

HEINL RADIO BUSINESS LETTER

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No. 1608

March 7, 1944.

NBC SETS NEW HIGH FOR WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS' SHOW

The National Broadcasting Company surely went to town Saturday, March 4th, with the show they put on at the Statler Hotel for the White House Correspondents' dinner and the 11th Anniversary of President Roosevelt. It has been the custom of the networks to alternate in furnishing the entertainment at these dinners and down through the years there have been some excellent programs but none finer in the opinion of the writer than the one NBC gave last Saturday night. One estimate was that conservatively it would cost between \$25,000 and \$30,000 to duplicate it.

Personally supervising the performance were David Sarnoff, President of the Radio Corporation of America, Niles Trammell, President of NBC; Frank E. Mullen, Vice-President and General Manager; John F. Royal, Vice-President in Charge of New Developments; Frank M. Russell, Washington Vice-President, and Carleton D. Smith, NBC Washington General Manager.

Not only were there stars seldom assembled on one stage but performers less well known who themselves almost stopped the show. For instance, there was a trained seal - an animal well known to the newspaper corps - which brought down the house by flapping up to the microphone and giving an imitation of one of Herr Hitler's speeches. Then there was Wally Berg, introduced as "a hot air artist", causing a distinguished Senator to remark, "they should seat him at the head table". Mr. Berg, a toy balloon trickster, created a zoo of miniature rubber balloon animals right before your eyes. "Archie" came all the way from "Duffy's Tavern" in New York to help dispense the hospitality. Then followed the debut in this country of Pedro Vargas, a great Mexican tenor, with the largest sombrero and the most brilliantly colored zerape ever seen north of the Rio Grande. Before Pedro began, he made a little speech in Mexican which Vice-President Wallace got busy and translated for the President.

A thrilling curtain raiser at these dinners is the salute to the President by a company of soldiers, sailors and marines. This year WACS and WAVES were included. The U. S. Navy Band led the procession. Dr. Frank Black of NBC, later took over with 40 members of the NBC Concert Orchestra.

Gracie Fields who, believe you me, has a real voice and all dolled up in a white silk dress and glittering with diamonds is a looker as well as a comedienne, wowed the customers. Gracie, Britain's highest paid star, almost blew herself up singing "The Greatest Aspidistra in the World". Elsie Janis, "sweetheart of the AEF", was brought by plane from Los Angeles to give her own version of "Hinky, Dinky, Parley Vous", and "what you boys' fathers liked in the last war".

Bob Hope came on saying that trying to find a room in Washington, he wound up in the basement of the Carlton Hotel. Seeing a man half asleep in a chair there, he said, "I'm going to another hotel." The man said: "Don't be foolish, I'm the manager of the Statler and look where I am." Mr. Hope said he "finally found a nice bench in a park overlooking the Shoreham." Some of his other wisecracks were:

"Trying to find a room in Washington is like trying to find 'My Day' in the Chicago Tribune."

"Mr. Roosevelt has been President so long that when I was a boy my father said to me, 'Bob, maybe some day you'll grow up to be Vice-President.'"

"At the last military conference between Roosevelt and Churchill, they discussed where and when to attack the enemy and how to keep Eleanor out of the crossfire."

"Willkie has got his eye on the President's chair, but look what Roosevelt's got on it."

"I get a big kick out of that Yank soldier who fathered quadruplets. Proves there'll always be an England."

The most dramatic moment was the appearance of Fritz Kreisler. He seemed to have completely recovered from his tragic accident. After thunderous applause, the audience arose in tribute to the great artist.

The only speaker was President Roosevelt who said: "I wish Dave Sarnoff could come and show us how to broadcast our White House press conferences."

There was a memorable finale when Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians sang the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" with the President and the audience joining in.

Earlier in the evening Merriman Smith of the United Press was sworn in as President of the White House Correspondents' Association succeeding Paul Wooton, Washington Correspondent of the New Orleans Times-Picayune and McGraw-Hill Publications. Mr. Wooton, one of the most valuable and popular members of the Washington newspaper corps, was returned by acclimation to his old job of Secretary-Treasurer of the Association. Someday somebody is going to write a story about Paul. Not only is he the Business Manager of the White House Correspondents, but he is the mainspring of the Overseas Writers, the Trade Press group, and a Director of the National Press Club. And here we'd be remiss not to mention Miss Haggett, Mr. Wooton's capable secretary so well and favorably known to Washington correspondents.

