

# Improve Radio Programs

**A**FTER A LONG STRUGGLE trying to improve the quality of moving pictures, parents in numerous homes have concluded that it is easier to find other types of recreation for children than to attempt to select suitable pictures from the mass of trash being spewed forth continually from the commercial studios.

A moving picture, once made, is comparatively permanent. After a number of showings, the various evaluating organizations can estimate its suitability for persons of various ages. Using the best of these reports, the intelligent parent can determine what moving pictures, if any, his children should see.

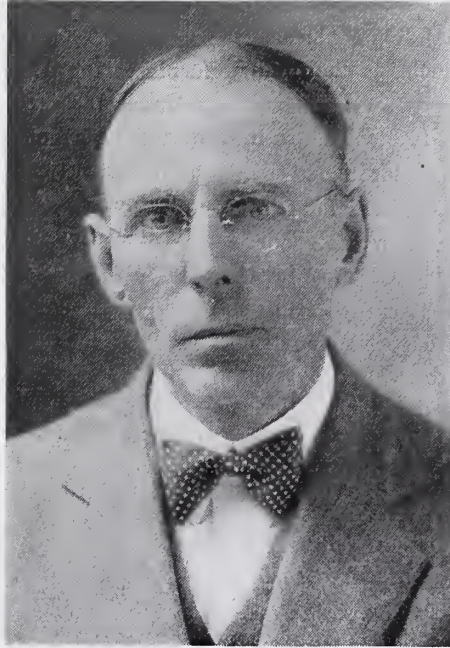
The radio is different. A single program is a transient thing, spoken over the air but once and then gone. Whether the effect is good or bad, once heard, its influence cannot be destroyed. The child does not have to go downtown and pay an admission, but in his home or perhaps in the confines of his own room, the radio program, without opportunity of preview or evaluation comes in to make an indelible impression on his plastic mind.

The radio constitutes a more difficult problem than that presented by children's reading. Radio programs bring a realism to youngsters that at the same age cannot be secured from reading. In fact long before a child can read, he can be intensely stimulated by a vicious radio program.

Parents do not have the opportunity in case of individual programs and seldom have the time in case of a series of programs to make a careful evaluation. In spite of this, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and other organizations and individuals seeking an improvement in radio programs because of their injurious effect upon boys and girls, receive nothing but sneers from certain mouthpieces of commercial radio. Witness the following quotation taken from the "Behind the Mike with William Moyes" column of the *Portland Oregonian*, May 30, 1933, as a case in point:

Franklin Dunham, educational director for NBC, New York, who dropped in yesterday, brought one gem that interested this column. It was an answer to old hens who go around crying about children's programs on the radio ruining the young. Mr. Dunham puts it too nicely, so B. Mike, interpreter without portfolio, renders it thus: You don't let your kids read anything they want, do you? Well, it's the same with radio. You're supposed to teach them discrimination. If they don't exercise it themselves you're supposed to do it for them. The only place where a kid listens to whatever he dampleases is the unmanaged home. Unmanaged homes are places lacrimose old klucks neglect so they can shoot off their bazoos in public over the ee-vils of radio.

Advertisers responsible for most of the undesirable children's radio programs may take a measure of consolation from such articles as the above, but intelligent parents banded together in the various organizations giving study to radio problems will not be so easily satisfied.



**C**HARLES A. CULVER, *professor of physics, Carleton College, and director of broadcasting station KFMX which recently left the air for financial reasons after ten years of operation. Professor Culver is a Fellow of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, member of the Institute of Radio Engineers, served as a major in the Signal Corps, and holds a number of patents in the radio communication field.*

It is a trite yet ever truthful saying that he who pays the fiddler, calls the tune. Where has it been shown to better advantage than in radio? Even the broadcasting officials of the chains or independent stations, high as their ideals may be, are powerless to regulate the content of programs given by advertisers. Perhaps the present American radio system can be modified to eliminate most of the present evils. This cannot be done by applying large quantities of whitewash. Right now representatives of the radio industry are busily writing articles for publication in various magazines in defense of American radio. A few readers may be fooled by the clever misrepresentation, but the bulk of the American public will resent this type of activity. They want the facts, not propaganda. They can tell from a casual listening to their own radios that something is radically wrong with the present system. Perhaps nothing can be done about it, but most of them feel that we should take the precautions of making a careful study before we blindly go farther in radio. An impartial Congressional study of radio similar to the Parliamentary study made for Canada by

Sir John Aird's Commission is the next logical step for the United States.

**S**OME AMERICAN FRIENDS living in Milan, Italy, report that they are absolutely reveling in the most gorgeous programs reaching them from every part of Europe even tho they have only a cheap receiving set. Europe has a wide choice and selection of national programs whereas in the United States we have no selectivity at all, but must content ourselves with the same character of commercialized tripe being broadcast from 400 stations at the same time.—An American radio listener.

