

Monopoly Helps England

This is the third of a series of articles written by Fred Smith, studio director of the Crosley Radio Corporation's experimental broadcasting station WLV. He has been referred to as the first "Radio Ambassador" and visited all of the important broadcasting stations abroad. These articles are appearing in The Times, exclusively.

By Fred Smith

It is well, before leaving London, to reflect upon these facts: The British Broadcasting Company has a monopoly on broadcasting in the British Isles; its pay roll numbers 562 names; it owns and operates twenty stations and one high power station now going at twenty-five kilowatts; it has a weekly newspaper with a circulation of nearly a million; it has the definite assurance of a fixed income by means of taxation enforced by the government; it is guided by the powerful personality of J. C. W. Reith, and it has plans and ambitions for the future where in the sky alone is the limit. In other words, the B. B. C. has become, and means to grow more and more into a potent factor in the life of the empire.

The high power station of the company was formerly at Chelmsford; but that city is not in the center of England; on the contrary, it is on the sea-coast. Since the purpose of the high power station is to furnish programs to all those listeners who were not directly under some less powerful station, it was considered advantageous to make a change. For this reason, Daventry, right in the center of England, was selected, and on July 27, the new twenty-five kilowatt station was formally opened by the postmaster general. Thus is created another link in the great chain of stations.

Under Fire

Let no one imagine that the R. B. C. was born and has lived in happy freedom from criticism! For it certainly has been through the fire. It started out under the auspices of six radio concerns, but left open the possibility of joining to others. The membership has gone up to 1,700. And in the meantime a multiplicity of interests found themselves in a position to be envious of this energetic organization. These interests did not hesitate to do all in their power to stir up public opinion against "the monopoly." However, these attacks seem to have weakened in proportion to the steadfast growth of the company.

A great part of the charm experienced in this travel-study about Europe is the sudden change one encounters by the simple means of crossing a bit of water or an invisible line upon the ground marking the boundary of a nation. The change takes place immediately: language, money, appearance, food, general customs—all changed completely or modified in varying degrees. Of course, people eat breakfast everywhere; but if you've been in England a week getting coffee, bread, butter, porridge, marmalade, and ham and eggs for breakfast, you are apt to notice the difference when you go back on the Continent to coffee and rolls!

Such a beautiful summer day came

with us to Amsterdam! The sun was warm, the shade refreshing. The sky was blue and the waters of the canals, dark indigo, reflected on smooth ripples the reds and bright colors of the small freight boats plying up and down, husband at the wheel, wife at the wash line. Conspicuous antennae perched with careful regularity over many buildings. There was a rather huge aerial over the Royal Palace. The sixteen-year-old Princess is a radio fan.

In the offices managers excused themselves for haste because "they were having election tomorrow." W. Vogt, studio director of NSF, Hilversum, invited us to go to the station that evening, where the biggest political men of the country were to address the public. He explained that the great political difficulty, so far as the station was concerned, was to have all the parties represented—there are twenty-five in Holland!

M. Vogt called for us at our hotel a little after five. Then we had to go by train some eighteen miles. It took nearly an hour. Arriving in Hilversum we took a taxi to the outskirts of the pretty town, where a new factory of radio receiving sets was located. We entered the building. Loud speakers in several offices made audible the concert. The Dutch orchestra was in the graceful midst of a South American tango. The next number was a North American fox-trot—"How Do You Do?" They wound up with "Red Hot Mama," and the Dutch National air. The orchestra played well, being professional and paid. The single studio was prettily furnished.

Tea Is Served

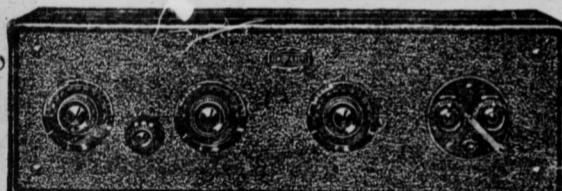
The young director of the Netherland Signal Apparatus Works, A. Dubois, a charming man of French descent, but of a family 300 years in Holland, was at the station on account of the importance of the political speakers. He took us for an inspection of the factory where several men were still at work although it was by this time 7 o'clock. The equipment was excellent, the building well lighted, the products, three tube sets and marine transmitters. Returning to the office of A. Dubois we were served tea, and the political speeches via loud speakers.

The Dutch are the most cautious people imaginable. They develop new industries slowly but solidly—like their architecture. They frequently wait to see what others are doing, and then apply the most suitable and practical of foreign discoveries to their own problems. They are answering the question "Who will pay for broadcasting?" in three ways simultaneously now, and waiting patiently for the firm support of the government for the clinching decision.

In the first place, their own company owns and operates the station at Hilversum. The engineer and operator is an Englishman, a pleasant young chap by the name of G. W. White. Two years ago, at the beginning, the antenna was so low the station was not getting out well.

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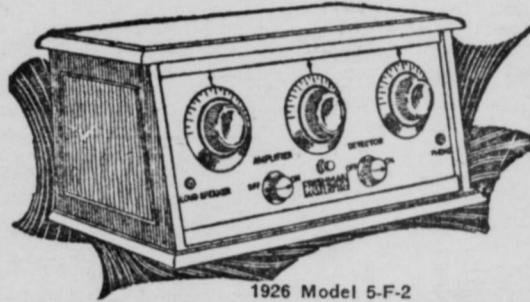
(To Be Continued.)

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