

HEINL RADIO BUSINESS LETTER

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PRALL PREDICTS EARLY GENERAL REALLOCATION

The Federal Communications Commission is working fast nowadays, despite the approach of the Christmas holidays, in an effort to get its plan for a general reallocation of the broadcasting setup drafted before Congress has a chance to call for an investigation on Capitol Hill.

Chairman Anning S. Prall, who as a former Representative from New York knows Congress' weakness for investigations, predicted that the FCC will be ready to open a long series of public hearings, preparatory to a shake-up in the broadcasting bands, early next year. He said he expects the hearings to last through March, when the new reallocation order may be forthcoming.

While keeping one eye on the approaching session of Congress, members of the Broadcast Division of the Commission are trying at the same time to keep down their colleagues who, though not directly connected with the broadcasting supervision, are outspoken in their criticism of the present operations of networks and stations. Commissioner George Henry Payne has several times this year assailed commercial broadcasters for their commercialism and questionable programs.

Commissioner Irvin Stewart is the latest to upset the Broadcast Division with his imposing-looking proposal that the FCC adopt special regulations for the regulation of chain broadcasting and return to the former policy of reserving the 40 clear channels for high-power stations designed to serve the sparsely settled areas.

Although his motion asked that the Broadcast Division investigate and report on his proposal, it is already as good as pigeon-holed. Commissioner Prall said with restrained sarcasm:

"The motion was entirely superfluous. The Communications Commission has been engaged in a study of the whole broadcasting structure, including the clear channels, for some months. Commissioner Stewart must not have been informed, else he would not have made such a motion."

Prall explained that the Engineering Division, which has already made reports on other phases of the proposed reallocation, expects to submit a study of the clear channels within six weeks.

Asked why the FCC considers the shake-up necessary at this time, Chairman Prall said:

"There has not been a general reallocation in seven years. Considerable progress has been made since 1928 in the technical fields of radio transmission, and we want broadcasting to keep abreast of these developments. We believe a reallocation is necessary if the broadcasters and the public are to get the maximum efficiency out of the limited frequencies."

Among the recommendations made to the Commission by its Engineering Division are the following:

That the 40 clear channels be reduced but that provision be made for 25 stations, of 500,000 watts power.

That the FCC order a horizontal increase in power from 1,000 to 5,000 watts at night on seven of the 40 regional channels, raise to 1,000 watts at night the power of stations on 17 regional channels, and fix a lower mileage separation on the remaining 16 regional channels with power from 250 to 1,000 watts at night and 5,000 watts daytime.

Seventy-two stations are now on the 17 channels on which the power would be raised horizontally, while 86 stations are using the 16 channels which would get the varying step-ups.

While the FCC has had nothing to say, unofficial reports have been circulated that the regional phase of the shake-up may be postponed indefinitely, or at least until after the 1936 elections.

One report was that William Paley, President of the Columbia Broadcasting System, protested against the move both to Prall and in a call at the White House this week.

Anticipating widespread increases in power, numerous stations already have filed applications for 5,000 watts, and a half-dozen stations are ready to ask for 500,000 watts as soon as the time is ripe. KNX, Hollywood, has already filed its application, and applications are anticipated from WGN, Chicago; WSM, Nashville; KFI, Los Angeles; and the New York and Chicago key stations of the National Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting System. There is only one 500 KW station operating now. It is WLW, Cincinnati.

The Engineering Division's recommendations relative to the clear channels, long a bone of contention, is expected to be that the 40 be reduced to 25. The latter would be reserved for the super-power transmitters, while the other 15 would be opened for duplication of stations, as is now being done on many of the clear channels.

That this proposed reduction will arouse protests in Congress is certain because many Representatives and Senators held with the former Senator C. C. Dill, of Washington, that the clear channels should be reserved for the wide open spaces. The

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tendency of the Federal Radio Commission and the FCC, however, has been away from the original plan.