**N**EVER IN THE HISTORY of the nation has there been such a bold and brazen attempt to seize control of the means of communication and to dominate public opinion as is now going on in the field of radio broadcasting.—Representative Frank R. Reid, Illinois.



## Radio Education in Australia

**D**URING MARCH 1933, at the invitation of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the minister for education co-operated in the formation of an advisory council to deal with educational broadcasts. The chairman is A. W. Hicks, M.C., M.A., assistant director and assistant undersecretary for education, and the secretary, E. A. Riley, M.A., formerly inspector of schools.

The council divided itself into two committees, one to deal with educational broadcasts for adults and one to concern itself with school broadcasts. The latter elected J. G. McKenzie, B.A., B.Ec., assistant chief inspector of schools, as chairman, and the general secretary as its secretary.

Two types of school broadcasts have been decided on. From noon till 12:20PM they will be suitable for children between the ages of 10 and 12 years, while the interests of students from 12 to 15 years of age will be catered to on four afternoons [Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday] from 3 to 3:30PM. On Wednesday afternoons from 3 to 3:30PM it is proposed to have a broadcast especially for pupils of the correspondence school. Subcommittees have been formed to draw up programs and select broadcasters for each of the subjects, which include English, history, geography, music for both groups, with French and science in addition for the seniors, and nature study and health talks for the juniors. A handbook, giving the programs, with notes, illustrations, and suggestions, will be issued to teachers, so that the young people may be prepared to receive the full advantage from the broadcasts.

A technical subcommittee is also at work seeking full information as to the type of reception that is available in various localities thruout the state with a given type of receiver. It is hoped to epitomize this information on a map of New South Wales, so that each school may know whether it can expect A class reception [guaranteed under all normal conditions] or B class reception, that is, a reasonable expectation of satisfactory reception, or whether it lies in a "dead spot" where there is no reasonable prospect of satisfactory reception.—The *Education Gazette*, New South Wales, May 1, 1933, p78.

## Baker Replaces Young

**O**NE OF THE MANY difficult and important problems facing the United States today is that of removing radio from the domination of the Power Trust.

When on November 21, 1932, the federal court in Wilmington, Delaware, decreed that there must be a complete separation of interests between Radio Corporation of America and General Electric Company, Owen D. Young was ordered to sever his relationship with either RCA or GE. He accordingly resigned as director and chairman of the executive committee of RCA and all of its subsidiaries. This action by the court it was hoped would destroy monopoly in the radio field.

It now appears that the Power Trust interests have found a way out. By bringing Newton D. Baker, one of the country's leading power trust attorneys, into the directorate in the place of Owen D. Young, they have continued the connection in fact if not in name.

## Lauds Radio Committee

**T**HE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION BY RADIO proposes to find the rightful place of radio in the general scheme of teaching.

Good! And at the same time, the Committee should make an attempt to find the rightful place of radio in the general scheme of our entire cultural and economic system.

Radio, as now handled, has many faults.

Chief among these are propaganda [as pointed out by the National Committee] and inaccuracy, as evidenced by the foolish and harmful reports broadcast during the recent California earthquakes.

Under the present system of commercialized programs the individual or company that purchases "time" on the air from the big chains can broadcast any sort of program which seems desirable.

If they choose to make it a program of propaganda—there is no one to stop them, for they have bought the time and it is theirs.

That fact, in and of itself, is a big drawback to education by radio.

As to inaccuracies by radio announcers, they are so commonplace as to be hardly worth comment.

We mention the recent California 'quakes, however, and state as one California newspaper did:

"The radio station that broadcast 'wild' accounts of a gigantic tidal wave that swept in from the sea, destroying towns and drowning thousands of people, gave the whole radio structure a 'black eye' that will remain for a long, long time. Inaccurate, sensational statements of this nature do serious harm."

Boxing enthusiasts who followed the Schmeling-Sharkey heavyweight match, were to some extent astounded.

Radio accounts of the fight had led all listeners to believe that Schmeling had won by a wide margin.

Merely another example of the helter-skelter and altogether questionable methods of today's radio broadcasting.

The ultimate solution seems to rest in government control.

England and some other countries, operate the radio as a government institution.

Educational and entertainment programs are put on without the endless interruption of: "Drink Whitis coffee" or "use this or that soap or smoke this or that cigar."

If handled properly, radio may serve humankind in many ways—

If handled improperly, it may prove to be a curse.

Right or wrong, each and every program put on the air is teaching something to millions of "listeners" every day.

The National Committee has the laudable ambition to make these teachings right and proper, rather than the reverse, as is the general rule today.—Editorial, *Meridian*, Mississippi, *Star*, May 2, 1933.

