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## ASK CONGRESS TO INSURE FREEDOM OF RADIO IN NEW LAW

Representatives of church groups and women's clubs together with owners and operators of small broadcasting stations in various sections of the country today appeared before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce to express their concern over the effects of the rules recently promulgated by the Federal Communications Commission and to ask Congressional consideration of the present broadcasting situation with a view to enactment of new legislation.

Frank C. Goodman, executive secretary of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, representing approximately 140,000 churches, Mrs. Harvey W. Wiley, chairman of the department of legislation of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, representing 14,600 clubs and 2,000,000 women, and Edward J. Heffron, executive secretary of the National Council of Catholic Men, appeared for their organizations.

Mr. Goodman also placed in the record statements by the International Council of Religious Education, the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, representing 188 foreign mission boards of the Protestant groups in America, the American Bible Society, one of the oldest and largest Bible organizations in the country, and a copy of the letter addressed to President Roosevelt by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick and 60 other leading clergymen of the Protestant church.

### Effects of Rules Feared

All the statements and letters voiced misgivings over the effects of the new rules on broadcasts of public service programs in which the groups are especially interested and asked Congress to make sure that no hasty and ill-considered action is taken to imperil broadcasting.

Clarence Wheeler, vice-president of Station WHEC, in Rochester, N. Y., Jonas Weiland, owner of Station WFTC, in Kinston, N. Car., J. W. Lee, manager of Station KGFF, in Shawnee, Okla., and C. P. Hasbrook, owner of WCAX, in Burlington, Vt., told the Committee they believe Congress should study the broadcasting industry and enact a new radio law because they fear the rules issued on May 2 by the FCC will harm their stations.

Addressing the Committee, Mr. Goodman said, "In my 24 years of service to the churches, I do not recall any development that has concerned the leaders of our major Protestant organizations quite as much as the unexpected new regulations of the Federal Communications Commission.

"Radio has furnished the first opportunity of develop-

ing an appreciation of the message of the Christian gospel, on the part of the unchurched people of our country, and any move by a government agency that may cause confusion within the radio industry, is looked upon with grave misgivings by the delegated leadership of a large section of our churches."

Mr. Goodman told the Committee that to expedite the hearings, which have extended over a period of three weeks, he was asking permission to place in the records his own statement and those of four interdenominational church groups, each with a nation-wide constituency.

### Says Churches Have Stake in Radio

In his statement, Mr. Goodman pointed out that he has had a long period of experience in religious radio in an executive relationship.

Reminding the Senators that this is a time of crisis for the churches as well as for the rest of the country, Dr. Goodman stated that during the depression "the Church lost surprisingly little in influence and activity, and we attribute this to the facilities we received from the free and uncensored American system of radio."

Under the direction of the Radio Department of the Federal Council of Churches, he said, 1,100 church men produced 8,000 network programs in the last 18 years, and 800 churchmen appointed by denominations produced 5,000 non-network programs in the last five years.

In the production of these programs, Mr. Goodman declared, "we have not received one complaint of censorship or control" on the part of the networks, the stations associated with them, or the other radio stations of the country.

More than five million letters from urban and rural audiences were received, he said, while more than two million requests for sermons were made to his office in the last six years.

The churches of the country, he continued, "have a real stake in American radio, and the Congress, we feel, should recognize this as our reason for requesting a thorough investigation of the American broadcasting system.

"Any compulsory re-organization of a fully developed business, charged with national and international commitments of far-reaching importance, may prove most unfortunate for the Church at a time of stress and strain, and if the new regulations of the Federal Communications Commission are likely to disrupt the radio industry, it will surely be a blow to national unity, and the spiritual and mental well-being of our people."

Mrs. Wiley presented a resolution adopted by the General Federation of Women's Clubs at Atlantic City on May 23 advocating "further Congressional study" of the present broadcasting problems to preserve the "freedom of radio for the best interest of democracy."

"The women of the Federation," Mrs. Wiley stated, "are grateful to the radio chains and stations for their splendid cooperation. They do not wish to see the aid which broadcasters have given to the work of their Clubs interrupted or jeopardized in any way."

Citing in his statement the aid given to the Catholic Radio Bureau of his organization, Mr. Heffron told the Committee that he believes there should be "a sound basis for the assurance" that public service network broadcasts should not be destroyed or impaired.

"We hope that this Committee," he testified, "will not only see to it that this assurance is given but that it is properly implemented and capable of being backed up."

