

# Educational Broadcasting Station Succumbs to Commercial Attack

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ANOTHER EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTING STATION, wearied and financially exhausted from repeated attacks by commercial interests, finally discontinued broadcasting on August first. The station, WCAJ, owned by Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, Nebraska, was one of the pioneer radio stations of the country, having begun operation in October 1920. Its director was J. C. Jensen, professor of physics, and well-known authority in radio-engineering and scientific circles. He was appointed a member of the Federal Radio Commission by President Hoover but the appointment was never acted upon by the Senate. Even spokesmen for our present commercialized radio practise admired his ability and his fighting spirit. For example, Thomas Stevenson, editor of *Broadcast Reporter*, in speaking of the Hoover appointment said:<sup>1</sup>

To the everlasting credit of Herbert Hoover, Professor John C. Jensen of Nebraska Wesleyan University has been nominated to the Radio Commission to succeed General Charles McK. Saltzman, who resigned. Altho Jensen probably will not get the job because of the determination of the Senate Democrats to prevent the confirmation of all Hoover appointments, it was a good non-political selection. Jensen has that understanding of fundamental engineering problems which is essential to good service.

**Early history**—When the Federal Radio Commission took office in March 1927, WCAJ together with seventeen other stations was assigned to a frequency of 1080 kilocycles. About May first of that year in the reallocation WCAJ was put on the same frequency with a station at Tulsa, Oklahoma, but with no requirement for time division. The Oklahoma station would not compromise; hence there was heterodyning for two months and then WCAJ was shifted to 590 kilocycles and allotted one-seventh of the time. This plan worked out quite satisfactorily until February 28, 1930 when WOW, the station with which it divided time on the 590 kilocycle frequency, asked for full time. On April 11, the Federal Radio Commission designated the case for hearing. After three months of negotiations in an attempt to solve the difficulty without a hearing WCAJ officials were compeled to come to Washington on September 10, 11, and 12, and spend considerable money to defend the station.

It was not until February 7, 1931 that Examiner Elmer W.

Pratt handed in his report which recommended the granting of WOW's application. In view of this adverse decision the educational station was forced to incur the additional expense of filing exceptions to the examiner's report.



J. W. STAFFORD, instructor in electrical engineering and manager radio station WBAA, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana. Captain Stafford received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering in 1924 and of Electrical Engineer in 1928, both from Purdue. His radio experience began as an amateur in 1908. During the War he was assigned to the Signal Corps, and attached to the U. S. Radio School, College Park, Maryland. He now holds a captain's commission in the signal reserve corps, and is a member of the Institute of Radio Engineers, of the executive committee of the Indianapolis-Lafayette Section of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, and of the Reserve Officers Association.

Fortunately for Nebraska Wesleyan University, the Federal Radio Commission [Commissioner Lafount dissenting] reversed its examiner and on May 22, 1931 handed down a decision denying the application of WOW. However, the attack on the educational institution was not yet over. WOW had still another legal device to use in causing further annoyance to WCAJ and thru its attorneys on June 10 it gave notice of appeal to the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia.

**Education wins**—After considerable delay, WOW's case came before the Court of Appeals on February 1, 1932. The Court handed down its decision on February 29, upholding the Federal Radio Commission and denying the application of WOW to secure the facilities of educational radio station WCAJ.

Plain justice surely would demand that after such a lengthy battle for its life with WOW, interspersed with a long controversy with the Federal Radio Commission even to maintain its power of 500 watts, WCAJ should be left alone to continue its educational work. That this work was of high quality is testified to by Charles W. Taylor, state superintendent of public instruction, when he said in an affidavit:<sup>2</sup>

I have listened very carefully to programs going out over station WCAJ. I want to commend you for the fine quality and educational usefulness of these programs . . . In a very

short time the commercial interests will have crowded the educational interests off the air. This should be considered contrary to the general welfare of the country at large. . . . It is hoped that educators and those interested in education will speedily arouse themselves to the need of protecting educational interests in this matter. . . . It seems to me that your evening programs are particularly valuable for the reason that they give you an opportunity to carry educational training and messages to the adult population who are unable either to go to school in the daytime or possibly listen in on the radio.

**The new attack**—Yet on May 8, 1933, WOW again filed application for WCAJ's facilities and on May 23, the Commission set the case for hearing. To fight the case would have

<sup>1</sup> *Broadcast Reporter*, February 15, 1933, p3.

