DEPT. OF THE SENAILE

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JOHN J. JUNE SENATE

CLERK OF THE SENATE

COMMONVEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

I present the Fifth Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Broadcasting, and move that it be printed. REPORT

the

COMMITTEE ON BROADCASTING

September 1944

OBIGINAL PAPER LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE SENATE

(To be appressed to the Clause of the Records and Papers.)

DEPT. OF THE SENATE

NO. 2675

ITEMPLE 19 SEP1944

JOHN Edwards

GLERK OF THE SENATE

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

FIFTH REPORT

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of the

PARLTAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTES ON BROADCASTING

Canberra, 14th September 1944

MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON BROADCASTING (Seventeenth Parliament)

Chairman Vice-Ehairman Senator Stanley Kerin Amour (a) The Honorable Josiah Francis, M.P. (b)

Senete

House of Representatives

(c) George James Bowden, M.C., M.P.(b)
William George Bryson, M.P. (b)
Cyril Chambers, M.P. (b)

M. World Oliver Watkins M.P. (b) Senator the Honorable Herbert Hays (c) Senator Richard Harry Nash (c)

(a)

Appointed 30th September 1943 Appointed 14th October 1943 Appointed 14th September 1942 1944

The late Senator Richard Darcey ceased to be a member of the Committee when his term as Sanator expired on 30th June 1944. Senator the Honorable Allan Nicholl MacDonaid resigned from the Committee on 20th July 1944. This report was completed before the appointment of their successors - Senator the Honorable Herbert Hays and Senator Richard Harry Nash.)

CONTENTS OF FIFTH REPORT

The Australian Labor Party's Application for Broadcasting Facilities in Tasmenia.

The Broadcasting of News.

Standard Radio Receiving Sets for Schools.

FIFTH REPORT OF THE PARLIALENTARY STANDING COM'ITTEE ON BROADCASTING.

In accordance with section 85 of the Eroadcasting Act we present this report to Parliament on matters which have been referred to us by the Minister.

THE AUSTRALIAM LABOR PARTY'S APPLICATION FOR FROADCASTING FACILITIES IN TASMANTA.

Abbreviations.

A.L.P. means Australian Labor Party.

U.A.P. means United Australia and Nationalist Organisation.

The A.I.P. desires that it be granted a licence to establish a broadcasting station in Hobart, or Launcestan or the lidlands of Tasmania; or, alternatively, that permission be given for the transfer of station 7DY from Derby to the Midlands on its present radio channel, with a minimum operating power of 2,000 watts or, failing that, its present power of 200 watts, there having been negotiations between the A.I.P. and the owners for the straight-out purchase of, or the acquisition of a half interest in, that station, provided it is transferred to the Midlands.

- 2. The following is a summary of information surplied and views expressed in evidence tendered on behalf of the A.L.P.:-
 - (1) In past years newspapers featured prominently parliamentary news and current topics. Diverse matters of interest of recent years have been crowded into ar ever-decreasing space in the columns of the daily press, until at the present time the only parliamentary items recorded in newspapers are those which gain their prominence by reason of the sensational effect of some noisy debate in the Houses of Parliament or a personal affair implicating one of its members. Such news debers from publicity the more serious items under discussion.
 - (2) The curtailment of paper due to war needs has accentuated the difficulty of lack of space in the immediate past years, but the tendency was there even before the war and has been particularly evident since the general newspacer has accepted the principle that the daily magazine is of more interest to the public than the more grave issues of social or economic reform.
 - (3) It is therefore reasonable that legislators should seek the use of broadcasting as a medium for keeping the community in close touch with matters of public importance occupying the attention of the Government of the day.
 - (4) People generally prefer to remain at home and receive, by radio, information, advice and entertainment which they previously obtained at meeting places and halls.
 - (5) The cost of purchasing broadcast time from existing stations is excessive and it is very difficult to secure the allocation of times acceptable to the ALL.P.
 - (6) Labor candidates at the last Senate elections secured

69,000 votes, in comparison with 51,300 received by other Party candidates. For the State election the votes in favour of the Labor Government were higher.

- (7) The A.L.P. has not been able to reach agreement in negotiations to secure an interest in Hobart and Launceston stations.
- (8) Tasmania is the only State without a 2,000 watt station, the provision of which would enable the State to receive increased radio broadcasting prestige.
- (9) Should the application be granted, the station would carry on normal broadcasting activities, saving only that the A.L.P. would have a minimum and maximum number of hours per year scheduled to be used by the Party for broadcasts at suitable times.
- (10) The sharing of a half interest in the Derby station (transferred to the Midlands) with other political parties would not be acceptable to the A.L.P., as the latter would then be perpetually in a minority. The U.A.P. could negotiate for the purchase of an interest in some other station.
- (11) The A.L.P., the U.A.P. and the Country Party should have equality of opportunity to expound their policies to the community. Apart from public meetings, the principal media available for this purpose are the newspapers and the radio service. The Parties in Tasmania do not receive equality of treatment in the news columns of the press. Since the Labor Party took office, the press has given less prominence to parliamentary news than previously. In the past the newspapers gave a fair report of parliamentary news but to-day the local council gets twice as much space as an important parliamentary debate.
- (12) Ten years ago (in 1934), when there was only one commercial station in Hobart, an application was made by the Tasmanian Government on behalf of A.L.P. and others interested in the attraction of tourists to Tasmania, for a licence to build and operate a second station in Hobart. The application was refused.
- (13) In 1936 the A.L.P. was refused permission to participate in an application from other interests for a licence to establish a second station in Hobart.
- (14) In every State, except Queensland and Tasmania, the A.L.P. has an interest in a commercial station.
- (15) In regard to the recommendation of other parliamentary committees that preference should be given to religious and educational institutions in the issue of new licences or the re-allotment of former licences, the word "educational" should be interpreted to include education in political economy, which is greatly needed in Australia.
- 3. Information supplied and opinions expressed on behalf of the U.A.P. are summarised as follows:-
 - (1) The U.A.P. desires a licence to set up a broadcasting station in the Midlands similar in power and efficiency to any station the A.L.P. might be permitted to conduct.
 - (2) The U.A.P. has not hitherto applied for a licence, although the matter has been the subject of discussion for some years.
 - (3) In the event of the A.L.P.'s application being refused, the U.A.P. will not press its application.

