

## A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

**ALFRED E. SMITH** has had a broadcasting studio installed in the Empire State Building at Fifth Avenue and 34th Street. Query: Will Mr. Chrysler enjoy his radio set as much as he once did?

# RADIO WORLD

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## The "Closed" Channels

**T**OO much concentration of the air privileges has been charged time and again, with the National Broadcasting Company a frequent target. This company is wholly owned by Radio Corporation of America.

Interest in this phase of the licensing problem has never been openly asserted by the Federal Radio Commission until now, when NBC seeks to buy out KPO, San Francisco, for \$600,000, a 5,000-watt station with a 50,000-watt construction permit. The Commission, at its hearing, has an engineer testify to the high percentages of quota units now to the credit of NBC, in the metropolitan section of San Francisco, in the State of California, and in the Fifth Radio Zone, with comparisons with the much smaller holdings or leases of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Again, when CBS itself seeks to buy a station, WCJS, Mt. Vernon Hills, Va., the station's land taking in a little of the estate of George Washington, the quota units that would be held by CBS, compared to all the units allotted throughout the United States, are cited by the Commission's engineer. It is as if for the very purpose of giving recognition to the fact that concentrated holdings are growing, for obviously when independent stations sell out to chains, selling their very existence, their independence goes with it.

In radio broadcasting big business is growing bigger and little business is growing smaller, when one rates the situation on the basis of service area and type of programs, rather than by the mere rote of counting stations. The smaller ones grow less important merely because the larger ones grow better, though individually the smaller ones may not be degraded a bit.

However, the mere notation of the growing enormity of the enormous will not help the Commission or the public much. Radio has become so well established in home life that listening in is almost second nature, and it puts a severe strain on the stations to have to furnish highly acceptable programs day after day, even hour after hour. With such a close association as exists between life itself and radio at large, naturally the public becomes critical of what is transmitted. The less to listen to, the broader the mind. Now with so much on the air that the public wants, and indeed gets, entertainment is furnished that may run to \$40,000 or \$50,000 an hour over a single chain. How small stations are to furnish programs with a large, famous orchestra, a guest conductor, a featured artist and some guest artists, all of whom get from hundreds to thousands of dollars for a performance, is impos-

## CELEBRITIES HONOR CELEBRITIES



More than a score of radio stars assembled to fete Pierre Brugnion, master of ceremonies of the "Evening in Paris" program, during the 182nd performance of that feature on Monday night last, over the WABC-Columbia network. The program was in the nature of a studio party and brought to the microphone distinguished guests. Among them were (l. to r. top) Lanny Ross, Stoopnagle and Budd, Kate Smith, Morton Downey, and (below) Singin' Sam, the Boswell Sisters and Norman Brokenshire. Seen in the center are Alice Remsen and Pierre Brugnion of the "Evening in Paris" cast.

sible to determine from any economic viewpoint.

In one sense, therefore, the critical public is itself voting for concentration of air privileges on large and powerful chains, while on the other hand it may be unambitiously opposing that as destructive of competition and against the American principle of open opportunities in natural resources. However, there is no such American principle. The plan of American business has been on the opposite scale. And there really isn't any competition when the local fife and drum corps, nice boys but dull musicians, is on the air from a small station, while Walter Damrosch's symphony orchestra is on the air from a host of other stations.

Because such perplexities as these seem insoluble, torment the mind and offer no

surcease, we create such official bodies as the Federal Radio Commission, which is empowered to worry over them to the fullest.

## Perkins Sinks to 10-a-Day

Ray Perkins, National Broadcasting Company wit, had a tough time the day he finished his old Jergens program and started his new Barbasol program. He had a rehearsal for Barbasol, a rehearsal for Jergens, a performance for Barbasol, a performance for Jergens, four personal appearances at the Fordham Theatre, in the Bronx, New York City; a benefit at Scarsdale, N. Y., at 10 p. m., and a personal appearance at a Bronx high school, which made ten sessions in one day.