

The Drug and Beauty Racket

ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS INDICTMENTS of our present American radio practise is the increased business it brings to companies selling harmful cosmetics and quack cures. Radio is not the only medium thru which such products are brought to the attention of the public. Radio, however, not only adds the force of vocal persuasion in appealing to the average citizen, but with marked effectiveness reaches the illiterate, the near illiterate, and the person who reads few, if any, newspapers and periodicals. Receipts from the sale of radio time for advertising drugs and toilet goods during the lean month of July 1933 were \$789,334 according to *Broadcasting*.¹ This represents more than one-fifth of the receipts for all radio advertising in the United States for that month.

The Committee on the Costs of Medical Care found that the people of the United States annually spend \$525,000,000 for self-medication and only about one-third as much [\$190,000,000] for prescriptions or purchases made with the direct advice of medical practitioners.²

Health authorities, sociologists, economists, and others who have carefully studied the problem of false and misleading advertising have suggested that in the absence of adequate legislation the schools should be called upon to give instruction along this line. In a recent article Irving S. Ross points out:³

Millions of consumers' dollars are wasted, their shelves are filled with useless antiseptics, harmful breakfast foods, and dangerous tooth-pastes. . . . Government regulation has been admittedly inadequate due mostly to lack of funds. . . . Obviously the school must fill this gap by providing unbiased information; no other institution can do it. No reputable manufacturer could object to that. He should welcome it. . . . In these times of hard-pressed consumer dollars there can be no quibbling about the necessity of such instruction. . . . We must replace the radio crooners, the ad-men, and the high-pressure salesmen. Yes, it's high time we fired Amos 'n Andy!

President Roosevelt promises us a "new deal" in this "false advertising racket." At his direction, assistant secretary of agriculture, Rexford G. Tugwell, has prepared a bill which is now pending in both House and Senate. It is predicted that hearings on the bill will begin early in December. The adminis-

tration's proposed measure would preserve the good features of the antiquated food and drug act of 1906, and according to the *Washington Star* of August 27, would provide, in addition, the following:

- [1] Cosmetics would be brought within scope of the statute.
- [2] Mechanical devices intended for curative purposes and devices and preparations intended to bring about changes in the structure of the body would be included also.
- [3] False advertising of foods, drugs, and cosmetics would be prohibited.
- [4] Definitely informative labeling would be required.
- [5] A drug which is, or may be, dangerous to health under the conditions of use prescribed in its labeling would be classed as adulterated.
- [6] The promulgation of definitions and standards for foods, which will have the effect and force of law, would be authorized.
- [7] The prohibition of added poisons in foods or the establishment of sale tolerances therefor would be provided for.
- [8] The operation of factories under federal permit would be authorized where protection of the public health could not be otherwise effected.
- [9] More effective methods for the control of false labeling and advertising of drug products would be provided.
- [10] More severe penalties, as well as injunctions in the case of repeated offenses, would be prescribed.

In defending the proposed legislation as it affects radio, Dr. Tugwell makes the following comments:⁴

Frankly, modern advertising of foods, drugs, and cosmetics does not always merit public confidence. . . . The standards of radio advertising in this field are no higher or lower than those of other advertising media. . . . Even if every broadcaster and publisher in the United States conscientiously tried to accept only truthful advertising in this field, he would not possess the scientific evidence on which to make a decision. . . . Just now consumers have lost faith in a great deal of advertising, and it is going to take a severe jolt of some sort to restore it. . . . It is a primary function of government to provide effective consumer protection. . . . The Department of Agriculture has received abundant evidence that the public wants false and misleading advertising cleaned out of the press and off the air. . . . Radio may discover special reasons for wanting the pending bill passed. Radio, now subject to federal control, is called upon to serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity. It is conceivable that a widespread consumer demand for control of advertising might result, at least temporarily, in restrictions being imposed solely on radio by the licensing authority. Competitively, this would place radio at a disadvantage. It would be more in the public interest, and more to the interest of radio, to have a single, reasonable set of standards applicable to all.