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- (4) Political parties should receive equal and just treatment in the provision of facilities to expound their policies to the community, provided they are able to pay for it.
- (5) If one political party is given the right to broadcast its news, policy, etc., from its own station, the same privilege should be allowed to any other political party which desires it.
- (6) For a period of years at least 50% of the electors of Tasmania have shown themselves to be U.A.P. supporters.
- (7) The people of Tasmania are entitled to regular and reliable information as to the trend of political events, both in the Federal and State arenas, and to full information as to what is being done by the U.A.P., whether it be in opposition, as at present, or in control of the Government.
- (8) Owing to the difficulty of arranging political meetings it is particularly important that the electors should receive in their homes information from the headquarters of the U.A.P.
- (9) The cost of obtaining time with present commercial stations is high and it is often difficult to secure time at the most useful portions of the day. The U.A.P. has done a great deal of broadcasting in the past, but has abandoned use of the facility owing to the cost.
- (10) The newsparers have been so restricted that under present conditions it is impossible for political announcements of adequate length to be made through the press, with the result that the public is not fully informed of current events.
- (11) The influence of broadcasting upon the people is greater than that of the press, particularly at election time.
- (12) Political parties do not receive equality of treatment in the news columns of the press. The newspapers give greater publicity to the activities of the Government of the day, irrespective of its political colour, because ministerial statements have greater news value than those of the opposition. At the present time the Tasmanian press gives the Labor Party much better publicity than it gives to the U.A.P. During the period immediately preceding the last election, the press gave cractically equal publicity to the verious Parties, except that their leading articles definitely favoured one party. Normally, and at ordinary times, the U.A.P. can get all the publicity it requires, but that does not apply to election times.
- (13) If station 7DY were disposed of or transferred to the Midlands it would not be reasonable or practical to apportion the shares equally between the U.A.P. and the A.L.P. It would not be a practicable arrangement for the A.L.P. to buy half the shares and for the U.A.P. to purchase the other half. The U.A.P. is opposed to the A.L.P. purchasing an interest in the station.
- (14) The U.A.P. has not endeavoured to buy an interest in any station in Tasmania.
- (15) If the A.L.P. had not applied for a licence the U.A.P. would not have submitted its application at this stage because of the difficulty in procuring equipment.
- (16) Under existing conditions for purchasing broadcast time, the political parties can get equal periods and equally favourable times on the air.

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- 4. Tasmania has three national stations (two at Hobert and one near Launceston) and eight commercial stations (two at Hobert, two at Launceston and one at Devonport, Eurnie, Lerty and Queenstown). Each of the commercial stations operates on a shared radio channel (except, temporarily, the Derby station).
- For the use of the request for a clear channel and increased power, the owners of 7HT advocate the establishment of an additional bratton in the hund district, such station in the station as a relay station to make the formation of additional broadcasting companies, on the ground that they would affect the economic structure of the commercial radii industry in Tasmonia, there having been complaints by national advortisers that the State has too many stations already. Fevertheless, failing compliance with their request for a clear channel and increased power, the owners of 7HT advocate the establishment of an additional station in the Huon district, such station to be either owned and operated by themselves as a relay station, or owned by nother proposed company, on behalf of which a licence has been sught at with which the owners of 7HT believe they could make satisfactory errangements for the use of the station as an almost permanent relay. Alternatively, they ask that they be allowed to establish a relay station in the Midlands. They agree that the W.A.P., the A.L.P. and the Country Party should have equal opportunity to expound their policies to the community, irrespective of the financial resources at their disposal to purchase broadcasting time. "That", the witness said, "is the foundation of democracy."
- 6. A representative of the proposed company, who is Chief Engineer of station 7HO Hobart, has confirmed that the commany's application for a licence to operate a station in the Fund district is based on the idea that it would function principally as a relay station for 7HT and 7HO. "To be a success", the witness says, "our station would be subject to the control of established commercial stations so far as the presentation of programmes is concerned". In addition to advocating a station at buon on the ground that the district has practically no Hobart connercial service and depends mostly on mainland stations, he has expressed the opinion that "the Oatlands district (Midlends) has an extremely bad service from the present State commercial stations". The witness also says "we believe that, rather than allow the Derby station to be moved to the Midlands, where it must necessarily be run at a loss, the licence should be trensferred to our proposed company".
- 7. Evidence given on behalf of the owners of station 7H0 Hobart shows that they are opposed to the granting of an additional licence or the transfer of an existing licence on the ground that it would disturb the economics of the existing stations. They feel that Tasmania is already apply served with radio facilities and they claim that the entry of a new station would tend to reduce programme standards
- 8. The owners of station 7EX Launceston are opposed to the transfer of 7DY to the hidlands, mainly because they, too, fear it would disturb the economics of existing stations. Inevertheless they themselves have applied for a licence to establish a station of their own in the Midlands. Their principal request, however, is for the allocation of higher power for 7EX at Launceston, which operates on 500 watts. They have submitted the following summary of their case:-

"TEX asks for more power to make it economically worth while to install a modern aerial system with which it could service any listeners that a station at Oatlands might service.

