

Broadcasting And The Minorities

Problems of Radio Organisation In Disturbed Czechoslovakia

Written for the "Record"

by

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"**P**ROSZE PANA, you cannot cross the Tatra mountains into Czechoslovakia," I was told by a wayside acquaintance at Zakopane in the Polish Carpathians. He spoke, somewhat vaguely, of Polish minority "trouble," of likely fighting and a closed frontier.

I sought confirmation from my Polish host. "Prosze Pana"—your Pole always introduces his remarks with that "if-you-please-sir" idiom—he replied, "the frontier is open. With periodical minority friction, the Zakopane peasantry live in a state of panic. They but need to hear a 'bang' to rush to withdraw bank savings, talking wildly of frontier fighting."

That blessed word "minority!"

I read again my invitation from a Hungarian family in Velka Ida, near Kosice, Eastern Slovakia, which had prompted my inquiry about the Carpathian route. The letter mentioned "another visit" by the Czech secret police in search of "incriminating documents" and the "indignities suffered by the Hungarian minority."

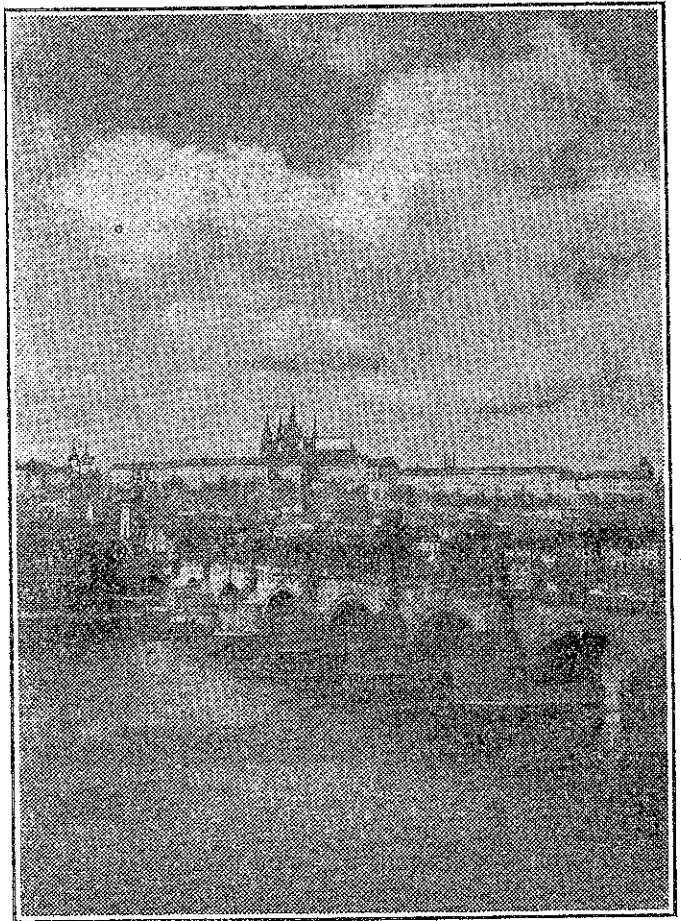
A week previously, in Warsaw, I had heard of petty disturbances in the German minorities in both Poland and Czechoslovakia, and of irritating boycotts by the Silesian and Sudeten Germans of non-German traders.

The Carpathian frontier, as it happened, was closed—not by rifles, but by impassable roads—and my entry into Czechoslovakia took the more orthodox form of the Warsaw-Prague express.

OFFICIALS at the Prague headquarters of Radio-Journal—the Czechoslovakian Broadcasting Corporation—courteously initiated me into the ABC of Czech broadcasting.

Radio-Journal, I learned, is a private corporation endowed by the State since 1923, and it has the exclusive right to broadcast in Czechoslovakia. The State, however, reserves 51 per cent. of the capital fund and has a majority representation on the directorate. Radio-Journal is responsible only for programmes; the provision of stations and technical maintenance is the care of the State.

The national transmitters are in Prague and the pri-



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cipal regional transmitters in Brno, Moravia; Bratislava, Slovakia; Kosice, Eastern Slovakia; and Moravska Ostrava, North-eastern Moravia. Prague has also short-wave stations well-known to New Zealand listeners.

Special staffs, some of which form an integral part of Radio-Journal and some of which are more

or less independent, deal with programme construction. In the first category belong broadcasting in the languages of the national minorities and school broadcasting; in the second are news bulletins and farmers' and workers' transmissions.

Special provision, I found, is made for the minorities. As early as 1925 special hours were reserved for German broadcasts, and in 1934 similar arrangements were made for broadcasting in Hungarian. In 1934, also, regular

broadcasts in the local Ukrainian dialect, designed for the Carpathian Ruthenian minority, were organised at the Kosice station.

SCHOOL broadcasts, inaugurated in 1930, are presented several times weekly in separate transmissions for the three age groups into which the elementary school children are divided. Attention is paid to actualities as well as to cultivation of literary and musical tastes. There are special regular broadcasts for children in the German, Hungarian and other minority schools.

News bulletins are given several times daily and are prepared independently of Radio Journal, by the Czechoslovak Press Bureau, an official (Continued on page 43.)

RADIO problems in New Zealand pale into insignificance when compared with the difficulties that beset the people who control broadcasting in Czechoslovakia. In this article Cecil W. Lusty describes radio organisation in the country at present so much in the news, and touches on the relation between radio and the minority problem.