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C H A N G I N G   C H A N N E L S

An analysis of the people and forces shaping  
the development of New Zealand Broadcasting.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in  
Geography at Massey University.

Dale Cameron Bailey

January 1985

"When you take stuff from one writer, it's plagiarism:  
but when you take it from many writers, it's research."

Wilson Mizner  
1876 -1933.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the people and forces shaping the development of New Zealand Broadcasting. People and the structures they live with have proven to be important, both identifiable yet inseparable. By examining process, this thesis has brought the two together in social enquiry. The development of broadcasting from the first experience in Wireless Telegraphy to the present day has been a series of complex changes. Key individuals and certain structures have shaped that development. Each chapter that details this development ~~adopts~~ adopts a different emphasis, thus providing insight into the wide range of forces being brought to bear. Three aspects in particular are explored in detail. Changing technologies, the development or new conceptions of broadcasting, and the altering nature of organisations have proved focal points for this thesis. These avenues of enquiry reveal more about the nature of Broadcasting and the society in which it resides.

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## CHAPTER 1

### 'A PERSONAL FRAMEWORK'

It is as unhelpful to separate a thesis from its author as it is to separate music from its composer. In the past, the character, ideals, hopes, values and aspirations of a researcher were seen as extraneous to his work, a distraction to his 'science'. Both, however, are interwoven, affecting each other.

This short comment is intended to provide the reader with some background which has influenced the author's choice of topic and approach.

Born in 1962, the author has lived and been educated within the confines of the Manawatu region. Attending a rural primary school, and later an urban boys' high school, he developed a taste for further education. This led to enrolment in a Bachelor of Arts course, majoring in Geography at Massey University. This was later extended to a Masterate, for which this thesis has been prepared.

A committed anti-centralist, the author developed interests in both history and current events. The sensitivity to history was in part inspired by a long family association in the area. Politics has also dominated the author's interests, with a special interest in rural affairs.

In Geography and Social Science studies, interests were pursued around the nature of people and the systems they create. In particular there has been a fascination with the structures, organisations and institutions created in society. This, combined with a desire to explain things more adequately has led the author to explore the development of knowledge in contextual terms, linking both human agency and social structure.

To conclude it is important not to over-emphasise the impact of these ideas and experiences. But, on the other hand, to disregard them would be inappropriate. They have been acknowledged and should be recognised for what they are.

"Reasoning Rules are intellectual tools by which we structure our thoughts and actions. My choice of reasoning mode is therefore analogous to the craftman's choice of trade tools; in both cases I am influenced by my subject matter, by my experiences I have accumulated in the past, by my present milieu and by my hopes and fears for the future"

Gunnar Olsson, 1980.

## CHAPTER 2

### "A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR A STUDY OF BROADCASTING"

As B. Wood (1982) contends 'a history of Broadcasting can only proceed by referring to what is not Broadcasting' (Wood, 1982, 107). Broadcasting, and indeed any other activity, must be explained within its milieu. In the context of New Zealand, this means gaining an understanding of a capitalist society. This can really only be achieved through embracing social theory.

Recent social theorists have sought to overcome the difficult dichotomy of structure and agency. Latterly there has been a recognition that both global processes and local events are often inseparable. Accounts need to be woven which capture both the specific local events, and the social structures prevalent in society. There needs to be an exploration of process.

There has been some recent agreement that the examination of the reproduction and production of society is a necessary pre-requisite for the portrayal of processes. Yet such an examination requires a many-faceted discussion of reality through the use of categories that capture the changing relationships of structure and agency. Social theorists often orient their discussion about the activities within capitalist

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societies in terms of commodity relations. In this way activities are seen to be linked to the general extension of productive relations defining commodity production. Yet such an approach is too limited to adequately explore the emergence and development of activities such as Broadcasting.

Radio and television are too bound up in social practices to be satisfactorily explained by reference to commodity relations alone. Broadcasting spans civil society and the State as well as the economy. Often people in broadcasting are acting deliberately against practices directly associated with commodity production.

Nevertheless the important work of Harvey (1982) (among others) confirms the dominance of the capitalist form of production, in New Zealand and most other societies. Though his work partly addresses issues of reproduction, he still centres on the economic functions of capitalism. With broadcasting it is crucial to consider wider non-commodity uses. Different movements of capital into broadcasting were made, for example, by, but often diametrically opposed, popular groups. Equally, the accommodation of antagonistic civil groups and various organisations of the State has usually been contingent. Yet despite such developments broadcasting is still tied to the evident necessities of profit realisation or revenue generation. In no way, however, should groups and individuals be regarded as always performing strictly according to the rules of capitalist

.../

production.

An explanation of the history of broadcasting places severe demands on available theory. With the interest of bridging structure and agency, in all three spheres, civil society, the State, and the economy, the theory must inform on organisational forms and functioning under the general umbrella of capitalist relations of production. It also has to cater for quite diverse arrangements in which the many different organisations of broadcasting have engaged in.

The way the economy, civil society and the State have or could have combined has special bearing on the degree of autonomy of broadcasting activities and the social meaning and functions attached to the organisations making up broadcasting. These are matters which can only be adequately handled in an analysis which highlights changing relationships. Although change is summarised by frequent reference to dates and well known events, it should be recognised that this type of summary only in part illustrates the key relationship defining organisations and activities. Thus rather than concentrating on events per se, this thesis attempts to thread an account of relationships which more adequately provides a sense of the diverse determining influences. It looks closely at the organisational arrangements and infrastructures and includes some evaluation of the personal contribution of decision makers and personalities. It reveals the magnitude and character of organisational change upon a succession of advances in radio and television.

While this thesis will not be sited within the bounds of conventional geography it firmly recognises that physical and social constraints affect the practices of individuals and groups. But to consider these facets alone would severely limit understanding. Accordingly questions of location and spatial organisation are accorded appropriate emphasis in

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relation to the particular practices which give meanings to the use of space.

### Reproducing Society

Allan Pred (1982) has argued that Geographers need to address the dialectic between society and the individual (Pred, 1982, 157). But as N. Thrift (1983) has pointed out, the traditional subject matter of geography has made it difficult:

"It is very difficult to relate what are usually very abstract generalisations about space phenomena to the features of a particular place at a particular time and to the actions of individuals within that place"

(Thrift, 1983, 23)

According to Thrift, the problem has been represented within human geography as a 'polarisation between social structure and human agency' (Thrift, 1983, 23). What is needed is an approach which transcends these difficulties:

"I am looking for a theoretically structured approach to the 'real world of human beings' which is not 'held at a safe distance by the extreme forms of the idealist abstraction' that are so characteristic of a substantial portion of Marxist traditions". (Thrift, 1983, 25)

Such a conception is a valid task for human geographers. A. Sayer, (1983) also sees the need to resolve the artificial dichotomy of structure and agency:

"Structuralist approaches tried to emphasise that action is structurally determined, even to the extent of virtually writing out agents. Behavioural geography had overlooked the fact that people do not just act as they please, in conditions of their own choosing, whereas in structuralist approaches it appears that conditions did the acting.

.../

What was lacking was a mediation between structure (always exalted) and agency (always over emphasised)!" (Sayer, 1982 80-81).

Pred (1982) adds that society is not a 'mass of separable events and sequences' nor a matter of momentary meanings which we attach to our physiological states' but is an agglomeration:

"Instead for any given area over any given time society may be defined as the agglomeration of all existing institutions, the activities (practices or modes of behaviour) associated with the institutions, the people participating in the activities, and the structural relations occurring between people as individuals or collectives between such people and the institutions and between institutions"

(Pred, 1982, 158).

Proceeding from this he defines the reproduction of society:

"...as that constantly ongoing process whereby, in a given area, the everyday performance of institutional activities ... results in the perpetuation in stable or altered form, of the institutions themselves, of the knowledge necessary to repeat or create activities of already existing structural relationships and of the biological reproduction of the areas of population".

(Pred, 1982, 158-9).

Such a process is the core of the continued existence of any society. A. Touraine (1977) claims there is more to it than simply reproducing and continuing the existing relationships:

"Society is not just reproduction and adaptation: it is also creation, self production. It has the capacity to define itself and thus through knowledge and investment

.../

it has achieved, to transform its relations with its environment, to constitute its milieu. Human society possesses a capacity of symbolic creation by means of which, between a 'situation and social conduct there occurs the formation of a meaning, a system of conduct".  
(Touraine, 1977, 4)

Touraine's analysis recognises that groups within society have the ability to reflect upon themselves and respond accordingly. It also allows a recognition of the social construction of value.

#### A Need to Consider Process

In order to resolve the dichotomy between agency and structure Philip Abrams (1982) suggests that 'process' might provide a link. He sees social action as 'both something we choose to do and something we have to do'

"...whatever reality society has, is a historical reality - a reality in time. When we refer to the two sidedness of society, we are referring to the ways which in time actions become institutions and institutions in turn are changed by action ..."

(Abrams, 1982, 2-3)

Such a sense of process has been largely omitted by social theorists. Abrams looks at events to provide a useful approach to process:

"The great events mark decisive conjunctions of action and structure: they are transparent moments of structuring at which human agency encounters social possibility and can be seen most clearly as simultaneously determined and determining. Time after time the analysis of the event reveals the meaning and the interweaving of the general and particular, of interests, states, cultures, rules and structured opportunity with individual understandings, motivations and more or less considered and deliberate action"

(Abrams, 1982, 199).

.../

Such an interpretation places events in some context, not isolated artificially. Anthony Giddens (1981) advocates that any 'social enquiry should fashion knowledge contextually':

"Time and space have traditionally been seen not only as 'boundaries' to social analysis but have also been in a certain sense separated from one another in a disciplinary fashion. History it is presumed, has as its special province the elapsing of time, while geography finds its identity in a pre-eminent concern with space".

(Giddens, 1981, 30)

Giddens sees it as important to 'grasp time and space in terms of the relations of things and events'. He argues that time and space become "phenomena" as contrasted to the classical view that all that is real exists in time and space'. (Giddens, 1980, 30-1).

The conception of society too can affect the construction of knowledge. Allen Scott sees knowledge as reflecting the order of a society:

"...knowledge is in essence an effect of ensembles of concrete social problems and interests. These problems and interests are intrinsic to the prevailing mode of production, and they accordingly assume a very definite historical character and form.." (Scott, 1982, 15)

Scott also sees two 'breakdowns' which greatly influence our society and have led to the creation of separate bodies of knowledge. The two breakdowns are:

- "a) Technical breakdowns in production and growth calling for positivistic knowledge effects and scientifically programmed interventions in order to re-establish the economic order of late capitalism,
  - b) Associated breakdowns of affective individual and social life which give rise to the need for empathetic research programmes and sociocultural management so as to maintain legitimation, smooth reproduction and cultural continuity."
- (Scott, 1982, 151-2)

.../

Such breakdowns in knowledge are central to the reproduction of capitalist societies.

According to D. Harvey (1982), 'we live in a world of commodity production - all goods are produced for exchange in the market' (Harvey, 1982, 9). Development has become so dominant in our society that 'we have arrived at the point where we can see that the conditions of general commodity exchange make the capitalist form of circulation socially necessary'. He sees the existence of 'a social space' in which 'the operations of the capitalist become necessary in order to stabilise exchange relations'. (Harvey, 1982, 13).

On the other hand organisations and institutions can be set up which appear to directly contradict the commodity relations. It is useful to conceive of structure and agency within a frame that accommodates this. Urry's (1981) capitalist societies, involving people groups and organisations is such a framework.

### Organisations

Activities are often co-ordinated and developed by groups, and it is necessary to reach an appropriate understanding of their operation. Ranson, Hinings and Greenwood (1980) provide an insight into organisational structures:

"The concept of structure is usually understood to imply a configuration of activities that is characteristically enduring and persistent, the dominant feature of organisational structure is its patterned regularity. Yet descriptions of structure have typically focussed on very different aspects of such patterned regularity. Some have sought to describe structure as a formal configuration of order and procedures, the prescribed framework of the organisation ..."

(Ranson, etal, 1980, 1-2)

They see the organisational framework as focussing on the 'differentiation of positions, formulations of rules and procedures, and prescriptions of authority.' Combined with this they see the

.../

properties of their 'structural frameworks' as having 'important consequences for the organisations effectiveness' (Ranson, et al 1980, 2) The authors; provide 'three abstract and interdependent categories' to analyse organisations. These categories are 'integral to a theoretical model that seeks to articulate the way in which the process of structuring itself defines and mediates organisational structures'. (Ranson, et al 1980, 4) These three categories are termed; provinces of meaning, dependencies of power and contextual constraints:

- "1) Organisational members create provinces of meaning which incorporate interpretive schemes, intermittently articulated as values and interests, that form the basis of their orientation and strategic purposes within organisations.
- 2) Since interpretive schemes can be the basis of cleavage as much as consensus, it is often appropriate to consider an organisation as composed of alternative schemes, value preferences and sectional interests, the resolution of which is determined by dependencies of power
- 3) Such constitutive structuring by organisational members has, in turn, always to accommodate contextual constraints inherent in characteristics of the organisation and the environment, with organisational members differentially responding to and enacting their contextual conditions according to the opportunities provided by infra-structure and time" (Ranson et al, 1980, 4)

In the day-to-day operation of organisations care must be taken to ensure that they are sensitive to social features as well as the demands of operation:

"... If organisations wish to perform effectively their structural forms must remain sensitive not only to these infrastructural elements (e.g., size of market, demographic pattern), but equally to such qualitative characteristics as

.../

the complexity, stability or uncertainty of changing technologies, populations and markets. Apart from confronting demands for its products and services, the organisation faces an environment upon which it is dependent for finance, manpower and materials, that is its resources" (Ranson, et al, 1980, 10)

To analyse the activity of organisations it is important not only to look within organisations but between them. Ranson et al<sup>^</sup> saw those relations as significant. One such relationship is the role of powerful actors:

"The constitutional structuring of relations between (as within) organisations is a dual one in which powerful actors wish to create structures of domination (that is of power and meaning) that mediate their own reconstituted meanings are sedimented in structures as well as in perceptual processes" (Ranson et al, 1980, 11)

The actions<sup>§</sup> of these people, along with others less significant, is strongly influenced by their view of the world:

"The attempt of power holders to constitute structural arrangements according to their interpretive scheme is typically a process of coping with obstacles, the milieu within which organisational life carries on" (Ranson, et al, 1980, 12)

As these authors note, 'all organisations are located in a broader social structure that will constrain the forms which they can develop' (Ranson, et al, 1980, 10). Given this understanding it is appreciated that social influences are constrained by the rules of capitalist production.

D. Harvey (1982) reasons organisations reconstitute themselves to meet the challenging demands of commodity production. He connects the need for organisational change with his 'general argument on technological change' (Harvey, 1982, 138). He explains this

.../

necessity:

"... competition impels capitalism towards perpetual revolutions in the productive forces by whatever means of whatever sort. Capitalists compete with each other in the realm of exchange. Each has the possibility to alter his own production process so that it becomes more efficient than the social average ... Once the competitors have caught up, the original innovators have every incentive to leap ahead once more in order to sustain the relative surplus value they were previously capturing ... the social consequence of competition is, of course, to force continuous leap frogging in the adoption of new technologies and new organisational forms independent of the will of any particular entrepreneur" (Harvey, 1982, 121).

If this analysis of technological change holds true, then 'we must interpret organisational change as a response to contradictory forces:

"we must also **anticipate** that the organisation achieved at any particular moment will embody powerful contradictions which will likely be the sources of instability and crises" (Harvey, 1982, 138).

J. Urry (1981) identifies the importance of the State in such developments. He sees the State as broadly maintaining the existing framework, and because of this function it ~~has~~ developed in a distinct way:

"The Capitalist State possesses a form which is given by its attempt to sustain the overall conditions under which profitable accumulation can take place within its national territory. This demand on each results from the structure within which it is situated. It cannot avoid attempting to sustain such conditions, although each State will vary in both its internal structure and in its policies it happens to pursue" (Urry, 1981, 101)

.../

Yet the State, cannot be simply reduced to economic functions alone. The State may, and does act outside of the demands of capital accumulation:

"The actions of the State can neither eliminate the contradictions of capitalism nor can it act independently of them. The effect of a major change in the State forms or policy always involves the establishment or at least a temporary power bloc out of the politically dominant social forces. The establishment of such a power bloc is problematic involving balancing out, manipulation, coercion, compromising and bargaining between the different classes, factors and popular forces ... The State must not be viewed as automatically reacting to the demands of capital accumulation. Indeed for a substantial period there may be no power bloc establishment at all; merely a number of politically dominant classes, factors and social forces with no particular organisation unity or policy"  
(Urry, 1981, 105)

The centrality of the State in modern societies is confirmed by Scott (1982):

"In the late capitalist society then, it can surely be said that the basic mechanisms of social regulation are no longer co-ordinated to any significant degree by a network of market relations, but that on the contrary, social stability and continuity are nowadays largely secured by means of bureaucratic intervention"  
(Scott, 1982, 144).

Furthermore, he sees the State as 'constrained and structured by two very stubborn sorts of social pressures'.

Scott explains:

"On the one hand,... the State finds itself having to secure highly rationalised initiatives by means of technical control of resources. At the present time there is no doubt that this

.../

is the dominant mode of State intervention given a prevailing situation in which the fiscal and political penalties of unproductive public expense are indeed severe.

On the other hand the State must seek to contain the socio-cultural stresses and strains that break out at different junctures in late capitalist society and it achieves this end by means of a proliferation of human relations programmes and social administration devices".

(Scott, 1982, 144).

With these forces, there has been a corresponding need for increasingly more precise intervention by the State:

"As capitalist society evolves and becomes more complex, new problems calling for more subtle forms of control, cultural and psychological management start to present themselves. The new problems emerge once society reaches a historical stage in which the development of human resources becomes a critical and omnipresent public policy issue and in which complex processes of reproduction and legitimation are collectively secured"

(Scott, 1982, 146)

#### The Social Context of Space

In social theorisations there is a need for a more explicit development of the context of space and place. M. Castells (1983) argues that space is more than just a 'reflection of society'

"...it is one of its (Society's) fundamental material dimensions, and to consider it independently from social relationships, even with the intention of studying their interaction, is actually to separate nature from culture and thus destroy the first principle of any social science: that matter and consciousness are interrelated and that this fusion is the essence of what history and science are each about. Therefore, spatial forms, at least on our planet will

.../

be produced, as all other objects are, by human action. They will express and perform the interests of the dominant class according to a given mode of production and to a specific mode of development. They will express and implement the power relationships of a state in a historically defined society" (Castells, 1983, 4)

In brief, space can be viewed as 'neither absolute, relative or relational in itself'. It can become 'one or all simultaneously depending on the circumstances. Harvey (1982) sees this 'problem of the proper conceptualisation of space as being resolved through human practice with respect to it' (Harvey, 1982, 339)

How **thus** can human practice be studied and interpreted? Richard Peet (1980) states that the way people view the world (their consciousness) will affect the way they order and respond to their world. Consciousness develops from our experiences.

"Consciousness develops by the accumulation of ideas from particular instances of experience, their interaction as generalisations within the mind, and the production of new ideas from this interaction which are confirmed or denied by practice. Consciousness thus both reflects past modes of production, and past historical moments of the mode of production dominant in the existing social formation..." (Peet, 1983, 93).

This consciousness is that part of social being devoted to understanding the direction of activity. 'Understanding', according to Peet, 'can only come from the interaction of thought with an existing social practice', and the knowledge gained by the encounter. (Peet, 1983, 113).

The development of consciousness and meaning by people is control of the perpetuation of the existing order. Raymond Williams (1981) considers broadcasting along with the cinema, record industry and publishing as integral to the general social and economic organisation and order. (Williams, 1981, 54) Peet (1982) reviewing the work of

.../

Enzerberger (1974) believes that these activities are designed not to sell particular products but to sell or reproduce the existing order.

"Because this industry holds the central position in late capitalism, it can use the attractions of high monetary return and mass adulation to employ the most 'creative' minds, the most beautiful bodies, the most skilled technicians to produce technicoloured, stereophonic pieces of false consciousness which are continuously projected into the minds of people living at the centre of world capitalism with the use of the most sophisticated 'communications' technology ever known. The techniques used involve particularly the provision of manufactured 'experience' in audio and visual formats which replicate and especially exaggerate, real events, intervening between everyday sensory experience and the process of consciousness formation by providing ready-formed but inaccurate generalisations ..." (Pred, 1982, 293)

"With particular institutional projects occurring at specific temporal and spatial locations."

(Pred, 1982, 165)

These intersections may only be brief moments (such as visits to the store or theatre) or much longer in duration (such as a student at University) (Pred, 1982, 165). The literature of Time Geography introduces the combination in social analysis of individual agency and societal structure. But Pred and others have found it important to link 'details of everyday paths' to 'the details of the past' and 'the future'. This thesis is not a work in Time-Geography but it does however, utilise in a background sense the ideas of combining the human agency and structures proposed by this approach.

#### Studies on Broadcasting

It is useful to briefly summarise the major studies of broadcasting in the past. Wood (1982) in a review of the world writings on the topic, comments that there have been 'two dominant and rival approaches

.../

to theorising the connections between broadcasting organisations and the political and economic practices of specific societies' (Wood, 1982, 73).

Wood labels these: 1) Liberal Democrats and the Fourth Estate and, 2) Marxist theories. Both approaches recognise the power of broadcasting and attempts to articulate, often contradictory missions for broadcasting.

Wood states that in the approach of the 'Liberal Democrats and the Fourth Estate', broadcasting organisations are understood as mediums of interrogating messages from political agents to the electorate (Wood, 1982, 74). This he attributes to traditional privalist notions of the press:

"With the development of liberal democracy and rational individualism, credible channels of communication were necessary for the citizenry to make rational political and economic decisions. Autonomy from political control guaranteed the objective truth of the information transmitted". (Wood, 1982, 75).

What has eventuated from these conceptions are distinct organisational forms:

"In terms of broadcasting the practical correlation of these conceptions was the attempt to create formal broadcasting systems beyond Government influence, and to develop the required codes of journalistic practice" (Wood, 1982, 75)

Wood argues that the liberal democratic theories rest on 'two fundamental propositions about the nature of their society'.

'Firstly the social formation consists of a diffused plurality of social groups on the legitimacy of society's values'. (Wood, 1982, 76-77).

.../

A serious dilemma arises out of the liberal democratic conception of politics. According to Wood:

"Analysis is rarely extended to the State in general, and ever more rarely are the linkages to economic practices explored. As some liberal democratic theories tend to ignore both the conflicts, incorporations, etc., with the State, through which the media are politicised, and the relationships to developing economic structures and the associated class struggles ...

... The second related problem with liberal democrats conception of politics is subjectivism, the tendency to reduce political and journalistic practices, to the collision of various personalities"

(Wood, 1982, 80)

This 'fourth estate' media research 'can tell us much about the cultural practices and ideological assumptions of broadcasting' (Wood, 1982, 83). Yet alone it proves unsatisfactory. As this chapter asserts, there is a need to develop accounts of broadcasting that explore the activity in relation to the wider social context.

Opposed to the 'Liberal Democratic traditions' is the 'Marxist response'. Described in traditional terms:

"This response stresses the determination of broadcasting organisations by the dominant economic, political and ideological structures of society. The emphasis on integration power, stratification, and so on decisively breaks with the 'Fourth Estate' advocacy of formal autonomy. The fundamental proposition of Marxist media studies is that there can be no theory of mass communications sui generis, that it is necessary to situate analysis within a political economy that includes both broadcasting, institutions and the social formula as a whole".

(Wood, 1982, 83-4).

.../

Furthermore, Wood observes, 'Marxists insist that class is the fundamental structuring principle of modern Western societies'.

"Thus a consideration of the relationship between class and media structures is held to be the best place from which to start analysing the connections between mass communications and society in general"

(Wood, 1982, 84)

As Wood himself identifies, Marxist analyses are traditionally split into determinism (structuralism) versus agency (instrumentalism), (Wood, 1982, 85). Clearly this is inappropriate. Theory must encompass the individuals and constraints imposed upon them by a system they have helped create and reinforce.

### Review of Thesis

This study is about how and why broadcasting has been organised in New Zealand. Broadcasting is inextricably woven into the relationship of the late capitalist State. In particular this thesis seeks to develop the changing character of broadcasting and location of radio stations and other facilities. There are three movements which have considerably shaped Radio and Television. Firstly there have been successive technological changes in the many facets of broadcasting. These have brought new possibilities and new restrictions. Secondly, there has been the development of new conceptions of broadcasting by key people and influential groups. The change of meanings, and the ability to articulate them has been an influential force in this sector. Thirdly, changing State-Economy, Economy-Civil Society and State-Civil Society relationships have promoted broadcasting change.

This thesis chronicles the major events, ideas and actions in New Zealand broadcasting throughout the twentieth century. This is carried out with an eye to the ideals developed by modern social theorists. Each following chapter has its own emphasis, each cutting differently into the subject matter, while at the same time providing the reader with a sense of development, which proceeds with reference to recorded events.

Chapter 3 looks at the early **development** of broadcasting technology and the exploration of applications for that knowledge. It concentrates on the influence of often well prepared people who acted within a range of opportunities presented to them. It looks at the germination of an activity and the subsequent channelling by various promoters and advocate groups.

Chapter 4 explores why and how the State intervened in the new practices, especially those of Civil Society and channelled possibilities in 'rational' ways. With the passage of time different possibilities were realised, relationships changed and new actions were deemed appropriate. This chapter follows closely the introduction of State management.

Chapter 5 deals with the contradictions that developed in the operation of a State service. New tasks were developed for the medium and reorganisation was necessary to remove anomalies. The benchmarks for management were partly those of national production and partly the shifting demands of pressure groups, especially in Civil Society and the Economy. This chapter considers especially the contradictions inherent in the intervention which yielded compromises, themselves the seeds for later change.

Chapter 6 looks at the management and regulation of development by the State through particularly turbulent times. The distinctive aspect of the period was the manipulation of the activity at the disputed hands of different power groups within broadcasting. Authority was perpetuated through successive organisational action, often taken without the sanction of the members within key organisations.

In Chapter 7 the changing field of broadcasting after the entry of television is examined. There were new missions articulated, and

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there was a need for new organisational structures to administer the activity. This chapter pulls together the themes of the earlier chapters and looks at the more recent changes associated with broadcasting.

Whilst chapters 3 to 7 chronicle the time - space constitution of broadcasting in New Zealand, they each examine different aspects of this process. Yet together they represent a unified account of an ongoing process of organisational structuring. As radio and television have progressed, different elements of their activities have become important. The individuals of the 1920's, the national demands of wartime, the size of investment needed to develop television, each in their own way have shaped the operation of broadcasting.

"I never gave up my conviction that amateur radio would have a part to play in re-orienting human society when it was given **encouragement** and scope to try. But in these early days, and to some extent still, authority has been strangely reluctant even afraid to recognise amateur radio as a significant extension of the field of human communication. For a long time political and commercial interests were concerned to see that amateur activities were strictly limited to 'harmless hobby' level and Government regulations were framed accordingly"

J.E. Strachan, Radio Experimenter.

### CHAPTER 3

#### RADIO: INNOVATION AND MANIPULATION

##### Introduction:

This chapter looks at the establishment of Broadcasting Tehcnology in New Zealand and the way that technology was applied. It highlights the events, reviews the actions of individuals and groups, relates the ideas being expressed at the time, and expands upon the way radio initially developed in New Zealand.