J. A. Fox, of the Washington Evening Star, was installed as Vice President of the White House Correspondents' Association, and three members of the Executive Committee - Fred Pasley, of the New York News; John H. Crider of the New York Times and Robert G. Nixon of International News Service.

Among those from the radio industry who attended the dinner were:

Carl Burkland, General Manager, WTOP, Washington; Wells Church, head Radio Bureau, Rep. North Committee; Martin Codel, formerly of Broadcasting Magazine; George Crandall, CBS Publicity Chief, New York; Comdr. T. A. M. Craven, Federal Communications Commissioner; Leif Eid, NBC, Washington; Earl Gammons, Vice-President CBS, Washington; Earl Godwin, radio commentator; Richard Harkness, radio commentator; Lieut. E. K. Jett, Federal Communications Commissioner; G. W. Johnstone, Blue Net News Chief; Paul Kesten, Vice President CBS, New York; Capt. Thomas Knode, Public Relations, NBC, Washington; Lynne M. Lamm, National Association of Broadcasters, Ernest K. Lindley, radio commentator.

Also, Edward McGrady, Vice-President, Radio Corporation of America; Claude Mahoney, Blue Net commentator; Clarence Menser, Vice President in Charge of Programs, NBC; Byron Price, Director of Censorship; John Harold Ryan, President Elect, National Association of Broadcasters; Oswald Schuette, Radio Corporation of America; Fred Shawn, NBC, Washington and Paul White, News Chief, CBS.

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GOES TO BAT IN CONGRESS FOR INDEPENDENT BROADCASTERS

Championing the independent broadcasters, Representative Karl E. Mundt, (R), of South Dakota, declared that "it is gratifying to know that a Senate committee is about to report out legislation designed to establish a code of ethical rules and regulations for broadcasting which will protect the rights of free speech for all and prevent the radio industry from either being subjected to the extra-legal decrees of the FCC or the non-legal dictations of a few monopolistic moguls presently enjoying almost exclusive access to the best air waves."

Representative Mundt added that it is hoped and expected that these objectives will be enacted by the present Congress.

Prefacing his remarks, Representative Mundt said:

"In view of the fact that the radio industry, the Federal Communications Commission and the need for revising legislation dealing with the establishment and maintenance of a free and impartial radio in this Republic are occupying more and more attention in Congress, I am utilizing permission granted me by the House to include at this point an informative article appearing in the February 28th issue of Broadcasting. The author of the article is Ed Craney, of Butte, Mont., who is further identified by the statement at the beginning of this article.

"If radio is to remain free in this country as I, for one, very much desire it shall, it is necessary that legislation be passed

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which will set up clear-cut and understandable rules and regulations which will not be subject to the whim or interpretative impulse of the FCC. It is also essential that the public be protected against some of the existing flagrant abuses in broadcasting by which individuals, organizations, and institutions are attacked over the air without adequate provision being guaranteed that they shall be assured the right of free speech by being given the opportunity of rejoinder. In other words, to remain free the radio industry must demonstrate its right to be free.

"Freedom of speech on the air, Mr. Speaker, must not be the monopoly of the few, nor the exclusive privilege of the favored. Congress has a responsibility to the listening public and to the integrity of our great Bill of Rights to set up rules of fair play and correct behavior on the air waves which shall apply alike to the great radio networks and the independent radio outlets."

The statement at the beginning of Mr. Craney's article in Broadcasting, which Representative Mundt referred to, read:

"Ed Craney is no stranger to broadcasters. Identified with practically every major controversy of the craft for a dozen years, he quit the N.A.B. at the stormy St. Louis convention in 1941, announcing he wouldn't return until there was a change. With the departure of Neville Miller as N.A.B. president, he applied for readmission, which was approved by the N.A.B. board February 3. Friend and confidante of Chairman Wheeler, Democrat, of Montana, Mr. Craney, in characteristic fashion, volunteers his views herewith from his vantage point as unofficial attache of the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee now writing a new radio law."