"7EX transmitter has been proved to be a very good site to service the majority of the licences at present outside the 25-mile areas of Tasmanian commercial stations, if a modern aerial is installed and greater power given.

"We are opposed to the transference of 7DY to the

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Midlands on the grounds that it is uneconomic and unnecessary. It could service at the very best no more than 1,000 unserviced licences. It would seriously trespass on the territories of 7LA, 7EX, 7HO and 7HT. It would turn what is at present one interest's financial liability into a drain on the economic resources of every station in the State.

"7EX's application would not upset the economic stability of present commercial radio, as it would compete only with an opposition who have already four transmitters in the north of Tasmanie which enjoy wide coverage.

"No outlet has been denied, nor discrimination shown, to any political party by 7EX; in fact, quite the reverse has applied.

"It is obvious the application to transfer 7DY is a thinly disguised attempt by the Findlay interest to add a "sales talk" item to its chain, and the transfer would be a doubtful, if any, real advantage to the Labor Party.

"7DY transferred to the Midlands could not service the licensees that it serves at present."

- 9. The following points were elaborated in evidence tendered on behalf of the proprietors of station 7DY Derby:-
 - (1) In its Derby location station 7DY has been operated at a loss during each of the past six years.
 - (2) Since 1939 efforts have been made to obtain permission to remove the station to the Midlands, preferably in the vicinity of Oatlands or Campbell Town, with an increase of operating power to 2,000 watts, on a clear radio channel.
 - (3) No station in Tasmania gives a satisfactory service to the Midlands.
 - (4) The Tasmanian network (comprising stations 7HO Hobart, 7LA Launceston, 7BU Burnie, 7AD Devonport, 7QT Queenstown and 7DY Derby) is not a money making concern; it was established to provide a simple channel for the transaction of business with advertising agencies on the mainland.
 - (5) The application for transfer of 7DV to the Midlands is supported by the A.L.P., with which there have been negotiations for the purchase of an interest in the station, if the A.L.P.'s application for a licence to conduct its own station is refused.
 - (6) A station of 2,000 watts could not give coverage to the whole of Tasmania, no matter where it might be located; for that, it would be necessary to have a station of at least 50,000 watts.
 - (7) No organisation would be interested to purchase a share in 7DY if it is to remain on its present site at Derby; it is of very little use to anyone where it is. Before the station was opened the operating power sought was 500 watts, but at first only 100 watts were allowed. Later this power was increased to 200 watts, which is not nearly enough.
 - (8) A mistake was made in establishing a station at Derby. Station 7LA Launceston operated on 200 watts and the coverage for that power was guite satisfactory. It was expected that equally satisfactory coverage on the same power would be experienced from Derby, but in that the

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proprietors were mistaken, owing to the serious and unforseen effects of a local metallic belt. A better service can be provided from the Midlands.

- (9) The principal proprietor of 7DY has shares in four other stations (7HO Hobart, 7LA Launceston, 7BU Burnie and 7AD Devomport). He has a controlling interest in only two (7BU and 7DY). The Broadcasting Act allows a controlling interest in four.
- (10) The owners of 7DY would not be prepared to sell a controlling interest in the station; they are willing to sell a half interest in it, and the A.L.P. has negotiated for the purchase of that share. No other political party has applied to the proprietors for an interest in the station.
- (11) Following upon negotiations between the principal proprietor of 7DY and a representative of the A.L.P., the Tasmanian Government approached the Commonwealth Government, on behalf of the A.L.P., and received a reply in July 1942 that 7DY's request for permission to operate the station in the Midlands with a power of 2,000 watts on a clear channel could not be granted.
- (12) After unsuccessful efforts to arrange transfer of 7DY to the Midlands, the proprietors sought permission to transfer the station to Huonville, but this was refused on the ground that listeners in that district were already receiving a satisfactory service from a number of stations.
- (13) If 7DY were transferred to the Midlands, programmes would be relayed from Hobart and Launceston when necessary, but most of the Lacquarie network items are recorded and it is just as easy to play the records from one station as from another.
- (14) The station would be unworkable if 25% of the shares were allotted to the A.L.P., and 25% to the U.A.P.
- (15) In regard to the recommendation of previous parliamentary committees that when radio channels become available preference should be given to religious and educational interests in the granting of new licences or the reallotment of former licences, the Derby proposal does not involve the granting of a new licence or the reallotment of a former licence; it is an application for the removal of a station under its existing licence to another location.
- (16) If no increased power be granted to 7DY, transfer to the Lidlands is still desired, as there are prospects of giving a better service there and of evolding loss in the running of the station.
- 10. Transfer of a station to the Eidlands has also been supported in letters we have received from the municipal authorities of Oatlands and Campbell Town.
- 11. Representatives of the Federation of Commercial Stations have informed us that the Federation is not concerned with the individual station interests which might be affected by the transfer of 7DY to the Midlands. The Federation desires that commercial stations should have parity in operating power with the national stations, but does not seek disturbance of the status quo at this stage in the matter of power, in view of the likelihood of frequency modulation being adopted after the war. Referring to costs in relation to operating power, the Federation has mentioned that a 100 watt station costs about £80 per week and a 2,000 watt station about

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£200 per week. The Federation regards commercial broadcasting to-day as primarily an entertainment business. "Emphasis is placed on 'entertainment'", the Federation says.

