

N-A-E-B NEWS LETTER

National Association of Educational Broadcasters

Madison, Wisconsin -- February 17, 1936

A LETTER FROM THE "PREX"

Greetings!

Back from three months' observation of broadcasting in Great Britain, I am glad to send to our members and friends my cordial greetings and a brief account of my impressions.

Let's pass quickly over the formal acknowledgment of the honor you did me at the Iowa City conference. Not that I treat lightly the honor of this position -- I am highly sensitive to that. But I am more concerned with the work involved. There's work aplenty -- and for all of us -- if educational radio is to take advantage of current unrest and activity and emerge fullstatured and strong.

My trip was only part of a general effort to discover the best in radio abroad and to bring about an exchange of ideas and experiences. Lester Ward Parker of Rochester, New York, has just returned from a six months' fellowship in Great Britain, making a most exhaustive study of school broadcasting. Tracy F. Tyler spent several weeks abroad, observing radio on the continent as well as development of the British Broadcasting Corporation. High officials of both national networks were on a tour of observation in Europe during the late summer. Last month Felix Greene, personable young man whom I had the pleasure of knowing in London, arrived in New York to establish representation and headquarters for the BBC in this country. And now, at the invitation of the General Education Board, Professor Arthur Lloyd James, Honorary Secretary of the BBC Advisory Committee on Spoken English, has come over from England for a visit of four to six months. Professor Lloyd James has been close to radio during its growth in Great Britain, and his observation on American broadcasting will be invaluable. To him Parker and I are much indebted for wise, friendly counsel and guidance on our studies.

There is, then, considerable activity towards interchange and understanding. This should result in real gain for American Broadcasting. There is much we can learn about good taste, about high level of program content, about unimpassioned interpretation of events, about true emphasis, about careful planning with supplementary printed aids -- and, of course, about publicly-supported broadcasting service under the control of a public corporation.

As for specific program ideas and presentation techniques -- it is natural that the United States, with more than 600 stations outdoing each other for listener attention, should show faster growth. And frankly, the impersonal style of radio address in Great Britain occasionally slips into seeming indifference, with a definite lack of vitality. Much of our American broadcasting, on the contrary, in its feverish effort to grab and grip the attention of the listener, is super-charged with artificial fervor. It is guilty of misplaced

stress and excessive dynamics. We "dramatize" history, for example -- we "dramatize" science -- we put geography into thrilling travel adventures -- and if we aren't careful, we'll have a nation of listeners who believe that acquiring education by radio is just an effortless surrender to the emotional stimulation.

Yes, we can learn much from the British about substantial motives and values. And we can learn, most of all, that the principle of publicly-supported broadcasting service works. It truly serves the people. The best evidence of this lies in the fact that the ten year charter of the British Broadcasting Corporation, which expires this year, will not only be renewed but strengthened, with provision for a larger share of the radio tax of ten shillings (\$2.50) per year. The recent report of the Parliamentary committee surveying the work for the BBC was most favorable and commendatory. This should give great encouragement to those of us who are endeavoring to make a place in the American system for non-commercial public broadcasting service.

Further reports on the various studies abroad will be made available to our members as soon as possible. I shall be glad to receive specific inquiries, if there are any.

This is indeed a time of aroused interest and questioning about fundamental principles in broadcasting and radio education. Let's give to the solution of the problem our alertness, our best thought, and our concerted effort.

Sincerely yours,

H.B. McCarty
President N.A.E.B.

IMPROVEMENT OF FACILITIES

Amidst rumors of re-allocation of radio facilities, what are your plans for improvement now and in the future?

Do you have an application in, or ready, for a more favorable assignment or increase in power? Have you had any recent denials by the Federal Communications Commission? What is your present and prospective situation in regard to facilities? For best representation of our entire membership, the officers of our association should be kept informed of plans and applications.

WKAR, Michigan State College, East Lansing, has been granted a favorable change in frequency from 1040 to 850 kilocycles.

WHA has an application pending for increase of power to 5000 watts on its present channel of 940 kilocycles, daytime.

Let's have news of the physical plans of other educational stations. Write McCarty or Engel now!

National Association of Educational Broadcasters Officers

President: H.B. McCarty, WHA, University of Wisconsin.
Vice-President: W.I. Griffith, WSUI, Iowa State College.
Secretary-Treasurer: B.B. Brackett, KUSD, University of South Dakota.
Executive Secretary: Harold Engel, WHA, University of Wisconsin.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION BY RADIO REORGANIZED

Up in front, carrying on in the cause of educational broadcasting, is a re-organized National Committee on Education by Radio.

Reaching the end of its original five-year period the National Committee is enabled, by an additional grant from the Payne Fund, to continue on a reduced operating basis for at least two years more. New headquarters in New York city, a new secretary, new statement of purpose, and new work projects -- these are the major changes.