<sup>2</sup> Taylor, Charles W. Statement on file with National Committee on Education by Radio.



involved much time and several thousands of dollars of expense. If the case was won again by WCAJ, the rules of the Commission would permit WOW to repeat the attack in a short time. The United States is now in the midst of a financial crisis. Education, especially private, has been sorely pressed for funds to carry on its worthwhile service. Representatives of WOW finally convinced the university authorities that the best plan would be to sell the station. In spite of the value of the 590 kilocycle assignment, WOW closed a deal by paying even less than the value of the broadcasting equipment for WCAJ's rights on the air.

The case is now closed. The Federal Radio Commission will be able to say about it as about many of the others that WCAJ was not forced off the air, but voluntarily assigned its license to WOW. It used this type of analysis in trying to defend itself in response to Senate Resolution No. 129, 72nd Congress 1st Session. The Commission in answer to the question, "Since education is a public service paid for by the taxes of the people, and therefore the people have a right to have complete control of all the facilities of public education, what recognition has the Commission given to the application of public educational institutions?" said:<sup>3</sup>

In the period from February 23, 1927, to January 1, 1932, the Commission granted radio station licenses to 95 educational institutions, 51 of which have been classified as public educational institutions, and 44 as private educational institutions.

As will be seen in the following tabular statements, 44 of these stations were in operation as of January 1, 1932; the licenses of 23 had been assigned voluntarily at the request of the educational institution to a person or corporation engaged in commercial enterprise; 18 had been deleted by reason of voluntary abandonment; and 10 had been deleted for cause.

**What of the future?**—Yet the drama uncovered by even a short trip behind the scenes gives indisputable evidence to the claim that *educational broadcasting stations in the United States are gradually being forced from the air by commercial interests*. Had they been protected by legislation or Commission regulations, probably most of them still would be serving their constituents. *How long are the American people going to tolerate the practise of putting commerce ahead of unselfish informational, educational, and cultural service?*

**D**ON'T EXPECT MUCH FAN MAIL these days unless you're giving something away. Readers don't write congratulatory notes about your newspaper and magazine advertisements, do they?—J. T. W. Martin in "Some Things I've Learned from Nine Years of Radio." *Broadcast Reporter*, June 15, 1933, p10.

**A**LLEN RAYMOND, at present on the staff of the *New York Herald-Tribune* and former London correspondent of the *New York Times*, has prepared a stimulating and enlightening series of articles touching the present American broadcasting practise. The three articles are entitled, "The Coming Fight Over News," "Static Ahead!" and "The Follies of Radio," and are found in the June, July, and August 1933 issues of the *New Outlook*. A veteran newspaper reporter, Mr. Raymond will be remembered as the author of "What Is Technocracy?"

<sup>3</sup> Federal Radio Commission. *Commercial Radio Advertising*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1932, p50.

## Educational Broadcasting Being Extended in Europe

**A**T THE BEGINNING OF JUNE the Geneva office of the International Broadcasting Union received a letter from America from a quarter specially interested in the educational possibilities of broadcasting, asking whether it was true that the various European broadcasting organizations were experiencing difficulties in financing educational broadcasting.

A special inquiry made by the office shows that *not only have the European broadcasters no financial difficulties in this respect but that despite economies which presentday conditions may compel in other phases of broadcasting activity, plans are actually afoot for further extensions of the practise of broadcasting to schools.*

Definitely negative replies to the questions, whether difficulties were being experienced in the financing of broadcasting and whether there was any intention to discontinue educative broadcasting, have been received from the broadcasting organizations of Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Danzig, Denmark, the French State Broadcasting stations, Germany, Great Britain, Holland [VARA], Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia.

In addition the Czechoslovakian broadcasting organization asserts that the broadcasts made especially to schools in its country, which are becoming more and more perfect technically, are now attracting official attention and establishing themselves as an essential complement to the school curriculum. School broadcasting in Czechoslovakia is regarded not only as an important form of public service but also as valuable propaganda for broadcasting itself among the younger generation.

*In Sweden, the school broadcasts [which are constantly developing] are regarded as the most important part of the broadcasting service.* In Switzerland where, until now, the school broadcasts have been both local and experimental, the results have been so satisfactory that next season they are to be extended to all parts of the Confederation. The expenses will be defrayed for next season, as during the experimental period, from the general budget of the Swiss Broadcasting Society.

It is possible that the American rumor has arisen from the fact that in certain countries the school authorities are finding difficulty in getting loans for the purchase of receivers from local public and private funds. This is not a new problem. It has always existed.