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12. The only religious body which has applied for a licence to establish a broadcasting station in Tasmania is the Church of England, on whose behalf the Archdeacon of Hobart has made the following representations to us:

"I emphasize the need for developing national character if a new world order is to be brought into being, and if it is to have any chance to endure. Such an order can come into existence only by the development of character, and character is founded on religion. For that reason, believe that a radio station which has for its objective the building of national character must be of the greatest benefit to the community. To-day, we are faced with a curious paradox: On the one hand, the churches are in a sound position and enjoy the goodwill and high esteem of the prople generally; on the other hand - I speak in general terms - there has been a marked decline of public worship. It is becoming increasingly difficult to hold children in the Sunday schools. The result of all this is that the people are living on their spirituel inheritance. We claim that we are a Christian people, and yet we are not getting to this generation the teaching of those Christian fundamentals necessary to maintain Christian character. If this state of affairs continues and becomes intensified the point will be reached sooner or later when we shall become spiritually bankrupt. In order to correct that tendency it is necessary to get religion into the homes, and to instruct our prople in those graces and virtues which are absolutely necessary to any Christian social order - those graces of truth and honour, and justice and righteousness and mercy, and love and service without which we can make no progress, and without which there can be no security or hope of abolishing international unrest and war. The Church of England authorities have been considering this matter for years. We made an application when the last B class licence was to be granted for Tasmania in 1936, but we were unsuccessful. Other interests had more money, and were able at that time to give better service to the public - the sort of service which the public presumably wanted, though not necessarily the sort that would have been best for it. Wowever, we believe that the Church of England, which represents half the population of the State, has resources, financial and otherwise, to enable it to run a broadcasting station that would achieve the aims which I have set out, and which would confer benefits upon the community generally. course, such a station would not be run for profit. would have educational, religious and cultural eims, and would not be an adjunct of any other organisation, nor be linked with other interests."

- 13. Our discussions with the Archdeacon show that the Church of England would be prepared to give consideration to the inclusion of other Christian churches as co-partners in the desired station and to the provision of opportunities for br@Gdcasts on behalf of other interests. Although it would be a religious station, it would be commercial to the extent that time would be sold to appropriate people. In the event of technical difficulties preventing the establishment of an additional station in Tasmania, the Church of England would be prepared to purchase a part interest in one of the existing stations on acceptable terms.
- 14. Some of the evidence shows that in certain quarters there is a mistaken belief that the higher the operating power of a station the greater the area it serves and that this area may be delineated on a map by drawing a circle at a given radius from the station.

Expert advice from the Post Office shows that this method of illustrating a station's range of service is cuite inaccurate. The area of effective service from a station is nearly always an irregularly shaped figure. It is hardly ever bounded by a circle, and certainly not in such country as Tasmania, the shape of the service area being determined by the position of mountains and by the nature of the rocks in the soil. Higher power does not necessarily enlarge a station's coverage; and although it provides stronger reception in a certain area, it would have to be increased at least four times in a given set of circumstances before a listener could notice an improvement in reception. Various station proprietors have sought authority to use higher power than they require, in the hope of exploiting it in solicitation of advertising contracts, but the higher the power the greater the operating cost, and in the interests of the general community, even if there were no other aspects to be considered, it would be wasteful to authorise the use of greater power than a station really needs to conduct its activities in the area it is intended to serve.

15. The technical experts of the Post Office do not share the opinion of the proprietors of station 7EX Launceston (which operates on a power of 500 watts) that an improved aerial would enable that station to cover nearly all the Kidlands and East coast listeners. The experts have explained:-

"Station TEX can send good signals down the valleys of the two Esk rivers, but in other directions they are stopped by the mountains. We would never discourage a station from installing a better aerial system because, with an improved aerial, the people on the margin of the service area would get a better service than they are getting now. Those in control of commercial stations sometimes call on us for edvice on technical matters affecting aerials, but when we tell them the cost of installing high masts they are not so pleased. For installing high masts they are not so pleased. For installing high mast costs about f6,000, which is more than the cost of the rest of the station. For our own purposes, we instal masts of the maximum height. They are half-wave aerials, and the costvaries from f4,000 to f10,000. Most of our regional aerials have cost us about £9,000 each. Even with increased power as well as an improved aerial, we still question the statement that with increased power and a higher aerial the station could provide a service for more beople than is possible now. In order to cover the East Coast of Tasmania, it would be necessary for the signals to traverse a mountain range, a difficulty which we with our 7,500 wett national station at Kelso cannot overcome. The fading boundary is not affected by the power of the station."

16. Besides avoiding wasteful allocations of power, the Post Office is obliged to safeguard the interests of stations whose activities would be detrimentally affected by indiscriminate use of power by a station sharing the same radio channel. This sharing process is unavoidable because there are only 96 channels available for the 127 stations at present operating, and even all these channels cannot be used to the extent desired, because in normal times some 50 stations in New Zealand, China, Japan and the Phillipine Is. are capable of marring, in varying degree, the services to listeners tuning to certain Australian stations. Shared channel working, although permitting a larger number of stations, has the inherent disability of restricting the amount of power which can be authorised. It also necessitates wide geographical separation between sharing stations - increasing with the power allotted to the stations concerned - in order that each may, within the area it is intended to serve, be reasonably free of interference from any station operating on the same or an adjacent channel. As previously noted, all of the commercial stations in Tasmania operate on shared channels (except, temporarily, 7DY).

