

EDITORIALS

de AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE



The 'Phones and Amateur Radio

AT our National Convention in Chicago last fall a paper was to have been presented on "The Effect of the Radio Phone on Traffic". The gentleman who was to have spoken on this subject unfortunately could not attend and the paper was never produced. The title of that undelivered paper, however, strikes the keynote of this editorial—the effect the 'phones, whether amateur or commercial, are having on our amateur work. We have some very serious things to say and we want everybody to read this carefully.

Fellows, do you know the grand old game has changed—that it isn't what it used to be, even a year ago? Time was, before the war and just after we had got on to regenerative receivers, when we could work as often and as long as we liked, and we owned the local air. After the war, with all the publicity radio got, there were many more of us and we had to adopt co-operative schemes whereby the hours were divided so that all got an equal show—like the Chicago Plan and its variations. Once we introduced the idea of team-work and co-operation, tho, we got along splendidly—until the radio telephone came suddenly into prominence this past fall. This prominence of the phone is evidenced in the commercial broadcast services and in amateur broadcasts and in the novice listeners. Within the short space of six months the entire aspect of the amateur world has been tremendously changed, bringing serious problems with it, and we must consider these problems. The whole legislative situation is again in upheaval, and the Secretary of Commerce has just been instructed to appoint another committee of radio experts to devise a new code of radio laws particularly to take into account the new situation brought about by the advent of the phone. Our A.R.R.L. expects to be accorded a voice in the deliberations, representing what the government calls the private radio interests, and your officers want practical suggestions from our affiliated clubs and individual members on the two big matters before us—the regulation of *amateur* broadcasts and the interference

problem between amateur transmission and commercial broadcast reception. Let us consider them in order.

The New Broadcast Regulations.

In January, paragraph 57 of the Radio Regulations was amended to require a limited commercial license for all transmitting stations used for broadcasting news, concerts, lectures, and such matter, the wave length for which service is fixed at 360 meters, with 485 meters for crop reports and weather forecasts. The immediate effect of this was the prohibition of all radio phone broadcasts under amateur licenses, with all new licenses stamped with the statement that the station was not licensed for any broadcasting. Our A.R.R.L. has had a committee in Washington investigating this matter and we now have the whole story. Our readers are particularly requested to note the following points:

(1) This prohibition is only *temporary*—the Department of Commerce does not mean to permanently prohibit any useful activity. As quickly as a practical basis can be determined upon, all legitimate services will be restored.

(2) Altho undoubtedly the corporate interests maintaining broadcasting establishments have requested better regulation of amateur phones to protect their own broadcasts, the main actuating motive on the part of the Department of Commerce has been a desire to protect the radio-TELEGRAPH amateur, whom the Department recognizes as the great national asset and whose activities were being fairly swamped by the amateur phones.

(3) Broadcasting is growing tremendously and must be regulated now before it gets out of hand. It should be permitted only when the general radio public is interested, and not merely because an individual to broadcast for his personal amusement or for advertising purposes without regard to the desires of his audience. Nor should amateur phones with rotten modulation, illegal outputs, awful "plate supply noises", and indifferent programs be permitted to broadcast under any circumstances. The right kind of stations will be permitted to continue their service

under a limited commercial license when their activity is desired by the general radio public.

(4) Special authority in all probability will be granted by the Bureau of Navigation to conduct any broadcasts already arranged for previous to the inauguration of the new regulation, and provision will be made for the continued broadcasts of those radio phone stations that are handling market and crop reports, weather forecasts, police alarms, etc., in co-operation with a branch of the Federal Government or their municipalities. In such cases a letter from the Government branch or municipality being served should be submitted, showing that the service is necessary for the public welfare, and we understand the necessary authority will be granted.

(5) The new regulation does not apply to radio-TELEGRAPH stations.

(6) The Department of Commerce now needs and wants a new basis for the various amateur activities, one which will give proper protection to all the amateur interests. Suggestions are solicited. It must be borne in mind that this is a big undertaking, probably involving a change in the radio law, and it cannot be accomplished in a day or a week. Everyone's viewpoint must be determined and a fair plan formulated, and then this must be enacted into law before it can be administered. Meanwhile we must be patient in the present situation.

Except for the part that the corporate interests may have played in bringing this about, we are well pleased with it and confident that the concentrated thought now being brought to bear on the matter of regulation will result in an equitable arrangement. Our 200-meter wave length is horribly crowded with the legitimate telegraphic business of an amateur field comprising some 14,000 transmitters, without being burdened with even the best of broadcasts from 200-meter phones. And what chance have the latter of being heard thru the din? And as to the awful stuff that most amateur phones put out from ten-cent records on \$1.89-phonographs with a supply ripple like a thrashing-machine and a wave like the Atlantic—we are glad it is gone and hope it never comes back! Amateur Radio is decidedly the better without it.

