

11 OF SMALLER STATIONS CALL SET-UP UNFAIR

Washington.

Charges of maladministration by the Federal Radio Commission, tending to work hardship upon "small stations" in favor of the larger ones, and that the Commission has "effected a monopoly in the radio business," were made before the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries by Joseph Goustin, president of the New Jersey Broadcasters' Association.

Mr. Goustin appeared before the committee in connection with the White Bill to extend the life of the Radio Commission one year after March 15th, the date on which it expires under the present law. New Jersey stations which are members of the Association are WAAT, WAAN, WNJ, WKBO, WEAN, WODA, WBMS, WIBS, WCAP, WOAX and former WTRL.

Criticizing the reallocation of November 11th as "unfair to the small stations," Mr. Goustin declared that Commissioner O. H. Caldwell was a "dictator of the First Zone," in which New Jersey is located. He said that almost all the publicity emanating from the Commission "has worked hardships upon the small stations."

Charges Law Evasion

The Commission, said the witness, "failed to carry out the law" when it promulgated the radio reallocation, asserting that the Davis equalization amendment "did not authorize clear channels on high power, which was the chief result of the allocation." There was no reallocation as provided by the Davis amendment, he said, but, instead, there were created clear channels "90 per cent of which are occupied by chain stations."

In the metropolitan area of New York, Mr. Goustin stated, much space in the ether is going to waste through "wide channel separation" between the larger stations. There is a separation of 340 kilocycles between the large stations in this area, he declared, which, if properly allocated, could be so arranged as to make available seven more channels to the 90 available for the United States for broadcasting.

Can't "See" High Power

The witness declared high power was not necessary, and that allotments of power of over 5,000 watts, in contrast to the present 50,000-watt maximum, is "a downright sin." Chain stations on clear channels, he declared, do not require more than 1,000 watts of power, because they are connected throughout the country by land lines.

Commenting further on the "injustices" of the allocation upon small stations, Mr. Goustin declared that there are six channels out of the 90 upon which 267 broadcasting stations out of the aggregate of 620 have been placed. "In other words," he said, "33 1-3 per cent of the stations are on seven per cent of the available channels."

Makes Proposals

The result of the allocation has been, said the witness, that "the Commission has shoved the small competitors of the big stations in positions where they cannot compete." Consequently, he declared, the small stations are losing their advertising;

High Power Ideas Found Garbled

Washington.

Testifying before the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, regarding extension of the life of the Radio Commission, Henry A. Bellows, of WCCO, Minneapolis-St. Paul, said that in principle he personally favored both high-power and cleared channels to a moderation.

Discussing movements to limit the power of broadcasting stations to 10,000 or even 5,000 watts, as compared to the present 50,000 allowed by the Commission, he declared this was, to his mind, an administrative matter to be handled by the Federal agency regulating radio, and not a matter for legislative action by Congress.

Engineers hold the view, the witness declared, that in most cases a station with 5,000 watts power will cause as much heterodyne interference as will a 50-kilowatt station. The advantages of high power, he said, are better signal strength, with resultant clearer reception, rather than to serve a materially increased number of listeners.

The service range of a station does not grow commensurate with the increased power assigned it, as most people suppose, said Mr. Bellows. Moreover, he said, the general belief that the higher the station's power the more interference it causes, also is erroneous. Engineers are of the opinion that by moving stations of higher power outside the city limits, perhaps 10 to 15 miles, the blanketing effects of stations, even within the cities to which they are adjacent, are materially reduced.

among the recommendations made by the witness were that there should be legislation prohibiting clear channels for stations of more than 5,000 watts. Under the allocation there are 40 cleared channels for exclusive station use. He recommended also legislation "designed to cure evils of jurisprudence" in radio. He explained that the Commission acts as "judge, jury and prosecutor" in all cases. While the Commission was described as having failed to carry out its functions, Mr. Goustin said he favored a permanent radio commission, "with certain laws to control its procedure."

In closing, he said, the Commission "has placed 75 per cent or more of the broadcasters in this country on 25 per cent, or less, of the available channels. Moreover, he declared, the Commissioners themselves evidently do not inspect stations in their zones as often as the stations would like. To correct this he recommended legislation "making it mandatory for Commissioners to make frequent inspection of stations in their zone."

Tax on Transmitters Asked by Robinson

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want that," he said. "Radio had its birth with advertising and has grown to manhood with it. It is the only practical way to support it.

Cigarette Boosts Discussed

"Some sponsored programs emphasize their wares. But there is not so much of this."

Complaints have been received from restaurant owners and preachers against certain programs sponsored by a cigarette manufacturer, said Chairman Robinson, because the advertisers allege that to smoke cigarettes "satisfies the desire for a piece of candy" or "helps a woman to get thin."

REALLOCATION CONFUSES, SAY BROADCASTERS

Washington.

The House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, considering the White bill to extend the life of the Federal Radio Commission for one year after next March, heard Henry A. Bellows, former Radio Commissioner, testifying on behalf of the National Association of Broadcasters. The association represents 122 stations in the United States.

The "general method" for realigning the radio broadcasting structure of the nation, pursuant to the terms of the amended Radio Act of 1927, favored by the Commission's chairman, Ira E. Robinson, is construed as "sound" by the association, said Mr. Bellows.

Chairman Robinson, a previous witness, had explained that he opposed the reallocation from the start, indorsing a plan whereby equalization of radio facilities among the States and radio zones, as required by the Davis equalization amendment, would have been effected by "gradual steps" rather than by a sweeping realignment, as the majority of the Commission voted.

Sides with Robinson

Mr. Bellows, general manager of WCCO, declared it was the judgment of the association that the views of Chairman Robinson "should have been followed." The Commission, in the public interest, he declared under questioning by Representative Davis (Dem.), Tullahoma, Tenn., author of the equalization amendment, "should not have effected changes among the 94 per cent of the stations."

The witness said he did not believe that the Commission had adhered "to the letter or to the spirit of the equalization amendment," although in some respects conditions have been improved. He agreed with Representative Davis that the changing of assignments of 94 per cent of the stations tends to "create confusion in the public's mind."

Claims Essential

On local channels the Commission "has done an exceedingly good job," said the witness. The stations on these channels are spaced properly with about the same power, and as a result, no interference of moment is caused.

Discussing chain broadcasting, Mr. Bellows declared the duplication existing is a "somewhat serious menace to the rights of listeners to hear all the programs they want." Chain broadcasting, however, he described as "absolutely essential to radio."

Like a Newspaper

"I believe that any form of regulation of chain broadcasting is going to have a very serious result, probably working against the public interest," he said. "The economics of chain broadcasting will enter the problem within a relatively short time and will work itself out," he said.

Mr. Bellows said a broadcasting station is comparable to a newspaper, dependent upon its outside service just as a newspaper must rely upon a press association for its "national and foreign news." The local demand must be met, just as a newspaper must provide adequate local news, and later a greater flexibility in broadcasting must come, with a station using "foreign material" to fill out local programs.