- 17. The Post Office recently made a comprehensive survey of the channel allocations with the object of making provision for 19 additional national stations, and it was found impracticable to provide for more than 12 of these, notwithstanding that channels were allotted on a shared basis for many national stations. Whilst this course will provide for the stations which are to be established within the next five years, seven contemplated stations have not yet been assigned a channel. It may therefore be necessary to impose even worse sharing conditions than those existing to-day, in order to provide the channels needed for these national stations. It is conceivable that groups of three or four stations may have to share the same channel in future.
- 18. In regard to the All.P.'s efforts to participate in the application from other interests for a licence to establish a second station at Hobart in 1936, we have ascertained from the Post Office that originally three parties were interested the Theatre Royal. McCann Bros. and the Mercury newspaper. The Mercury withdrew from the negotiations, and at that stage a request was submitted by the then Premier with a view to the A.L.P. securing a one-third interest in the station, but the other parties were not agreeable and offered a one-sixth interest. Apparently that offer was not acceptable, and eventually the licence (7HT) was granted to the Theatre Royal and McCann Bros.
- 19. Owing to the acute shortage of radio material, we are edvised that equipment for an additional station in Tasmania would not be procurable without a priority order, and there would be no prospect of such an order being issued unless it could be established that the additional station is essential to the prosecution of the war. Moreover, no radio channel is available for another station in Tasmania under existing conditions. In these circumstances it is not practicable to give consideration to the question of licensing the A.L.P. to erect its own station in that State, and we have therefore devoted our attention to the alternative proposal affecting station 7DY Derby.
- 20. Under Section 46 of the Broadcasting Act licences to establish commercial stations are granted for an initial period not exceeding three years, after which the Linister may renew them for not more than one year at a time, if he deems it desirable to do so. The acquisition of sites for the stations and studios and the supply and erection of buildings and eqipment are matters for the licensee to take care of, at his own expense, and these assets remain his property at the expiration of the licence; that is to say, if the Kinister deemed it desirable to withhold renewal of a particular licence with the object of issuing it to some other interest, the former licensee could not be compelled to transfer the station property to the new licensee. Sale of the property would be a matter for negotiation and agreement between the particular concerned. If the former licensee refused to sell on acceptable terms or on any terms whatsoever, an impasse would be reached, because the prospective new licensee would normally be unable to purchase equipment for his station elsewhere at the present time.
- Rence, under present conditions, the holders of existing licences enjoy a type of monopoly, the Post Office view being that they are reasonably justified in expecting renewal of their licences from year to year, provided they conduct their services in accordance with the provisions of the Broadcasting Act. There is support for the Post Office view in other evidence we have heard, it being contended that uncertainty in security of a station's tenure would make people disinclined to invest their capital in it. On the other hand, as pointed out in earlier evidence on behalf of the Post Office, there is reason for entertaining the view that short licensing periods should have a beneficial influence on the standard of service, as a long tenure might tend to produce poorer rather than better programmes.

- 22. Whilst there is a good deal to be said in favour of a reasonable measure of preference to those who pioneered the establishment of stations at a time when others were apathetic or idistincteristed, it should not be overlooked that there has been evidence of a surfeit of light entertainment by radio in Australia in comparison with other countries, and the perretual renewal of licences to the same persons or commanies may have the effect of excluding important interests from adequate opportunities of securing a voice on the air at times when the audience they seek is available.
- Such a situation, in the long run, might conceivably be detrimental to the general good of the community, in view of the emphasis with which commercial stations regard entertainment as their primary function; their claim in other evidence to attract 80% of listeners; and their tendency to foster, on behalf of advertisers, the popularising of programme items lacking educational value during convenient leisure hours, when there would otherwise be opportunities for devoting more of this valuable time to adult education in affairs immeasurably more important than excessive entertainment, even if the latter were always planned to elevate public taste. In this connection a noteworthy commentary has recently been made by a regular columnist in one of the newspapers (which, incidentally, owns a broadcasting station). After listening to convendable music broadcast in daylight hours when audiences would be comperatively small, he says: "To hear that and then try to be content with some of the rubbishy night programmes made rather hard going". Under existing conditions, probably a preferable alternative to other remedial measures would be voluntary, but concerted, action by the stations to ensure that reasonable proportions of maximum sudience hours are devoted to broadcasts which are informative and educational in the best sense of those words.
- 24. Recognition of the growing importance of adult education in countries which aspire to the maintenance of democratic government is crystallised in these weighty words recently expressed by Sir John Morris, Chief Justice of Tasmania, in his canacity as Chairman of the Tasmanian Library Board:

"We have all of us had to do a lot of re-thinking about education, and we see on all sides a great consciousness among the people of the importance and the value of education. We no longer think of education as a privilege of the few but the right of the many...We have ell had occasion to look at this democracy of ours rather critically in the last few years. A lot of people in England and elsewhere have suffered very greatly for it, men are being killed for it daily, and it is a very precious thing to us. But it doesn't always measure up to what we would like it to be. It is supposed to be government by public opinion, but too often there is no public opinion. There is instead public ignorance, public apathy, public dilemma; and the decision goes to him who can make most efficient use of propaganda. When we think over this, we ask what can be done to make this democracy really worth what is being suffered and so heroically sacrificed for it. There is one answer. Make public opinion real by education, information, the production of persons who are prepared to be critical, who are prepared to go and seek information and to weigh it and form their judgment upon it. It is because the war has brought this realisation that there will be vigorous efforts in all education, particularly, I should imagine, adult education in democratic countries after the war".

25. It goes without saying that if public opinion is to be based on well-informed judgment, adequate opportunities must be given to leading political organisations which advocate objectives by constitutional means to disseminate arguments for and against proposals affecting the common good of the community. As Summer Welles says, in his book The Time for Decision, "in a democracy the

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people must be kept fully and continuously informed....only an enlightened public opinion can be held responsible for its mistakes."

