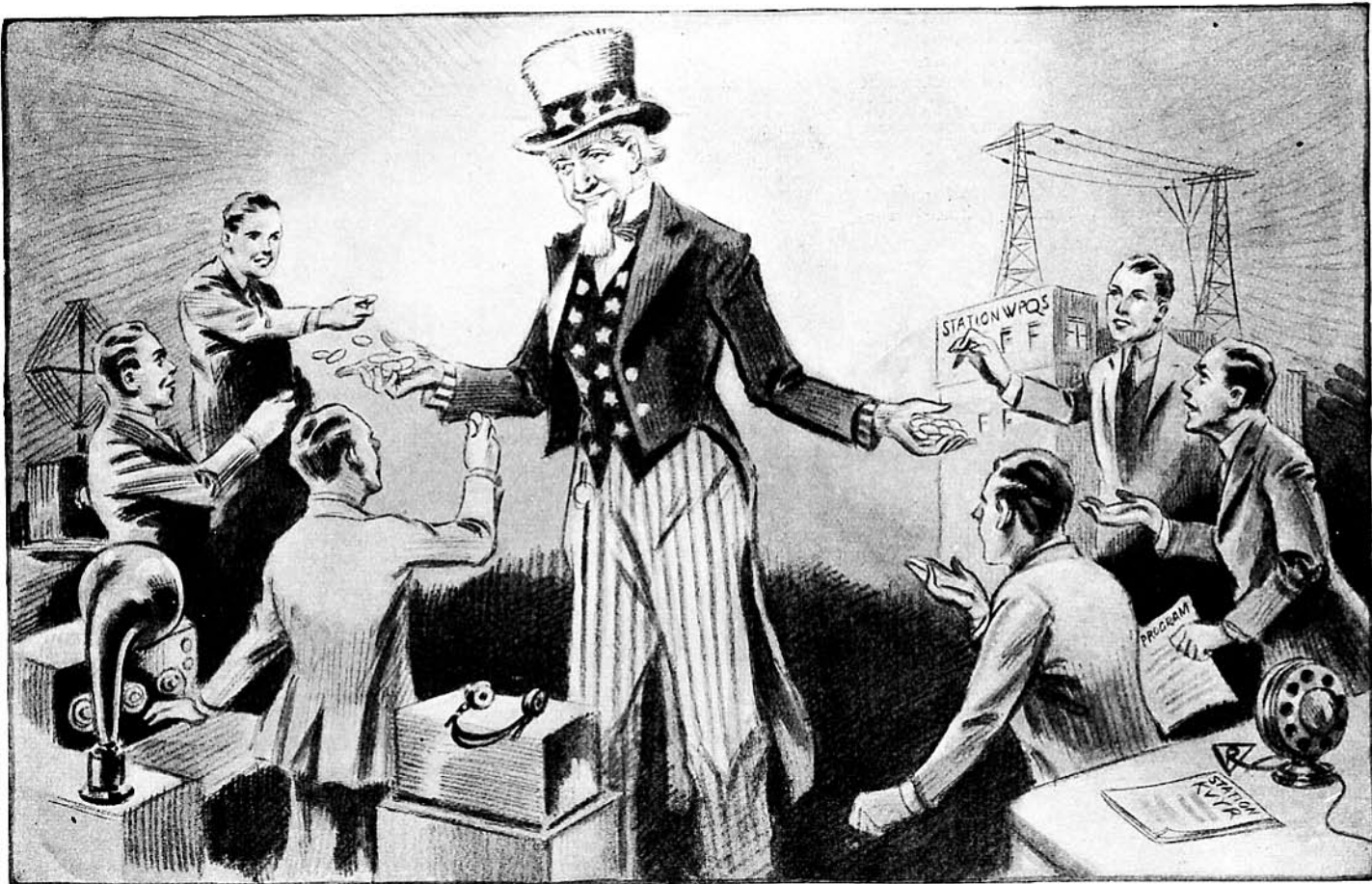


# Shall We Have a Federal Radio Tax?

By RAYMOND FRANCIS YATES

This article contains one of the most practical suggestions we have heard to put broadcasting on a commercial basis. The plan outlined by Mr. Yates seems quite practicable, and we shall be glad to receive from our readers their opinions regarding it.



If All the Broadcast Listeners Were Willing to Pay a Few Cents Monthly, the Best Artists Could Be Engaged to Perform for the Radio Audience. The Money Already Spent for Cards and Letters to Acknowledge the Reception of Programs Represents a Huge Sum Which Might Be Employed for This Purpose, If Uncle Sam Could Take Care of the Distribution.

