending out. We receive lists of these "Educational Broadcasts" from the NBC, Teachers College, Columbia University, and the *Journal of Education*.

Disadvantage of radio-advertising—There are, however, almost insurmountable obstacles to our practical use of this material. *First, of course, is the objectionable advertising which is frequently interspersed thruout the program.* Then there is the failure to receive the lists far enough in advance to plan for the reception. A very real difficulty is our inability to classify programs as to subjects and grades from a mere list of titles which are not sufficiently descriptive.

We have been able to make some use of these programs of the radio stations thru "home lessons by radio." Valuable broadcasts out of school hours are assigned to pupils having radio sets at home. These pupils listen, take notes, and report.

Unanimously the principals have found the school "mike" the most valuable part of the equipment. Here we may produce for our pupil-listeners programs that are free from advertising, that are planned in advance, and that are classified and graded. The criteria for planning a microphone lesson include the aid that

it will give the classroom teacher by supplementing her efforts, the interest that it will add, and the time that it will save.

Lecture method poorest—There is a microphone technic, as the professional broadcasters well know. Our teachers must acquire the simpler elements of this technic in order to teach successfully via "mike." As in the classroom, so here the lecture method is one of the poorest. The Socratic dialog is better. Dramatization is excellent. Character-training lessons are presented in this way by groups of pupils at the microphone, for their fellow students at the loudspeakers in the various classrooms. Language dictation exercises for the entire school are conducted over the microphone, including correction of papers and immediate tabulation of results. The visiting music teacher at her piano in the broadcasting room teaches certain elements of the music lesson to half the school at one time. Arithmetic fundamentals and language usage tests are given regularly in this way with a decided economy of time.

Auditorium programs without assembling in the auditorium are often more successful than the usual "assembly." The amplifiers make the training of platform speakers unnecessary. The auditors in the classrooms follow the programs better than they would if they were seated at the rear of a hall, where



SUPERINTENDENT A. J. Stoddard, Providence, Rhode Island, one of the nation's leaders in fitting the radio into the program of the public school system.

they could hear only half of what is said. In these "radio auditorium" programs we preserve community spirit by providing for listener-activity in unison. We switch on the phonograph to play the accompaniments for community songs, and thru-out the corridors the classes may be heard, all singing together. In this connection we made a discovery. The tone quality of the singing improved. In order to keep together it is necessary to hear the accompaniment, and this subdued singing eliminates the gusto with which children usually sing familiar songs.

A spirited march heard from each classroom loudspeaker at the close of the day sends the pupils home with a feeling of love for their school.

At the superintendent's direction, two committees, one for junior high schools and the other for elementary schools, have made plans to broadcast a series of programs for classroom reception. These programs are intended also to enlist the interest of parents who are able to listen in at their homes. An attempt has been made to provide lessons that are adapted to radio presentation, that will supplement the work of the classroom teacher, and that will arouse the active interest of the pupils.

In following the admonition to heed the three steps of preparation, reception, and follow-up, our teachers are acquiring what may be called "loudspeaker technic." The teacher at the loudspeaker becomes an assistant to the teacher at the microphone. Very ingenious are some of the devices by which she prepares the class for the coming radio program. She has pictures at hand or words on the blackboard. She introduces the speaker or the subject. During the reception she is alert to assist. In unobtrusive ways she uses a pointer or writes an unusual word, or she takes notes for use during the third step. Another important activity of hers during the listening is to observe the reactions of her pupils. They follow up the radio lesson by preparing scrapbooks or they write letters, essays, or poems.

Promising future—The question will naturally arise in the minds of taxpayers, schoolboards, parents, and teachers: "Is this marvelous invention, the radio, a proper tool for use in the schools?" A little careful reflection will convince one that in spite of obvious shortcomings there is good reason for anticipating that radio will find an important place in elementary and secondary education; its place in adult education is already assured. Radio is a means of communication; so was the saga; so is the picture in the textbook; so is the movie; so indeed is printing. We may assume that the loudspeaker promises to become an indispensable auditory aid in education.

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RADIO, THE ASSISTANT TEACHER, is an interesting and valuable book for everyone interested in radio instruction. It is the first book dealing with the pedagogy of education by radio. Send \$1.90 to the author, B. H. Darrow, director of the Ohio School of the Air, State Department of Education, Columbus, Ohio, and a copy will be mailed to you postpaid.

