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# TALKING ON THE RADIO

*A Practical Guide  
for  
Writing and Broadcasting a Speech*

BY

ORRIN E. DUNLAP, JR.

*Radio Editor, The New York Times*



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*To*

**CHARLES M. DUNLAP, JR.**



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## INTRODUCTION

THERE are only twenty-six letters in the English alphabet; they are the bullets of verbal broadcasting.

The ideal text from which all speakers may learn the tricks of point-blank broadcasting is politics. For this reason, these pages delve into political broadcasting. Being more rough-and-ready and spectacular, politics immediately brings to light helpful hints generally less evident in the more sane and subtle branches of the art such as education, religion and selling. Teacher, clergyman, cooking expert, beauty specialist, health adviser, news commentator, in fact, anyone who has thoughts to express on the air can learn much from the modern spellbinder's tactics.

A purpose of this book is to reveal to broadcast speakers the knack of gaining the most from their verbal barrage; how to win a *coup de main* with words; how to enter countless homes by radio and be welcome until the speech is finished.

As a compendium of suggestions for the radio forum this manual is designed to be practical. It is hoped that it will help to remove from the trans-

continental battlefield of gab the entanglements encountered between the microphone's ear and the loudspeaker's lip; that it will simplify the attack so the tongue's electrified projectiles will not thump as "duds" when the speaker, be he political warrior or teacher, seeks to capture ears barricaded in the trenches of home comforts.

Unless the speech is carefully planned and adroitly delivered shots of eloquence may explode in the emptiness of space—in radio's no man's land.

O. E. D. JR.

New York City

## I

### WRITING THE RADIO TALK

THE radio speaker is a monologist. Ostensibly he is talking to himself, whether he be teacher, preacher, commentator, politician or newscaster. His task of speaking through a mute but alert device to people he cannot see is nothing more than a new branch in the age-old art of table-talking on a national scale. The simplicity of it all is wrapped up in electrified sound. A fusion of news sense with showmanship; a flair for the dramatic enlivened by skill in radio writing, abetted by a well modulated voice, is what broadcasters like to call "radio personality." It has definite implications.

This thing called personality covers a multitude of sins. If a broadcaster has good material for a speech, but fails for some reason to "get across," he is generally told there is no need of trying any further for he simply lacks "radio personality." If the subject-matter is mediocre or even below standard, and a voice vitalizes it with an attractive personality, then the broadcasters are quick to attribute the suc-

cess to "personality." And, oddly enough, the voice may be that of a polished speaker, a man who chooses his words with great care or it may be a rapid-fire, rather rough voice that possesses this electric individuality. Radio personality is not necessarily a college product.

Otherwise, recognized ethereal personalities could not mispronounce words and "get away with it," humorously yet effectively. This may be one of the reasons why the broadcasters find it somewhat difficult to put a finger on any definite type of speaker and call him a perfect model of "radio personality." There are too many different types. ♦

Every radio speaker, whether a fledgling or a veteran practitioner, is treated with the same lofty distinction in the presence of the microphone before he begins to reveal the timbre of his sound personality. Each and every one is introduced to the "mike" as if a master at the art. It seems to be taken for granted that all approach the microphone with the same degree of perfection. The announcer at the conclusion of his opening remarks casually signals, "go to it, you're on the air." He presumes the speaker knows his stuff. Without any ado he turns him over to the invisible millions. The announcer stops aside. He is not there as a coach or critic. So the newcomer, skilled or unskilled, is at the mercy of the watts and

waves. He is on his own. There is no emotion of a mob to sustain him. With so much at stake it is surprising how calmly the air is entrusted to a lonely tongue.

Every radio speech goes through two processes—preparation and presentation. Both are equally important.

The first few sentences should be couched to strike the bull's-eye; they must captivate attention of listeners instantly. There is no time to hem and haw. If the speaker wants to "break the ice" with a pleasant "good evening" all right, or plunge right into the subject. The joke or anecdote as an opener requires clever handling to get across.

Broadcasting rapidly ages wisecracks, anecdotes and epigrams. Comedians know that. Stories must be fresh. The speaker in an auditorium may begin to lay his foundation carefully and dryly, having no fear of boring his audience because he is aiming at an electrifying climax. That method fails on the air; listeners tune out at the early stages. The radio listener can chop off the tormentor who hurls long-winded sentences. Often it is wise to put the climax first and work backward—give the lead first as in a newspaper article and then cover the lesser details, but in a way that hammers at the main point throughout the speech.

Radio is a medium distraught by distractions. The home is no lecture hall where politeness, courtesy and silence give the speaker "a break." Furthermore, time is precious. The red, restless, second hand of the studio clock quickly measures off the allotted time. Watts and waves, too, are precious. Therefore, it behooves the speaker to lose no time, to waste no words, else he miss fleeting minutes which are the white space of radio. And remember, if 1,000,000 people listen for ten minutes they give a speaker almost two years of time.

Eyes are fickle; so are the ears. Always there is a constant bleating of sounds only a hair-breadth away on every dial seeking to enchant the minds of a multitude. Every minute there is sure to be some modern Demosthenes, a soprano serene, a military band or a blood-curdling drama bidding for attention, competing and battling in the ethereal amphitheatre in which the unending contest of sound is waged. Listeners are the hostages. Only well organized material and personality in delivery can ensnare them. The common tie between speaker and listener is sentiment. Ear appeal is what counts.

There are no iron-clad rules with which to plan the opening attack. It differs with each broadcaster's style. Short sentences and Anglo-Saxon words are generally most effective but there is no law against

long sentences if the speaker has the cunning to handle them properly. If he fails in this he is likely to sound nervous, although in reality he is merely winded or choking on the volubility of words. Naturally, the mannerisms, accents and speed of presentation vary with each individual.

The broadcast speech, although prepared in advance, is not necessarily phrased in the same words as would be used to express the same thoughts in print. Writers of broadcast speeches often ignore rules of grammar. They slide through sentences without verbs. They have been known frequently to shift tenses and quite generally disregard lessons of the schoolroom. Every "sentence" in radio does not perforce contain a subject and a verb. Some of the broadcasters have no inhibitions whatever in their efforts to dramatize their flow of spoken words. Writing for radio sanctions more freedom than writing for print. To the literary expert broadcasters are careless with the laws of writing.

### *Shoot at One Target*

The radio speech should not be crammed full of aims and cross aims. It should point at one target—one dominant idea. Radio speakers frequently err in trying to drive home too many points in one

speech. It is difficult enough for listeners to catch and retain one main point. Radio is too swift a messenger. The speaker, therefore, should concentrate his bombardment on a major objective.

Stick to the subject. For example, if "liberalization of the Republican party" is the topic under discussion, it is well to cling to that subject and not wander off to the broken promises of a Democrat. The chief subject may then become obscure and the purpose of the speech lost in an involved broadcast. The talk must not become a jumble or a puzzle to listeners. Rows of figures and technical words should be avoided. Every word should stab.

There are speakers who like to dictate their broadcasts to gain naturalness and their best speaking style, embodying the incoherencies of ordinary conversation. Only a minority trust themselves to extemporaneous broadcasting. Radio has done much to curtail this spontaneous art. Prominent speakers when they resort to extemporaneous speech often request that no microphone be present. That makes the meeting less formal. Former Governor Alfred E. Smith and a few others adhere to the extemporaneous style, but others less skillful wisely prepare in advance, if only to avert error, time their talk, avoid being misquoted and to facilitate smooth delivery.

*Roosevelt's Formula*

All radio speakers will gain by study of Franklin D. Roosevelt's technique. A notable feature is clarity. His words are such that all can understand; they ring with sincerity. The effect is electric. Long to be remembered are his heart-to-heart talks to the people. He had taken the helm of a Ship of State wallowing in a disastrous economic storm. All the banks in the land were closed. Yet on the night of March 12, eight days after his inauguration, Roosevelt spoke, but with no flourishes of oratory, and the nation was stirred by a new hope.

He assured America, "there is no occasion for worry—the phantom of fear will soon be laid."

The next morning the people from coast-to-coast were more cheerful than they had been in many a month. A stifling fear was banished. Politicians were awed by the effect; thousands of telegrams, letters and postal cards were evidence that Roosevelt and radio were potent partners.

What is the secret of the President's success on the radio?

First of all, Mr. Roosevelt consciously or subconsciously, mastered that simple formula of broadcasting: *Be natural, be yourself.*

He speaks right from the shoulder and calls a spade a spade. No "high-falutin'" words are in his vocabulary of the air. There is not much chance of Americans failing to catch the meaning of such expressions as, "we cannot ballyhoo ourselves back to prosperity"; "the kind of prosperity that will lead us into another tailspin"; "I have no expectation of making a hit every time I come to bat."

Delivering his veto message on the Patman Bonus Bill, and pointing to the menace of printing-press money, President Roosevelt before a joint session of Congress (May 22, 1935) revealed a superb technique that hits the mark with a visible audience and at the same time rings clearly on the air. The newspapers called it "a masterful, magnificent speech."

An extract illustrates the Rooseveltian simplicity of stating facts in a way that cannot fail to be understood:

In the majority of cases printing press money has not been retired through taxation. Because of increased costs, caused by inflated prices, new issue has followed new issue, ending in the ultimate wiping out of the currency of the afflicted country. In a few cases, like our own in the period of the Civil War, the printing of Treasury notes to cover an emergency has fortunately not resulted in actual disaster and collapse, but has,

nevertheless, caused this nation untold troubles, economic and political, for a whole generation.

The statement in this same second "Whereas" clause that payment will discharge and retire an acknowledged contract obligation of the government is, I regret to say, not in accordance with the fact. It wholly omits and disregards the fact that this contract obligation is due in 1945 and not today.

If, I, as an individual, owe you, an individual member of the Congress, \$1,000 payable in 1945, it is not a correct statement for you to tell me that I owe you \$1,000 today. As a matter of practical fact, if I put \$750 into a government savings bond today and make that bond out in your name you will get \$1,000 on the due date, ten years from now. My debt to you today, therefore, can not under the remotest possibility be considered more than \$750.

Mr. Roosevelt recognizes the all-important fact that a chat-type of radio speech to be effective must be groomed especially for an unseen audience. When talking directly to the people, he does not make the error of attempting to address both visible and invisible. He once revealed this sagacity when he canceled the broadcast of a speech before the Chamber of Commerce. He was mindful that he could not devote proper attention to the microphone and at the same time speak informally to a gathering of industrialists and bankers. Neither does he make the

mistake of going to the microphone too often.

The success of a broadcaster is measured by his ability to make the greatest possible number of listeners feel that he is talking to each individually, whether the talk be on religion, child welfare, cookery or politics. A listener must be made to think; then he is more likely to remember. Strike at the listener's imagination; that provokes thought.

### *Owen D. Young's Technique*

Owen D. Young, industrialist, participating in a political rally at the Metropolitan Opera House (November 4, 1932), delivered what broadcasters and listeners praised as an excellent specimen of radio speech. There was no doubt where Mr. Young stood in this broadcast backing Franklin D. Roosevelt for the Presidency. Note the forcefulness and the news in the opening; the punctuation, and the short sentences separating long ones.

Because there has been some misinterpretation of my silence in this campaign, I welcome the privilege of standing on this platform tonight with Governor Roosevelt and saying what will not be news to him or to the President of the United States, that I am supporting without qualification Roosevelt and Garner for the two highest offices within the gift of the American

people. May I add that I am also supporting my friend Senator Wagner and Mr. Lehman for Governor. Let that definite statement from me end any speculation or inference as to where I stand.

The major issues of this campaign, both social and economic, particularly in the domestic field, have been debated. I shall not speak of them. In any event, there is no time now. You want to hear Governor Roosevelt. A word from me in most general terms on our international situation may perhaps be not unwelcome. . . .

### *Advantages of Rehearsal*

The wise broadcaster, unless he is an extraordinarily clever veteran, will do well to rehearse; to read the speech aloud in private or in the presence of a friend before going on the air. This is essential for accurate timing, but more than that it levels out the rough spots. A little sleight of hand with a pencil, and talks acquire a spark of animation.

It is better to stumble over awkward word combinations and sentences in rehearsal than to encounter them for the first time in the presence of a live microphone. Over rehearsal, however, is dangerous. Then the broadcast becomes too studied, too sing-song and mechanical. Delivery is then stripped of naturalness.

Memorizing a radio speech is not advocated; it is likely to be too artificial, chances for error are multiplied.

Nine times out of ten an advance reading will reveal deletions that can be made or sentences needed to clarify a salient point. It is surprising how many times the first paragraph and possibly the second of the originally prepared speech can be lopped off. It seems that until a speaker becomes more or less professional in the art of broadcasting he usually "warms up" in the first few lines. That delays firing the real projectile. It is like a bomber dropping stones before the deadly grenade; he warns the enemy to seek cover. A weak beginning in a radio speech admonishes listeners to get off the wave. So does affectation.

The originator by reading the speech can generally detect in rehearsal if the opening is boring. Nevertheless, he may try to cling to it despite his better judgment, just because it covers some pet idea, yet irrelevant to the purpose of the speech. If there is any doubt about the opening paragraph, throw it away. It is probably "dead wood."

Reading aloud in rehearsal is especially recommended if the script is prepared by a "ghost" writer. Otherwise, the one who delivers it may find it foreign to his thoughts and tongue. Oddly enough

listeners can detect it. If no rehearsal the speaker is likely to falter over unfamiliar constructions that do not slip spontaneously off his tongue.

Ghosted speeches need revision by the broadcaster himself. In fact, if he does not go through the script he may be continually trying to read ahead of himself while broadcasting, and the worry of trying to "see" what is coming will reveal to listeners that something is not as it ought to be. He should know what the "ghost" has put into his mouth before he attempts to tell the microphone. Studying the speech as he goes along makes for hesitant, dull delivery, lack of confidence and a trace of insincerity. Radio magnifies all that sort of thing. Sincerity and candor somehow subtly convey themselves to listeners.

There are "ghosts," of course, who know their masters well enough to write exactly to fit their thoughts in style and delivery. But even then there is a safety factor in reading aloud in private. That polishes diction and pronunciation if nothing else. It helps to make the speech entertaining by enhancing its vitality.

Rehearsal is not merely an American notion. It is recognized internationally as the well-oiled hinge upon which the broadcast will swing as a gate that opens to a large audience, and then closes before the crowd becomes restless and walks out. For example,

an English critic in discussing the knack of injecting spontaneity into radio dialogue revealed this British method:

“Nothing short of elaborate preparation and rehearsal has hitherto succeeded. The speakers meet, settle the points at issue between them, agree roughly on the order of discussion, and proceed to natural, uninterrupted talk. A stenographer takes down the dialogue; it is typed and gone through again. Redundant passages are cut, and the whole sequence of discussion fined down to the limits of allowed time. But the original spontaneous forms of speech are kept. The revised draft is rehearsed once, twice, more times if necessary, until the stress and tone and flow achieve a spontaneity as near perfect as artifice can make it. The best dialogues are built on such a plan. But not all speakers have time or patience for such conformity.

“The alternative is the debate form with allotted periods and inevitable controversy as to who shall start and who shall have the last word. But at best such dialogues only rarely deceive the listener. Add artifice to artifice and you have, maybe, the solution of an insoluble problem. Create a setting. Play at make-believe. It is curious how instantaneous is the effect. Simple discussions of simple, everyday

problems are the first essentials of good wireless talk."

*Forcefulness Is a Requisite*

Public speaking has its rules about gestures, actions on the platform and appearance. Radio ignores them. A cynical remark or a slur may be softened by a smile or a gesture before a crowd, but the smile, the wave of a hand or pointing of a finger has no such disarming power on the air. Forcefulness by sound alone is radio's prime requisite. Stress on the vital words is a secret of proficiency. It adds color, realism and conviction.

Observe the crisp, concise style of Senator William E. Borah; here are two of his opening paragraphs: \*

We live under a written Constitution. Many people believe that is our good fortune. Some people seem to think otherwise. But, fortunate or unfortunate, it is a fact. This fact is the cause of much debate at the present time.

The Constitution of Italy is the fertile and restless brain of Mussolini. The Constitution of Germany is the daring and resourceful character of Hitler. The Constitution of Russia is the iron will of Stalin. The Constitution of the United

\* Radio address, June 2, 1935.

States is the will and purpose of the American people crystallized into a written document binding upon rulers and people alike. . . .

### *Accelerating Public Opinion*

Quite generally radio is credited with accelerating the pace at which public opinion crystallizes. Much, naturally, depends upon the relative degrees of persuasiveness by the speakers, and that William Hard, veteran radio commentator, finds difficult to calculate. He is of the opinion that some radio talkers attract an enormous following, only to discover that they have irritated and repelled a horde of listeners almost equally enormous. Other speakers may attract smaller audiences and win more conversions.

"Our American theory of government is simply that full free speech shall exist," said Mr. Hard at the American Academy of Political and Social Science, "and that thereupon the subsequent behavior of the public whatever it may be, is a behavior which the public has an unquestioned and unquestionable right to pursue. The true object of radio in a democracy is not what listeners do after they have listened to the speakers, but what is done to insure the access of the speakers to the facilities of the air."

In regard to radio as a moulder of public opinion, The New York Times (Jan. 20, 1936) observed:

Radio is new, and in this business of politics and parties it enjoys a prestige that, in this country especially, attaches to novelty. Actually there is good reason for thinking that people have been greatly exaggerating the potency of this new engine of public opinion.

It is too easily taken for granted that any speaker who goes on the air has a vast number of his countrymen hanging on his words. If they do listen to him it is too easily taken for granted that the radio orator holds the fortunes of his country in the palm of his hands.

It is not so simple as all that. In the first place there seems to be no very convincing way of measuring the size of the radio audience. People largely guess about the "millions" of radio listeners who rally to this or that orator. It is still harder to measure the spell which the orator casts over his audience. There are telegrams and post-cards, to be sure, but they do not say how long the spell under which they have been written will endure. . . .

The fate of the American Republic and of our civic liberties will not be decided solely by radio. We also have newspapers, meeting halls, and free speech in the public squares and on the soap-boxes. They are older institutions than radio, but still count for something.

Politics, nevertheless, is a colorful thread woven through the fabric of verbal broadcasting. Every trick of the trade is bound into that blustery branch of the oratorical art. Politics has given great prestige

to broadcasting and won high recognition for the microphone, especially during Presidential campaigns. Each crusade since the days of Coolidge has put more and more demands upon broadcasting paraphernalia. The direct political contacts radio affords now make it an indispensable weapon in the campaign.

Detached from the excitement of a mob the voter sits comfortably at home and eavesdrops on the appeals. He is swayed by cold facts and voice personality. He may be honestly persuaded but seldom swept off his feet. He cannot be commanded. In few fields has radio played upon public opinion to the extent that it has in politics. In that realm all "guns" in the art of radio speaking are brought into play. In a modern political campaign lurks the very essence of the art of talking on the air. Every student in tune will hear poor speakers and good speakers, some overshooting the mark others hitting the precious target—the listeners' mind.

A European broadcaster once warned of the three barely submerged rocks to be avoided: somnolent droning, tendentious inflection and smart impudence. In an American political campaign the ethereal tide often goes out and leaves these jagged edges in view of the listener.

The majority of verbal broadcasts are more or less

neutral topics but in political broadcasts the spirit of neutrality does not prevail. Words are not given merely informative wings; they carry a sting. Rivalry in politics stirs the art of radio speaking; it puts the spoken-word on high and calls for the best in orators if they are to merit a landslide at the polls, when the unseen electorate comes out of hiding on election day.

Radio has even been credited with unabashedly manufacturing public opinion, and that is called a sort of "social deviltry." Dr. Glenn Frank, himself a master at the art of broadcasting, once referred to the microphone as "the deadly enemy of the demagogue—a ruthless revealer of hokum." Radio, he finds, puts the rhetorician to rout and exalts the realist because the slightest trickery of phrase or voice shows up on the air. It is easy to detect the babel of a crank; the harangue of the demagogue.

## II

### BROADCASTING THE SPEECH

Just as newspapers and magazines have a style of their own, so does radio. The broadcast manuscript is a close kin to the news story and to the playwright's scenario. But on the air simplicity and forceful conversation are the keynotes. And conversation is labeled "an art with many variants." Those who strive to guard the King's English were beginning to look upon good conversation as an art with "languishing traditions," until the microphone came along to revive it. The oral form of language is glorified by radio just as the visual form is by the printing press. Sound and electricity mix into a new "ink."

There are no rules for natural ability; that is a prerequisite in broadcasting. Ask a successful radio speaker for his keynote and he will offer the simple slogan, "Be Natural." Good diction is paramount. And diction, as defined by the American Academy of Arts and Letters in awarding a gold medal to announcers, includes pronunciation, articulation, tonal quality, accent and general cultural effect.

No large book is necessary to cover instructions on the preparation and presentation of radio talks. The fundamentals are few and simple. "Practice makes perfect" as usual. There is no fixed formula. If there were the speech would be sheared of naturalness, spontaneity and sincerity, three vital essentials.

The whole thing boils down to what the broadcasters like to call "technique." What they mean is instinct: instinct for news, for in radio how it is said is equally if not more important than what is said.

In reality the speaker must be an actor. And the broadcasters often wonder if successful radio speakers are born not made, in much the same way as an actor. The knack itself is simple, but without that inborn something it falls flat.

Broadcasting technique is simpler than public speaking. There is no visible audience to disturb the speaker or to give him cues as yardsticks of his success or failure. Boldly he continues at the microphone with the feeling that he is going over big. Yet he has no proof, not for awhile at least.

There is no traditional rule that a speaker must stand or sit at the microphone. It is a matter of choice and comfort. There is no chalk line beyond which he must not step. Distance from the "mike" depends upon its type, upon studio acoustics and character of the voice, which incidentally is pretty much at the

mercy of the control operator. He watches a needle on a meter and regulates a little knob to guard the listener from ear-splitting blasts caused by an enthusiastic overload.

The announcer or attendant will take care of the microphone's position for normal conversational tone. A speaker soon acquires the proper intuition to gauge the distance for whispers and shouts. There is no rule about shouting for the sake of emphasis; no rule for stealthy whispering. Repetition for emphasis is permissible. Generally, the conversational tone should prevail in a studio broadcast. And obviously, it is a good idea to have a clearly typed manuscript with pages not clipped or fastened. Page numbers in the lower right or upper right corner are handy for quick sight.

How the newcomer handles the microphone may have an important bearing on his destiny. The radio audience has an uncanny way of detecting and cataloguing a new luminary whether he be in the pulpit, the teacher's rostrum or on the political stump. The seasoned listeners, and there are many millions of them, seem to find it easy to distinguish between the veteran who "knows his microphone" and the promising recruit whose overanxiety, freshness of youth and enthusiasm often reveal little clues that he has

yet to master the devices designed to send messages afar.

### *The Veteran's Tactics*

The old-timer generally speaks with a confidence, sincerity and naturalness that make listeners feel he is talking directly to them. There is not the slightest clue that he is reading the speech. And, incidentally, to read a prepared speech without an inkling that it is being read, is quite an art. That requires practice. The trick is more than reading; it's acting. Overacting, however, is deadly, and so is a patronizing manner.

The radio neophyte is likely to read too rapidly for his unseen audience, although the cadence may be all right for the banqueters or those in the studio, classroom or political arena, who can see him in action at the microphone. Radio is no place for a race of words. A fast gait seems to do something to sincerity; the words seem to merely skim over it. Furthermore, rapid speaking crowds too many thoughts into the allotted time. The rate of delivery depends upon the material and the speaker's style. The usual pace is estimated to be somewhere between 130 and 150 words a minute. The Roosevelt average is between 110 and 135; Lowell Thomas, 142; Gabriel Heatter,

170; Boake Carter, 157; and Edwin C. Hill, 160.

Words that flash to the listener at the speed of sunlight, going in one ear and out the other at a rapid pace, have little chance to leave an impression on the mind of the radio audience. After eavesdropping for a few minutes the listener may tire of trying to keep track of the speaker's thoughts. He begins to wonder what the harangue is all about, for he has caught little of it.