**B**ROADCASTING is a sort of economic curiosity. It holds out the same interest for the economist that a two-legged calf holds for the biologist.

The radio problem is a federal problem. The very nature of radio makes it so. Any broadcasting station, no matter what its power, is an inter-state proposition. Radio has no respect for boundary lines, national or international, and the program of any station is the property of the nation. A station cannot be a state affair no matter how hard it tries. The pure universalism of radio to say nothing of the more complicated angles of the problems, demands that we have federal control. Radio broadcasting means entertainment and education for the masses and consequently it takes on a national aspect.

Radio broadcasters are drifting they know not where. Broadcasting proved to be a mirage for many of those who jumped into it without thinking of the consequences. Today they have on their hands expensive establishments requiring large sums of money for upkeep.

If we were to buy an automobile, and the manufacturer of that automobile obligated himself to supply us with gasoline and oil for an indefinite period we would have a situation somewhat akin to that of radio broadcasting as it stands today. Now, if our automobile manufacturer would sell cars so fast that his profit would be of great enough volume, he might be able to carry

out this program for two or three or possibly ten years, but a time would eventually be reached when the sales would strike the saturation mark and naturally fall off, leaving him in a position where he would have to eat into the huge profits that came during the years of prosperity. He would suddenly find himself faced with a situation that would eventually bring about his financial ruin.

## FINANCING BROADCASTING

Today our radio manufacturers are selling enormous quantities of radio equipment and part of the profits resulting from the sale of this equipment are used to support broadcasting programs. In the meantime the country is rapidly becoming filled with receiving instruments. Perhaps in another three or four years there will be as many as 15,000,000 receiving sets in the United States, if the present sales records are maintained, 15,000,000 receiving sets distributed throughout this country would bring it dangerously close to the absolute saturation point. Should broadcasting be able to support itself until that situation is reached—a feat which now seems doubtful—our manufacturers would be absolutely unable to carry on and broadcasting would have to pass into other hands.

It goes without saying that those who are shouldering the responsibility of broadcasting are entitled to some revenue, but under what method are they going to

collect it? They have a moral right to charge for their programs, but as yet there is no way in which they can collect. They are not so much in love with the "dear public" that they are giving this entertainment out of the kindness of their hearts.

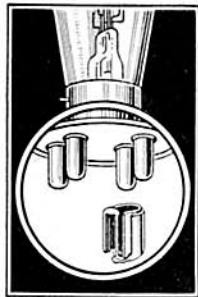
As the situation appears now, there is only one plan that can give to space broadcasting a permanent place regardless of other developments technical or otherwise. The writer refers to a Federal tax system for the maintenance of space broadcasting. Now the word tax is quite distasteful to the majority. So many taxes have had to be met since the war that any additions are scorned. Perhaps we have misnamed this particular kind of revenue. It would not really be a tax, but rather a fee collected by a responsible party (The Federal Government) and distributed as needed to broadcasting stations operated by the Government located in the various zones throughout the country and supported by small re-broadcasters who would make the program available to everyone with a receiving set, no matter how elaborate or how modest. Every fair-minded person who enjoys radio could not have any objection to the Government acting in their interests and taking upon itself the responsibility of collecting a small fee and placing it in a broadcasting budget for the

(Continued on page 976)

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Radio Equipment Company,

Gentlemen: About last January I purchased some of your Radeco Safety Fuses. I have never had cause to regret this purchase, because I believe it has saved me many dollars. So I am writing to thank you and will recommend them to my Radio friends. The fuses have not interfered in any way with the operation of my set, and you are entirely at liberty to use this letter as an "ad" for your product, if you should so desire. Wishing you success in your present enterprise, I am,

Yours truly,  
Mr. Harvey F. Reese.

9/26/23

out and with the aid of matches from the mate's water-proof box, sent an answering flare into the heavens. The answering siren of the Coast Guard cutter came faintly to them, after what seemed an interminable wait, telling them that their signal had been seen. Another rocket a few points off their starboard beam disclosed the presence of the other ship's boat which had got safely away.

There could be no resting on the oars. In spite of aching arms and weary bodies, the boat must be held into the waves or swamped. But they had been seen, and help was almost at hand. "Thank God," murmured the mate, "I didn't believe we could do it. I hope the old man made his boat, all right."

"Guess there's no fear of that, Mr. Nelson," ventured Jack, "the boys wouldn't leave without him."

