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HEINL RADIO BUSINESS LETTER

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September 12, 1939

MAJOR NETWORKS ADOPT CODE ON WAR BROADCASTS

A self-imposed code designed to keep their war broadcasts neutral has been adopted by the National Broadcasting Company, the Columbia Broadcasting System, and the Mutual Broadcasting System, effective at once, the Federal Communications Commission was informed this week.

While general in character, the code is designed to avoid the broadcasting of propaganda from abroad, biased opinions from commentators in this country, and to curtail the frequent "flashes" and "bulletins" that broke into programs during the first few days of the war.

The text of the arrangement was released by Neville Miller, President of the National Association of Broadcasters, after a conference with James L. Fly, Chairman of the FCC, and the other two members of the special committee investigating American broadcasting in connection with the war.

Others at the parley were Niles Trammell, Executive Vice President, and Frank M. Russell, Vice President and Manager of the Washington office, of the National Broadcasting Company; Edward Klauber, Executive Vice President, and Harry C. Butcher, Vice-President, and Manager of the Washington office, of the Columbia Broadcasting System; Alfred J. McCosker, Chairman of the Board, and William B. Dolph, Manager of WOL, Washington, of the Mutual Broadcasting System.

Although drawn up particularly for the networks, Mr. Miller said that the code will be presented to independent broadcasters at the NAB convention in Chicago this week.

Principal provisions of the code follow:

"Every effort consistent with the news itself is to be made to avoid horror, suspense and undue excitement. Particular effort will be made to avoid suspense in cases where the information causing the suspense is of no particular use to the listener. Also, we will avoid descriptions of hypothetical horrors, which have not actually occurred.

"Broadcasters will make every effort to be temperate, responsible, and mature in selecting the manner in which they make the facts of war and its attendant circumstances known to the audience.

"Broadcasters will, at all times, try to distinguish between fact, official statement, news obtained from responsible official or unofficial sources, rumor, and matter taken from or

contained in the foreign press or other publications, so that, by reporting and identifying these sources, we can help the radio audience as much as possible to evaluate the news brought to it.

"The radio audience should be clearly informed that the news from many sources, whether it be press bulletins or direct broadcasts, is censored and must be appraised in the light of this censorship.

"Broadcasters will designate, if they choose, broadcasts of news and news analysis, either or both, from Europe at such intervals as they individually deem to be desirable. It is advisable that these broadcasts be by Americans as far as possible, and that each individual broadcaster instruct the persons he employs, either permanently or temporarily, in the general principles set forth here. Insofar as European broadcasts contain news analysis, they are to conform to the definition of news analysis hereinafter set forth.

"Speeches by foreigners from abroad, public proclamations and statements, and like matter are to be handled by each individual broadcaster in such manner as he deems best to serve his audience, but it is essential that fairness to all belligerents be maintained and that this phase of the operations be carried out in such a way that the American audience shall be as completely and fairly informed as possible.

"If broadcasts become available from scenes of battle, bombed areas, air-raid shelters, refugee camps and so on, broadcasters will not deprive the audience of the ability of radio to give them first-hand information, but will use taste and judgment to prevent such broadcasts from being unduly harrowing.

"If broadcasters put on propaganda disseminated by radio stations or the press of European countries or distributed by these countries in any other manner, each will be guided by his own news judgment and endeavor to label precisely the source of the material, and to do this sufficiently often so that no reasonably careful listener is likely to be misled, and he will also be governed by the same rules of fairness in presenting all sides, though not necessarily in the same broadcast, nor need this judgment be a quantitative one.

"All the foregoing general principles will, of course, apply to domestic broadcasts on any phase of the war. All news broadcasts, whether sponsored or unsponsored, are to remain in the strictest control of the broadcaster in order that the standards herein set forth may be maintained. News analysts are at all times to be confined strictly to explaining and evaluating such fact, rumor, propaganda, and so on, as are available. No news analysts or news broadcaster of any kind is to be allowed to express personal editorial judgment or to select or omit news with the purpose of creating any given effect, and no news analyst or other news broadcaster is to be allowed to say anything in an effort to influence action or opinion of others one way or the other. Nothing in this

is intended to forbid any news broadcaster from attempting to evaluate the news as it develops, provided he substantiates his evaluation with facts and attendant circumstances. His basis for evaluation should, of course, be impersonal, sincere and honest.

"In order not to keep the public unduly disturbed and alarmed, each broadcaster, exercising his own news judgment, will endeavor to interrupt programs for news bulletins as little as seems consistent with good operations.

"No propaganda in connection with the war will be allowed in either the commercial announcements or the context of commercial programs. Nothing in this shall be interpreted as barring straight news or news analysis, as herein have been described, from commercial programs.