- 26. The Tasmanian A.L.P. and U.A.P. witnesses agree that both parties should have the same facilities. They also agree that in these days the principal media by which their policies may be expounded are the newspapers and the radio services.
- 27. On the question whether equality of opportunity is available through the medium of the Press, there is disputation in regard to the allocation of space in one of the Tasmenian newspepers for the reporting of parliamentary debates. The proprietors of the newspaper have supplied an analysis of coverage measured in inches in support of their contention that a greater proportion of space has been given to the Government than to the Opposition, and they hold that this analysis is typical of allocations in other Tasmanian newspapers.
- 28. In defence of evidence to the contrary, given on behalf of the A.L.P., another analysis has been submitted by the Premier of Tasmania showing that, in respect of the House of Assembly, members of the Opposition, in proportion to their number, heve averaged considerably more space than members of the Government, although the situation is reversed as regards the Legislative Council and it is admitted that a greater proportion of space is given to Government news in general, whichever party is in power.
- 29. In the newspaper's opinion, however, the fact that the Government has 20 members in the House of Assembly and the Opposition only 10, has no real relevance, unless it could be proved that as a general rule the respective numbers of Labor and Opposition contributors to debates are in proportion to the numerical strength of the parties.
- 30. Another witness a barrister of considerable experience in affairs associated with broadcasting, who has given evidence to previous Parliamentary Committees has expressed the view that the mere measuring of space is not a very good guide in determining the extent to which the Press gives more favourable publicity to one political party's interests in comparison with those of another political party. He suggests that in order to arrive at a reasonable judgment it would be necessary to analyse the matter published to see how much of it was party political and how much purely neutral, such as news dealing with the progress of the war, food production, etc., which would be given publicity whoever the Minister was; and how far factual statements were or were not coloured in the newspaper reports.
- 31. The following are extracts from evidence given by the same witness on the general necessity for adequate education of the people in opposite viewpoints on political affairs:-
 - (1) In the interests of democratic government, political parties which advocate their objectives by constitutional means should have equality of opportunity to expound their views over the air. That is a necessary part of the education of the people, especially where there is compulsory voting. Apart from religion, there is no subject on which education is more necessary than politics. It is hopeless to expect the people to be educated in political matters by neutral teachers; there must be the expression of views by opposing perties. Attrition between contending views is the basis of our parliamentary system, under which we go so far as to pay an extra salary to the Leader of the Opposition and to allow him a special staff. The same idea underlies our judicial system. Even in cases in which the Crown is a party to the proceedings, there is provision for payment by the Crown of counsel on behalf of the defendant.

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- (2) It is just as important to be educated in nolitics as in reading, writing and arithmetic, music or painting or any other subjects coming within the broad term "education", which should include education of the community upon all matters which would raise its general cultural and intellectual level.
- (3) Experience has shown that the Labor Party cannot run a newspaper.
- (4) Equality of opportunity could not exist if it were measured only in terms of ability to pay.
- (5) It is not in the interests of the newspapers themselves that so meny of them should represent views opposed to Labor, unless Labor has a full opportunity to bring its views before the people. The only effective voice which the Labor Party can use is the voice over the air. If Labor supporters believe, rightly or wrongly, that they are unable to reach the people, trouble will eventually occur. That might even lead to some form of control over newspapers, whereas the best results in the long run are obtained from the free expression of contending views, the success of the Eritish Empire being in large measure due to that principle.
- (6) It would be a very good thing if the U.A.P. could have an interest in broadcasting stations, but not in the same sations as the A.L.P. The sharing of control of a station by opposing political parties would not be practicable; the most that seems possible is that time be allowed to the opposing party for broadcasting during election periods.
- 32. So far as the radio medium is concerned, we are informed by the Federation of Commercial Stations that it is their practice, when a general election is announced, to refuse any bookings of time until nomination day. The three political parties are then requested to make their requisitions, and the stations equate and rotate the times for each of them.
- 33. In Tasmania, however, both the A.L.P. and the U.A.P. are dissatisfied with the radio facilities available to them, because of the expenditure involved in the charges made by the broadcasting stations and because the times allotted are not always suitable. One way in which they may obtain the facilities they consider necessary is to have stations of their own. Another is to acquire shares in existing stations, with the object of having at least a voice in the stations' policy in allocating time to them. Both parties agree, however, that it would be an unworkable arrangement for them to share ownership of the same station. As the erection of their own stations is out of the question at the present time, there remains the alternative of negotiating for the acquisition of shares in existing stations.
- 34. In reply to our enquiries as to the attitude of the Post office in the past in regard to the grenting of permission to political parties to own broadcasting stations, the Department's practice has been explained as follows:-

"It has been the invariable practice of the department to recommend the grant of a licence to the most suitable applicant, or what is considered to be the most suitable applicant, and licences have not been granted actually to political parties as such. Nevertheless, licences are held by the Labour Council of New South Wales (2KY Sydney); the Industrial Printing and Publicity Company (3KZ Nelbourne); station 3XY Proprietary Limited (3XY Melbourne); People's Printing and Publishing Company of Western Australia Limited (6KY Perth); and the Workers' Herald, Adelaide, has a one-fifth share in stations 5KA Adelaide and 5AU Port Augusta.

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"It is understood that the People's Printing and Publishing Company of Western Australia and the Industrial Printing and Publicity Company of Melbourne are affiliated with the Trades and Labour Council".

35. In two of the cases mentioned (3KZ and 3XX) the stations are not operated by the licensees but by agency companies under agreements which were approved by the Postmaster-General of the day and which contain provisions enabling the station owners to control the nature of political broadcasts.

36. Power to consent to agreements of this nature is conferred upon the Postmaster-General by Section 50 (1) of the Broadcasting Act, which provides:-

"Except with the consent in writing of the Ninister, a licensee of a commercial broadcasting station shall not transfer the licence or assign, sublet or otherwise dispose of the licence or admit any other person to participate in any of the benefits of the licence, or to exercise any of the powers of authorities granted by the licence".

