

Australian Broadcasting Annual Report

THE annual report of the Australian Postmaster-General's Department shows how the wireless revenue derived

from license fees and other sources during the 1930-31 financial year was spent. The department's share of license revenue was £149,364, but the wireless branch's total income was £150,253, which was disbursed in the following way:—Upkeep and operation of broadcasting stations, £32,552; upkeep and operation of broadcasting studios, £23,749; supervision and cost of issuing licenses, £29,610; telephone circuit for broadcasting purposes, £13,726; depreciation, £9072; superannuation liability and pensions, £2118; interest and exchange on capital cost of equipment, £4278. This made a total of £115,105, which left a surplus of £35,148, which, together with the surplus on the postal branch went to reduce the aggregate

losses of the telephone and telegraph branches. The capital cost of the plant and buildings of the wireless branch at the end of the financial year was £128,550, £48,087 having been added during the year.

Expressed in terms of licenses it is found that the cost of upkeep of stations is about 1/11d. a license, and of studios 1/5, a total of 3/4d. The expenses of supervision and collecting the fees are about 1/9d. a license (1/- is allowed for this), telephone circuits cost 10d., and other expenses (depreciation, interest, etc.), absorbed 11d., leaving a surplus of about 2/1d. a license.

There are plenty of ways in which this surplus could be used for improving the service, states the "Sydney Morning Herald." Apart from the reconstruction of some of the older stations there are opportunities for a relay station in Western Australia, or on the far north coast of New South Wales, and the provision of permanent land-line facilities from Sydney to 2CO.

Further information concerning the allocation of revenue derived from the license fees is given in the report of the Auditor-General for the financial year ended June 30, 1931. At the beginning of the period under review the Postmaster-General held in trust the sum of £102,179, which was later paid, as earned, to the Australian Broadcasting Company for the supply of programmes, and to Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia), Limited, for patent royalties. A further sum of £397,303 (an increase of about £24,000) was collected during the year from listeners and experimenters, making a gross total of £499,482 available for distribution, and this was dealt with in the following manner:—Payment to Tasmanian Broadcasters Pty., Ltd. (license expired December 13, 1930), £3134; patent royalties (to A.W.A.), £49,365; Australian Broadcasting Co., Ltd., £186,949; P.M.G.'s Department (proportion of license fees), £148,364; balance held in trust to be paid to the A.B.C. and A.W.A., as earned, £111,670.

During 1929-30 the Postmaster-General received £173,418 (£25,000 more than in 1930-31), and a sum of about £70,000 was available for benefit of consolidated revenue. What the Postmaster-General's surplus was last year has not been announced, but it was probably not much less than £40,000.

The payments to the A.B.C. (£186,949) were £28,667 greater than in the year 1929-30, and the company's accounts showed a profit of £6021, as against a previous loss of £4896, which, however, in the opinion of the Auditor-General, could not be considered as a true loss when the composition of the company and the fact that £12,500 was allocated to outside broadcasting rights from Fullers' Theatres, Ltd., and Union Theatres, Ltd., were taken into consideration.

During 1930-31, at the instance of the Postmaster-General's Department, the payments at the rate of £5000 a year by the A.B.C. to Fullers' Theatres, Ltd., for broadcasting rights were discontinued. No variation was made in the payments at the rate of £7500 a year to Union Theatres, Ltd. No information is given as to the payments made by the A.B.C. for various services, but is reasonable to assume that the profit of £6021 has been arrived at after charging all directors' fees, copyright payments, broadcasting rights, etc., against revenue. The amount paid to the Performing Rights Association was probably £30,000.

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