Thanks, however, to various ingenious plans which have been developed under the stimulating influence of school broadcasting these difficulties are invariably overcome.—A. R. Burrows, secretary general, International Broadcasting Union.

**M**ANAGERS OF RADIO TRANSMITTING STATIONS in Brazil complain that the police have censored even children's bedtime stories. Parents in the United States, listening to some of the "thrillers" that come in on their radios along about Johnny's bedtime, may be pardoned if they sympathize with the Brazilian censorship.—Editorial, *Christian Science Monitor*, July 17, 1933.



# Farm and Home Broadcasting

ANDREW W. HOPKINS<sup>1</sup> AND K. M. GAPEN<sup>2</sup>

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS with agricultural colleges and experiment stations are in a strategic position to give service to the farmers and homemakers of their respective states. This possible service is unique in every way. It is a service that is impossible for commercial institutions to give.

Practical ways of solving problems of farmers and homemakers are continually being worked out at these institutions. Experimenters and extension workers are diligently seeking to secure and to disseminate accurate and up-to-date information which will help make farming more profitable and rural living more enjoyable. That is one of the first tasks of such state institutions.

For a period of more than seven and one-half years, WHA, the first educational radio station in America, has been giving this farm and home radio service to Wisconsin taxpayers. WHA has been broadcasting scheduled programs of a general nature since 1920.

Unfortunately the facilities of the station have been greatly limited. The lack of sufficient power to reach a large majority of the Wisconsin public has handicapped and restricted its potential service possibilities. Lack of night-time broadcasting authority has also restricted the service which the Wisconsin College of Agriculture could and would offer to the public. It is the desire of the agricultural college at the University of Wisconsin to more efficiently and effectively reach a larger number of Wisconsin citizens.

During the years since that station has been in existence it has been giving day by day and week by week a service of exceedingly important information which would be difficult to duplicate. On one program it may have an economist of national reputation, speaking upon the "Farmers' Way Out" of the present situation thru the reduction of taxes, thru individual and collective effort, thru a lowered cost of production, and thru the widening of markets for the products of the farm. On another program it may be a specialist in land use, showing the possibilities of using land for other than agricultural purposes—recreation, forestry, and game production. And at another time a scientist may be suggesting to farmers of that state, thru information and encouragement, ways of using

legumes in order to grow the home supply of feed and forage and cut the farmers' feed bill by millions.

Farmers of the state may be expending large sums of money for expensive mineral mixtures which they do not need in the rations of their animals. Along come the chemists, speaking thru the microphone to the farmers of the state, and help them to save hundreds of thousands of dollars. In the fields of human nutrition and child care, there are similar opportunities which investigators are using to broadcast information which will be of untold benefit to the listening audience. And so we might go on enumerating the many ways and many subjects in and upon which that station is serving and servicing the farmers and homemakers of that state.

There has been worked out, and there is being worked out at that and other experiment stations of this country, vast stores of information which can be made quickly available over the air to the farmers and homemakers of the respective states. This information should go to these people without bias or prejudice of any character. Such institutions exist for the people, and not for any particular group which may be commercially interested in the broadcasting of only such information as may be to their temporary advantage.

Information on farm and home subjects needs to be broadcast in an interesting and easy-to-listen-to manner. Methods of presentation are important. Here are some of the ways in which WHA is, and has been for several years, broadcasting farm and home information effectively. The dialog, interview, question and answer by one man, narrative, dramatized, and anecdote types of radio presentation are being used effectively in addition to the regular straight talk method.

A questionnaire sent to the recipients of the farm and home programs asking vital questions about the programs and the desires of the listeners along program lines, brought out two salient facts—[1] that WHA farm and home programs have a large audience; [2] that the farm and home programs are being appreciated.

Those arranging WHA farm and home radio programs have found that the various parts of the program must be short—five to seven minute talks are long enough. There should be more and shorter items on farm and home broadcasts. Sincere variety is needed.

<sup>1</sup> Extension editor, College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin.

<sup>2</sup> Radio editor, College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin.

**WHEREAS** RADIO BROADCASTING is the only means whereby the citizens in general may hear the officials of our communities, our state, our nation and other nations, and the leaders in all fields of learning, business, and the professions, and *Whereas*, Radio economically increases the effectiveness of our schools, colleges, and organizations, making education and culture more easily available to children and adults. *Resolved:* That the Association of Boards of Education of Ohio approves the action of educators and broadcasters of Ohio and the National Committee on Education by Radio in organizing the Ohio Radio Education Association for the purpose of developing cooperation, encouraging educational and cultural broadcasting, and stimulating the interest of listeners.—Adopted at the annual meeting held in Columbus, Ohio, May 5, 1933.