Mr. Craney's article concluded:

"I am fully convinced that the independent stations should maintain their own association and also should hire someone as competent as a Russell or a Gammons to head its Washington office. This representation should be exclusively for the independent stations - for us and not with the interests of a network or a great manufacturing or communications company always in the background.* * *

"What can we do for the benefit of ourselves? How can we raise enough money to support an N.A.B. without the networks? Representation in Washington is of primary importance to us. But we need not carry on alone all the work of the present N.A.B. Many functions can be usefully and properly collaborated between our independent organization and a networks' organization and funds can be supplied jointly for that work. N.A.B. used to operate on much less than the \$350,000 budget of today; under wise and competent management, it will not be difficult to do so again. Moreover, the industry will have better standing if it is not running an expensive Washington corporation lobby."

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NAB TAKES ISSUE WITH WMCA SELLING CONTROVERSIAL TIME

What appears to be a development of a sharp difference of opinion within the industry is suggested in a letter from Willard D. Egolf, Assistant to the President of the National Association of Broadcasters to Nathan Straus, President of Station WMCA in New York, which reads in part as follows:

"The National Association of Broadcasters feels some concern over the announcement of WMCA policy to sell time for the discussion of controversial issues. Your requirement that both sides of a controversy be willing to participate commercially is only an incident to the real problem, we feel, and is not an adequate solution.

"For several years prior to 1939 the broadcasting industry searched for a suitable policy to cover the broadcasting of programs involving controversial issues. On July 11 of that year the Code of the National Association of Broadcasters was adopted at a meeting of the membership with more than five hundred present. Serious study by leaders of the industry resulted in a strong, unequivocal declaration in the section entitled, 'Controversial Public Issues'. Put to the test and subjected to discussion many times since 1939, this language still stands in the opinion of the industry as the soundest assurance of operation in the public interest.

"In the light of this provision of the Code, the thing to be most regretted is a policy which places money in the balance, against a manager's judgment, in deciding the weight of a controversial issue. There is no substitute for alert, aggressive, public-minded station management. When the decision as to broadcasting a controversial public issue becomes involved with commercial revenue, even though both sides are represented, it cannot be denied that the prospect of revenue will occupy a prominent place in the negotiations; it will receive consideration and it may be accepted as a determining factor to the exclusion of sound broadcast policies. Worst of all, a station manager is invited to base his decision on monetary rather than public service considerations, thereby setting up false standards.

"In no sense does the Code of the National Association of Broadcasters impair the 'freedom to listen'. This right is the foundation of the Code. It is part of the basic radio law, under which owners of radio stations are licensed only on condition that they operate 'in the public interest, convenience and necessity'. There is a public responsibility which need not be sugar-coated by an inducement to sell time which they are charged to furnish free.

"There is nothing in your policy which enables a proponent of a controversial issue to obtain broadcast time more readily than he is able to obtain it under the Code. As a matter of fact, reduced to its final analysis, your policy provides a means whereby he may be kept off the air altogether, and effectively. His opponent, by your own statement, need only say that he is unable or unwilling to spend the money for a reply. Under the Code of the National Association of

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Broadcasters, a station manager may schedule a broadcast on a controversial issue, if he deems it in the public interest. If no one on the opposing side chooses to make a reply, both sides are held to have had their 'day in court'. Thus, at least station management is vindicated in the exercise of unbiased judgment in the public interest.

"Inasmuch as the announcement of your policy received publicity through press and radio, we are taking the liberty of giving similar publication to this letter."

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WJJD TO FIELD \$700,000; WFTL FORT INDUSTRY \$270,000

The sale of two important stations was completed last week when Marshall Field bought Station WJJD in Chicago from Ralph L. Atlass and associates, and the Federal Communications Commission finally placed its stamp of approval on the sale of WFTL, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to Fort Industry, headed by Lieut. Commander George B. Storer, now stationed in Chicago. The Commission at the same time authorized WFTL to open and maintain studios in Miami. The money consideration in the WJJD deal, a 20,000 watt station operating on limited time, was \$700,000, and for WFTL, with 10,000 watts, \$275,000.