The development of radio technology enabled the activity of Broadcasting to occur. That innovation created opportunities and possibilities for successive action.

While the development of radio technology is acknowledged as being crucial to the ability of broadcasting to advance, this thesis is more interested with the elaboration of the activity itself. It seeks to explore the responses in New Zealand to an opportunity granted by technological advances.

##### Early Innovators

The innovation of broadcasting was not just an imported idea. In 1894, Ernest Rutherford sent a 'signal of Hertzian waves from one end of his physics lab to the other' (Hall, 1980, 1). Although Rutherford was soon to leave Christchurch for Cambridge, his small experiments were the start of radio in New Zealand. By the turn of the ventury other keen individuals were experimenting. By the middle of 1901 two Dunedin pupil teachers had their "wireless waves" ringing a bell a hundred yards away from a transmitter. In 1902, a J.L. Passmore of Dunedin came across a magazine article with instructions for building "an efficient wireless telegraph at a small cost." Inside the year he had constructed a 'wireless telegraph' with a range of 200 yards, and a year later had a range of six miles. Elsewhere in 1902, W.P. Huggins of Timaru built a receiving set. He continued experimenting under licence granted by the Government through the 1903 Wireless Telegraphy Act. Huggins' enthusiasm for the new

technology was to make him an important innovator. Individuals like these men were responsible for the initial spread of the activity. Through their enthusiasm and activity for the new, technology was brought to the attention of those in the colony.

#### Parliament Acts

Almost from the outset, Government was concerned about the new technology. This was reflected in the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1903, which authorised the establishment of:

"...stations for the purpose of receiving and transmitting messages within New Zealand or between New Zealand and parts beyond New Zealand by what is commonly known as 'wireless telegraphy' including in that expression every method of transmitting messages by electricity otherwise than by wires, whether such is in use at the time of the passing of this act or is hereafter applied"

(Bills, 1903, M to Z. Vol II No. 6-4)

Significantly the act preserved the right of the State to act in the area and required everyone else to seek a licence:

"Every person who erects, constructs, or establishes any station or plant for the purposes of receiving or transmitting communications for hire or profit without having first obtained the consent of the Governor in Council is liable to penalty not exceeding five hundred pounds, and any plant, machinery, instruments and material used by him for such purpose may be forfeited and dealt with as the Commissioner directs".

(Bills, 1903, M to Z, Vol II No. 6-4)

The act was one designed to protect the investments of the Crown especially in regard to the State monopoly on communication. The Postmaster-General made this clear during the second reading of the Bill:

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"Sir, this Bill is necessary in view of the fact that the Marconi system of telegraphy may possibly be utilised in New Zealand. It is, therefore, expedient that we should take the necessary power of protection so as to carry on a system of this kind if applied to the Colony ... There can be no doubt that, if this Marconi system is gone on with so as to become a commercial reality, the colony might be in trouble at once if, for want of such power as is proposed to be taken in this measure, someone from outside comes in, and we allow this new system to supplant our own telegraph system over which we have incurred such a large expenditure..."  
 (Hansard, July 31, 1903. p.171)

This speech concluded with the remark that the Bill was "one purely of a protective nature".

Country members of the Opposition in the House of Representatives upheld the Legislative Council in proposing an amendment to the Bill which would have permitted unrestricted establishment of stations not operating for hire of profit. They had in mind the linking of back country settlers, mention of whose isolation evoked sympathy from both sides of the House. The Premier, Richard Seddon countered this move with a message from the Imperial Authorities:

"A most important communication has been received from the Imperial Authorities. If the Bill, as proposed, was passed, foreign powers would be free to erect wireless stations here, for their own purposes. Parliament's duty to the Colony and the Empire alike was to guard against this possibility".

(Hall, 1980, 3)

As Hall (1980) comments, "this action came at the end of the Seddonian political reign and was in tune with the general policies of State socialism" (Hall, 1980, 2). Whether it is 'state socialism' as Hall claims or not, the Act firmly established the State presence in the sector. Coming late in the liberal period, it is important to appreciate the liberal experience.

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### The Liberal Experience

The citizens of the colony had from very early times looked to the State and had often appealed to the Government for help. New Zealand had utilised the powers of the State to break up the great estates, institute protective tariffs to assist local industry, laid down labour laws to ensure reasonable working conditions, created a tribunal to fix a fair level of wages, to get small farmers on the land, sponsored state industries to compete with monopolies and brought in social reform such as support for the aged. Most of this formidable programme of social legislation had been put on the Statute books within a decade! (Concliffé, 1963, 180).

With such a wide ranging programme of State intervention, it is little wonder that the State pre-empted any major development in the new technology. How did this intervention come about?

J.B. Concliffé (1963) reasons that the widening of State functions was primarily due to 'Colonial opportunity and freedom from theories'. Concliffé suggests that William Pember Reeves phrase "Colonial Governmentalism" is a 'better description of the Liberal-Labour experiments than State socialism'. Concliffé cites 'Public ownership and disposal of land, later Governmental development and ownership of transport, the weakness of Local Bodies and equally of private enterprise; all threw action into the hands of Government. There were few vested interests or other obstacles to overcome. State action had a comparatively clear field' (Concliffé, 1963, 182).

Given the nature of the State's race to perpetuate the mode of production, Concliffé's argument is correct. The Crown had to intervene heavily in order to promote the development of the economy. Just as they had opened up the land, built the Main Trunk railway to improve transportation, they now saw the need to order the new communication and reserve their right to act.

Irene Webley (1978) holds that the isolation of New Zealand, the ruggedness of the terrain and small size of population meant that the cost of building an economic infrastructure was high. The probability that such capital investment would be unprofitable left the State as the only means to raise the necessary loans. The New Zealand State was seen as ahead of other Western Countries. It had already 'begun active involvement with economic enterprise, through development of road, rail and telegraph links, as well as providing life insurance and education services'. (Webley, 1978, 19). 'Wireless telegraphy' was probably seen as another form of the infrastructure, from which further economic and social development might take place. This conception has some validity; radio frequencies are much like roads, provide routes along which goods/ services can move. Whether this movement is advertising or speeding up communication and the flow of goods by two way communication, it does not matter. But this conception is perhaps out of context here. The concept of Broadcasting as we know it today was not part of the rationale behind the passing of this Act. It was the drafting of the Act in terms wide enough to encompass the development of Broadcasting that enabled Government to take control of Broadcasting when it arrived. They made sure subsequent Parliaments wrote the newcomer into law (Hall, 1980, 2).

New Zealand was a frontrunner in the reservation of Wireless Telegraphy for state and state approved activities. The British Government passed a similar act in 1904, assigning control of the new medium of communication to the Government, and in October 1905, the Commonwealth of Australia passed its own legislation, (Curnow, 1963, 53).

### The Innovation Spreads

Wireless Telegraphy began to capture public imagination. Two individuals were to play an important part in one such episode. In 1906, two pupils of Otago Boys High School became interested in Wireless and began to experiment. They were joined by a third, an apprentice in electrical engineering, and together they built a

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transmitter-receiver' (Hall, 1980, 2). They were later to conduct a major exhibition of the new technology. Hall explains: "On the evening of the 10th of September 1908, two of these 'stations' .... were used for New Zealand's first public demonstration of wireless telegraphy. Messages were exchanged across Otago Harbour, between the Mayor of Dunedin ... and the Mayor of West Harbour...

...One special greeting was wirelessly across the harbour for onward transmission to Wellington by land telegraph. For it, the young principals had unofficially incorporated themselves. "On behalf of the boys attending the schools in the Dominion, the S.B. & B. Wireless Company sent hearty good wishes to the Postmaster-General and the Parliament of New Zealand" (Hall, 1980, 3).

The Postmaster-General (Ward) heartily congratulated the boys. 'Such successful experiments in our own backyards, and by schoolboys was news. The press association carried the story and illustrated weeklies throughout the country published photographs of the three and their gear' (Hall, 1980, 3). This particular episode demonstrates the type of activity of the period. Human agency was important in spreading the innovation. Example bred emulation and in the next few years the hobby spread widely. As the experiments multiplied the participants began to grumble about 'restrictions' being placed on them. The control exerted by the State was enforced by the Post and Telegraph Department. They 'argued that the restrictions were essential to protect the freeflow and secrecy of official messages'. The situation was one of frustration on both sides. The justification for intervention and regulation was one of order. Without such control, the State argued, chaos would result.

#### International Experiences

Before long the New Zealand Government became involved in the development of wireless for International Defence reasons. A conference to study the matter of developing a wireless service to augment the submarine cable for the British Western Pacific was called in 1908 at Melbourne. The conference agreed to develop

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links across Australia, between Australia and New Zealand and between New Zealand and Fiji. The conference concluded:

"After full consideration of the proposals, the conference unanimously adopted a resolution to the effect that it is desirable that any service of wireless telegraph established to meet the requirements of the British Western Pacific be established and maintained under direct State Control or through a State Agency"

(Quoted from Australian External Affairs Archives, in CURNOW, 1963, 57)

State Control was reaffirmed by International commitment.

Another international event was to reinforce the need for strong enforcement of radio communication. This event occurred on the far side of the world. The sinking of the Titanic demonstrated to the world, and in particular the British Authorities, the merits of radio communication and the need for standardisation of maritime service (Clarkson, n.d. 75)

In 1910 the New Zealand Government followed the rest of the world and began building a number of shore stations. These stations were to be used for communication with ships at sea. The contract for the shore stations was granted to the German firm, Telefunken, and not the British firm Marconi (Strachan, n,d, 141)

'By the second decade of this century Wireless Telegraphy was turning professional. Simultaneously, officialdom grew more agitated in its protective role. Fuller powers to restrict the erection and working of amateur stations were taken by Parliament in 1913'. (Hall, 1980, 4). As the technology advanced, there was a need for Governmental control to be tightened.

### War

The First World War was both impetus and impediment to change. It brought stricter controls to those experimenting. All amateur status was closed for the duration of the war. The state of emergency also provided opportunities for experience. Not only were people trained in Wireless for military purposes but many others saw the benefits of such communication. Hall (1980) quotes a signaller in that war;

"We all learned much for our experience in France and returned full of energy for fresh experiments. The valve had been invented, we had used them in France, and most of us managed to stow a few inside our pockets to take back with us". (Hall, 1980, 4).

In 1919 the burgeoning fascination with radio telegraphy was reflected in Parliament by the M.P. for Wallace, J.C. Thompson. 'New Zealand and the Falkland Islands were the only two territories in the world', Wallace said, that were not issuing licences 'to people wishing to study Radio Telegraphy and Telephony'. Would the Government, he asked, 'with view to stimulating research and invention, consider authorising experiments here? (Hall, 1980, 4) Thompson echoed the concern that such experimental stations ought not be 'operated for profit'. They were to be used 'for private practice and research in the art of radio communication'. In response to Thompson's question, the Government simply replied that the matter 'was at present being considered'.

Concern was expressed in Parliament that 'Wireless Telegraphy' might be operated for profit. This attitude was to pervade for many years. It initially arose out of the need to protect the Government monopoly on telegrams. No possibilities for radio were being realised.

#### New Possibilities

Professor R. Jack of the University of Otago's Physics Department offered a vision of how 'Wireless' might develop in post-war New Zealand. He commented in August 1921:

"Wireless telephony will develop rapidly along its own special lines and will tend greatly to strengthen the bonds by which a civilised community is held together and formed into an organised whole". (Hall, 1980, 7)

He went on to say that the activities made possible by 'wireless telegraphy' would 'bring country settlers into close touch with all the life of the town'. He saw that 'no country stands to benefit more than New Zealand by having the disadvantage of isolation removed' (Hall, 1980, 7).

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This conception of utilising the technology to bring people, previously isolated, closer together is an important one. This social use of the technology can be seen throughout the history of New Zealand Broadcasting. The New Zealand public were quick to appreciate this potential for creating a closer community and were vocal in demanding its implacement. It can in part be explained as a reflection of the New Zealand egalitarian ethos for equal service. But the ability to realise this demand was contrasted by the tight financial controls and shortages of resources. With such demands on the wide extension of the Broadcasting service meant that the State would really be the only agency in a position to widely deploy the medium.

#### Timidity and Control

The Post and Telegraph began its issue of provisional permits to receive only in 1921. In May, Professor Jack approached the Department for Authority to send as well as receive, using a power of 500 watts. The Department suggested 250 watts, in fear that the higher power might interfere with official wireless Telegraph Stations at Bluff and Wellington. The Professor contended that the comparative isolation of Dunedin from official stations and shipping made it an ideal centre for experimental transmitting, but Wellington did not agree. No licence was issued. This incident is illustrative of the timidity with which the Government was approaching 'Wireless'. Such attitudes must have been frustrating for the innovators keen to get on and explore the technology.

The power of radio as a means of entertainment was demonstrated by visiting ships. 'The visit of the American Steamer 'The Eastern Planet', for instance provided a concert, 'broadcast from its radio room'. People began to realise that those possibilities Professor Jack had spoke of were becoming more like realities. 'On 17 November 1921, Professor Jack sent out from the University the first of a series of long ranging concerts, with live voice and gramophone! Broadcasting as we know it, had commenced (Hall, 1980, 9).

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But the State retained a firm control of the 'broadcasts'. 'Professor Jack had to get separate authority for each broadcast and submit each of the items for approval. A Dunedin music house provided the gramophone and recordings. The concerts were to encourage new 'listeners-in' and they were 'heard at many points in Otago and Southland, in Timaru, Christchurch, Greymouth and Nelson,' (Hall, 1980, 9).

By the end of 1921 the question of licencing was again under review. In an Imprest Supply debate, the Postmaster-General Gordon Coates, stated that the question of allowing amateurs to transmit was "being considered", although the officers at his Department assured him that New Zealand was following the British practice of restricting them to receiving. However, "in view of the possibilities of wireless telephony" it was necessary to consider carefully whether it was possible "to assist those who are desirous of developing in that direction". (Hall, 1980, 10). The practice of following the lead of Britain, was one which persisted for many years.

Already the appeal of the isolated broadcast was beginning to wane. As radio audiences grew, so did its appetite for regular entertainment, and simultaneously, enterprises began to discern the possibilities of profit.

#### Broadcasting Begins

The first regular 'Broadcasting Station' took to the air in Wellington in February 1922. Sporadic broadcasts in Auckland commenced later that year. Broadcasting by societies, also commenced that year. The Otago Radio Association, and the Radio Society of Christchurch being the first. Enthusiasm was still the main drive of the activity rather than the pursuit of profit by the participants.

Whilst Broadcasting proper started up, Parliament unrolled some tentative plans. 'They proposed to divide the country into areas, eight, six or four of them, that had yet to be decided, and to issue licences in each area. The Postmaster-General stated in the

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house that the Government itself would not operate Broadcasting, it would licence private enterprise to provide the service' (Hall, 1980, 11).

Parliament had recognised a need for legislation to catch up with the growing enthusiasm. The announcement that fresh regulations were on the way was greeted by many. In Dunedin, which was emerging as a growth centre for the new service, listener support was canvassed and members of Parliament were lobbied. The press were kept well apprised of fresh steps towards regular Broadcasting in their area. The enthusiasts were not the only ones keen for change. The District Telegraph Authorities longed for the new regulations promised by the Postmaster-General. "We are being pestered by the various bodies and individuals who wish to commence Broadcasting", they wrote to Head Office in October, and "we ask you to expedite the issue which is now under consideration" (Hall, 1980,12).

#### Regulation

The "Radio Telegraph Regulations for Amateur, Experimental and Broadcasting Stations" were gazetted on the 18th January 1923. The regulations instituted a regional configuration upon the land for Broadcasting. As promised by the Postmaster-General, four radio districts were established:

"...the mainland of New Zealand shall be divided into four (4) radio districts, which shall be identical with the Telegraph and Telephone districts superintended by the District Telegraph Engineers. These radio districts shall be classified as follows:

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1) Auckland   | 3) Canterbury |
| 2) Wellington | 4) Otago      |

Chatham Islands shall be included in the Wellington district and Stewart Island shall be included in the Otago Radio District"

(Gazette, Jan 18 1923, p.142 (No.5).)

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The numbers granted to these regions endure today as the call signs of the Radio Stations (e.g. 2ZA, 2ZB) The regulations also established two further radio districts: Western Samoa (5) and the Cook Islands(6).

Applicants who wished to get an experimental licence had to supply evidence of British nationality and a reference as to character from a reputable citizen amongst other things. The regulations were also concerned with censorship. Stations were not allowed to be used:

"...for the dissemination of propaganda of a controversial nature, but shall be restricted to matter of an educative nature or entertaining character, such as news, lectures, useful information, religious services, musical or elocutionary entertainment and other such items of general interest which may be approved by the Minister from time to time" (Statutes, Jan, 1923, p.149)

Furthermore the Minister was empowered to prohibit the Broadcasting of Communications held to be outside of this authorisation, or not conducive to public interest. Advertising whether direct or indirect was prohibited and on Sundays between certain hours priority was to be given "to broadcasts of religious services and kindred matter". (Hall, 1980, 13)

The State had clearly established its control of the medium. While the Government had decided not to develop its own broadcasting service it had clearly laid the ground rules for those which it licensed. The move was justified on the grounds of reducing chaos and instilling order. Postmaster-General Coates wrote in a letter dated 4 September 1923 to experimenter J.E. Strachan that:

"The regulations are being formed to serve the best interests of the public generally and are being designed to obviate as far as possible, the confusion experienced in other countries owing to the lack of formal control" (Harris, 1975, 139)

The manipulation of the innovation had clearly begun. What was this 'confusion experienced in other countries' that Coates spoke of?

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### Overseas Experience

New Zealand echoed the concern being mooted in Britain about the order of American airwaves. It had been quickly appreciated that the radio spectrum was a limited resource. In the United States the more open attitude to the development of radio had allowed crowding and chaos in the ether. Up to this time stations in the same locality were licensed to broadcast on the same wavelength. In each community where there was more than one station, time was to be divided up amongst them. 'As the stations multiplied sharing became difficult. Some defied each other and broadcast simultaneously. There were considerable demands to establish some order but Government action was limited. The law was vague in its powers and it seemed to imply that anyone applying for a licence had a right for one. A meeting was called to discuss the pandemonium and what to do about it' (Barnouw, 1978, 13).

Administrator Herbert Hoover had, by the time of the second of these conferences, taken drastic steps to reduce the chaos. Hoover managed the situation by dispersing two stations among several wavelengths. He adopted a plan that in effect created a hierarchy of stations. Some stations were granted 'clear channels' over most of the country, and, therefore, able to use maximum permitted power. Less privileged would be the regional stations, and these were limited to medium power. At the bottom of the hierarchy would be the local stations serving small areas and, therefore, very restricted in power and in some case confined to daytime hours to reduce interference' (Barnouw, 1978, 19). Such was the control instituted in America. Britain, too, recognised the need for State management of the airwaves.

The 1923 Sykes Committee of Enquiry into Broadcasting and the subsequent 1926 Crawford Committee, recognised that any consideration of Broadcasting must be dominated by the fact that the service is dependent on the allocation of radio frequencies. This, it was noted included the allocation of frequencies to other services such as Radio Telegraphy, Radio Telephones and Radio Navigation. The Sykes Committee considered that the 'wavelengths available in any country

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must be regarded as a valuable form of public property'. When the Crawford Committee reported it stated that this 'national asset' should be used in the 'general public interest and not for the benefit of powerful or rich non interest groups'. The Committee went as far as to propose an organisational type to accommodate these ideals. They suggested that 'the Broadcasting Service should be conducted by a public corporation acting as a trustee for the national interest and that its status and duties should correspond with those of a public service' (Annan 1977, A 8-9).

Both the Sykes and Crawford committees acknowledged that the State, through Parliament, should retain the right of ultimate control to ensure the orderly use of frequencies. As the Sykes committee put it:

"We consider that the control of such a potential power over the public opinion and the life of the nation ought to remain within the State" (Annan 1977, A. 9)

The committee also emphasised the disadvantages of direct Government operation of the service:

"A minister might well shrink from the prospect of having to defend in Parliament the various items in Government concerts. If a Government Department had to select the news, speeches, lectures, etc., to be broadcast, it would be constantly open to suspicion that it was using its unique opportunities to advance the interests of the political party in power, and in the endeavour to avoid anything in the slightest degree controversial, it would succeed in making the service intolerably dull" (Annan, 1977, A.9).

The Crawford committee thought it essential that the public corporation they had recommended should be independent of ministerial control. The corporation should not be:

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"... subject to the continuing ministerial guidance and direction which apply to Government offices. The progress of science and the harmonies of art will be tampered by too rigid rules and too constant a supervision by the state ... it would discourage enterprise and initiative, both in regards experiments and the intricate problems of programmes, were the authority subjected to too much control ... the (Corporation), therefore, should be invested with the maximum freedom which Parliament is prepared to concede" (Annan, 1977, A.9)

This notion was reaffirmed by the British Postmaster-General who told the House of Commons that measures of domestic policy and matters of the day to day control were to be left to the free judgement of the Corporation. Successive Governments of the United Kingdom have maintained this policy (Annan, 1977, A 10). The development of the British Corporation, was not something New Zealand chose to emulate for some years, but the experiences of America and Britain were to prove influential in the actions taken by successive New Zealand Governments. Both the American and British Governments had legislated and regulated the Radio sector, and the New Zealand State followed suit.

An early experimenter, J.E. Strachan later wrote that New Zealand faced three possibilities: a) a renewal of the embargo of non-Government wireless, b) free enterprise, and c) regulation. Strachan explained the options. [The first would have at least safeguarded official communications especially with ships at sea, but it would 'defraud people of the right to enjoy the facilities afforded by the advance of science'. The second option 'would lead to a hopeless jumble' which left the third. The problem was whether the State could both 'safeguard official traffic and at the same time afford reasonable facilities to experimenters and the public generally' (Harris (ed) 1975, 6).

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J.E. Strachan, reveals something of the motivation the early experimenters had, in a letter written late in life, to another early radio experimenter, A.R. Harris:

"I never gave up my conviction that amateur radio would have a part to play in reorienting human society when it was given encouragement and scope to try. But in these early days and to some extent still, authority has been strongly reluctant, even afraid to recognise amateur radio as a significant extension of the field of human communication. For a long time political and commercial interests were concerned to see that amateur activities were strictly limited to 'harmless hobby' level and Government regulations were framed accordingly"

(J.E. Strachan in a letter to A.R. Harris of 24/9/70 in Harris (ed, 1976,6) Alexander Turnbull Library)

The concern, noted by Strachan of Commercial and State interests to keep the activity at the 'harmless hobby' level is interesting. The State's concern has been clearly identified in preceding pages, but why would commercial interests be against development? Perhaps the threat of hundreds of new enthusiast small businesses each plying for an expanding market was distasteful to them. Strachan unfortunately did not elaborate.

### Shaping the Future

The 1923 regulations did more than just authorise licences and censorship. It sought to develop a national plan of stations. It carefully worked out a two tier development scheme for future expansion of the broadcasting sector. In an endeavour to minimise interference between stations, and to make broadcasting available throughout New Zealand, they organised the following system. Fourteen stations would be granted a power of half a kilowatt and nineteen stations a power of quarter of a kilowatt. Figure 3.1. shows the distribution.

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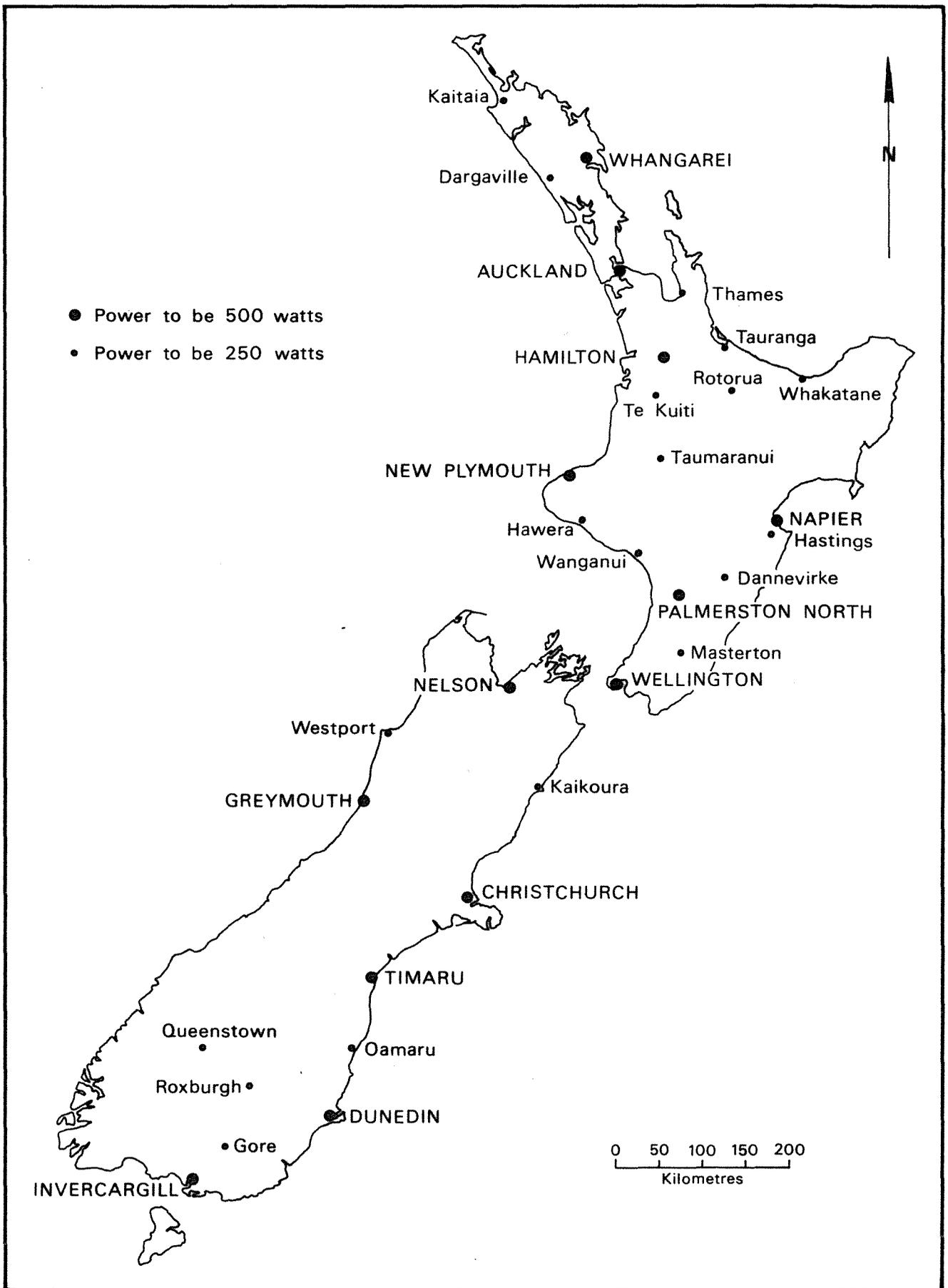


Figure 3.1: The Plan for Broadcasting as laid down by the 1923 Regulations.  
 (Statutes, 18 January 1923. 148)

This 'paper distribution' can be seen as little more than an illustration of how Broadcasting might develop and spread through the country. Authority was given in the regulations to vary the scheme as it needed, and technical advances soon negated much of the planning. The increasing power and range of the metropolitan stations from 1925 onwards extinguished the need for as many as 33 points of transmission to cover the country. Some of the towns on that list waited until the 1960's for a local Broadcasting station, and some centres, not mentioned in 1923, developed unexpectedly and obtained stations before others on the list. However, the plan did not go as far as to detail how the proposal might be achieved. It was a vision of what the future ought to hold, not how to bring it about.

