

HEINL RADIO BUSINESS LETTER

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ADJOURNING CONGRESS LEAVES MANY RADIO BILLS PENDING

No less than twenty-six bills affecting communications and radio in one way or another were introduced in the First Session of the 74th Congress. Those enacted into law were few and far between. The rest will automatically go over to the Second Session of the same Congress, which is scheduled to begin January 3rd of next year.

No action was taken whatever, not even a hearing, on the bill introduced by Representative Monaghan, of Montana, "For the purpose of providing wholesome radio programs, free from monopolistic domination and control on the part of vested interests, and to make available to all our people adequate radio service." To accomplish this purpose, Representative Monaghan desired to have created a Federal Radio Commission which would have nine members instead of five, as the old one had.

Representative Culkin, of New York, introduced a bill which would make it unlawful to broadcast any advertisement of intoxicating liquor or the solicitation of an order for intoxicating liquor. Senator Capper, of Kansas, reintroduced into the Senate a similar bill. Neither Representative Culkin or Senator Capper, however, pressed their bills for action.

Other bills were introduced by Senators Copeland and Vandenberg and Representatives Buckbee and Sauthoff, which one way or another would affect broadcast advertising.

Senator Walsh, of Massachusetts, introduced a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934, as follows:

"Any radio address or radio program broadcast by or for or in the interest of any foreign government, or subdivision thereof, or person interested therein shall not be broadcast by any licensee until such radio address or radio program has been submitted to the Department of State and the approval of the Secretary of State has been secured in writing and is filed with such licensee. Any licensee permitting the broadcasting of any radio address or radio program by or for or in the interest of any foreign government, or subdivision thereof, or any person interested therein, without having on file, prior to such broadcast, the written approval of the Secretary of State, shall be penalized by the immediate revocation of such licenses."

An identical bill to that of Senator Walsh to have foreign radio programs approved by the State Department was introduced into the House by Representative McKeough, of Illinois.

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Although it is generally believed that Congress will readily approve the State Department keeping an eye on foreign programs, it did not get to a hearing stage even in the First Session of the 74th Congress.

Senator Wheeler, of Montana, introduced a bill offering the following amendment to the Communications Act:

"In considering applications for licenses, and modifications and renewals thereof, when and insofar as there is demand for the same, the Commission shall make such distribution of licenses, frequencies, hours of operation, and of power among the several States and communities as to provide an equitable distribution of radio service to each of the same."

No action whatever was taken on this.

Neither did Congress bestir itself regarding the bills introduced by Senator Copeland, of New York, and Representative McCormack, of Massachusetts, which would allow ships at sea to report their positions by radio to newspapers either at a nominal charge or without a charge provided that the name of the radio company be used with the report.

During the session, Senator McAdoo, of California, introduced a resolution to create a new committee in the Senate on aviation and radio to consist of 15 Senators. No action was taken on this.

Representative Sirovich, of New York, introduced a bill "Providing for the establishment of an executive department to be known as the 'Department of Science, Art and Literature.'" Lengthy hearings were held on this bill, which would include certain phases of radio, but the bill itself went over to the next session.

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TO INVESTIGATE SHIP SAILING WITH ONLY ONE RADIO OPERATOR

The Federation Communications Commission this week decided to make an investigation into the circumstances and lawfulness of the voyage of the SS "Munargo" of the Munson Steamship Line, which departed on July 17, 1935, from the Port of Miami, Florida, and proceeded to the Port of Havana, Cuba, with only one radio operator aboard.

The hearing will be held at Washington, D. C., at such time as the Commission may designate.

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EXCHANGE HAMPERS SALES AMERICAN RADIO PARTS IN ARGENTINA

The current exchange situation in Argentina is reacting unfavorably on the sale of radio parts in that market, according to a report to the Commerce Department from Trade Commissioner D. G. Clark, Buenos Aires.

A number of radio sets are assembled in the country and sold under recognized trade names while other sets are assembled and sold under names known only in that area, the report states.