It will be noticed that the seasoned radio speaker, and President Roosevelt is an excellent example, never adheres to a machine-gun clip. The veteran never lets his radio words rush ahead pellmell with the anxiety of a college sophomore to reveal his eloquence as an orator. He is well aware that radio hits its target of ears in an instant, and before the next important shot is fired from the tongue there must be a perfectly timed pause for the preceding "bullet" to sink in. Then, too, there is the danger in a wordy race of biting off the words. Articulation is poor and the listener misses many a vital thought.

With the uninitiated at the microphone there is usually the telltale rustle of paper when he enthusiastically turns the pages of his prepared speech. Then the listener, already convinced of the unnaturalness of the delivery, gets the cue across the air waves that the speaker is reading; he has not mastered

the subtle art of delivering a speech with the simplicity, naturalness and spontaneity that win the multitudes, although they may never sense just what it was that enabled some more experienced speaker to perform the miracle of holding them spellbound.

Appropriately the microphone has been called "a strange touchstone of personality."

Mr. Roosevelt is a strategist in broadcasting. He knows, for example, that the time element in radio is a vital factor. He generally speaks to the country, not at 8 o'clock, Washington time, when many thousands would still be at work or homeward bound in the far West, but at 10 o'clock in the evening when the majority of his fellow citizens are likely to be home and near the loudspeakers.

Roosevelt broadcasts are brief—usually less than a half hour, sometimes twenty minutes.

The loquacious broadcaster who overlaps the time of a favorite program runs the danger of irking part of the audience, and by so doing endangers his own popularity. Mr. Roosevelt treads on no ethereal performer's toes by running over his allotted time.

Those who have been in the White House when the President is about to go "on the air," feel a tenseness unlike that which precedes any other program, possibly because so many millions are listening. It is a great event.

It was on May 7, 1933, two minutes before Mr. Roosevelt was to talk to the nation about his first two months of stewardship, that a dead silence fell in the Oval Room where the newsreel photographers, radio group and camera men were assembled. The President was glancing over his manuscript. Suddenly he looked up, seeming to wonder at the pall; then he smiled.

"If anybody has to sneeze," he said, "he'd better do it now!"

The tension vanished, Roosevelt had humanized the scene just as he does a broadcast.

"It is a real treat to watch him broadcast," said a Washington announcer. "Many people face a microphone with a worried look or indifferent manner. They give the impression of talking to a machine, but not Mr. Roosevelt. From the expression on his face one can sense that he fully realizes he is talking to the people, and not merely to a microphone. He does not make a speech; he just visits with the people."

Rooseveltian vocal chords were described by one radio observer as "more sensitive, more susceptible to the influence of the man's emotions than the strings of a violin to the master touch of the bow."

"The human voice when the man is not making conscious use of it by way of impersonation, does in spite of himself reflect the mood, temper and personality,"

remarked a radio critic. "It expresses the characteristics of the man. President Roosevelt's voice reveals sincerity, good-will and kindness, determination, strength, courage and abounding happiness."

Politicians as well as broadcasters, who study the Roosevelt voice, observe one key to his success on the air is the unusual gift of making listeners feel, even though they may be hundreds of miles away, that he is talking with them instead of at them. The unseen audience feels as if the President were agreeing with them about something they already believed.

"President Roosevelt uses plain, straightforward, colloquial English that states his ideas concisely," said John Royal, Program Director of the National Broadcasting Company, in analyzing the reasons for the President's radio triumphs. "He might be talking across a cracker-barrel or at the other side of a fireplace. His voice carries a feeling of intimacy with his audience as well as with his subject. He seems to be talking instead of reading. He apparently visualizes his millions of listeners, and through this feeling of close contact with them makes them feel close to him."

Potentates, Emperors, Chancellors, Premiers and Monarchs have used the radio during the past decade. King Edward VIII, Mussolini, Hitler, and a host of others have girdled the earthly sphere. But their utterances were couched generally in formal, diplo-

matic language, not designed in the Rooseveltian manner, as informal chats, understood by people in all walks of life. Roosevelt is an ace in this art; and so is King Edward VIII as was his father King George V, both human, sincere, friendly and effective on the air.

And among the most effective broadcasters in the American radio forum have been: Charles Evans Hughes, Owen D. Young, Senator William E. Borah, Ogden L. Mills, Senator Pat Harrison, Senator Carter Glass, former Senator David A. Reed and Senator Robert Wagner.

Helen Hayes, actress, and Anne Morrow Lindbergh have ideal radio voices, very natural and effective on the air. Walter Huston is an ace among the actors at the microphone.

### *Psychology of Listeners*

Today it is believed that listening-in is in a sense intellectual rather than emotional. Crowd psychology, of course, is missing. When the broadcast contains beneficial information of monetary value, it is more likely to win concentration. For example, the farmer will listen intently to weather and crop reports, whereas he might be listening casually or talking while the loudspeaker offered music.

Program research experts believe the broadcast, rather than the surroundings, must create the mood. The effect of this has been noticed repeatedly in the failure of some oratory to make an appeal over the radio, where a straightforward conversational talk hits the mark. And when a performer approaches the microphone he generally faces an audience that is largely indifferent, although segments may be appreciative if he strikes the right chord.

The broadcaster, whether he be a comedian or silver-tongued orator, who goes to the microphone with the idea of winning the entire audience is vastly in error. No individual, station or program can monopolize the audience—a championship prize fight seems to have the best chance, politics may be second.

Political showmen may be interested to know that the entertainment likes and dislikes of the radio audience are much the same from coast to coast. This fact stands out in the majority of surveys whether they are conducted by telephone, house-to-house canvass, or by written questionnaire.

A catchy tune capturing the fancy of Easterners is likely to be hummed and whistled along the Pacific Coast. A joke that makes New Yorkers laugh has a good chance of stirring a streak of hilarity across the country from Montauk Point to the Golden Gate.

That rule may be applied to the "sugarcoating" of

the political rally on the air, but don't forget "Dixie" appeals below the Mason Dixon Line. However, this idea does not rule the topic under discussion—on a trans-continental network it must be nationally interesting, not sectional.

The ardent listener and his radio, like the whistler and his dog, are pals.

Political strategists and other radio speakers will do well in planning their talks to consider the radio audience divided into two distinct classes. One comprises the dyed-in-the-wool fans, who enthusiastically, whether by habit or for pleasure, tune in and follow the programs day after day. They are the regulars.

Radio to them is a home entertainer. It forms an almost ever-present background of music from early morning until bedtime. They look upon broadcasting as a blessing. It fills in leisure hours. It puts them in direct contact with people, places and melodies which otherwise would be mythical. These regular listeners consider radio performers and the announcers as their friends. They worship them as ethereal neighbors who can be depended upon to call weekly or daily with a pleasant greeting, entertain a bit and be gone as mysteriously as they arrived.

The other class of listener is irregular. Members of

this group have equipped their homes with radio chiefly because of its utility. Occasionally they eavesdrop on the daily programs. Their main purpose, however, in owning a radio is to pick up special events, such as championship bouts, football games, the world's series, political speeches, the best in music and all events that might be classed as timely and of national interest.

The regulars are disturbed less by the advertising, because they listen so much that they are likely to be unconscious of what the announcer talks about. Music is their fare. They are responsible for so many comedians on the air. They write the letters of applause and tell what they like and dislike. Likewise, they are responsible for the crooners. They are credited with the long run of Amos 'n' Andy.

### *The "Red Seal" Audience*

The irregulars are the red-seal audience of radio. Many of them enjoy the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philadelphia Symphony, the Metropolitan Opera and the artists of distinction.

While some members of the regular audience tune out a distinguished soprano with the remark that "she warbles too serenely for me," there are probably

thousands in the red-seal audience who have seen her name in the "outstanding events" and tuned in especially to hear her.

The broadcasters are fully aware that they cater to an audience of mixed tastes in politics and in song. They reach a multitude. There is obviously a high-brow and lowbrow division and a regular and irregular group of listeners. The broadcasters know from the mail that there are thousands who would never miss a certain program and others would never tune in.

By the right of the divine power with which science has equipped each listener he can take politics or anything else in the air or leave it by a slight twist of a tiny knob.

The task of the broadcaster is to please, and to win as many ears as possible; it is not easy.

### *After-dinner Speaking*

Whenever the microphone brushes against an age-old art it generally accelerates a revolution in the process of evolution. There is no better example of this than in public speaking, whether on the political stump or at a banquet table.

Joseph B. Ely, while Governor of Massachusetts, faced a microphone in Boston to express regret that the pressure of unusual administrative difficulties

made it necessary for him to forego the pleasure of attending a dinner conference in New York, at which he had been invited to speak. The audience, however, was not to be disappointed, for every word of the address he had hoped to deliver in person was heard from his lips in the New York dining hall.

Across wires from the Commonwealth, 200 miles distant, came his electrical presence. And so efficient was the magic of science, had there been a loudspeaker in the executive chamber in which the Governor spoke, he might have been annoyed by each of his words flashing back on him by radio before he could utter the next. His voice, turned into electricity, into Hert-zian waves, back into electricity and then into sound again, would boomerang to his side at the very instant the New Yorkers heard him.

Governor Ely sensed the magic of the performance; he referred to "this wonderful invention—the radio." Wondrous, indeed, is the Marconi miracle as a time and labor saver for busy men invited to speak at a dinner but pinned by duty to stay on the job. Today, however, no man can plead that he lacks the time to accept the invitation to speak; or is the fact that he will be out of town, in California or even in Europe any loophole. Radio follows him. Science quickly accommodates; it stretches the speakers' table to international lengths.

It is interesting to compare the speakers' list on dinner menus of 1920 with those of today. Now there are fewer speeches, and they are under a stop-watch as much as a football game or a 220-yard dash. Then, too, the calibre of speakers has changed. Once they were invited and given a slice of the dinner's radio time because of their wit; they were entertaining. Now they are generally men and women whose words are important and of national interest to listeners at home as well as to the diners.

It was not so long ago that a Governor of Massachusetts, invited to address a conference in New York, would be compelled to abandon his desk, spend six or seven hours on a train, and that night return on a sleeper to the golden-domed State House on Beacon Hill. But not so in this era of broadcasting.

Everything is timed to the second. A radio announcer calls at the Governor's study, gives him the cue, and he speaks to an unseen assemblage beyond his horizon. His voice, however, is as distinct and as normal in tone as if he were present; merely standing behind a silken curtain. And when his last words are electrified and radiofied he is applauded as if seen in person. But right there is where time is saved. Before the next speaker is introduced the Governor is back at his work. No time is lost; no train trip ahead in the night; no cause for indigestion. In fact, the few min-

utes he was on the air were a brief respite from the "unusual administrative difficulties."

The applause for him in New York ends and the toastmaster turns to a speaker on the local dais, for it is a good plan to alternate between the visible and the invisible, else the affair may become too radioized. Nevertheless, it is difficult to get away from the utility of broadcasting, for it reaches far corners and many ears. Soon the procedure is modernized again. Another unseen speaker is on the menu-program, this time from Washington—the President of the United States. He, too, "swamped with work," finds it comparatively easy to pick up the White House microphone and read for a few minutes.

The banquet hall in New York again becomes the tiny nucleus of a vast audience scattered across the continent. While wire tentacles reach out for the speaker's voice, channels in the sky immediately flash the speech into many homes.

These modern dinners with the guests attired in formal evening clothes are unique in contrast with the national scene dotted with countless "uninvited" guests, listening in all sorts of garb, some probably coatless, with collar and tie missing, in overalls or in pajamas ready to retire as soon as they hear what the President or the Governor had to say. These unseen banqueters, like the distant speaker at the micro-

phone, have no crowds with which to contend after the dinner, no motor car jaunt, no taxi or subway. They are home.

A watch rules the speakers' table. Even the waiters frequently get their cues from the radio announcer. On occasions when the guests are slow to assemble they must pay the penalty, for the soup is certain to be sidetracked until the speakers go on the air. When they sign-off, the waiters are given the signal to rush in, but never must they push ahead of radio, lest the clatter of dishes and clinking of silverware stir up "static." Many a dinner has been halted abruptly while the microphone took its bow on scheduled time. Never will that mute device politely wait until the ice cream is served or until the demi-tasse is poured. The dinner must stand-by for broadcasting just as ships do for an SOS.

Those attending dinners from which speeches are to be broadcast are fully aware in advance at what time they will hear the message of the orator. And they know there will be no "long-winded" speakers, because radio will not tolerate prolonged verbal blasts. That has added to the pleasure of many a dinner since the advent of broadcasting.

Radio insists on brevity. There is too much else waiting to go on the air. The speaker is warned in advance, and the veterans are fully aware they must

begin on time; they must strike right out to deliver their message. There is no time for opening jokes. The time for humor is after the precise microphone has finished its job.

Broadcasting has worked quite a change in the after-dinner speaker lists. The selection is not hit-and-miss. When the broadcasters are approached with the idea of "airing" a dinner they carefully scrutinize the importance of the speakers' list to see if the event is likely to fall within the formula of "public interest, convenience and necessity." They also have a good "mental catalogue" by this time of speakers' radio personalities, and if one is not of high calibre, that speaker may be relegated to a non-radio spot on the program.

The dinner that is broadcast is generally more formal; the non-radio affair is less formal, less cut-and-dried. To be within the shadow of the microphone has several advantages for speakers and guests; to be away from such a shadow also has advantages, for then the speaker can concentrate on those whom he can see and count, otherwise he is likely to be devoting his attention to an unseen audience, countless and elusive.

### III

#### TRICKS IN POLITICAL ORATORY

RADIO was born into politics. It was cradled to the bombilation of election returns. It was nursed by Uncle Sam and his legislators.

On November 2, 1920, wireless amateurs within the area around Pittsburgh heard voices whisper through space that Warren G. Harding, Republican candidate for the Presidency, had defeated James M. Cox, the Democratic standardbearer. The news *flashed from the aerial of KDKA*, coyly located in a garage. That was a momentous night for radio; it was equally auspicious for politics.

Few probably realized on this memorable election night as the dots and dashes of wireless gave way to spoken words that it was the dawn of a new era in political campaigning. Those feeble voices speeding through the Smoky City's air at the velocity of sunlight sounded the keynote of a revolution in politics and public speaking; and possibly the end of long, tedious swings around the country by the candidates. Here was a new weapon in politics; impressive in-

struments with which a politician might sit in a comfortable studio, even in his own home and address the electorate scattered across 3,000 miles of continent.

Sound became a cardinal ingredient in politics. Those who learned how to use it to full advantage were destined to reach a new goal. Voice personality was paramount. It became more electric on a national scale than a smile, more convincing than a gesture, more effective than a fife and drum corps, red fire, banners, cigars or baby kissing. Radio modernized public speaking.

It behooved all candidates to learn the mysticism and skill of this indefatigable giant. They had to become proficient at microphone technique, cultivate voice personalities and be able to convince an unseen audience by sound alone spoken into a mute man-made device. Waves of words overspread every city, and waft across every farm. Who mastered radio might become master of the nation. And so it came to pass. Politics was given wings.

### *Keystones of Success*

In the McKinley, Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson days before the '20's only a comparative handful of voters heard the voice of a Presidential candidate; now millions might eavesdrop on his words and judge him by

the calibre of his voice, by the sincerity and friendliness of his tongue. Radio in a split second introduces him to the entire nation after which to be the nominee, he "must grow in public regard and confidence." No longer is the political rally a sort of family affair.

The microphone became the most powerful instrument ever handed to a politician. His fate to a large degree rests in what he impinges upon its sensitive ear. By no trick can he fool it or hoodwink the audience beyond. The microphone takes him at his word; so do the listeners. Naturalness must be the keystone. If his utterances, his pledges and his promises do not strike the listener with a natural ring, then they lack sincerity. He is doomed to defeat.

Success in political broadcasting is no haphazard trick. It entails much more than merely reading a prepared speech. Broadcasting is an art. The politician must be a showman as well as an orator; an actor as well as a spellbinder. He has much to learn before he wins ballots by the sound of his voice alone. Under no circumstances must he violate the etiquette of the air.

Voice tactics are what count.

The political campaigner traveling by train, airplane or motor car goes one place at a time; radio takes him everywhere at the same time. He saves

energy and precious hours. He has more time to think about what he will talk.

The first inkling of this idea came through air from the national Capitol.

A Senator pointed the way. He was Harry S. New of Indiana. The date was March 30, 1922. Washington was amazed to learn that the progressive Mr. New had delivered a political speech to listening constituents 600 miles away. For more than half an hour he talked into a radiophone in an appeal to Indiana farmers and city voters who had radios in their homes. Ex-Senator Albert J. Beveridge was his rival for the Republican nomination for the Senate.

Mr. New spoke from his office in the Senate office building. He had no radio rules to follow, but sensed the advantage of preparing the speech in advance. He began delivery in a prosaic, and matter of fact way, as if talking over the telephone but to his surprise the thing became so real that emotion got the best of him at times and he departed from the written speech.

That night a dispatch from Washington stated:

Senator New's successful venture into radio campaigning caused a lot of gossip and speculation in political circles. Some political experts expressed the optimistic opinion that campaigning by radio might soon leave the field of novelty

and become a practical every-day proposition during political fights.

They admitted that anyone who had suggested such a thing even as recently as the campaign of 1920 would have been ridiculed, but at the conclusion of tonight's performance they predicted that the radio telephone facilities in many sections of the nation would be tested to capacity when the election campaigns were reached next fall.—It has been estimated that the total number of radio outfits in homes will be more than 1,000,000 within the next six months.

The possibilities of such a development from the political viewpoint are not going to be overlooked.—Heavy reduction in the cost of campaigning is foreseen. Expenses for travel will be eliminated and make it possible at the same time for a candidate to reach a much larger audience than could crowd into any hall.—There isn't a thread of doubt in the minds of radio enthusiasts that plans for radio campaigning are practicable and that radio will be distinctly the vogue before many weeks have gone by.

The prophets in the national capital that night were no idle dreamers.

The cry went up that radio was fast becoming a necessity in politics. Everybody would be listening in!

Political commentators observed that Senator New took time by the forelock. Too busy in the Senate to look after his fences in person, he entrusted radio to

speak for him. But it was pointed out that his rival, who always had an inexhaustible reservoir of sentiment on tap, was face to face with the voters and could also use the radio. Mr. Beveridge had an attractive presence, and was more supple of speech than Senator New. But it was conceded that there were votes in the very idea that the absent candidate could speak from Washington to his constituents.

A few nights later Representative Alice Robertson spoke to Oklahoma by radio. Students of politics asked, what is to prevent Senator Borah from similarly addressing his supporters in Idaho, which report says, he rarely visits? Someone remarked that if the Senator went home he would lose the prestige of his eloquence in the Senate chamber. Still, advantages were foreseen in electioneering by radio.

Will the new telephony impair the influence of the orator who uses it? That was a question of the hour. It was difficult to imagine William Jennings Bryan as "a remote and diminished voice." The politicians were fearful that only a powerful receiver would reproduce the familiar accents in full tone. They counted on the personality of the orator for more than half of the effect. Mr. Bryan had always prided himself upon looking the part and his friends said he had hypnotic powers. Surely, they said, he would never consent to be a ghost of himself by radio.

Already, they could see that a candidate who did not use radio would have a slim chance of being universally popular. They confessed, "the new device is indispensable; the audience of the public speaker may be the whole United States, by relays at least."

Over in the White House President Harding read the handwriting on the ethereal wall. He ordered one of the new fangled radio sets installed in the Executive Mansion, and for the first time in history a man, unsolicited, unannounced and unknown, spoke directly to the President of the United States. President Harding is said to have heard George B. Muldaur representing fire insurance underwriters, thank him from a Newark station for refusing to permit lighted candles to be placed in the windows of the White House on Christmas.

The talk was sandwiched between a brass band jazz orchestra, weather reports and songs. Clear and distinct flashed the words, "Mr. President, I trust you will permit me to voice the sincere appreciation, etc."

Hundreds in the radio audience eavesdropped too, and wondered "What are we coming to?"

### *The Radio-minded Harding*

President Harding at Arlington on Memorial Day, 1922, supplied the answer; he introduced broadcast-

ing into the political life of the nation. His address dedicating a monument to the Civil War Soldiers was the first Presidential address to be microphoned successfully for an unseen audience. From the lofty towers of "Radio Virginia," on the banks of the Potomac, electromagnetic waves etched history across the canopy of the globe.

The response even in those days, when receivers were counted by hundreds, was a revelation.

Warren G. Harding became radio-minded. Already he had evidence that the microphone was an ideal mouthpiece through which to reach his countrymen. So when he left in the summer of 1923 on the western trip, destined to end with his death in San Francisco, he traveled on the first Presidential train equipped with radio. At St. Louis he established the record as the first President to broadcast over a network namely, KSD, St. Louis; WJZ, New York, and WCAP, then the call of a Washington station.

It was noted to the chagrin of western politicians who gathered at the railroad stations to see him that the display of oratory was missing. An observing news correspondent remarked:

"Written in the vein of current history, these presidential addresses necessarily, perhaps purposely, lack those elements which tend toward a display of oratory. In their delivery President Harding has avoided

any effort to arouse his hearers to enthusiastic fervor. Although having, in the quiet manner of the President's delivery, no incentive to enthuse, the crowds have shown a keen interest in the President's words, and have received him with marked courtesy.

"According to those who have followed the President's speech making closely, occasional temptation to break away from the tone of plain, matter of fact recital in which the addresses are delivered has come the President's way. It is apparent that in failing to yield to temptation he is dominated by the restraining influence of the radio telephone amplifiers, into which he has talked in making all his set addresses. He is obliged to stand directly in front of the enunciator (microphone) without the opportunity of walking up and down the platform as an aid to oratorical display.

"On several occasions, when earnestness in his subject carried him away from the printed text before him, he had stepped back from the enunciator and obviously prepared to get out in the open, with a desire to bring his audience nearer him. But in each case he has recovered himself, and with self-abnegation has delivered himself again to the mastery of the instrument in front of him.

"He acknowledges that he has been impressed by the wonder of the radio amplifier, which enables his

words to be carried to the ears of interested people listening at receivers hundreds of miles away, but this acknowledgment does not modify the evidence that the mechanical contrivance worries him, and that he is tempted at times to revert to the old style of direct oratory, more stimulating to both orator and audience. The President scores in personal contact. He seems to have the ability to charm in intimate associations."

Could he get that charm through the microphone? The politicians were worried. He could make friends in Kansas when he met them face to face as just one of the folks, and the people liked his ways; but his formal addresses seemed to be "cold."

The politicians wondered if radio was an instrument of the devil to be avoided; broadcasting was called, "amplified oratory."

If change signifies progress, then politics was on the way. Already women suffrage had altered the picture and now the invisible brushes of radio were adding new tints.

The effect was observed by The New York Times: \*

The fact that President Harding's speeches are heard all over the country instantaneously by radio has its drawbacks as well as its ad-

\* June 27, 1923.

vantages. It gives him an immense distant audience, but hampers him before his immediate hearers. It carries his message far, but cripples his oratory near by.

At Kansas City and elsewhere he was thought to be occasionally moved to depart from his written address and to introduce some extempore remarks prompted by the occasion ; but each time he checked himself and went back to his steady reading into the amplifier. The effect upon the listeners must have been that the orator was not thinking of them so much as of the listeners-in at Duluth, Seattle, Boston and Atlanta.

All this cannot but limit and embarrass the born orator. He is accustomed to get from his audience a part of what he gives back to them. Out of the close contact, and the constant interplay of emotion, between hearers and speaker are born some of the happiest flashes of oratory. Temperamental speakers have often been extremely anxious to know that their voices were carrying well to everybody in the assembly that they were addressing.

It was pointed out that when Lord Rosebery was at the pinnacle of his fame he was very serious at the beginning of any speech before public gatherings. His friends sent up notes to him on the platform saying: "Your Lordship is heard perfectly in every part of the room." That cheered and inspired him to renewed efforts. But now it is wondered what would have happened if the note read: "Your Lordship

is heard perfectly in Edinburgh, Dublin, Hull and London." Would that have cramped and deadened the oratorical impulses?

The critics of politics do not question the novelty and interest of a President getting his words simultaneously to the ears of all his countrymen who care to listen to him. They admit radio is an immense extension of public speaking, but they add "it does not necessarily heighten the quality."

