

Radio Overseas

Interesting Facts From Commission's Report

The report of Mr. Justice Owen, the Royal Commissioner who investigated the copyright position in Australia, deals at length with broadcasting in Australia and traverses in detail the claims made by the associated gramophone record manufacturers. Broadcasting in Australia, the report states, apparently differs from that in all other countries.

In Australia there are national (and non-profit earning) stations operating side by side with forty-six "B" Class stations which are carried on for profit, each class supplemental to and necessary to the other. In New Zealand all the important stations are national, and the profit-making stations are few in number.

Evidence given before the Commission established that unless broadcasting stations can use the musical works controlled by the Australasian Performing Rights Association they cannot now, or for some time to come, successfully and efficiently maintain a national service. The same applies, though to a less extent, to the records made by the record manufacturing companies, if the present policy is maintained of obtaining records on the Australian market.

About June, 1932, the A.P.R.A. offered to grant to the Australian Broadcasting Commission a license for the use of copyright works controlled by the Association at the following rates:—

- (a) 2/4d per item per main station on a basis of 350,000 listeners, and
- (b) 4d per item per main station for each additional 10,000 licensed listeners.

This offer was refused by the Broadcasting Commission and up to the time the report was presented no agreement had been arrived at. The Association claimed that a "relay" must be treated as a separate performance.

For 1931 the average charge made to the Australian Broadcasting Company (a profit-making company which controlled the "A" stations in Australia until July 1, 1932) was equivalent to 2/5.352d per item. In that year the Company paid £30,190 for 296,850 performances (of which 49,992 were not claimed as copyright). In other words the Australian Association was paid for 246,858 performances at an average rate of 2/5.352d per item. The evidence before the Commission showed:—

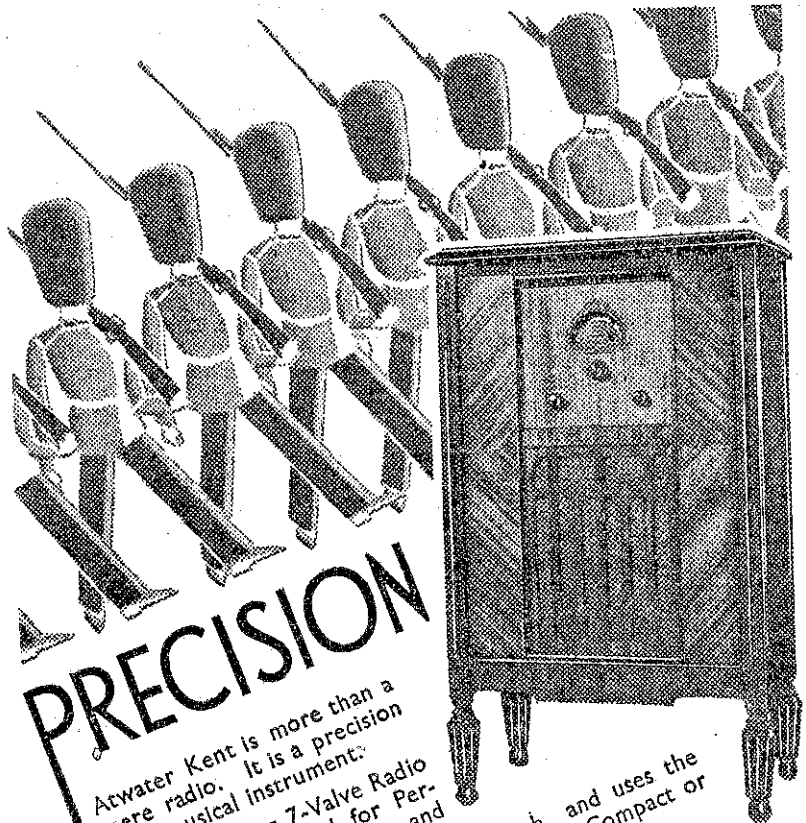
- (a) The British Broadcasting Commission pays (on a basis of 4,526,075 licences) about £63,500 a year for the whole repertoire controlled by the Performing Right Society.
- (b) In Germany (on a basis of 3,980,840 licences) the Broadcasting Board of Control would have a revenue of £2,805,879 at par on sterling. The Copyright Associations receive 3½ per cent. without any restriction as to the numbers of musical items used, representing £98,205 per annum.
- (c) In Austria the Broadcasting Authority pays 3½ per cent. of the revenue from licences (cal-

culated on 476,000 licences). The amount paid is equivalent to £11,245.

- (d) In Poland, where some 300,000 licences are in existence, the Broadcasting Authority pays to the Copyright Society 3 per cent. of its revenue from licences with a minimum of about £3,200 a year. The amount paid to the Society is about £7,425.
- (e) In the United States of America the amounts payable under the agreement recently made with the American performing Right Society are roughly £300,000 for 1933, £400,000 for 1934, and £500,000 for 1935.

- (f) In New Zealand the Broadcasting Board, if it were to continue to pay at the rate previously paid by the Broadcasting Company which controlled the "A" stations, would pay £5,250 per annum, and the Australasian Performing Right Association's claims, if made applicable to New Zealand, would amount to £11,365.

The information as to the Continental countries was obtained by the late Mr. H. P. Williams from the Union Internationale de Radio Diffusion, Geneva, said to be the highest authority from which such information can be obtained.



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