We say again, fellows, that the Department of Commerce is our friend. An amateur phone carrying on local conversation during local hours cannot cause much inconvenience, nor can it cause particularly great interference in the amount of traffic it can successfully handle in the later hours. It causes its trouble, then, in its generally ill-guided inclination to "favor" the public with broadcasts, whether the public desire

to be favored or no. The temporary suspending order was issued because it was apparent to the Department that such broadcasts were interfering with stations conducting other kinds of business—the novice listeners to some extent but mainly the other 200-meter activities, the amateur telegraph station. They believe that it is the later who is truly of value, who is most likely to make a real contribution to the art, who is of actual aid to his country in time of need, who can cover distances with speed and perform a worth-while service. And his activities were being hampered to an extent that was getting unbearable and conditions were getting chaotic—the telegraph amateur was being put out of business.

The Department largely looks to our organization, thru its affiliated clubs, to decide by the interchange of ideas just how the amateur radiotelegraph and amateur radiotelephone stations are to be co-ordinated with each other and with the other services involved. It is now necessary to find some way to permit amateur broadcasting (where such service is desirable, and still not "gum up the works" for other amateur operation. Some schemes under consideration at present are, first, to allow broadcasting on some other wave length, such as 175 or 225 meters, or, third, to revise the present system completely and institute graded amateur licenses restricting transmitters to waves below 175 for their first year or so, putting all amateur phones on 200 meters, sparks (telegraph of course) on 225, and 275 for C.W. stations using code; and in everybody's mind is the feeling that the commercial broadcasts ought to go to a higher wave length where conflicts with amateur work would be avoided.

Now it's up to us to express ourselves. What do we want? We feel pretty sure that of the two, telegraph and phone, one must be subservient to the other in the new regulations. Our A.R.R.L. is primarily a telegraphing organization and we have always felt that that was the most important thing. It is for us amateurs ourselves to decide the question. We wonder if we have come to the parting of the ways? Do we want to favor the phone to the detriment or possible discarding of the telegraph? We at headquarters don't think so, and feel that "the telegraph's the thing", but we want instructions and suggestions from the gang. What do YOU think about it?

Now, fellows, don't get hot-headed over this thing and join in any loud talk about petitions to Congress to change matters, how the corporations are slipping it all over us and this is the beginning of the end, and so on. This is a thing that has been done largely for our own protection and it has got under control a situation that bid fair to destroy us. And we have been asked to say what we want. So don't start writing

wild protests to your senators and putting on a "blue-card" fight when there are only shadows to fight. If we are dignified and business-like we will gain the consideration of those senators and congressmen when we make our recommendations, and we may need their help in a real blue-card fight some day.

Meanwhile the present regulation is to be obeyed. No more phone broadcasts. And sending out music and addressing it to a particular station while it is yet a broadcast in its intent is just a subterfuge and will not be tolerated. A limited commercial license is necessary for the transmission of such phone matter. Stick within the law.

The Broadcast Listener.

And now we come to the second difficulty created by the increased use of the phone—the interference our regular amateur work causes the broadcast listeners. This is a really grave problem and one about which every A.R.R.L. man must think, as it is staring us in the face like a grim spectre.

Here's the story: the big corporations have capitalized all the publicity radio has got since the war, have put up big broadcasting stations which generally transmit entertaining and instructive programs, they advertise this extensively and create an immense demand for apparatus, and then they build and sell the equipment. We all know what the result has been. A year ago the radio industry consisted of a hundred or so firms, struggling along as best they could with what by comparison was a pitifully small amount of trade, counting nickles to make ends meet. Then came the boom! And now they can't keep up. In the east it is practically impossible to buy a receiving set, one has to stand in line to get waited upon only to find that the store hasn't got even the parts one wants, the factories are months behind in their orders altho some of them have tripled their production, and in general the business has taken a boom that was beyond the fondest dreams of a year ago. And it's Mr. Novice who is doing the buying. He doesn't know a thing about radio and he doesn't care as long as he can hear something over it. These men have come in by the hundreds of thousands. We have no doubt they outnumber us amateurs a hundred to one right now, and they are still coming strong. They are buying apparatus by what must be the millions of dollars worth—in other words the broadcasting companies are making "big business" out of what was the game of us amateurs for so many years.