Forward-looking legislation of this sort will have its opponents. Enormous profits are being made thru the sale of poisonous toothpastes, hair removers, and eye-lash dyes; alleged



S. W. JONES, program director and announcer of radio station KFDY, South Dakota State College, Brookings, South Dakota. After receiving a bachelor's degree from South Dakota State College in 1927, and a master's degree from Iowa State College in 1928, Mr. Jones spent three years as county extension agent in South Dakota. Since 1931 he has served his alma mater devoting half time to radio and half to rural organization in the extension service.

truthful advertising in this field, he would not possess the scientific evidence on which to make a decision. . . . Just now consumers have lost faith in a great deal of advertising, and it is going to take a severe jolt of some sort to restore it. . . . It is a primary function of government to provide effective consumer protection. . . . The Department of Agriculture has received abundant evidence that the public wants false and misleading advertising cleaned out of the press and off the air. . . . Radio may discover special reasons for wanting the pending bill passed. Radio, now subject to federal control, is called upon to serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity. It is conceivable that a widespread consumer demand for control of advertising might result, at least temporarily, in restrictions being imposed solely on radio by the licensing authority. Competitively, this would place radio at a disadvantage. It would be more in the public interest, and more to the interest of radio, to have a single, reasonable set of standards applicable to all.

Forward-looking legislation of this sort will have its opponents. Enormous profits are being made thru the sale of poisonous toothpastes, hair removers, and eye-lash dyes; alleged

¹ Codel, Martin. "Monthly Guide to Broadcasting Business." *Broadcasting*, 5:17, October 1, 1933.

² The Committee on the Costs of Medical Care. *The Costs of Medicines; The Manufacture and Distribution of Drugs and Medicines in the United States and the Services of Pharmacy in Medical Care*. University of Chicago Press, 1932, 268p.

³ Ross, Irving S. "Let's Fire Amos 'n Andy." *Secondary Education*, 2:90-91, September 1933.

⁴ Tugwell, Rexford G. "How Food and Drugs Bill Would Affect Radio." *Broadcasting*, 5:5, September 15, 1933.

ALL POINTS OF VIEW concerning radio control policy are being presented in *Education by Radio*. In this issue, p50, will be found the point of view of the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education. The position of the Federal Radio Commission was presented in the September issue. Others are to follow.

cures for diabetes, arthritis, tuberculosis, overweight, and high blood pressure; and unnecessary, if not harmful, mouthwashes and health giving crystals. A recent book devoted to an exposure of these "rackets" will give a wealth of evidence for those who desire to secure the facts in the case.⁵ Already the powerful manufacturers and distributors of the products which will be affected by the bill have begun lobbying against it. No doubt some of the short-sighted broadcasting stations fearful of losing a large slice of advertising revenue will lend

their opposition. On the other hand consumers, as of one accord, will give the bill enthusiastic support because of the protection it will give them.

The removal from the air of false health and drug advertising will be a step forward in the improvement of American radio practise. It should be the beginning of a careful scrutiny in this country of many other indefensible types of radio advertising such as financial, liquor, narcotic, and the like. More power to the President and his advisers in their fight!

Program Experimentation of the Council

Levering Tyson

Director of the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education

THE EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTING SITUATION presents at least three distinct aspects, Dr. William John Cooper, then commissioner of education, stated in effect several years ago: first, there is the necessity for developing worthy programs and bringing them to the microphone; second, the broadcasting of such programs; and third, the measuring of the reception and effectiveness of instruction.

Commissioner Cooper pointed out that the United States Office of Education has a definite interest in the last mentioned; the commercial companies and college stations thruout the country seemed to be concerned chiefly with the second; and until the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education was organized no one had attempted to deal satisfactorily with the first aspect. The Council, among other purposes which are possible under its charter, has undertaken since then not only to collect and study programs regardless of their source, but also to devise means for more effective programs, and to compare progress in education by radio in this country with educational broadcasting abroad. As yet no one is prepared or competent to say whether or not this will eventually force the Council to discuss the mechanisms necessary for educational broadcasting and whether their ownership should be in commercial hands, in the hands of educational institutions, or in the hands of non-profit cooperative federations, or perhaps in all. However in its experimental work with educational programs on a national basis the Council in the brief period of two years has accumulated some little experience. The National Committee on Education by Radio has requested the director of the Council to outline that experience for the readers of *Education by Radio*. In view of the forthcoming debates all over the country on the relative merits of the British and American systems of broadcasting this experience is outlined below, with the British system in the mental background, so to speak.

In America the only facilities available for presenting educational programs for nationwide consumption are the national networks of the Columbia Broadcasting System and the National Broadcasting Company. Both had stated publicly that when a thoroly representative group of educators devised programs their network facilities would be made available without charge.