Commissioner Stewart appears to have taken up Senator Dill's cudgels now, and will doubtless arouse a great deal of support in Congress. His guns are directed chiefly against the networks because of their domination of the clear channels. His analysis showed that only one of the 40 clear channels has a station with no chain affiliations.

Members of the Broadcast Division appear confident that at least one perennial attack on broadcasting in Congress may be forestalled when the Radio-Education Committee gets busy trying to work out a scheme for semi-public use of commercial broadcasting facilities for educational and religious programs on a systematized basis. The committee is now in the process of formation under the auspices of the FCC and the Office of Education.

Another basis of hope - and probably the most substantial - at the Broadcast Division is that members of Congress will be so eager to adjourn the next session early in order to begin their election campaigns that they won't have time to punt the political football - broadcasting - before 1937 anyway.

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MPPA WON'T REQUIRE LICENSE FOR RECORDING LIVE PROGRAMS

The Music Publishers' Protective Association has decided not to require broadcasters to obtain licenses to manufacture recordings of their own live programs following a conference with officers of the National Association of Broadcasters.

John G. Paine, Chairman of the Board of MPPA, has informed James W. Baldwin, Managing Director of the National Association of Broadcasters, by letter that the music publishers' organization has decided not "to press our roughs" at the present for fear of causing "not only embarrassment but very serious confusion."

The action followed loud protests from broadcasters, which led to negotiations. Paine left a loophole for MPPA, however, by implying that the issue may be revived later after schedules can be worked out.

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RADIO SPEEDS NAVAL MANEUVERS; GREAT ADVANCE SINCE WORLD WAR

Technical advances in radio since the World War "facilitate the maneuvering" of the United States fleet, Lieut. W. B. Ammon, U.S.N., writes in the current issue of the Scientific American.

"Radio serves as the fleet's voice and ears, making communications as vital to the Navy as gunnery, engineering, and damage control", he continues.

"Radio permits the far-flung scouts to give vital information instantaneously to the Commander-in-Chief and his subordinate commanders, whether the scouts be submerged submarines, swift cruisers and destroyers, or speeding aircraft. It facilitates carrying out the principles underlying the dissemination of information. It is the means by which the Commander-in-Chief may disclose his plan simultaneously to a hundred or more scattered but alert ears just before meeting the foe. Hence, he is better able to take advantage of the tactical element of surprise. During action, radio is the invisible means of putting the heavy guns on distant targets. It is the agency used to give information of damage inflicted on the enemy to the team captain and the instrument to enable him to harmonize the actions of his forces and direct their efforts so each contributes the maximum effectiveness to the whole. * * *

"The major advance is considered to have been the perfection of the vacuum tube. Some of the earliest types of tubes had a life of about 70 hours and cost approximately 50 dollars each. Today the life is measured in thousands of hours and the cost is only a few dollars. Vacuum tube development made available many types of compact transmitter and receiver circuits which were suited to installation in the confined spaces allotted in a man-of-war. The detection and amplification of signals improved greatly and resulted in longer range receivers. With progress in the technique of vacuum-tube manufacture, transmitter power and sturdiness of tubes was improved and the communication range between ships has increased from a few miles to thousands of miles.* * * *The evolution of the vacuum tube was the primary step toward fulfilling the Navy's demands for rugged equipment suited for long or short range transmission, simultaneous communication on many channels, and capable of either telegraph or telephone use by submarine, surface ship, airplane, or land station.

"Another development increasing radio's value in naval operations was the elimination of much of the interference experienced during the World War. Frequency stability has been perfected and with it the means for rapid shifting of frequencies and accurate calibration of transmitters and receivers. Hence, without mutual interference, frequencies close to each other in

the radio spectrum can be assigned within the same body of ships. The receiving operator's problem is simplified; his attention can be devoted wholly to copying a message instead of attempting to receive it while tuning his set to follow the transmitter's vagaries. More accurate receiver tuning has partially overcome static. Scientific shielding has obviated local interference, particularly in aircraft, where electrical noises from the ignition system, motors and the like, are serious obstacles to good receiving conditions.