The broadcast listener has been attracted by the phone and so he is undeniably one who has resisted the call of the wireless as we know it—the dots and dashes. He has heard of the A.R.R.L. but doesn't know what it is. He has heard where we have done some wonderful things but doesn't be-

lieve it. He hasn't a ghost of an idea as to how radio works and he doesn't have any interest in finding out. He only wants to know how much it will cost to get a set installed for him, pulling out his checkbook as he asks. He gets a broad-tuning simplified tuner in all probability, and doesn't know how to operate even that. He hears all kinds of disturbances, ships, commercials, amateurs, harmonics, leaky power lines, static. They annoy him, because he has no idea what they mean—knows nothing of the rest of the radio world. He is like a beginner in our own amateur game, only worse because often he is a prominent citizen and used to doing as he pleases in many things. Because, do you know, fellows, these listeners are the mayor, the eminent politician, the bank president, the leading merchant, the doctor, the minister, the president of the board of education—the kind of folks we have long wished under different circumstances to have in amateur radio in order that it might be a truer Citizen Radio. These men are discovering that most of the strange noises that interfere with their concerts are from us amateurs, and what we don't actually make ourselves we are getting blamed for anyway, including static. Directly they are going to get together and say "These amateurs are a damned nuisance—they bust up my concerts. They ought to be kicked out." For you see, men, the novice listener doesn't yet know that there are others besides himself that amount to anything in radio, and at the present time he wants *all the air*, the same as we used to have all of it for *ourselves*. The danger is that these listeners, these prominent men in the community, will call up their senators and congressmen and say "Bill, I want you to do something for me. I've got a wireless and the family likes to listen to these concerts, but we're bothered by a gang of kids all over creation who make the most infernal racket all night long with a bunch of squawks and crashes that knock things to pieces. They're a nuisance—can't you get 'em stopped?" And when all the eminent local politicians and big guns in all the towns get to telling Congress that we're a nuisance, we're likely to get the can whether we are or not. Therein lies the danger.

The trouble is chargeable to many causes. There's the broad tuning of the kind of receivers put out for these folks, their inability to operate anything right, their overbearingness but there's also the too-long and too-broad wave of countless amateur stations, the amateur ether-hog who never stops, the local concert fiends who try to compare with KDKA, the high-handed disdain of the amateur for the novice, the lack of willingness to share the ether with him; and there's the unfortunate fact, beyond the control of either at present, that the amateur wave and the broadcast wave

are much too close together for any hope of entirely successful working.

There will be objection to raising the broadcast wave but it will never be any easier to do than it is right now and it ought to be done now before it gets too difficult. If this were done there no longer would be any conflict between amateurs and concert listeners. There is a band of wave lengths between 1000 and 1800 meters that at present is almost entirely unused, reserved for the Navy. The Navy says that national security demands that they have these waves, but they are not using them. And in time of war *all* waves belong to the military. This is the age of efficient sharing and the trend of the times is to get back on a real peace-time basis and give more to domestic matters and less to military. It is our opinion that the official broadcast wave length should be changed to some band in this at present unused range. We believe the situation demands it even now, and it is getting worse, as all the broadcasts can't operate on the very same wave length of 360 meters and their isn't any particular room thereabouts for expansion.

But that may never come about and meanwhile we are faced by our most serious situation of recent years. Do you wonder that we say the game has changed? Up to now we amateurs have had all the air. Now the novices want all of it. Neither of us can have all of it—we must share it, the same as we amateurs did among ourselves when we started the Chicago Plan. We amateurs must start now to correct this situation as it relates to our own activities, and we must get busy immediately to educate the listener to the fact that he isn't alone in his glory and that he too must share. Either that, fellows, or good-nite amateur radio!

Our hope now is in our Affiliated Clubs, and we believe we are going to have a real test of our affiliated strength. Once upon a time our A.R.R.L. consisted of a lot of individual memberships, but since we started the business of local co-operative plans with community tribunals we have become more and more an association of affiliated societies, each representing a community viewpoint rather than an individual one. And it is to our affiliated clubs that we must look for the solution of the amateur-novice problem.

Generally folks are enemies only so long as they don't know each other. To meet is to have their difference dissolve into thin air. The radio club is the forum where we all meet and get our peeves off our chests. Affiliated Clubs, there's a job for you! You must take in to yourselves the broadcast listeners, not only because they're fine fellows when they know you right but to save your necks! Make your meetings in-

teresting for them, and invite them in. They're often the pillars of the community, the type of men you need. Don't let them club by themselves—they need helpful information in the worst sort of way and they're hungry for it—they'll come in if you'll let them. GO GET THEM!