The following series of experimental programs were organized, and beginning with the fall of 1931 were broadcast under Council auspices, utilizing in every case a coast-to-coast network of one or both of these organizations:

Aspects of the depression—A series on important economic questions broadcast over 57 NBC stations from October 17, 1931 to May 31, 1932 [32 weeks].

⁵ Kallet, Arthur, and Schlink, F. J. *100,000,000 Guinea Pigs, Dangers in Everyday Foods, Drugs, and Cosmetics*, New York: Vanguard Press, 1932.

Labor and the nation—A series on the development of American labor broadcast over 47 CBS stations from May 1, 1932 to July 3, 1932 [10 weeks]. This series was resumed for 10 weeks over 48 CBS stations from September 4, 1932 [the day before Labor Day] to November 5, 1932.

You and your government—A series of impartial, nonpartisan broadcasts on government over 45 NBC stations from April 5, 1932 to July 5, 1932 [14 weeks]. This series was resumed over the NBC network beginning September 6, 1932 and has continued without interruption since.

Psychology today—A series of recent developments in psychological research broadcast over 57 NBC stations from October 17, 1931 to May 21, 1932 [32 weeks].

Vocational guidance—A series indicating the necessity for direction in choosing a vocation broadcast over 60 CBS stations from February 18, 1932 to April 24, 1932 [eight programs including ten addresses and six dramatizations].

Radio's past and future—An address by Dr. Robert A. Millikan, president of the Council, broadcast over the combined NBC and CBS coast-to-coast networks May 22, 1931. The President of the United States, speaking from the Cabinet Room in the White House, introduced Dr. Millikan.

American education past and future—An address by Dr. John Dewey on an NBC network October 25, 1931.

The economic world today—A series of roundtable discussions on current economic questions by prominent economists, newspaper correspondents, and others conversant with national economic problems broadcast over an NBC network beginning November 12, 1932 and continuing thru June 10, 1933.

The lawyer and the public—A series of fifteen radio programs by leading members of the legal profession, dealing with the lawyer's part in legal reform and in legislation, and with his relations to the court and to the layman broadcast over 70 CBS stations from February 12, 1933 to May 21, 1933.

The expanding universe—On invitation of the Council, Sir Arthur Eddington, world-famous astro-physicist, delivered a series of three radio addresses on "The Expanding Universe" on September 8, 15, and 22, 1932. The programs were carried over an NBC network.

America and the world situation—On January 23, 1933, by special arrangements with the Council, Dr. Robert A. Millikan organized a convocation in the Pasadena, California, Civic Auditorium, at which he, Dr. Albert Einstein, Mr. Henry M. Robinson, and Professor William B. Munro spoke. This program was carried over an NBC network.

The production and distribution of these programs has given Council officials some insight into the broad general problem of educational broadcasting on a national scale. On the basis of this experience a comprehensive and systematic series of experiments could well be organized, the results of which could be taken as an index of what might be done in this country. There are a great many students of this problem who believe that some such experimentation is necessary immediately, without any relation to the future American radio structure.

Program content—Subjectmatter for broadcasts which are broadly educational in character is unlimited. The Council decided to limit its program experimentation to fields of immediate public interest. The first step was to assemble abso-

lutely competent and representative individuals who could plan programs that would be thoroly comprehensive and useful from the subjectmatter standpoint. In the case of economics, for example, the American Economics Association, the National Bureau of Economic Research, and the Brookings Institution were each invited to select two individuals for this purpose. To this committee of six individuals was turned over the entire responsibility for the organization and presentation of the subjectmatter of the proposed series in economics, the committee choosing its own chairman, adopting its own procedure and thereafter being entirely independent. The same general procedure was adopted and has been followed in the case of all other committees.

The Council *per se* produces no programs. Those listed earlier were the result of this activity. Upwards of a dozen such committees have been organized and have proposed programs. Other committees are planned or being formed.

From the Council's experience this method for radio presentation of the most advanced thought in a given field is entirely practical. It corresponds to the methods followed in foreign countries, of course allowing for basic differences in responsibility which exist where education is definitely under government control. In America these committees have had a free hand.

Important as some such organization is under any system of broadcasting, it is only the first step. The employment of effective technics before the microphone is just as important as the adequate organization of material to be broadcast. The Council has found that there are relatively few experienced broadcasters in the academic world in this country. Apparently it will be necessary for us to attempt for some time the discovery of individuals who can qualify both in knowledge of subjectmatter and microphone technic.