## Politics on British Air

A GREAT DEAL OF MISINFORMATION has been spread as to the British system of radio broadcasting. This has been particularly true in references to provision for political discussion. *The Listener*, an official publication of the British Broadcasting Corporation devoted to adult education, gives the following information in an editorial in its August 2, 1933 issue:

The late evening talks promise to provoke interest, enthusiasm, and disagreement. On Mondays will be political talks—absolutely free and uncensored. The speakers will presumably deal with points raised by their opponents in previous weeks, but *they will be given a free choice of subjects and allowed to say exactly what they wish.* Among the members of the different political parties who have agreed to speak are the Prime Minister, Mr. Lansbury, Mr. Baldwin, Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. J. H. Thomas, Mr. Arthur Greenwood, and Sir Herbert Samuel. On Wednesdays and Fridays, Mr. Howard Marshall and Mr. S. P. B. Mais are to undertake two series of the kind in which they have proved themselves so successful. "Vanishing England" is the title of Mr. Marshall's—arranged in consultation with the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, the National Trust, and the National Housing and Town-Planning Council. It will deal with such things as desecration of beauty spots, litter, ribbon development, bungalow growths and so on; we fervently hope that Mr. Marshall will manage to bring home to individual listeners the horrors of the countryside as well as he lately brot home to them the horrors of the slums.

## Debate Handbooks in Demand

MORE COPIES of the 1933-34 official debate handbook have been ordered than in any year since the work has been organized under the auspices of the National University Extension Association; according to T. M. Beaird, chairman of the committee on debate materials and interstate cooperation. The official debate topic this coming year is, "Resolved that the United States Should Adopt the Essential Features of the British System of Radio Control and Operation." Bower Aly and Gerald D. Shively of the University of Missouri are editors of the handbook. Delivery of the orders will be about September 1.

WHILE MANY WILL ENJOY a bit of music with a picnic meal or some vocal companionship on an otherwise lonely drive, there are others to whom one of the attractions of a car is the escape it offers from the blaring jazz and soap salesmanship of the radio at home. If these seekers after outdoor quiet are to be continually smitten with billboards on the ear as well as the eye, neither motoring nor radio will profit greatly by their custom.—Editorial, *Christian Science Monitor*, August 10, 1933.

## Is This Free Speech?

A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL RADIO COMMISSION, Mr. James H. Hanley, is widely reported as saying that preachers who venture to argue against the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment in sermons over the radio should be cut off from the air, and could be cut off under a strict interpretation of the law. We do not know on just what paragraph of the law Mr. Hanley relies to authorize the withdrawal of broadcasting rights. It is true that the law gives large discretionary powers to the Federal Radio Commission, and it is also true that the Commission sometimes uses these powers with very little discretion, as in the case of the withdrawal of the license from the station used by Reverend Bob Shuler in Los Angeles for alleged reasons which were contradicted by the Commission's own investigator. Perhaps Mr. Hanley means that a strict interpretation of the law would give the Commission power to bar from the air anyone who has the temerity to oppose any policy favored by the administration. Or perhaps it seems to him to fall within the Commission's function to censor sermons and see to it that preachers stick to "the simple gospel" and do not trespass upon any field related to social ethics. Whatever the ground of Mr. Hanley's suggestion, it has not been well received. Even so wet a paper as the *Chicago Tribune* protests editorially against such a policy of autocratic governmental control over opinions and the agencies thru which they are disseminated. If our government, thru the Federal Radio Commission or any other part of its machinery, undertakes to tell the preachers what they shall preach and to warn the church away from every area which is touched by laws, there will be little to choose between such a regime and that which is now operative in Germany.—Editorial in the *Christian Century*, August 9, 1933, p1005.

ACCORDING TO THE NATURE OF THE CASE, radio education is not a matter that can be left entirely with commercial stations. A program of education requires definite planning and permanency of arrangement. There must be a long-time view of certain problems. Such permanency of arrangement is not possible except in those states where the public owns the station and in whose interest it is operated and controled. The National Committee on Education by Radio believes in such national legislation as will protect the states in the programs of radio education which their people desire and are willing to support.—Coltrane, Eugene J. "Radio: An Instrument of Education in Modern Life." *North Carolina Teacher*, April 1933, p309.

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.