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Radiotorial Comment

THE Third Radio Conference has passed into history after accomplishing a constructive piece of work in untangling most of the knots in the complex maze of questions presented for its consideration. Many conflicting interests were there represented, each wanting something, and, strange to say, each got what it wanted. This was not done by any feat of legerdemain but by a generous spirit of compromise and by the patient application of common sense in solving the problems.

The radiocast stations were given exclusive use of the 950 kilocycle wave band between 200 and 545 meters. Stations were given a more logical classification in accordance with their power and the character of their programs. A new zoning plan was put in effect so that each of the class 1 stations has an exclusive wave length, except those along the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts where the allocations will be duplicated. This gives 63 channels of communication, and by a possible division of time will care for 126 stations of this class.

Every precaution was taken to mitigate interference with radiocast reception. U. S. ships are to entirely discontinue the use of the 300 and 450 meter wave length and 600 meters is to be used only for calling and for the S O S. Thorough co-operation was assured by representatives of electric power, railway and telephone companies in correcting faults in their systems which may annoy radio listeners. Stress was laid upon the necessity for careful manipulation of radiating receivers and the more general use of non-radiating types was urged. A gradual reduction in the broadness of undamped waves from ship and point-to point spark stations was recommended, as was also a strenuous effort to eliminate harmonics from arc and tube sets.

The "most contentious" subject discussed was the granting of permission to use greater power in radiocasting. One self-styled "friend of the peepul" exposed to ridicule and unfriendly criticism the research and development work of "the four horsemen," as he dubbed the corporations who have done much to make radio possible today. The organized newspaper interests bitterly opposed any further extension of radio service to the public that might ensue from increased power. But as the facts regarding the advantages of 5 kw. radiophone transmitters were gradually developed a more amicable spirit prevailed and the question was settled by compromise.

Discussion as to preferable types of programs elicited the fact that no standard should be set for individual stations and that the main requirement is for variety. There was a decided difference of opinion regarding the public's attitude toward toll radiocasting or "radiotising," with a general sentiment that definite announcement should be made when a program is paid for by an advertiser. This is apparently the most practical method yet devised for compensating artists, as several attempts to secure voluntary contributions from listeners have failed. It was agreed that there should be no governmental censorship of programs.

After a brief consideration of the relative advantages of line and of space radio for the interconnection of stations it became evident that both wire telephony and the re-broadcasting of short wave radio transmission offer a practical solution of the problem. The main deterrents to immediate adoption is the high cost and the question of whether the stations are sufficiently desirous of the service to pay for it. Secretary Hoover suggested that an association might be formed to function for the radiocasters much as the Associated Press functions for the newspapers. A continuing committee was appointed to work out ways and means.

The amateur spark gave up the ghost without a struggle, its passing being noted only by the fact that no provision was made for it in the allocation of wave lengths. Thus officially ends the existence of the boy's delight and the BCL's anathema. Five wide bands of the lower wave lengths are available for C. W. transmitters using circuits loosely coupled to the radiating system or using coil antenna or loops. I. C. W. and 'phone are confined to the 170 to 180 meter band. The amateur sub-committee also recommended that the use of radiating receivers be discouraged on the short wave relay broadcast bands because of the likelihood of relayed interference from this source.

Four additional channels were provided for ship communication and a request made for voluntary reduction in the number of position reports of ships.

The strongest recommendation made by the conference, and the one most conducive to the efficient carrying out of all other recommendations, was that a more liberal appropriation of funds be made for the offices of the radio supervisors, all of whom have been greatly handicapped by insufficient personnel and equipment.