The distribution is important in a number of respects. Firstly it embodied those principles already being demanded for Broadcasting; it sought to develop a nationwide service, provide order instead of chaos and to link the rural areas more closely. Not only were the stations evenly spread geographically, but the spectrum itself was carefully planned. However, the frequencies were allocated to centres not stations. The regulations provided for centres with more than one station by a sharing of time:

"Where more than one Broadcasting station is licensed to operate at the same Broadcasting centre, the Minister shall determine the hours of operation, and shall thereon by consideration of the public interest". (Statutes, Jan 18, 1923, p.148)

#### The Activity Expands

Some 2,800 receiving licences were issued in the next 15 months, and the 7 stations of 1922 became 11 in the course of 1923, but only 3 of them were to be found in provincial areas. There was a strong bias toward the urban centres which provided strong support for the fledgling technology.

'Technological development along with increased listeners created spirited competition which enlivened programmes in those towns which had Broadcasting stations. Nevertheless it was soon apparent

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that Broadcasting could not long remain as it was. Although the annual licence charge was not burdensome, neither did it promise much revenue toward providing the informative and entertaining programmes envisaged by the regulations. For the time being the entire amount went to the Post Office, none to the Broadcasters. Yet Broadcasting was costing money'. (Hall, 1980, 14).

Many of the stations were operated by radio shops, hoping to encourage sale of their wares. However, the profits from their broadcast did not accrue to them alone 'but to all radio dealers' Sales of parts and assembled sets were rising. But although the Broadcasters' privilege of being able to broadcast his business establishment in station announcements did attract business to him, it was never his exclusively. Traders who did not broadcast, profited from those that did, perhaps not equally, but as demand mounted' (Hall, 1980, 14-15).

#### Funding

The whole issue of funding the Service was a critical one. With Broadcasting prohibited the stations could not operate as a business concern on their own. Yet sales of sets would only increase with the introduction of radio stations. The Government was still taking fees for radio, yet not contributing to broadcasting itself.

Professor Jack recognised the inequality of the situation and put a scheme for allowing revenue to go to Broadcasters. His scheme increased the fees for listeners and dealers, and put a substantial amount of the increase towards the Broadcasters. In this way, he claimed, 'not only would all radio dealers be contributing toward Broadcasting that sustained the demand for their wares, but also listeners would be made to pay for what they were getting for free'. Not only would the user pay but 'listeners could legitimately expect an improved service if they were contributing toward the cost. Many of the non-broadcasting retailers were prepared to pay such a levy' (Hall, 1980, 15)

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In Wellington, two firms joined together to form a company to operate a broadcasting station. Later on a further two firms joined in with the company. The trade elsewhere applauded the Wellington example, and in Auckland other dealers began to subsidise 1YA's expenses. But nowhere else did this co-operating broadcasting become complete. 'Events were running too quickly in another direction', (Hall, 1980, 15). It was the inability of the private fragmented interests to co-operate that prompted the Government to manipulate a national service.

#### A Dominion Wide Scheme

In November 1923, Postmaster-General Coates disclosed the Government's plan for broadcasting. 'Present broadcast entertainment was poor, he said, 'owing chiefly to the lack of revenue to provide better programmes.' The only manner in which broadcasting could be made satisfactory was to have a Dominion wide scheme, some organisation under semi-Governmental control. The scheme was quite detailed. The points of the scheme were:-

- "a) Those interested in Broadcasting, chiefly dealers in radio apparatus, to form an association with authority to issue debentures or raise capital in any other way thought fit,
- b) The proposed association would be granted a licence to broadcast from each of the four main centres,
- c) The association to be controlled by a board comprising of the Postmaster-General, a representative of the radio trade, a representative of the Listeners-in, and certain officials appointed by the Postmaster-General,
- d) Power to be 500 watts,
- e) Wavelengths to be allotted by agreement,
- f) Hours and programmes to be controlled by agreement,
- g) Listeners fee to be increased from 1 pound to one pound ten shillings and ninepence, half of this to go to the association and the other half to the Post and Telegraph Department,
- h) The Government to have access to the Association's accounts,

.. . /

- i) Broadcasting's share of the fees to be shared equally amongst the four stations "on a population basis according to the number of listeners-in in the area served by the station",
- j) Dealers to be licensed,
- k) No monopoly to be permitted on the sale of apparatus" (Hall, 1980, 15).

The Reform Party strongly reaffirmed the policy of state manipulation of the innovation. The plan reiterated the desire for an organised, controlled and widespread introduction of radio. Funding was provided, and all parties in the sector were to be represented on the Board with responsibility to Government. The plan copied the one developed in Britain in December 1922 which had established the British Broadcasting Company. That company, had, according to Emery (1969), embodied three principles:-

"Firstly it confirmed the principle that the radio spectrum is part of the public domain and that the state should exercise regulatory control after both transmission and reception. It required the licensing of all transmitters and receivers by the Government, and that it was desirable to finance the system by licence fees rather than by Public Taxation than by the sale of advertising" (Emery, 1969, 83).

Of persons or companies engaged in broadcasting or of persons or companies who in consideration of payment under this section undertake a broadcasting service, (Statutes, 1924, N.19. p.68)

The Minister in charge of Telegraphs was 'empowered to enter into agreement with any such person or company for the payment to him or it of portion of the licence fees received as aforesaid in any period of not more than five years, but that any such agreement may from time to time be renewed for a period or of further periods, not exceeding five years at one time'. Power of renewal was to rest at the whim of government, something which many commercial interests were not keen on. Hall contends that commercial

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interests would have been interested in developing the National Broadcasting Service for a period longer than five years. Without the assurance of the longer time it was not possible to take on the large capital investment and get a viable return.

During the second reading of the Bill, the Postmaster-General outlined the need for the new service.

New Zealand's action also embodied those principles.

'It was evident that the Government was interested in finding businessmen who would accept the responsibility and opportunity it was prepared to offer them, and initially the Minister hoped to find them close to or in the radio trade. Attempts were made in 1923/4 by direct approach to commercial leaders in Wellington and by sounding the trade throughout the country to ascertain whether there was interest to take on permanent broadcasting, and to what extent financial support was likely to be forthcoming. The results were not encouraging, principally because the Government was talking in terms of a five year period, with no sure right of extension. Nevertheless, the policy of developing broadcasting by Private Enterprise remained', (Hall, 1980, 15).

Parliament introduced the 1924 Post and Telegraph Amendment Bill to make more firm their commitment to the National Broadcasting Scheme. This act provided for part of the licence revenue to be granted "in assistance:

"...we have, I think two small stations in Auckland, one station in Wellington, one station in Christchurch and one or two in Dunedin, and the best that is provided by these stations is inadequate, as the power is too low. They are making the best of the appliances they have and/or the money at their disposal, but they are not able to give complete programmes" (Hansard, Sept 23 1924, 1075).

.../

But the planned service would not, the Postmaster-General assured the house,

"become an exploiting monopoly. The whole thing that is bad in connection with the monopoly is the power which it has for good or ill" (Hansard, Sept, 23, 1924, 1077).

The potential power of the medium was well recognised. The real motivation for the establishment of a Company to conduct broadcasting, was that it might explore, at no costs to the Government, the potential of a National Service. The Postmaster-General said:-

"It is a very short cut at monopolising the wireless of New Zealand and bringing it under the regulations immediately rather than going to the length of experience of other countries where they have spent millions of pounds which have practically been wasted so far as effectiveness is concerned" (Hansard, Sept 23, 1924, 1078).

New Zealand it seemed would gain all the advantages of State Control, but none of the expense of a State Service. The Government would be happy enough for private interests to do the work, provided they obeyed the ruler.

'As hope faded of the trades' ability to finance dominion wide broadcasting, the Government hastily revived an earlier set of discussions. Two years previously two men, in the Waikato had fallen to talking about broadcasting. One was an electrical contractor from Christchurch, the other Managing Director of The New Zealand Dairy Company: Ambrose Harris and William Goodfellow (Later knighted). Harris was newly back from the United States, where he had worked in the Edison Laboratories. Goodfellow was stimulated by Harris' accounts of North American broadcasting. Goodfellow was interested in radio and envisaged the possibility of keeping in contact with the shareholders of his Dairy Co-operative. He was later to recall:

.../

"I realised that Broadcasting could give the country people a marvellous service and could greatly strengthen the Co-operative movement in the South Auckland Province".  
(Goodfellow, S.A. T570)

The Directors of the co-operative agreed and in May 1923, Goodfellow sought the Postmaster-General's authority to erect and run in Hamilton a transmitter with the range of eighty miles. Harris was sent to Australia to collect information and it was decided 'to form a small company to be owned and operated by the New Zealand Co-op Dairy Company on a non-profit basis, primarily for the benefit of the dairy farmers of the South Auckland province' (Goodfellow, S.A. T570). The co-operative was also going to import radio sets and sell them at competitive prices. They handed their proposal to Gordon Coates who:-

"... informed us that ours was the first concrete proposal and he would give us the required licence to have exclusive rights to broadcast at Hamilton and within an eighty mile radius. Subsequently, the promise was withdrawn as it was found to be undesirable to subdivide New Zealand into radio areas" (Goodfellow, S.A. T570 ).

#### A National Scheme - A Political Necessity

Although Coates had favoured the proposal, Cabinet did not. Goodfellow stated that he did not want to pursue radio beyond the Waikato. By the winter of 1925 Coates had become Prime Minister and Sir James Parr, Postmaster-General. Earlier in March the Government had gazetted new radio regulations. These regulations had brought about a mammoth increase in the annual licence fee from 5s. to 30s. Provision was also given that the Broadcasting Authority could be paid up to one pound from that fee.

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From April the Government began payments of a subsidy of fifteen pounds per week to a private station in each of the four main centres. This was to be an interim measure until such time as the national scheme was in place. (Hall, 1980,16).

Both the Prime Minister and the Postmaster-General appreciated the political urgency of maintaining the higher licence fees with a good and permanent system of broadcasting. Goodfellow was still anxious to develop a service for his dairy farmers in the Waikato. He stated that he would operate a station in Auckland City if his farmers could be serviced from there. Postmaster-General Parr, an Auckland and an astute lawyer, saw the chance to confound the criticism. Goodfellow was invited to resume talks. As Goodfellow recalled:

"After several meetings I finally agreed, rather reluctantly to go into the national scheme provided that Mr Harris would personally manage the Company and also provided that we had some assurance that we would get an extension of the contract if the service was satisfactory ...

... I pointed out to Mr Coates that five years was too short a contract period. What I visualised would happen is that the company would do all the pioneering donkey work and the P. and T. Department would say thank you and take over the concern at valuation terms of agreement.....

...He assured me that the Department had no such intention but I told him that we wanted something in writing. He finally agreed to ask Sir James Parr, the Postmaster-General to give us a letter of intent which satisfied us".

(Goodfellow, S.A. 7570)

The New Zealand Dairy Company formed no part of the agreement. The Government dealt directly with Goodfellow and Harris personally as trustees of the proposed Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand.

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The Company was incorporated on the 22nd August 1925. In their agreement with the Government, the Company undertook to pursue four conditions:-

- 1) The purchase of four stations, one each in Wellington, Auckland, Dunedin and Christchurch, then broadcasting under subsidy from the Post and Telegraph Department.
- 2) Within six months to establish and operate 500 watt stations at Auckland and Christchurch.
- 3) On request of the Minister after the first two stations were on the air to provide similar installations at Wellington and Dunedin.
- 4) Pending erection of its own stations to carry from the subsidised stations as purchased, or by other means in the same centres, as good a broadcasting service as the private owners had been providing.

(Hall, 1980, 17)

The Government had commissioned a 'national' broadcasting scheme under the auspices of private enterprise, yet primarily funded by licence fees, with capital expansion by Government loans. The Company quickly set to work, ordering the 500 watt transmitters for Auckland and Christchurch before the company was even incorporated. But delays at the manufacturers meant that at the end of six months there was still no broadcasting. Auckland licensees grew critical, which Hall suggests was only parochialism; they disliked the Company being operated from Christchurch. Within weeks they had, however, negotiated agreements for the purchase of the stations in Dunedin, and followed shortly by Christchurch and Auckland. (Hall, 1980, 18).

There was an early challenge to the company's monopoly. The New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition was due to open and Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd., (A.W.A.), had been

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pressing the Government for leave to broadcast from the exhibition. The service proposed was to be free, without aid from licence fees. However, the Government saw it as placing AWA in regional competition with the Company. On these grounds they declined the application. The Postmaster-General referred Otago's special need to the company. The Government backed the Company's monopoly on broadcasting. (Hall, 1980, 18)

#### The Company Begins

In February 1926, conceding that delays in the arrival of the 500 watt transmitters were not the Company's fault, the Government extended the period by which the Company had to commence broadcasting. The Postmaster-General asked if the extension to June would be the only one needed. He was told that the makers, English Western Electric, hoped to ship for June delivery. This wasn't so and the transmitters weren't in service until August and September 1926. (Hall, 1980, 20).

The Company laid down a set of priorities to approach its task. First they were to build the stations, next engage the staff and thirdly improve the programmes. As a commercial enterprise, the Company had to reach profitability quickly. To achieve this, the priority was to enlarge the area of reception, hence the urgency to begin building. Ultimately the success or failure of the system would be the calculated manipulation of those three priorities. It was important not to make any miscalculation in timing, in deciding at what point of physical construction to press toward with improving programmes. (Hall, 1980. 20).

Goodfellow had recollections of considerable Government pressure:

"The Government insisted for political reasons, on erecting stations in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin - as soon as possible despite our protest that the income would be too small to run four stations" (Goodfellow, S.A. T570).

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The service was operating under pressure. They had only five years to develop the service and make it a success.

"All the time we had in mind that we had to give a good service so that at the end of five years we would certainly get a renewal ..."

(Goodfellow, S.A. T570)

It is clear that the Government regarded the Radio Broadcasting Company as an experimental development organisation. The Company was charged with implementing a "Dominion-wide" scheme as soon as possible. At least it was an attempt at getting a wide distribution. Many areas would not be serviced by the Company. If progress was too slow the Government was distressed by the delay, yet it still controlled the service.

After some months of experience, the Government accepted a Company proposal to increase the proposed power of the new Wellington station to 5,000 watts, a tenfold increase. As this involved much greater expense than had been contemplated in 1925, Government agreed to advance the Company fifteen thousand pounds to be secured by mortgage. This was taken over the plant, apparatus and assets of the new station, for a term of five years. In order to encompass the tenure of the new loan the Company's agreement with the Government was extended until 31 December 1931. (Hall, 1980, 21).

The Company's activities brought great advances to New Zealand Broadcasting. New stations were opened, lectures, talks and records were broadcast, and people enjoyed increased radio time. Audiences were entertained by local and overseas artists, kept up to date with sports commentaries, and held in suspense listening to observations of current events. The British Empire Short Wave Service provided not only local reception, but also, local re-broadcasts were highly praised. New Zealanders were brought into contact for the first time with events virtually as they happened. World events like the signing of the Kellogg Peace Pact

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in Paris and the running of the Melbourne Cup were shared by New Zealanders (Hall, 1980, 30) .

As audiences grew and broadcasts lengthened, the demand for such service multiplied. Government regulations demanded a certain percentage of live music, difficulty was experienced in making the programmes lively. (Hall, 1980, 30). The problem being experienced was one essentially of what could be done with the new medium. Experimentation was over, the radio service had to develop into a distinct character. A mission needed to be articulated.

'A.R. Harris suggested in August 1929 that the primary object of broadcasting should be to disseminate such desirable news, information and entertainment as was already available, and that this should be based on the spirit of co-operative effort with other interests. Every endeavour, he said, was being made to feature the broadcast of public functions so as listeners living away from the cities, and those in cities unable to attend functions, were able to keep in touch with current events. The Company was of the opinion that the service could be developed as a medium of communication for the broadcasting of public functions and matters of public interest. The proposal did not appeal, as Harris had proposed this as a means of matching the shortfall not as an extension to the service. 'Listeners wanted more relays, and more studio broadcasts' (Hall, 1980, 30).

This attempt to find a solution to a short term programming problem had come close to developing a long term raison d'etre. To contrast listeners' demands, the Company was faced with severe financial limitations and legal restrictions. There were many hidden obligations in Radio.

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### Alluring Opportunities and Hidden Obligations

The opportunities of the medium were soon to be restricted by obscure responsibilities and hidden obligations. Government control the sector had known and accepted, but many demands were made in connection with rights and claimed to be associated with appliances, materials and invisible materials they used. First to emerge were those associated with the international patents on transmitters and receivers, all of which were owned by Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd (AWA), Connected with this development was the market protection of private property. These series of legal challenges should be seen as a determination of ownership boundaries and rights.

'In April 1923, AWA issued a strong public warning of its intention to take legal action against persons and companies believed to be infringing its rights. The trade, although momentarily alarmed, ignored the warning for more than a year, during which the volume of broadcasting grew. AWA's patience ran out, and its solicitors were ordered to proceed. As none of the private stations had money for litigation they fell back on local goodwill and agitating power. Threatened by the loss of their entertainment, listeners turned to their M.P.'s as stations closed. By the second week of October 1924 all were silent. Ten days later the Government acted' (Hall, 1980, 32).

A Post and Telegraph Amendment Bill was already on the order paper. With the addition of an extra clause, the Bill was put through all stages in five minutes, by which every licenced Broadcaster was made an agent of the Department. This authorised them to use patented inventions. The Crown had accepted liability for the patentees claims. The silent stations were told they could safely resume broadcasting and a lump sum of £10,852 was paid in settlement of past liability. It was agreed that for the next five years AWA was to get three shillings a

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year for each licensed household. In the next year the Government's acceptance of liability was written into the Radio Broadcasting Company's agreement. It also continued to cover the private stations as well, (Hall, 1980, 32).

The private stations escaped less happily in their next legal encounter. Within five months of the R.B.C.N.Z.'s commencement the Australasian Performing Rights Association (APRA) was registered in New South Wales. This organisation claimed to represent more than 98% of the world's copyrighted music, and at once presented a demand for Copyright dues. They threatened, failing compliance, to seek from the Supreme Court an injunction prohibiting the broadcast in New Zealand of any of its numbers. Although there was no mention then of broadcasting in New Zealand Copyright laws, **it was** acknowledged that the broadcasting without permission, of music subject to Copyright was an infringement of the Act. The Company had to come to an agreement with APRA. (Hall, 1980, 32). The reception of the demands is remembered by Goodfellow:-

"...they wanted 12.5% of the gross revenue, came over and demanded it ...they got hold of the Minister of Finance, I think it was a chap called Guthrie, and they scared six months growth out of him ... they told him that if we didn't settle this that it might mean International complications - it might even mean war with Italy. He got those fellows terrified, the whole cabinet was stampeded. We were told by Mr Norseworthy, who was then the Minister, things have got to be settled!"  
(Goodfellow, S.A. T570)

On the eve of opening station 1YA, Auckland, the Company was forced to protect itself from action for infringement of Copyright. It entered into a one year agreement with APRA, accepting its demands (Hall, 1980, 32). Broadcasting had not been foreseen by the 1913 Copyright Act. By 1926, however, there was a strong case for Radio Broadcasting to be included within the orbit of copyright. The Company had urged the Government to act on this matter, before the signing of the

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agreement with APRA. But an International Copyright Conference to be held in Rome was imminent, and it seemed wise to defer action until after that gathering. The New Zealand delegate was due to report back to the Government after the conference. In the intervening period, APRA made application for a Court injunction. The application was to be heard on 10 October 1928. On 9 October 1928 Parliament passed the Copyright (Temporary) Amendment Act, which ran retrospectively from 1 October 1927 to 31 August 1929. It declared that copyright in a musical work was not infringed by the broadcasting of that work, but provided a fund for compensation to the owners of the copyright. It also established a commission which was to affix a fair rate of payment. This commission later decided that the share should be a flat 6% of the Company's share of revenue. (Hall, 1980, 34).

APRA being the only claimant on the compensation fund received the full 6%, and after the Act lapsed the same rate of payment was maintained by mutual agreement. The arrangement did not, however, apply to the privately owned stations. Harris, among others, thought that 6% of the revenue was sufficient for all the country's stations. Nevertheless, APRA persisted in reminding the 'B' stations that they were not included in the deal but remained separately liable. APRA proposed an annual fee of £200 to cover all private stations. (Hall, 1980, 34).

Private proprietors acknowledged that APRA, had a claim, although some considered that it had been included in the Company's arrangement. If not, they claimed, it would lead many 'B' stations to bankruptcy<sup>4</sup>. Those in Dunedin gathered at a public meeting and resolved that it was unfair to expect 'B' stations to provide amusement and also pay copyright fees. The gathering decided to take the initiative in trying to form a New Zealand Radio Listeners League, "to carry out the wishes of the meeting and watch the interests of the listeners generally". (Hall, 1980, 34).

## Review

The activity known as Broadcasting had arrived. Its development in the early stages was one of innovation and manipulation. Innovation with the technology and its application; manipulation in that individuals and groups sought to channel the medium's development. The role of the State was important, it constrained the activity from the unco-ordinated experimental phase to a highly orchestrated service. The rise of the Listener League is another example. The establishment of that pressure group was in response to the actions and non-actions of the State. A group was formed to co-ordinate attempts to impose their ideas on what Radio should be.

But not only was human agency important in this period. Private ownership, an integral feature of capitalist production, was central to the copyright challenges to radio. The idea of the State, acting to establish order and rationalise development of radio is an important influence. This principle was important in legitimating the intervention and control established by the State.

But the order established by groups and individuals was not enough. Broadcasting was soon to be subjected to tighter controls. The next chapter explores this more from manipulation to management.

Radio had, in approximately three decades, developed substantially from the crude experiments of Rutherford. Both human agency constrained by social structure and social structure created by human agency produced the early form of radio in New Zealand. An economic space had been moulded for the activity but the direction of development was in no way obvious.

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Footnotes

1. J.L. Passmore illustrates the small individual innovator of the period. He would go on to be the most influential in the development of New Zealand Radio. He became, in 1922, a founder of the Otago Radio Association and in 1935 was appointed a member of the Broadcasting Board.
  
2. For instance, he gave two Dunedin pupil teachers a textbook which really got them properly started in 1922. Some years later, he gave another young man, Jim Bingham, a piece of Galena to make his first detector. That man went on to become Chief Engineer of the Radio Broadcasting Company.
  
3. The stations were:
  - 1YA Radio Service Ltd., Auckland
  - 2YB Wellington Broadcasters Ltd.,
  - 4YA British Electrical & Engineering Co., Dunedin
  - 4YO Radio Supply Co., Dunedin
  - 1YA Charles H. Pearson for Newcombe Ltd., Auckland
  - 2YM Gisborne Radio Company
  - 2YA Wilkins & Field Ltd., Nelson
  - 2YK Dominion Radio Company Ltd., Wellington
  - 4AB Otago Radio Association, Dunedin.
  - 3AC Radio Society of Christchurch.
  - 2AH Wanganui Amateur Radio Club.

(Hall, 1980, 14)
  
4. 'B' stations were those that were privately owned.

"Before long we will have television ...

For that reason it is necessary that the service should be in the hands of a public company. Broadcasting is a public utility, and on that score also, it should be a monopoly of the people. It is created by the people, and therefore, it belongs to the people. No company should be allowed to make large profits at the expense of the people, especially with a monopoly"

J.B. Donald

(Hansard. Nov.2, 1931, p.662)

## CHAPTER 4

### "FROM MANIPULATION TO MANAGEMENT"

#### Introduction

In the capitalist system, reorganisation is an integral part of the production and reproduction. Change is needed, expected and encouraged. Yet there are times when widespread major reconstructions are needed, to perpetuate the system. In our own recent history, the 1930's is one such period of revolutionary reform. Old orders, along with some recent ones were severely challenged, many were altered and some displaced. The order of capitalism itself faced a major structural crisis, out of which new relationships were created. Within this context broadcasting's form was reworked, new demands for radio appeared and the service was viewed in a different light. A major part of that reform was the greater control exerted by the State.

This chapter follows the move towards greater intervention in broadcasting. The State channelled the activity toward what it considered to be rational development. This chapter also outlines the different stances of involved groups. The listeners, the 'B' stations, the Politicians all had different interpretations of the field of radio. This chapter explores those differences and how they influenced subsequent action.

#### The Company in Context

At 1930 the broadcasting scene was characterised by a Government sponsored and restrained private company attempting to establish a service, spread throughout the country. But the company was not dominant. 'There were significantly more privately owned and independently operated stations; thirty six in fact compared to the four of the RBCNZ' (Prothero, 1946, 56).

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Radio receiving licences totalled 53,407, a ratio of 3.59 per 100 head of population.

The RBCNZ were in a comfortable position. They proudly proclaimed in their house journal:

"From the very inception of the Radio Broadcasting Company there has been a double link between the company and the public - the bond of ether waves bringing together those at the transmitting and receiving ends of a broadcast and a subtle bond of their common interest in a great adventure of science which spells for the listening people of this Dominion a new source of enjoyment, a medium of culture and a new sense of National solidarity"  
(RBCNZ, n.d. 7)

This publication sought to justify the form of its company, promoting its role, as outlined above, and defending its organisation.