The reorganization was brought about at a meeting of the Committee in Washington January 20 and 21. Our Association was represented by President McCarty. Because of the reduction in budget, it was decided to close the Washington offices and accept the donated part-time services of S. Howard Evans of the Payne Fund as Secretary, centering activities and functions at One Madison Avenue, New York City, where Mr. Evans is already located.

You should hear from the new Secretary shortly. His first bulletin is in preparation and should reach you within a few days. Mr. Evans takes hold of the work with eagerness, insight, and ability. The National Committee is indeed fortunate to have his leadership in the enterprise which was carried forward with such determination and unflagging spirit by Tracy F. Tyler and Armstrong Perry during the past five years. For the present, Dr. Tyler is to continue on some special research work for the General Education Board, and Mr. Perry, with an office in Washington, is busy at his writing.

The National Committee is fortunate also in having President Arthur G. Crane of the University of Wyoming as Chairman. He is giving time, energy, and his best thinking without stint. With him as Chairman, and Mr. Evans as Secretary, we may expect an abundance of activity and drive toward the re-stated purpose of the National Committee on Education by Radio:

"To promote the use of radio for educational, cultural, and civic purposes."

NEW MEXICO TAKES STOCK OF RADIO

After a brief leave of absence from his duties as WHA your Secretary, Harold A. Engel, has just returned from New Mexico where he completed a survey and a plan for state-radio. A few years ago State College leased its station to a newspaper. The state now wishes to regain the facility for educational and governmental service.

The plan for operation, which was adopted by the state officials, embodies some safeguard features which may apply in other states. A copy of the KOB report was included in your recent exchange packet.

The New Mexico situation will bear watching. Hearings before the commission are set for March 25. Will their facility be saved for state service, or will it be lost? What will be the deciding factors?

NEWS-LETTER HEADQUARTERS AT MADISON

Hereafter, send notes for this sheet to the Secretary at Madison, Wisconsin. Make notes on your calendar now to remind you each month to send in your news.

THE "STUDEBAKER COMMITTEE" MEETS

Our Association will be represented at the meeting of the New Federal Radio Education Committee in Washington, D.C. February 17, and 18. H.B. McCarty, as President of the N.A.E.B., is one of 39 members appointed by the Federal Communications Commission, with Dr. J.W. Studobaker as chairman of the committee, to:

- "1. Eliminate controversy and misunderstanding between groups of educators and between the industry and educators.
2. Promote actual cooperative arrangements between educators and broadcasters on national, regional and local bases."

What will come of this new effort no one knows. "It's going to be a headache," says one national observer. "The communications commission is just doing a little window-dressing," says another. "No, this is a genuine attempt at improvement," says a third. Maybe, we'll see. But one big barrier to progress is the provision that the committee is limited to the work of eliminating controversy and promoting cooperation "within the present broadcast structure." On that basis the plan looks like a search for a palliative, not a corrective.

President McCarty has promised that he will make a "state of the nation" report to N.A.E.B. members as soon as there are any significant developments from the work of the Federal Radio Education Committee. Write him, if you have any ideas about the project or suggestions for the committee.

EXCHANGE PACKET

Another N.A.E.B. exchange packet has now gone out. The expressions received indicate that the service should be continued and it will be, if you, as a member, cooperate by sending in exchange material. Only by unselfishly swapping ideas can we be of mutual help.

Material for the next packet is now being received by your secretary. Look over your activities -- and send along samples of anything and everything which you can make available.

STATION SURVEY

Some weeks ago your secretary sent out to all educational stations questionnaires to supply information necessary to make N.A.E.B. service more effective. The following stations have reported: WBAA, WCAC, WCAD, WCAT, WESG, WHA, WILL, WKAR, KWSC, WOSU, WRUF, WSUL, WTAW, KBPS, WCAL, KFDY, KFKU, KOAC, KSAC, KUSD, WEW, and KWLC.

We still want reports from these: WGST, WHAZ, WOI, WSAJ, WSVS, WVL, KFJM, and KFGQ.

A REMINDER

The annual membership campaign is on. Once each year (sometimes oftener in cases where reminders are necessary) it is someone's unpleasant duty to collect dues. The statements have been sent out. If you put yours in the "immediate" file and forgot about it, won't you dig it out now and o.k. it for payment?

If your statement hasn't reached you, notify the Secretary and another will be sent.

THE MUSIC COPYRIGHT WAR

In spite of the violent music copyright conflict, practically nothing has happened to affect the free license status of educational stations. Collection of license fees has been, and continues to be, based upon "public performance for profit." Non-commercial stations are, therefore, exempt from payment of royalties, and the exemption allowed by A.S.C.M.P. is also extended by the Warner Brothers group of publishers that withdraw from A.S.C.M.P. It is essential, however, that each station make individual application to the Music Publishers Holding Corporation for a free license. No blanket arrangement can be made for our entire N.A.E.B. membership. The following letter states the matter clearly:

321 West 44th Street
New York

January 10th, 1936

The National Association of Educational Broadcasters,
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisc.