"The safeguards of fairness and program balance now applied in the handling of speeches on controversial issues will continue to be applied and, in order to make this effective, every effort will be made to obtain the text of speeches before they are scheduled."

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JOLLIFFE SEES TELEVISION USE IF WAR CONTINUES

If the European war lasts more than a few months, as it now appears that it will, it is highly probable that television will be brought into use by military authorities on both sides, according to Dr. C. B. Jolliffe, RCA engineer and former Chief Engineer of the Federal Communications Commission.

Interviewed in Washington this week, he said that television is sufficiently developed for military use and only awaits adaptation.

"Television may become the eyes of an army", he said.

"The army commander would have a chance actually to see what was going on as he planned his strategy."

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Cuban imports of radio sets during July 1939 numbered 1,364 units valued at 23,409 pesos, as compared with 1,900 units valued at 30,484 pesos, imported during June, and 1,933 sets valued at 49,477 pesos, imported during July 1938, according to the U. S. Commerce Department. Imports from The Netherlands during July of this year were nil as compared with 30 units valued at 842 pesos imported in June of this year, and 116 sets valued at 1,724 pesos, imported in July of 1938.

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WMCA CITED BY FCC FOR CODE MESSAGE BROADCASTS

Station WMCA, New York, on Tuesday was cited by the Federal Communications Commission to show cause why its license should not be revoked for decoding and broadcasting secret military information transmitted by British and German radio facilities at the outbreak of the European war.

The order, the first to be issued by the FCC in a move to keep American radio stations neutral, cited Section 312(a) of the Communications Act as a basis for its drastic action.

Station WMCA's broadcasts, FCC officials said, consisted of secret information having to do with German troop movements in Poland and British naval maneuvers in closing the Mediterranean at the outbreak of the war. A code expert picked up the radio communications via a short-wave receiver. WMCA was able to scoop the press by means of the information.

The FCC, in its order, pointed out that it had entered into an international agreement to take all possible measures to prohibit and prevent (1) the unauthorized interception of radio communications not intended for the general public reception, and (2) the divulging of the contents, the publication or other use of the communications without authorization.

Station WMCA was instructed to file a written statement on the facts in the case by Friday, September 15th.

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WAR WILL SPEED RADIO PROGRESS, SAYS DELLINGER

A prediction that the war would speed radio improvements was made by Dr. J. H. Dellinger, of the National Bureau of Standards, Chairman of a Committee of radio engineering experts which met at the State Department this week to prepare for United States participation in the session of the International Radio Consulting Committee, scheduled to meet at Stockholm next June unless war causes cancellation.

"During the World War, improvements were made in radio tubes, receiving sets and transmission equipment. When the war ended in 1918, we were ripe for broadcasting, which began in 1920", Dr. Dellinger pointed out, predicting further great advances under similar impetus.

With the world keyed to wartime apprehension for vessels in distress, the radio experts discussed - among many highly technical matters - the best word or signal for a ship with radio-telephonic apparatus to use in calling for help, corresponding to the telegraphic SOS.

The question was whether the international term now in use, "m'aidez" ("help me") in French, and pronounced "mayday" in English would be continued as the radiotelephonic distress call for ships.

The sub-committee on this question, headed by E. M. Webster, of the Federal Communications Commission, checked the question to other nations by making two alternative suggestions in case they had difficulties necessitating a change from "m'aidez".

One suggestion was the replacement of the spoken word "m'aidez" by the sounds corresponding to the English letters SOS.

At that, one engineer spoke up: "The other nations might think we are trying to compel them to speak English!"

"If we're going to have an English term, why not use the word 'Help'?" another engineer inquired, practically.

"Because some people can't say 'Help' - they say 'Elp'!" another man countered, ending the discussion on that particular point.

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GREAT LAKE RADIO STUDY NEARING COMPLETION

The Federal Communications Commission is concluding a year's investigation of communications facilities on the Great Lakes to be used as a basis for a proposed agreement with Canada.

Thad H. Brown of the Commission, directing the inquiry, said the Commission soon would prepare a comprehensive report on commerce, navigation and the need, if any, for expanded communications machinery.

Congress, which authorized the survey in 1937, directed the Commission to report not later than December 31, 1939.

"This special study has as its goal the very motives for which men have always fought hardest - the guarding of life, the safety of property", Commissioner Brown stated.

He said the legislation was intended to "promote the safety of life and property at sea through the use of wire and radio communications."

"Back of this desire", he added, "is the far-flung effort to make more effective the program of the International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea, adopted in London in 1929, to provide compulsory fitting of merchant ships with radio apparatus and the maintenance of radio watches."