Nevertheless, is not a speech thoughtfully prepared in advance for broadcasting more likely to have quality than an unmeditated talk loaded with impulsive thoughts on the spur of the moment? Back in 1923 it was agreed quite generally that radio might be good for the wide dissemination of dry official statements, but there were doubts that it could convey the vivid power of spontaneous oratory.

And to prove the point the skeptics reflected: "If Daniel Webster's Bunker Hill speech had been made in the days of radio, he could not have turned as if with unstudied art to make his apostrophe to the 'venerable men.' Indignant listeners in Ohio and North Carolina would have wanted to know what on earth he was talking about, and would have complained that they didn't see any venerable men standing about anywhere."

*Wilson's First Approach*

Woodrow Wilson was the first President to approach the microphone while in office, although he was unaware of its presence. Returning from France in 1919 on board the U.S.S. Washington he agreed to deliver an Independence Day address to the crew on the afternoon of the Fourth. The radio men wanted to attempt a broadcast of the voice to shore.

"That instrument," said Rear Admiral Gary T. Grayson, personal physician of Mr. Wilson, pointing to the microphone, "stuck up before the President, will make him nervous when he talks. It can't be done."

Such was the edict, as the radio operators recall it. But Dr. Grayson did agree, however, to allow the attempt to broadcast provided the microphone could be hidden so Mr. Wilson could not see it. Arrangements were made for the President to speak on B deck aft, so the pick-up device fed by a megaphone was installed and concealed behind an American flag. Mr. Wilson was not to know of the experiment until it was all over. Preliminary tests had revealed that a voice within six feet of the microphone could be heard clearly.

The President spoke on schedule, but those who eavesdropped failed to hear him because he talked

from the C deck hatchway instead of from B deck, a distance of twenty feet from the microphone and with his back to it. An occasional word could be heard by the ship's operator. There was not sufficient modulation, however, for the U.S.S. Oklahoma, 1,000 yards distant, to distinguish the words.

For Mr. Wilson radio came too late to be of use during his active political life, but he stepped up to the microphone a crippled man on Armistice Eve, November 10, 1923, to score the United States for having deserted the Allies at the close of the war. Speaking from the study in his "S" Street home, his voice a trifle husky at first, he declared the attitude of this country since the World conflict had been "deeply ignoble,"—"cowardly and dishonorable."

President Coolidge tuned-in over the White House radio, and it was estimated "the speech probably was listened to by more thousands of people than any radio transmission yet attempted."

Mr. Wilson was not long on the air; he was a sick man—soon his voice would be gone from space forever.

But as brief as was his speech politicians saw in that radio address the first guns of the 1924 Presidential campaign with the League of Nations as a dominant issue.

Nineteen-twenty-three, however, had one more im-

portant radio event on the calendar before the persuasive guns of 1924 were drawn up for wordy warfare.

*"Silent Cal's" Triumph*

President Coolidge addressed Congress on December 6, 1923, and six stations, a record network for that day, were connected with the microphone on the rostrum in the House of Representatives. An odd role to be sure for a taciturn son of New England, fondly nicknamed "Silent Cal."

So clear was this Coolidge broadcast through half the nation that the operators at KSD, St. Louis, telephoned to the Capitol and asked, "What's that grating noise?"

The broadcasters in Washington replied, "That's the rustling of paper as he turns the pages of his message."

Yes, Americans were listening intently to their President, not to an embalmed text. Incidentally, there the broadcasters learned a lesson; don't rustle the pages of a manuscript.

This Coolidge broadcast was a front-page story. The awe of that historic day was intensified against the background of the fact that no one could have anticipated when President Wilson read his first mes-

sage to Congress that the revival of an early practice was but the first step toward the President's speaking in his own voice to millions of men, women and children in all parts of the Republic. Those who like to contrast the present with the past looked back 133 years when a few representatives of the people stood in New York in the presence of George Washington and listened to the first presidential message to Congress.

The Coolidge broadcast moved one commentator to recall the Trojan War when a gallant Stentor, "in whose brazen voice was heard a shout like that of fifty men," appeared before the Greek army. But now, a quiet man, a man of few words, with effortless, high-pitched voice had outspoken the ancient Stentor a hundred thousand times. By a singular fate a President with whose name the adjective "silent" was often used had become the most widely heard throughout the land.

There was wisdom in the words that "the voice of the people will probably be responsive as never before to the voice of the people, for that voice has literally as never before the ear of the people."

"Silent Cal" had pointed the way up a new political road.

America recognized Calvin Coolidge by his New England twang; his was a sectional voice. It did not

appeal to all. His delivery was that of one who believes when he speaks he has said the final word.

### *Broadcasting the Conventions*

New opportunities were presented for radio in 1924—the National Political Conventions!

How could the microphones ever handle such pandemonium? Who would ever lend ear to such wild rhetorical excursions, flowery nonsense and flamboyant oratory? Inflated elocution comprised no radio program; there were some who argued, however, that Americans would relish going to the conventions by radio. It would be fun to “see” the favorite sons have their hour of glory; a dazzling hour when it is remembered that 50,000,000 listeners may hear their praises being sung.

The stampede was on! Radio offered its greatest hook-up, fourteen transmitters in eleven cities! The Republicans headed for Cleveland; the Democrats to New York.

The conclave of the Grand Old Party was a tame affair. Coolidge was nominated; it was too cut and dried to give radio a good test under severe oratorical fire. But throughout the country the old goosenecked loudspeaker horns bellowed the first lesson of its kind. The populace began to think the selection of a stand-

ard bearer was not such a thrilling event after all.

But after the Cleveland convention, the Democrats, who had eavesdropped, realized that radio is a double-edged political weapon. The old-time political spellbinder fell flat; a plain blunt man sounded like a Demosthenes.

There was no doubt that radio demanded a new type of orator. Those who studied the public reaction to the Cleveland parley asserted the microphone doomed the flowery orator, or the one who relies on theatrical gestures and excitement of his immediate audience to carry along a thin thread of thought. Radio exposes every false note, every kind of affectation. Listeners are quickly disgusted with things that pass for flashes of genius with a crowd that is tuned to the mood of the orator. It is a risky thing to trust a man on the air because he has been a good stump speaker.

Up to 1924 national conventions were things to read about; few ever witnessed the scene; but now the people were invited to "attend" by ear.

The comment was made that "President Coolidge has a great political asset in that he is extremely popular as a radio speaker. He never makes any of the mistakes that injure many speakers with radio audience. There is never a false note in his talks. He is always simple and clear, with now and then a phrase so

turned as to bring the radio audience figuratively to its feet."

Predictions were heard that "the coming Presidential contest will be waged by radio. The candidates will speak to the American public in its entire territory; his rise or fall will depend largely upon what he has to say to Americans by radio.—We are approaching the dawn of clear intelligent politics."

The scene shifted to Madison Square Garden; it was there that John W. Davis broke a long deadlock; it was there that William Jennings Bryan spoke, and tumult boomed everytime a southern voice shouted with insistence, "Alabama casts twenty-four votes for Oscar Underwood."

Ballot after ballot was taken under the "noses" of 7,500,000 receiving sets.

Bryan hailed radio as a boon to Democracy. He argued that Democratic truths did not get equal exploitation in the press with Republican fallacy. While the press-following was believed to be acutely partisan, the silver-tongued Bryan saw no such partisanship in radio waves. People of all political faiths listen-in.

"Radio is the gift of Providence to the Democratic Party:" that is the way Bryan analyzed the possibilities of broadcasting. And he was rated the most experienced Presidential campaigner in the world.

"I regard radio as the most wonderful of all the mysteries that man has unraveled or deals with," said Mr. Bryan. "I have no doubt that it will play an increasing part in our campaigns. Local candidates will address the people in their territory, and Presidential candidates will talk to the entire nation. I have no doubt that arrangements will be made for impartial treatment of candidates, and this will give Democrats a much greater relative advantage than they have when they rely upon the press, which is largely Republican in the contested States.

"Last March I talked to an invisible audience estimated at 75,000. I presume the number of receivers is double now what it was then. My first experience was with an instrument installed at Pittsburgh. Letters received from those who listened indicated that my address was heard over an area of many square miles. The possibilities of radio are unlimited and none is able to estimate with accuracy the use that may be made of it."

He predicted broadcasting would be legally compelled to play fair between the two parties. His forecast came true.

Radio, however, did not "run away" with politics in 1924; people were still anxious to see the candidates in the flesh. The broadcasts were confined to the national conventions and to a limited number of

speeches by the standardbearers. The Democratic appropriation for radio that year was about \$40,000, and that of the Republicans not much more—approximately \$50,000.

The old system of public meetings, reported more or less fully in the newspapers the next morning, was still practically the only way of being sure to reach the voters. But radio was recognized as a supplement to print in spreading and publicizing the speeches. It gave the candidate a more intimate touch with the electorate; the voters saw him in many poses in the newspapers and it proved easy for listeners to visualize the speaker as they heard him on the radio.

"So clearly and completely must the issues of the radio campaign be laid before the electorate," said Major General J. G. Harbord, "that the possibility is visualized of future campaigns being shortened to perhaps a month, thus minimizing the demoralization and interruption to business hitherto characteristic of the quadrennial periods."

In the beginning some had foreseen radio as lessening the expense of campaigning—but not so; as the radio webs expanded across the country, costs increased. Larger "war chests" were needed to buy national hook-ups to mop up every hamlet. Each golden second on the air costs money.

A campaign manager warned: "All over the coun-

try there are millions of people ready to listen to serious discussions of governmental matters, men and women ready to cast their vote with us. These people are deserving of facts, not rhetoric. But we must have a care that in our zeal we do not destroy the routine of the family evenings at home, or ignore the rights of any of the members of the family, and, most of all, the small boy and girl. They are anxious for bedtime stories, and even the older folks want jazz fantasies; we must protect them from too much politics.

“What goes over the radio must be politics of an informing kind dealing with taxation and things pertaining directly to the interest of the general public. The political speaker first of all, must be a man whom a large area of the country is anxious to hear, a man who has something to say, a man who will speak on a big topic in a big way. Speeches which merely view with alarm and point with pride should be ruled out. The speech must have an appeal to the voters as a whole. The shorter the better. If a man can say in five minutes what he wants to, it would be ideal.”

The year 1924 was a Midas period for radio; King Politics bowed to the microphone. Politics became a Klondike for the broadcasters; they ruled the turnstiles to millions of homes. No longer did the farmer have to hitch up old dobbin and pack in the boys for a buggy ride of twenty miles to see and hear “the

next President." He came to them—by radio.

No human voice on a street corner could prevail against millions of loudspeakers empowered by electrical amplification; the lone voice would be as the peep of a "sailor's soul" in mid-ocean, compared to the thunder of Niagara.

The politicians and campaign managers began to study ways and means to profit the most from ten minutes or even an hour on the air. Each speech must be carefully prepared; they were aware of that at the outset. But they were faced with a new technique in speaking, clever strategy—an unprecedented sort of generalship in campaigning.

They would have to correct the error of their ways at the 1924 microphone; they would develop new *modus operandi* before 1928 arrived.

By the time '28 was calendared the politicians thought they had taken over radio and adapted it to their purposes, but, as a matter of fact, as they studied the situation they found radio had taken over and revolutionized politics.

### *Paying for Minutes*

The political budgets of 1928 provided for radio in a big way. The Democratic National Committee appropriated \$600,000 for broadcasts out of a total

preliminary budget of \$4,000,000. At least another \$500,000 was spent by State Committees for radio. It was estimated the Republicans bought a \$1,000,000 slice of radio that year. Both parties were determined to fight it out on thin air.

Listeners from coast-to-coast heard the Kansas City Convention (Republican) pin its hopes on Herbert Hoover; and a few days later in the sweltering heat at Houston, Texas, Democracy picked Alfred E. Smith as its leader. He donned a brown derby, called radio, rad-dio and nicknamed the microphone "the pie plate."

One thing was settled: speakers do not need to smash gavels galore and to split their throats yelling in vain to make themselves heard in the rear of immense halls; the microphone, amplifiers, loudspeakers and public address systems, came to their relief. Incidentally, Californians heard the words before those in the rear of the auditoriums because radio travels faster than sound.

Political generals were puzzled; this thing called broadcasting was still more or less a mystery. They feared that radio voters would keep too cool and become too critical. Some of the veteran campaigners said that things should be whooped up, and they declared it could not be done to any great extent by broadcasting speeches— Enthusiasm can be gener-

ated in great assemblies; it is difficult in the atmosphere of home to easily move a hearer to fervor by the human voice alone.

Old school politicians called the 1928 radio campaign a "funeral procession." Vehemently they protested in vain; they foresaw defeat if the public meetings with parades, bands, red fire, crowd enthusiasm, spellbinders, and gesticulating were thrown to the winds. They could not see the microphone as a vote-getter. How, they asked, could a lone voice sway a crowd sitting in the parlor?

But others summed up the political effect of radio as the greatest debunking influence that had come into American politics since the Declaration of Independence. Speakers who straddled and evaded the issues or who tried to conceal their meaning behind a verbal smoke screen failed. The hell-roaring orator had seen his best day; gone were long-winded harangues.

A new intimacy and informality had been injected into politics with the result that campaigning had been debunked and might be more so as radio seeped into the political strata. The ultimate effects of wireless on politics were only a guess, but those who glimpsed ahead four years, eight years and twelve, acknowledged that the radio campaign of 1928 would doubtless seem primitive. With the exception of the

printed word, broadcasting loomed as a most important medium of propaganda. Of course, hokum is likely to be ingrained in propaganda, but any way radio seemed to make it more subtle and artistic.

There was not the least evidence, however, that radio lurked as a menace to paper mills and ink factories. The more words flung across the skies, the more ink to be rolled on paper so the public might read the next morning what had skipped overhead the night before. Broadcasting publicizes a speech and the people like to read what they hear over the radio, just as they enjoy reading about baseball or football after seeing the games.

### *Hoover's Voice Versus Smith's*

The 1928, Hoover-Smith campaign was the first intense effort to assemble the entire nation into a town meeting. The days of flamboyant oratory were gone.

Here is how the contestants lined up at the starting point:

Hoover's voice was typical of the engineer. The microphone betrayed deliberate effort. But the importance of what a President says insures a large listening audience, no matter what the quality of his radio delivery. In that respect he has an advantage

over his opponent. The timbre of the Hoover voice was a trifle heavy. The broadcasters called it "the voice of a man who does not like to talk." His manner of monotoned speaking showed great positiveness, even stubbornness.

The Smith voice was that of a fighter, explosive, harsh, yet not enough to be exceedingly disagreeable. The raspy quality was modified by a great sense of humor. A chuckle lurked behind the sentences to foretell the approach of a good-natured or humorous point. Smith's was a "happy-warrior" voice of confidence, aggressiveness—but there were many fearful of its unpolished words on the rad-dio.

Smith was the more colorful speaker but neither candidate was silver-tongued enough to be capable of fine oratory "made by high-sounding phrases and beautiful metaphors, mixed and unmixed, majestically intoned."

Nevertheless, the voices of Hoover and Smith, "painted" their distinctive characters. Both accepted the challenge of the ethereal crusade; both entered the campaign with high hopes of "bringing home the bacon."

Both were advised that the successful broadcast speaker must bear in mind that he is not addressing a meeting of his own supporters only, but is speaking into the homes of many people hostile to him, scat-

tered to the remotest corners of the nation. He avoids controversy, attacks nobody, simply gives what is termed a heart-to-heart talk with the man sitting with his slippers on and his pipe in his mouth, reclining in his own armchair. That is one secret of a winning broadcast.

The "leather-lunged" speaker who storms and blasts before the microphone, runs up and down the platform waving his arms to stir his audience, is likely to be tuned out. The man who speaks clearly and stays within the shadow of the microphone has the best chance of being tuned-in.

Appeals must be made to the listener's sympathies, his reason, his intelligence, but attempts to arouse sectional, class or religious prejudices are certain to fall flat. Pleas based upon sentimental patriotism undoubtedly find a cold audience at the loudspeaker.

The orator who uses homely metaphors, and injects into his broadcast illustrations drawn from everyday life, the speaker who delivers his words with sincerity and dignity, is more apt to reach the intelligence of his listeners.

The address must be free from trivialities. Appeals should be national in scope when a network flings the wordy barrage. Radio waves, especially those of the more powerful transmitters, recognize no local or state boundaries. Arguments that may placate one section

of a country may irritate another. Thus votes are lost.

Alfred E. Smith with his brown derby and cigar was the first presidential candidate, showman and actor combined. He injected color, humor and personality into broadcasting. The word rad-dio which he coined focused attention on him. It echoed round the world and stirred up controversy on pronunciation of the word. As a further touch of the theatrical he went on the air with a theme song, "East Side, West Side"; a cast of noted Broadway actors staged a radio drama of his life, "Up From The City Streets."

Smith abhorred a cut and dried manuscript and on several occasions when he faced the microphone with a ready-made speech he cast it aside and talked extemporaneously injecting wisecracks and talking back to the audience.

Neglect of the carefully prepared speech was believed by some to have cost Smith more than a barrel of votes. But when the campaign was history there was no doubt that radio portrayed personality in campaigning; that it publicized the standard bearer.

Radio advertised him like billboards herald the arrival of a circus, so when the day arrived when he swung into a town record crowds were on hand to see what he looked like. He was no mystery man, but a human being the populace felt they knew because they had heard him speak by radio in their homes;

they had seen his pictures in the press and on the screen. They were curious to meet him face to face.

Hoover won! The Coolidge era of prosperity for which Republicanism was credited helped him. Hoover was "dry"; Smith, four years ahead of his time, was "wet." Smith hailed as a man of the people was not the choice of the people; some blamed his defeat on his "rough" radio personality and his outspoken, impromptu broadcasts.

Hoover was mechanical and methodical—his was a cold delivery unstudded here and there with sparkling gems of humor or human interest anecdotes as was a Smith broadcast. While none of the world's great orators from Cicero to Bryan read from a manuscript, it was evident in this campaign that a candidate on the air opens himself to extemporaneous chances of error if he speaks without a prepared speech. On the spur of the moment, swayed by the crowd he may say something he cannot recall once it strikes the microphone; he may boldly express thoughts he could not be prevailed upon to write.

It requires training to read a radio speech with the feeling of extemporaneous effect upon listeners. It is difficult to work on the human emotions by reading from a sheet of paper whether in the pulpit or on the stump.

Pronunciation is a factor. Al Smith said "foist,"

for "first." He also used "ain't." Of course, there is no logical reason why pronunciation, as long as it is literate and grammatical, should be a factor, but the voting masses of the country are affected by peculiar things, many of which are trivial, some absurd. Ill-built sentences, however, cannot be helped out and explained by gestures. Election day reveals the results.

This Hoover-Smith campaign taught many radio lessons to politicians. As soon as it was over they began to study, to pick up the loose ends and muster the radio guns for 1932.

What had they learned?

First, that a political campaign being nothing else but the dissemination of political principles, or in other words, education in politics, radio, therefore, is an instrument readily lent to the campaign—it is here to stay.

They discovered, to the amazement of some of the old-timers that a Simon Pure orator is not crippled by radio. Emotion carries through the air. Real good speaking transmits its thrill because on the part of the audience in the aggregate there is an intentness and concentration not always possible amid the distractions of a vast crowd. Radio is a gain for the rational speaker against the table thumper. With the ears of the country upon him the delegate or candi-

date is impelled to moderate his Dionysiac furies.

Students of campaign strategy find the interest of radio listeners is still largely governed by geography. They believe the average voter has ten times as much interest in a speech made within 100 miles of him as in a speech made 1,000 miles away although the radio set handles both with equal clarity.

Radio "hook-ups" destroy the old-time politicians' game of promising in each locality the things that community wishes. They can no longer promise the Western farmer higher wheat prices without arousing the eastern factory population against higher bread prices. In 1928 they could not make a popular "wet" speech in New York, without adding fury to the "drys" of Kansas and the arid Carolinas.

Radio ushers in changes in political gunnery. It seems to eliminate "the front porch" campaign but some day a candidate equipped with the microphone and television camera may revive the idea. There are still traces of the torchlight processions, but long pilgrimages to see and hear candidates are things more to be remembered by a generation that is disappearing.

Radio reaches countless citizens in rural areas who do not receive daily newspapers on the day of edition, and who could not possibly be assembled in halls and other meeting places. But broadcasts bring

to them a full knowledge of the issues which affect the lives of the people.

Gone is the day when any man or woman entitled to vote can conscientiously plead ignorance of the issues involved as an excuse for remaining at home on election day. Radio conveys interpretations of party platforms and classifies the various campaign arguments.

Furthermore, the "ins" have no advantage over the "outs" as far as paying for time on the air is concerned; even the President with his hat in the ring for re-election pays the same rate as his opponent for the radio facilities handling a campaign speech. On other occasions free radio time is one of the prerogatives of the President of the United States.

These were among the truths gleaned from the 1928 crusade.

The successful political broadcasters were quick to be convinced that brevity and appeal to reason are two main factors to be kept constantly in mind during a radio campaign. Instead of reaching the mind through emotions, one must reach the emotions through the mind if he is to reach them at all. Discussion of political questions must be fair otherwise it will go into disrepute and act as a boomerang. Radio does not always supply the speaker's per-

sonality, but it does bring millions of people within the speaker's influence.

Listeners are not appreciative of long-drawn-out political arguments. They are willing to listen to pithy statements. A veteran campaigner rightly observed that a visible audience listens as a crowd with aroused emotions but dulled intellects. And he added, "The radio listeners at home listen with unaroused emotions as thinking individuals."

Appeal to reason is what counts.

### *Appealing for Funds*

Candidates receive thousands of letters offering criticism, arguments and all sorts of suggestions for gaining votes, and last but not least, campaign contributions. A radio appeal for funds for the Smith campaign resulted in 4,000 new contributions totaling more than \$70,000. The appeal went over a national hook-up, with a request for from \$1. to \$5. Hundreds who responded said it never occurred to them that such small sums were of any use to a political war chest.

Alfred E. Smith declared:

"The microphone is the mouthpiece of the nation and radio is the medium through which the great issues that confront the country will be brought to

the ears and attention of the voters, no matter where they may be.—Radio brings to the people the opportunity to play the role that they are entitled to play in the election.

“The time is forever past when party leaders speak for their candidates. Radio has made the candidate speak for himself directly to the people. There was a time when the views of the candidate for national office were made to fit the locality he was speaking in, but that time, too, is past. It passed when radio linked the country into one huge audience.”

All eyes were on 1932—who would enter the radio’s unroped arena to oppose Herbert Hoover seeking re-election? One thing was certain, a magnetic radio personality would be an asset on the ledger of Democracy’s political fortunes.

The Republicans met at Chicago and under the greatest array of microphones, some of boutonniere variety suspended among the delegates, others in glass announcerial cages, Mr. Hoover was renominated.

The Republican cohorts with the wolves of a business depression at their heels, quickly scattered to prepare for the crusade against fate and the Democrats.

The radio paraphernalia was left behind in the

Windy City for the Democratic hordes were sweeping down on Chicago to choose their commander-in-chief.

The air was saturated with politics. It had been a foregone conclusion that Hoover would ride the elephant in the parade but the question now was who would sit astride the Democratic donkey? Americans listened all day long and into the night for the answer. When they awoke early in the morning, weary politicians were still undecided—night sessions kept the broadcasters busy all hours.

The conclave appeared to be deadlocked. Leaders warned it would be calamity to the Democratic Party to stage another prolonged fiasco such as that of 1924 when listeners were irked by the constant surge of politics; now a much greater audience was in tune. The impression created by indecision might be disastrous.

One morning the convention suddenly recessed for twelve hours. The rumor spread that a candidate would be named at 8 o'clock. The ears of a keyed-up nation were on Chicago. When the microphones were enlivened the floodgates of bedlam were opened. The noise was terrific; it seemed to indicate a climax was approaching. Those listening were to see politics played in the terms of a game. Roosevelt was on one side: Smith on the other

The gavel signaled the start of the final quarter. The audience through the announcers' eyes saw two "players," William Gibbs McAdoo of California and John Nance Garner of Texas, "run upon the field." Garner handed the votes of the Lone Star State to Roosevelt. McAdoo mounted the platform and flauntingly carried out the terms of a deal; he marched the California delegates into the Roosevelt camp. Then the Roosevelt forces graciously turned their strength to Garner and crowned him the Vice-Presidential running mate.