In foreign countries, notably England, the demands of technic are readily recognized and opportunity is afforded to educational broadcasters to discover and develop this ability. Thus far the Council's experimentation in this field has consisted largely in trying out the relative effectiveness of various types of programs—that is, the dialog, roundtable, or general discussion, in contrast to the “straight talk.” We are led to the inevitable conclusion that the microphone personality of the “performer” is the important factor. It is to be deplored that with the enormous amount of broadcasting in this country in the past decade so little scientific study has been made of the radio talk as a program device.

In many foreign countries, particularly in Britain, after program content is determined upon, broadcasters step in to assist in this matter of technic. In America we have not utilized the experience of broadcasters to as much an extent as our resources would allow. In addition, educators abroad are responsible for more of the merchandising work of a program than they are in this country. For example, the 1933 BBC

Year-Book stated: “The Council [that is the Central Council for Broadcast Adult Education] advises as to program content and speakers, but *its chief work* lies in the organization of the listening end, in particular the study-groups which are springing up in all parts of the country.”

In the Council's experience there has been absolutely no attempt by the broadcasters to control subjectmatter or suggest what should or should not be put on the air. There are on record lurid instances of “censorship” of programs as practised by commercial broadcasters. There has not been a single instance where this has ever been attempted in respect to our programs. There was one very heated argument *between the Council's office and one of our own committees* over a question of good taste, but the broadcasting company had no relation to this argument or any knowledge of it.

Merchandising—From the outset the Council has recognized the relatively easy task of assembling speakers and putting them before the microphone. However, this was not interpreted as real *educational broadcasting*. It has been believed from the start that to be truly educational a program must, first, have an audience assembled for it ready and qualified to appreciate what comes to it; second, that audience must be held and must be stimulated to follow up the broadcast with existing devices for that purpose, or additional devices must be created. In all its program activities the Council has attempted to “merchandise its wares.”

The absence of any listing of “educational” programs available to the American radio audience has been keenly felt. It has been necessary to provide printed notices containing information about Council programs and to distribute these very generally thruout the country. Every dignified publicity mechanism has been used. The assistance of organizations and influential individuals interested in the subjectmatter of each program has been secured. The United States Office of Education has been of great help. Provision has been made for reprinting all Council programs at cost for the use of anyone who wants them. Plans for the ultimate electrical transcription of all programs have been made. The organization of discussion groups under competent leadership and direction is an essential and our relatively meager experience indicates great potential developments. Reading lists prepared under expert and practical guidance of librarians who come in constant contact with the demands of the general public are an important feature of every broadcast. Wherever possible the use of exhibits in libraries and museums is desirable.

There is nothing new in all this except that in America under whatever system of broadcasting we operate or will operate, some such organization work is necessary. The expense of this organization work is enormous and will always be an important factor to be considered under any system.

Finance—As soon as Council committees had recommended programs and had organized them for the air, both networks

WHEREAS, THE WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE is mindful of the activities of the state-owned radio stations, WHA and WLBL, in taking to the people noncommercial broadcasts of a high class; and *Whereas*, it recognizes the service rendered to the citizenry in making these radio facilities available to all legislators for uncensored discussion on matters of public concern; therefore, be it *Resolved by the Assembly, the Senate concurring*: That the legislature hereby expresses its appreciation and approval of the operation and use of the state-owned radio stations in the interests of the people, thru the dissemination of information from the educational, governmental, agricultural, and other service agencies of this state. *Be it further Resolved*, That properly attested copies of this resolution be transmitted to the managers of radio stations WHA and WLBL.—*Joint Resolution Number 178A*, adopted July 21, 1933 by the Wisconsin legislature.

made time available. There has never been any question about payment for these network facilities and no program recommended by the Council has ever been refused time.

The costs of broadcasting programs of this type are by no means confined to the cost of facilities. Under any system of broadcasting the enormous costs for providing adequate programs must be met. In the experience of the Council the most important elements in these costs aside from the question of facilities are concerned with the proper organization of the program itself and the adequate merchandising of it after it is organized. Experimentation with programs on a paid and volunteer basis has confirmed the belief of the Council that in general those who participate in a program should be paid a fee. Thru the employment of available supplementary devices and existing correlating agencies it is possible to thoroly merchandise a program for a reasonable sum, but there is little chance of the sale of enough printed copies of the program to pay for the support of other program expenses.