"A third improvement was the introduction of automatic transmission and reception. Manual transmission rarely exceeds 35 or 40 words a minute even with a high-speed key or 'bug', while the use of 'automatics' permits speeds above 500 words a minute. Consequently, a circuit's capacity is increased tremendously and the human operator with his inherent errors is eliminated except for punching and copying the tape."

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TELEPHONE LINES SERVING RADIO HELD IN INTERSTATE COMMERCE

The Federal Communications Commission held on November 13 that telephone companies which provide wire facilities for radio stations are engaged in interstate commerce and therefore subject to Federal regulation.

The order, issued in the case of the Rochester Telephone Company, of Rochester, N. Y., is expected to affect the status of numerous independent telephone companies.

Under terms of the ruling, any telephone company furnishing wires to broadcasters is held to be engaged in interstate commerce and subject to the Commission's jurisdiction, whether or not its lines cover more than one State.

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COLORADO STATION BROADCASTS IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS

The Colorado Senate, instead of barring radio from its impeachment proceedings, voted unanimously to allow KFEL-KVOD, Denver, to broadcast the trial of James Carr, Secretary of State, facing a dozen charges.

KFEL-KVOD, which had previously broadcast proceedings in the Colorado House of Representatives, won so much goodwill that the latter telegraphed the Federal Communications Commission asking an increase in power for the station from 500 to 1000 watts during the impeachment proceedings.

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D. C. SUPREME COURT DISMISSES APPEAL OF WSPD, TOLEDO

The District of Columbia Supreme Court has dismissed the appeal of Station WSPD, Toledo, O., from an order authorizing Station WALR to move from Zanesville to Toledo.

Basing its action on the decision of the U. S. Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia, as sustained by the U.S. Supreme Court, the District Supreme Court held the WSPD case was similar to the Jenny Wren case. In that case a station at Kansas City protested against the removal of a station into its territory on the grounds that it would be adversely affected economically. The District Court of Appeals held that the action should be brought before it rather than the District Supreme Court, and a writ of certiorari was subsequently denied by the U. S. Supreme Court.

Counsel of the Federal Communications Commission are now considering whether to grant WSPD a hearing on its protest. If the hearing is denied, the Toledo station has recourse to the District Court of Appeals.

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BRITISH RADIO ADVERTISERS FIGHT THREATENED CONTINENTAL BAN

Barred from advertising over their own British Broadcasting Corporation stations, British advertisers who have been using continental transmitters are protesting against a threatened ban by the British Post Office Department.

The Incorporated Society of British Advertisers has appealed to Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin in the matter. The appeal has been made on behalf of 500 British manufacturers, including some of the largest concerns in the country, employing many thousands, who have found radio advertising increases sales at home and abroad, thereby increasing the number of employees. As one of the aims of the National Government is to increase employment, it is felt that on this score, at least, their aims for national benefit coincide.

"Least of all should a government, avowedly national in character, allow one of its own departments to take official action in a matter which, in the opinion of British radio advertisers, is an unwarranted restraint of trade, unjustifiable, to the detriment of their interests", the appeal to Mr. Baldwin says. "As to whether the British public wants sponsored programs this, surely, is a matter they can decide. The response of listeners to sponsored programs is indisputable proof of their popularity and their value to radio advertisers as a means of selling goods."

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"HAY WIRE" EQUIPMENT IS OUTLAWED ON STATIONS BY FCC

The Federal Communications Commission, engaged in a campaign to eliminate obsolete broadcasting equipment, issued an order November 12 outlawing "hay wire" apparatus to minimize the dangers of injuries or death to operators.

The new rule (No. 132) is effective immediately, but stations are allowed a year in which to comply. The regulation was proposed by Andrew D. Ring, Assistant Chief Engineer in Charge of Broadcasting, and concurred in by the Law Department. It follows in text:

"(a) The transmitter proper and associated transmitting equipment of each broadcast station shall be designed, constructed and operated in accordance with good engineering practice in all phases not otherwise specifically included in these regulations.