Commission members reported that Canadian officials were cooperating fully with this government toward establishment of identical communications standards for vessels operating on the Great Lakes.

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RADIO UNDER PUBLIC RELATIONS IF WAR HITS U.S.

Censorship of radio in this country will be exercised by a special public relations administration if the United States goes to war, according to a plan evolved by the War Department and disclosed this week in Washington.

Details of the operations of the emergency agencies were not divulged. The public relations administration would be directly under the President.

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PUBLISHERS' ORGAN AGAINST RADIO CENSORSHIP

Editor & Publisher last week came out editorially against any form of radio censorship in the following statement:

"President Roosevelt was well advised in disregarding son Elliott's plea for a rule against broadcasting of foreign propaganda. That is now a matter for the individual judgment of radio operators and they should soon learn from the audiences whether the re-broadcast of the short-wave handouts is a popular service.

"At this writing, we think it is well that Americans be informed on all national attempts to influence our opinions. To date, we have not been impressed by their efficiency. The German, Polish, and Italian broadcasts, which are out-and-out propaganda, discount the ability of Americans either to hear other stations or to read newspapers. The German, especially, has tried clumsily to undermine American confidence in our press - even to the extent of quoting from a non-existent American newspaper. Let's assume the basic intelligence of our citizenry, its belief in our own institutions and news service - and let's have no censorship of any kind on this side of the water."

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WAR BROADCASTS, COPYRIGHT ON NAB AGENDA

While called particularly to consider music copyright problems, the special convention of the National Association of Broadcasters in Chicago on Friday also will take up the matter of maintaining neutrality in war news broadcasts.

The NAB Directors will meet on Wednesday, preceding the convention, and the IRNA and independents will meet on Thursday. All sessions are to be at the Palmer House.

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CAUTION URGED IN RADIO WAR NEWS BROADCASTS

Broadcasters were warned to exercise both caution and restraint in broadcasting war news either from this country or foreign capitals in a statement on "radio neutrality" in the current "NAB Reports", published by the National Association of Broadcasters.

"Promulgation of the Neutrality Proclamation by President Roosevelt last Tuesday has quite naturally raised in the minds of broadcasters the question 'What is radio neutrality?'" the NAB statement said.

"In considering the broad implications of the Neutrality Proclamation in the broadcasting field, Headquarter feels that the caution exercised by broadcasters should go to points even beyond those covered by the Controversial Public Questions and the News sections of the new NAB Code.

"Though it is felt every broadcaster has endeavored to broadcast factual news, free from bias or editorial opinion, even before the Code was adopted last July, Headquarters would like to point out that the method and manner in which news is handled during the present situation is being as carefully scrutinized as is the content of the news broadcast itself.

"While it should not be necessary for any newscaster or announcer to change his style of delivery, it should be pointed out that all news broadcasts, especially news 'flashes' interrupting another program already on the air, should be handled with the greatest degree of restraint.

"News matter which is obviously sensational, though thoroughly accredited to a responsible source, should be carefully checked and confirmed as far as possible before it is broadcast. Statements in conflict coming from censored belligerent sources should be paired and notice to the public should be given that all news from belligerent countries has passed under the blue pencil of the government censor before becoming available to American listeners.

"Though President Roosevelt stated that the declared neutrality of the United States did not deprive the right of the individual to his own opinion, broadcasters face a difficult and complex problem in allotting time to speakers. In general, Headquarters feels that the Public Controversial plank of the new Code is a safe guidepost for members to follow. While the Code is not yet in effect (the effective date is to be announced by the NAB Board at its meeting next week), it will be recalled that the Code bars all discussion of public controversial matter from paid time (except political - during a political campaign) and requires that time for such discussions shall 'be allotted with due regard to all the other elements of balanced program schedules and to the degree of public interest in the questions to be presented.

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Broadcasters shall use their best efforts to allot such time with fairness to all elements in a given controversy.'

"In pointing out the seriousness and complexity of the problem of radio neutrality, Headquarters would like to quote two paragraphs from a recent column by Dorothy Thompson published this week:

"'It would seem essential that while we are considering means of cushioning this country against the economic shock of war, and reconsidering whether the existing neutrality legislation is actually in the best interests of our neutrality, we should also have a policy adopted regarding propaganda, and particularly regarding propaganda on the air.

"'The spoken word is provably far more inflammatory than the written word. The human voice is a more potent conveyor of emotion than is the printed page; it is less likely to appeal to reason; it is more capable of being misunderstood; from time immemorial it has been used to sway and control masses, and this possibility has been incalculably augmented by the radio and the power of reaching millions.'

