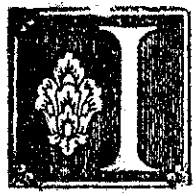


Sound Basis of Government Regulations Assists Broadcasting in New Zealand



IN the early part of 1921 the interest that was being taken in wireless transmission by amateur enthusiasts caused the Post and Telegraph Department to arrange for the issue of provisional permits authorising the use of receiving apparatus for experimental or instructional purposes. These permits were first issued in April, 1921, and a condition of the issue was that no interference should be caused to public wireless telegraph work. In the course of a few months several hundred permits had been issued. The Department had then under consideration the question of drafting suitable regulations to control the issue of permanent licenses. At that time the issue of transmitting licenses was confined to persons either engaged in the scientific side of radio problems or personally connected with the manufacture of wireless apparatus from a technical or commercial point of view.

The interest in amateur wireless grew rapidly. Up to the date of the gazetting of the first amateur regulations in January, 1923, 588 permits had been issued.

During the year 1922 there was little change in the situation. The Department continued to issue provisional permits and the drafting of permanent regulations was undertaken.

THE 1923 regulations provided for the issue of receiving, transmitting, experimental, and broadcasting licenses, the annual fees being 5s. for a receiving station, £1 and £2 for Grade II and Grade I transmitting stations respectively, £3 for an experimental station, £2 for a private broadcasting station, and £5 for a toll broadcasting station. During the first twelve months that these regulations were in force over 2000 licenses were issued, the number on March 31, 1924, being 2830. The total number on March 31, 1925, when the present regulations came into

force, were 4702 receiving licenses, 99 transmitting licenses, 3 experimental licenses, and 7 broadcast licenses.

The essential differences between the Amateur Regulations, 1923, and those gazetted in 1925 are as follow:—

(1) The annual fee. In the 1923 regulations the receiving license fee is 5s. annually, while, in the 1925 regulations, the amount was increased to £1 10s.

(2) In the 1923 regulations, licenses were issued for a period of twelve months from the date of issue, while, in the 1925 regulations, a license lapses on the 31st day of March.

(3) Authority was given in the 1925 regulations for a portion of the fees to be devoted to broadcasting.

(4) In the 1923 regulations, authority was given for the establishment of broadcasting stations of $\frac{1}{2}$ k.w. each at fourteen centres throughout the Dominion; the wavelengths ranging from 206 to 385 metres and for $\frac{1}{4}$ k.w. stations at nineteen similar places on wavelengths ranging from 190 to 250 metres.

THE 1923 regulations were designed to render the broadcasting of music, lectures, news, and other items of interest as widely available as possible, not only to the more thickly populated areas, but also to scattered communities. At the same time an endeavour was made to reduce to a minimum the objectionable features of interference which, according to reports, marred the success of broadcasting services in other countries.

Following the gazetting of the regulations in January, 1923, applications for licenses came in freely. In addition to the issue of receiving licenses, many applications were received for transmitting licenses and in a few cases for broadcasting licenses. During the year, several broadcasting stations of comparatively small power were erected in the principal centres and operated by private enterprise, with a considerable measure of success, but through lack of funds and other causes the development of this class of station was, to a certain extent, retarded.

THE position was considered to be unsatisfactory by the Department and by listeners, and investigations were made with a view to establishing a first-class broadcasting service. The Government ascertained the views of radio societies and others in-

terested in the subject, and also obtained information from other countries in regard to up-to-date systems of broadcasting.

It was found by actual experience in other countries that the most satisfactory system was to permit a private company to undertake broadcasting under Government control.



HON. J. G. COATES,
Prime Minister of New Zealand.

The matter received exhaustive consideration and, in November, 1923, a new policy was announced by the then Postmaster-General, the Hon. J. G. Coates, in a speech at Dannevirke.

In his speech the present Prime Minister laid down the basis of the Government's policy, and outlined the organisation which would be necessary for giving listeners the standard of service desired by the Government. With minor adjustments dictated by experience as development has proceeded,

this outline of organisation has stood the test of time, and is substantially to-day the identical basis upon which the broadcasting service is administered by the Radio Broadcasting Company under the regulations of the Government.