"New Zealand was in the fortunate position of being able to take advantage of the experience of other countries. After considering the good and bad features of the systems of control followed in other parts of the world, the Government of the day decided that the most satisfactory method would be by a private company operating under Government regulations. It was a momentous decision, the wisdom of which soon became apparent, both here and abroad. Confusion that was well nigh chaos became resolved into order".  
(RBCNZ, n.d. 7)

'The Company had entered 1930 with the reasonable expectation that, with revenue assured, progress would continue at a quickened pace and mounting quality' (Hall, 1980, 42). Yet the wider economic situation was far from rosy. 'Unemployment had been bad since 1926' and the prices received for the export of 'primary produce had been very uncertain'. The Reform Party, although being 'the most vigorous borrowers since Vogel' began to restrict Government expenditure. (Sinclair, 1959, 247)

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Providing a backdrop to the broadcasting sphere was a turbulent political arena. The 1928 general election had shown that many rural voters 'considered that Reform (the Government) had become a tool in the hands of urban allies'. On the other hand, 'businessmen in turn resented the promotion of State activity' by a Government which had pledged 'more business in Government, and less Government in business'. Prime Minister Coates, and the Reform Party lost the election. Sir Joseph Ward and the United Party entered the Treasury benches with the help of an unstable alliance with Labour. 'It soon became apparent, too, that the United Party had little to offer. Unable to borrow, and in failing health, Ward simply waited. His inaction alienated Labour members, who held him in power. But they were reluctant to withdraw their support for fear that Reform would replace United'. Ward resigned in May 1930 and Labour soon withdrew their support. Ward was succeeded by Forbes. (Richardson, 1981, 220)

The rise of Labour is also influential to the story of Broadcasting. From 1930 to 1935 Labour was the official opposition. In the 1922 election it had won 17 seats on the strength of the urban worker. But thereafter Labour needed to gain some of the country vote if it was to become the Government. 'But a party traditionally wedded to land nationalisation would not easily attract the votes of the farmers'. In the 1928 election 'Labour offered, with a sure instinct, easy credit and mortgage relief to the farmer'. The farmers may have taken to this offer if Sir Joseph Ward hadn't tempted them with an immense loan (Oliver, 1960, 176-77)

In early October 1930 the United Postmaster-General, J.B. Donald, announced unexpectedly that his department would take control of the Broadcasting Service when the Government's agreement with the company expired at the end of the following year. He added that extensive improvements would be made to the existing service, and that 'minor stations of more modern design would be established

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in provincial centres'. The new stations were to be located at Whangarei, Hamilton, New Plymouth, Napier or Hastings, Wanganui, Timaru, Invercargill and on the West Coast of the South Island. The Postmaster-General commented that there were no plans to do away with private stations, and that investigations would be made so that 'they can run, along with the Government sections', (Hall, 1980, 44)

What was interesting was that the RBCNZ had submitted a very similar 'scheme for the installation of a carefully planned system of regional relay stations to be linked up with the four main transmitting stations'. Furthermore this scheme was to 'make available to the majority of listeners in the country districts a broadcast service unaffected by atmospheric and topographical vagaries'. (RBCNZ, n.d. 11). That plan had not been well received. As Goodfellow was later to recall:

Goodfellow: "Ah well, we got a plan out to cover New Zealand with relay stations ...

Interviewer: "... and they still turned it down?"

Goodfellow: "Oh, yes, it was political you see, political, you can't fight a Government".

(Goodfellow, S.A. T570)

It must have been quite flattering for the company to see their scheme minced by the Government. The State had decided that the company's reign was to come to an end.

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The intention to bring broadcasting within the realm of Government enterprise was warmly received by the small Labour Party. It was attacked on the other hand by the Opposition and generally ill received by the radio audience (Hall, 1980, 45). The 'Dominion' criticised the Minister's statement of intent:

"Since when did the State give better service at the same or even at a much higher price than private enterprise? Listeners should be very critical of this suggested transfer to officialdom, and the general taxpayer on his guard lest he find another State service on his hands for subsidies".

(Quoted in Hall, 1980, 45).

This proposed action of the State can also be seen in terms of the wider actions of the State in response to the Depression. The company did not publicly contest its dismissal, it went ahead with its own plans of improving the service. (Hall 1980, 45). The Postmaster-General, J.B. Donald would later comment in 1931 that:

"We have no reason to find fault with the present broadcasting company. They have done very well indeed under strained circumstances in one way, they started off the business, and it was not to be expected that they would reach perfection in the first 12 months or so. I do believe, however, that listeners are demanding more than they are getting today, and seeing that they have to pay the piper, they are entitled to get it". (Hall, 1980, 48).

The Postmaster-General was unsure of what form the new organisation should take, and invited suggestions. Harris and Goodfellow proposed a scheme partial "customer ownership" consisting of a public company with three types of shares. Cabinet considered this plan when preparing legislation for future control, but no part of it was adopted. (Hall, 1980, 48).

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Considerable concern was expressed during the debates about private ownership and profit making, which was reflective of the general questioning of the capitalist system at the time. Mr J. Savage stated:

"...I am viewing the question from the point of view that a public service ought to be controlled by the public in the public interest. A public service controlled by a private corporation may put private interests before the interests of the public"

(Hansard, Nov.2, 1931, pp 660-1)

The institution of public corporation for Broadcasting was also questioned. Labour members suggested that the Post and Telegraph Department might be a better administering body. But the government was concerned to ensure that the Board would be seen to be independent from the State.

Sir James Parr stated in the Legislative Council that the Board would not 'be a State Department' but would 'be entirely independent' (Hansard, Nov.6, 1931 p.811).

The private stations did not escape attention with the Bill. The old Postmaster-General J.B. Donald stated:

"The Prime Minister takes the view that the new Board, when it is created, will deal sympathetically with these stations. I believe that the department considers thirty six of these 'B' stations is in excess of the reasonable requirements of so small a community as one million five hundred thousand, and the proposal is to reduce these smaller stations from thirty six to twelve. The question as to what particular attitude is to be adopted towards the 'B' stations is, as I say, largely a matter for the Board"

(Hansard, Nov.6, 1931, p 803)

.../

The Cabinet Committee, considering the question, decided to adopt the British Broadcasting Corporation as the model for New Zealand. They saw it offering the 'advantages of non-profit direction with none of the disadvantages attached to private monopoly of the public utility' (Prothero, 1946, 63-4).

The Bill to make broadcasting a State enterprise was introduced by one Minister and steered through Parliament by another, (Hall, 1980, 48). With the depression deepening every day and an election in the offing it had become more and more difficult for Coates 'to maintain the Reform Party's independence from United.' Prime Minister Forbes set up an interparty Economic Committee to discuss further cutbacks in expenditure, thus making it clear that United was not prepared alone to introduce measures that both parties agreed were necessary. He would force Reform to share the unpleasantness of Office. On Friday, 18 September 1931, Forbes told a none-too surprised country that a coalition Government was to be formed' between the Reform and United Parties.<sup>1</sup>

Bassett (1982) comments:

"It soon became clear that the Reform Party which had so clearly had the upper hand, had driven a hard bargain. 'For all practical purposes the Reform Party is now the Government, notwithstanding its devastating defeat in 1928', Labour's Harry Holland said on 24 October 1931. The United cabinet had 13 ministers; the new Coalition Government was to have only ten, five from each side. This meant that for the 'greater good' at least eight United Cabinet members had to be fired".  
(Bassett, 1982, 57)

.../

Among them was the Postmaster-General, J.B. Donald. He was replaced by Adam Hamilton, a Southland farmer, who belonged to the Reform and Private Enterprise wing of Coalition. Despite this he 'freely accepted the principles of State Control' (Hall, 1980, 48).

After much decision and confusion, a date was finally set for the election. Parliament rose on 11 November and the election was set for 2 December. One of the last Acts of Parliament was the placing of the Broadcasting Act 1931 onto the statute books. The Act established a Broadcasting Board of three members 'to carry on broadcasting from the stations the Government was about to take over' from the RBCNZ and 'to develop and improve the service. The employees of the board were deemed to be outside the Public Service. There was also provision for the appointment of an Advisory Council of eight members to 'advise' the Board' (Hall, 1980, 48: Gazette 1931. No 39, pp437-441)

#### Corporation Control

State management had been implemented. A public corporation had been established. It was defended, by Mr Donald in the second reading of the Bill:

"Before long we will have television ...

For that reason it is necessary that the Service should be in the hands of a public company. Broadcasting is a public utility, and on that score also it should be a monopoly of the people. It is created by the people, and therefore it belongs to the people. No company should be allowed to make large profits at the expense of the people, especially with a monopoly"

(Hansard, Nov 2, 1931. p. 662

.../

Postmaster-General Hamilton, in summing up reaffirmed the commitment to a Public corporation:

"...I think the general community is in favour of Board control of this class of business. The Post and Telegraph Department is controlling a class of business. Broadcasting is very closely associated with the social and educational life of the community, and it is just a question of whether the Post and Telegraph Department could pay as much attention to the subject as a Board selected for the purpose".  
(Hansard, Nov.2, 1931, p.673)

G.R. Hawke (1981) comments that the Coalition Government considered its role as facilitating the activities of groups within the economy. Politicians of the time, Hawke says, were sensitive to the interests of rural people, and the Reform wing was strong in country electorates. On the other hand the Coalition was wary of urban interest. Downie Stewart the Coalitions Minister of Finance for instance, represented a Dunedin electorate, and had to draw support from both urban businessmen and wage earners. (Hawke, 1981, 145). The Government then had the difficult task of balancing urban and rural interests, and this would be a notable concern in Radio. Decisive action was needed in the broadcasting field, and it was an activity which could both stimulate urban and rural peoples. The composition of the first board also reflects the need to balance rural and urban. The three directors consisted of an Accountant, a Company Director and a Farmer.

#### R.B.C.N.Z. - Success and Failure

The company had been used by the Government as an experimental and building agent, which would distance the State from any failure. The company's tenure was not renewed, partly because a successful service had been developed. A.R. Harris was later

.../

to say, in the Arbitration procedures during the sale of the RBCNZ, that the Government had clearly taken this attitude:

"...the Minister - now Sir James Parr - in explaining to the house the nature of the arrangement with the company claimed he had made an excellent bargain from the point of view of the Government, in as much as the Government was freed from all financial responsibility and risk, but that the Government had the right in the event of everything going well, to assume control of the service"

(Nat. Ar. JC/W1. Statement of A.R. Harris to Arbitration Commission. p.3)

As Harris sadly noted:

"The Company ... has made a success of the venture, particularly on the technical side, and as a result of this very success, had been compelled by the Government ... to yield all the advantages which would have accrued from a continuation of the Licence"  
(Ibid)

Yet the company had failed too. While it had succeeded in developing a coverage for the main cities it accomplished little in its 'short career to consolidate its position with the many thousands of listeners who lived outside the four main centres'. McKay (1953) suggests that this failure was 'the rock on which the Company foundered'. McKay argues that the RBCNZ ought to have 'sought the assistance of some strategically situated 'B' stations which for the outlay of a subsidy could have provided a somewhat wider service. As he comments, 'instead the company acted as though they were unaware of the existence of these stations, alienating the sympathies of thousands of people who derived their entertainment from them' (McKay, 1953, 36).

Technically, the company had developed a fine service, upon which the Broadcasting Board could successfully build. The Board had had many advantages, a steady annual income, capital development loans from the State and general assistance.

.../

The Directors opted to 'concentrate their efforts on a narrow front in preference to spreading themselves thinly over the country areas. To accomplish the latter would have involved heavy capital expenditure'. They were not prepared to undertake such expenditure until they had 'secured some of the fruits of the narrow front of city coverage' (McKay, 1953, 37).

McKay sees that the board made two cardinal errors. Firstly they went into business without sufficient capital (McKay 1953,38). Goodfellow also identified that as a problem:

"Really there should have been a good deal more capital. We could have got it, and to be able to run at a loss for a couple of years ...

... if we had plenty of money, we would have run at a bigger loss and got the revenue up quick. If we had been sure we were going to get ten years. We thought we were safe for ten years. But we hadn't got the extra capital - we couldn't get it"

(Goodfellow, T570)

Secondly McKay asserts that the second error was not making any attempt to 'gauge the feelings of resentment in the country areas' (McKay, 1953, 38). It is possible that, as Goodfellow said, that development for rural areas was planned for the period after the licence was revoked. As McKay argues, the company was building on the assumption that they would remain in business indefinitely. They thought that time was on their side. The company certainly misjudged the political atmosphere! When the extension was not granted they were caught completely by surprise (McKay 1953, 38).

.../

When the Government and the RBCNZ could not agree on an equitable price for assets, the case went to arbitration. RBCNZ claimed £85,812, the Government offered £27,353, and the Arbitrator, after examination, fixed the figure at £58,646 6s 2d. As McKay eloquently concludes:

"Broadcasting had arrived, was by now an integral part of the community life, and listeners had experienced some of the fruits of an organised service. Private enterprise had pioneered the way and like most pioneers, made many mistakes but accomplished a great deal. Admittedly, the Government's breath was not on the company's neck throughout, the regulations preventing them from having an entirely free hand. The company was encouraged to expand, but when it reached a certain phase the Government decided it had served its purpose and the State would take a more personal interest in future broadcasting activity".

(McKay, 1953, 38)

#### Under New Management

The Board inherited what had been the company's prime problem - coverage. (Hall, 1980, 58). In recognition of this the Board quickly appointed a Coverage Commission charged with investigating reception, and developing a better coverage. The Commission visited some eighty towns where they were 'welcomed by Radio Clubs and Societies all anxious to provide data'. When they reported in July 1932, they had four main recommendations:

- "1) 1YA, 2YA, and 4YA, the respective stations in the four main centres, to be modernised, increased in power and rendered stable in operation;
- 2) An emergency transmitter to be installed in Wellington;

.../

- 3) Relay stations in the vicinity of Invercargill, Woodville, East Coast of the North Island and Tirau;
- 4) Special provision for assistance towards improved service at Cromwell, Timaru, West Coast of South Island, Nelson, Taranaki, Ohakune, Opotiki and Whangarei.

(McKay, 1953, 41)

After a review of the report, the Board announced a range of actions. 'Station 2YA would be overhauled, increased in power and an emergency plant would be provided'. New sites for 1YA, 3YA and 4YA would be tested at once, and their hours of broadcast would be extended. 'Finally assistance was given to certain provincial 'B' stations, but not to city 'B' stations'. (Hall, 1980, 59). The Board's first report to Parliament, noted the decision to 'render assistance to a number of broadcasting stations operating in areas where transmission from the Board's stations is unsatisfactory' (AJHR, F3, 1933, 4)<sup>2</sup>.

The scheme proposed by the Commission had been adopted in principle, if not in detail. Figure 4.1 illustrates the principle adopted by the Board - to develop a four tier system: 1) Government stations, 2) Relay Stations, 3) Subsidised 'B' stations, and 4) Private stations.

A comparison of the stations proposed by the Commission shows a tendency in the North Island to develop relay stations, and subsidised stations in areas not already served by stations, (e.g., Ohakune, Tirau, Woodville). The Board, on the other hand, chose to provide relay services to established radio centres. The coverage in 1932 is also interesting, for it was the year that had the greatest number of stations, 40 in all, and only 4 being State owned. The Board also set about making improvements to the programmes and presentation. Alec O'Donoghue (1946) wrote:

.../

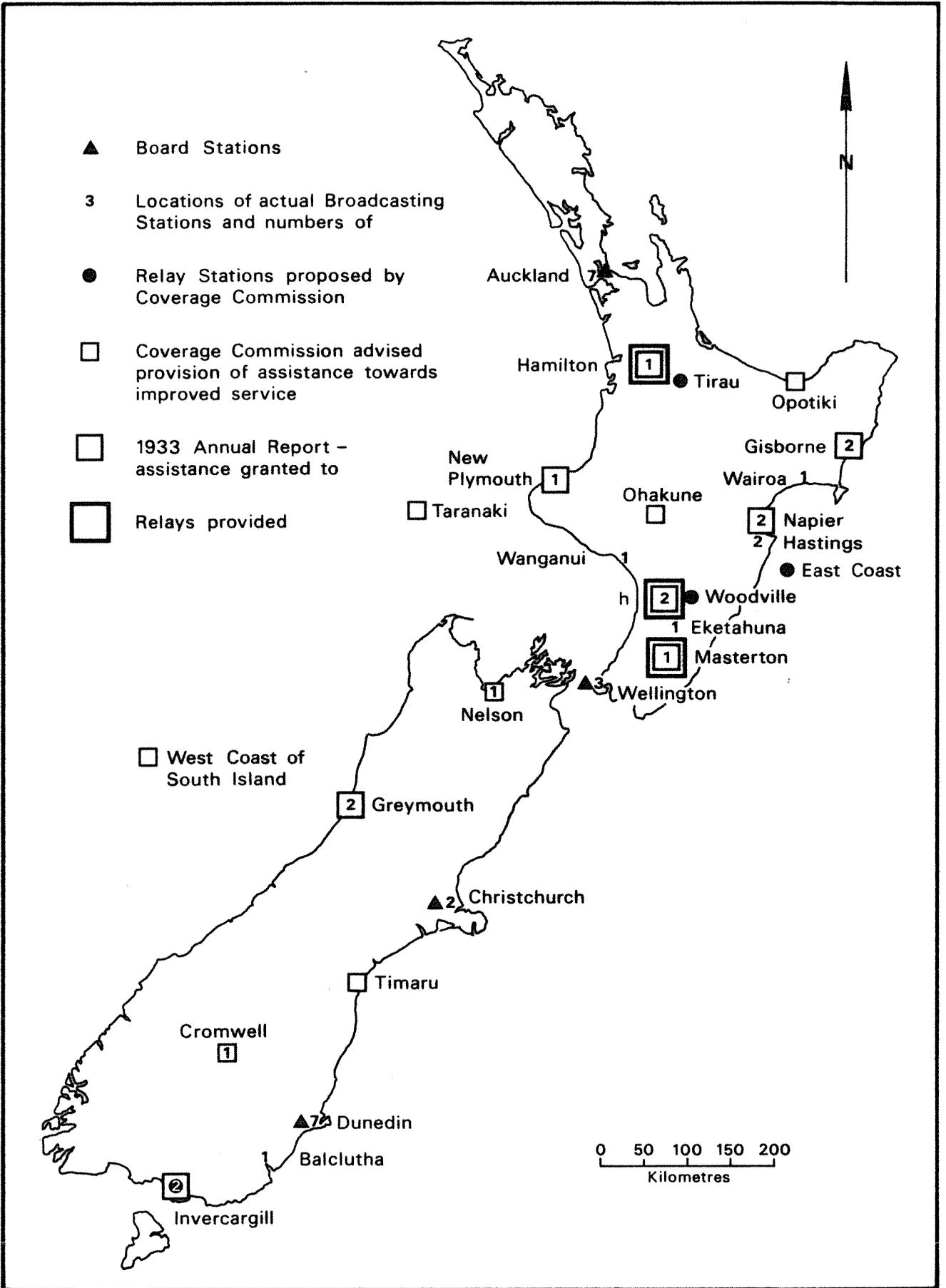


Figure 4.1 Radio Stations - Actual and Planned  
 (AJHR, 1933, F.3) (McKay, 1953, 41) (Prothero, 1946, 156)

"By the efforts of the Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand Ltd., which laid the foundations of the service, the New Zealand Broadcasting Board which succeeded it, we had built in this country a broadcasting service of a very high standard, a service which was founded on hard work, dignity and honour, and which reflected in its transmission the obligations and duty it owed to its listeners".

(O'Donoghue, 1946, 13)

The Board modernised its four stations during the course of 1933 and opened two more, 2YC, Wellington and 1YX, Auckland. In the first three months of 1934 it had opened two more, 3YL, Christchurch and 4YO, Dunedin. While the Board had doubled its stations, they were still all in the four main centres. (Hall, 1980, 60)

But the Board was to face considerable criticism of its performance. McKay (1953) commented that no-one was very happy with the accomplishments of the Board. By 1934 opponents of the existing method of control concentrated on the regulations banning controversial material from programmes or talks, along with the treatment accorded to the 'B' stations. 'These two topics were always likely to arouse spirited protests in Parliamentary debates and on many platforms, driving through narrow party lines much to the embarrassment of the Minister. Undoubtedly changes were contemplated! It came as no surprise when the Postmaster-General introduced a Broadcasting Bill on 6 March 1935 (McKay 1953, 51).

#### Private Enterprise Under Fire

The Broadcasting Amendment Act 1934-35 enlarged the Board from three to seven members, and abolished Advisory Council. The Board was granted power to supervise programmes from all stations, including private stations. Hitherto this function had been exercised as an adjunct of licencing by the Post and Telegraph Department. It also established a ceiling on the number of stations, no more licences were to be issued, though lapsed licences might be re-issued. The net was closing on private enterprise. (Hall, 1980, 61)

Criticism of the attack on 'B' stations was forthcoming in the House of Representatives. The member for Timaru said:

"If (the Government) is afraid of these little broadcasting stations, and so it is taking means to knock them out, well I think the 'B' class stations might make it appear to the British instincts of the Government and say 'hit someone your own size'".  
(Hansard, Mar 7, 1935, 303).

Many saw the clause as a means to eliminate the 'B' stations. Mr Atmore, member for Nelson said:

"...Hon. the Minister stated that it is not the Government's intention to kill the 'B' class stations, he did not say that the conditions are being made so that they will die; and that is undoubtedly the position"  
(Hansard, Mar 7, 1935, p.331)

The Government justified the measure on the basis of limited resource. The Postmaster-General stated:

"...I would like to point out that there is no unlimited space on the air for all classes of broadcasting, for stations to have any power they like and any hours they choose"  
(Hansard, 6 Mar, 1935, p.294)

In the debates, the future Labour Prime Minister, Mr J. Savage clearly stated his view of the future control of New Zealand Broadcasting:

"But the day will come when the Government will control the Broadcasting Service from A to Z - when it will have sufficient wisdom to draft a policy to be carried out by those appointed to do so. But it will be the Policy of the Government, and not that of the Board, and if the Board fails to carry out the Policy laid down by the Government it will have to make room for those who will"  
(Hansard, 15 March 1935, 407)

.../

The Bill gave the Board responsibility previously held by the Minister. Their action was strongly criticised by the Labour Party on the grounds that the Government was farming out responsibilities to a Board, who though handling public funds was not directly answerable to the people. Mr Savage promised that if Labour came to power at the next election they would see that the elected representatives of the people, not a Board, controlled the service. So strong was the criticism that two concessions were made in the Bill. Firstly two members of the Board were to be selected from persons nominated by organisations representing listeners. Secondly the word 'control' was altered to read 'supervised' as related to the Board's authority over 'B' stations. (McKay, 1953, 52-3).

The intent was clear, a national service was to be established, but the position of the 'B' stations in the system was that they should be around until such a time as the National Service could be implemented. Mr E.C. Hands, General Manager of the Board wrote to the Postmaster-General about the proposed amendments:

"As intimated to you today, I feel that a valuable step towards our National Service ideal would be a provision calling upon the Board to report, in, say, three months time as to the 'B' stations necessary to provide an adequate broadcasting service pending the completion of the Board's coverage scheme. The stations deemed unnecessary to be bought out by the Broadcasting Board"

(N.A. BC I IV, letter d. 6 March 1935)

The Act took effect from 2 April 1935, and the Board wasted little time in exerting its influence. The General Manager wrote to 'B' station 3ZM, Christchurch on 16 April

.../

"...As you are aware, my Board has the duty of supervising all programmes to be transmitted from Private Broadcasting Stations ...Kindly note that the Board desires you to ensure that no speaker be allowed to express an opinion regarding the actions of Parliament or Government or the Administration of Government Departments, Boards or Local Bodies set up in pursuance of statutory authority"

(ATL, MS 1645 Folder 2, l.d. 16 April 1935)

The lot of the 'B' stations was an unenviable one. They were, as McKay (1953) put it, 'the illegitimate offspring of successive administrations and no-one wished to assume responsibility for their upbringing'. The mortality rate was high, those who survived did so with the assistance of individuals and chaos. In the face of Government pressure the 'B' stations decided to organise.

The first attempt to organise a national pressure group was in Dunedin in 1928. The local stations, 4ZL, 4ZM, and 4ZO circularised the other stations in existence, suggesting to them that a national organisation be formed, to secure monetary return for their services (McKay, 1953, 59). Three schemes for assistance were proposed. Firstly the Government could provide grants to cover expenses. The second scheme suggested that 10% (six minutes of every hour) of transmission hours was given to paid advertising. The third scheme was a combination of grant and reduced advertising time. (Prothero, 1946, 96).

This attempt by a particular section of the community to form an interest group and mould broadcasting is important. It attempted to change the direction of Government policy. It was not alone. In 1929 operators and radio dealers held a conference in Wellington to examine various proposals for assistance to 'B' stations. A scheme was placed before the

.../

Minister which sought permission to form a company to operate Four 'B' stations. No subsidy was sought, but the company wished to use 10% of its programme time for advertising. They proposed an administering board of five members representing the Government, 'B' stations, the radio trade and listeners. But opponents of the scheme thought that to set up another radio network was unwise. They claimed it may weaken the organisation in place, thus 'two weaklings would be struggling for the nourishment for one'. The request after consideration was declined. (McKay, 1953, 60-61)

In September 1928 the expected blow fell upon the 'B' stations. APRA served notice for copyright dues<sup>3</sup>. The demands for copyright payment were met by renewed calls for the 'B' stations to be allowed to earn revenue. The obvious answer was sponsored programmes. A meeting in support of the Dunedin stations decided to form a Listeners League to support the 'B' stations' claims for commercial broadcasting. (McKay, 1953, 61-2). The Press, too, were concerned about commercial broadcasting. They saw commercial radio as encroaching on that service which they offered: advertising.

### Commercial Radio

A small concession was made by the Government. Postmaster-General Donald announced in June 1931 that the Government had authorised a form of sponsored programmes for 'B' stations. The concession was limited, stations only being permitted short announcements of the name of the sponsor at the opening and close of each programmes. No product was allowed to be mentioned. McKay (1953) saw the gesture as meaningless in that it secured so little revenue. There was some questioning about why at all the gesture had been made, 'for it was known that the United Government was not as close to the press as its predecessors'. There was suggestion that the press had been threatened with commercial broadcasting unless they eased attacks on the Government's financial policy (McKay 1953, 62-3).

.../

It is useful to consider the impact of advertising. Advertising was not a 'pretty' subject in the minds of many New Zealanders at the time. It was seen as 'foreign' and undesirable for broadcasting. The member for Nelson, Mr Atmore, commented in the 1934-35 Broadcasting Amendment Debate that advertising distorted the activities of those that utilised it:

"Big advertising interests are catered for by the so called public press of the country which has ceased to be a public press battling for the people's interests. As soon as the newspapers took on big scale advertising they adopted the role of defenders of big interests - whose interests as a rule conflict with those of the people - and consequently since then the people are deprived of the information they are entitled to"  
(Hansard, 15 Mar. 1935, p.417)

This was a perceptive comment, which closely identifies the link advertising has in the capitalist system. To these early broadcasters and administrators, to combine advertising with such a powerful force as broadcasting was unthinkable. The Postmaster-General stated, "Advertising is not a part of the Broadcasting Service". It was suggested that this attitude was just 'an arrangement between the newspapers and the Government' (Hansard, 6 Mar 1935, p.295).

However, with the mounting claims for payments on copyright, and with no Governmental grants to 'B' stations forthcoming, advertising appeared to be the only viable option available. In response to such pressure the 'B' stations formed another pressure group, the New Zealand Alliance headed by 1ZR, Auckland and 2ZW, Wellington.

.../

"This group was considerably more powerful than its predecessors and towards the end of 1932 petitioned Parliament for the right to advertise. In December a Parliamentary Committee referred the proposal to the Government for 'favourable consideration', interest being aroused during the debate when members from both sides of the House supported the 'B' stations as being necessary to the broadcasting system"

(McKay, 1953, 64).

The Government agreed to relax the regulations, but the administering department received no new instructions, so the existing regulations remained in force. The Post and Telegraph officials were very zealous in enforcing the regulations, and in June 1932, a District Telegraph Engineer suspended the licence of 1ZR, Auckland, ordering it to cease broadcasting, after a minor breach of the regulations. 1ZR called a public protest meeting claiming that some of the regulations were only enforced against 'B' stations. 1ZR was back on air within a week, after promising not to break the regulations again (McKay 1953, 64).