It is estimated that purchases by the larger Argentine independent assemblers of such parts as coils, transformers, chassis, condensers, dials and loud speakers have declined approximately 30 per cent as compared with last year. In addition to this slackening of trade, the exchange situation is prejudicing purchases from the United States, as importers are finding that most of this equipment must be paid for with exchange bought at the open market rate, and a surtax must be paid which amounts to the difference between the official exchange rate and 20 per cent above this figure. The natural consequence of this situation, that report states, is that assemblers are turning more and more to European sources of supply.

Parts and accessories for American branded lines which are assembled locally will undoubtedly continue to come from the United States regardless of conditions in the exchange market, it is pointed out. However, it is feared that the really important business which is offered by the independent assemblers will, unless there is an improvement in the exchange market, drift more and more in the direction of European suppliers.

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LA GUARDIA PEEVED AT WNYC FALL-DOWN

Mayor LaGuardia, of New York City, was so angered at the failure of Christie Bohnsack, Program Director of the city-owned broadcasting station WNYC, and Isaac Brimberg, radio engineer at their failure to have the microphone in readiness at the breaking of ground for the construction of a new city market, that he has given them forty-eight hours to explain the fall-down. In addition to that, he suspended Brimberg from duty, an action which was not within his power.

As a result of the Mayor's irritation, however, F. J. H. Kracke, Commissioner of Plant and Structures, who is in charge of WNYC, ordered a hearing. It was after the hearing that it was learned for the first time that Mr. Bohnsack, a Civil Service employee, who, during the Walker administration, took an active part in arranging city receptions for distinguished guests, was involved. At the hearing it developed that Mr. Bohnsack was notified several days before to prepare for the market ceremonies.

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VERMONT FAVORED FOR NEW 1000 WATT TRANSMISSION

If the recommendation of Melvin H. Dalberg, Examiner, is followed by the Federal Communications Commission, to allow Station WNBX which, up to this time, has been confined to day-time broadcast to go on the air with 1,000 watts power at night as well, it will amount to virtually a new station for that State. WNBX, which is located in Springfield, Vermont, is at present transmitting on a frequency of 1260 kc. but is required to go off the air at sunset.

In his conclusion, Examiner Dalberg said:

"The granting of this application would permit WNBX to expand its program service to a very considerable extent and to supply a considerable area and a substantial number of listeners. The proposed improvement in the nature and extent of broadcast material, a large percentage of which would apparently consist of live talent, appears to be of both a satisfactory and meritorious nature and would result in a better grade of service within the station's present service area.

"It appears from the testimony of the Commission Engineer that the granting of this application would cause no serious interference to the other stations, namely between WHIO (Dayton, O., 665 miles away) and WTOG (Savannah, Ga., 910 miles distant); one of these stations, WHIO, whose primary interest is apparently to serve Dayton, Ohio, is considerably below the separation recommended by this Commission. The granting of this application would cause a very slight deviation with respect to quota and would be in accordance with the public interest, convenience or necessity."

It was testified to that the present cost of operating WNBX is approximately \$1,000 a month and that its present revenues range between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per month. It was further stated by the applicant that the increased cost which would arise by reason of the granting of this application would be approximately fifteen per cent more than the present overhead but that this increased expenditure for operation would be more than offset by the revenue which would be derived, should the application be granted. The broadcast service supplied by the applicant provided for the area in the neighborhood of Springfield, Vermont, includes a listening public of approximately two hundred and fifty thousand people.

The only Vermont stations which broadcast at night are WCAX at Burlington with 100 watts power which operates from 6 to 9 P.M. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and WSYB in Rutland which operates from 6 to 9 P.M. with 100 watts power on Sunday evenings only.

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HOW BBC HELPED ADVERTISE AMERICAN STORE IN LONDON

An interesting radio angle was revealed by Harry Gordon Selfridge in telling the whys and wherefores of the great Selfridge Department Store in London, now known all over the world. Mr. Selfridge, who formerly was one of the owners of Marshall Field in Chicago, and is an American, is writing a series of articles currently appearing in the Saturday Evening Post. Here is what Mr. Selfridge wrote in connection with a wonderful publicity break he received having to do with radio:

"Of course, if you can get other people to spend the money for you, it is all to the good. This is what happened when the British Broadcasting Corporation were casting around about 1925 for a suitable place to erect new radio masts from which to distribute their programs to the listeners of London and the provinces. They finally decided that the roof of Selfridge's was just about the best spot they could find for their purpose. I don't think Sir John Reith, that dour, silent Scot who has been responsible more than any other man for the position British broadcasting occupies in the world today, stopped for a moment to consider the appropriateness of putting up his masts on an American building. As a matter of fact, I have a suspicion that he and his corporation had rather a soft side to our organization, and I will tell you why. Several months previously, the British papers had closed down their columns to the free publication of the corporation's daily programs, holding that they were entitled to be paid at ordinary advertising rates for the space used, running to considerably more than a column per day. The corporation had distinctly opposite views and for a week or two no programs were published. Radio without programs is not, of course, a radio service at all.

"This was an obvious Selfridge opportunity. We started to print the programs in a special column which we have used for many years now in various London papers to give a daily exposition of the policies, principles and opinions of the house of Selfridge on matters of public interest. In other words, we acted as a sort of strike-breaker. Our advertisements were read by tens of thousands of people who had probably never read them before. Both readers and newspaper proprietors appreciated the humor of the situation, and in a few days the papers withdrew their opposition and started again to publish the broadcasting programs. Nobody harbored any animosity against us for what we had done; it was simply another advertising point for the house.

"We were perfectly willing to give our roof to the corporation for the masts, and came under a promise not to make use for publicity purposes, on any consideration whatever, of the association of our establishment with the British broadcasting authorities. In due course the towering masts were installed. I was half afraid that they might prove an eyesore and in some way detract from the appearance of the building. On the contrary, the masts were so artistic that they had, if possible, the

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opposite effect; certainly I never heard any complaints. Not one person in the organization ever mentioned the masts save in the most casual way of conversation. But this did not prevent thousands of people daily making their way up to the roof - it was no part of our bargain with the B.B.C. that the masts should not be on view to our customers - and gazing skyward at these silent miracles of the wireless age. The result was exactly as might have been anticipated from the outset - the British public was quick to seize on the fact that the principal radio programs of Britain were 'sent out from Selfridge's'! And once again the store got a lot of credit - and free publicity - for something none of us had really any active part in.

"It was sheer circumstance, too, in the shape of these wireless masts, that transformed the Selfridge building into a key position of the British state at the time of the general strike in 1926. During the fateful days which preceded that tragic effort on the part of organized labor to take over the control of a nation, we at the store watched the course of events with more than ordinary concern, for we realized, as did His Majesty's government, that it was absolutely vital that the wireless service should be preserved and maintained intact. Without the dissemination of news and instructions by radio, the plight of Britain might have been inconceivably worse as a result of the general stoppage of newspapers and all means of transportation.

"At that serious moment in the history of England I deemed it my duty to call all the male members of our staff together and ask them if they would be willing to put themselves at the disposal of the Metropolitan Police Force. There was no need to explain why the Selfridge store occupied a strategic position in the clash. Our people volunteered to a man. The Metropolitan Police gratefully accepted our offer of assistance, and a large body, composed entirely of members of the Selfridge organization, was sworn in as special constables. Because so many of our men had seen service in the war, it was left to the house to form its own companies and to perfect its own arrangements.

"My son Gordon and Mr. H. J. Clarke, one of the directors, were appointed inspectors and placed in full command of the Selfridge station. They were assisted by two other executives, with army experience, who were given temporary commissions as assistant inspectors. Night and day throughout the strike period, our own specials guarded the roof with its wireless masts and broadcasting station. No serious attempt was made to interfere with these very alert watchers; it would have gone ill with any man or body of men trying to get a footing on Selfridge's roof during these days and nights - perhaps the tensest in British politics for a hundred years.

"The remainder of the volunteers from the store were formed into flying squads with headquarters throughout the building. They were ready at a moment's notice to be rushed off to any danger spot in London on receipt of a telephone message from Scotland Yard. I remember that our fellows had their full share of adventures in protecting amateur bus and tram drivers, escorting food supplies, and making possible the distribution of the government newspaper hastily organized and edited by that very brilliant person, Mr. Winston Spencer Churchill. Hard knocks were given and received, but there were no major casualties. The store carried on its functions as usual; but at night, one or two of the departments assumed the appearance of a military barracks, for many of the special constables refused to leave the premises.