"You don't know some of these old shell-back skippers and their fool traditions, my boy," and with that remark, the tossing boat once more was silent.

For all of an hour the little craft was held in place by the heroic efforts of the small crew. And at last their efforts were rewarded, for topping the crest of a monstrous wave, came the Coast Guard's sturdy little motor sailer, the rhythmic exhaust of her powerful motor making sweet music to the tortured victims of the sea.

The transfer was difficult, but skilled seamanship and willing hands soon had all on board the larger boat and but one man had suffered a ducking; a quartermaster's numbed limbs answered slowly, but a quick grab and a mighty heave and he was safe. The bobbing life-boat they attempted to tow, but it proved such a menace that they were forced to cut it adrift.

A similar rescue was effected a few minutes later when the crew of the second life-boat were hauled aboard. But, as the mate had feared, the Captain was not among them. He had elected to remain aboard his vessel and share her fate for his traditions were strong within him. The mate reproved the crew of the second boat for not forcing the Captain to accompany them, but the reply of the first assistant engineer, "He threatened us with a pistol, Nelson, if we didn't leave," convinced him that the old man had been firmly determined.

A rough but safe journey to the Neah Bay Coast Guard station and hot coffee, followed by a warm bed, put all hands in good shape and none the worse for their experience. The incident of the rescue was communicated by wire to NPD and the broadcast of that powerful station, fittingly closes another chapter in the annals of the sea:

"TO ALL SHIPS AND STATIONS:

MS SEAKING, BELLINGHAM SAN PEDRO, DISABLED AND SANK EIGHT MILES WEST TATOOSH 510 AM TWENTY FOURTH. ALL HANDS RESCUED BY COAST GUARD WITH EXCEPTION CAPTAIN. BEWARE FLOATING WRECKAGE.

RADIO TATOOSH."

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## Shall We Have a Federal Radio Tax?

(Continued from page 867)

establishment and maintenance of stations.

There would be nothing to interfere with the immediate adoption of such a plan and should our present 4,000,000 listeners endorse and urge such a scheme in a political way it might be possible to get action and eventually bring about the inauguration of such a plan. The plan would be economically sound and if it were put up to the listeners in proper fashion they could be made to understand that they were not paying a tax but a small fee for a service.



## HOW BROADCASTING CAN BE PUT ON A SOUND BASIS

Say we have 4,000,000 listeners in the United States and six dollars a year or fifty cents a month was collected from each one. This would place in the hands of the Government not less than \$24,000,000 for the use of broadcasting. To this our radio manufacturers might add a small percentage of their profits which would boost it another four or five million, giving approximately \$30,000,000 a year for this purpose. Now, \$30,000,000 spent wisely and discreetly would guarantee for the citizens of the United States a wonderful nightly program, and it would only be necessary to use a small percentage of the present broadcasting stations. Some of them might be changed into relay stations, and, of course, it would be necessary to make additions to the system at strategic points. It would seem that the stage is beautifully set for such a plan and no doubt many of our present station owners would heave a sigh of relief if their equipment should be taken over and operated by the Federal Government. Such a plan would also thwart the progress of wired wireless. Indeed, it might discourage the whole scheme.

Some will ask, how would it be possible to collect this broadcasting fee? The answer is, how is it possible to collect any other legal fee? How is the revenue tax collected, the income tax, and all the other various collections that the Government has to make? It is true that there are a certain number of evaders, but they are greatly in the minority. In the case of radio, legislation could be enacted that would make it illegal for a person to own a radio receiving set without being obligated to pay a small yearly fee, and it is certain that the Government would meet with just as much success in collecting this charge as it has met with in the many other tax collections that it has to make.

Tax is a mean-sounding word in these days. It conjures up pictures of fat collectors clothed in authority which they use with reckless abandon. At the very mention of the word, we automatically think of our pocketbooks. Consequently the writer hastens to explain that the term is used here for the want of a more expressive one. We might call it a radio service fee. The automobile tourist does not grumble when he realizes that part of his state tax goes for the maintenance of the roads that his six cylinder bus goes bounding over, bringing his eyes to feast upon the green fields and spacious valleys. The roads are public. Could anything be more public than the ether? True, one must have a radio set to tap the ether, but one must also have an automobile to enjoy the roads and a motor boat to enjoy the waterways.