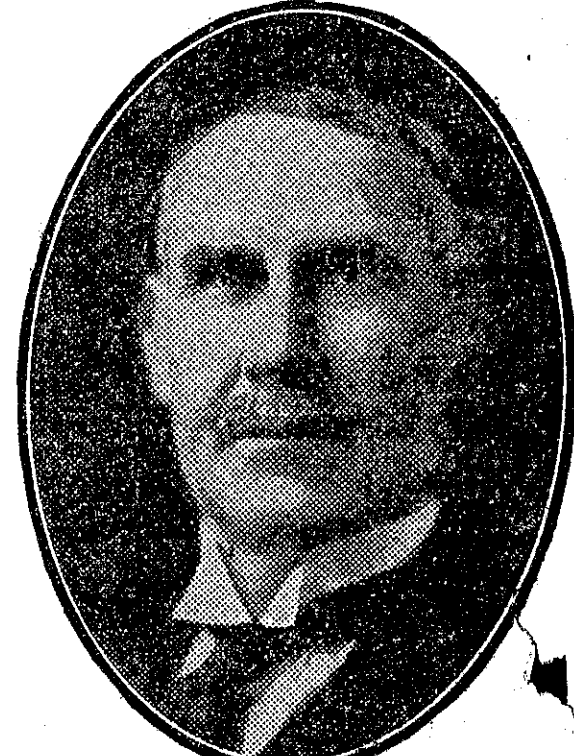
THE new policy as announced by the Postmaster-General proved to be acceptable to listeners generally. During the early part of 1924, the various radio societies made representations to the Government to the effect that there would be no objection to the imposition of a much higher fee provided that the increase was devoted to broadcasting. The sole interest of the Government was to see that an up-to-date broadcasting service was provided and to give every possible assistance in that direction. With that object in view, a promise was given in 1924 that the necessary legislation would be passed. This was done. At the time of the passing of the new legislation, the Government was in communication with certain interests which had in view the formation of a company to undertake Dominion broadcasting. After the passing of the Act, the preparation of amended regulations was proceeded with. The Regulations were finally gazetted at the beginning of March, 1925. Shortly afterwards, negotiations with the proposed broadcasting syndicate broke down and the Government was at that time placed in a difficult position. The increased fee of £1 10s. per annum was

being charged to listeners from April 1, 1925, and to bridge the gap it was arranged that existing broadcasting stations at the four centres should carry on until something could be done. Out of the fees received from listeners, the Department paid a subsidy of £15 per week to each of the four stations and with that subsidy a greatly improved service was given. This was only a temporary measure. In the meantime, Messrs. Goodfellow and Harris came forward with an offer to erect the necessary stations and to carry on a service on the conditions laid down by the amending Act and the Broadcasting Regulations. These gentlemen agreed to act as trustees for a new company to be formed almost immediately, and undertook, on the signing of the agreement to cable for equipment for 500-watt stations at Auckland and Christchurch, to be followed at a later date by stations in the other two centres.

AS is generally known, the agreement was signed and took effect from August 1, 1925. Various delays occurred, and it was not until August 7, 1926, that the Auckland station commenced operations. The number of licenses on that date was 4400. The Christchurch station, which had been ordered at the same time, was duly opened on September 1, 1926. On that date the number of licenses had increased to 5000. From then onwards, applications for licenses continued to pour in and on March 31, 1927, the number issued was 18,162. In the meantime, the Wellington super-station had been ordered and high hopes were entertained of this powerful 5000 watt station. The opening of the Wellington station took place on July 16, 1927, the number of licenses on that date being 21,059. The number rapidly increased during the next few months, and on December 31, 1927, 38,125 licenses had been issued. The number gradually increas-



HON. W. NOSWORTHY,
Postmaster-General.



SIR JAMES PARR,
Ex-Postmaster-General and High Commissioner.