"On the happy conclusion of the general strike I had the pleasure of receiving the thanks of the British Government for the assistance rendered by the store, and every member of the staff who had done his bit also received a letter of appreciation."

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FIRE AT GERMANY'S RADIO SHOW

Germany's largest exhibition hall, located on the city's exhibition grounds, was burned to the ground this week as the result of a short circuit in a booth of the National Radio Show, which was opened by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels on Saturday.

Twenty-six persons were reported injured and the stands of leading German radio firms as well as the exhibition of the Reich postal and telegraph system and auxiliary sender on the second floor of the hall were destroyed.

Two other halls on the exhibition grounds were damaged. The radio tower, except for the destruction of the lofty restaurant, does not appear seriously damaged.

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ENGLISH CABLE AND WIRELESS TRAFFIC INDEX

The traffic index number for June of Cable and Wireless works out at 70.2 against 70.1 for both June 1934, and 1935. It is the highest June figure since 1930, when it was 86.0. The figure for May was 72.5, which showed the usual seasonal decline when compared with the previous month. (1929 equals 100).

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BROADCASTERS PROTEST EXCLUSION OF ALIEN MUSICIANS

A protest by the National Association of Broadcasters against the passage of two bills introduced in the House, aimed to protect the artistic and earning opportunities of American musicians has been lodged with Samuel Dickstein, Chairman of the committee which has the bills under consideration. These bills contain substantially the same provisions that:

"(a) An alien musician may not be imported into this country unless it is conclusively proved that there is not at that time within the United States an unemployed musician of that class and equal ability, and

"(b) It must be conclusively proved that the country of origin of such alien musician has made arrangement to engage an equal number of American musicians in employment of a similar nature."

The Broadcasters oppose the enactment of either of these bills on the grounds:

"1. The condition which requires conclusive proof of musical ability of both the alien and all American musicians of the same class is equivalent in practice to a positive inhibition against any musical performance in this country by an alien artist.

"2. Such legislation will effectively reduce the opportunities for the employment of American musical talent."

Writing to Representative Dickstein, James W. Baldwin, Managing Director of the NAB said, in part:

"A part of the first condition which must be observed is that of conclusively proving the 'ability' of the foreign musician. This evidently has reference to musical ability, although it is not specifically so provided. 'Ability' includes capacity, skill, power to perform, talent and proficiency, competency, aptitude, knowledge and artistic perception. It embraces both native and acquired capacity. How is it possible to meet this part of the condition? A well-known Polish conductor is engaged by an American musical organization. It is intended that he should conduct one performance of an American manned philharmonic orchestra in Boston. His appearance is desired not because he is a foreigner or the world's greatest conductor but because of his prominence in the musical world and because of his special appeal to the American musical public. Before he may enter this country these bills require that the American musical organization must conclusively prove the ability of the foreign conductor and then conclusively prove the ability of all American conductors not employed. Having done that, the musical organization must then conclusively compare the ability of the one against the ability of the other. What standard shall be employed to make this comparison? We submit that not even

the roughest comparison of artistic ability of musicians of the same general class can be made. There simply is no yardstick by which one may prove musical ability beyond its meager fundamentals. The subject involves art, not mathematical science.

"The second condition is equally restrictive. It requires conclusive proof of the actual employment of American artists in the homeland of the alien in order to offset the employment of the alien here. If Toscanini is engaged to conduct one Philharmonic performance in the United States then some American conductor must be employed to conduct one Philharmonic performance in Italy. This condition is obviously impossible of compliance except in unusual circumstances too rare to even require mention here, and will in effect banish from the American musical world every performance except that which is wholly American.

"The enactment of either of these bills would not improve the employment condition of American musicians. The opportunity for greater employment here for American artists would not be added to by forbidding employment of foreign artists. To the contrary, some American instrumentalists contemplating labor with foreign impressarios here would discover that the engagement had necessarily been cancelled and nothing, American or foreign, added in its stead. It is a fallacious notion that for a planned performance by a given foreign artist there would be substituted a performance by an American artist. If, for example, Madam Flagstead is not permitted to exhibit her artistic talents in a concert scheduled here for a given time then no concert whatever will take place and American musicians will therefore lose rather than gain. In other words, it is our conviction that the enactment of either of these bills will defeat the purpose for which they are intended."