Mr. Field has been looking for a station in Chicago for sometime and the FCC order requiring the disposal of more than one station under the same ownership in any territory opened the way for the purchase as the Atlass group would have been required to dispose of either WJJD or WIND, whose coverage overlaps.

All of the common stock of WJJD, Inc. and 360 of 900 outstanding shares of preferred stock were purchased by Mr. Field from Ralph L. Atlass, Leslie Atlass, P. K. Wrigley and A. M. Linick. Horace L. Lohnes, Washington attorney, represented Mr. Field and W. Theodore Pierson the stockholders in WJJD.

Mr. Wrigley, chewing gum manufacturer, real estate operator and owner of the Chicago Cubs, is principal owner of WJJD, holding approximately 35% of the common stock, of which 15,000 shares were outstanding. Ralph Atlass holds approximately 25%; his brother, Leslie, CBS Vice-President in Chicago, approximately 20%; and Mr. Linick, identified with the station management, approximately 10%.

The 15,000 shares of common stock are being acquired for \$660,000, at the rate of \$44 per share. The price per share of the preferred stock was \$100, or \$36,000 for the 360 shares acquired, leaving 540 shares at \$100 per share outstanding. Acquisition of the remaining preferred shares would bring the overall price to \$750,000.

According to the sales contract, the sellers guarantee the balance sheet as of Jan. 31, 1944. The balance sheet shows current

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assets of approximately \$225,000 and a net worth of about \$320,000. Replacement value of technical equipment and studios was estimated at \$200,000. The station has current contracted business of between \$400,000 and \$500,000.

Fort Industry, of which J. Harold Ryan, President-elect of the National Association of Broadcasters, is Vice-President, acquired WFTL from Ralph A. Horton, investment broker.

Commander Storer was quoted as saying that Stephen A. Vetter will continue as Managing Director of the station under the new ownership. He will report to George W. Smith, Executive Vice-President of Fort Industry and directing head of WWVA, Wheeling, and L. A. Pixley, Fort Industry General Manager in Detroit. Mr. Pixley also heads the Standard Tube Co., Storer enterprise engaged in Government contract work. The Fort Industry Co. stations, in addition to WFTL and WWVA, are WMMN, Fairmount, West Virginia; WLOK, Lima, Ohio; WHIZ, Zanesville, Ohio, WAGA, Atlanta, Georgia, and WSPD, Toledo, Ohio.

The application for transfer, filed by Andrew W. Bennett, Washington attorney, covered acquisition of equipment and property valued at \$181,000, plus several mortgages, which brought the figure to \$275,000. A claim against the sale entered by Mr. Vetter, based on a previous contract with Mr. Horton, was settled.

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CBS ISSUES INVASION ORDERS; MBS PRE-INVASION NEWS SHEET

The networks are preparing for the invasion in earnest. Paul W. White, CBS Chief of News Events, has just sent confidential instructions which are called "A blueprint to all CBS World News men for our domestic coverage of the prospective invasion of Western Europe." Another confidential memo, written for the benefit of CBS correspondents who will be assigned to invasion forces and for the network's bureau men in London, has been sent out.

A specially prepared news sheet, with accompanying photos and mats of the network's overseas and domestic news commentators and reporters, as they stand poised for the Allied invasion of the European continent, has been mailed to newspaper radio editors and affiliated radio stations by the Press Department of the Mutual Broadcasting System.

The promotion contains stories and photos on all the network's topflight news men.

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NBC SEEKING CHI TELEVISION CHANNEL GETS RISE OUT OF ZENITH

There appears to be the makings of a first class scrap in NBC's applying for Television Channel No. 1 in Chicago W9XZV, long assigned to the Zenith Radio Corporation.

Hugh Robertson, Executive Vice President and Treasurer for Zenith, promptly issued the following ultimatum:

"Zenith's television transmitter, W9XZV, (commercial television construction permit WTZR) is the oldest existing television transmitter in the Chicago area, and from the standpoint of providing continuous scheduled program service, is older than any New York station.