"(b) The transmitter shall be wired and shielded in accordance with good engineering practice and shall be provided with safety features in accordance with the specifications of Article 37 of the current National Electrical Code as approved by the American Standards Association.

"(c) The station equipment shall be so operated, tuned, and adjusted that emissions are not radiated outside the authorized band which cause or are capable of causing interference to the communications of other stations. The spurious emissions, including radio frequency harmonics and audio frequency harmonics, shall be maintained at as low a level as required by good engineering practice. The program distortion, audio frequency range, carrier hum, noise level, and other essential phases of the operation which control the external effects shall at all times conform to the requirements of good engineering practice.

"(d) Whenever, in this rule, the term 'good engineering practice' is used, the specifications deemed necessary to meet the requirements of good engineering practice will be published from time to time.

"(e) This rule shall be effective upon its adoption, provided, however, that existing broadcast stations shall be allowed one year in which to meet the requirements herein."

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WOMEN'S COMMITTEE HURLS NEW BLAST AT AMATEUR RADIO PROGRAMS

The widespread employment of amateurs for radio programs, already under fire of New York City's relief organizations, is assailed anew by the Women's National Radio Committee in the current issue of its organ, The Radio Review.

"Our grievance", said the Committee, "is not based on the fact that a few men are being made wealthy at the expense of ambitious young people and unemployed professionals who perform at amateur rates. What we do challenge vigorously is the feeble justification offered for prolonging the amateur cycle in radio."

The outburst then continues, in part, as follows:

"The excuse heard most frequently is that it discovers new talent. What for? The graduates of the amateur hour who have received radio contracts may be counted on the fingers of one hand. Certainly, none of them have become the big name stars of radio in the past two years. The contestants who obtain vaudeville engagements are dropped after a while to yield to a new crop of vote-winners. The balance of those who flock to New York City in the hope of appearing on one of the better-known programs, are stranded at the rate of three hundred a week, according to a recent report of the Emergency Relief Transit Bureau.

"Booking agents cannot begin to place all the artists from the legitimate, vaudeville and concert stage who are available for 'cakes and coffee.' Swelling the hordes of these are an ever-increasing number of ex-amateurs, who, having had a taste of the glamour of the stage, are reluctant to return to their former trades. Every large radio studio has lists of artists who have successfully passed audition tests and are now waiting for an opening.

"The closing down of vaudeville on the Loew and R-K-O circuits means that engagements for variety artists are limited to the few theatres which still have stage shows.

"Nevertheless, despite this oversupply of talent, the amateur hour continues - because it is cheaper to produce; because those who are making money out of the idea are anxious to keep it alive; because clever publicity buildups give the impression that the entire country is clamoring for amateurs; and, finally, because the sponsors are also advertisers in magazines and newspapers, and as a matter of good business, attacks on their programs are soft-pedalled."

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STRATOSPHERE FLIERS ALSO SET RECORD IN RADIO CONVERSATION

The intrepid Army Air Corps fliers, Capts., Albert W. Stevens and Orvil A. Anderson, who went higher in the stratosphere than any other human beings on November 11, also established a record in prolonged radio conversation. They talked intermittently over the radio with associates on the earth for nearly eight hours.

Starting within twenty minutes after their take-off, they talked with one person or another on a multitude of subjects throughout the day.

Captain Stevens was especially active, listening to advice from three of the corps of scientists attached to the expedition, but chatting with a Pan American airplane over the Pacific, and in the next minute patiently answering the questions of a London newspaper man. He talked to the plane over the Pacific several times.

Wherever any one of consequence wanted to talk to the stratosphere balloon, engineers of the National Broadcasting Company quickly set up a microphone transmitter and receiver and quickly tuned in the balloon.