Educator Leaves American School of the Air

ALICE KEITH, director of the American School of the Air since its inception, was forced to sever her connection with the Columbia Broadcasting System, which has been featuring these educational programs, at the conclusion of the 1931-32 series last spring. It is reported that her departure leaves no one in the educational department of the Columbia Broadcasting System who has a college degree or teaching experience. Officials of the broadcasting system state that they will themselves direct the school, and point to the prominent men and women of the advisory committee as proof of the continued educational merit to be expected of this endeavor. On the other hand the advisory committee [formed originally by Miss Keith] is known to be both honorary and unpaid and while it may be asked in a general way to pass on policies, it cannot check on every program. As a protest against the alleged unfair treatment of Miss Keith, several members of the advisory committee have resigned. Educators are skeptical about the future of this educational program and point to the necessity of employing fulltime a person with adequate background, training, and experience, if public schools are to use it.

Many broadcasting executives are either advertisers, salesmen, promoters, or showmen. Few, if any, are prepared to direct or understand a program aimed to be used by our boys and girls in the public schools. One educational director for a large broadcasting organization has been educated in the English type of preparatory school and knows little about the organization of the American system of education. Yet he is in charge of all the so-called educational programs it broadcasts.

Miss Keith, on the contrary, was educated in our own public schools and is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, with an additional two years spent in the study of music. She has been a teacher in rural, elementary, and high schools, and has given lecture courses in the summer schools of Wisconsin, Ohio, Western Reserve, and Pennsylvania universities. She was supervisor of music appreciation in Cleveland for three years. She had charge of playground work and story-telling for chautauquas several summers and for a period directed plays and festivals for War Camp Community Service in Boston, Kansas City, New York, and other cities. Among the historical pageants which she either directed or organized was the Chicago Fire Semi-centennial. For three years, Miss Keith lectured in various parts of the country as a member of the educational staff of the Victor Talking Machine Company, and was made educational director of the Radio Corporation of America during the year it sponsored the Damrosch concerts. In this capacity she organized the advisory council and committee and made the necessary school contacts. It was from this position that she was called to organize and direct the wellknown American School of the Air.

Those who have maintained that "commerce" cannot be trusted with all of radio, lest its educational value be reduced to zero, point to this act of the Columbia Broadcasting System as another proof of their contention that radio frequencies must be set aside for the various states to use for educational and cultural purposes.

Public Stations Enlighten Wisconsin Citizens

THE TWO STATE-OWNED RADIO STATIONS in Wisconsin drew up an agreement on August 12, 1932, with representatives of the five major political parties providing for the free use of these stations in the pre-primary campaign. One of these stations is WHA at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, a daytime station which was recently authorized by the Federal Radio Commission to increase its power from 750 watts to 1 kilowatt. The other, also a daytime station, is WLBL of the State Department of Markets, which is located at Stevens Point and operates with 2 kilowatts power. Neither of these stations permits advertising and both are devoted to educating and informing their constituents and providing them with high-grade entertainment.

The agreement signed by representatives of each of the parties and the stations follows in full text:

We, the representatives of stations WHA and WLBL and of the various political parties and groups, heartily endorse the use of Wisconsin's state-owned radio stations in political campaigns.

We believe that one of our truest platitudes is that the success of a democracy depends upon an informed and enlightened citizenry. At present, many of our voters get only one point of view; they read only one newspaper; and they attend, when they go at all, only the meetings of one political party. But if each party or group is allowed an equal opportunity to present its case over the state stations, the voter can get a much more adequate understanding of the issues and can cast a much more intelligent ballot.

Another consideration touches the use of money in political campaigns. The state sets limits to the amounts that can properly be spent. The charge is often made that parties without large financial resources are handicapped because they cannot get their argument before the voters. If the state places its radio facilities without charge at the disposal of each party or group, a step will be taken towards meeting both of these situations.

We are aware that, unless political uses of the radio are properly safeguarded, unpleasant situations may arise. Some feel that the danger of friction is so great that the attempts to use the radio in political campaigns should not be made. However, we do not take this position. The process of avoiding danger often results in avoiding programs of any sort. Wisconsin has a real opportunity to lead the way in taking problems of government to the people by radio.

We agree to use stations WHA and WLBL in the pre-primary campaign under the following conditions:

[1] The authorities in charge of stations WHA and WLBL agree to place these two stations at the disposal of the five political groups from 12 to 12:30PM each Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, for the four weeks beginning August 22, 1932; from 6 to 7PM on each of these days until September 1, and from 5:15 to 6:15PM for the remaining period; and to give each group a final opportunity to appear over each station on the afternoon of Monday, September 21. [If funds can be secured for the rental of telephone lines between the two stations they will be operated as a chain with the same program going out from both stations. In this case, programs can originate at

either station. Otherwise, the two stations must be operated separately and each group will be allotted time over each station. In that event the time schedule for station WLBL may differ somewhat from the one herein given.]