If broadcasting is to grow and prosper, we need a non-partisan Federal Commission of educators, entertainment and technical experts to govern, regulate and control broadcasting and to arrange for the collection of a small yearly fee from each owner of a receiving set. The fee asked might depend upon the receiving range of an outfit, the greater the range, the greater the service available to the owner. Our manufacturers could very easily be induced to contribute to this fund.

## MULTIPLE BROADCASTING WOULD REDUCE EXPENSES

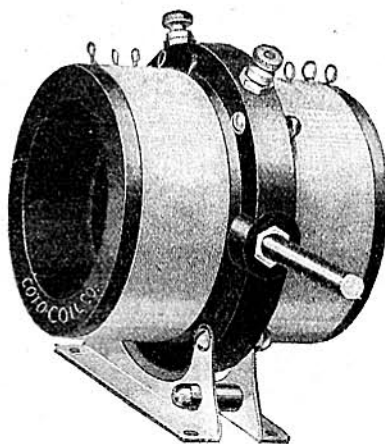
With this scheme it might be possible to place remotely controlled stations in various parts of the country that would be fed from the larger outfits in the greater cities thereby effecting considerable economy. It is now possible to rebroad-

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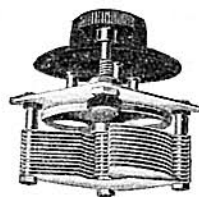
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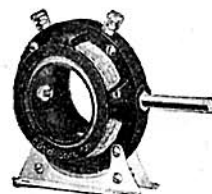
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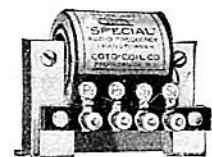
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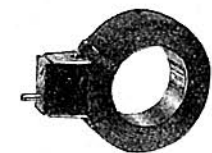
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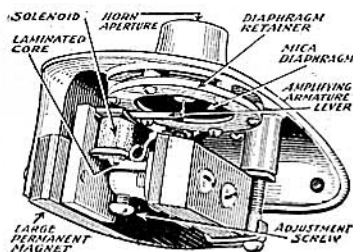
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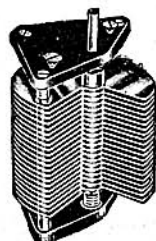
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cast, that is, to have one station pick up the broadcasting of another, strengthen it and send it out again. This is done daily with the time signals from Arlington. They are first received and amplified on a very ordinary outfit. This done, they are fed into the transmitter and sent out again on another wave-length. Using this system one man could take care of a remotely controlled station, and one large station in a community where it is easy to obtain the necessary talent could "mother" as many as ten of these radio outposts.

Within the next three years radio will do one of three things. We can have Federal control, a system of subscription through a specially designed receiver for secret transmission, or what has recently become known as wired wireless. These latter problems are entirely technical, but their solution is eminent enough to regard them as possible remedies for the broadcasting tangle. Of course, they would make it possible for the broadcasters to collect for their service, otherwise they could not be regarded as possible solutions.

A practical system of secret transmission would be a delicious solution of the problem. By this we mean the development of an apparatus that will allow the transmission of any broadcasting station to be secret except to those who have rented or leased the special instrument that will respond to the waves. This could be done by scrambling several wave-lengths in such a way as to make them unintelligible except to those who were in possession of the proper kind of a receiver. Such a system is in use today, but not for the purpose of broadcasting and it is doubtful if it could meet the demands for this type of service. With scrambled waves, any one with a receiver of ordinary design would receive nothing but patches of the programs which would sound like the gurglings of an infant.

### A Transmitter That Will Work With Plenty of Five-Watt Tubes

(Continued from page 896)

L4 L4 are two coils wound with No. 28 D.C.C. wire on a 3" or 4" diameter form with about 200 to 225 turns. Do not mount these so that they will be in inductive relation to anything else. The two tuned chokes have 35 turns each and are wound with heavy wire and shunted by a good .001 mfd. variable. On these choke coils, do not

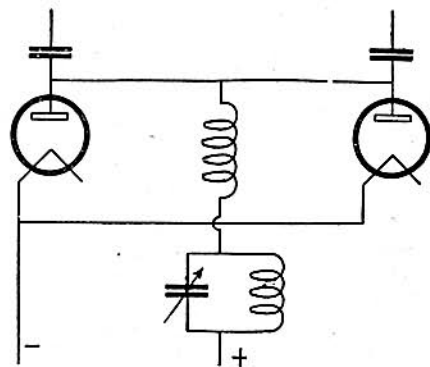


Fig. 2

The Connection of the Circuit When Used With D. C. Plate Supply. Only One Tuned Choke Is Necessary

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