**I** BELIEVE that [elementary and secondary school] programs will have to be worked out for areas smaller than the nation, limited within a time belt, limited eventually to states, altho I do not have conclusive evidence to support such a belief.—W. W. Charters in *Education on the Air*, 1930, p129.

# The Canadian Radio Plan

THE NEW CANADIAN PLAN of radio broadcasting had its origin in the appointment of the Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting which was constituted "to examine into the broadcasting situation in the Dominion of Canada and to make recommendations to the government as to the future administration, management, control, and financing thereof."<sup>1</sup> The report of this commission known as the Aird Report, since Sir John Aird, president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, was the commission's chairman, was made public on September 11, 1929.

With the facts in hand and wellcirculated thruout Canada, a special committee of the Canadian House of Commons was appointed on March 2, 1932 "[1] to consider the report of the Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting dated the 11th day of September, 1929, and, commonly known as the Aird Report, [2] to advise and recommend a complete technical scheme for radio broadcasting in Canada, so designed as to ensure from Canadian sources as complete and satisfactory a service as the present development of radio science will permit, and [3] to investigate and report upon the most satisfactory agency for carrying out such a scheme, with power to the said committee to send for persons and papers and to examine witnesses, and to report from time to time to this House."<sup>2</sup>

After careful study the committee brought in a report recommending the nationalization of Canadian broadcasting, making radio selfsustaining, and vesting the business of broadcasting in an adequately paid commission of three members. This report was concurred in by the House of Commons on May 11, 1932.

Considerable preliminary work fell to the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission following its appointment. However, an example of the scope of the work and the essentials of Canadian radio under the new plan can be gained from the following paragraphs taken from the commission's *Rules and Regulations* issued April 1, 1933.<sup>3</sup>

3. All broadcasting in Canada shall be under the supervision of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission. For the purpose of supervising radio broadcasting, the Dominion of Canada is divided into the following regions:

[a] The Maritime Provinces. This includes the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

<sup>1</sup> Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting. *Report*. F. A. Acland, Ottawa, 1929. p5.  
<sup>2</sup> House of Commons. Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting, No. 17. F. A. Acland, Ottawa, 1932. piii.

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission. *Rules and Regulations*. The Commission, Ottawa, 1933. 19p.

[b] Province of Quebec.

[c] Province of Ontario.

[d] The Western Provinces. This includes the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

[e] Province of British Columbia.

4. The supervision of programs with regard to advertising contents, mechanical reproductions, quality, and all other matters covered by these regulations, shall be carried out by the regional directors of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission, in collaboration with the assistant commissioners of each of the provinces within the respective regions.

89. In drawing up daily schedules Canadian broadcasting stations shall not exceed the following percentages for the several classes of program material mentioned:

Programs imported from foreign countries—40 percent.

A program of foreign origin which advertises goods manufactured in Canada, and names the address in this country where such goods are produced and distributed, shall be deemed a Canadian program.

90. No broadcasting station may broadcast any speech, printed matter, program, or advertising matter containing abusive or defamatory statements with regard to individuals or institutions, or statements or suggestions contrary to the express purpose of any existing legislation; as for example, the Patent Medicine Act or any regulations promulgated thereunder.

91. The commission reserves the right to prohibit the broadcasting of any matter until the continuity or record or transcription or both have been submitted to the commission for examination and have been approved by them.

92. Broadcasting stations in Canada shall not mention or suggest prices in connection with any advertising programs or announcements transmitted by the said stations.

99. Except where special permission has been given by the commission, the amount of advertising matter of all kinds contained in programs broadcast from Canadian stations shall not exceed 5 percent of the time of any program period, for example—in a quarter hour program, forty-five seconds only may be given up to advertising matter.

100. No station shall broadcast advertising spot announcements between the hours of 7:30PM and 11PM. No advertising spot announcement shall exceed one hundred words. Spot announcements shall not total more than three minutes in any one hour.

## Death of Pioneer

THE FIRST EDUCATION DIRECTOR of the British Broadcasting Corporation, J. C. Stobart, passed away the early part of May at the close of a career devoted to educational work. His service with the BBC which began in 1925 consisted in the building up of the education department, the launching of school broadcasting, the introduction in the evening program of educational talks suitable for adults, and the supervision of the religious programs.

WE BELIEVE THAT RADIO BROADCASTING has potential values for education, culture, and entertainment, far in excess of those at present realized. We wish to commend the many programs of merit now being broadcast and to give credit to all those who have worked for program improvement. In view of the distinctly unhealthy reactions produced in boys and girls by some of our present radio programs, we urge that individuals and organizations responsible for such programs take immediate steps to make their content conform to generally accepted standards in the field of child development; and further that all parent-teacher units use every available means to secure such improvement at the earliest possible moment.—Resolution adopted by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Seattle, Washington, May 26, 1933.