After demands for copyright on records were placed on the 'B' stations most stations grouped behind the powerful 1ZR, Auckland and 2ZW Wellington, both of which were owned by well established business firms. The Government's reaction to the renewed demands was swift. They purchased 1ZR and 2ZW. It appeared that the Government had made quite a good offer and informed the owners that if they didn't accept they would be forced off the air. They stated that sponsored programmes would be prohibited and the demands of the gramophone companies would also make it 'impossible for stations to continue'. The owners had no choice and no publicity was to be given to the negotiations. The purchase was so quickly undertaken that neither listeners nor

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the clubs associated with the two stations were informed. Even more extraordinary was that the Broadcasting Board was not consulted, and the press provided their first knowledge of the event. (McKay 1953, 65). The government had decisively undermined the opposition to its Broadcasting plans<sup>4</sup>.

On 10 November 1933 the Postmaster-General defended the acquisition on the grounds 'that yeoman service had been rendered when the national coverage was inadequate and the Government considered there was a moral, if not legal, obligation to assist these stations! It was pointed out that for years they had been included in the AWA copyright agreement. This agreement was due to run out and the 'B' stations would have to cater for themselves. The final blow was that from 31 March 1934 sponsored programmes would be prohibited once again (McKay 1953, 66).

By removing the ability of private stations to survive, the Government effectively would alter the form of radio in New Zealand. It was far cheaper to 'starve out' the stations than purchase each station individually. The administration of the regulations was tightened to restrict their activities. 1ZB, Auckland, after being thwarted by the Department, organised the largest public meeting held in Auckland. Some 20,000 people gathered to hear about the efforts of 1ZB. The meeting was told that this was the 'last in a series of petty irritations that was undermining the foundation of the 'B' stations and could no longer be tolerated' (McKay 1953, 67)

#### Freedom or Restriction?

As New Zealand approached the landmark 1935 General Election there was considerable criticism of the censorship of 'controversial matter'. Two recent visitors to New Zealand had come up against this ban. Indian philosopher Jidda Krishnamurti

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visited Auckland and was banned from speaking over the air. Author, G.B. Shaw, was invited to speak and asked to submit copies for censorship. Had he done so, he would have been banned. Local talks were also banned due to their controversial nature, for instance Professor Sewell was prohibited from speaking on Religion and Philosophy and an Economics Lecturer forbidden to comment on Marxism and Fascism. One broadcast from 12M Auckland (a 'B' station) on British- Israelism was disallowed (Hall, 1980, 68-70)

The rules and laws laid down were coming into conflict with the ideas being developed by the media. The real power and potential of broadcasting was only just being brought into fruition yet it was being knocked back by outside regulations. There was considerable debate about the bounds of freedom for radio. Was it to be like the press and enjoy a 'freedom of the airwaves'? Comments in Parliament reflected this debate:

"One of our prized British traditions is the freedom of speech; why not let us have freedom on the air? Is there any difference? We allow anyone to start a newspaper and in fact we say - the more the merrier" (Hansard, 7Mar. 1935. 303)

### Scrimgeour

During 1934 the focus of broadcasting politics settled in Auckland and was dominated by one individual, the Reverend C.G. Scrimgeour. Scrimgeour bought a lapsed station and licenced it in the name of the 'Fellowship of the Friendly Road'. Scrimgeour developed the station along a pseudo-religious philosophy. His station was bought out by the State, but he acquired the idle plant and other assets of the station. He invited listeners to write or telegraph the Government, and

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a proposed protest meeting at Carlaw Park the licence was granted. (Hall, 1980, 50-7).

But the demands did not end there. Scrimgeour was to continually pester authorities for extended hours and power. He had won his licence by political pressure, against the advice of Governmental advisors, yet he continually asked for more. 'Such people did not endear themselves to administrators'. After the 1ZR incident, the Friendly Road declared war. At a gathering of 12,000 in Carlaw Park Scrimgeour told the people:

"We have had nothing but hindrance from the Post and Telegraph Department since our station came on the air. The position in regard to radio control has become intolerable, and the Friendly Road is being forced into taking political action, and we will have something to say to the electors prior to the General Election". (Hall, 1980, 73)

From there Scrimgeour proceeded about the country on a speaking tour, criticising the Government actions. He saw the Broadcasting Amendment Bill as "the most atrocious piece of legislation ever drafted in New Zealand" (Hall, 1980, 74) Public support was forthcoming. Money was sent, letters were written and the debate became a lively election issue. In the press, 'B' stations were criticised. Scrimgeour (1976), was later to recall:

"The Press knew it (radio) as a means of communication. Now, therefore, everything that was wrong, or could be identified as being even doubtful about commercialising radio, they found out, and they didn't want radio... .. it wasn't so much the commercial intrusion that they were warned about, they were worried about another channel being open for matters of news and information. This was where the big challenge came. They didn't want **anyone to dispute** what they said - and they certainly didn't want anyone to dispute what they didn't say" (Scrimgeour et al, 1976, 44)

.../

Once again the thoughts and actions of an individual proved to be integral to the development of broadcasting. Scrimgeour's lead was followed by other radio stations. The 3ZM Radio Club for instance, issued a Radio Listener's Ballot Paper, which discussed the various viewpoints and implored the Listener-Reader to be judge. The pamphlet summarised the Government's case in three points:

- "1) The Government has declared its intention of preventing the pollution of advertising,
- 2) The Government has decided to model its broadcasting system on lines similar to those of the broadcasting system in Great Britain under the Broadcasting Corporation,
- 3) The Government contends that it has catered for all the listeners and that the national stations and their auxiliaries in the cities and in the smaller towns provide the fullest average"

(3ZM Christchurch, 5  
ATL<sup>MS</sup> 1845 )

The case for defence was introduced with this eloquent phrase:

"If there is an earthly paradise where narrow-minded officialdom can give free rein to its moronic inhibitions, then that place is New Zealand"

(3ZM Christchurch, 7  
ATL MS 1845)

Their case was summed up in four questions:

- "1) Shall 'B' class stations be shifted by the Government whose one aim appears to be to get rid of the competitive element which they provide?
- 2) Shall listeners be deprived of the additional entertainment which the 'B' class stations provide, so that the Government may satisfy the demands of an organisation whose only interest is the protection of its monopolistic advertising rights?

.../

- 3) Do you object to sponsored programmes as they are broadcast at present?
- 4) Would you object to an extension of the right of 'B' class stations to broadcast, say 30 words of advertising each half hour?"

(3ZM Christchurch, 11  
ATL MS 1845)

This novel pamphlet provides an insight into the debate at the local level. It is clear that the 'B' stations accepted some of the Government's viewpoint, but asked whether this provided the best service.

#### An Election Looms

As the general election approached the debate livened. The Government's policy was to follow Britain, not the American or Australian model. Support for the 'B' stations came from all corners of the House, irrespective of party allegiances, local loyalties were strongly expressed. (Hall, 1980, 75-76). Scrimgeour returned from a visit to Australia in August and stated he would survey all the political parties for their broadcasting policies. A questionnaire was circularised and in October a booklet entitled "The Scandal of New Zealand Broadcasting" was printed with the results. Scrimgeour recalled later:

"I composed and distributed the questionnaire to all parties, and every one of the Labour Party wrote back: Yes, yes, yes, yes, In other words they were giving the go-ahead for the 'B' stations to earn revenue. Of the other parties there was quite a variety of them - No reply, no reply, no reply, no reply"  
(Scrimgeour et al, 1976, 44)

With the Labour Party committed to providing revenue for 'B' stations, voting was clear in relation to radio.

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The pressure groups saw it as a fight against freedom.

Listeners were urged to act:

"The Press supports the Government in its Political Party and in return the Government helps the Press by maintaining a restrictive radio policy. Your opportunity is here to break this vicious circle and to free the human family from the deathlike grip of monopoly"

(1ZB Radio Club, 12)

In many centres voters were urged to vote for candidates who supported the 'B' stations. 2ZR, Nelson implored its readers to do likewise:

"Remember -

A vote for the National Candidate is a vote for the muzzling of the microphone and for ending 'B' stations.

A vote for candidates pledged to support 'B' class stations is a vote for freedom of the Air and life for the 'B' stations,

Vote accordingly:-"

(3ZM Christchurch, ATL MS 1845)

The Government looked to the American system for guidance. They were clearly caught within a series of different interpretations. They were clearly against maintaining the status quo. Their actions had sought to remove the 'B' stations. The 'B' stations sought to get commercial broadcasting in order that they might continue to exist. The Government stood firm, they were committed to following the British model of State Corporation monopoly. As the following day approached, tensions began to rise. With election day set for Wednesday 27 November 1935, Scrimgeour was due to broadcast as usual three days before, on Sunday evening. Many still awaited Scrim's pronouncement, direction

.../

or call to tell them how they should vote. (Hall, 1980, 77). In the light of the controversial matter ruling such a statement would lose Scrim his licence. Once again the Government acted, they jammed the broadcast. Scrim recalled later:

"I would not be foolish enough to lose my licence. There was no guarantee that Labour would go in and I think that they thought I wouldn't take the risk of losing my licence. I don't think they were frightened of that - that I was going to say anything political. They were extremely frightened of the fact that they had made a mistake and left a loophole, in that you could give a report to members of the Listener's Clubs, and that report would be based on the questionnaire which showed unanimous endorsement for the revenue question on the part of the Labour Party, and complete silence on the part of all the other parties. And that was what they had been waiting for. They knew that there was going to be no speech saying "Vote Labour", but instead, "I've just received the results of a questionnaire and this is what they are". This was not controversial - every member had seen it and they had the right to announce it as they wished. And the Government suddenly realised that they had made a mistake"

(Scrimgeour, et al, 1976. 44-45)

The jamming became great news. The Deputy-Prime Minister who was in Auckland stated:

"I have received communications suggesting that the Government is in some way responsible for the interference. These are quite without foundation. Neither the Government nor the Post Office, nor the Broadcasting Board had the slightest connection with the occurrence, nor did they have any knowledge of it. The interference is either a childish rag, or an unscrupulous attempt to make political capital by throwing suspicion on the Government"

(Hall, 1980. 78)

The 1935 Labour Party victory had been well recorded. Broadcasting was part of that change. As Burdon (1965) wrote "The Labour Party were given a mandate to reform capitalism, not to institute socialism" (Burdon, 1965, 212). The system had been under severe strain. Conservative solutions were to be voted inadequate. Yet the Labour Party had pledged to support private enterprise broadcasting. The new Labour Postmaster-General stated in his Christmas message that:

"The Government is determined to carry out the policy enunciated during the general election campaign - to keep broadcasting in closer touch with the people and to give service to all listeners in the Dominion" (Hall, 1980, 82)

Whilst broadcasting had generated a lot of heat during the election, it was still accorded a low priority in the new Government's task sheet. It would have to wait for action. Yet its potential was warmly recognised by the new Government. "The old avenues of publicity - the newspapers have been deliberately closed against us", said Prime Minister Savage. "Radio, this means of communicating our work and our aims to the public is being enthusiastically taken up by the Labour Government". (Hall, 1980, 83). Change for radio was once again on the horizon.

### Review

This chapter has explored the movement in broadcasting of a service under State manipulation to one of State management. As radio technology matured, new options appeared and were explored. With maturation it became clear that the institutions of broadcasting would not go long unaltered. With the realisation of new potentials, particular sections of society observed that unchecked, broadcasting would soon be a force to be reckoned with.

.../ .

Although the State had already strongly influenced New Zealand Broadcasting, this was extended to explicit management of radio. But these actions were not without challengers. Individuals and groups tried to set in place alternative operational forms. The different viewpoints, and the interaction between those exposing them, provided the body of the chapter.

New organisational forms were needed and were often developed, through compromise. The late 1920's and early 1930's were a period of considerable reform. New meanings for activities allied with broadcasting were articulated, new demands were made of existing systems. The pressures also brought social questioning and reform. That reform within broadcasting was evident in the debates on 'B' stations.

A dominant feature of the period was direct State action. Government's, and their policies, changed yet consistent throughout was a movement toward greater control and management of the sector by the State. The State sought to not merely manipulate but to manage and control. Private enterprise broadcasting was progressively excluded from the sphere.

Yet the exclusion of private enterprise could not be achieved without some compromise. Chapter 5 explores the necessity of the State to consolidate its newly found power bloc. There was to be once again, struggle over whose views about the organisation of broadcasting should prevail, but the struggle, unlike the period just covered, was to be largely, if not entirely, located within the orbit of the State.

Footnotes:

1. The 1928 election brought down a Parliament like this:

Reform	28 seats	
United	27 seats	
Ind. Liberal	4 seats	
Labour	19 seats	
Country Party	1 seat	
Miscellaneous	1 seat	
	<u>80 seats</u>	(Bassett, 1982, 67)

2. The following stations received assistance from the Board in its first year totalling £1,097 15s 10d.

1ZH Hamilton	*
2YB New Plymouth	
2ZF Palmerston North	*
2ZD Masterton	*
2ZJ Gisborne	
2ZH Napier	
4ZP Invercargill	
3ZR Greymouth	

\* Relays of programmes also provided.

3. For an account of this refer to Chapter 3.
4. Station 3ZC Christchurch was later acquired on the same grounds.

"I believe in the State, because the State is now the people, and the people the State, and because the people are orderly and well-educated"

William Pember Reeves

New Zealand Parliamentary Debates  
1892.

"I do not think any organisation is superior to Parliament in being able to reflect the views of listeners, the right of control should be vested in the Government"

F. Jones,  
Postmaster-General  
9 June 1936.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE CONTRADICTIONS OF INTERVENTION

#### Introduction

Under the first Labour Government, New Zealand broadcasting went through a period of considerable change. The public broadcasting system was drawn into a Department of State, all private stations were nationalised and a unique hybrid, State Commercial Radio was born. The State's intervention in the sector was total, it now owned and operated a monopoly.

With the onset of war, the institutions of the State, economy and civil society spheres were placed under scrutiny. Inconsistencies, Economic waste and inefficiencies in particular were under fire. Broadcasting could not escape such scrutiny, staffing levels would be cut, capital expansion delayed and the role of the radio would be redefined. Major reforms were undertaken to ensure the production to which New Zealand saw itself belonging to. These reforms would influence society well beyond the duration of war.

New Zealand Broadcasting, however, was not shaped by major social forces alone. Key individuals would often hold influential positions in the re-shaping of the activity. People like G.G. Scrimgeour, M.J. Savage, P. Fraser and others were prominent in the reformation of radio. Clearly there is a need to integrate the influences of structure and agency.

#### A Department of State

In June 1936, the new Labour Government introduced its Broadcasting Bill. It sought to abolish the Broadcasting Board and was to vest ownership and operation of the Broadcasting Service with the Crown. It directed that the service be carried under ministerial control as a Department of State. The Bill further authorised the appointment of an advisory council. It also permitted the establishment of

commercial stations and prohibited advertising from all other stations, Government or private. The duty of supervising programmes from private stations passed now to the Minister, and no more private stations could be licensed. Lastly, no licence for private broadcasting could be sold, leased mortgaged or assigned without the written consent of the Minister (Hall, 1980, 85).

Labour's Postmaster-General, F. Jones stated that broadcasting had been brought back to the realm of the Government because only Parliament could reflect the views of the people:

"I do not think any organisation is superior to Parliament in being able to reflect the views of listeners, the right of control should be vested in the Government".

(Hansard, 9 June 1936, 749).

However, the measures were strongly attacked by the former Postmaster-General Adam Hamilton. He went so far as to call the Bill the 'Most autocratic or dictatorial measures the Government' had introduced:

"The freedom of the individual and individuality are by this Bill, going to be interfered with, and everyone must step into line and dance to the Government's tune"

(Hansard, 9 June. 754, 756)

Why had the Government's policy changed from its election promises? According to L. Edwards (1971) the Prime Minister had landed, almost immediately after the election, in difficulty:

"He (Savage) had heard that a syndicate of newspaper proprietors intended to buy up 'B' stations if private commercial radio was authorised. This looked like the tables being turned and double turned - not only a revenue windfall for the newspapers, but a propaganda outlet being snatched from under Labour's nose and put to Tory advantage ..."

(Edward, 1971, 91.)

And the new plan was heavily attacked, as an assault on the press. Adam Hamilton said:

"It looks as if this is going to whip certain newspapers if they criticise the Government. It is a potential whip, to be applied to the newspapers if they do not report the members of the Government in the style in which they would like to be reported"

(Hansard, 9 June 1936, p.756).

Commercial radio was not seen yet as a competitor for news, but a competitor in advertising. The propaganda value of radio for the dissemination of information was well appreciated. During the Labour Government's early years, the Government might have started a full radio news service, but never did, although a Government controlled news service would have been of great value (Hobbs, 1967, 147)

To the criticism levelled by the Press, the Government counter-claimed that the newspapers 'lost no opportunity of attacking and misrepresenting their actions and motives, and made it quite clear that they in turn would take any step necessary to combat the Press' (McKay, 1953, 77).

Prime Minister Savage commented in the New Zealand Herald:

"The Government has a duty to the people not to keep them in the dark. What the newspapers neglect to do Broadcasting will do. We have a far reaching programme and we want the people to come with us everywhere. The Government is going to be master of publicity"

(N.Z. Herald, 9/6/36

Quoted in Gregory, 1979, 427)

.../

There was a questioning during this time of what was a legitimate use of the radio. As a means of communication it was an extremely useful tool for good or ill. The Opposition contended that the Government eagerly used the microphone for propaganda purposes, and in the years following 1937, ministerial appearances on the air were certainly numerous. When the Government embarked upon its spectacular social and economic reconstruction, communicating it to its citizens through the radio, the opposition were excluded. It is significant that during the next 13 years the Opposition did not have any opportunity of stating a case against Government policy, other than during Broadcasting Parliamentary debates! (McKay, 1953, 77)

With the Press antagonistic to the Government, there was little hope that the radio service, recently claimed in the name of 'the people' would be able to criticise a 'peoples' Government'. While the Labour Government did not actively develop its own news service, it did create a climate sympathetic to Governmental actions which it used to its advantage. Hobbs (1967) comments that 'it would be nice to think that Labour turned down the radio news service idea in a belief that Government should not dabble in the news', but really it was a matter of complacency about publicity after Savage's death. (Hobbs, 1967, 147-48). Liberal notions of a fourth estate clearly did not yet include radio.

#### The Demise of the Board

As symbols of the new Government's activist determination, Labour removed a number of activities from Corporation control and returned them to State Departments. For example, the Railways and the Mortgage Corporation were reinstated in the Departmental stable (Hawke, 1981, 157). While the demise of the board may be seen in a similar light, they did little in their short career to ensure their own existence. The board's record on administration

.../

was weak, and it appeared to lack confidence in its own engineers. It had often alienated the listeners, and their policies failed to encourage eager staff. While many regional areas still had no satisfactory service, the Board busied itself providing a duplicate service in the four main centres. Administrators saw new ideas, imported programmes and 'B' station initiatives as irritants rather than encouragement to improve. 'They wanted to control radio in all forms, but spent too much time preparing to ward off certain possibilities. Censorship, prohibitions and restrictions were acceptable alike to the board, and the Government. They had become their very tools of the trade' (McKay, 1953, 56).

In retrospect, there seemed very little to argue to retain the board and the change to a Government Department would be almost inevitable. McKay (1953) lays blame ~~of~~ for the failure of the board, not of the organisation, but the actors in it:

"What should be made clear was that the method of control did not fail but the men who were appointed were not big enough. Their failure made the vision of ministerial control appear as a welcome alternative that would at least be amenable to some form of listener control through Parliament"

(McKay, 1953, 57)

#### State-Commercial Radio

A unique hybrid was formed with the new legislation, State-Commercial radio. Unique in the world, New Zealand's public broadcasting would offer radio advertising. It would, however, be only a part of a wider radio system, designed to cater for a variety of tastes. There <sup>etc</sup> was to be two independent services, both owned and operated by the State, and subject to Ministerial control. The National Broadcasting Service (N.B.S.) would present all types of programmes, to appeal to varying sections

.../

of the audience. The Commercial Broadcasting Service (C.B.S.) on the other hand would give entertainment acceptable to a larger proportion of the listeners, a popular programme to ensure advertising revenue. From the outset, a network of 'ZB' stations would be self-supporting and would not receive any financial assistance from listener funds. The two networks were designed to compete and inspire better broadcasting.

The installation of commercial radio was in part a response to criticism of the State's actions. By developing an alternative network, based on a popular appeal, the Government cleared the way for the ultimate removal of private stations. Critics' notions of a drab State Service were placated by the introduction of a competitive up market alternative network. It would not cost any more to run, and it would conveniently cut across the advertising revenue of the antagonistic press.

No time was wasted in the search for the Director of Broadcasting. Out of more than 150 applicants, James Shelly, Professor of Education at Canterbury University College was appointed. The new Director quickly set about his job, and articulated two principles for future programming. Firstly, that every legitimate and sizeable demand for entertainment, information and instruction was to be supplied. And, secondly, that once its type had been decided, quality alone should determine the contents of a programme. (Hall, 1980, 87)

Shelly's tenure as Director of Broadcasting is marked by the delineation time and time again of a mission, a case for public broadcasting. This initial programming initiative illustrates the type of measure he instilled in the service. Both principles are still central tenets of the present broadcasting service.

.../

To the other post, Controller of Commercial Broadcasting, Prime Minister Savage alone appointed Scrimgeour at a salary of £500 per annum, plus a commission of 7½% of advertising revenue. The salary for Shelly<sup>e</sup> had been £1500, but Shelly<sup>e</sup> had been appointed after advertisement of the position, Scrimgeour had not.

Questions were asked; why had the controller's job not been advertised? In response to Parliamentary questions, Savage commented:

"Applications were not called by advertisement. The whole matter of staffing the service, including the appointment of the controller, has been discussed with the Public Service Commissioner"

(Hall, 1980, 90)

Scrimgeour was to later recall that he had been offered Shelly<sup>e</sup>'s job:

"Cabinet reversed its sworn policy on broadcasting, but Joe knew he had to make a gesture of sorts. I still had a vast microphone audience in place of the free licence promised. They offered me the job of Director of Broadcasting at a salary of £1500 per year. I refused the job. Neither Fraser, nor Nash wanted commercial broadcasting, nor did Professor Shelly<sup>e</sup> whom they appointed. His dislike of commercial radio suited Nash and Fraser. Shelly made his attitude too pronounced he denied the right of the 'B' stations, but we still held 80% of New Zealand listeners, including the Prime Minister ...

... Joe Savage had undertaken to preserve the 'B' stations with the right to compete with newspapers for advertising"

(Scrimgeour, et al. 1976, 60)

.../

Scrimgeour claims that the Labour Party was one of expediency, they would rely on 'certain radio stations to give them a fair go when they were in opposition...' Scrim explains that while the Prime Minister was committed to the protection of the 'B' stations many in cabinet were not:

"So the Government just made a decision in the absence of Joe Savage who'd made those promises to the people as well as to me, and they said - "We'll make it State controlled", so that when you were in the Opposition it was all right to have the 'B' stations criticising the Government in a free way, but once you were the Government, it was a different matter"

(Scrimgeour, et al. 1976, 62)

So Scrimgeour's appointment was important to the Prime Minister to validate his promise of preserving the 'B' stations. While his cabinet had reversed his campaign pledge, he could adapt it to preserve his 'electoral integrity'. What is more, he could placate what would be the greatest critic of the Labour Party policy reversal: Divide and Rule.

At the end of March 1937, Scrimgeour's salary was altered, his commission was discontinued and his salary was raised to £1500. The commercial was quick to get underway, commercial stations were opened in Wellington (2ZB) in April 1937, Christchurch (3ZB) in September and Dunedin (4ZB) in October. (Hall, 1980, 93)<sup>2</sup>

#### The End of Private Ownership

By the end of 1937 two contrasting patterns began to emerge, in part reflecting their two heads. The commercial service enjoyed the advantage that always accrues to the newcomer, it had no past to live down. (Hall, 1980, 94). With the commercial services underway the Government turned its attention to the remaining private stations.

There were now 21 'B' stations about the country, and all were valued by the Government. Firm offers to buy were made by April 1937. The end was in sight for private enterprise radio.

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Government had concluded 'that the interests of all would be best served by carrying on all broadcasting from Government owned stations'. Accordingly Government wished to acquire all private stations, and considered the fairest course was to buy their equipment, 'at a fair price to owners and communities alike'. The offers were made on 14 April and replies requested by the end of the month. (Hall, 1980. 95)

A deputation from the Federation of 'B' Station owners visited Acting Prime Minister, Fraser, Jones and Departmental officers on 21 April. They expressed their members' feelings that the Government's prices were too low and that time allowed for decision was too short. They also noted that the majority of stations wished to sell, but they would also like to hear more about operating subsidies. The attitude was to not dispute the Government's decision but to get the best deal possible for members. (Nat. Ar. P.M. 20/6 d. 21 April 1937, 8)

Postmaster-General extended the time for replies. Before the end of June, 7 of the 21 station owners had sold, 15 before Christmas and two more by the end of March 1938. Of these 17 stations, 7 were closed on purchase, 3 became N.B.S. stations, 6 were continued under contract to maintain service until the N.B.S. opened stations, and one was operated by the N.C.B.S. (Hall, 1980, 95)

But still 4 stations remained outside of the Government service, and were operated under subsidy. After three months, one of them was back at the negotiating table. That was sold in the winter of 1938, and was followed by another in November. In the course of 20 months, the Government had bought 20 stations for a shade more than £20,000 (Hall, 1980, 96).

From its inception the N.C.B.S. and its controversial controller had been vigorously attacked by the Parliamentary opposition and the Press. Scrim flourished amid the controversy which his own actions and words frequently provoked (Hall, 1980, 98). The criticism did have an adverse effect, many businesses refused to use the new medium's advertising service. Political issues and loyalties were also involved, thus many people were wary of the

service, and were not keen to rush in and utilise radio until the 'smoke of the battle had settled'. (McKay, 1953, 80)

In part, the commercial service had been established separately so as it would be seen to not interfere, to denigrate the National service. Yet this duality was beginning to cause some tension. The two services were becoming competitive. Advertisers were wooed into purchasing time on the new 2ZB station in Wellington. The commercial station was shown to have a popular appeal, compared to the two national stations. Within 48 hours of 2ZB opening, the national service opened a new station with a bright popular entertainment with a commercial presentation. Advertisers were angry, accusing the Government of unfair tactics:

"On the one hand, we have a Government creating an organisation to take advertisers' money, and on the other hand they create a service to take away the advertisers audience"

(McKay, 1953, 81)

This incident demonstrates clearly that it was not the commercial service that was sought after by the listeners, but the popular programmes it had to employ. The 2ZB example also reflects the two icecream vendors on the beach, each trying to maximise their 'audience'. Both are drawn close together, narrowing the range of service. The principles of competing in broadcasting have repeatedly shown that the promised wider range of service did not eventuate, instead two very similar stations began to broadcast very similar programmes.

The roles of the two services were still very much under debate. New ideas were aired, and reaction gauged. Often controversy would wage over whether a programme or comment was suitable for a Government service. In August 1938 for instance Scrim produced some reaction in relation to comments he had made on his 'Man in the Street' session. A general election was in the offing and an opposition political organiser alleged that 'poisonous political propaganda' was being broadcast 'in the name of religion'.