Many a radio listener was shocked and disillusioned; yet that sort of brazen tactics is considered perfectly proper by politicians—so Roosevelt-Garner lifted high the banner of Democracy and entered the lists to embattle Hoover-Curtis.

### *Showmanship in Politics*

Radio dramatizes politics. A nation-wide audience eavesdrops on the national conventions. Secrecy is cast to the winds; even "confidential" whispers among party leaders on the platform go far astray. Radio brings much of politics out in the open. Candidates are nominated in front of the people; not in the smoke-filled room of a hotel where politicians barter and "hatch" history.

Villagers 2,000 miles away may "watch" the Californian tide flow to Roosevelt; they hear the clamor and hullabaloo as delegates rush to climb upon the bandwagon. By means of radio bulletins, whether in Florida or Oregon, they follow an airplane flying Governor Roosevelt from Albany to Chicago to address the convention; and he makes it an acceptance speech as well as a greeting of thankfulness. The citizens follow every move. The radio spotlight is on him.

The cheers and fanfare echo across the land; the applause, of course, eats up valuable radio time but that is showmanship. More than mere words the ovation may do much psychologically to convince the populace that Roosevelt is the man of the hour.

It is part of the game!

The broadcasters insisted that politics as well as education on the air called for showmanship. If a razor or a mouthwash could be sold to the tunes of Beethoven or Tschaikovsky then the issues of a political campaign called for the embellishments of Sousa or Tin Pan Alley. The politicians caught the idea.

Up went the call for talent. Actors and songsters, bands and orchestras rallied to the aid of their party. The life of the candidate was dramatized while sentimental melodies lured the electorate. Music and

vaudeville vied with the spoken word. There was a barrage of both laid down across the country. The spellbinder found himself sandwiched in between "The Stars and Stripes Forever," and "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here." Politics was sugarcoated.

Franklin D. Roosevelt entered the campaign of 1932 with a never failing salutation, "My friends," (Harding said, "My Countrymen all").

Roosevelt invaded the West to see for himself what was going on out there, and to make personal contacts with the people so that he might learn their problems first hand.

Every key speech was broadcast whether he talked on gold or hogs, wheat or cotton.

The New York Times observed: \*

Governor Roosevelt may be indulging in a bit of harmless political coquetry when he tells the people who flock to see him in the West that he wishes to get into contact with them so as to learn their needs. But they are the ones who are actually making the contact. The great crowds who gather to see him or hear him in the cities through which he has passed are undoubtedly more interested in his personality than anything he has to say.

The great thing for them is to have a direct look at the flesh-and-blood Presidential candidate. Doubtless most of the thousands who

swarm to obtain for themselves this vivid personal impression had many times seen counterfeit presentments of Mr. Roosevelt. Moving pictures and news reels and talkies had made his face and smile and even his voice familiar to them. Yet it all evidently did not lessen their eagerness actually to lay their eyes upon the living man in person.

This continuous demonstration during the course of the Governor's travels may indicate that we have been too hasty in assuming that radio and talking pictures have radically revolutionized our political campaigning. They have undoubtedly wrought a wondrous change in it, but have they destroyed the old human conviction that an actual personality is the most moving and vitalizing thing in the world—even in the world of politics.—In public life, amid all the rough and tumble of our democracy, it still remains true, as Governor Roosevelt has been showing, that a living presence has more power as of a magnet to the multitude than all the dead images of a man that can be got together.

### *Microphone Duels*

Radio is expedient for quick rebuttal; politicians reconnoitered as never before in this 1932 campaign. In the days of Wilson and beyond several weeks usually passed before the rebuttal, and then only a small audience heard the defensive words. Days

passed before the candidate could get to the city where his adversary campaigned and then he probably spoke to an entirely different audience.

But not so in this age of wireless. The counterblast follows immediately while the attack is still fresh in the minds of listeners.

The entire country hears the retort without loss of time. There is no expense of travel, and detailed arrangements for a rally in an auditorium are unnecessary.

Excitement prevailed on the night that President Hoover spoke in New York over a coast-to-coast network; when he signed-off, the ethereal scene shifted immediately to Boston where Franklin D. Roosevelt was standing-by to talk to the nation. Before he entered the arena he had eavesdropped on the President's speech. The microphone presented him with opportunity to retort.

When Carter Glass, one of the silver-tongued orators of the Southland, with his voice keyed like a musical instrument, assailed the Hoover administration's finance policy, he had no sooner stopped talking than Ogden L. Mills, Secretary of the Treasury, came on the air with his suave, aggressive voice to defend the government's fiscal policies and relief efforts. Mr. Mills, speaking from his office in Washington, admitted at the outset that he had listened with

a great deal of interest to Senator Glass. As a microphone duel it was headlined as "Echo of Rapier Politics Era," recalling historic struggles of Burr, Hamilton and Jefferson.

The Virginian was fiery mad; he accused Mr. Mills of bad etiquette. Forcefully this debate revealed radio's potency in rebuttal. Incidentally, it cost the National Democratic Committee \$9,000 for Senator Glass to speak over fifty-three stations. He broadcast more than 10,000 words. Mr. Mills spoke for a half hour in his effort to take the sting out of the Glass broadcast, and the bill was \$4,000.

Up to this time it was believed by some that controversial topics were taboo on the air; but that idea crumbled at the onslaught of politics at the microphone. Impartial discussion was no longer part of the act in "getting the ear of the people."

### *A Dramatic Episode*

Madison Square Garden was packed to the rafters. Old Glory was everywhere. On the platform was a battery of microphones. A tall, sandy haired man came down the ramp to the speaker's lectern. The uproar was terrific. It almost seemed too much for him; he looked rather pale and moved slowly, almost as a sick man. He held up his watch and

pointed to the microphones in an effort to silence the cheers for he was no man to waste time on the air that cost money. He was Calvin Coolidge.

Faithful to party he had come from the quiet of his home in Massachusetts to defend Republicanism; he praised Herbert Clark Hoover and urged his re-election. It was a dramatic episode in politics on the air.

America was at the cross-roads of a crisis. The sun was setting on the 1932 crusade.

A train speeding westward stops at Elko, Nevada; it is late in the evening. Microphones and radio boxes have been hooked-up in the lounge car. Technicians hurry aboard with more electrical paraphernalia. They rush to complete wire connections with the outside world. In five minutes they will be ready to go on the air.

It is election eve. President Hoover is one of several speakers on the program. He walks into the car five minutes before he is scheduled to broadcast. He has just been listening to Calvin Coolidge from his home in Northampton, and other standpatters in various cities projecting final salvos for the G.O.P. With him is Mrs. Hoover, his secretaries, aides, newspaper men and photographers. Inside the train are the most modern furnishings and conveniences;

outside are suggestions of frontier days. It is a dramatic, inspiring moment. The cue comes for the switch to Elko. Everybody on the train is silent.

President Hoover is at the microphone, awaiting the signal to begin. He is on his way home, bound across the Great Divide to vote and to learn the results of the polls. The announcer waves his hand; the President is on the air to fire his final wordy shots in the campaign for reelection.

He urges the people to exercise their right to vote in the realization that the choice to be made might well be of effect for more than four years—"The Presidency is more than executive responsibility. It is the symbol of America's high purpose. The President must represent the nation's ideals, and he must also represent them to the nations of the world. After four years of experience, I still regard this as a supreme obligation."

There seems to be a tinge of sadness in the Hoover voice as it leaves the air. The locomotive whistles and into the night speeds the train across the Rockies, toward Palo Alto.

Few, if any, suspected amid the tumult of that night that Calvin Coolidge had delivered his final declaration for the Republican ticket. It was his parting shot on election eve: "All the teachings of

common sense require us to re-elect President Hoover.—When the times have called for a man one has stood forth. Such is the case now.”

The radio audience or vast sections of it at least, had an abounding faith in Coolidge; his was an era of prosperity. On and off the radio his words of wisdom inspired confidence and thrift. But while he had been in seclusion at Northampton something had happened; the Humpty Dumpty G.O.P. had fallen off the wall and all the Coolidge horses and Coolidge men could not put it together again even by the wizardry of radio.

At midnight the scene shifted to New York. Mr. Roosevelt was to have the last word. The alert Democrats had foreseen just such a situation and contracted far in advance for that witching hour on the air. They relished a whirlwind finish.

In some campaigns the last word might be important but one wonders if the voters have not already made up their minds; if not, then the last word at midnight might be worth \$250,000 for radio facilities. In the Hoover-Roosevelt campaign, however, both could have been silent on the eve of this election for the country disgruntled and distraught by economic unrest was eager for new leadership; America accepted the Roosevelt challenge for a New

Deal and radio did much to crown its resolute campaign.

Election night pulsed with politics. Hoover was on the western edge of the continent; Roosevelt in the east and wreathed in smiles for the returns by 7 o'clock showed the trend. The final count was Roosevelt 22,821,857; Hoover, 15,761,841 and Thomas (Socialist) 884,781.

Roosevelt's pleas to "the forgotten man" had not been in vain; apparently they had been listening.

America was wondering, waiting, watching; Roosevelt entered the nation's capital as triumphant as a Washington. With him came action; events moved swiftly.

The new voice in the White House declared, "This nation will endure as it has endured"; he called for "Anchors Aweigh." The radio bands played "Happy Days Are Here Again." America was on its way!

Roosevelt used radio to perfection. He won at a time when Americans were ready for a new deal. His voice promised it; his was a friendly word. The two R's, Roosevelt and Radio were two powerful forces acting in perfect harmony. Theirs was the song of victory.

For the second time in history a Roosevelt clan went to the White House on March 4, 1933 and radio

went with them. The microphone on its metal stem perched on the Presidential desk more vitalic than an inkwell, more potent in speedy action than a pen, more far reaching than the telephone. The microphone was the gateway to the folks at home; Congress had better behave!

On election night Mr. Roosevelt was proclaimed "the Radio President." Never had a candidate for his high office made such effective use of electromagnetic waves on the checkerboard of politics.

## IV

### LESSONS OF A CAMPAIGN

THERE is plenty of evidence that radio "gets out the votes," at least it helps as various issues such as prohibition and depression, prosperity and gold, Federal spending and taxes, farm relief and unemployment are injected into the campaign. The broadcasters, of course, would like to believe radio a main factor in the total votes; they contend that the increased number of ballots, since the advent of broadcasting, reveals the power of radio's "pull."

Here are the figures: 1920 (no broadcasting) 26,705,346 total vote cast; 1924, 29,022,261; 1928, 36,879,414; and 1932, 39,816,522.

The politicians looked back to the days when printing enabled the mind to be mobilized in silence; now they were also working with an electrified force which empowered the mind to be mobilized in sound. The candidate speaks into a great silence, the meaning of which is not known until the votes are counted.

*Timing the Speeches*

Radio became the ruler of politics in more ways than one. For example, keynote speeches were timed to be on the air when the largest audience would be listening; no longer were they afternoon affairs. The key speeches went through the air at night, after supper-time, when all America might listen. The same rule applied to the acceptance speeches.

"Apparently the existence of the radio audience is introducing a new standard," observed a veteran political writer. He predicted that if the development continued, politics might come to have as high a standard of ethics as prize-fighting.

Politicians managing the conventions take more and more account of the radio audience. More and more in the mechanism of conventions, the audience in the hall is subordinated by the unseen audience. For example, in the 1932 convention a three-hour recess was decreed by Governor Ritchie's (Maryland) insistence that the speeches and demonstrations for him should not occur at a time when radio was busy with commercial and other programs outside the convention. He was aware that the largest audience, considering the country as a whole, is probably ready to listen when the clocks strike 10 or 11 o'clock at night in the east.

*How Many Listen?*

Years ago the sneering question was asked by the manager of a political machine, "Who reads a political speech?" Now they were asking, "Who listens?" Mail told the story. Out of the 17,000,000 radio outfits scattered across the United States, if 100,000 listened that was a record audience compared to any Theodore Roosevelt ever talked to at once; he had to travel to many a city to reach that number, and even then those on the edges of the crowd failed to hear him.

Politicians anxious to know exactly where their darts were striking asked the ethereal statisticians to prove whether they were winning or alienating votes. But those who collected the vital statistics of broadcasting had no yardstick with which to measure the effect of a political warrior who invades the privacy of the home, sparing neither age, sex nor scheduled time, as one commentator described the tactics of the remorseless politician.

The broadcasters, of course, were sure that radio's arrows struck home—but the crafty politicians quoted Longfellow, "I shot an arrow into the air; it fell to earth I knew not where."

They recalled what Lord Rosebery, British Prime Minister in the mauve decade once wrote: "Speeches,

as a rule, even the best, are as evanescent as fireworks or thistledown. They are explored by untimely quotation during the speaker's life and when that useful purpose closes at his death, they cease to be opened at all."

Radio has the fireworks aspect; brilliant while it whirls through space.

### *Do Big Names "Pull"?*

"Big names mean little to the average listener," said a prominent theatrical broadcaster. "Long speeches mean less. What the radio audience wants is good music and entertainment. There has been too much politics on the air. Such blasts as we have heard are not effective. Lengthy talks on reconstruction, a new deal in finances and economics are generally over the head of the average listener. In the end, they usually vote for the one with the winning tie, because they like the color of the tie he wears or the way he combs his hair. The psychology of the radio audience is not new."

The broadcasters in defense of the microphone, however, pointed out that the radio talker has an advantage over a writer in that his words are meteoric instead of permanent; and fallible memory is a

much less fearsome witness in days to come than is the printed page.

The number of radio sets in 1928 was estimated at 8,000,000. The 1930 census which "counted" them raised the figure to 12,000,000 so by 1932 the optimistic broadcasters, with that as a base, estimated 17,000,000—and if each set has an average audience of four, that means a potential audience of 68,000,000 listeners. The year 1936 lifted the estimate to 21,000,000 sets.

Despite this arithmetic, broadcasting does not diminish the crowds at the rallies. In fact, radio apparently whets the appetite for listeners to attend public meetings and catch glimpses of the candidate. The fact that they might sit and listen in the comfort of the home is no incentive to dodge the jostle and jam of the crowds. The doors are stormed; it is a case of come early to get a seat. Man is still a gregarious animal. There are more political rallies and more men on the stump, while loudspeakers on trucks and rooftops belch politics down upon the streets of towns and cities throughout the land. Political exhortation is everywhere.

The larger the crowd the more demand for printed matter, leaflets and pictures of the candidates. And despite the fact that the speech is broadcast, newspapers more than ever print full text the next day;

the people like to read what they hear. Radio by publicizing the campaign intensifies every sort of propaganda.

### *Speaking from Disks*

Obviously, it would be a waste of time, money, words and watts for a Senator or Congressman to conduct his campaign all over the country, so he turns to stations with state and local coverage. Occasionally, it will do him no harm, of course, if invited, to participate in a national rally, for then the folks at home may judge him as a national figure.

The majority of local stations are equipped for electrical transcription broadcasts, that is, they broadcast from records. Senator Arthur Capper, Republican of Kansas, introduced a novel idea by vigorously campaigning over his own station at Topeka, although he was absent. On Tuesday nights, while Congress was in session, he went to the transcription studios in Washington and made a record to be broadcast a few days later in Kansas. In this way he kept the invisible audience in touch with what was transpiring in the capital from week to week and what he was doing for his constituents. Several other Senators and Representatives "kept the ear" of their people in the same way.

*What Listeners Think*

The politician knew what he thought about radio at the end of the 1932 contest; but what did the listener think? That was a more important question. To seek the answer the mail was combed to learn the psychology of the unseen audience from Maine right straight across to California. And there was mail galore as a result of the 1932 campaign; the listeners with pen and pencil gushed just as many words as the orators spouted on the air. If a candidate speaks in Massachusetts he may get more mail from Texas than from New England; it all depends upon what he discusses, tariff walls, cattle prices, cotton or silver.

Truth must be the keynote.

Listeners complained that the announcers at the Roosevelt inaugural abandoned accuracy. Later it became known that the announcers of at least one major network were ordered to "be buoyant and give a colorful picture of optimism." The nation needed it; every bank in the country was closed. Hoover as he came down the ramp at the Capitol looked worried, glum and depressed as he gazed out across the sea of faces. Roosevelt followed with a smile; a serious smile of hope that spread 'round the country.

"It was quite evident," reported an Ithaca listener, "that a studied attempt was being made by certain

individuals to create an impression, and a little of this was of course well taken; but when the clouds themselves began to reflect the new atmosphere the straining point was reached.

"When the time of one station was up, a totally misleading announcement was made to the effect that the parade was concluded. On turning to another station I was surprised to learn that the parade continued for at least another half hour.

"The responsibility of broadcasters to adhere strictly to the facts is very great. No such audience in the world's history ever listened to a single voice as is now the case in coast-to-coast broadcasts. Hence the importance for truth.

"The physical hook-up and technique of the broadcast were unsurpassed, and the broadcasting companies deserve much credit for the able manner of presentation, covering so many details of the activity taking place in Washington. The conclusion is that the human end of the broadcast did not measure up to the physical end of the presentation."

Whether the broadcasters were right or wrong the sunshine of optimism did spread afar with Roosevelt's inaugural as the signal.

One complaint was prevalent in the mail: political candidates talk too long. Years ago the broadcasters

were aware that a fifteen-minute address on the radio was quite enough; in fact, it required a highly interesting speaker and a sparkling topic to hold an invisible audience that length of time. The broadcasters contend that candidates running for the Presidency, for the Governorship or Congress must learn to discard hour-and-a-half speeches and condense their thoughts to fit in a half hour at the most.

### *Advantages of Brevity*

Short speeches not only save time and hold a larger audience but they are more economical for the political parties. They could put across three nation-wide half-hour broadcasts for the price of an hour and a half. And using a shorter period they might contract for a more satisfactory period on the air. There were too many wasted words in the 1932 campaign, chiefly because the oratory was much too long, according to a study of mail from the audience.

Just because a speaker has no adversaries on the air at the same time is no reason to believe he has no competition. He is competing with music far more attractive to ears than an opponent's wordy ballistics.

It is too easy on the radio to turn to something else,

especially when the newspapers carry the complete speech the next morning. Print can be read at will and studied.

The radio audience is resentful when politics obliterates the regular programs. A New Yorker said:

"I have been listening with mounting indignation to the dreary political hash which was so unwisely substituted for the delightful Colonel and Budd. And instead we were declared by the announcer to be "fortunate" in being able to listen to a lady tell us the Democrats alone are responsible for the war debts. We heard her gasp with frightful audibility for breath as she brought forth a dull summary of political proceedings which would have disgraced a tenth-rate reporter on a small-town sheet."

And the broadcasting station answers: "We are certain you will understand that the political situation is so vital to the majority this year that even this inimitable pair must step aside when schedules conflict."

The broadcasters on more than one occasion wondered if disgruntled listeners voted against candidates who talked beyond their scheduled time, and "stole" the time of favorite programs.

The station managers found it extremely ticklish to interrupt a speaker before he finished although he used up all the time for which he had contracted.

Contending "the rights of listeners are paramount, especially when great public questions are under discussion," protests were received from listeners "against the effrontery of the broadcasting companies in taking candidates off the air before they complete their addresses."

### *What Politics Costs*

Radio gleaned at least \$1,000,000 from the 1932 campaign. The total political billing by the Columbia Broadcasting System was \$368,175, of which \$194,624 was Republican, \$167,171 Democratic, and Socialists, \$6,380.

The Republicans negotiated for twenty-nine broadcasts or 17½ hours over WABC network, and the Democrats twenty-three broadcasts that consumed 18½ hours. And in addition the Columbia network contributed fifty-six hours of political broadcasting.

It was estimated, in the case of the National Broadcasting Company, operating two major networks, that the political expenditure ran up to \$1,000,000 and possibly higher.

Time on the air at night is more expensive than in the daytime. An hour rally after sunset on the Columbia hook-up of eighty-two transmitters cost ap-

proximately \$17,000. The WEAf chain listed at \$12,880 an hour and the WJZ coast-to-coast unit \$11,740 for sixty precious minutes, a combination of the major networks meant an expenditure of about \$35,000.

"The approximate cost of these combined hook-ups is \$1,250,000," said Senator C. C. Dill in a broadcast discussion on how much the three major parties spent on transcontinental hook-ups alone. "It is estimated that the major parties spent another \$500,000 or \$750,000 for speeches over sectional networks—state-wide networks and independent station broadcasts not connected with the chain. I have been unable to collect any data as to the amount spent by local candidates, but probably that would amount to \$250,000 or more, making a total of \$2,000,000 spent by committees and candidates for the radio.

"The programs of public addresses which radio stations both on the chain and off the chains contributed in addition must have been worth at least \$1,000,000 more. Adding these amounts spent for political speeches and the amounts contributed by radio stations in the last four months, we have a grand total of approximately \$5,000,000 worth of broadcasting during the campaign."

After looking over the mail the broadcasters

dubbed the National Conventions of 1932, "the greatest program of public interest we ever put on the air."

This does not mean every letter was one of praise. There is always thorny protest intermingled with ethereal bouquets.

Postmarks are evidence that the million or more words uttered within range of the electrical ears at Chicago reached every nook and corner of the land. Those who listened found a myriad of reasons to write. They were irritated or gracious, offended or delighted. The letters disclosed the many different reactions a speech may have on a cosmopolitan audience as far-flung and diversified in opinion as a radio assemblage.

### *Incentives for Writing*

It seems that the only relief a radio listener gets when stirred to a pitch of anger or inspired to the heights of joy is to shut off the set, tune to another station or write a letter. Listening-in for more than a decade has created a habit of letter-writing. The mis-sive gives vent to the feelings, whether injured or appreciative. The letter is one way the unseen audience has of "getting back at the radio." Others of less argumentative nature, merely snap the "off" switch.

When one looks over the mail, however, it is apparent that in political broadcasting hosts find peace of mind by writing. That probably accounts for the unprecedented mail response. When the conventions signed off sine die, it was the signal for the auditor to have his inning with the written word. And so the radio people read while the listeners were recovering from the bombardment of oratory.

One listener, recuperating from pleurisy, discovered that broadcasts from the convention gave speed to time which might otherwise have borne heavily on him. He confided that "radio has almost made a Democrat out of me."

A New Jersey citizen praised the tireless efforts of the announcers, thanked the commercial sponsors for staying off the air and added a bit of hope that all the speeches of both parties would be broadcast right up to Election Day.

Commentators were thanked many times for pungent humor, terse phrases, clear, impartial, thought-provoking talks. Others condemned them as "prejudiced and hostile."

Many heralded the broadcasts as instructive and pointed out that radio from national political bull-rings enables the general public "to see how the machinery works to select Presidential candidates."

Hundreds reported that they thoroughly enjoyed the first real good look behind the scenes of the political performance.

### *Value of Night Sessions*

The Democratic meeting, according to the letters, attracted a greater audience than the Republican conclave, because it featured night sessions, affording more people opportunity to be at loudspeakers. A Montana listener, however, called the Republican broadcast "as instructive and thrilling entertainment as ever came to us by radio," while a citizen of Oregon confessed, "I am a Democrat from now on."

"Broadcasting of the conventions should do a great deal to inform the victims of politics," said a Missourian. "We have caught a glimpse of how the political organizations operate. After hearing the whistle of the Republican steam roller, I hopefully awaited the Democrats; but after hearing the row over seating Huey Long I began to have my doubts which were not removed by later events. Such broadcasting ought to arouse intelligent sentiment among the voters for revision of the nominating machinery so that candidates for high office will be selected by popular choice instead of by a group of politicians.

A New Jerseyite summed up the general sentiment of the broadcasting as "a short, intensive laboratory course in civil government."

Complaints covered a multitude of ethereal sins. There were some who protested against failure to broadcast every minute of the conventions. A Pennsylvanian arraigned the program sponsors who failed to surrender their time to politics as "guilty in lack of enterprise in failing to hitch their ballyhoo to this the greatest national sporting event." More than one listener thought that he sensed censorship on the part of the broadcasters.