37. The Post Office has explained the object of the section as follows:-

"The purpose of Section 50 (1) is to prevent the control of any commercial broadcasting station passing, without the consent of the linister, from the licensee to any other person, either:

- (a) by the disposal of the licence by any of the methods mentioned in the first portion of the Section; or
- (b) by any arrangement whereby the licensee permits some other person to operate the station on terms which would give that person virtual control thereof.

"The provisions of Section 50 (1) do not impose an obligation on any company which holds a licence for a commercial station to obtain approval for the disposal of shares by individual shareholders. The Department therefore has no authority to require a licensee to do so, but the position in this regard is closely watched, and an annual examination is made of shareholdings in each licensed company.

"The object of that portion of the Section which relates to the admission of 'any other person to participate in any of the benefits of the licence' is to give the linister authority to veto any arrangement of the kind mentioned under (b) above".

38. As it is therefore not necessary for the licensee of 7DY to obtain ministerial approval of the sale of 50% of the station's shares to the A.L.P., completion of negotiations to that end is an ordinary business proposition; but as the evidence tendered on behalf of the A.L.P. shows that that organisation would not object to equal times being given to other political interests provided payment is made for the facility, we suggest that there should be an appropriate understanding to that effect in connection with the negotiations.

39. As previously noted, there is no radio channel for an additional station in Tasmania. For this reason, apart from equipment difficulties, it is not practicable to give consideration to the application made on behalf of the Church of England for a licence to provide and operate its own station. If the Church authorities decide to pursue the alternative of acquiring an interest in an existing station, the matter would be one for

negotiation between them and the station licensee. Another alternative would be to explore the possibility of making satisfactory arrengements with existing stations for the allocation of broadcasting time. In this connection there is evidence that the facilities which commercial stations are prepared to give to religious bodies in Tasmania have not been fully availed of.

40. With regard to the application for permission to remove 7DY Derby to the Midlands, with increased power and a more favourable radio channel, the objections of the Post Office to the granting of the request may be summarised as follows:-

- (1) In the Post Office plan of broadcasting develorment throughout Australia no provision was made for a high powered commercial station in Tasmania, because the area of the State and the distribution of population are such that an adequate service can be given by means of medium and low powered stations.
- (2) Clear channels cannot be made available for many rejected national stations intended to provi∂e service in various districts of the Commonwealth which do not receive any reliable service.
- (3) The use of high power by 7DY, either at Derby or the Midlands, on its present channel, would interfere with 2MG Midgee (New South Wales), which shared 7 DY's channel prior to suspending operations about two years ago on account of financial difficulties arising from wer conditions. Representations have been made in favour of the re-opening of the indexe station, but it could not be re-licensed if 7DY were permitted any increase of power beyond its present 200 watts. The Deportment considers that it would be unreasonable not to renew the Midgee station's licence. In any case the channel is reserved in the general developmental plan for sharing purposes and, as such, is not suitable for occupancy by a high powered station.
- (4) Even if it were technically practicable to transfer 7DY
 Derby on high power to the lidlends, the proposal would
 still be open to objection. Such a station, if used
 as a reley unit of either one of the Nobart or Launceston
 stations, would react to the detriment of competitors in
 those cities, who, as a result, might be forced to curtail
 their service to the public.
- (5) From the technical standpoint, a low powered station could satisfactorily cater for such of the nonulation in the Midlands as is now inadequately served. It would therefore be wasteful to authorise high power for a station on a clear channel in that locality.
- 41. It has also been suggested that if 7DY were transferred, even without increase in power, stations in Hobart and Launceston which participated in any relays to 7DY would still have an advantage over their competitors in those cities. The monetary value of that advantage has not been estimated; indeed, it would seem impracticable to do so reliably without actual experience. The principal promietor of 7DY does not expect that the station would make any profit in the Midlands location, but he believes that it would have a better opportunity there to pay its way. To achieve that result and provided the cost of running the station in the Midlands would be the same as at Derby, we find from an examination of the profit-and-loss accounts of the various stations, and after averaging 7DY's annual loss that the additional revenue which the station would have to earn would represent less than 1% of the total earnings of the eight commercial stations in Tasmania, and would not exceed 1% of the earnings of the four stations in Hobart and Launceston, which, between them, receive approximately 80% of the revenue earned by the eight stations.

- 42. The Post Office advises that there would be no technical objections to the removal of the Derby station to the idlands if its power were not increased, and although listeners in the Derby district would lose a local service they would still receive a good service from the national station near Launceston, from the two commercial stations at Launceston, from the vonational stations at Melbourne and from the national station at Sale.
- 43. Within a radius of 25 miles from Derby, Oatlands and Campbell Town, the approximate numbers of listeners are 6,200, 5,800 and 3,500 respectively. The primary service area of 7DY, however, is of irregular shape, the effect of which is illustrated in the case of Scottsdale. According to the official map, Scottsdale, although only about 15 miles from Derby, is nevertheless some miles outside the boundary of the station's estimated primary service area under shared-channel working, primary service area being the area in which reception of programmes is free from perceptible fading and distortion, day and night.
- 44. The Post Office has explained that without the taking of exhaustive measurements it would be difficult to ser just what areas would be served if 7DY were transferred to the iddinads, but the Department thinks it might be expected that the number of listeners which the station would serve from the lidlands is approximately the same as at Derby.
- 45. Although certain interests in Hobart and Launceston are against the removal of 7DY to the idlands, we are not convinced that the grounds of their opposition are well founded. One reason for our doubt is that some of those interests would not be averse to the establishment of a station in the Fidlands if they themselves owned. it. Another is that the number of listeners who would be served in the Midlands is approximately the same as in the Derby district, and as advertisers are influenced by coverage in entering into contracts with broadcasting stations, we feel that any disability arising from the competitive aspect is likely to be comparatively small and certainly not sufficient to justify withholding from Midlands' listeners a means of getting improvement in their advittedly inadequate service, without injustice to the Derby district listeners, who would still be well served from other stations, both national and commercial. In these circumstances, it seems unfair to insist on 7DY remaining at Derby, where six years' experience has shown that it would have to continue operating at a loss, or close down.
- 46. Even if it were established that one of the applicants for a licence to erect an entirely new station in the Midlands or elsewhere had a stronger claim than any of the others, it would not be practicable to issue the licence, because, apart from the equipment problem, no radio channel is available for another station in Tasmanla. These handicaps, however, are not applicable to the 7DY process, which is merely a project to remove equipment already in service to another location where it can still operate on its existing channel. Hence, opposition to the removal merely because other interests want to provide an additional station and cannot do so, foes not appear to be tenable unless the removal would seriously urset the economic stability of existing stations, a contingency which in our opinion is not likely to eventuate.
- 47. Discussions with the Post Office representatives show that in the consideration of previous requests from the proprietors of 7DY for permission to transfer the station, the objections were based mainly on technical reasons, because the desired transfer was associated with a request for increased power and an improved radio channel; and that the objections would largely disappear if the station were moved on condition that it would continue to operate on its present power of 200 watts and its existing shared channel. Summing up, the Department considers that there would not be anything very wrong in principle in allowing the station to be transferred, subject to that condition.