# Proposes Autocratic Radio Group Do They Get What They Want?

LEVERING TYSON, director of the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, in his annual report for 1933 proposes the formation of a national radio institute to produce and support broadcasting programs in the United States. Quoting from page 21 of Dr. Tyson's report one finds his proposal for

... the formation of a National Radio Institute, entirely apart from any organization now in the educational broadcasting field but anticipating the cooperation of all, with the sole purpose of raising funds for devising and producing under its auspices programs of generally accepted excellence.

... *there is nothing in this proposal directly or by implication, that the broadcasting industry should, even if it wanted to, be relieved of any of the financial responsibility for the many meritorious programs it has to its credit or that it will wish to organize in the future.* This proposal merely accepts the challenge which the industry has held out repeatedly to the educators of the country.

... [The institute would] devise and produce programs in subjects of general importance and interest, such as public health, literature and the arts, science, home economics, agriculture, government, history and economics, labor, and international relations, for both school and adult audiences.

... its management would be vested in fifteen governors, men and women from all parts of the country who are nationally recognized for their ability and public spirit.

There is no doubt as to the desirability of a change in the present system of broadcasting, but would it be an improvement to place the responsibility of producing programs in self-appointed organizations? Since the United States still retains its faith in democratic government and democratic institutions, would it not be a better plan to entrust the control of radio to the duly selected representatives of the people?

## Radio Question Popular

THE 1933-34 NATIONAL DEBATE QUESTION has already proved to be the most popular question yet selected, according to T. M. Beaird of the University of Oklahoma, chairman of the committee on debate materials and interstate cooperation of the National University Extension Association. The 1933-34 question, *Resolved that the United States should adopt the essential features of the British system of radio control and operation*, will be used by 1500 colleges and 6000 high schools in 33 states. Mr. Beaird estimates that at least two and one-half million people will hear the debates on the radio question during the coming year.

DO LISTENERS GET the radio programs they prefer? Clifford Kirkpatrick, associate professor of sociology, University of Minnesota, in a recent publication<sup>1</sup> concludes they do not.

Thru the use of a combined telephone interview and questionnaire study, Dr. Kirkpatrick made a detailed investigation of the radio audience in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His study concerned itself with such questions as [1] the volume of radio listening, [2] the trends of radio listening, [3] program preferences, [4] reactions to advertising, [5] influence of the radio on recreation outside the home, [6] selection of propaganda, [7] listener's reaction to the broadcasting source, [8] selection of programs with the aid of printed announcements, and [9] broadcasting content and suggestions for improvement.

In his investigation, Dr. Kirkpatrick found that the program preferences of listeners ranked as follows: [1] news and information, [2] classical music, [3] popular music, including jazz, [4] dramatic programs, [5] sports, [6] religious and inspirational talks, and [7] political speeches.

An analysis was made of the actual programs given over the four Minneapolis broadcasting frequencies. The composite Minneapolis radio program consists of 48.4 percent popular music, 13.9 percent direct advertising, 13.4 percent classical music, 6.7 percent educational programs, 6.2 percent drama, 3.9 percent sports, 3.6 percent station or chain announcements, 2.2 percent pressure appeals or propaganda talks, and 1.5 percent religious talks.

This study gives further verification to the impression held by many that in spite of an avowed desire to please *their* listeners, the commercial broadcasters have not measured up to the public interest, convenience, and necessity clause of the Radio Act. They either have paid too much attention to "fan mail" in building their programs, or those upon whom the responsibility falls do not have sufficient educational and cultural background to build the best types of radio programs, or else our noble experiment in attempting to develop a system of radio supported entirely by advertising is a failure.

JUST THINK, we breathe the very air thru which some of these radio programs come.—*Memphis [Mo.] Democrat.*

<sup>1</sup> Kirkpatrick, Clifford. *Report of a Research into the Attitudes and Habits of Radio Listeners*. Webb Book Publishing Company, St. Paul, 1933. 63p.

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: Charles T. Corcoran, S. J., director, radio station WEW, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri, The Jesuit Educational Association. 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. John Henry MacCracken, vicechairman, 744 Jackson Place, Washington, D. C., American Council on Education. 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. H. Umberger, Kansas State College of Agriculture, Manhattan, Kansas, Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities. Jos. F. Wright, director, radio station WILL, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana, Ill., Association of College and Univ. Broadcasting Stations. Everyone who receives a copy of this bulletin is invited to send in suggestions and comments. Save the bulletins for reference or pass them on to your local library or to a friend. Education by radio is a pioneering movement. These bulletins are, therefore, valuable. Earlier numbers will be supplied free on request while the supply lasts. Radio is an extension of the home. Let's keep it clean and free.