Prohibition repeal and unemployment inspired hundreds of letters. The politicians caught a cross-section of public opinion by reading the radio stations' mail.

Announcers were condemned for halting and hesitating. A Californian declared that an announcer "uncertain of his words is subject to confusion of thought and language." He then proceeded to define the ideal political announcer as one who "is level-headed, poised, quick-witted, gifted with a ready command of language, fluent speech, thoroughly posted on all issues and personalities involved."

Someone suggested that radio stations should adopt a slogan, "We take you to the thick of the fight."

The broadcasters notice that the only sure way to put a name or address across on the radio is to spell it. Letters received by the political commentators, Husing, Wile and Kaltenborn, after the conventions indicated that pronunciation is not sufficient.

Many letters were sent to Huesting, Housing and Using, and others were addressed to Weil, Wilde and While. But it was Kaltenborn's name that drew the greatest number of variations. It turned out to be, in various letters, Klattenbird, Coldingborn, Cunninghamborn, Cattyburn, Kittyburn, Killingbane and even Cattleboom. William Hard was often addressed "Hart." This seems to indicate that words presented orally are not recognized as accurately as when presented visually.

Evidence of the closeness of listener interest was contained in the letters that essayed to set the announcers and commentators aright on various matters. One announcer referred to "a terrific convention," and that colloquial use of the adjective drew fire from a purist, who contended that "terrific" could only mean "appalling," "terrible" or "exciting dread." Again a reference to the Chicago Stadium organ as "the largest in the world," brought a 600-word letter from a Rochester musician who contended that there were several hundred larger organs in the world.

The unknown and invisible in politics as in everything else are always hidden in an element of mystery. That is why broadcasters are continually puzzled about their audience. They are aware, of course, of everything that takes place up to the microphone. They control the electrical flow to that mute point. Beyond lurks mystery. Letters received several days later give a partial report, but the majority of the radio audience never write or telegraph applause or criticism.

In some respects politics annoys the broadcast showmen as much as it does some of the auditors. They contend that too much political oratory does not easily dovetail with the usual fanfare of the air.

Furthermore, the broadcasters complain that the politicians do not cooperate on well-planned programs. The result is that each party often broadcasts in competition with itself. For example, time was purchased for President Hoover and at the same hour on other stations Republican spellbinders were on the air. And while Governor Roosevelt was speaking Democrats were "performing" from other stations.

"The result," said a radio official, "is that a candidate may think he is talking to 25,000,000 listeners, but he may have only 10,000,000 or less, because members of his own party are competing with him on the air. The political parties have not learned how to

use radio to the greatest advantage. The politicians neglect to add an element of entertainment to attract a large audience, which otherwise will not tune in. The major parties should have efficient organizations to cooperate with the broadcasting stations, otherwise much of their effort is wasted."

While Governor Roosevelt was broadcasting his views on the bonus and Federal expenses from Pittsburgh, one night over WJZ in New York a Democratic rally at Tammany Hall was whooping up over WOR. While Mr. Roosevelt was talking former Governor Alfred E. Smith was also on the air pledging his support to the national ticket. This competition, of course, was chiefly confined to the metropolitan area, because WOR was not in a network as was WJZ.

That is one place where print has it over radio. The listener can only hear one speech at a time. The reader can digest any number at leisure.

Talks are often broadcast with little or no regard for the size of the audience or for time. For example, it is wasted speech to try to talk to business men in the daytime, when a speech to women voters might be more effective. The time to reach the business man is at night, and after 10 P. M., New York time, if a coast-to-coast audience is desired; or locally between 8 and 10 o'clock.

The broadcasting organizations have advised the parties to perfect radio committees thoroughly versed in the mechanics of broadcasting. In the 1932 campaign they frequently waited until the last minute to make broadcasting arrangements, and by so doing they missed being listed in the radio programs in the daily papers.

The public in several instances has been surprised to tune in for a scheduled musical show and find a politician warming up instead.

One night a 'cello soloist was listed for performance at 10:15 P. M., and when the audience turned the dial to that point John Nance Garner, Democratic candidate for the Vice Presidency, was broadcasting. The program department of WJZ reported it was not aware of Mr. Garner's intention until noon that day. That is not good radio planning.

The Republican rally at Madison Square Garden at which former President Coolidge participated was planned weeks ahead, but final broadcasting arrangements were not announced until the afternoon prior to the event. Such announcements should be made a week in advance so that the entire country is aware of the network to be utilized and the time of the speech, otherwise the audience is diminished. Complaints were received that many in outlying areas

missed the Coolidge talk because they were not aware it was to be a radio event.

Broadcasters assert they make a slim profit on politics. If the speaker goes over the allotted time the broadcasters are reluctant to shut him off, because they are then accused of insulting a candidate and of partisanship or censorship. That means the sponsored program which the speaker consumes must be canceled and the broadcasting company must pay the talent. This cost more than \$10,000 on several occasions during the political battle of 1932.

And when the stations cancel a favorite musical, replacing it with political discussion, letters and telephone calls complain. The invisible audience, it seems, has many likes and dislikes. All do not cherish politics, no matter who speaks or how fine the oratory. When President Hoover, at Des Moines, overlapped Ed Wynn's comic time, the studio of WEAf received 800 telephone protests, while the 60-station network had a total of 6,000 calls. Richmond reported 500 complaints, Worcester 200 and Rochester 250.

And so the broadcasters are usually delighted when Election Day passes. But they must be good to politics because it is classed as "public interest, convenience and necessity."

*Power of the Fireside Chat*

Roosevelt as he stood on the crest of the battlefield after the campaign, saw one formidable weapon intact among the smouldering ruins of a silent Republicanism. That weapon was the microphone. He picked it up and laid it victoriously on his desk in the White House. It might come in handy again. The campaign was history but he faced another war, that called for rapid-fire action. He had pledged leadership and now he was ready to move forward with all America as a united army to battle a destructive business depression, to drive fear and timidity from the land.

He lost no time; within a few days after his inauguration, on March 12, to be exact, a Sunday night, he went on the air for his first "fireside chat," immediately revealing his purpose:

"I want to talk a few minutes with the people of the United States about banking,"—and a trans-continental network of more than one hundred and fifty stations distributed his words to countless homes. A deluge of pledges for support flooded the White House by telephone, telegraph and mail, revealing that the fleeting words had found their mark and accomplished their purpose as big guns of faith and courage against the enemy—fear. The voice that

took wing from the banks of the Potomac did the trick.

"Was I all right?" inquired the President, when he finished his "chat."

Smiles and nods of approval were all about him. He had opened a new vista in radio with his ring of sincerity; by a friendly conversational tone he showed how the reading of a manuscript ceases to become a speech. The "fireside chat" became the long range cannon in the history and politics of America.

The President broadcast twenty-six times in his first year in the White House. As "the Radio President" he became a popular figure on the air, but he sensed the danger in too many "appearances" mindful that "familiarity" might not be a wise policy.

Broadcasters in their zeal to portray events of the day dramatized scenes in which the President played a major role. To add realism they used "phantoms" to mimic the Roosevelt voice. Soon it was suggested that they drop the "ghosts" lest members of the unseen audience erroneously believe they were hearing Mr. Roosevelt in person; too much imitation would make the voice from the White House commonplace on the air, with the result that it might not gain as much attention when actually at the microphone.

Listeners do not always hear the opening of the

program and might be led to believe a mimic an actual broadcast by Mr. Roosevelt. And in the case of long-distance short-wave broadcasts, which may be bombarded by static or attacked by fading, a wrong impression might be gleaned by foreign listeners. So with all these thoughts in mind, Presidential impersonators went into discard.

Radio loomed as President Roosevelt's modernized Big Stick. He engaged no specific periods for Presidential broadcasts. Nevertheless, the major networks anticipated that he would turn to the White House microphone "to talk it out with the people" when occasion called for such action.

These talks were well planned, strategic moves based on numerous conferences with advisers. Congressional mailbags during the week following a Roosevelt "chat" have revealed to Senators and Representatives that multitudes lend ear to the President. The record response indicates radio is a powerful, psychological force. The political effect is tremendous.

On the morning after Mr. Roosevelt's seventh "fireside chat," The New York Times observed:\*

The President "went on the air" again Sunday night, and once more showed his mastery of that medium of appeal to the people. His tone

\* April 30, 1935.

and manner were as near perfection as anyone can come over the radio. He was friendly, composed, ingratiating. The whole address was like that of a man sitting down with his neighbors to talk over matters of deep concern to them as well as to himself.

He confirmed the general conviction that no politician of his time equals him in the adroit use of this means of approach to his fellow-citizens all over the land. The greatest campaigners and advocates of other days would gasp with astonishment if they could come back and see their audiences of three or four thousand people transformed into groups of listeners that may easily have numbered ten or twelve millions. The invention has wrought enormous changes in our political life.

These chats are as dangerous as they are powerful. Friends and enemies "hang on" every word. Motives are studied from every angle. Debate is stirred throughout the country; the cue is "Did you hear the President last night?"

The Roosevelt chats arose out of a crisis and for that reason the impression spread that a chat meant a crisis was at hand or pending. But Mr. Roosevelt wisely tried to brush aside such ideas by "counseling with the people," and by reporting on his stewardship. The fact remains, however, that the chats are looked upon by the public as important news events; the President has something important to say else he

would not go on the air. If he tells them what they have already read in the papers he puts himself in a class with a radio actor attempting to repeat an act; and that doesn't go on the radio. The show must be fresh; so must the chat. What a President says in a "fireside chat" might well decide his political destiny; a mere chat might be the climax of a White House career.

### *Opening of the 1936 Campaign*

Only a few January days had dropped off the 1936 calendar when the broadcasters found themselves within range of the rumble of another national political campaign. The Democrats selected Philadelphia as the convention site, and Cleveland was chosen by the Republicans. Who, they wondered, could match the Roosevelt voice?

Governor Alf M. Landon of Kansas forcefully tossed his hat into the G.O.P. ring, defining himself in a 45-minute broadcast as "a constitutional liberal." At times his words of economic wisdom glistened like the thrift creed of Coolidge, but his non-sectional voice was more like that of Hoover with the ends of sentences dropping off to a lower pitch.

It was noted that "the clear thinking" Landon used "simple, homely words" and on the air he sounded

sincere, "a man of sound judgment and moderate opinions," as he appealed for economy, common sense and better housekeeping in government. William Franklin Knox, selected as the Vice Presidential nominee on the Republican ticket, is called "a splendid, vigorous speaker." His voice falls more into the ministerial class. He "preaches" more as a business man, while Landon "the Kansas Coolidge," talks in a more "neighborly" spirit.

### *An Old Star Twinkles*

The 1936 political pot began to boil. Veterans, more or less silent since the end of the 1932 campaign, began to return to the "mike." Alfred E. Smith was one of them; some believed he had gone off on an orbit that would never bring him back to the political universe after the breach between Franklin D. Roosevelt and him had widened in the years since the banners of the New Deal unfurled.

Any doubt that Al Smith's days were over as a most effective "actor" at the microphone, must have been dispelled in the minds of those who tuned-in his "bludgeon attack on the New Deal" at the American Liberty League dinner on Jan. 25, 1936. His "historic utterance" on that occasion was heralded as a bugle call for revolt against the Roosevelt New Deal

forces, because of betrayal of the solemn pledges in the Democratic platform of 1932.

Press comment revealed widespread recognition of Mr. Smith's talents as a broadcaster, referring to his speech as one of "trenchant phrases"; "picturesque language"; "swift, sure strokes"; "simple, vivid and colloquial"; "a masterful summary"; "his aim was deadly, as he dealt plank by plank with the platform, pointing out its violated promises." He was editorialized as "the super-showman; master of the phrase, the inflection and the pause." And said, The New York Times:

He is the hardest-hitting political speaker of his time. He also has a marvelous gift for showmanship. Wit and ridicule flow easily from him, and make old subjects seem fresh and vivid. His pungent and picturesque phrases linger in the mind after the substance of his speech has partly evaporated. . . .

Here is a sample of the "Happy Warrior's" extemporaneous style:

No administration in the history of the country came into power with a more simple, a more clear, or a more inescapable mandate than the party that was inaugurated on the 4th of March in 1933, and listen—no candidate in the history of the country ever pledged himself more un-

equivocally to his party than did the President who was inaugurated on that day.

Well, here we are. Millions and millions of Democrats, just like myself, all over the country, still believing in that platform. What we want to know is, why wasn't it carried out?

And listen—there is only one man in the United States of America who can answer that question!

. . . . Now, what is worrying me is: Where does that leave us millions of Democrats? My mind is all fixed upon the convention in June in Philadelphia. The committee on resolutions is about to report. The preamble to the platform is:

"We, the representatives of the Democratic party, in convention assembled, heartily endorse the Democratic Administration."

What happened to the recital of Jefferson and Jackson and Cleveland when that resolution was read out? Why, for us it is a washout. There is only one of two things we can do, we can either take on the mantle of hypocrisy or we can take a walk, and we will probably do the latter. . . ."

The effectiveness of Mr. Smith's words as they slid down the western slope of the Rockies, was noted by the San Francisco Chronicle: "One could almost see the shades of Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson and Grover Cleveland applauding as Alfred E. Smith laid down his six suggestions to his 'friends on Capitol Hill.' "

Several nights later over the same radio facilities, Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas, Smith's running-mate in the 1928 campaign, broadcast a reply to Smith's scathing attack on the New Deal. Radio had again endeavored to live up to the law of fair play—both sides of the controversial issue had been given a chance.

### *The "New Hoover" Appears*

Heralded as "the new Hoover," Herbert Hoover also came back into the limelight in 1936 as an entirely different radio personality; gone was the monotone voice that characterized him during the presidency. His speech was crisp, more concrete and sparkling with humor.

It was observed that "the Ex-President has become one of the most arresting speakers on public affairs." His verbal thrusts snapped with irony and sarcasm. Never did "the old Hoover" have such gusto. Either Mr. Hoover or someone at his side had learned the art of writing a radio speech, and Mr. Hoover had learned how to deliver it.

He painted effective word pictures. For example, the Democratic attitude toward economic recovery as like that of the Chanticleer loudly crowing over the sunrise which it has caused. He suggested a white

rabbit as the symbol of the New Deal Party because "it travels in uncertain directions at high speed; it multiplies rapidly."

Hoover on the air wasn't what he used to be; he had greatly improved. His old attitude toward the "mike" seemed like that of a person who picks up the telephone and just talks; but the microphone calls for more showmanship and artistry than does the telephone.

And Mr. Hoover had learned that speech-making isn't what it used to be.

"There was a time that you could go around the country making the same speech at each town," he commented. "This way you could polish up the speech as you went along. But now with radio speech-making is hard work. A speech is good only once, because the public is quick to detect repetition. I do a lot of research and spend two or three weeks on each of my speeches."

This was "the new Hoover" speaking, but like the sprinting runner trailing in the last lap of a marathon, he got his radio "wind" too late to win the race—in this case the Republican nomination to enter the lists in a second campaign against Roosevelt.

There were whispers too that Roosevelt despite his alliance with radio would enter the 1936 contest intent on a personal nation-wide tour, casting aside

the old-time tradition of a conservative, dignified campaign for a White House occupant with his hat in the ring for re-election. Back-platform appearances and friendly, homely speeches were favored to broadcasts from the White House porch. Mindful of the ancient Chinese proverb that "seeing once is better than hearing 100 times," the Democrats knew that sight would stamp Mr. Roosevelt's personality upon the people far more magnetically than his spoken words plucked from space miles away from him.

As the political scouts began to lay out their plans and consult with the broadcasters, they discovered that in four years the networks had increased in size and costs had gone up too. An hour rally after sunset on the Columbia chain of ninety-six stations in 1936 costs approximately \$18,395 compared to \$17,000 in 1932; WEAf's 65-station charge had increased from \$12,000 an hour to \$16,040; and WJZ's rate card for a 63-station "web" specified \$14,640 for sixty minutes, while in 1932 it was \$11,740 for that network, although there were fewer transmitters in it. On top of this there is the Mutual Broadcasting System of four high-power stations, which charges \$3,025 for an evening hour. So the approximate total for an hour on these four networks is \$52,100, and that does not count independent stations that might also handle the program.

Talk may be cheap, but not on the air. Radio words are costly and ought to be chosen with care.

The broadcasters swarmed into the 1936 political arenas and festooned the auditoriums with microphones including one for each delegation; the Republicans assembled on June 9 at Cleveland and put the names of Landon and Knox on the ticket. The Democrats met at Philadelphia on June 23 to renominate Roosevelt-Garner. The convention network of more than 200 stations from Portland, Me., to Honolulu broke all records in handling such a quadrennial event called, "a potent factor in education." Then the political cohorts scattered to campaign; Landonians singing as their battle song that lilting prairie tune "Oh! Susanna!" reminiscent of covered wagon days; Roosevelt's legions chanting, "Happy Days Are Here Again."

## V

### LAWS AND ETHICS

WHENEVER the American system of broadcasting is attacked, some Patrick Henry always jumps to his feet to explain that the American plan, unhampered by strict edicts as in many foreign lands, is as free as the trees in an autumn gale to be pruned naturally by the winds of public opinion.

The broadcaster in the United States has always argued that the listener "rules the roost"—that he gets what he wants. He is the arbiter. If he frowns on the so-called "nightmare" programs at bedtime, then the mail will pronounce a verdict that will purge the horror and blood-curdling elements from the children's hour. If the announcer bespeaks too much ballyhoo and rudely interrupts the entertainment, the only sure cure, according to the showmen, is public opinion. It's what the listener thinks that counts.

#### *Is Censorship Enforced?*

Censorship is a prerogative American broadcasters

assert they do not possess, yet occasionally a speaker charges his speech was suppressed.

It is explained by the station officials that censorship is not practiced. In fact, censorship is a power the law does not give even to the Federal Communications Commission. But when a speaker is barred from the air, the station's conduct is challenged as a "direct blow at free speech."

The broadcasters, in defense, explain that they are liable under the law of libel and slander. They must protect themselves. To do so they reserve the right to see in advance copies of speeches to be delivered through their microphone. Some request the speeches seventy-two hours before broadcasting time; others adhere to a twenty-four hour rule. Some have such a regulation but confess they are lax in enforcing it. They contend if a person makes a speech in bad taste it blots his reputation, and, therefore, the majority of speakers are extremely careful in what they confide to the microphone.

The question that arises is whether the stations' so-called "self-preservation rule" of submitting a talk in advance, in order to guard against libel and slander, amounts to censorship. If so, it is contrary to the Communications Act of 1934. The ether over the United States belongs to the people. No station has a vested right in a wave length. Freedom of

speech is the keynote. A nonpartisan attitude on the part of American broadcasters is encouraged under the law. The doctrine of free speech must be held inviolate.

The Coolidge era was marked with considerable radio legislation, including the Radio Act of 1927, and appointment of the first Federal Radio Commission.

Here are several Coolidge precepts in his effort to guide the legislators:

In its broad aspects, radio is a new agency brought by science to our people which may, if properly safeguarded, become one of our greatest blessings. It should render possible a more complete understanding of our national problems. It should bring to the fireside large contributions toward entertainment and education. With all its great possibilities, it is accompanied with a most intricate technology and a most intricate relationship to the government.

—No monopoly should be allowed to arise, and to prevent it the control of the channels through the ether should remain as much in the hands of the government, and therefore of the people, as the control of navigation upon our waters; that while we retain the fundamental rights in the hands of the people to the control of these channels we should maintain the widest degree of freedom in their use.

Liberty is not license and in this new instru-

ment of science there is an opportunity for greater license even than in the use of print, for while parents may exclude corrupting literature from the home, radio reaches directly toward our children.

There is a great responsibility on the part of those who transmit material over the radio that there should be no malice or slander through these channels. Entirely aside from the legal liability that may be involved, there is double injury because those who are wronged can have no opportunity to reply.

### *License Can Be Revoked*

While the Federal Communications Commission has no power of censorship, it can, however, cancel a station's license when application is made for renewal at the end of every six months if, in the opinion of the commission, the station has failed in "public interest, convenience and necessity." That is the law. It is the commission's strongest arm. Legally it compels the broadcasters to play fair.

The Communications Law states:

Nothing in this act shall be understood or construed to give the commission the power of censorship over radio communications or signals transmitted by any radio station, and no regulation or condition shall be promulgated or fixed by the commission which shall interfere with

the right of free speech by means of radio communication. No person within the jurisdiction of the United States shall utter any obscene, indecent or profane language by means of radio communication.

The broadcasters in general have also been guided by this text of the law :

If any licensee shall permit any person who is a legally qualified candidate for any public office to use a broadcasting station he shall afford equal opportunities to all other such candidates for that office in the use of such broadcasting station, and the commission shall make rules and regulations to carry this provision into effect: Provided, That such licensee shall have no power of censorship over the material broadcast under the provisions of this section. No obligation is hereby imposed upon any licensee to allow the use of its station by any such candidate.

This stipulation in the law has saved the broadcasters in several instances from embarrassing situations. They are guided by the spirit of this provision whether the speaker is a political candidate or not.

The listener alone, equipped with the radio's off-switch and tuning dial, has the power of censorship at his fingertips, in his own home.

Incidentally, the Supreme Court of Nebraska in

interpreting the section of the Radio Act relative to the use of broadcasting facilities to qualified candidates for public office has held that it means, "no censorship of words as to their political or partisan trend, but does not give a licensee any privilege to join and assist in the publication of a libel nor grant any immunity from the consequences of such action."

*Policies of the Networks*

"We have no policy of censorship," said John Royal, vice president and program director of the National Broadcasting Company. "We are careful whom we invite to broadcast, and once invited we would not censor. We do not expect men and women in public life to say anything we would be ashamed of. We know they have a sense of dignity and responsibility. We have no rule to see their manuscripts in advance. It often happens that a speech is written only a few minutes before the broadcast, and in some instances the talk is delivered extemporaneously from notes.

"During political campaigns on several occasions we have asked speakers to sign waivers so we would not be responsible for what they said under the laws of libel and slander. But we seldom do that. Men in

public life, of course, may expect a certain amount of criticism, and in cases of controversial subjects we give all sides equal opportunity."

The policy of the Columbia Broadcasting System, according to a representative of that organization, provides that manuscripts must be read in advance by the program division, chiefly for timing.

"If a manuscript includes something considered to be in violation of good taste, suggestions are made for changes and editing," explained the Columbia spokesman. "In such cases the heads of the program and production departments are consulted. If the speech is of a violent nature, leading executives and legal counsel decide whether it should be broadcast. No one person has the authority to ban a speech. There are no exceptions to the rule of submitting the manuscripts in advance. What we guard against is libel and slander."

"He who broadcasts broadcasts at his peril." Thus did A. L. Ashby, General Counsel of the National Broadcasting Company, paraphrase the ever-present danger of libel damage suits in an address before the Teachers of Business Law in Collegiate Schools of Business in New York. He pointed out that the right to engage in the broadcasting business is predicated solely upon Federal franchise, because broadcasting is essentially a form of interstate commerce. That

franchise is in the form of a license issued by the Federal Communications Commission.

"In order to serve the public interest, the broadcaster is anxious to avoid broadcasting defamatory matter," said Mr. Ashby. "He also wishes to avoid liability from damage suits on this score. There is no Federal statute defining the extent of liability of the broadcaster for radio defamation but the few courts which have treated of the question have held the broadcaster to be liable. In none of those cases was the defamatory statement made by an employee of the broadcasting company, but, nevertheless, the broadcasting company was considered to be a joint tortfeasor. What is contained in the ordinary commercial program is first reduced to writing—a 'continuity' which is submitted to the station in advance of the broadcast."

Broadcasters have, of course, an opportunity to determine whether a speech contains any defamatory statement and are, therefore, willing to take the risk of a suit for defamation respecting such continuity. Cases, however, arise in which the station owner is liable in damages, notwithstanding he is powerless to prevent the defamation. Such a situation arises in instances where the performer deviates from the manuscript. Before the operators are physically able to cut off his statement the damage is done.

"Another peculiar instance of the unfair imposition of liability upon the broadcaster arises with respect to so-called political speeches," continued Mr. Ashby. "Under the law, if a candidate for public office is permitted to broadcast over a station then his opponent must be afforded equal facilities and in neither event is the broadcaster permitted to edit or modify in any respect the speech of the candidate. Nevertheless, if either of such candidates defames another the broadcasting station is jointly responsible."