Our experience in this respect seems to coincide with experience of the British, altho the analogy is not quite fair because the BBC has a rather elaborate publications program in which the publication of talks pamphlets constitutes only a small part. Other publications include the *Radio Times* which is primarily a program-listing weekly; *World Radio* containing notices of foreign programs and comment thereon; and *The Listener* which is a high-class weekly review. All these magazines carry a large amount of advertising and considerable revenue is derived therefrom. The talks pamphlets themselves and the pamphlets for distribution to schools contain advertisements which also are productive of revenue. The advertising in the radio periodicals is general in character. The advertising in the talks pamphlets is directly related to the subjectmatter.

In general the Council's experience has indicated that not enough consideration has been paid to the basic economic problem of securing sufficient money to broadcast representative educational programs adequately.

Facilities—As indicated earlier, every request made by the Council to the national networks for time has been granted. The approximate hours selected for programs, the length of the programs, and the duration of the series, were recommended by Council committees—and not, as has been frequently stated elsewhere, taken by the Council as largess from the broadcasting companies.

The problem of securing desirable time does not present any difficulties so far as the national networks themselves are concerned. In the Council's experience the difficulty arises with the member stations on the network. In every program issued under Council auspices we have had a desirable nationwide coast-to-coast network. There have been difficulties with individual stations which could not be resolved because of local commitments, not always commercial contracts. A sustaining program for local consumption which has been maintained by a member station over a long period of years with an enthusiastic following, will occasionally block an outlet for a Council program in a strategic locality. Our experience has been that

the officials of the networks are ready and anxious to make good their public statements with respect to programs that are devised and produced under thoroly representative auspices; that station managers generally adopt the same attitude; but that local considerations, both commercial and otherwise, have to be taken into account.

The question of desirable time is a difficult one in itself and is made more so when organizing a program for national consumption by differences in the various time zones across the American continent. This difficulty will be present under any system of broadcasting in this country. The habits of the listening audience in America are not definitely determined by any means. Evening time is thought most desirable for programs of an educational character. The hours after 6PM are thought to be most valuable commercially. The Council's experience would seem to indicate that a comprehensive editorial policy for all broadcasting, which would be extremely difficult if not impossible to secure because of time changes and because of the network complexities in this country, might throw some light on this problem. The British Broadcasting Corporation talks program for the fall of 1933 utilizes 10:45 to 11AM six days a week, 10:50 to 11:20AM two days a week, 3:15 to 3:35PM two days a week, 6:50 to 7:05PM two days a week, 6:50 to 7:10PM one day a week, 6:30 to 6:45PM one day a week, 6:50 to 7:20PM [for language courses] two days a week, 7:05 to 7:25PM three days a week, 7:10 to 7:25PM one day a week, 7:30 to 8PM five days a week, 8:30 to 9PM one day a week, and various late evening periods five days a week. On Sundays there are programs from 2:40 to 3PM, 7 to 7:30PM, and 8:15 to 8:45PM. It will be noted that practically all these programs fall before 8 o'clock in the evening. In a given week all these programs constitute thirty-four separate items involving eleven and one-quarter hours; prior to 8PM twenty-seven items involving nine hours; after 8PM seven items involving two and one-quarter hours. Of all these only nine items, involving four and one-quarter hours weekly, are arranged under the auspices of the Central Council for Broadcast Adult Education; the other items such as news reel, foreign affairs, sports talks, the theater and the cinema, new books, and traveler's tales, are arranged wholly by the broadcasters.

The schools program is fifteen minutes each morning and approximately an hour and one-quarter each afternoon for pupils of all ages.

The importance of regularity and compactness is apparent in the British system. It would seem to be possible in America to organize regularity of broadcasting but because of political and geographical considerations the compactness is and will eternally be absent, thus making practically impossible a determination of what is desirable time.

The production of programs is only one Council activity but an extremely important one. The experience above outlined is relatively meager but its value lies in the fact that it constitutes the only attempt that has been made in America to produce programs of this type on a national basis. From it deductions can be made as to problems that will arise under any system of broadcasting in this country.

E DUCATION 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 are: Charles T. Corcoran, S. J.; Arthur G. Crane; J. O. Keller; Charles N. Lischka; John Henry MacCracken, vicechairman; James N. Rule; H. Umberger; Jos. F. Wright; and Joy Elmer Morgan, chairman.

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. Education by radio is a pioneering movement. These bulletins are, therefore, valuable.