.../

Scrimgeour took this as a personal reflection and chose to reply in the same session. He first tendered his resignation to the Minister, then over the air told the organiser that he was 'an unmitigated and malicious liar' - a description he later extended to 'the gang who employ you to say such things'. Parliament was in session, and the opposition moved an adjournment in order to discuss 'the misuse and abuse of broadcasting' by public servants. They argued that constitutionally it was for the Minister, not the Departmental head, to respond to any adverse criticism of a Department'. Nevertheless so far as the motion was anything more than a political manoeuvre, it centred on Scrimgeour and the power of broadcasting as an instrument of information of propaganda. The motion was talked out and his resignation was not accepted. (Hall, 1980, 98)

#### Growth and Dual Control

The spring and early summer of 1938 were notable for broadcasting growth. The N.B.S. opened stations in Invercargill, Napier and Greymouth. Transmission strengths were increased, and the stations equipment was modernised. On 7 October 1938 a fifth commercial station was opened, the first in a provincial area, at Palmerston North. Prime Minister Savage defended the system of dual control in his opening address of the station:

"When the Government decided to introduce commercial radio to New Zealand it was faced with two methods of control. The first, which on first sight may appear to be obvious, was to bring it under the direction and control of the National Service. The second was to make the commercial service a separate department ....we chose to put it (commercial radio) under separate control because we felt that commercial radio although in the broadcasting sense, similar to the National Service, differed from all other respects - commercial radio was something new, something untried as far as New Zealand was concerned, and moreover

.../

it was something which had to stand on its own two feet against the fiercest organised opposition. This fact alone made it necessary for the Government to frame something which, while it had the flexibility necessary to compete on a commercial basis, must also fit into the established practice of Government Departments. This could be achieved only by separating it from a department by which its very character was subject to restrictions which would hamper a commercial undertaking ... In addition, the competition which would be endangered by the separate control was considered to be a major consideration both for the good of the National Service and the good of the commercial service itself"

(Hall, 1980, 99)

Competition not only brought a chance for the commercial service to devise its own 'identity' but it also brought unnecessary duplication of staff, inflation in the costs of programming through competitive buying and unco-ordinated development. The duality was wasteful and inefficient. World events were to lead quickly to an international situation where the nation could no longer countenance such waste.

Yet the NCBS independence brought initiative and daring to the radio. The sixth commercial station (5ZB) was one such innovator. It was a concept which would widely extend the commercial networks support at only commitment of one plant. As Hall (1980) puts it, it was a transient, a rover, finding audiences and writing businesses all over the North Island. It was a station on wheels, built into a railway car. The venture was highly successful bringing a new service to new areas, and bringing the NCBS a profit or more than 100% on outlay and running costs (Hall, 1980, 99).

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The war closed in upon civilian enterprise, and reorientated the priorities of New Zealand societies. It was to strongly influence the nature of radio.

### The Approach of War

When preparations for the possible state of emergency began in New Zealand, it was quickly realised that any policy would have to include measures for the supervision of broadcast services. The ability of radio to convey information accurately and immediately as well as offer entertainment would be critical to the organisation of New Zealand society during wartime. (Nat. Ar. W.A. C.N.Z., 1).

The approach of hostilities had not gone unnoticed in New Zealand. Certain precautions had been made. The Government had called up a territorial force of 6,000 by the Prime Minister appealing to the public through a series of national broadcasts (Wood, 1958, 82). Radio was beginning to be used to unify the nation into a community to face the dilemma of an imminent war.

From 1938, B.B.C transmission had been monitored during normal New Zealand broadcasting hours and from September 1939 and throughout the war, a 24 hour listening watch was maintained on the B.B.C.<sup>3</sup> (Nat. Ar. W.A. CNZ, 23)

In particular, advertising came under careful censorship. On 5 September the controller issued a comprehensive memorandum on the censorship of advertising copy. While it was thought unlikely that enemy agents would try to convey valuable information through advertising, the service reserved the right to make any alterations it desired. All care was to be taken, especially where the advertiser was an alien or known to be connected with foreign business. Special care was to be taken of copy from any person who insisted it should be broadcast unaltered. Adlibbing unless written out and approved first, was to take only the form of

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comment on an item just played, or an exchange of greetings between announcers when changing staff. (Nat Ar. W.A. CNZ, p. 4,5,6)

The war had brought strict censorship. Controls which would have been unacceptable in peace time were quickly implemented in the state of emergency.

While broadcasting faced controls and restrictions it also experienced expansion of service. This was a difficult stress on the two services, complicated by the fact that men with technical training were in great demand with the armed services. (Nat. Ar. W.A. CNZ p.10)

### Rationalisation

In January 1941 the War Cabinet of New Zealand requested that an enquiry be made into, and a report submitted as to the steps which might be taken to reduce and rationalise Radio Broadcasting Services, with a view, inter alia, to releasing radio technicians and others with experience in radio for war service. (Nat. Ar. W.A. CNZ p. 12-13)

In March the Minister of Broadcasting organised such a committee. They were charged with considering the following terms of reference:

- "A) The conditions under which it would be feasible to amalgamate the staffs and the work of two services whilst still retaining the commercial programmes,
- B) The possibility of making available radio technicians for war service by the reduction of existing stations and/or a reduction of existing programmes such action being consistent with the service that will have to be rendered by the radio services during a national emergency,
- C) Such other matters as the committee considers to be essential to the proper functioning of the broadcasting services, particularly, but not exclusively during the war period".

(C.R.R. 1941, p.2)

The resulting report provides a unique snapshot of the two services, their internal aims, methods and staffing. The report advised considerable change, not only for the wartime economies, but changes designed to improve the service in the longer term.

### Dual Services, Dual Goals

In outlining the activities of the two services, the commission brought down what it saw as the goals and functions of the two radio networks.

The committee saw the National Broadcasting Service as seeking:

- "A) To provide a dominion wide high grade coverage under both day and night conditions, service to sparsely populated areas being considered equally as important as to service to urban areas,
- B) To provide a reasonable number of alternative programmes so as to meet the tastes and moods of as many listeners as possible. Collaterally the immediate aim being to provide all listeners with a choice of two programmes,
- C) To provide such programmes as are calculated to meet with approval, according to the item, because of:
  - i) their educative value or
  - ii) their entertainment value or
  - iii) their cultural value or
  - iv) their publicity value.

The service has a responsibility to lead rather than follow public taste, and to this end skilled professional executive, are employed to control the various programme departments.

- D) To encourage and develop local talent"
- (C.R.R., 1941, 3)

This review of functions gives an insight into how the N.B.S. saw itself, a look at its internal *raison d'être*. Clearly the N.B.S. was firmly set in the Public Service, providing a high quality radio service for all. Yet it viewed itself as more than a public servant. It sought not to 'follow public taste', but to develop culture and education. The Commercial Broadcasting Service operated under a different set of functions:

- "A) To provide entertainment of a bright, diversified, and popular nature, calculated to attract and hold mass listening, mainly in metropolitan and urban areas. While the entertainment offered by the commercial stations is not without its cult aspects, it is very largely designed to match trends in public taste and to appeal to the maximum audience on a profitable basis.
- B) To plan the programme, to carry advertising material in the form of sponsorship of features, or direct advertising announcements. Advertising is confined to weekdays, while on Sundays and religious holidays, the commercial schedules are substituted by sustaining programmes designed to retain listeners for the week day commercial programmes,
- C) To introduce utility and community service features whose object, apart from assisting worthy causes, it is to develop practical usefulness of the commercial stations for the greatest number of listeners, thus building community interest as an essential to business goodwill,
- D) To place the service on a non-profit earning basis, thus providing the public with alternate radio entertainment without extra cost to them as listeners"

(C.R.R. 1941, p.10)

.../

The report concluded that 'while advertising interests do not actually control the standards of programme and presentation, they nevertheless tend to become a dominant factor for the reason that the programme or entertainment offered by the service is built around the advertising units, and must necessarily be conditioned by the amount of revenue accruing from the sale of time or the sponsoring of entertainment features by advertisers. (C.R.R. 1941, p.10). In essence, the functions of the N.C.B.S. were more dominantly commercial than a State Service. The only proviso was function D) which sought to have the service on a non profit basis. Yet profits could be justified, in that the money was needed for further development. The N.C.B.S. was a strange combination of a State owned, commercially run enterprise.

The Committee did not feel that the differences outlined would preclude the amalgamation of the two services. It recommended the establishment of a unified organisation, with one permanent head and common engineering staff. The recording sections could be commonly owned and a central purchasing agency for both services established. (Nat. Ar. N.A. CNZ, p.14-15)

#### A New Broadcasting System

The committee suggested a framework of duties for the new service:

"The committee feels that the first duty of the combined broadcasting service would be to provide adequate coverage and such alternative programmes as the resources of the service permit. Having reached a stage where alternative programmes are available to all listeners, the next responsibility should be to improve the standard of programmes by the wise expenditure of funds available, on both overseas performers and the encouragement of local talent"

(C.R.R., 1941, p.13)

.../

The committee suggested that the permanent head should regard advertising primarily as a means of increasing revenue, so as to enable a greater range of alternative programmes to be provided without additional expense to the listeners. It also suggested that administration should not necessarily demand that stations giving commercial programmes should be completely financed from advertising revenue, and profit making should be replaced by revenue production, as the aim of the commercial side of the service. The main objective for the Administration ought to be providing adequate coverage and a contrast in programmes. (C.R.R., 1941, p.13)

The committee then struck at the inconsistency of the N.C.B.S. objectives:

"While operating as a separate unco-ordinated service with the objective of providing the maximum service with the maximum profits, it was inevitable that the commercial service would have a policy of broadcasting from comparatively low powered stations located at centres having the greatest density of population. If the profit motive were still to be dominant in the commercial section of the new service, it would be essential that the same policy should be perpetuated ...

... in the new service, commercial programmes should be considered as the means of providing additional revenue rather than of providing profits, and that the establishment of Government owned stations should aim at providing the best possible co-ordinated service to listeners with the new revenue available to the administration, under these circumstances, it may not be found desirable to continue to instal low powered commercial stations in urban areas, although new stations, may, with advantage, be of such power and so sited as to assure the best use of the funds available to provide commercial alternatives for the listening public ... in the opinion of the committee one commercial programme is the maximum that should be envisaged"

(C.R.R., 1941, p.47)

Essentially the commercial service was being brought back into the State Services. Commercial radio would be a revenue earner for the whole integrated system. The committee argued that:

"Viewing the present position of Government-owned broadcasting in New Zealand, the Government has within its control a monopoly. By virtue of the fact that it is a monopoly imposes a responsibility that it should be used for the greatest good of the people as a whole"  
(C.R.R., 1941, p.28)

The committee perceived a need for co-ordinated expansion and development, and the war provided the justification for the organisational change. State Commercial Radio had been an experiment and had proved its worth. The committee succinctly identified that despite the immense popularity of the commercial stations, they were essentially an advertising service:

"The committee cannot escape the fact that, whatever responsibility Government may place upon the commercial side of the new service, in the eyes of the advertiser its purpose will be selling his goods, and it will be useful to him only insofar as it does so"  
(C.R.R., 1941, 29).

The committee recommended that every effort should be made to second the best men for war service. They saw two reasons for such a recommendation. Firstly, they stated that the war effort requires 'our best men'. Secondly they reasoned 'the broadcasting service will ultimately benefit by its most-able technical officers having the privilege of gaining experience in the most modern radio developments'.

(C.R.R., 1941, 45)

The report was presented on 23 July 1941. After some delay the decision to reorganise was taken by the War Cabinet on 21 August 1942. They initially recommended that the technical staffs of both services should be combined under the Chief Engineer of the N.B.S. Total amalgamation was completed by the Statutes Amendment Act 1943. (Nat. Ar. W.A. C.N.Z. p.19.) The delay can be in part explained by the actions of an individual - C.G. Scrimgeour.

Scrimgeour

In October 1941, Scrimgeour conveyed his feelings on possible amalgamation to his Minister:

"It would be desirable to maintain separate establishments to the two branches of the service. The essence of the success of the Commercial Service is without question in its standing as a separate entity in the minds of listeners ... In order to maintain this attraction the Commercial Service must preserve its atmosphere distinct and separate from that of the National Service. Otherwise the commercial service must inevitably lose its appeal to listeners, and in turn the advertising revenue upon which it depends for existence."

(Hall, 1980, 103)

Scrimgeour's personal attitude to amalgamation was uncompromising. In November 1942, Scrim was balloted for service in the Armed Forces. He was told that no appeal would be made on his behalf to retain his services in broadcasting. Machinery had been set up whereby Departments of State could and did appeal for the services of officers considered to be essential. Scrimgeour contended that this work was essential, particularly for war publicity, and he appealed his call up. The hearing was set for February 1943, and Scrim called his Minister, Hon. D. Wilson as his witness:

In his evidence Wilson stated that in his opinion that 'if Scrimgeour went into the Armed Forces it would not affect the public interest, the war effort of Broadcasting one iota'. He added:

"I might get more willing and loyal service from his successor"

His appeal was dismissed. A week later Scrim was suspended from duty:

"This is the outcome of a political vendetta which Hon. David Wilson has been waging against me for the past 12 months" (Hall, 1980, 103).

.../

In his dismissal of Scrimgeour, the Minister said he 'was suspended for flagrant disobedience of instructions'. When Scrim received the telegram, he gave the news to the Press, and boarded the train for Wellington. When he arrived at his headquarters, Police were in the building and the lock to his office had been changed. (Hall,,1980. 103).

After immediate protests from some trade unions, and some mediation with the Prime Minister, Scrimgeour signed a document as a basis of settlement. Scrim undertook four conditions:

- "1) I will undertake to faithfully carry out the Government's policy in regard to broadcasting,
- 2) I will submit all scripts to the censor for approval prior to putting them on the air, and will not make any announcements either into newspapers or over the air without having first obtained the Minister's consent in writing,
- 3) I will diligently carry out all lawful instructions given to me by the Minister in charge of Broadcasting. I will give an assurance that I will not take up an hostile attitude toward the Minister and that I will not incite or encourage any other person to take up such an attitude. I will at all time work harmoniously with the Minister and will use all my influence and power as Controller to ensure that the staffs of the Commercial Broadcasting Service, individually or collectively give similar loyal service,
- 4) I will withdraw the public attack made by me upon the Government and the Prime Minister and will express regret for having made it".

(Hall, 1980, 104)

.../

And so the dispute was resolved, the suspension was lifted and Scrimgeour returned to work. Through three uneasy months of mounting personal stress the arrangements for amalgamation stood still. Scrimgeour's call up was postponed for family reasons.

On the eve of entering camp in June, Scrimgeour issued a press statement. This statement asked whether he was 'being sent into the Army for Army purposes? (McKay, 1953, 90). He continued, 'Is my case not discrimination and victimisation at its worst? Is it possible for a Minister of the Crown, a Government desiring to dismiss a public servant, but having no grounds that would commend themselves to public opinion, to take the despicable and cowardly course of railroading him into the Armed Forces. Immediately on such railroading, the public servant's mouth is shut by Army regulations'.

Scrimgeour said he was happy and proud to be joining the Armed Forces of the country in which he was born, but wondered whether his services might be better used if he were to continue as Controller of Commercial Broadcasting. "Perhaps", he suggested, "the explanation is to be found in the Ministers own words to me on one occasion: "I do not want you to get too much power". (Hall, 1980, 106).

Fraser replied the next day:

"The question of calling up of any one man to the military forces through the usual channels, in spite of any objection he may have to service in the Army, and after the appropriate military appeal board has decided the matter, and in light of the further fact that his employer does not consider his service to be essential is not a matter that usually demands any special attention from myself as Prime Minister. Nor does Mr Scrimgeour's long list of complaints, conjectures, insinuations and explanations for desiring not to give military service enhance in any way its importance. Rather the contrary... From the Government's point of view there is only one question of importance involved in Mr Scrimgeour's latest statement. That is its complete violation of the

.../

undertaking given by Mr Scrimgeour as a pre-condition of his re-instalment after his suspension some months ago, and the effect of such flagrant and persistent insubordination upon the public service of the Dominion, in which the first essential is discipline. The Government is compelled to give consideration to this latest development"

(Hall, 1980, 106).

Scrim was dismissed from his job and shortly afterwards entered the Airforce. The ousting of Scrimgeour provides a fascinating account of the redefinition of authority and responsibility within broadcasting at that time. By having an individual of some force and determination in a position of authority, who was prepared to question, provides an illustration of the influence of individuals in systems.

Under Prime Minister Savage, Scrimgeour had been guaranteed a considerable degree of freedom of action and expression. However, after Savage's death, the combination of personality clashes, power redefinitions and international circumstances, substantially reduced that freedom. Changes and controls were instituted in broadcasting, in the name of national security. Perhaps partly too, in fear of a strength within broadcasting. But the incident must be firmly viewed within the context of the war, with the Government taking responsibility and authority in many fields for the war effort. The State had to demand total allegiance, dissent from its civil servants could not be tolerated. But the events are also firmly set in the redefinition of power relationships brought in part by actors, and by the complex international situations. The State had acted, it asserted its authority.<sup>4</sup>

#### Amalgamation Completed

In the last week before Parliament dissolved for 1943, Section II of the Broadcasting Amendment Act 1937, which had established the N.C.B.S. was repealed, and the way was clear to complete the

.../

job of amalgamation, (Hall, 1980, 108)

The physical amalgamation was swiftly completed, and the new service got down to work, 'chiefly by moving former N.C.B.S. transmitters into the same premises as N.B.S. Amalgamation of engineering services had enabled the release of 22 officers for service'. But amalgamation was not to be a smooth road. 'It took years, and much patient skill in administration, to fashion one homogenous service from the frequently incompatible elements of the two'. (Hall, 1980, 141)

The contribution of radio in the wartime had been large. Both were official organs of communication for the administration, and were constantly involved in 'keeping up morale'. Travelling recording units were sent overseas with New Zealand troops, sending back recordings of New Zealanders at war. At home radio was used in raising war loans, running phone-in donations, providing propaganda shows, talks and explanations and other community service activities. (Nat. Ar. W.A. CNZ, 33). All these new activities were done during a time when expenditure had to be curbed.

As New Zealand came out of the war there was a gradual easing of restrictions. There was a lot to do and broadcasting was not awarded the highest priority. However, despite these constraints of a 'planned' society, after the war, things began to move. The war had provided new experiences for broadcasters and listeners alike. Servicemen and women had returned with new skills, and had experienced overseas broadcasting. At home, New Zealanders had been exposed to American servicemen, and their brand of radio. Broadcasting inherited equipment and buildings, from war surplus. There was a growing optimism, a need to get on with the job. There was also a change of name, to the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS).

The Director-General was filled too with the new energy:

"Social and cultural development are an essential factor in the successful readjustment of the community to post-war conditions. Creative expression is to a great degree a measure of a nation's stature, and it is considered that

broadcasting should contribute to the stimulation of such creative expression, especially but of course, not solely in relation to the musical, literary and dramatic arts. The power of radio in the modern world is such that by its agency, the thought and action of a community may be unified to an extent never before approached in the history of peoples".

(Hall, 1980, 150).

### Review

During this decade the State seized total control of the economy and civil society. Controls which would have been politically and socially unacceptable in times of peace were quickly implemented in war. Yet in the midst of major structural reformations, individuals still proved to be decisive. The nature of broadcasting too, was altered. It was brought firmly and squarely, after a number of compromises into the realm of public enterprise. These actions and compromises were to have a long-standing effect on the nature of broadcasting.

The war hastened the need to remove anomalies and contradictions, such as the dual departments of broadcasting. The conflict brought new tasks, experiences, ideas and demands for broadcasting, These in turn necessitated change. The State was granted a free hand in the field of broadcasting, firstly by a new Government pledged to create State involvement, and secondly reinforced by the demands of the war. The conditions created by this situation were to influence the nature of broadcasting for the next two decades.

This chapter has looked closely at the institution of total State control. Radio was now, unashamedly, part of the State. Yet the attainment of this structural character was not smooth.

Contradictions created in the movement were influential in the development of broadcasting. There was a substantial alteration of broadcasting under Labour and because of the war. A new

administrative order emerged, with different actors, both within, and external to, broadcasting, redefining key relationships.

Footnotes

- 1, One of the early innovations of the Labour Government was the broadcasting of the proceedings of Parliament. This commenced in 1936.
2. When Scrimgeour had been appointed the Government had already given a definite undertaking to buy 1ZB Auckland, although a price had not been settled. (Hall, 1980, 91)
3. It was through maintaining that watch on the BBC that New Zealand gained first knowledge of the declarations of war, and of the invasions of Holland, Belgium, Denmark and Norway. (Nat. Ar. W.A., CNZ 23)
4. Scrimgeour opposed Prime Minister Fraser in the election of September 1943, and received 2,253 votes out of 15,000. He stood as an Independent, and came third out of four candidates. In late 1944 the Air Force began reducing its home strength and Scrimgeour was discharged. He went at once to Australia where he prospered in radio. (Hall, 1980, 108)

"Mr Shanahan,

We shouldn't be launching any new projects, Christchurch or anywhere else, that can be avoided. This one appears to be inescapable. I should like efforts to be made to see if it can be postponed"

18 Jan. 1950.

Memo to Mr Shanahan, Minister in Charge of Broadcasting, from Prime Minister, Holland.

## CHAPTER 6

### "STATE MANAGEMENT AND THE REGULATION OF DEVELOPMENT"

#### Introduction

With private enterprise completely excluded from broadcasting, the State now had the opportunity to completely manage and develop broadcasting. However, there were many tasks confronting the new post-war society, and broadcasting was not a high priority. Controls which had been put in place during the war, were continued in peacetime. The planning, necessary in war, was useful in peace.

This chapter explores the controlled development of broadcasting after the second world war. While the State enjoyed total control of the sector, there were challenges to that authority. Often disputes sprang from frustration with the actions and non actions of state broadcasting.

Broadcasting technology rapidly changed and due to administrative caution, New Zealand broadcasting was soon seen to be in falling behind. The economic caution of Government forestalled for many years the introduction of television. Groups and individuals sought different actions and change. They challenged the well established authority of State Broadcasting.

This chapter follows the activity of broadcasting through the changes brought to bear by such pressures. Organisational reforms legalising of private enterprise broadcasting and more 'enlightened' programming were some of the concessions made by the State under mounting civil pressure.

#### Into Peacetime

The end of the war brought more problems into existence than the war itself had solved, but it found New Zealand prosperous. Unemployment was negligible and wages could at least meet prices on equal terms. Manufacturing had expanded to meet the shortfall

.../

of imports. There were more jobs than men or women seeking employment; bulk purchase agreements with Great Britain still gave a guaranteed market and admirable returns. But the economy was subject to strains of some force and complexity, which were to grow stronger during the years of peace. There were shortages especially of imported goods, numerous and irksome controls imposed in the name of stabilisation; high taxation and a high cost of living. (Oliver, 1960, 209).

After the war, with the economy booming there was a continuing shortage of labour, thus driving up wages, with prices following. Such an inflationary spiral was made worse by the high price of imported goods once they became available. The Government's contribution to the malaise was high taxation - taxes to finance welfare services, housing and school construction, development programmes, taxes to pay for social security benefits, which had to increase with prices: taxes to provide the subsidies which the Government paid to producers in an effort to peg the prices of food.

To meet these problems, a system of controls was implemented, covering most aspects of economic life. It had not been built in accordance of any long range plan, but piece by piece had been added as needed. Total control had been found tolerable in total war, when sacrifices could be reasonably demanded. But even during the war there had been significant grumblings. Peace brought an irresistible pressure toward relaxation - irresistible that is, up to a point where it became clear that prosperity itself was in jeopardy. (Oliver, 1960, 211)

In the early years of peacetime, plans long deferred were gradually realised. The National Orchestra was established along with a mobile recording unit. New equipment at last began to arrive and transmission hours were increased (Hall, 1980, 150). There were now 23 stations in New Zealand, five of them commercial, 2 privately owned operating under subsidy, and 2 owned by the N.Z.B.S. and operated under contract. Three of these last four stations were in areas where there was no N.Z.B.S. stations, The fourth was in Dunedin. Figure 6.1 demonstrates the very strong metropolitan bias of radio. In fact, 15 stations of the 23 were operating out of the 4 main centres.

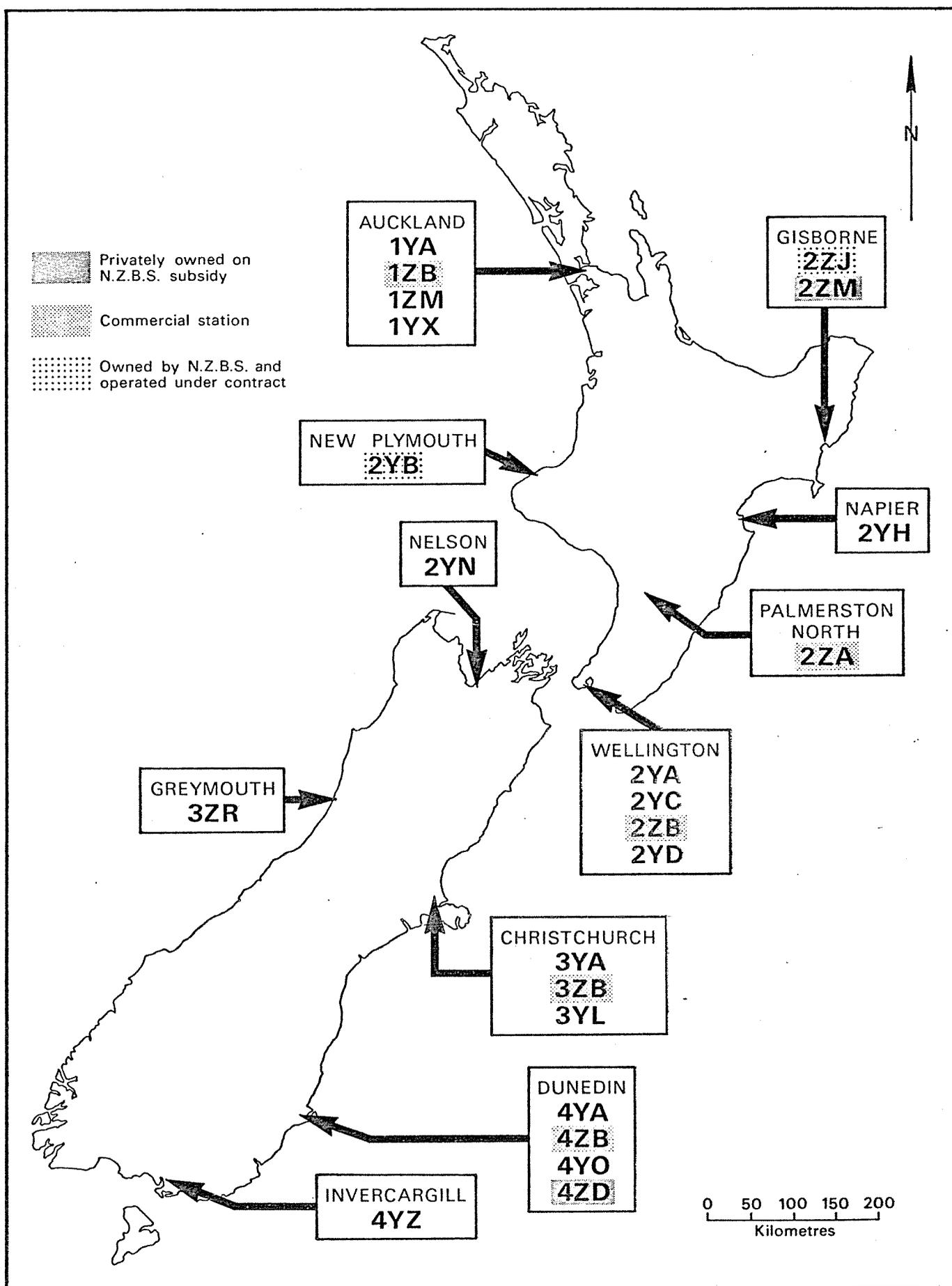


Figure 6.1. Radio Broadcasting Stations in New Zealand, 1946  
(AJHR, F.3, 1946, 14)

### An Integrated Broadcasting Plan

As part of the 'Planning' of New Zealand, the 1947 Annual Report to Parliament described a comprehensive broadcasting scheme. The plan put up seven different types of station:

- "A) An International shortwave station at Titahi Bay,
- B) National stations. At present this is represented by 2YZ.  
It will be to provide a means of broadcasting Parliament, events of national importance and outstanding artists,
- C) District stations, At present represented by 1YA, 2YC, 3YA, 4YA, 3YH, 3ZR, and 4YZ. These will be regarded as serving the interests of the larger districts of the Dominion supplying their best artists to the national stations and broadcasting the best of the 'local' artists, sometimes rebroadcasting the national station and sometimes rebroadcast by the national station.
- D) Alternative stations. In the main centres at present represented by 1YX, 3YL, and 4YO, which will present alternative programmes to those of the district network.
- E) Local stations - small average stations located in the smaller towns and populated areas, to serve the immediate locality, to search out and encourage talent and to act as a feeder of suitable talent to the District stations. The extent to which these stations will broadcast programmes will depend on local conditions.
- F) Commercial stations which will present light programmes and provide listeners with an additional alternative programme to that available from the district stations, and in the main centres,

.../

G) Districts not within convenient distance of broadcasting studios will be visited by Mobile Recording Units which will record the work of artists, musical and dramatic organisations, as well as talks and local activities, for Broadcasts from appropriate stations"

(AJHR, F.3, 1947, p.21)

The plan aimed to give at least one local programme capable of first class reception and an alternative 'national' programme would be available to listeners in all areas. While those who were situated near one of the four main centres would receive an alternative district programme or commercial service. The report saw the local station network as providing a 'unifying instrument for the entire community, stimulating civic consciousness and cultural endeavour and embracing the interests of remote country districts' (AJHR, F.3, 1947, p.3)

For the first time, a plan was expressed which would develop a fully integrated system on several scales. It is also interesting to note the downgrading of the commercial service to an alternative service, not to equal co-service which had been earlier envisaged. The scheme was optimistic and forward looking. It attempted to develop the different potentials of radio, unifying both smaller areas, and the nation as a whole. As the above outline concedes, it was more than a distribution service, but also a collection hierarchy to bring in talent especially.