"W9XZV has been broadcasting regularly scheduled programs continuously since March 30, 1939. We have used our present frequency in the public interest, not only from the standpoint of providing good programs, but also as a means of contributing to advancement of the art. In 1939 Commander McDonald let it be known to the industry in general that the facilities of our station would be made available upon request to schools, business organizations, and others engaged in television research. We have on several occasions transmitted special programs in response to such requests. We have also, at the request of the Federal Communications Commission, conducted special research for that organization.

"Zenith has a considerable investment in television, and has used its assigned television frequency to the greatest possible advantage for science, industry, the FCC, and the general public. NBC's action in asking for Zenith's frequency is presumptuous and unfair, and will be vigorously contested."

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\$1,000,000 OWI SHORT-WAVE BASE TO BE BUILT

Construction of a \$1,000,000 short-wave broadcasting plant to serve the Pacific area, the Far East and Latin America will begin in San Francisco within a few weeks, it was announced Sunday by the National Broadcasting Company.

The plant, expected to be in operation by Fall, will be designed and built by the NBC for and in collaboration with the Office of War Information and the Defense Plant Corporation.

For the duration, the plant, having four powerful stations, will be operated, technically by NBC, San Francisco, for the Overseas Branch of OWI, which will handle program operations.

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FCC ROW BREAKS OUT ANEW ON TWO CAPITOL FRONTS

Two outstanding clashes in the row over the Federal Communications Commission investigation are scheduled on Capitol Hill today (Tuesday). First, Chairman James L. Fly will be given his first face-to-face crack at the House Investigating Committee, which though it has been investigating the Commission for more than a year, has not yet offered Mr. Fly an opportunity to be heard. It is generally conceded, however, that his appearance now will not mean much - in fact, amount to a whitewash - inasmuch as Eugene L. Garey, the man who was going to put Fly over the jumps, was recently forced to resign, as was Representative Eugene Cox (D), of Georgia, former Chairman. This, many believe, was pulling the teeth of the investigation.

The only hope of the opposition is that Representative Richard B. Wigglesworth (R), of Massachusetts, and Representative Louis E. Miller (R), of Missouri, minority members of the Investigating Committee, may try to put Mr. Fly on the spot.

Last week, Representative Wigglesworth denounced the investigation on the floor of the House, demanding that Committee Chairman Lea resign unless he conducted "an honest and fearless" inquiry, and today Representative Miller, following the Committee meeting at which Mr. Fly is to appear, will proceed to the House and probably give the members another dose of the same.

Representative Warren Magnuson (D), of Washington, who already has taken up the cudgel for the FCC, has asked for time to answer Mr. Miller so there may be quite a scrimmage on the floor of the House also. Mr. Miller has announced that he will present all the facts concerning the manner in which the hearings on the FCC are now being conducted.

When Chairman Lea announced the latter part of the week that the Committee would give Chairman Fly and the FCC a chance to be heard, Representatives Wigglesworth and Miller declared the decision had been made over their vigorous protests. Whether Representative Miller will reiterate demands that Representative Lea resign, or will announce that he and his colleague will refuse to serve on the Committee remained uncertain.

Mr. Miller disclosed that he and Mr. Wigglesworth had felt so vehemently on the subject of proceeding at this time with the FCC side of the case, without completing an investigation which had previously been started, that they had taken their own stenographer to the executive session of the Committee when the decision was made.

The about-face the White House did in allowing Jonathan Daniels to testify before the Senate Agricultural Committee has led to the belief that the House Investigating Committee may review its efforts to force the hand of President Roosevelt to allow J. Edgar Hoover and high ranking Army and Navy officers who had been called to testify regarding the FCC. When previously called they were all gagged by executive order.

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CBS ISSUES PRESS COURTESY CARDS

It has been the experience of out-of-town press correspondents endeavoring to look in on New York broadcasts to get man-handled by an attendant or usher who frequently looked like a cross between a phony Marine Corps Major General and a hotel bell-hop.