Then you'll have a representative organization that can reflect the true desires of the radio population of your community. And then get busy on this interference problem. What are we going to do about it? Why, will you believe it, we have been asked how the A.R.R.L. would regard the proposal to introduce a bill prohibiting amateur transmission of any sort between the hours of 8 and 11 p.m., it being intimated that as the A.R.R.L. was primarily interested in long-distance work which was only possible in the later hours of the night, we might be expected to support such a bill. They're a thousand reasons why we don't want a law like this, but we must do something about the situation or it will happen. How many of us amateurs can get the broadcasts well and how many of us like to listen to them, so that of ourselves alone we would vote for quiet hours? It's a little surprising to find out that a great number of us seem already in favor of quiet hours, and in numerous communities the local amateur clubs have voted for silent air during the broadcasts. If we don't want a national law shoved thru against us we have got to do something quick. That something, as we see it, is to decide the matter in each community by *local option*, after we have got the broadcast listeners in to the clubs so that they will see that we are not a flock of little boys in short trousers but that we are really going after the thing in more serious fashion than they themselves. What you must do, Clubs, is to make yourselves representative bodies, capable of reflecting the spirit of the majority of the radio public in your community, and then actually do the reflecting. Vote on it. In your territory are there only a couple of listeners and a hundred telegraph transmitters who want to do amateur work, and are you far enough away from other broadcast listeners that you won't interfere with them? Then it is plain that you should go ahead and transmit, so that the majority may have their way. But are there as many with only receiving sets as there are real amateurs, and do you discover that most of the amateurs themselves like to receive the broadcasts and desire silent air? Then by all means have the quiet hours—start them at once and make everybody comply with your regulations.

That's co-operation. That's the rule of the majority. That's the only thing that's fair. And it's the only way to keep the broadcast listener from demanding all of the air—and coming close to getting it.

Let's speak a little more definitely. Here is what we want every A.R.R.L. affiliated club to do:

(1) Call a mass meeting of everybody in your territory who is interested in radio—amateurs, broadcast listeners, everybody. Take stock of your local situation and be sure that you get all the broadcast listeners in to the meeting. You *must* have them. Find out who they are and write them letters or better send a committee to invite them to the meeting, and do everything you can to round up everybody interested.

(2) Then talk over these matters fairly and squarely. Tell them that we have a nasty situation to solve and that you want to do it by co-operation. Find out how everybody feels, whether amateur or listener, about both of our big problems—the regulation of amateur phones and the interference between amateur and listener. Give everybody a chance to be heard.

(3) And then start the ball rolling at once in some scheme that will decide whether or not you are to have quiet hours for broadcast listening by the majority sentiment. Take a vote on it and agree to a definite program if at all possible, and broadcast this to everybody in your territory. Try to come to an understanding at that meeting, because it is a hard job to get out a big gang to a meeting. But whatever you do, be sure to get something in the works that will enable the prompt settling of this matter by "local option"—that is the vital thing.

(4) Then write immediately to A.R.R.L. Headquarters at Hartford, Conn., and let us know what you have done. There are two things your Board of Direction wants to know at once: first, is the amateur radio telephone or the telegraph to be favored in the new amateur regulations, and what are your suggestions as to a division of wave lengths; and, second, give us what assurance you can that you have arranged mat-

ters in your territory so that local option, whatever the outcome, will decide the matter of silent air for broadcast hours.

(5) Do all of these things just as promptly as you possibly can.

The general radio public have not yet come to the point where they know anything about what we amateurs have been struggling with for years in the way of QRM—or static. But they want help and that is our chance. At any club meeting not only can every question be answered but friendships can be made which will mean helpful visits from amateurs who know. Gradually they will wake up to the fact that the existing amateur organizations are the very thing they are looking for, and once they are in the clubs they will learn the situation and become a part of us and work with us instead of against us.

We must fight to the last ditch any law sponsored either by the general public or by the big manufacturing interests behind them, which proposes to prohibit amateur transmitting during most of the evening. There is no reason why the broadcast stuff should have it all. Amateur transmission now has it all but we cannot hope to keep it all. What we want is a just and fair distribution of the hours in accordance with the majority sentiment in each community—but we must give consideration to those who want to listen. We must make up our minds that as far as the large centers of population go, the old days of free-for-all amateur radio have gone for good. The day will never return when we can make all the noise we want at any old time of the day or night.

Our A.R.R.L. has a glorious history of real Americanism and team-work in all its doings. Now let's all put a shoulder to the wheel and whip this job. But the minute we break up the team-work—Good-Night!