### Restrictions

The Annual Report of 1947 also expressed some of the restrictions the N.Z.B.S. was facing. Buildings were needed to develop the service further; despite some relief from war surplus:—

"The service received no allocation of building resources from the commissioner of works for new projects during the year. In order that the coverage and expansion plan held in abeyance since the commencement of hostilities in 1939, could proceed, it was decided to erect temporary accommodation by using buildings constructed for war purposes"

(AJHR, F.3, 1947, p.7)

There were other restrictions countering development. Shortages of electricity for instance, forced silent periods to conserve power. But despite these difficulties development still went on. A new class of station was authorised - 'X' class. They were composite stations carrying both commercial and non-commercial programmes. The extension of commercial stations into provincial areas, planned by Scrimgeour, was put off during the war. In May 1941, Scrimgeour had commented that there would probably be seven provincial stations in all:

"Commercial broadcasting was originally planned on the basis of four main stations, seven provincial stations and ultimately, four auxiliary main centre music stations" (Hall, 1980, 778)

The 'X' class station enabled the spreading of two district services more quickly. Two types of programmes were broadcast from one station, thus catering for the different audiences.

In 1948 the NZBS embarked on what it called a major innovation. They commenced an International Short Wave Service, one transmitter becoming a service to the Pacific, and another to the Eastern States of Australia. (Hall, 1980, 169)

But such developments were contrasted by a desire to keep spending at a minimum. The Secretary of the Cabinet Finance Committee urged the Minister in Charge of Broadcasting in 1953 to curb any expansionist demands:

"The committee thought that the Broadcasting Service might be authorised to be firm in resisting pressure or agitation for additional services such as the extension of broadcasting hours to cover cricket tests, travelling to country areas to carry out outside or make documentary programmes. In general the committee felt that the service should hold firm against any further extension of services at the present time but as this objective involved issues of Government policy it is considered that any more in this area should be discussed in Cabinet".

(Nat. Ar. CAB, 203/1/1 pt.1 d. 2 July 1953)

Prime Minister Holland shared this view. In a memo to Mr Shanahan he noted:

"We shouldn't be launching any new projects Christchurch or anywhere else, that can be avoided. This one appears to be inescapable, I should like efforts to be made to see if it can be postponed"

(Nat. Ar. CAB 203/4/1 d. 18 Jan. 1950)

Government spending stringencies perhaps best characterise this period of broadcasting. Every effort was being made to avoid any major financial commitment. Radio simply was not afforded a high priority. Holland and his National Government had entered the Treasury benches on a pledge to reduce controls and instil more competition. Since the war there had been a gradual crumbling of the control system. But once the bad tidings came from overseas markets, the controls were quickly reapplied. (Oliver, 1960, 211)

Deterioration in the financing of the service occurred in 1951. A Treasury report laid the blame with 'the impact of wage increased and the burden of the expansion' programme the service had commenced in 1946. Treasury criticised the expansion programme:

"Treasury has previously intimated that it considered the expansion undertaken to provide the present standards of service and coverage to be difficult to justify for a population of just under two millions. This appears to be the core of the present difficulties"

(Nat. Ar. CAB 203/9/11 pl d. 26 Sept, 1951)

They recommended an increase in the listeners' licence fee to obtain 'sufficient revenue to bridge the gap in working finances, along with a curtailment of further expansion'. They concluded:

"Further expansion cannot be justified on the basis of cost in relation to our population and should be rigidly curtailed" (Nat. Ar. CAB 203/9/11 pl. d. 26 Sept, 1951)

.../

There appeared to be a mismatch between revenue and services. The then Director General W. Yates, defended vigorously the services activities:

"There is some misunderstanding of the service's obligations and aims. The present coverage was established not on a population basis but on a basis demanded by the area and geographical features of the country and the technical difficulties of coverage ...

... The technical coverage plan of the service is not a new thing. It started in 1932 and has been implemented progressively from that stage"

(Nat. Ar. CAB 203/9/1 Pt 1.  
d/ 21 Nov 1951, p.1-2)

Yates defended the commercial stations on the grounds that they were self supporting through advertising revenue. The local stations on the other hand, might be considered superfluous from a coverage point of view. The Director-General had five points to support their retention:

- "1) They give noise free reception,
- 2) They contribute towards making life in rural areas more attractive,
- 3) They provide a unity of interest in the districts in which they operate by virtue of the fact that by keeping certain of the hours free from advertising they were able to offer an outlet for local speakers and artists,
- 4) They provided an invaluable service to the district in emergencies, e.g., floods
- 5) They make available to the business community probably the most effective advertising medium of the day"

(Nat. Ar. CAB 203/9/1 pt 1  
d. 21 Nov. 1951, p. 1-2)

.../

The report added:

"One feature of our small local stations, conducted at so little net cost and often overlooked, is the way in which they bring broadcasting into the lives of the community, to a far greater degree than is the case overseas"  
(ibid, p.3)

Yates agreed that the Treasury was right in the area of technical expansion, but there was still a considerable need for programme development:

"In the field of programme expansion, however, we have a considerable distance to go. While no broadcasting authority can ever hope to give all its listeners all they expect, nevertheless there are some fields in which expansion is justified. The service is very conscious of its lack of a real New Zealand news service"  
(Nat, Ar. CAB 203/9/1 pt.1  
d. 21 Nov 1951, p.12)

From these two reports the conflicting forces of expansion and economic restriction can be seen. Broadcasting could see many development possibilities, though they were often hamstrung by the guardians of the public purse. Another technological development was to face the same fate.

### Television

For a long time television had been talked about and hinted of in Parliament. As early as 1936 concern had been expressed by the Government about the introduction of television and in particular, copyrights. There was some concern that pre-emptive action again be taken by the State to avoid problems with corporate interests. A report of television to Peter Fraser commented:

"...before New Zealand can utilise the greatest power consequent on the consolidation of power of radio broadcasting and Television, the question of Television patent rights demands requires instant and skilled attention"  
(Nat. Ar. P.M. 20/6 d. 28/10/36 p.1)

and that:

"...Government action must be taken immediately to protect the defenceless public. At present the door is still open for the Government of New Zealand to step in and say it will take over the Baird Television Rights for New Zealand Thus ... ensuring ... (that) no undue exploitation of the public is going to take place in this Dominion"  
(Nat. Ar. P.M. 20/6 d. 28/10/36 p.1)

The special subject of television was again discussed in 1949 by an Inter-departmental committee (D.C.T.V.) consisting of representatives of the N.Z.B.S. and the Post Office. The committee was later expanded to include representatives of the Treasury and Department of Industries and Commerce (N.Z.B.A., 1971, 21). This committee was set up to study overseas experience in the development and operation of the new medium. (N.Z.B.C., 1965, 1)

The report of this committee was presented in November 1950. They said that television could not be forestalled forever:

"Despite the economic and technical factors involved we feel that having regard to the spectacular development overseas of television and the high degree of public interest in it, the establishment of a television service cannot be withheld indefinitely from the public of New Zealand"  
(D.C.T.V. Nat Ar. CAB 203/8/1  
pt 1. d.8/11/50 p.1)

The committee advised that action should be taken by the Government on two matters:

- "A) Determination of technical standards to be adopted,
- B) Determination of Government policy in regard to control of television in New Zealand"

(D.C.T.V. Nat. Ar. CAB 203/8/1  
pt 1. d.8/11/50 p.2)

.../

Government decision on these matters would, they explained enable detailed and long term planning to be carried out by the appropriate organisations. They advised that the Government needed to consider seven factors:

- "1) Legislation to be enacted,
- 2) Working out a National coverage scheme and the stages of implementation of such a scheme,
- 3) Nature and extent of technical and studio facilities to be provided,
- 4) Estimated cost of various stages of development and method of financing,
- 5) Training of staff,
- 6) Assembly of programme resources and material,
- 7) Type of television receiver necessary, the source of supply, and the rate and cost at which these receivers would become available to the public"

(D.C.T.V. Nat. Ar. CAB 203/8/1  
pt. 1 d. 8/11/50 p.2)

The committee firmly reaffirmed the planned integration of a State Service:

"In New Zealand it is obvious that from the technical and economic considerations alone, it would not be feasible for the country to contemplate anything but one television service commencing experimentally in one centre and as experience is gained, staff trained and financial prospects determined, extended to other centres when considered feasible. Such a development must in the committee's opinion be on a uniformly planned and national basis. While recognising the merit of private enterprise and control in such a matter it does not consider such control suitable to New Zealand, having regard to the many factors, economic, technical and social involved"

(D.C.T.V. Nat. Ar. CAB 203/8/1  
pt. 1 d. 8/11/50 p.2)

The report favoured state control of television through the N.Z.B.S. though it conceded corporation control might be appropriate. The Cabinet postponed any decision on the grounds of expense. In the meantime the N.Z.B.S. sought experience in the new medium.

In 1952 the D.C.T.V. reported again. This second report reiterated many of the earlier report's findings. They also related a new pressure for action:

"Manufacturers of receiving sets who have a business interest in this matter are pressing increasingly for some indication of the Government's policy in this matter. Private interests have already made application for permission to commence television stations in Auckland. As time goes on, pressure from the public itself will become greater. It seems to the committee necessary, therefore, that the Government, for the guidance of all concerned, should make a statement of its policy in this matter. This need not involve any immediate financial commitment, but it will give an opportunity for preparatory planning, development work and training by those whom the Government might decide to entrust the operation of any further service"

(Nat. Ar. CAB 203/8/1 pt. 1  
D.C.T.V. d. 14/10/52 p.2)

They strongly recommended that the television service be developed by the N.Z.B.S.:

"By vesting in the N.Z.B.S. the Government can itself determine the speed at which development should be undertaken and directly the demands which will be made on the country's economy and overseas funds during such development"

(Ibid, p.2)

.../

The committee was clearly against private enterprise control of television, but what of a public corporation? A Cabinet Committee was set up to consider the television proposals, The D.C.T.V. put forward submissions including a consideration of corporation control. They advised:

"That it would not be logical for a public corporation to be established to control television and yet leave the sound Broadcasting system under Government control. The question of whether both services should be placed under a public corporation is a matter of policy for determination by Government ... Any change from the present system would represent a major change in Government policy .... In the meantime, the New Zealand Broadcasting Service is a going concern accepted by the public and the setting up of a separate organisation would increase administrative costs".

(Nat. Ar. CAB 203/8/1 pt.1  
MZ (Agenda) p.1)

The agenda suggested that there would still be room for private enterprise to participate in New Zealand television by:

- a) supply of artist's services and material,
  - b) advertising,
  - c) sale of features/programmes to the service,
  - d) supply and repair of technical equipment,
- (Ibid.)

The Cabinet Committee's minutes reveal a preference for allowing private interests to proceed. Public Corporation control was not favoured. There was some suggestion that they might well follow the course of radio, allowing private interests to develop it, and the State to come in and take over.

.../

It was clear that the introduction of television would necessitate a thorough rethinking, redefinition of broadcasting and its organisation. But still no firm action was taken.

#### Another Challenge

The introduction of television was not the only challenge to the monopoly of the N.Z.B.S. A group of businessmen asked the Holland ministry for permission to 'construct, own and operate a commercial broadcasting station in such centres as Lower Hutt and North Shore, Auckland'.

This challenge was considered carefully by the National cabinet. The Director General questioned whether such a development would be in the 'public interest', or in 'purely commercial interests.' The Director General saw advantages and disadvantages to the scheme:

"Sections of the public, by the infusion of competition in broadcasting would have a wider choice of programmes. Advertisers would have more time available for their purposes, at competitive prices, and staffs would strive hard to make their programmes more lively, topical and novel and entertaining than those of competing stations"

"While competition might make more and livelier programmes available, these would not necessarily be different in style, often the material would be for the same material or material of a similar type. The competition would almost always be for the mass audience".

(Nat. Ar. CAB 203/4/1 pt 1.  
Memo 2 August 1956 p. 2-3)

'Competition' he argued, 'would send up the price of the particular programme talent or material being competed for'. (Ibid. p.3). This increased competition, Yates advised, would

.../

'not only increase costs, it would reduce business', thus lessening the return from the services commercial stations. 'Private station owners would be willing to operate only in profitable areas, most of which were already covered. Coverage of distant and sparsely populated areas would not interest them'. Yates, not surprisingly recommended that:

"...no change can be made in present policy, but that the service be permitted to develop and extend commercial broadcasting in an orderly way, having no regard to coverage needs, the advertising business offering, and programme requirements of the country as a whole, the financial needs of the overall activities of the service and a Government financial policy"

(Nat. Ar. CAB 203/4/1 pt. 1  
Memo 2 August 1956 p.4)

The Minister sought Cabinet's opinion. The 'party's' own policy was to favour the granting of such a concession'. The Minister saw that it would be hard to stand in the way of others if the State could not provide similar services. This challenge, must have been one of many, each sounding the Government out on a possible relaxation of a State monopoly.

In March 1957, the Minister in charge of broadcasting once again raised the question of broadcasting in Cabinet:

"Much as I wish to delay this matter for a further period I feel that I must place the whole question before Cabinet for a decision on certain important questions of policy. I think that our Government will incur a fair amount of newspaper criticism unless it is in a position to publish soon a fairly clear and positive statement as to its attitude towards this problem"

(Nat. Ar. CAB 203/8/1 pt.1  
C.p. (57) 192 d. 15 March 1957 p.1)

.../

Considerable pressure was being brought to bear on the Government in the election year. According to the Minister's paper, pressure was not from the general public but from the 'Manufacturers of sets, the Government was being forced to act'.

"The financial and economic problems present the most formidable obstacle to the introduction of television into New Zealand. We cannot any longer put up convincing arguments for holding back on moral or social grounds. Nor can we justify inaction solely on the ground that we are waiting for technical improvements, colour viewing and so on. Television is inevitable! The questions are when, how and where?"

(Nat. Ar. CAB 203/8/1 pt. 1  
C.p. (57) 192 d. 15 March 1957 p.3)

The National Government had to decide whether the State would maintain its monopoly on broadcasting and introduce the highly expensive television, or would they step aside and allow private enterprise to bring television to New Zealand:

"If and when television is introduced to New Zealand, will it be owned and operated publicly or by free enterprise firms or will both systems run side by side? In this connection, I would point out that manufacturers are saying - "if the Government won't tackle it, why won't it let free enterprise have a go?"

Private enterprise had discerned the possibility of profit in television for New Zealand, and they were a force to be reckoned with. By the end of the year the National Government, in all its indecision, lost the election and the second Labour Government entered power with a slim one seat majority. The new Prime Minister went on the National Radio network to proclaim the existence of a foreign exchange crisis for New Zealand. The Labour Party were forced to introduce austerity measures, and

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television was delayed once again due to cost. (Chapman, et al, 1962, p.30,32,33). Despite the austerity measures the public demanded more services, better reception and repeatedly asked when television was to occur.

The 1958 Annual Report of the N.Z.B.S. to Parliament acknowledged both the demands and the costs:

"Part of the heavy initial cost of television would require the use of overseas funds; so would the annual costs. Although the advantages of television and the interest of the public in them are fully recognised, the Minister of Broadcasting recently announced that a commitment of this nature and extent cannot be undertaken at the present time. For the same reason the decision taken earlier to purchase a small amount of television testing equipment has had to be deferred in the meantime, but will be reviewed again towards the end of 1958"  
(AJHR, F3 1958. p.5)

In 1959, W.B. Sutch commented:

"New Zealand is probably past the point of considering whether television should be introduced, that being the case, we should be on the eve of a great debate when, how and in what form television should be introduced and operated and to examine the likely social and economic effects of its introduction"  
(Sutch, 1959, 1)

Sutch (1959) expressed clearly the New Zealand 'egalitarian' concern that private enterprise would not be interested in pursuing a nationwide service:

"The system of purely privately operated stations is the least likely to suit New Zealand. The company or or companies concerned would serve only the main centres of population where the audiences were large enough to

ensure adequate advertising revenue, the unprofitable areas would be left without a service. An even more serious objection would be that profit (naturally) would be the determining factor in planning programmes" (Sutch, 1959, 27)

Sutch too argued for State control, and cited the satisfactory services of the Post Office and N.Z.B.S. as proof of the system. Once again Parliament was hailed as the only institution capable of representing the people's interests:

" A State operated system can be regarded by Parliament to operate in the public interest with regard for the needs of all sections of the community, and all parts of the country - and this requirement can be made effective. The operations of such a system, while having to be effecient, would not need to be governed by the necessity to make a profit as its operations at all costs and thus it could maintain civilised standards" (Sutch, 1959, 33)

There were fears too, that a State run television would possibly not have the fire of a commercial service. It might become dull in striving to reflect all citizens. Sutch was also quick to point out that a commercial service would not be any cheaper to New Zealanders than a non-commercial service, rather the public would just pay indirectly through the prices of advertised goods.

Finally in August 1958 the Labour Government announced that the Government would adopt the 625 line system as standard for any television service in New Zealand. Two months later the N.Z.B.S. obtained approval for the purchase of equipment to enable technical investigations. Television planning was underway. (N.Z.B.C. 1965. 1)

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February, 1959 brought some experimental transmissions from a low-powered station in Auckland to assist engineers in site selection and other preparation work. Public interest in television increased over the succeeding months until January, 1960 when the Prime Minister Walter Nash announced plans to introduce television. (N.Z.B.C., 1965, 1)

As the 1960 Annual Report quietly commented:

"It was announced on the 28th January that Government would introduce a television system to be owned and controlled by the State and associated with the N.Z.B.S." (A.J.H.R. F.3 1960. 4)

State control was reasserted for television by the second Labour Government. As the Labour M.P. for Hastings was to comment in the Address and Reply Debate when Parliament opened in June:

"...the Labour Party does assert and will continue to assert, that the State has not only the right, but the duty to command the heights of the economy so that the economic and financial power cannot be concentrated in a few irresponsible and often anonymous private hands, but either shall be exercised by responsible public authorities constantly under scrutiny by Parliament and the public ...

... and it is for this reason that the Labour Government has now asserted that the State should control television. Television requires tremendous capital expenditure and makes an impact not merely on some industries but on the tender mercies of vulgar and more pernicious aspects of commercialism so that a few people can exploit and make fabulous profits" (Hansard, 23 June 1960. p.9)

Political rhetoric aside, this comment does illustrate some of the rationale of the action. Later in the session the Labour Government brought in legislation enabling television to be operated by the N.Z.B.S. The plan was not well received by the National opposition. Leader Keith Holyoake proposed a corporation not unlike the B.B.C:

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"The authority would not just be another section or another separate State Department. Through its members, the committee would reflect the views, the ideas and the tastes of the people. It would not operate just at the dictate of a Minister of a Government. We believe that is important"

(Hansard, 28 September 1960, p.2623)

The Bill was passed into law on the 3rd October 1960. In the General Election, broadcasting was playing a dual role, constituting both an issue and a force within the campaign. K. Jackson (1962) claims that neither party had considered in depth their policies on broadcasting. The advent of television, Jackson says, brought about a re-evaluation of the service. (Jackson, 1962, 109).

Broadcasting's other role was that of a communicator. Large numbers of people were brought into the campaign through its activities. Jackson (1962) comments that though New Zealand had developed a pattern of local broadcasting which would have been the envy of B.B.C. planners, the parties were reluctant to use available radio time for local issues and campaigns. The second Labour Government lost the 1960 election and National held a majority in the House of twelve seats. The following year legislation was introduced to create a public corporation to administer broadcasting.

#### The N.Z.B.S. and its Demise

R.J. Gregory (1979) stresses the importance of the acquisition and installation of plant and facilities for any broadcasting organisation. The yardstick of any broadcasting authority will be its ability to develop the physical and demonstrable rate than the abstract and speculative (Gregory, 1979, 80). In the careers of the N.B.S., N.Z.B.S. and the amalgam N.Z.B.S., there was also a strong desire to develop tangible services. Gregory notes that these 'physical development imperatives' were so 'strong that they could be seen to inhibit commitment to wider more abstract social

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responsibilities. (Gregory, 1979, 81).

But the development of a philosophy, or an articulated mission for broadcasting was also crucial to the success of any institution operating broadcasting. Individuals and groups articulate missions for an activity and will seek to impress that vision upon others.

Gregory, (1979) identifies that James Shelly was the first person to set about the task of defining and articulating a mission for New Zealand's Public Broadcasting (Gregory, 1979, 99). Shelly's philosophy embodied three principal values, according to Gregory. Firstly, he regarded it as imperative that radio be used to promote and maintain higher standards in the arts. Secondly, Shelly sought it as a chance to secure social unity through an appreciation of finer things, and finally he held a strong belief that radio was a vital means of fostering International tolerance and peace. (Gregory, 1979, 84-6).

It is important, however, to realise that while Shelly's mission was important, others too were influential in shaping meanings: Shelly's concepts were a product of his character, his power, position and experiences. He articulated a mission and was in a position to impress it upon others. Gregory fails to acknowledge the existence of other views and their promoters, both preceding and contemporary to Shelly's.

Shelly's mission saw the N.Z.B.S. as a leader in social and cultural development. The service had adopted this role eagerly, it had been appropriate for the time. The N.Z.B.S. was a radio organisation designed to develop radio in the programme sense, not embark on any major technical building programmes. Thus while it could administer a matured, respected and well defined service it was not equipped to bring about the introduction of television.

In its success as social patron, it was not able to successfully transfer its objectives to the building of a major television network. This inability to rearticulate its mission was the

service's demise. People doubted whether the N.Z.B.S. was a capable framework for an integrated radio and television service. It was not so much a matter of questioning State control but more a questioning that particular State organisation.

### Review

This chapter has reviewed the period where the State ruled supreme in radio. It had total management of the service and did so in a fashion that restricted development. But often, this control was one of timidity. The various Governments more than not delayed actions rather than took them. Television for instance was delayed for many years on the economic grounds of cost.

The State's total management was not without challenges. Different individuals and groups sought to re-establish opportunities for other broadcasting options. Private enterprise sought radio and television development rights, for instance. Despite surviving these challenges the State was forced to reorient its activities. When television was finally introduced it was necessary to implement a new form of control, something more responsive to the requirements of the new technology.

This chapter has examined a distinct peacetime period of total control. The State controlled broadcasting firmly. It was integrated into the total State apparatus, development options were assessed against other State projects, and were often accorded a low priority. Yet a new facet of broadcasting was well underway and this necessitated organisational changes. The device of departmental control was no longer appropriate.

"The private operator must operate at a profit - there's nothing wrong in operating at a profit; - similarly the N.Z.B.C., if it is to fulfil its function as trustee of the licence holders of New Zealand, must operate fundamentally what I would call a surplus. It is what the money is used for is the distinction".

L.R. Sceats,  
Director-General designate  
28 May 1970.

## CHAPTER 7

### "CONTEMPORARY NEW ZEALAND BROADCASTING: TELEVISION, STATE CORPORATIONS PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND REVENUE CRISES"

#### Introduction

Over the last two decades New Zealand broadcasting has undergone a series of reformations. Different people, new technologies and questions of revenue were prominent in the continual reshaping of the activity. Technology combined with new ideas altered the nature and shape of broadcasting. New institutions were also needed to accommodate the changes.

Such has been the nature of the reforms that much of what is recognised as broadcasting and what is demanded of it, have only fully emerged, distinctively, in recent years. This chapter brings the analysis of broadcasting up to the present day.

#### The N.Z.B.C.

Late in 1961 the new National Government introduced legislation to the House to create a public corporation to administer New Zealand Broadcasting. The new Minister of Broadcasting, A.E. Kinsella outlined the roles and functions of the new corporation. It would be self supporting, financially, gaining revenue from both commercial sources and from licensing. The corporation was to administer programme standards and would be able to license private stations (Hansard, 13 Oct. 1961, p.2997). The Labour Government contested strongly this final provision. Ex-Prime Minister, Walter Nash commented:

"What we are concerned about is the effect of television under private control, the objective of which is to make money, having a major effect on public opinion. That is dangerous" (Hansard, 13 Oct. 1961, p.3002)

Many were also concerned about the power of television, especially when under a monopoly situation.

"It (TV) has power for good or evil. It has a great power for enlightenment of people. In a bad sense it has a great power when used for propaganda purposes. It is particularly effective and dangerous as a political and social weapon especially when a monopoly is running it. It is more dangerous still when that monopoly is under political control".