Reception and transmission, for a minute here and there, were characterized as perfect by Captain Stevens and his associates on the ground. Listeners on household sets could not only follow the conversations clearly, but could also hear the ticking of the Geiger counters registering the arrival of the cosmic rays; the regular tripping of the machinery operating the battery of cameras, and finally toward the end of the flight the grunts and suppressed voices of the two fliers as they joined in heaving ballast overboard to slow up the descent of their ship.

There was no difficulty in identifying the speakers. Captain Stevens' Down East twang, with the clipped enunciation that comes only from Maine, contrasted with the drawl of Captain Anderson, who was reared on a Utah cattle ranch.

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ZENITH ENJOYS 125 PER CENT INCREASE OVER LAST YEAR

The Zenith Radio Corporation, Chicago, is experiencing a 125 per cent increase in business over last year, and shipments, both in sets and dollar volume, during July and August were the largest of any similar months in the company's history, according to E. F. McDonald, Jr., President.

"September was the largest month since December, 1929, and during October we shipped more sets than in any other month since we have been in business", McDonald said. "We at present have many thousands of unfilled orders on our books."

Ninety per cent of the Zenith line is all-wave with foreign reception. Zenith claims to be a pioneer in short-wave receiving sets for public markets, having launched them in 1923.

Profits of the Zenith Corporation for the quarter ending October amounted to \$390,000, subject to Federal profit taxes and year-end audit and reserve adjustments.

McDonald pointed out that Zenith has not had a factory service man in the field since a year ago last June and has had no call for one despite the preponderance of all-wave sets sold.

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RCA REPORTED SELLING ENGLISH TELEVISION HOLDINGS

The current issue of Variety carries the following:

"While officials of Radio Corporation of America are not denying possible sale of its share holding in Electrical & Musical Industries, Ltd., they have refused to comment. EMI is actively involved in television in England and supposition is that interest in company originally was obtained to cash in on possible developments in this field abroad.

"David Sarnoff, President of RCA, who recently returned from trip abroad on which he spent considerable time in London, has made denial that any deal has been made on company's holdings in EMI. However, in Wall Street reports persist that a large block of stock may be disposed of to British interests.

"This would be looked on in financial circles as partial admission that RCA does not regard commercial possibilities of television abroad as financially great.

"Holding of RCA in Electrical & Musical Industries, Ltd., as reported last year totaled 1,700,000 shares of common and 1,000 shares of preferred. The common stock represented slightly over 29% of the outstanding EMI stock. This was carried on the books of Radio Corp. at \$13,189,431 at close of last year."

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 ::: INDUSTRY NOTES :::
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Alois Havrilla, veteran announcer of the National Broadcasting Company on November 14th was awarded the 1935 Radio Diction Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The medal is given annually to the radio announcer whose diction, in the judgment of the Academy, has been outstanding during the preceding year.

NBC announcers have won the award five of the six times it has been made. In 1929, the first year it was offered, it was given to Milton J. Cross; in 1930, to Alwyn Bach; in 1931, to John Holbrook; in 1932, to David Ross, and in 1933, to James Wellington. There was no award last year.

Paul A. Walker, Chairman of the Telephone Division of the Federal Communications Commission on November 14 addressed the Oklahoma State Society of Washington, D. C., in commemoration of the late Wylie Post and at the 28th anniversary of Oklahoma's Statehood. Mr. Walker comes from Oklahoma.

The Columbia Broadcasting System has announced the appointment of Dr. Frank N. Stanton to the Market Research Department under John J. Karol, Director. Dr. Stanton is best known for his psychological studies in the field of audible vs. visual advertising media and is the author of "Memory for Advertising Copy Presented Visually vs. Orally". He comes to CBS from the Department of Psychology at Ohio State University.

Philadelphia radio stations scooped local newspapers in reporting the recent elections, according to Billboard, which says:

"If ever the Philadelphia newspapers lost a battle to radio, they certainly did election day, being whipped to a pulp all around. What was a well-laid plan to freeze out radio from getting the election returns went for naught and in turn it was radio which picked up all the scoops, one paper running a special edition on the strength of a radio flash."