### *Wisconsin's Plan*

Wisconsin allows all political parties to broadcast their campaign views on government free of charge. The cost element is met by the free use of State-owned stations. The State, however, undertakes no censorship.

It is believed that if each party is allowed equal opportunity to present its own case over the State stations the voter can get a more adequate understanding of the current political issues, governmental problems, and can vote more intelligently.

The use of money by parties has been a problem. Wisconsin specifies limits on the amount of money that can be properly spent. It is often asserted that

those parties without large financial resources are handicapped because they cannot place their arguments adequately before the voters. The State by placing radio facilities without charge at the disposal of each party or group takes a step toward meeting this situation. The stations for certain periods set their facilities aside for the use of all parties. Schedules for the four political groups are drawn up after lots are drawn.

It is mutually agreed that the programs shall be limited to a discussion of State issues (or national issues when the candidates for the United States Senate are the speakers). Candidates for local or district offices may be invited to discuss party issues, but the State radio stations shall not be used for local or district campaigns.

It is further mutually agreed that station officials will not undertake to censor in any way the material presented. (It is taken for granted that all speakers are desirous of avoiding charges that might be regarded as violations of the law of libel.) It is further agreed that these arrangements are experimental in nature and should not necessarily be regarded as a precedent for future campaigns; that a meeting should be held after the primary election to draw up rules governing the use of the two State stations

WHA and WLBL in the pre-election campaign. At the time of the broadcast the speaker is requested to deposit at the studio seven copies of the speech.

President Roosevelt's high regard for the power of radio is found in the headlines of January 1, 1936: "Congress to hear President in a night session; he seeks a 'fireside chat'; nation will be audience."

This was the first time a President ever delivered his opening message to Congress at a night session and the second time in history that a Congress assembled at night to hear a Presidential communication delivered in person by the Chief Executive. President Wilson was the first; he read his historic war message in April, 1917, but, of course, there was no broadcasting then.

### *A Formula For Fairness*

President Roosevelt's surprise move was set for 9 P. M., "to catch the hour when millions can tune in." Congress was the dramatic background; the "sound effects."

Henry P. Fletcher, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, quickly protested that the major networks should allot to Republican spokesmen on some closely following day the same amount

of time over the same stations at the same hour given to the President.

William S. Paley, President of the Columbia Broadcasting System, replied that his organization "will continue to distinguish between the office of the President and the Government, on the one hand, and the political parties and their candidates on the other without regard to whether a candidate is in office or out.—It is not possible or wise for broadcasting to adopt a mathematical formula for fairness.—We shall try to apportion time among the political candidates and their supporters with fairness and with good editorial judgment."

Merlin H. Aylesworth, Vice Chairman of the National Broadcasting Company, wired Mr. Fletcher that in accordance with the established policy of NBC of making its facilities available to responsible speakers for discussion of both sides of public questions affecting the national welfare, "we are glad to afford the representative or representatives of the Republican party whom you may select the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company for such discussions from time to time."

The major networks, which can assemble at least 200 transmitters, have formally and publicly placed their facilities at the disposal of the Government.

They regard this privilege of serving as a direct and immediate means of communication between the President and the citizens of the country, the greatest opportunity to adhere to the law of "public interest, convenience and necessity."

The broadcasters, however, are none too anxious that all Government officials suddenly "take to radio like a duck to water." The station managers find themselves in a delicate position, standing between a sponsor who has contracted for time on the air, and a Congressman or other official who is provided the facilities gratis. And, of course, when a commercially sponsored program is sidetracked the broadcasting organization loses revenue.

It seems that it is no easy task in diplomacy to convince a Senator that he should wait his turn to broadcast until the bedtime story, a crooner or a jazz band has completed a performance, thereby relinquishing the microphone for a talk on banking, economics or taxes.

The station officials point to the \$3,000,000 a year which a coast-to-coast network pays to the telephone company for land wires. That is radio's big overhead, so the networks wonder what might happen to their regular business if they were too frequently forced to clear the wires and waves for a governmental program. The broadcasters on such an oc-

casions are in a unique predicament. They have no vested rights in space.

### *Dramatizing Political Issues*

Differences in opinion broke out on a wide front when the Republican National Committee in 1936 made a move to attack by means of dramatized political issues. Several recorded programs entitled, "Liberty at the Cross Roads," were etched on disks and following auditions application was made for network facilities at commercial rates. The major network broadcasting officials promptly answered, "No."

Lenox R. Lohr, President of the National Broadcasting Company, stated that his organization seeks to have presented to radio listeners the various sides of political issues and to have them presented fairly and adequately. He said the company tries to render such service on the basis of straightforward statement of fact and opinion openly and directly made by responsible spokesmen.

"The programs which you have offered to us, using actors to give dramatic skits on the air, involve the fictionizing of important political issues now before the country," said Mr. Lohr.—"To accept such dramatic programs would place the discussion of

vital political and national issues on the basis of dramatic license, rather than upon a basis of responsibly stated fact or opinion."

William S. Paley, President of the Columbia Broadcasting System, outlined the CBS policy in regard to dramatized politics and presented "a complete document" on the subject, the following:

Appeals to the electorate should be intellectual and not based on emotion, passion or prejudice. We recognize that even the oratorical discussion of campaign issues can be to a degree stamped with the aforementioned flaws, but we are convinced that dramatization would throw the radio campaign almost wholly over to the emotional side.

Then, too, we believe that the dramatic method, by its very nature, would tend to over-emphasize incidents of minor importance and significance, simply because of the dramatic value.

While we realize that no approach to the electorate is absolutely ideal, we believe American voters have long been trained to discriminate among the assertions of orators whereas we do not believe they could discriminate fairly among dramatizations, so that the turn of national issues might well depend on the skill of warring dramatists rather than on the merits of the issue debated.

A decision to forego the immense revenues which

might be obtained for the sale of time for propaganda, Mr. Paley explained, is based on two main points:

- (1) We felt that the exercise of the wisest editorial judgment we are able to bring to bear, rather than the ability of others to pay, should govern decisions as to what subjects should be discussed and what subjects lacked sufficient public interest in proportion to other things to merit discussion and, further, that such editorial judgment should govern the amount of time devoted to such discussion in a given case.
- (2) We have an absolute conviction that the air would be misused were such discussion confined to those causes or advocates of causes who were able to pay and we would very quickly build up an undemocratic and un-American situation in which the air belonged to those with money. This would result in some things not being heard at all and in one side of others being preponderantly presented.

"I think it must be obvious that if anything like program balance is to be maintained, and experience as to what constitutes good broadcasting is to be applied, the broadcasting system rather than the user or would-be user must dictate program policy," continued Mr. Paley. "Otherwise it would be impossible to give to the public in either quality or quantity anything like a balanced ration of education, discussion,

high class entertainment, popular entertainment, news, and all the other things which the public wants."

### *A Code of Ethics*

It was at this early stage of the 1936 campaign that Owen D. Young, industrialist, in a plea for temperate speech, gave the broadcast orator a creed. And well might each microphone be engraved with these words of his:

—may we not appeal for the choice word and the measured phrase, spoken with malice toward none and charity toward all.

Picturing the microphone as "a giant reflector of the voice," and radio as "a sounding board of the world," Mr. Young pointed to the dangers of carelessness or intemperance in the use of words and emphasized the fact that every radio speaker on his individual freedom to speak has superimposed in a very real sense a kind of trusteeship for the nation.

Said Mr. Young:

Freedom of speech for the man whose voice can be heard a few hundred feet is one thing. Freedom of speech for the man whose voice may be heard around the world is another. We defend them both and will to the uttermost, but

we cannot be blind to the increasing dangers of carelessness or intemperance in their use.

The radio transmitter is one of the great central power plants of public opinion, and public opinion is the master of our politics.

The same extravagance of statement, the same carelessness, the same appeal to emotions, which stirred the audience in the ballroom of the country hotel 100 years ago, is freely resorted to yet, before the great central sounding board of the nation. The gibe, the exaggeration, the exuberance, even though rhetorical only, which may have relieved the lonely pioneer on his way home over a muddy road, and so have been excusable, may become, when uttered by a voice of great authority before a master sounding board while millions listen, an agency of irremediable injury.

And the broadcasters quite agreed that if all radio orators followed Mr. Young's tenets, the listener even during the heat of a political contest would be "impressed with the charm and power of the spoken word."

It is believed that if the speaker, no matter his subject, adheres to the common sense code of ethics suggested by Mr. Young, he will give thought to his responsibilities of trusteeship while preparing and delivering his speech; he will speak more calmly and with much greater effectiveness than if he ranted and attacked from a partisan angle. He must re-

member he talks to the family, not to a mass meeting of constituents in an auditorium. There the technique and choice of words may differ.

In a preface to its program policies the National Broadcasting Company calls attention to the fact that radio derives its value from listeners' enjoyment of programs. Anything that mars or impairs their confidence reacts unfavorably on the art. Broadcasters constantly realize they are required first and foremost to serve public interest, which has been held by the courts to mean service to listeners, and that is interpreted by the showmen as "good programs."

Specifying that two characteristics—the intimate personal nature of broadcasting, the wide range and joint listening of its audience—primarily determine what may be properly put on the air, the National Broadcasting Company, has adopted the following requirements to maintain a standard of ethics:

The use of the Deity's name is acceptable only when used reverently or as part of a standard classic work.

Statements or suggestions which are offensive to religious views, racial traits, and the like, must be avoided.

False or questionable statements and all other forms of misrepresentation must be eliminated.

Obscene and off-color songs and jokes, oaths,

sacrilegious expressions, and all other language of doubtful propriety must be eliminated.

Testimonials must reflect the genuine experience or opinion of a competent witness.

Statements of prices and values must be confined to specific facts. Misleading price claims or comparisons must not be used.

As a safeguard against misuse of broadcasting facilities or unfair competition, commercial programs shall not refer to any competitor, directly or indirectly, by company name, by individual name or by brand name—regardless of whether such reference is derogatory or laudatory.

### *Talking to Children*

Those planning scripts for the younger generation might bear in mind several specific themes and dramatic treatments barred by the Columbia Broadcasting System:

The exalting as modern heroes of gangsters, criminals and racketeers will not be allowed.

Disrespect for either parental or other proper authority must not be glorified or encouraged.

Cruelty, greed and selfishness must not be presented as worthy motivations.

Programs that arouse harmful nervous reactions in the child must not be presented.

Conceit, smugness or an unwarranted sense of superiority over others less fortunate may not be presented as laudable.

Recklessness and abandon must not be falsely identified with a healthy spirit of adventure.

Unfair exploitation of others for personal gain must not be made praiseworthy.

Dishonesty and deceit are not to be made appealing or attractive to the child.

### *Tactics Abroad*

The psychology of the listener, human nature and radio-politics are in many respects similar the world-over, but generally glib tongues are not permitted to extol as freely on the air in Europe as in Uncle Sam's domain. Speeches that descend from the clouds in foreign lands are usually heavy with restrictions called "a form of supervision solely concerned with ensuring fair play by the elimination of personal prejudices, offense and misrepresentation."

A sharp difference exists between the American and British radio systems. In the United States broadcasting is a private enterprise, supported by advertising or rental of facilities. Great Britain's radio carries no advertising. The British system is supported by an annual receiving license fee of \$2.50 collected from listeners, which amounts to approximately \$15,000,000.

It is proposed that under the revised charter, ef-

fective in 1937, that 75 per cent of this net fund be devoted to the British Broadcasting Corporation, and that the balance be potentially available for development of broadcasting and television.

The BBC was set up under the aegis of the State but is not directly controlled by the government. It operates under a royal charter, granted in order that the broadcasting service might be conducted "by a public corporation acting as trustee for the national interest." The mandate refers to the "great value of the service as a means of education and entertainment." In administration the BBC is described as "autonomous." Parliament made it a monopoly, at the head of which is a director general, and a five-man board of governors appointed by the Crown, although seven are proposed under the 1937 charter, also a Minister of Broadcasting.

The Prime Minister—or any Minister, for that matter—has the legal right under terms of the charter to demand a broadcast. But this right, according to an authority on English radio, has never yet been exercised. The outcry, he explained, would be too great should radio be used to spread party propaganda unless it was in a series of talks devoted to controversial political issues.

Parliamentary control, it is said, must be ultimate and not inconsistent with "an autonomy fully and

consciously devolved." Party politicians have been warned to "touch it at their peril."

When the Prime Minister broadcasts he speaks as the Prime Minister, and not as the leader of any particular party. Should he attempt political use of the radio, the Opposition might demand a talk or two.

The BBC, to use the words of an Englishman, "has put upon the shoulders of the politicians themselves the responsibility of dividing the time devoted to political talks, prior to a general election. A Parliamentary committee distributes the radio time for party issues. For example, if there are to be fourteen talks for politics, the committee makes the arrangements and the broadcasting organization acts accordingly in allotting the facilities."

Under the British plan there are only two limiting factors in the broadcasting of controversy: one, the time available, the other, the known preference of British listeners. The former precludes the presentation within any one series of talks of every point of view; but, by and large, all interests and parties with any considerable support behind them in England are given a hearing in one or another of the series of talks or debates arranged.

Emphasizing that radio, as a medium whereby expressions of political opinion can be brought into

millions of homes, needs careful safeguarding if not to be abused, the Ullswater Committee in framing suggestions for decennial renewal of the royal charter said:

It has been the avowed policy to hold the scales even between the various political parties, and in this, the BBC has on the whole been successful.

It must be recognized as inevitable that more prominence is given to the leaders of the political party in power than to the Opposition. There are numbers of occasions on which Ministers of State are called upon to make important pronouncements. These necessarily have some political flavor and tend naturally to stress the beneficence of government activities.

In a short account of the British Broadcasting Corporation's "constitution," it has been explained that "the representations of minority opinions in controversial broadcasting is admittedly a difficult question. There is a point beyond which concession to minorities becomes impossible. A national system of broadcasting, with centralized control, reduces to a minimum the access of quackery to the air; for the worst quacks are local."

If political and other controversy in Great Britain seems mild by foreign standards, the explanation

must be sought, according to the Englishman, not in any supposed bureaucratic tendencies of the broadcasting organization or governmental interference, but in the natural reserve and moderation which are characteristic of the British people.

After the smoke of one British election battle cleared away, a London commentator observed:

It is said that broadcasting remorselessly exposes insincerity and that only the truly earnest man can speak by wireless with due effect. For this reason, incidentally, it is sometimes urged that radio drama is a failure—no mere actor can rivet the attention by speech alone. Whatever the truth of this matter, it is certain that microphone personality won millions of votes.

Sir John Simon, Snowden, and MacDonald talked to the people in their homes as intimate friends. The first cultivated and convincing; the second, marshalling his facts and driving home his points with the faintest touch of acerbity; the last, with a few rhetorical tricks but with homely traces of Scottish accent and a whole world of conviction in his voice.

Theirs was the appeal of one individual to another. While the noisy minority flocked to public meetings and shouted themselves hoarse, the majority sat by their fireplaces and listened to radio voices, cold logic, sentiment, fear—all the influences that sway the mind had full and free play, unaffected by the heat and passion of the mob contact.

The Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill observed:\*

Providence has thrown a lifebuoy to the struggling peoples. In the broadcast, leading men can speak intimately to the cottage home. The mere fact of addressing so vast an audience tends to purge the argument of claptrap. The speaker cannot realize the millions. He feels that he is talking in an earnest, friendly way to a fellow countryman whom he has met upon the wayside, and who has asked him to his dwelling to tell him and his wife and children about the big things of which the papers are full.

A tremendous and inspiring experience! The more it is used, the more freely it is used, the greater is the chance of securing through Parliamentary institutions the conscious participation by the millions in modern Government. Will it be used or will it be abused?—This broadcast which freely developed in a tolerant and liberal atmosphere, might save the freedom, progress and culture of our existing civilization, can, almost by a twist of the hand, be made the irresponsible engine of falsehood, tyranny and brutality.

A few weeks later, G. K. Chesterton, author, in a discussion of "The Mystery of Broadcasting," wrote in *The Radio Times*:

If there is one thing that fails entirely in the case of broadcasting, it is the particular sort of

\* *The Radio Times* published by the British Broadcasting Corporation (London), May 25, 1934.

platform hypocrisy which was the curse of the nineteenth century, along with its materialism and its machinery. Whatever its other defects, broadcasting does not encourage that sort of pompous demagoguery which has been the curse of Constitutional and Parliamentary politics; the broadcaster cannot raise a roar of applause in a million separate parlors by hitting the table and saying, 'Empire' or 'Free Trade.'

It is certainly unfortunate that the crowd could conceivably tear the platform statesman in pieces, whereas it cannot get at the languid conversational broadcaster. This is very sad; but tearing politicians in pieces has already become so rare and unfashionable that it makes the less difference. Broadcasting is more natural than public speaking; and that again is really a new sort of novelty.

Englishmen, since the inception of broadcasting, have always sensed their responsibility toward what is called the vexing and intriguing problems of spoken English. Proudly they have guarded the King's English on the air. Recognizing the fact that they, the broadcasters, are influential, and also open to criticism from every quarter because of local vernacular and tradition, those who have authority over the British microphone are seeking what they term "a common denominator of educated speech." Uniformity of pronunciation is the aim.

As far back as 1926 the London broadcasters

sought expert advice on spoken English, and since then the British Broadcasting Corporation has issued several pamphlets on "Broadcast English." A feature is recommendations for announcers and speakers regarding certain words doubtful of pronunciation.

The American broadcasters have no such specially arranged list of words. They choose to consult the various dictionaries which, of course, frequently disagree. The broadcaster here and abroad, therefore, finds it no easy task to please all who may listen. If he quotes one dictionary, the critic quotes another, and so the argument may whirl 'round and around.

In a discussion of "the spoken word," the British Broadcasting Corporation states that all radio talks are based upon three principles:

(1) They should cover a wide range of tastes and interests, fair and proportionate consideration being given to the needs of the minority.

(2) Only the best is good enough for listeners; a man should be an expert to be given access to the microphone.

(3) Simple and effective presentation is nearly as important as quality of matter. The speaker should, if possible, be not only an expert but a personality.

The Englishman recognizes the broadcast spoken word as comprising three categories: general talks, news and educational talks. And he believes that the

former should aim primarily at entertaining the listener without sacrifice of standard or good taste.

Englishmen are slow spokesmen; many of them share the conviction that "those who know don't say, and those who say don't know." That is believed to be one reason why the number of broadcast speakers who have captured the imagination of listeners is still small. The British listener is said to require more than brightness and snap in the speakers to whom he gives ear. He responds more sympathetically to the evidences of modesty and sincerity.

The Englishman does not like the word "censorship" applied to the British method of broadcasting. He, too, cherishes free speech. Relative to "censorship" the British Broadcasting Corporation explains:

It is true that speakers are asked for their manuscripts in advance, but the purpose of this is to provide for publication in *THE LISTENER*, as well as to enable speakers to secure from experienced officials the best advice on the method of presenting what they have to say.

Preliminary examination of scripts is an essential prerequisite of effective presentation of talks. The term censorship is, however, loosely applied to another form of supervision.

This is concerned solely with ensuring fair play by the elimination of personal prejudice and offense or misrepresentation of opposed points of view in talks put forward as impartial.

This is the bare duty of any responsible broadcasting organization. In debates or in discussions, and in symposia to which exponents of widely divergent points of view are invited to contribute, censorship other than as a purely formal safeguard of good taste and as a means of better presentation, does not exist. In all controversial series there is no curtailment of free speech.

An Englishman once remarked: "In the case of an individual, a broadcast defamatory statement might cause him more than nation-wide damage in circumstances which would make it difficult for him to receive damages to an adequate degree so far as extra-territorial damage at any rate is concerned. It is a moot point to be considered whether a broadcast defamatory statement is not more truly libel than slander."

### *The Canadian Plan*

Canada's step to prevent the use of radio for dissemination of revolutionary propaganda is found in an amendment to the Dominion's Radio Act, adopted in August, 1935, which reads:

"No broadcasting station may rebroadcast any speech, printed matter or program containing defamatory, libellous, or obscene statements with regard to persons or institutions, or state-

ments of a treasonable character or intended to promote change by unlawful means and which might lead to a breach of the peace, or any advertising matter containing false or deceptive statements."

A special Canadian radio committee of 1936 in recommending to Parliament that the Dominion's Radio Act of 1932 be replaced with a new act modeled more closely after the British rather than the American system of broadcasting, also recommended the following points be incorporated in new legislation:

That dramatized political broadcasts be prohibited.

That full sponsorship of all political broadcasts be required.

That the limitation and distribution of time for political broadcasts be under the complete control of the Corporation, whose duty it shall be to assign time on an equitable basis between all parties and rival candidates.

That no political broadcasts be allowed on an election day or during two days immediately preceding same.

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### *The Swiss Plan*

The Swiss Broadcasting Society and the Swiss government formulated the following regulations for political broadcasters:

1. Opposing views may be broadcast before each Federal election, provided that the two views are given on the same day and that they follow each other immediately.

2. The duration of the two talks is limited to 60-70 minutes at the most.

3. The two speakers will interchange their manuscripts.

4. It is prescribed that the lecturer who speaks in favor of the project adopted by the Federal Chamber (The Swiss Congress) will speak last.

5. The opposing viewpoint must be broadcast during the week preceding the election.

“Radio in free European countries is generally a respectable narrow-meshed sieve,” said William Hard, “which permits only occasional accents of acute political controversy to filter through transmitters into listeners’ receiving sets. In enslaved European countries radio is an arm of governmental policy. By contrast, radio in the United States is a crude, tumultuous, wide-open public forum.”

The keynote of broadcasting in Britain is “public service in the national interest.”

In the United States it is “public interest, convenience and necessity.”

The British Broadcasting Corporation is described as “a genuine entity in the national life, impartial but not vaguely impersonal, qualified by its character and

vitality to act as a trustee for the national interest."

Freedom is believed to ring louder on the American air, however, than in any other nation.

"Radio broadcasting should be maintained on an equality of freedom similar to that freedom which has been and is the keystone of the American press," said President Roosevelt in a greeting to the Radio Manufacturers Association. "To permit radio to become a medium for selfish propaganda of any character would be shamefully and wrongfully to abuse a great agent of public service."

## VI

### TEACHING BY RADIO

THE spoken word is an ancient pedagogical tool, the domain of which broadcasting has vastly extended. As a subsidiary instrument in education, the microphone establishes contact with authoritative speakers and introduces them to those who listen to learn. Radio, because of its instantaneous and widespread influence among millions of listeners helps to incubate public opinion and foster ideas among all classes and ages. Broadcasts inform; they teach.

Radio has been called "the peoples' college," the classrooms of which are widely scattered in homes and schools. It is estimated that more than 21,000,000 dwellings in the United States are radio-equipped, while it is believed approximately 40,000 schools have broadcast reception in some form, either from a receiver in the assembly hall or through a centralized system reaching all rooms.

#### *Every Speaker a Teacher*

Every radio speaker is a teacher, for each broad-

caster illuminates some subject or else there would be little justification for his being on the air. Somebody, somewhere is listening and learning, consciously or unconsciously. Whether the talk is on the corn borer or fashions, bees or social security, someone is likely to be learning something new; intellectual horizons are broadened and sphere of interest expanded.

Radio's educational activities, however, are not necessarily confined to lectures. Broadcasts educate by the electrification of such events as the national political conventions, although few probably tune in with the direct purpose of being educated. In this case, news "sugarcoats" a lesson in civics. Without forethought, the listener absorbs educational values while in quest of news, information and entertainment, or his curiosity in a subject may be aroused by eavesdropping on an airplane race, launching of an ocean liner or inauguration of a President.

He learns about geography by tuning-in on explorers, such as the Byrd Antarctic Expeditions and the broadcasts directed to the adventurers. Then, too, correct pronunciation is spread by the trained announcers. For instance, in the case of a name such as Haile Selassie, radio no doubt revealed the pronunciation to many who may never have heard of that

King of Kings until the Italo-Ethiopian dispute tossed him into the international limelight.