Gentlemen:-

Atten:- Mr. H. B. McCarty

Replying to your letter of January 8th, our present plan is to grant licenses to Colleges and non-commercial stations free of charge. It will however be necessary to send out, from time to time, a list of numbers that must be restricted from all broadcasting stations.

By stations owned and operated by colleges, churches and other non-commercial stations, we mean broadcasting stations that do not sell any time for advertising purposes. If a station is sponsored by Religious or Educational Institutions, they come under the category of 'free licenses'.

It will be necessary for each individual station to make application to us, advising us of their purpose of operation. Upon receipt of such application, we will issue a free license, as stated above.

Very truly yours,

MUSIC PUBLISHERS HOLDING CORPORATION

Herman Starr (Signed)
President

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF RECORDING ARTISTS

Many stations are receiving notices that fees for the use of recorded music must be paid to the American Society of Recording Artists. The matter is now being investigated by our Association. As soon as information is received concerning the arrangements to be made for non-profit stations, our members will be notified at once. This should be within the next few days.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION IN WASHINGTON

One service to educational stations no longer possible under the reduced budget of the National Committee on Education by Radio is the free legal counsel of Attorney Horace L. Lohnes, formerly engaged on a partial retainer basis. The following letter will be of interest to our members:

Law Offices
HORACE L. LOHNES
Munsey Building
Washington

January 23, 1936

Mr. H.B. McCarty, President,
National Association of Educational
Broadcasters,
Radio Station WHA,
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. McCarty:

As you have no doubt been advised, my contract with the National Committee on Education by Radio has expired and my services are no longer available to members of your organization in accordance with the terms thereof.

I want the members of your Association to know, however, that I still retain my interest in the matter of educational broadcasting and that I deeply appreciate and cherish the friendships made as a result of this past relationship.

If I can be of any service to the members of your Association I trust that they will not hesitate to call upon me. I shall look forward to seeing each and everyone of the station representatives whenever they are in Washington.

Cordially yours,

Horace L. Lohnes (Signed)

1936 N.A.E.B. CONVENTION -- WHERE?

Your secretary has been receiving invitations from convention hotels from New York to Florida to Colorado making bids for the 1936 convention of the N.A.E.B. At the 1935 meeting at Iowa City it was decided to continue the policy of meeting at a city where one of our member stations is located. Between now and the time the next news-letter goes out invitations will be received from member stations wishing to serve as host to the 1936 convention. By holding these meetings in various places, we will all, in time, get to see the other fellows' studios and equipment.

In the next news-letter you'll have a report, and a chance to express your opinions regarding the meeting place.

A RECORDING MACHINE FOR N.A.E.B.

What could you do with a recording machine, one of the finest instantaneous recorders available -- a machine that makes transcriptions suitable for broadcast?

What could our members accomplish for themselves and the Association by having the use of such a machine for a time?

Yes, negotiations are under way and just about completed for the purchase of a fine recording outfit for the use of N.A.E.B. members on a rotating schedule, limited time basis. This is to be made possible through a grant from one of the foundations. Tests by WMA engineers on three different recorders during the past three months have brought remarkably fine results and have resulted in the selection of a machine recommended for purchase.

One of these machines is already in service at WMA, bought and paid for by the Wisconsin State Medical Society. The Society plans to build a library of recorded health talks for broadcast over the state stations and for distribution to local medical associations and stations. In return for technical attention and care, the recording machine is to remain at WMA and be available for general service. (A hint to other stations?)

We have been talking for years about exchanging program ideas and information. Here, then, is a chance to exchange not merely notes and manuscripts but programs in their original sound and spirit. The records, mind you, have wide frequency range, low surface noise, and clear quality. With practice and skill from experience, an operator can make records which are good enough for broadcast over any man's radio station.

Now, how shall we make the most of this opportunity? What could the machine do for you? And what contribution could you make to others? Let's have some ideas on the subject to help put this project through.

LET'S TRY THESE ON OURSELVES

Are we looking ahead?

- a. What do we need most to do a better job of broadcasting?
- b. Do we know what our "next steps" are?
- c. What obstacles are most persistent in holding up progress?
- d. Have we stopped to figure out a course which will lead to a solution of the problem?
- e. In the case of facilities being made available on a basis of a record of service and use of present facilities, what could we demand?
- f. Are we looking ahead in technical improvements?
- g. What about television, facsimile, short-wave, high fidelity -- and other undetermined quantities? Are we experimenting?
- h. Are our programs such as to warrant listeners tuning in again?
- i. Do we have an adequate studio layout, or are we making definite progress toward getting better quarters?
- j. Have we given those who would like to be our friends enough of a chance to help in building a better radio service?

(Grade your own paper -- and use your own judgment about telling the score.)

Scanned from the National Association of Educational Broadcasters Records
at the Wisconsin Historical Society as part of
"Unlocking the Airwaves: Revitalizing an Early Public and Educational Radio Collection."



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