48. Our conclusions are:-

- (1) In the interests of democratic government, there should be adequate means of educating the people in effairs affecting the common good of the general community.
- (2) The principal media available for this purcose novadays are the newspapers and broadcasting stations.
- (3) Leading political organisations which advocate attainment of their objectives by constitutional means should have equality of opportunity to expound their policies to the community through those media.
- (4) Where there is conclusive evidence of inequality of opportunity in either medium, equitable proposals designed to offset the inequality should be encouraged.
- (5) In the broadcasting field, efforts should be made to provide equality of opportunity at times when the desired listeners are most likely to be available, and the allocation of such times should not be subordinated unreasonably to any prevailing preponderance of entertainment during hours of maximum audience, particularly where the entertainment is not of a type conductive to elevation of the cultural and intellectual level of public taste.
- (6) As the A.L.P. in Tasmania agrees that there should be equality of opportunity to the political parties concerned in facilities from station 7DY, an appropriate understanding to that effect should be associated with the business proposition under which the A.L.P. proposes to purchase 50% of the sheres in that station.
- (7) Owing to equipment and radio channel difficulties, it is not practicable to give consideration to any of the applications for licences to establish additional stations in Tasmania or to the granting of higher operating power to existing stations.
- (8) There is no objection to the removal of 7DY from Derby to a suitable site in the ! idlands of Tasmania, on condition that it shall operate there on its existing your and radio channel.

THE BROADCASTING OF NEWS.

- 49. Paragraph 96 of the Committee's Fourth Report, relating to the broadcasting of news, reads:-
 - 96. Speaking of the sessions generally, the Commission considers that the public are very satisfied with the present news service. A recent survey of city and country listeners showed that 91 per cent availed themselves of it.
- 50. That paragraph was based on the original transcript of the evidence. In view of a dispute as to the accuracy of the transcript, the paragraph should be amended to read:-
 - 96. The Commission recently made a survey, in which it obtained the views of hundreds of people in the city and in the country, and discovered that 91 per cent of them listened to the news bulletin, though not necessarily from the national stations. On the question of longer news sessions, the Chairman says: "Our present bulletins are sufficiently long, and if they were extended they would be less attractive to listeners. I believe that we have reached the happy medium".

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STANDARD RADIO RECEIVING SETS FOR SCHOOLS.

- 51. As is well known, the Australian Fraceasting Commission is enthusiastically co-operating with educational authorities in arranging broadcasts to schools to supplement the work of the teachers.
- 52. The use of this new educational medium has necessarily involved the schools in additional expenditure for the provision and maintenance of radio equipment, and much thought has been given to the possibility of reducing the cost by standardising receiving units with the object of arranging collective contracts.
- 53. To that end there have been discussions between representatives of the educational authorities of the several States, the broadcasting Commission, the Post Office, and the Aralgamated Wireless Company, in the hope of cyrstallising a proposal which could be implemented after the war when present restrictions on the manufacture of receivers are removed.
- 54. However, the indications are that this hope will not be realised, the conclusion having been reached that the cost cannot be reduced by any attempt to evolve standard receivers, owing to the varying requirements of schools of different types in different localities and difficulties associated with the diversity of method of providing electric power to energize the receiving equipment according to the local facilities available.
- 55. The total number of schools in Australia which may make use of broadcast matter is estimated to lie between 12,000 and 14,000 and the normal annual output of Australian manufacturers of radio receivers is estimated to be approximately 200,000 sets. Hence, we are informed, even if standardisation were practicable and if the whole of the schools of Australia were equipped with new receiving apparatus within the space of one year, the quantity required would not be great enough to have an appreciable effect on production costs.
- 56. In these circumstances we accept the advice tendered to us that the best type of assistance that may be given to the schools lies in the direction of helping them to ascertain the types of equipment that would be most suitable for their needs. A useful step in this direction has been taken by the Commission in the issue of a booklet entitled "The Installation of Equipment for School Broadcast Reception". In addition, the Post Office is willing to assist the educational authorities in every State with technical advice in the selection of satisfactory equipment.

S. K. ALMOUR, Chairman.

JOS. FRANCIS, Vice-Chairman.

GEO. BOWDEN

W.G. BRYSON

C. CHAMBERS

J. ALLAH GUY

D. WATKINS

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