It is universally agreed that listening-in supplements the textbook, but by no stretch of the imagination can it supplant the teacher or usurp his or her powers. Radio in education is an auxiliary; an assistant to the teacher whose living personality is woven in the backbone of education. In no way has radio dispensed with the need for personal contact between teacher and pupil; the tutor's direct influence is still a paramount factor in education.

The instructor at the microphone is not acquainted with the aptitude of his students individually; he cannot call upon them to recite nor can he stir the passive listener. He cannot discipline or pause to answer questions if some point is not clear. Broadcasts chiefly stimulate a broader knowledge of world-events, injecting timeliness into education, enlivening interest in lessons.

### *Showmanship in Teaching*

Teachers who go on the air are more or less mechanical instructors and ought first to recognize the fact that they are in a new field of "a highly specialized type of showmanship." Veteran broad-

casters, who have studied thousands of letters resulting from educational broadcasts, warn that to be popularly received the program must be "sugar-coated." That means it must be entertaining to enchant and to hold attention in invisible "class-rooms" where distractions of all sorts observe no rules.

Then, too, if the broadcast is labeled "education" or "instruction" there are many listeners who are likely to dodge it as something "highbrow." The Englishman chooses to call his informative broadcasts "popular talks," and does his best to live up to that standard without being too sensational lest the normal functioning of the mental faculties be disturbed by over-excitement. He aims to popularize learning and self-improvement. He recognizes the fact that radio without television lacks visual impressions essential to hold attention, therefore, the successful broadcast is a "word-picture." In Belgium the loudspeaker is looked upon as "a soulless instrument" with radio labeled "an accessory medium of teaching." For children under twelve broadcasting is quite generally considered as "a recreative medium" with an informational tinge.

There is salesmanship in teaching by radio just as in politics on the air. There must be, because competition for a hearing is crowded on the dial and it is

so easy to slip away from a pedagogue to a brass band or clown. The average listener it seems is a restless soul who tunes-in chiefly for entertainment, so if education is to intrigue the ear, then it must be linked with some elements of the ethereal circus. The teacher and the showman have learned that they must join hands at the "mike." But the teacher, like the actor and singer, in grasping radio's possibilities must not overlook its definite limitations, its shortcomings.

Classroom tactics cannot be taken directly to the microphone anymore than a stage play can be electrified successfully unless adapted to the radio medium. The classroom student, of course, is more or less bound to listen to a lecture no matter how dull; the radio listener is bound by no tradition or act of courtesy to lend an ear. He can "walk out" and the professor will never miss him.

It is human interest, news elements, story telling and showmanship abetted by a pleasant radio voice that entertains while it teaches that holds a listener. The broadcast cannot be delivered as a classroom lesson. It calls for a specialist. There may be teachers who can prepare the talks but who lack the voice qualifications to deliver them, and in such a case it is wise to engage a trained broadcaster.

Radio as a school is a real forum of liberty as far as the unseen student is concerned. Self-help is es-

sential. The degree with which he disciplines himself, concentrates and follows up the radio lesson by actual study determines whether he is marked plus or minus in the School of the Air. The teacher should keep these points in mind and encourage the listener as far as possible to be honest with himself. Otherwise, the talk is likely to fly in one ear and out the other. That's where the teacher's subtle art of salesmanship must be brought into play.

### *Types of Radio Lessons*

Teaching on the radio may be in dramatized form, aimed to impress, appeal to the imagination and arouse creative activity; it may be musical or a straight talk, but seldom is the lecture, in the strict sense of the word, animated enough for schools, unless it is an eye-witness story—a personal experience. Interviews and dialogue are variations of the lecture but the interlocutor should not permit the expert to become too "technical." The interlocutor is the animator. Lectures are more for seniors and adults; drama and stories for the younger generation.

Observe the successful teachers and religious leaders on the air, and it will be found that each has an individualistic style developed naturally without

adherence to any list of rules. Some speak without inhibitions. The pace of delivery differs as does timbre of the voice and choice of words, inflection and diction. That is why voice personalities differ as widely as faces. If there are any rules they are general, and nothing more than common sense. The teacher should not overlook the fact that his voice may be strange to the radio audience, while in the classroom the students are familiar with it. Obviously, he should not talk too fast. Thoughts must be well organized. Obscure and technical words should be avoided. The teacher and the preacher have an opportunity to dramatize. Some have an imaginary flair, and as the political campaigner casts aside print's rules of grammar so the radio teacher, often to his own dismay, finds himself using verbless "sentences." The professor finds in his study of political broadcasting all the basic suggestions for the preparation of his talk, rehearsal and delivery. He has but to envision that group of the unseen audience whom he hopes to reach and frame his sentences for them to understand.

Exactly as good diction, pleasant personality and effectively organized material is vital in politics so it is in teaching. Radio teaching is, of course, more modified than politics on the air. Teaching might be called less rugged. The voice level and the force-

fulness may differ but the basic principles are the same. The teacher and minister lean a trifle toward the actor. Neither can fool the "mike."

The teacher will do well to link his talk with reader helps. Proof that listeners welcome such aids is found in the fact that broadcasts pertaining to economics and psychology over a ten-week period brought 100,000 requests for printed material. Here was evidence of the usefulness of radio in the diffusion of university extension courses.

"Neither the radio manufacturers, nor the broadcasting company, nor the lecturers would suggest that understanding can be achieved by listening alone," said Dr. Robert M. Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago in introducing a radio lecture series. "No system of education can be based exclusively on lecturing. Every system presupposes reading, investigation, and reflection by the student. Most of them presuppose discussion in which the students by themselves or with a teacher pursue and develop problems raised by the lectures.

"The radio addresses will not serve their purpose unless we who listen make use of the reading guides and notebooks furnished in connection with them. The passive process of hearing will not achieve the results that further study and informal conference groups may be expected to secure."

*Subjects Adapted to Broadcasting*

There seems no end of subjects adapted to broadcasting. Probably because there are so many different people listening. The college professor or high school teacher knows from years of experience and precedent what lessons to teach, but on the air they face no select group of a certain age limit. Radio is the one medium that offers an audience for any subject so there is no rule that mathematics is "too deep" as an ethereal topic or that educational talks should be confined to geography and history.

Take for example a talk on "personality." Why should a radio speaker focus on such a topic? Does it represent a theme of interest to radio listeners? Dr. Walter V. Bingham of the Personnel Research Federation of New York, once reported in a broadcast that many in the radio audience requested it.

How can I develop a more effective personality? inquired a fifty-two-year-old lawyer from Michigan. What is the secret of Jeritza's magnetic personality? asked a follower of the opera. A city superintendent of schools in Oklahoma hoped there would be lectures on improving the personalities of teachers. A real estate sales manager in Denver called for help in training salesmen to be more acceptable and impressive in their relations with possible purchasers. And

students everywhere have clamored for light on some of the quirks and abnormalities of personality which fascinate and baffle them.

Listeners are believed to be interested in such talks because they deal with them personally, and may assist in the solution of their every-day problems. As Dr. Bingham declared "personality" is an inclusive term and as such it is excellent example of one of a thousand subjects adapted to broadcasting.

Music is an auditory subject, therefore, music-appreciation is the topnotch subject for radio teaching; it is so closely allied with broadcasting.

Dr. Walter Damrosch estimates that his audience for musical appreciation runs close to 7,000,000 scattered from coast-to-coast. He, as the outstanding teacher and pioneer in this field, has received thousands and thousands of letters from the listening public and from school teachers to prove that radio carries education afar and reaches a vast assembly, which displays "an amazing musical intelligence, unswervingly classical." In fact, the listeners exhibited such a growing appetite for good music that he decided to perform a complete symphony once each month during his school broadcasts.

He issued a word of caution, however, to commercial organizations who seek to promote their products by linking musical education with advertis-

ing: "If the music is of high quality and enlists the finer susceptibilities of the public, it resents the interruption, or undue preponderance of advertising talk. Such intrusion defeats the very purpose of the advertiser, which is to gain the good will of listeners."

### *Benefits from Radio Lessons*

A large number of benefits are ascribed to educational broadcasts. Reports from the audience indicate beyond all doubt that the radio teacher's efforts are by no means lost in space. Letters express appreciation for the contact broadcasts afford with master teachers, world leaders and news events at first hand.

The educational microphone is credited with supplying variety, enrichment, new material, and freshness. Stressed again and again is: "It stimulates the listening ability of the pupils. It teaches them to concentrate. It improves their note-taking." Others report an enlargement of the student's vocabulary and development of reportorial ability. It is declared to be a stimulator of curiosity and a broader outlook.

One teacher said, "Radio greatly increases the pupils' conception of places, events and people." And another, "Geography broadcasts help our pupils to be far above the county median in the State examinations." "Often the broadcasts summarize and

fix in the minds of the pupils the ideas the teacher tried to implant." "It teaches my pupils to discriminate between essentials and non-essentials." Another teacher reported, "It makes school attendance more regular."

By far the greatest difficulty seems to be fitting the broadcast period into the school schedule. Next in order comes local "static" interference. This alone frequently prevents city schools from listening. Many users frankly blame poor equipment. Others, and only a small percent of the whole, find fault with materials broadcast in certain courses. Most common is the complaint of difficult vocabulary, poor voice and poor enunciation. Still a few others stress fast talking and, in the case of dramalogs, too much background (sound effects).

Geography lessons, especially in the form of travel talks, rank high in satisfaction, probably because along with history they can be dramatized picturously; these subjects lend themselves to the show business. Events and places can be re-created and visualized when a traveler or explorer reveals his personal experiences. Such talks leave an imprint on the youthful mind far different from a textbook. Youth's sense of hearing is sharp.

School administrators in summarizing have rated the subjects which best lend themselves to broadcast

teaching as follows: Music appreciation, geography and travel, English and literature, health and hygiene, history, current events, civics, nature study and science, foreign languages. This line-up seems to be about the same in all countries, although each subject's place on the list may vary somewhat from country to country. Music is universally at the top of the list.

### *Voice Qualities That Please*

Students report in detail on the qualities they like in a broadcast teacher. They want the person to possess a sense of humor, enthusiasm and a pleasant manner. They demand "skillful teaching" and "selective ability." Other terms used are radiant, alert and vivacious. Other adjectives they use are strong, resonant, rich, magnetic, unaffected, persuasive and friendly. They want clear enunciation and correct grammar combined with a natural speaking pace. The suitability of vocabulary and the demand for simple, clear language is insistent. Common, vivid words and word-pictures are at a premium. Sufficient repetition is also stressed.

School teachers suggest to the broadcasters that the lesson should be talked, not read, otherwise papers delivered over the radio lack effectiveness. Others de-

cry the "platform" type and commend school broadcasts for being free from that type of speaking. "Talk to the pupils, not at them," many teachers advise.

The ability to paint word-pictures is mentioned often in letters to broadcasters. One superintendent of schools said, "The successful radio teacher must present a coherent and spirited talk, tinged with humor and using abundance of concrete, colorful illustrations, not too bookish."

Teachers at the microphone are warned to avoid childish language. The aim should be to present new points of view and problems that will encourage further study in the classroom, public library or at home. There should be no attempt, however, to solve such problems with mathematical precision, for as those who have made a study of "radio and the three Rs" point out time and time again, "broadcasting is mainly mental stimulus."

### *Some Good Advice*

"Keep your mind on your objective, just as in golf the player keeps his eye on the ball," advises Margaret Cuthbert, Director of Women's Activities of the National Broadcasting Company. "It is difficult to know if one has a good voice on the air. Many

people have not—particularly women—and radio does not help the voice. It simply transmits what goes in at one end and projects it from the loudspeaker at the other end.

“One hears a good deal about women’s voices not being good on the air. But many women—though they may not have good voices according to the teacher of voice—have interesting voices, charming, emotional, friendly, natural, and voices with a pleasing accent. Any one of these qualities is interesting to listen to. The radio speaker should have at least one or two of these qualities.

“Do not broadcast as though you were addressing an assembled multitude. If you do your talk in this manner it will only be interesting as a genuine antique is interesting to a collector. Speak as you would speak when talking to friends. The little pauses, the asides, the smile that would naturally be there when you were talking, will somehow be transmitted through that x-ray quality that is radio’s own secret.

“Do not lay down the law,” said Miss Cuthbert. “Do not write your talk as if written to be read. Write it as you talk—spontaneously—the dot and dash system! You are trying to gain and hold the attention of two or three people in a room, even as you do at the dinner table. You want to hold the

attention of your friends and influence them to your way of thinking. A total stranger is even harder to interest.

"Do not let someone else write your talk unless it is written by one well-versed in the art of writing for radio. Write it yourself. It is that part of yourself which you put in your talk that makes the difference. Anything natural, anything real, anything spontaneous captures the attention of the listeners.

"A teacher from the Kentucky Mountains, a fireman or a sailor is likely to be more interesting on the air than the president of a company, who has had someone in the publicity department write his talk, and who has not had the time or the interest to look over the manuscript before he goes on the air.

"The successful speaker in radio must be sincere, convincing, and able to project a vivid personality that stimulates his audience. In radio one deals with intangibles—that is why it is so baffling."

Whether or not students should be encouraged to take notes during a broadcast is a debated topic. Opinions among educators differ; some contend if the talk is interesting it will hold the listeners' attention, in fact, they might not think of taking notes. To insist on note-taking would in the majority of cases interrupt the contact between the unseen speaker and the students. If notes are taken they should be con-

fined to the high-spots, but even then there is danger of dropping behind the speaker with the result that outstanding points will be missed while the pencil is busy.

The classroom teacher, of course, can sense the time to pause while notes are jotted down, but the radio teacher cannot gauge time that way; radio does not provide for "dead spots." It is probably most satisfactory at the end of the broadcast for the teacher in the schoolroom to exchange views and to summarize the lesson after the speaker signs-off. For those who can learn and memorize by sound as well as sight, and for those whose imaginations are readily stimulated, radio is a beneficial teacher.

A difficulty peculiar to radio, of course, is that the audience, especially those at home, can and usually does, disperse immediately if a program fails to begin on time. People who have made the effort to go to an auditorium usually will wait more or less patiently if the speaker is delayed, but the habit of the radio listener is to turn off the receiver or tune in another program rather than to wait for thirty seconds. In a classroom it is also necessary to start the broadcast as soon as the class is ready. The director of the program, therefore, is obliged to have a substitute ready in case the radio teacher is late, or does not arrive.

The Ohio School of the Air makes it a practice to have announcements ready to fill a few minutes if the speaker is tardy. Also the director secures in advance, whenever possible, copies of the talks so that they can be read by others if the scheduled speakers fail to appear.

It has been found that pupils have no inhibitions against becoming frankly bored, even by persons so famous that their reputations would ensure their being heard, with respectful attention at least, by an adult audience. The ability to interest children, is on that account, one of the necessary qualifications for a radio teacher. Name and fame are of secondary importance.

Those who have taught on the air know from their mail that the dialect of the teacher has much to do with the attitude of the listening pupils. Lacking broad contacts and experience, the pupils do not realize that their own manner of speech is a dialect, and think that a person who speaks in any other of the thirty or more dialects used in this country is showing affectation or ignorance. The peculiarities in the speech of teachers from other sections is mimicked until the announcer explains that, since we are all Americans, it is well to know how people in New England pronounce their r's, and what differences there may be in other sections. There seems to be no

doubt that national programs broaden the experience of pupils until they become less keenly conscious of differences in dialect, according to those who have studied the results of the Ohio School of the Air experiments.

Librarians are reported to be unsympathetic to the idea that radio programs should be dropped to the intelligence level of thirteen-years olds, as once suggested by a Superintendent of Schools in the west. Those at the library desks have seen too many thousands of men, women and youths come to them in quest of books to follow up ideas inspired by broadcasts, and to pursue subjects which radio quickened the desire to learn more about. That these people may get the most from their efforts, Francis K. W. Drury of the American Library Association, asserts that the prime essential in any plan to stimulate reading through radio, hinges on the availability and accessibility of books.

The reference books must be handy. In case of a nation-wide series of educational talks it is well for the broadcasting organization to prepare the way by advising the purveyors of books relative to the schedule. The suggestion has been made that the libraries then set aside a "Radio Shelf" for the books referred to in the broadcasts.

*New Dress for an Old Art*

In reference to educational broadcasting, the question is raised from time to time whether it is a new art. Or does radio merely focus attention upon the spoken word in a more far-reaching and spectacular way than ever before in history? Until the invention of broadcasting the spoken word dealt chiefly with visible audiences; radio dropped a curtain between the speaker and the listener, but television will lift that veil so again they will be face to face.

All that is new in the art are the tricks of embellishing the spoken word with as much personality of the speaker as possible. That puts life into the speech. The problem of the radio teacher is further magnified in that a million or more people may be listening while the teachers of the past never directly exerted their influence on such a multitude in a lifetime. Television, of course, will multiply the effectiveness of radio teaching a thousand fold, for through the eye much can be learned that can never enter the ear.

In reading a textbook or any other printed matter, the eye glances ahead of the mind with a sort of sweep; each sentence is not actually read word by word. On the radio, however, every sentence unfolds

in a piecemeal fashion as each word is impinged on the "mike." Generally, the full significance of the sentence or even a headline, is not completely grasped until it is all "on the air."

For example, "The jury found John Doe guilty." The listener does not know what happened until the last word of the sentence is uttered, but in print the eye sees the complete bulletin at a glance. There can be no forward glimpses, no gestures, or action as clues of what is coming, therefore, every word and sound counts. Someone has suggested that radio talks and drama ought to be written with the eyes shut, because the eyes of the radio audience are definitely closed.

In summary, broadcast teaching is part of the show business. It is art coupled with business. So is teaching, but radio cannot be harnessed to the schools. It is an auxiliary teacher. In the words of a London educator, "broadcasting provides something more than the common stuff of school experience; it relieves the fixed routine." The visible teacher, the text book and the blackboard have not lost one iota of their power.

The radio lesson exists only when it is heard; it is gone the very instant it slips from the teacher's lips. The student, therefore, must be alert, concentrating on every second of the fleeting lesson for only those

who listen intently may learn. That is why the teacher should be expert in the preparation of the ethereal lesson and with a colorful voice deliver it to the microphone that speeds each word on its way with contagion across the countryside.

## VII

### FOR NEWSCASTERS AND COMMENTATORS

RADIO has added a new branch to the art of journalism; writing electrified stories for the ears of an invisible, "blind" audience. It calls for a different treatment than writing for newspapers and the eye.

News broadcasts may be divided into two general classes: straight facts or headlines, briefly and clearly stated—the news in a "nutshell"; and, secondly, the same facts in greater detail colored by adjectives hurled into space by a dramatic tongue. Both types of broadcasts have their followings. Time is the governing feature. Out of necessity a 5-minute broadcast should adhere to the "headline" form, while a ten or fifteen minute period affords more opportunity for "color" and human interest.

For those who read the daily papers as a steady diet the short headline plus the condensed lead paragraph may suffice, but for those, especially in remote areas, who depend more upon radio for news, the more entertaining, dramatic words are believed to attract. The latter is more of the "picture paper" of the air.

One of the first considerations is whether the newscaster is to follow the dramatic or more natural "sober-thought" style of delivery. In the former, the voice personality is likely to dominate the news; in the other the news dominates the voice. For example, London's newscasters are more friendly and slower-paced compared to the rapid-fire, robot-like commentators often heard on the American air.

"Indeed, the English radio announcers are very much representative of the King's English," said Professor A. Lloyd James of the University of London, who has direct supervision over the English radio announcers. "That means they are national, not peculiarly modern or too local. We insist that the announcer must never forget that in addressing a million people he does so individually, as if talking to a group of friends at the fireside. He must not envision them as a vast audience, which seems to be the American mass-elocution technique in telling the story at great speed.

"In England the announcer and commentator is trained to deal with sober thoughts spoken in a friendly way. When the British announcer shows signs of injecting his own personality ahead of the sober thought or over-powering it, he is warned to change his tactics; listeners become tired of personalities.

"Radio's delivery of thought is paramount. Colorful, dramatic adjectives are not necessary to put it across.—Language is not an end in itself; it's a means to an end."

### *Inserting the Sales Talk*

It is a distinct error to open the sponsored news program with a blast of sales talk, just as it would be to have the front page of a newspaper covered with advertising and no news. The sponsor's name and product may be briefly and quite naturally mentioned at the beginning, but to preface the news with a minute or more of talk about bread or headache pills annoys the listener, who is almost certain to get another dose in the middle and at the end of the program.

Injecting advertising in a news broadcast is a subtle art. The news commentator, who in the centre of his broadcast suddenly exclaims, "I know you will excuse me if I now tell you something about our sponsor's product," etc., is too apologetic. The listener may sense that he has covered all the main news of the minute, and frees himself of the commercialism by tuning away. The announcer also tips the audience of approaching sales talk when he says, "now let's take time out," in the middle of the broadcast.

There is no reason why the regular announcer in introducing the newscaster cannot refer briefly to the sponsorship, but the man who delivers the news should swing right into it. For him to talk the advertising is like interrupting a news story to insert a paragraph about some advertised product.

It is much cleaner broadcasting to let the regular announcer handle all the commercials, and let him do most of his sales talk near the end of the news rather than at the beginning. There is not much difference in a newscaster talking advertising than for an opera star to include in his recital a ditty, the lyrics of which melodiously herald and praise the sponsor and his motor car or whatever the product may be.

### *Length of News Periods*

How long is news entertaining? There are some broadcasters who favor 5-minute announcements at timely intervals throughout the day, and others advocate 15-minute periods. One writer found that all of the main stories on every page and several short human interest items in a New York morning paper could be covered in a 15-minute broadcast of fact stripped of adjectives, giving attentive listeners a good idea of the world's activities in brief.

The average 15-minute talk, whether it be news or

advice on health, contains about 2,250 words although some of the veteran commentators cover more ground. For example, Lowell Thomas figures about 2,400 words for 13-minutes, and others of the more rapid-fire variety, microphone from 2,500 to 2,800 words in that length of time. The speed in every instance is naturally gauged by the speaker's style, therefore, there can be no definite rule for news broadcasts anymore than for teaching, spellbinding or preaching. Speed depends upon the material and voice personality of the individual broadcaster.

News on the air should be selected because of its general interest, such as the weather, if it is to hold a large audience. The wave lengths cannot be split into specialized columns or pages as can a newspaper in which the reader may glance at an index and turn to the page that interests him or read some pages and pass over others. For example, radio has neither the time nor space to cover the stock market as does the press.

Furthermore, financial news, unless it is of great national interest, does not directly concern the man-in-the-street, and he is the backbone of the radio audience. The stock market crash of 1929, of course, is one of those financial items that qualify for broadcasting. The day-to-day trading, however, is of little interest to the majority of radio's millions, anymore

than are the earning statements of banks and industries unless there is something extraordinary about them that lifts them into the class of general public interest.

### *Formula for Radioized News*

Radio news specialists suggest first and foremost that stories to be adapted for broadcasting should be of widespread public interest, and those that pulse with action, drama, color and humor, tersely written so that the listener may easily visualize the scene, are ideal for radio. The broadcasters urge the news writer to produce scripts that make the listener feel he is an eye-witness. Of course, news for the air cannot be written like news for the presses; neither can radio say everything that may be printed in ink.

Items not wanted in news broadcasts are specified in the formula of Transradio Press Service, heard in the New York area through WOR, as follows:

Unpleasant stories dealing with crimes cannot be put on the air, unless it be one of those rare instances which has such compelling national interest that it gets tremendous play in papers throughout the country.

Details of gruesome crimes or accident, such as a description of dismembered bodies, etc., are not for radio. Newspapers may be able to

carry details of this sort; the reader may skip them if he desires. The radio listener cannot skip anything that comes into his home over the loudspeaker—possibly in the presence of the family—without turning off the program, and then it would be too late.

Statistical stories do not interest Transradio unless they carry an unusual "kick" or are necessary in brief to illustrate the point of a story. Neither is this service interested in commercial or financial news unless it is of tremendous national importance, not merely sectional.