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FRENCH COLONIAL RADIO EQUIPMENT TO BE MODERNIZED

The modernization of radio equipment of the French colonial stations has necessitated new coastal stations in the following localities: Djibouti, French Somaliland, acquires a new 2 k.w. transmitter. Guadeloupe will have a new medium wave transmitter for interior service. Makatea, in French Oceania, will have a 500 watts transmitter for connections between Tahiti and Port-de-France (Noumea), capital of New Caledonia.

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JOHN ROYAL REPORTS ON EUROPEAN TOUR

"Radio is the healthiest thing in Europe today. Governments may disagree - and do. War may be just over the horizon. But," said John F. Royal, NBC Vice-President in Charge of Programs, who has just returned on the "Normandie" from a two months' tour of England and sixteen continental countries, "radio is an international factor for good-will."

Royal gave impressions of the foreign broadcasting situation in Germany, Italy, Russia, Austria and a dozen other countries.

How do American programs stack up against those in foreign lands?

"I say, modestly, we have nothing to be ashamed of in this country. Generally speaking, I didn't find them doing anything any better abroad than we are doing it here."

"Every place I went I found them clamoring for more American dance music. You don't know what the term 'popular music' means till you see how popular our dance tunes are abroad. In Russia they asked me for broadcasts that would feature week-old tunes. They can't get them quick enough or hot enough, it seems."

As for programs NBC will broadcast during the 1935-36 season from Europe:

"Probably" from the near-war zone in Ethiopia. At least, when pressed to the wall by reporters, Royal admitted NBC would try its best to bring direct broadcasts from the battlefield when, as and if there should be one.

"Radio has been in the front line every place else. We certainly ought to be in the front line trench in case of war - although that's a difficult thing to promise", he explained.

Another experiment probably will take the form of ancient history lessons, to be broadcast from the Colosseum, the Acropolis, the Appian Way and other Greek and Roman historic spots.

Royal said that Germany is planning a huge new building for short-wave broadcasting only. This will contain forty-four small and eight large studios; two new transmitters. Its purpose - to "Sell Germany to the world."

Among Royal's many official conferences was his private audience with the Pope in Vatican City. Of this he says, "The Pope is the best-posted ruler in the world on radio. His conversation shows a definite knowledge of the radio situation all

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over the world. He keeps statistics in his desk, showing just what's happening according to latest developments. He spoke to me earnestly of the responsibility of those who run broadcasting companies and voiced a warning to people who use the air, to be careful in their choice of words."

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WALLINGTON LEAVES NBC TO JOIN EDDIE CANTOR

Jimmy Wallington leaves the National Broadcasting Co. September 12 to join Eddie Cantor. Wallington resigns after five years with NBC and four years' broadcasting with Cantor. When circumstances forced Cantor to move his show to Columbia Broadcasting System networks, he was frank to admit he "felt lost" without the young announcer. For several months Wallington has been struggling over the problem - how to keep his places both at NBC and with Cantor. The present solution was finally agreed upon and NBC has bid Jimmy a regretful farewell, wished him all luck and - a speedy return to the "home" networks.

Only 28 years old, Wallington went to NBC headquarters after breaking in over WGY, Schenectady, as the "Byrd announcer", broadcasting news of the world to the 1929 Byrd expedition at the South Pole. He holds the 1933 award of the American Academy for good radio diction.

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A. T. & T. PLANS RADIOPHONE TO FRANCE

The American Telephone and Telegraph Company has recently asked the Federal Communications Commission to modify the license of its radio telephone station at Lawrenceville, N.J. so that it might have direct communication with Paris.

In a statement filed with the application, Theodore G. Miller, Vice-President of the company, said it was planned to establish the new circuit as soon as the French telephone administration could complete construction and installation of new equipment in France, which would require six months or more. The American company plans to use the circuit eight hours a day, the official added, routing messages for France by way of London at all other times.

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