[2] The representatives of the five political groups agree to the following division of time. The schedule which follows was determined by drawing lots:

The Democratic Party—from 12 to 12:30PM on the following days: Thursday, August 25, Monday, August 29, Tuesday, August 30, Monday, September 5, Wednesday, September 7, Wednesday, September 14; from 6 to 7PM on the following days: Monday, August 22, Monday, August 29, Wednesday, August 31; from 5:15 to 6:15PM on the following days: Monday, September 5, Friday, September 9, Thursday, September 15; and from 6 to 6:15PM on the following day: Monday, September 19.

The Prohibition Party—from 12 to 12:30PM on the following days: Monday, August 22, Wednesday, August 31, Friday, September 9, Thursday, September 15; from 6 to 7PM on the following days: Wednesday, August 24, Friday, September 2, Tuesday, September 6, Monday, September 12; and from 4:40 to 4:55 PM on the following day: Monday, September 19.

The Republican Party—from 12 to 12:30PM on the following days: Tuesday, August 23, Thursday, September 8, Friday, September 16; from 6 to 7PM on the following days: Thursday, August 25, Tuesday, August 30; from 5:15 to 6:15PM on the following day: Wednesday, September 14; and from 5:20 to 5:35PM on the following day: Monday, September 19.

The Progressive Republican Party—from 12 to 12:30PM on the following days: Friday, August 26, Thursday, September 1, Tuesday, September 13; from 6 to 7PM on the following day: Tuesday, August 23; from 5:15 to 6:15PM on the following days: Thursday, September 8, Friday, September 16; and from 5 to 5:15PM on the following day: Monday, September 19.

The Socialist Party—from 12 to 12:30PM on the following days: Wednesday, August 24, Friday, September 2, Tuesday, September 6, Monday, September 12; from 6 to 7PM on the following day: Friday, August 26; from 5:15 to 6:15PM on the following days: Thursday, September 1, Wednesday, September 7, Tuesday, September 13, and from 5:40 to 5:55PM on the following day: Monday, September 19.

[3] It is mutually agreed that officials designated by each party or group shall have complete charge of the programs assigned to that group. They will select the speakers and apportion the time. The station will, before each of these programs, make a brief announcement of the arrangement under which these broadcasts are given.

[4] It is further mutually agreed that these programs should be limited to a discussion of state issues [or national issues when the candidates for the United States Senate are the speakers]. Candidates for local or district offices may be invited to discuss party issues but the radio stations shall not be used in local or district campaigns.

[5] It is further mutually agreed that station officials will not undertake to censor in any way the material presented. [It is taken for granted that all speakers are desirous of avoiding charges that might be regarded as violations of the law of libel.]

[6] It is further mutually agreed that these arrangements are experimental in nature and should not necessarily be regarded as a precedent for future campaigns; that a meeting should be held after the primary election to draw up rules governing the use of the two stations in the pre-election campaign.

EDUCATION BY RADIO is published 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.
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.
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Joy Elmer Morgan, chairman, 1201 Sixteenth Street, Northwest, Washington, D. C., National Education Association.
James N. Rule, state superintendent of public instruction, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, National Council of State Superintendents.
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Radio Trust Denies Free Speech

THE POWER TRUST last week proved that it has grown strong enough to put a censorship on the air. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been lost by investors in public utility securities, and a heavy part of this loss has fallen on savings banks. Professor William Z. Ripley of Harvard, one of the leading economists of the country and a cautious conservative in his general attitude, was asked to speak to the National Association of Mutual Savings Banks on ways and means of preventing similar losses in the future.

The National Broadcasting Company refused to broadcast Ripley's address! "I have been asked to blue-pencil my speech," said Professor Ripley, when he faced his audience. "I have never submitted to blue-penciling, and will not begin now." He did not begin—but neither did his scathing analysis of public utility financing get on the air.

When a man of Ripley's age, eminence, and known conservatism can be cut off the air, then free speech in this country does not go beyond the range of an individual voice. The power trust, with its ally or subsidiary, the radio trust, controls the air.

Canada has seen that menace coming, and has met it by moving to nationalize radio. What will the American people do about it?—*Wyoming Labor Journal*, June 24, 1932.