"Headquarters is aware of the delicate problem of station management and supervision raised by the war period. It is closely following each development on the Washington front and within the industry so as to be in a position to advise members when unforeseen problems arise. A fuller discussion of the matter will be made at the convention next week."

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BRITISH BACK STATION IN LIECHTENSTEIN

Recently a private company, presumably backed by British capital, has established a broadcasting station in the Principality of Liechtenstein under the name of "Liechtensteinische Rundspruch A.G.", Vaduz, according to the American Consulate General at Zurich, Switzerland. This company is at present operating a small broadcasting station of 1.5 kilowatts on 209.9 meters. Beginning March 4, 1940, it is expected to operate on 198.7 meters.

In addition to this station, the same company is contemplating the construction of a short wave station beamed on Great Britain and North America. This station would carry commercially sponsored programs similar to those which the long wave station in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg now transmits to Great Britain.

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 ::: TRADE NOTES :::
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Three new pieces of television test equipment, a piezo-electric calibrator, a 5-inch wide-range oscillograph, and a television alignment oscillator, have been announced by the RCA Manufacturing Company. All three have been carefully designed in accordance with present-day television receiver development, and in addition include provision for future television progress, thus minimizing the possibility of obsolescence. The instruments have been designed primarily for servicing RCA Victor television receivers, but may be adapted readily to other present day sight-and-sound receivers.

Offices have been opened in the New York Herald Tribune building for the new radio checking service announced by Burrelle's Press Clipping Bureau. The Radio Reporter, first of its kind in the clipping bureau field, aims to perform the same functions in collecting news mentions on the air of interest to its clients as Burrelle's has done for more than 50 years with newspapers and magazines. Coverage will be world-wide in scope, with trained newsmen "listening-in" 24 hours a day, it was announced.

The Farnsworth Radio and Television Corporation has completed arrangements with the Commercial Credit Company, Baltimore, for financing of dealers' sales of Farnsborth products.

Friday, September 22nd, will be deForest Day at the New York Fair, and the veteran inventor will be there in person, as the guest of the Fair and of the Veteran Wireless Operators' Association, of which latter organization he is honorary president.

Members of the Washington Institute of Radio Engineers Monday night listened to radio signals broadcast from a stratosphere balloon that rose 10 miles in less than an hour. The balloon carried a 2-pound weather station and a radio transmitter. The engineers by listening to the broadcast, learned that at 50,000 feet the temperature was 58 degrees below zero and the humidity was 30 percent.

An increased operating schedule to Europe for General Electric's international radio station WGEO that will provide European listeners with three more hours of American programs daily has been announced by C. H. Lang, Manager of Broadcasting. Directional antennas will be used, pointed on London, for the additional service from 3 to 6 P.M. EST. It was also announced that the G.E. Station KGEI, Treasure Island, Calif., will add a new frequency to its two already in use. The station will broadcast on 6,190 kilocycles, 48.46 meters, from 9 P.M. to midnight PST.

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A.F. of L. REJECTS C.I.O. MERGER PROPOSAL

Frank B. Powers, President of the A. F. of L. Commercial Telegraphers' Union, this week rejected a proposed merger with the C.I.O. American Communications Association. The proposal was made by Mervyn Rathborne of New York, President of the A.C.A., as the C.T.U. opened its convention in Chicago.

"This C.I.O. outfit spent two years and \$100,000 trying to destroy our union", Mr. Powers said. "Now that they have failed, they ask us to unite with them. Such tactics are a sample of the communistic methods employed by the group sponsored by John L. Lewis."

Mr. Powers declared that the communication from Mr. Rathborne would not even be officially received by the convention.

Mr. Rathborne's letter stated that the only objection to a merger is whether the resulting union should affiliate with the C.I.O. or the A. F. of L. He suggested that this question be settled "democratically" by the memberships of the unions.

Mr. Powers said the C.I.O. union had won most of its members by closed shop agreements obtained by means of sit-down strikes, a method, he said, which the commercial telegraphers have spurned.

Sixty delegates, twenty of them from Canada, represent members employed by press wire services, brokerage firms, leased wire operators and radio telegraph companies.

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SPAIN URGING WIDESPREAD USE OF RADIO SETS

While the Nazi government of Germany has confiscated all radio sets other than those that can receive programs and news only from local stations, in Spain the Franco government has so encouraged the making and transportation of sets that the Hendaye correspondent of The London Times conjectures that Spain will soon have more radio fans in proportion to the population than any other country in Continental Europe. There is no tax on sets and the import duties have been lowered.

This does not apply to broadcasting apparatus, however, the possessors of which pay a high license and are under constant government surveillance. Official information and entertainment are broadcast from a semi-government organization recently established on the same lines as the BBC in London.

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