George Crandall, CBS Director of Press Information, may have had this in mind when he got the happy idea of issuing press courtesy cards to facilitate admission to broadcasts. The card itself is not a ticket of admission to CBS studios or playhouses but upon presentation at Press Information at 485 Madison Avenue, credentials will be issued to bearer for guest privileges in the New York studios and playhouses of Columbia during rehearsal and "on the air". In sending the card, Mr. Crandall further states: "We would appreciate your advising us in advance of your visit here, so that we may reserve tickets for those broadcasts you wish to see."

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SWEDEN BARS ADVERTISING; ALSO CAMPAIGN SPEECHES

The number of licensed radio receiving sets in Sweden now is 1,709,012, having increased in 1943 by 80,940. In 1942 the gain was 79,300. Since the population is about 6,400,000, there is a radio set for every four inhabitants, or roughly one for every family, a record for all countries with a similar system of charging Government license fees.

No advertising is allowed on the Swedish radio and no political campaign speeches. The revenue from the license fees pays for the programs, which are provided by a service corporation - Radiotjänst - on which the newspapers, the radio manufacturers and the Department of Education are represented. For more details see chapter on "Radio Broadcasting" by Yngve Hugo, Director of the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, in "Sweden - A Wartime Survey", distributed by the Albert Bonnier Publishing House, 665 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, New York.

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OFFICERS' UNIFORM HELD AS INDUCEMENT TO RADIO REPAIR MEN

A folder captioned "Work for Philco in Vital War Job and Wear the Uniform of an Officer" carries a facsimile of a letter addressed to radio servicemen which reads, in part:

"In some of these jobs, the work is of such a military character, the men who do it are entitled to wear the uniform and enjoy the privileges of an officer, except for insignia designating rank. Yet they are civilians, working for Philco, the world's largest radio manufacturer.

"In this work, the most interesting and often thrilling assignments can come to you. For example, you may be sent to a military air base and be given the job of helping to supervise the installation of electronic equipment to be used at that base. Or, if such work appeals to you, you may become an instructor of Army or Navy personnel being trained in radio."

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::: TRADE NOTES :::

Alfred J. McCosker, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Mutual Broadcasting System, has been named as a member of Mayor LaGuardia's newly-formed city-wide Committee on Unity, "to promote understanding and mutual respect among all the racial groups in our city".

According to Mayor LaGuardia, the Committee, made up of 19 members headed by Charles E. Hughes, Jr., would observe and analyze dangerous trends and unfavorable conditions, study the causes and suggest remedies.

National advertisers, advertising men and media executives will meet in Washington March 8 with Elmer Davis, Director of the Office of War Information, to receive first-hand reports on the progress of the war and the needs of the home front.

If the transmitter of United Radio Algiers, North Africa, has familiar "buzz" to the G.I.'s within its listening range, it's because it is the same outfit that once perched in the meadows at Wayne, N.J., as New York transmitter WABC of the CBS network.

The following stations have applied for construction permits for new High Frequency (FM) broadcast stations: The Valley Broadcasting Co., Steubenville, Ohio; WFBM, Inc., Indianapolis, Ind., to be operated on 47,700 kc.; Capital Broadcasting Co., Washington, D.C. to be operated on 46,700 kc.; Plaza Court Broadcasting Co., Oklahoma City, Okla.; Liberty Broadcasting Co., Pittsburgh, Penna; Drovers Journal Publishing Co., Chicago, Ill., to be operated on 48,700 kc.; The Broadcasting Corp. of America, Riverside, Calif., to be operated on 43,500 kc.; also for construction permit for a new commercial television broadcast station to be operated on Channel #3 (66000-72000 kilocycles);

Through an arrangement between the Committee on Scripts for Soldier and Sailor Shows, Writers War Board, and the Entertainment Section of Special Services, manuscripts are being sent overseas weekly in mimeographed folios. The folios also contain skits from dozens of network radio programs, mainly of comic nature.

"Why cannot the Government let some radios be put on the market so that the war veterans who return can buy one at a reasonable price?" a "Disabled Veteran" writes the Washington Star. "Now that I want to buy one I find that the dealers are asking from \$35 to \$50 for several bad radios that sold in peace time for from \$5 to \$10 each.

"Should we war veterans who have served our country to the best of our ability be as much entitled to buy a radio at a reasonable price as the nations of Europe, Asia or South America, etc., or not?"

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