Unnecessary details which have no bearing on the point of a story are taboo on the air. Each story generally revolves around one incident. It conveys one impression. Only the details needed to put over this point are required. This does not mean stripping the story of "color" details, but frequently applies to such factors as the names of policemen who make arrests, names of courts and judges, amount of bail-bonds, names of streets, etc. Naturally, any one of these so-called unnecessary details may be a vital part of the story under certain circumstances.

### *How to Capture Attention*

To nab the attention of the unseen audience the announcer is the primary key to success, but he must be handed "copy" properly arranged to grip the listener's attention. The secret of this ethereal make-

up or layout is *Variety*, and the announcer by cleverly changing his pace and tone, adds to the effectiveness of the verbal "headlines." For example, shifting from the story of a fire or airplane race to the death of a prominent person, naturally calls for a slower pace and a soft tone tinged with sadness.

Obviously, the broadcasts should comprise the latest news of national interest or of local interest to the community served by the station. For example, it does not hold that news significant within range of a Philadelphia transmitter, would be of import in Boston or Seattle.

Much is heard in radio circles of the "headline lead," described as "a psychological translation of the black-face newspaper headline." For further enlightenment on the subject, it is the flash impression a newspaper reader has when he sees a big headline. For example, the heavy type might read: "Lights Out, City Paralyzed for Hours North of 59th Street by Power Plant Failure." The reader's flash impression might be: "Darkness, Confusion."

News writers of radio point out that the headline lead designed specially for the opening "shot" should always be undated. For instance, the opening would lack punch if it began: "Trenton, N. J.—Governor Harold G. Hoffman granted today to Bruno Hauptmann a reprieve until February 19,

after a last minute effort to obtain a confession from the convicted murderer of Charles A. Lindbergh, Jr., through his wife." It would be much more electric to say on the air: "Hauptmann gets a 30-day reprieve from Governor Hoffman," etc.

Deft and easy phrasing of punchy sentences of seven words or less are believed to catch the ear as a black headline captures the eye.

Occasionally, to impress listeners with the up-to-the-minute service, the announcer, even in the middle of a news broadcast, prefaces an item with "Flash!" But he must not do it too often, nor should he exclaim "Flash!" for items already widely circulated in print or during previous broadcasts over his station or any other. Listeners are quick to sense that the bulletin did not just arrive at the studio, if they have read or heard it earlier, although the announcer may strive to create an impression of timeliness.

Also, the radio news man is warned to guard against overstatement and exaggeration. Radio is so fleeting that a listener may not hear distinctly or may tune in on only a few words of a bulletin, and that on several occasions has started rumors flying.

The newspaper reader may read twice to verify, the listener, however, cannot hear the same words again. They vanish the very instant he hears them.

*Some Basic Principles*

Basic principles in writing news broadcasts are outlined by Transradio Press Service as follows:

1. The short 5-minute broadcast is a "last-minute flash" job—a series of eight to ten fast-moving, tersely-written bulletins. Aside from the opening story carrying the "headline lead," all items should be datelined.

The stories that are chosen, with the exception of the end-piece and possibly one other, should be brand new events of front-page calibre or latest developments on current matters of greatest interest. Stories with short-clipped, forceful sentences should be selected. One story of as many as three or four paragraphs may be featured, but it ought not run more than 150–170 words; and most of the broadcast should comprise stories of 75–100 words or less (counting roughly ten words per line).

2. Start with a brief colorful story which already has a headline lead or which will lend itself to one. In dropping the dateline, make sure the locale of the story is clearly brought out in the opening sentence.

3. Save the biggest, most interesting story for second place. So many listeners are turning dials to catch the news that many do not get the opening of the first story. That is why it is necessary to keep the first one brief. (Note: All broadcasters do not agree on this point; some contend the regular announcer's introduction permits

sufficient time for the listeners to get "settled" on the wave, and the news broadcast should flash the biggest most timely story first.)

4. Base selection of the items on the audience. From mid-morning until late afternoon choose stories that appeal to women.

5. Strive for the utmost variety in the items. If avoidable do not run two political stories together or two crime stories; two Chicago stories or two long items together. Do not put non-dated lined dispatches next to each other for that tends to give the broadcast too much of a "commentator" aspect and reduces the "flash" effect conveyed by the dateline. Always have at least two bright, fast-moving short items between two longer pieces in a broadcast of more than five minutes.

6. Select the end piece with particular care. Use the most entertaining story available, particularly one that carries a "kick" in the final paragraph leaving listeners with a good impression of the broadcast as a whole.

News broadcasters have quite generally established meal-time as the hour for the microphone to "go to press." The most popular period in the morning, except Sunday, is from 7:45 to 9 o'clock, and on the Sabbath from 10 to 11 o'clock. The noon hour finds many housewives at home and farmers returned from the fields wondering what has happened in the world since the morning papers were printed or since the morning broadcasts.

The supper-time spot is probably the most popular radio news-time and that explains why the period between 6 and 8 o'clock is dotted with news bulletins, sports résumés and commentators, such as Lowell Thomas and Boake Carter. More than twenty such broadcasts are on the air in the New York district at that time.

There are countless thousands in the radio audience anxious for dispatches before retiring, and for them 11 o'clock is a good hour at which to summarize the day's activities and to report on happenings since the evening papers rolled off the presses.

If an item is so "hot," that is, of tremendous interest to the public, it may be bulletined immediately, but it must be highly important to warrant interruption of a regular program or for insertion between performances. In every sense of the word it is a special bulletin. For instance, the major networks saw fit to flash as a special bulletin the following:

London—It has just been announced officially that oxygen was rushed to King George V of Great Britain tonight as his condition from bronchial catarrh and a weakening heart became worse. The announcement was followed by the

ultra-conservative statement that the King was less comfortable. Two nurses and three of the most distinguished physicians in England are now at his bedside.

News advertises news. So closely is radio allied to print, and such is their relationship, that radio broadcasting has neither time nor space to compete with the newspapers or to render such a completely informative service by sound for all walks of life.

The Fourth Estate in this respect is more fortunate than other industries in that its own product in condensed form advertises the complete newspaper. For example, the cigarette or soup manufacturer must use music or drama to attract an audience to which it may present some advertising on the air, but the press by bulletins, mere samples of its complete product, gives the listeners snatches of information which satisfy a curiosity and at the same time whet their appetite to read the newspapers for the details.

There is much more behind every news story than the microphone can handle. News on the air is by no means a competitor of print; the flashes are but billboards in the home for the newspapers. News sounded on the air is but "a flash in the pan." Radio cannot be "journalese."

*Dictate Don't Rewrite*

"Remember you're talking"; that is the big secret of news writing for radio, according to A. A. Schechter, News Editor of the National Broadcasting Company.

The radio story is that of the reporter or leg man's telephone report to the rewrite man, and is not the rewrite man's story as handed to the copy desk. The best way to write news for radio is to dictate just as the reporter calls the rewrite man on the phone.

"What have you got?" says the rewrite man, and the reporter tells him the story quickly and concisely, yet completely. The broadcast bulletin must be short and snappy; the announcer cannot breathe properly if the writer of the news script follows the general style of newspaper lead.

Radio is primarily an entertainment medium, therefore, each news broadcast should be well balanced to interest men, women, sports fans, etc. Selection of the items must be very discriminating because the microphone's "editor" is the final selector; the listener hears what he chooses, whereas the newspaper reader has a chance for selection. The items should also be arranged for sustained listener interest.

Dodge pronouns. For example, a bulletin might

read, "President Roosevelt left today on a fishing trip; he will be gone for three weeks." Use the proper name again rather than "he," because new people are continually tuning-in, or some interruption may cause them to miss to whom "he" referred.

All stories are not for radio. The newscasters refrain from such bulletins as this: "An airplane crashed in Wyoming killing twelve people." Such a flash without names starts a frantic wave of worry and alarm; even with the casualty list such a flash is alarming because some listeners may tune-in only to hear the last few names. Anxiety spreads among listeners who have friends and relatives in aircraft at the time; and rumors start.

The broadcasters learned a lesson one Sunday night when a flash reported a number of students asphyxiated in a fraternity house at Dartmouth College. No names were broadcast, nor was the name of the fraternity house mentioned. Immediately those who had friends or relatives at the college rushed to the telephone and telegraph for complete information. The wires to the town were swamped and few calls could get through with the result that greater apprehension than ever was aroused from coast to coast. The broadcasting stations too, received hundreds of inquiries as did newspapers and press associations.

Radio travels so rapidly that broadcasters on several occasions have found that their flash bulletins reached relatives "out of a clear sky," ahead of the more carefully planned or official notification of an accident or death. This the broadcasters try to avoid.

Another instance of how suspense and apprehension might spread is found in a bulletin that in a certain skyscraper an elevator crashed with ten passengers. Such flashes, even with a list of names of those injured, are taboo, because there may be several thousand people in and out of that building in a day, and the relatives who hear it on the radio instantly wonder if a person in their family was in the accident. But, to report that an elevator at a certain mine crashed does not cause such widespread alarm; it is more localized. The same is true of a disaster at sea; to name the boat in distress confines the story to a particular passenger list, but to *announce that a ship is sinking or afire at sea* leads the listener to believe it may be any ship on board which relatives may be traveling.

Radio news writers, because of the very speed, nature of the medium and direct contact with the home must take extraordinary precaution to avoid being alarmists or spreaders of worry and fear, even though delay may cause them to be "scooped."

Placement of bulletins is important. For example,

it would be bad taste to interrupt a jazz program with a sudden announcement, "the King is dead," and then continue the dance music. For such a flash the band should fade out, and after the bulletin, more solemn music should complete the period. Otherwise, the radio station is likely to be severely criticized by members of the audience.

A regularly scheduled news broadcast may contain more startling news than a flash interrupting a program without causing misapprehension and misunderstanding. The flash that punctures a program does not find the audience "geared" for it, and it may be partially lost. The listener who had been in the mood for music, frequently catches only a snatch of the bulletin and is left wondering about the first part of the story. *Those in tune with scheduled news periods, however, are usually listening more intently, and are less likely to miss part of it.*

Radio news should have a mental make-up. For instance, it is not good technique to jump from a Paris item about the Chamber of Deputies to Sioux City to tell of an oldtimer celebrating a 100th birthday. Such leaps are too much in one "breath." People mentally picture what is being said, and if they are suddenly yanked from France to North Dakota it is quite a jolt to the imagination.

There is such a thing as an anecdotal news broad-

cast, of which Lowell Thomas is a master. Anecdotes make him more of a personality, and not a mere voice as in the case of a straight newscast announcer. Furthermore, anecdotes are remembered longer than a bulletin. One is a story that lingers in memory, as told by a showman and good story teller; the other is a flash, in one ear and out the other.

Full names have little or no place in news on the air. Names should be mentioned exactly as in conversation with a friend or with a group in the living room. For example, in ordinary conversation, few would say, "President Franklin D. Roosevelt" or "Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh." The natural thing to say would be, "President Roosevelt vetoed the bonus," or "Lindbergh landed in Paris."

The use of quotes is one of the best methods to tell a news story on the air because quotations represent actual talk—the man's own words exactly as he spoke them. That is much more forceful than narration. It all goes back to the veteran newscaster's secret of success, "remember you're talking; give the listener a 'picture' through a mental headline."

### *The Editor's Problems*

Broadcasting news is not so simple a matter as the casual observer might think, according to John Coat-

man, news editor of the British Broadcasting Corporation. He explains in the *Radio-Times* that it is a task very far removed indeed from the mere compilation of so many minutes of spoken material dealing with the day's happenings.

"In the first place, the listener cannot pick and choose the items to which he will listen, whereas he can skip anything he wants in a newspaper," said Mr. Coatman. "Thus the editor of broadcast news is faced with a very formidable problem of selection. He cannot hope to please all listeners so he must try to give the news of interest to the majority; also, much of what gives taste and life to a newspaper is automatically debarred from the broadcast bulletins—for instance, reports in the proceedings in society divorce cases, murder trials, and other such news. Results of important criminal and other trials are given, however.

"Listening to news demands much greater concentration on the part of the listener than reading news. One can put the paper down in order to talk to one's wife, to play with the dog, or do any one of the thousand and one little actions that would vitally interrupt the passage of the broadcast news. This helps to narrow the editor's possible choice of news of general, if not obvious importance. It goes without saying, therefore, that there must be a cer-

tain austerity in a good wireless news bulletin; but austerity is not a synonym for dullness. News bulletins for which the majority are obviously waiting are always given at the beginning of the broadcast unless there is other news of such vital importance as to take unchallenged precedence."

After careful study of public opinion, Mr. Coatman reports that "the best form of presentation of wireless news is the simplest form." His formula stresses clear, straightforward narrative or exposition of the items, weighed according to their importance and arranged in the most appropriate and logical sequence. Extraneous and dramatic effects, dialogue and the like, seem to be definitely deleterious to broadcast news. There is, however, believed to be a place in the bulletins for dramatic interludes, which themselves are news or are meant to direct attention to some matter in which it is of national importance to interest the public. Then there is the interview at the microphone, which has great news possibilities. And, of course, there are many talks that are of high interest as news, in fact, they are news in the making.

"The object of the wireless news editor," continued Mr. Coatman, "is to give his public all the news that matters, in an absolutely unbiased manner. He has got to make his news as palatable as

possible. Lastly, his work is in no way hostile to that of the newspapers. On the contrary, broadcast news is a strong ally of the newspapers. It marks what is really important in current events and directs listeners to their newspapers for fuller details of what they have heard and for comment and criticism thereon by the many distinguished journalists who make the British press the admiration of the world."

A friendly attitude toward radio was expressed in the American Newspaper Publishers Association's radio committee report in 1936, which pointed out that in some respects radio and the press see eye to eye, while in others there is a divergence of opinion.

In reference to the close alliance of radio and the press the report said in part:

The newspaper publishers of the United States should be interested in keeping radio as a medium for the dissemination of information without government or advertiser sponsorship or censorship. The functions of the newspaper and of radio are so closely allied that the future welfare of this country may depend upon the continuance of both of these media as free institutions. Of course, radio, while subject to a license, can never be as free as the press, but even so, the press can protect the freedom of the air if the broadcasters, by their acts, prove themselves worthy of our help.

The most dangerous feature of radio broad-

casting in any country and under any system yet devised lies in the fact that the license to operate a broadcasting station provides a complete monopoly because no more radio channels are available. The situation under private operation becomes more acute when we realize that there are only a limited number of hours in which to operate a broadcast station; and still more acute when one considers the value of such a license.

In commenting on the reason why there is a controversy over the freedom of the air, it is pointed out that the holder of a broadcasting station license must say who shall speak over the air, when he shall speak, how long he shall speak, and in most cases a manuscript must be submitted in advance.

The ANPA radio committee report continues:

It is easy for the license holder to deny an unwelcome speaker the right to speak under the excuse of not having available time on the air. Different hours of the day and night also have their value from zero to millions in terms of an audience, and the time of the broadcast is most important to the speaker as many elements enter into the factor of equal opportunity. The most popular hours of the day are the most valuable revenue producing hours.

Under our system of regulation, where the licenses to broadcast are granted by a political body every six months, a station is not likely to jeopardize its license by offending this political

body. It is for these reasons that radio offers a convenient vehicle for control by a political party. It is the duty of publishers to see that the regulation of broadcasting is kept free from political domination, and without bias or prejudice.

Looking ahead to facsimile and television the ANPA radio committee said:

Journalism could not exist if it were subject to a government license. Radio broadcasting, facsimile printing, and television by their nature must always be under government license.

Attempts of radio to function in the field of journalism must fail because a government license destroys the freedom on which any journalistic endeavor rests.

If radio broadcasting, facsimile printing, and television ever jeopardize the functions of the press, they will do so only when these facilities are used for propaganda purposes to retard the work of the press, and the press by a lack of vigilance has aided in its own destruction.

The control of debate, the utilization of radio for government propaganda, and censorship of news over the air are possibilities in radio, even probabilities. They are unthinkable as to the press.

Incidentally, about one-quarter of the broadcasting stations in the United States are owned or partly owned by newspapers, and fifty others are reported

to have filed applications for licenses not only for regular broadcasting but for ultra-short waves because of the possibilities in that spectrum for sound broadcasts, facsimile and television.

Attention has been called to the fact that with ratification of the first amendment to the Constitution, the press was freed not only of licensing but of any governmental control whatever.

Article I, as one of the ten original amendments to the Constitution, in force since Dec. 15, 1791, reads:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

## VIII

### PRACTICAL DO'S AND DON'T'S

MR. AVERAGE SPEAKER has a definite place on the radio today. Talking on the air is no longer confined to a handful of expert elocutionists or pure linguists. No one knows just when he will be called upon to champion a cause or crusade on the air. Each day's radio program finds new speakers listed to talk on everything from Packards to politics, from sapphires to soap.

Whether you advertise or whether you "fireside chat" here is a round-up of hints aimed to map intelligently the strategy of the radio speech:

1. Be natural and sincere; don't perorate.
2. Make every word count; a 75-station salvo costs thousands of dollars. Use simple words.
3. Give them substance; a personage may gather a crowd but it is the substance which keeps the audience tuned-in. Even the personality of the speaker mirrored through his voice is second in importance to the substance of his talk.
4. Write the speech. Write as you speak not as you write. On the radio a miss is not as good

as a mile; you cannot gloss over a mistake after it is microphoned any more than you can recall yesterday in order to alter it in accord with your second thoughts. Those who can extemporize successfully in the silence of the studio with no audience to "lean on" are few and far between.

5. Give them a simple, direct, reasoned message. Do not be technical or statistical.

6. Remember competition on the air is keen; you are competing with jazz, opera, symphony and all sorts of ethereal vaudeville. Be brief.

7. Leave no weak spots in your reasoning; the listener sits and thinks; you cannot glide over a weak spot with a verbal flourish or gesture.

8. Talk with the listeners not to them; don't try to make them weep.

9. Throw brickbats at your own risk, if at all; they are dangerous weapons, and like a "whispering campaign" are likely to react against the thrower.

10. Study the fan mail; it holds many cues and clues.

11. A radio political speaker should figuratively draw up a chair and explain things. Listeners will not tolerate explosive shouts. Swinging the arms and stamping around the microphone count for naught.

12. Do not "stump"; forget the "flaming phrases" and superlatives of eloquence.

13. Do not adopt a haughty, "hi-falutin'" attitude.

14. Declarations that it is good to be good

and bad to be bad are not likely to "go" even half as well as they often do where there are reciprocal excitements between speaker and hearers.

15. Remember in framing the speech that radio possesses the advantage of entering the opposition camps; it even preaches into the ears of the enemy (and the chances are they are listening) instead of seeking proselytes among members of the orator's own party.

16. "Confidential" whispers on the platform are dangerous; undertones travel far at the speed of light.

17. A candidate should strive to hold the attention of those not on his side. To such people a 15-minute talk is far more effective than an hour blast which only irks those whom he is seeking to win into his camp.

18. Radio has an advantage for speakers whose endowment of personality is not notable; the reliance is on argument and fact instead of mass excitement.

19. There is no place in the air for electromagnetic mud-slinging, high-sounding phraseology, hot air, meaningless platitudes and the bunkum of soap-box oratory.

20. Don't slam the fist on the microphone table or you'll bombard your own words.

21. Use the best possible radio equipment; the feelings of the electorate may become unruly if politics becomes a matter of distortion and noise. This also applies to the public address system for the auditorium and overflow crowds.

22. Farmers who have been working in the fields all day are likely to be too tired to listen to political speeches if sent to them after 9 o'clock. The agricultural broadcasters specializing in weather and market reports find the time between noon and 2 o'clock opportune to reach receptive ruralists.

23. Keep your watch in your pocket. Don't lay it on the table alongside the microphone; amplification makes the ticks of seconds sound like a rivet hammer.

24. "Big" names mean more in the campaign if they have not been on the air frequently; the curiosity value among the audience is diminished if the speaker's voice is well known. That is why Henry Ford, Charlie Chaplin and Elihu Root were stellar attractions in 1932.

25. Don't send any political "poison gas" across the frontiers to create ill-will among neighbors at the expense of winning a few votes at home. Short waves travel far. Avoid domestic squabbles over the radio fence because they might be an international boomerang later.

26. Do not attempt to cover too many issues in one broadcast; stick to what you know most about.

27. Do not gush poetry or prophecy.

28. A political candidate relishes cheers and bands as much as a football team; they imbue him with an enlivened spirit. Whoop it up at the radio rally and provide "spare time" for the hubbub but guard against too much color else it mar the speech and bore listeners.

29. Don't try to "split" the air by shouting. Speak in a natural tone and do not wander too far from the microphone or words then become "gibberish."

30. Do not hide behind the microphone. It was a futuristic idea in 1924 that the candidate would sit at home and conduct an armchair campaign. The candidate who travels with the microphone is the winner. The stay-at-home idea is like spending an evening with the picture of the best-girl; it's not the same as a personal call.

31. Do not ignore the male voice in the political broadcast directed to feminine ears; the female orator often sounds "superior" or a bit too elegant in tone, and women listeners resent it.

32. Do not aim or bid for fan mail; listeners content with what they hear seldom write. The auditor who doubts the subject or personality of the speaker is the one who uses the mail.

38. Morning or afternoon is the radio time to discuss subjects of special interest to women; in the evening choose topics of equal importance to men and women.

34. Do not get the erroneous idea that you must "talk down" to the rural audience; establish a "You and I relationship."

35. Deliberately made informal in the script, the round-table discussion, interview, dialogue, questions-and-answers, are not always successful. Simulation of spontaneity is generally apparent (few have mastered it) and it annoys

the listener more than the standard form of speech.

36. Don't use up all the watts and time by knocking the other fellow; give some constructive thoughts; concentrate on the "selling points."

37. Radio has a tendency to magnify defects in delivery; there is no place for the blatant demagogue for as a Senator once remarked, "venomous darts of scurrilous archers cannot pass through the air."

38. Take extra precaution to pause enough for important points to "sink in."

39. Don't worry about pauses in the speech. Pauses are generally psychological. Your theatrical mentality has the power to automatically measure the length of pauses. This applies in all acting and speaking. A good provocation fact gives you an excellent chance for a natural pause.

40. Remember you are not talking to "just a lot of politicians."

41. Plan the speech dramatically as a playwright builds up his plot and leave the audience with the thrill that accompanies the fall of the final curtain—primarily from the broadcasting angle that is "a good show."

42. Use short sentences. Lengthy sentences give the impression of nervousness while the effect is mere "windiness." Short sentences usually produce a more dramatic effect, more punch, and enliven the speech.

43. Avoid tongue twisters; use short words as much as possible. For example, "liberalization" is a difficult word for broadcasting.

44. Expression should be equal to your thoughts. Don't let your imagination lag. Dodge the monotone.

45. Accent the right words to make the broadcast forceful. Make up your mind where the emphasis should fall.

46. Convey your ideas honestly. Don't worry about the audience. Remember if any are listening, you are there for their joy or information. Don't worry about rules of oratory.

47. There is no rule against memorizing, but the broadcast may become sing-song or artificial; and there is always the chance of error slipping off the tongue. A printed copy of the talk is proof of what was spoken.

48. To become proficient at radio speaking, practice fifteen minutes a day for six days a week and rest on the seventh. That requires plenty of resolution.

49. If the talk has news value send advance copies to the press associations, city editors, radio editors and to the press department of the station. Be sure to mark the release date, time of the broadcast, name of the speaker and call letters of the station, on top of the first page.

50. If time is not available for the complete speech do not broadcast only the centre of it merely for the sake of being on the air; a talk with head and tail cut off is of little sense.

These suggestions lead up to television. Campaigning by sound-sight will call for more strategy. Television will be another fascinating chapter in the art and science of political broadcasting. Then the great time spellbinders may sweep satanic-like upon the stage again to haunt the electorate.

Students will see the radio teachers; congregations the preachers; consumers the salesmen in the act of demonstrating their wares; club folks their lecturers and vast audiences their entertainers. The ether mask will be ripped off the speaker's face and again he will be himself, not merely a disembodied voice striving with sound alone against such a mysterious thing as "microphone technique" to get his personality across with a story. But seeing by radio will have its limitations too.

Much of the television speaker's knack will be based upon what the broadcast speaker has learned. For sight will be wedded to sound, the forerunner of the art of addressing many millions simultaneously. Then it may be said, to quote the Scriptures, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