### **Says Rules Would be Detrimental**

The first of the station owners to appear at today's hearing, Mr. Wheeler said, "I think the proposed regulations would be very detrimental to the industry, would injure the program structure, and would certainly be detrimental in many ways, as far as WHEC is concerned."

He testified he believes it would be helpful if "the Congress would consider the whole question of regulation of radio and enact new legislation."

Network affiliation, he said, is "of real value to a station like WHEC," because it helps to build up the station audience and makes available a national sales force.

The only change in the terms of his station's contract with CBS was made, he stated, at the station's request and added that "I have never seen any evidence of monopolistic power on the part of the networks," contrary to the FCC majority contention of "monopolistic powers" alleged to be held by the networks.

Since 1931, he stated, WHEC has invested upwards of \$200,000 in improving facilities, and added he is fearful the rules would make valueless "this affiliation that we have deemed so stable and made it possible for us to make these large expenditures."

Mr. Wheeler said he fears that important network commercial programs may be shifted under the new rules to another station with a clear channel and higher power.

Mr. Weiland told the Committee his station, WFTC, was "right in the middle of a lot of trouble" over the new rules.

Until June 1, WFTC and another station at Wilson, N. C., according to Mr. Weiland, had shared the costs of a line to Raleigh where the Mutual Broadcasting System has a line, and the two stations had been affiliated with Mutual, which, unlike NBC and CBS, does not pay all wire charges to affiliated stations.

On June 1, the Wilson station, Mr. Weiland testified, canceled its arrangement, "based upon the fact that the present rules would seem to necessitate it, and we were sitting right down at the end of the line without any network service available to us."

He said his station could not afford to pay the whole cost of the line from Raleigh to Kinston, since that would be "in the vicinity of \$500 a month."

Arrangements were made for affiliation of his station with NBC Blue, he testified.

"I applied," said Mr. Weiland, "to the FCC for per-

mission to sign the contract. They advised me that the present rules are in operation.

"It is very difficult for us to operate without a network affiliation because our listeners have become used to network service, and as a local station we cannot give the type of service the network was able to give us."

Saying that he favored a long-term contract and option time provisions, Mr. Weiland declared, "the present rules promulgated by the FCC puts our station out of the possibility of network service and possibly they would have the same effect upon a whole lot of small broadcasting stations that are trying to serve their communities."

Mr. Lee told the Committee, "We desire affiliation with only one network. We have tried affiliation with two networks. For four and a half months of this year we were affiliated with both the Mutual network and the NBC Blue network. We found that to be impractical and confusing to our listeners. It created an insurmountable traffic problem."

Conflicts in time, he said, prevented giving the station's listeners major features of the two networks.

"I think," Mr. Lee asserted, "the matter of line charges has not been stressed enough in these hearings from the point of view of the small station. For four years our station paid line charges to bring the Mutual service into our station, and paid in cash. We never derived enough revenue from the Mutual network to offset this cash outlay for line charges.

"Now we have no cash outlay for our NBC affiliation. We pay for the lines that bring these programs to us in time, a commodity that we can afford to pay with. We have a net saving of several thousand dollars a year that can now be diverted into improving our local station."

### **Thinks Rules Have Damaged Station**

Mr. Lee said his station wanted an exclusive long term contract and that option time is "no handicap to us."

"The Chairman of the FCC," he declared, "has said that if the small stations are harmed by the regulations in practice, something will be done about it. That is not enough assurance for us. That is like calling the doctor after the patient is dead. We feel that the FCC has already damaged our station in creating a public misunderstanding as to the fate of the Blue network."

Senator Bone asked a number of questions about line charges and indicated he thinks these should be studied.

Mr. Hasbrook testified that the new rules "will bother me very seriously. What they are doing is to take the foundation out from under me when I am halfway across the bridge."

After being granted permission by the FCC to increase the power of his station from 250 watts to 1,000 watts, Mr. Hasbrook said, he had started construction of a new station.

His station, he testified, has a contract with CBS, which has been paying the line charge, quoted, he added, at the time of contract negotiations, at from \$7,500 to \$10,000 a year.

Mr. Hasbrook told the Committee he couldn't afford to pay for the line in money instead of time, and feared he might lose his network affiliation due to the rules.

Saying he has never been able to find out "who has been hurt by the present method of broadcasting," Mr. Hasbrook declared, "I just do not understand why in these times we have to change the whole system."