(Hansard, 13 October 1961, p.3322)

Corporation control seemed the most appropriate and the safest for the public good. The Government was reluctant to see any private enterprise introduced. The provisions for it in the Act were vague, probably put there to placate certain commercial interests. When the Minister outlined the functions of the corporation, private enterprise was accorded a very low key. The Minister outlined six functions with which the N.Z.B.C. would be charged:

- "1) To carry out the service, develop it, expand it and improve it,
- 2) To carry out surveys and consider and recommend on the possibilities of private services if required,
- 3) To supervise and control the programmes of all stations, either corporation or private stations,
- 4) To advise the Minister on the fees and licenses which should be fixed for licensing,
- 5) To supervise the operation of private stations if licenses should be granted,
- 6) Charged with responsibility of ensuring accuracy and impartiality in news services".

(Hansard, 7 November 1961, p. 3323-4)

.../

The corporation was charged with the unusual dual responsibilities of being a participant, and judge, of activities. The corporation had essentially been charged with expanding broadcasting and that meant television. By establishing a corporation, the State had yielded some authority, and divorced itself from a wide variety of responsibilities. No longer would Government be directly accountable to criticism of the development, nor would it have to find the finances. The State still retained most of the reins of power, yet removed a lot of the responsibility. Expenditure on broadcasting would from now on be controlled by circumstance rather than by Cabinet decision.

How was Government control retained?

There were three mechanisms by which Parliament held power of the corporation:

- 1) The corporation must comply with Government directions that are in writing,
- 2) The corporation must submit its reports and accounts to Parliament each year, thus giving Parliament the opportunity to review its activities,
- 3) The corporation must have approval of Government for its works programme, although it was free to embark upon expenditure up to sums of £25,000.

(Hansard, 7 November 1961, p.3323)

The last provision was not as inhibiting as it may appear. Due to its self sufficiency the corporation was able to utilise advertising revenues to embark on capital development. (Gregory, 1979, 34). The ideals of the system are succinctly expressed by Lord Normanbrook (1965), Chairman of the B.B.C.:

"...an organisation providing such a service as this is more likely to follow a steady but developing course if it is not subject to detailed control by a Minister directly responsible to Parliament. A public corporation

has the advantage that it is in a position to combine the general interest while remaining free from day to day intervention by the political machine"

(Normanbrook, 1965, 4)

Yet the quasi-autonomous relationship was to cause problems with the development of television. New Zealand's 'egalitarian ethos' required the N.Z.B.C. to quickly implement television reception across the country. Not only were the viewers insistent on this but also manufacturers and members of the advertising industry. Thus developed a fundamental tension; the speed at which development could be implemented and the demands made upon the organisation for rapid if not immediate provision of coverage.

(Gregory, 1982, 51)

#### Development

Tension would soon extend to the relationship between corporation and Government. The N.Z.B.C. had in 1963 with the Government's approval, embarked upon a £7.5 million capital expansion programme to extend the fledgling television service over the whole of the country, and to upgrade and expand radio services. While the corporation was obliged to finance this development itself, inflation had placed it in the position of getting more revenue from television advertising. (Gregory, 1979, 133)

Yet the Government demanded that development be kept in check. Strained relations began to develop because the corporation began to direct criticism of slow progress to the Government, (Gregory, 1979, 134).

In November 1964, this tension reached a peak. Chairman of the N.Z.B.C., Mr Llewellyn launched a strong public attack on the Government's "procrastination" over the N.Z.B.C.'s proposals for a second channel, which had been submitted to the Minister nine months earlier. The N.Z.B.C. had wanted to implement a

second channel in viable areas before completing national coverage of the first network. They saw the move realising more revenue and would greatly accelerate, in their mind, the development of New Zealand television. However, W.J. Scott, Minister of Broadcasting had fears that such an introduction would be politically unsound. How could the Government justify such a measure when many areas received no coverage at all?. (Gregory, 1979, 137).

To ease the public demands for action, the Government monopoly was relaxed. In 1963 it was decided to allow the setting up of privately-owned translator stations to provide interim reception in localities which would otherwise be required to wait years for adequate reception. (Gregory, 1982, 52). The corporation allowed viewer societies, of not less than 50 members, to install, operate and maintain translators on behalf of the N.Z.B.C. The capital costs of purchasing and installing the equipment would be met by the individual members of the society, and the corporation would be licensee of the equipment and would subsidise the costs of the operation and maintenance. (Stringer, 1969, 3).

The societies, were, in effect, agents of the N.Z.B.C. and were bound by the agreement to restrict operations to relaying and not transmission. (Stringer, 1969, 6). Thus the corporation was able to expand its services at a much lower cost and placate criticism. By the end of March 1964, 13 translators had been licensed. But there were still areas, which by the nature of of the terrain, would be unserved. The formation of a 50 member society was impossible in many small areas. To accommodate this the corporation allowed the introduction of battery operated mini-translators (Stringer, 1969, 6-7). By 1969 these developments had had a significant impact upon television reception. Figure 7.1

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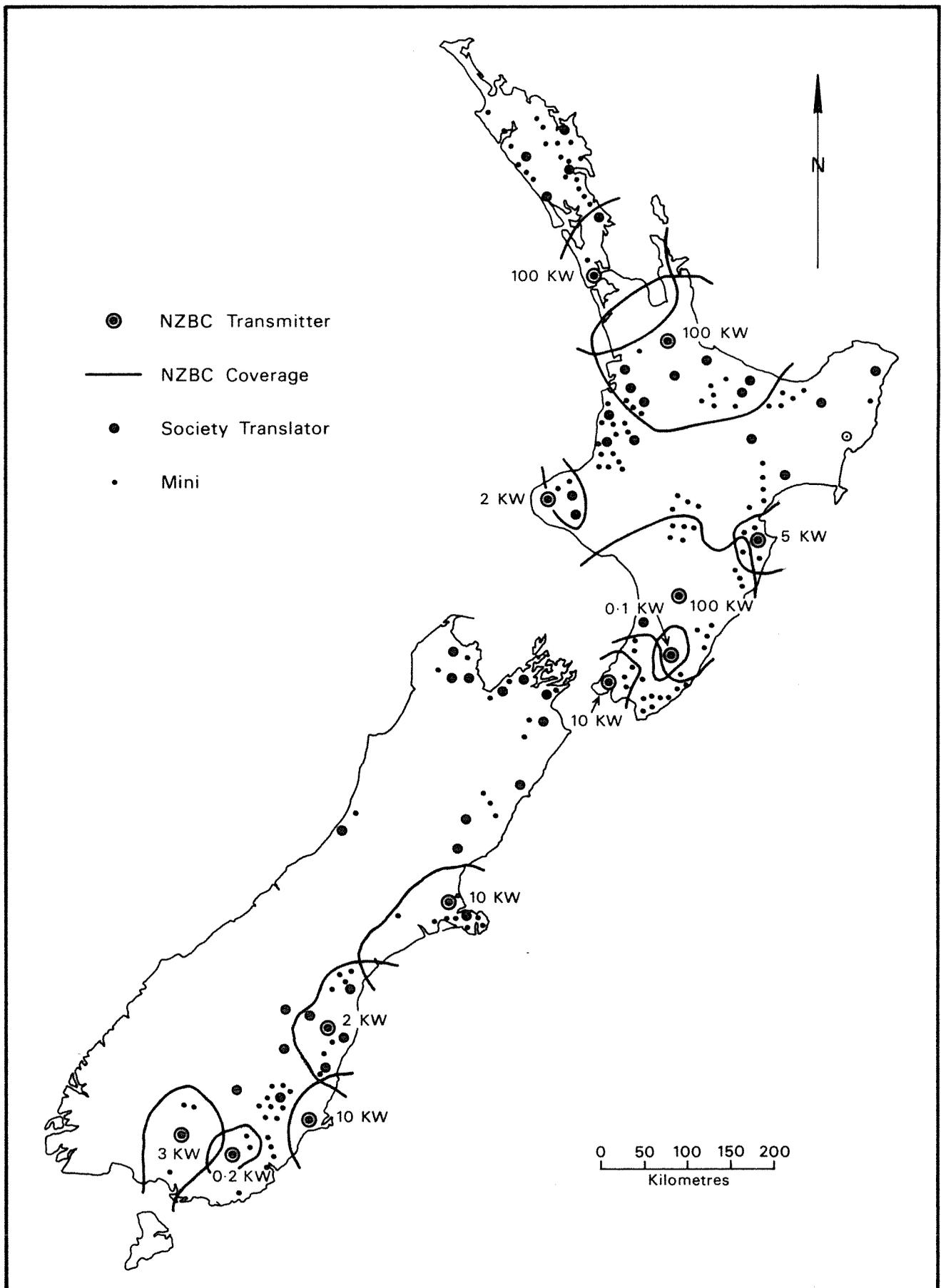


Figure 7.1 Television Coverage and Translator Societies, 1969.

(Stringer 1969, 4-5)

illustrates the impact of this slight easing of State monopoly. Once the corporation developed coverage in the area, it would buy out these societies.

Gregory (1982) sees these actions as consistent with the capital development philosophy paramount within the organisation at that time. It was not growth per se that was of primary importance, but growth in order to protect the economic viability of public broadcasting from the threat posed by the potential profit-oriented competitors. (Gregory, 1982, 53).

There were other concepts of importance, including the ideologies of financial self-sufficiency, low costs to the consumer, the fostering of a national identity, and a pride that the service measured up well against overseas broadcasting organisations. But the dominant value was that the N.Z.B.C. should be a building organisation. (Gregory, 1982, 55-56).

The N.Z.B.C. had been modelled on the triumvirate of the American political system. There was to be three partners in the N.Z.B.C. - the Director General and his staff were one, the Chairman and the Board the second, and thirdly the Minister and Parliament. This conception, as expressed in Figure 7.2 was to cause problems in the operation of broadcasting.

The problem, according to the Minister of Broadcasting was the overt dominance of the Director General (Gregory, 1979, 137). The boundaries between the parties had been ill defined. (Toogood, 1969, 107). The board was increased from three members to seven in order to negate some of the Director General's influence.

#### The Continued Exclusion of Private Broadcasting

The Government had reluctantly charged the N.Z.B.C. with the responsibility of hearing applications for private warrants. The Act laid down ten matters for the corporation to take into consideration. These comprehensive criteria were in the main, covering traditional areas of concern about private broadcasting (i.e. standards of service, advertising and interference with the State Service).

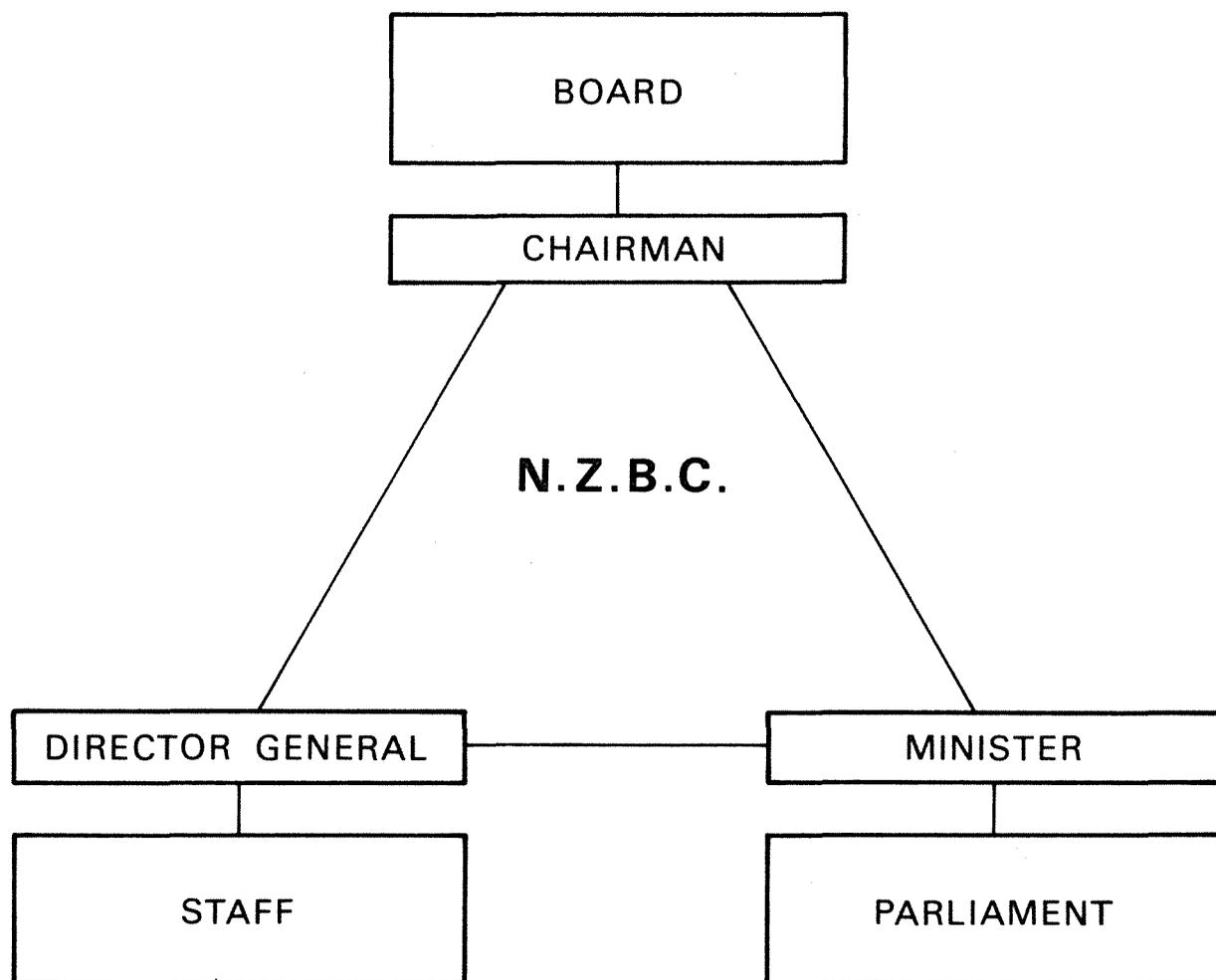


Figure 7.2 The Structure of New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation as explained by G.H. Stringer, (Gregory, 1979, 56).

How did the corporation come to receive these judicial functions? K.P. Ross (1971) argues that this function was acquired more by default than by design. It was a balancing of all three attitudes prevalent in the National Party's caucus. Ross identifies supporters of private enterprise (such as J.R. Marshall), those who wanted a B.B.C. type structure (like T.P. Shand) and those who were satisfied with the present structure (such as R.M. Algie). At no time were any of these attitudes dominant over the others. At the time of the drafting of the Bill the two latter attitudes (corporation and State Control) were sufficiently powerful to ensure private enterprise was excluded. As a compromise gesture to keep the private enterprise supporters with the Bill, Part III was included. It was a political decision to satisfy various inter-party pressures rather than a move to improve broadcasting. (Ross, 1971, 27-8).

Thus, by default the corporation was given power over its potential competitors, enough to even exclude them. The N.Z.B.C. achieved tremendous growth during the 1960's, mainly due to the fact it was selective with its responsibilities. In the early years it ignored the responsibility over private enterprise. Essentially the roles were incompatible (Ross, 1971, 30.)

This is not to say there were not challenges. In the late 1950's and early 1960's several attempts were made by private enterprise to enter broadcasting, notably television. Why did these attempts fail?

Ross (1971) suggests a number of reasons. Firstly the N.Z.B.C. was sufficiently powerful that the Government hesitated to upset it often. Secondly, up to that time New Zealand viewers were still 'sufficiently enchanted by the one channel screen', And, thirdly, those companies and individuals interested were not putting their full energies into obtaining the second channel. (Ross, 1971, 34)<sup>1</sup>.

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The N.Z.B.C. vigorously chased the second channel. They had been so successful with their first television channel that the national coverage plan had to be brought forward. (Ross, 1971, 36). But television was only part of broadcasting. Radio was still developing and was still the major part of the sector.

During the 1960's the N.Z.B.C. had opened twelve further commercial stations (both full- and part-time). However, further expansion of this network was adjourned during the mid 1960's. Commercial radio was no longer a revenue earner, it was now in deficit. But stations were not closed because they were unprofitable. They were re-assessed, and were regarded as integral to the responsibilities of the corporation. G.H. Stringer comments that the development of radio stations into the smaller areas during the early 1960's fulfilled a dual role. They were not only distribution points, but collection points especially for news (Pers. Com.). The development of a news service, independent of the traditional newspaper routes was a major innovation for broadcasting and the media in general. Broadcasting's ability to relay news had long been recognised, but had never been developed. The retention of unprofitable stations would be essential if a reliable news service was to be maintained.

But there is little doubt that radio was being upstaged by the newcomer, television. Ross (1971) argues that it was the hybrid nature of the N.Z.B.C. with its limited financial resources that meant it was caught in its early years going too many ways. It had concentrated on television, on non-commercial radio, and on increasing the number of commercial radio stations. Yet little was done on updating the programmes of commercial radio, by which the public judged it most (Ross, 1971, 45).

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### The Monopoly Crumbles

It was in 1966 that a thirty year monopoly of the State over radio was defeated. It was the result of a challenge made by a Pirate radio station, in the Hauraki Gulf. A group of younger people, had viewed similar developments in Europe and decided that they might be able to invoke some change in New Zealand broadcasting. As the founder recalled:

"I think it started ..... when a group of us decided there were certain things wrong with radio in New Zealand and we thought we would do something about it and we did. We bought a ship and built a transmitter and we got a few young people together, most of them from the N.Z.B.C., and a little naively perhaps, we went ahead and put a radio station on the air and that was Radio Hauraki".

(N.Z. Company Director, April 1970, p.80)

This challenge had a very high profile. The main thrust of their attack was the unsympathetic programming of the N.Z.B.C. They aimed their programme at an audience, under-served by the corporation:

"...Radio Hauraki is designed to appeal, not exclusively, but the sound of the station is designed to appeal to young people under the age of 25. It was our intention when we first formed to appeal to this market. We felt that the present broadcasting services, although very good in a number of ways, failed in the area of providing entertainment for young people".

(N.Z. Company Director, April 1970, p.10)

He added that the N.Z.B.C. had failed by attempting 'to cater for too many tastes on too few radio stations'. (N.Z. Company Director, April 1970, p.10). The group stimulated public debate. During the height of the election campaign they began transmissions from a small vessel in the Hauraki Gulf. Minister of Broadcasting, W.J. Scott responded by writing to the corporation requesting 'brighter' Y.D. stations. At

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the same time the National Party promised in the election manifesto to set up a new licensing authority to determine the need for additional television and radio stations, and to issue warrants to successful applicants (Cleveland, 1970, 47).

This challenge, captured the New Zealand public's imagination. A 1978 Listener article mythicised the challenge:

"The Hauraki story is a classic of New Zealand mythology the triumph of the gutsy average over Big Brother, individual enterprise versus bureaucratic monopoly. The Hauraki pirates were the good guys, their statements from the outset designed to gain public sympathy. Nobody ever said "We're in it for money", and if they had been in those lean, early days, they would have had pockets to let"

(N.Z. Listener, May 13, 1978, p.24)

On 23 March 1969, the Authority gained two private radio warrants - one to Hauraki. The Government's monopoly was broken at the hands of a few young people. Another group had managed to implant some of their meanings on broadcasting. After the election, the Government passed the 1968 Broadcasting Authorities Act. It established an independent tribunal, as promised, to adjudicate those judicial functions, previously held by the N.Z.B.C. The corporation took the removal of this power in its stride. The 1969 Annual Report noted:

"If private stations are to be licensed by the broadcasting Authority this will bring to an end a period of more than 30 years in which the greater part of New Zealand Broadcasting Services were operated by a single organisation".

(A.J.H.R., 1969, 5).

This report also noted the reception of a consultancy report commissioned by the board into the internal organisation of the corporation. The board was worried that the N.Z.B.C. had become

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too remote from the public. According to Gregory (1979) the board thought the corporation was too like a Government Department, with control centralised in the hands of a permanent head. Gregory argues there was a tension between a Director-General who preferred to think of himself as a sort of independent head, and a board that wished to assert its own authority as a public corporation vested with the responsibility of operating the country's broadcasting system (Gregory, 1979, 169).

Significantly, the consultants recommended the establishment of three administrative regions. According to Ross, the value of the reorganisation was slight (Ross, 1971, 110). The real value had been that the N.Z.B.C. was seen to be doing something in response to considerable public criticism. Gregory (1975) identifies an argument prevalent at the time which questioned whether or not the corporation was becoming too powerful and too independent of mind. Could greater independence from undesirable political influence be gained from large, monolithic organisations, though with clear lines of political accountancy, or by a number of smaller organisations whose links with the Government of the day <sup>were</sup> not so clearly defined by Statute (Gregory, 1975, 138)

The move to regionalism and decentralisation was seen as a measure to increase the availability to the public. In 1965 the N.Z.B.C. had developed a regional framework of Advisory Committees to be a 'sounding board' for their activities. They were designed to 'provide the environment of critical appraisal and response'.

#### The Broadcasting Authority

The Broadcasting Authority Act 1968 established an independent body to adjudicate the warrants for broadcasting stations. It was also charged with supervising the operations of stations and advising the Minister of Broadcasting matters. This Act rewrote the provisions under which warrants might be sought. The categories were similar to those given to the corporation but with the addition of an ownership control. It excluded monopoly control, foreign ownership and individual owners from operating private broadcasting stations<sup>2</sup>.

The Authority was also obliged to comply with Government policy, as given by written notice. The Authority was set up as Berger(1970) argues, more to decide 'which applicants would get warrants', not whether there should be commercial radio. (Berger, 1970, B. p.73).

G.D. McKay (1972) asserts that the Government was able to exert considerable pressure over the broadcasting sector through ensuring the authority was responsive to Government policy:

"...the Government through the directive provisions and the informal powers that flow from such a provision, would appear to have more control than it would care to admit. Whether this influence is formal or not largely depends on whether public opinion resists Government interference. If it does it only makes it more likely that informal influence will be used, and the only limit to these informal powers is the self restraint exercised by Government".  
(G.D. McKay, 1972, 24).

The National Government justified the change to authority control on the grounds of anti-monopoly. Ostensibly, they argued, the 'Pirates Affair' of 1966 had shown that the corporation was not willing to use Part III of its Act. The Labour Party opposed the change on the grounds that private enterprise ought not be involved in broadcasting as it would only be interested in profit.

Once again there was a bid by private enterprise to establish television. A conglomerate under the name of Associated Network was set up, backed by U.E.B. Industries, J. Watties Canneries, Wright Stephenson and Kerridge Odeon. The group sought to operate a national television network and radio stations in the four main centres. Their proposal was not received with any enthusiasm by the then Minister, Lance Adams-Schneider. He re-stated the Government's policy that there would be no second channel before 1971. He also said that before the authority called for applications it would undertake a national survey on the future of television. (Ross, 1971, 39-40).

October, 1969 saw the establishment of the Inquiry. It was charged with exploring the 'needs of New Zealand for a second channel (and possible subsequent channels) including the timing, economic effects and various methods of introducing an additional channel or channels in respect of both black and white and colour television'. It was also charged with 'finding the best way of introducing private enterprise competition'. (N.Z.B.A. 1971, 8-9). This Inquiry was useful to the Government in that it would enable Cabinet to have a full report before authorising any move. It would also be useful in delaying any action in the area of a second channel, thereby quietening down the topics of broadcasting for a forthcoming election. (Ross, 1971, 40).

As the Inquiry got underway the N.Z.B.C. accomplished an important engineering step. They commissioned in November, the microwave system which enabled four regional television services to be linked together for simultaneous broadcasts. A truly national network had been established. (N.Z.B.C., 1971, 21). While private enterprise had been lobbying for permission to commence television, the corporation had been quietly working on its own coverage plans. It had the transmitters ready, Avalon could handle the programme requirements and it was experimenting with colour. The N.Z.B.C. were making themselves ready to take on the new channel.

#### Private Broadcasting?

It is illustrative to look at the way the corporation responded to the private enterprise hearings. The N.Z.B.C. developed three main arguments against private operators:

- 1) That the proposals, if implemented, would affect the corporation's revenue and future ability to maintain and extend its services in the public interest,
- 2) That the proposals did not evidence balanced programming,
- 3) They did not provide programmes or services which the N.Z.B.C. was not already undertaking.

(Gregory, 1979, 270).

The N.Z.B.C. stood by its record. The Government had decided that private enterprise was going to re-enter broadcasting and the sooner the better. The corporation had little to contest. But in its haste to introduce 'competitive' broadcasting, the Government had forgotten to address the fundamental question, How might private enterprise improve the service to the public? As Berger (1970) stated:

"...Will private radio stimulate a better flow of adrenalin in the N.Z.B.C., will it in itself provide better, more extensive news coverage, interpretive news analysis, even editorials?"

(Berger, 1970, p.74).

In June 1970 the corporation made its bid for the second channel. They reasoned that the N.Z.B.C. already had the facilities for duplicating channels at minimum expense. It claimed that within 12 months it could provide a second channel service for Auckland and Wellington viewers (ATL. R.O. Douglas papers Box 6 of 28 October 1971).

The new Director General, L.R. Sceats stated that the N.Z.B.C. would be the most appropriate means of control:

"The board of the Broadcasting Corporation is really the trustee of the viewers of New Zealand and my particular viewpoint is that the viewers can be best served by two channels under the one control"

(Sceats, 1970, 1)

He also attacked the private enterprise contenders:

"The private operator must operate at a profit - there's nothing wrong in operating at a profit; similarly the N.Z.B.C. if it is to fulfil its function as trustee of the licence holders of New Zealand, must operate fundamentally what I would call a surplus. It is what the money is used for is the distinction"

(Sceats, 1970, 4)

The Broadcasting Authority reported back in 1971. It recommended that the existing television service operated by the N.Z.B.C. be converted to colour transmission by October 1973 and that the authority be empowered to call for applications to operate the second channel in colour. The National Government accepted the proposals. (ATL. R.O. Douglas papers M.S. Box 7).

Two applications were received in 1972, one from the N.Z.B.C. which proposed a complementary channel, and the other was from the Independent Television Corporation. (ibid.) The leader of the Opposition, N. Kirk, warned that a Labour Government would block private enterprise television if it was granted the warrant. With the change of Government, there was still no finding by the Authority. The Prime Minister-elect declared again that the N.Z.B.C. would get the second channel regardless of the hearing's outcome. (ATL. R.O. Douglas papers, Box 3).

#### Political Bias

There was another issue of the moment which created some controversy. It was labelled the 'McLeod Affair' when the editor of the Listener was fired by the Board of the Corporation. Although the issues were in the main, internal ones, the resulting debate and public enquiry looked closely at allegations that members of the board had been politically appointed. While the commission found no evidence of any overt 'political influence' it was clear that many members of the board had political leanings that favoured the National Party. As Bassett (1976) put it:

"While the subsequent enquiry concluded that there was no political influence behind the sacking, the public was rather disgusted to find that from the Chairman of the N.Z.B.C. right through the Board of the Corporation, political appointments abounded".

(Bassett, 1976, 12-13).

.../

The matter was one of concern to the Board. In their 1972 Report to Parliament, they clearly established their position:

"The Corporation is conscious of its position in matters of public debate. It is established by Parliament, and is responsible to it to act in the public interest. It propounds no editorial views of its own but pursues the aim of enabling listeners and viewers to acquaint themselves with various aspects of issues, which it believes it does fairly and impartially, and with considerable success. The Corporation strenuously denies assertions of bias and partiality".

(A.J.H.R. F.3 1972 p.6)

Major General W.S. McKinnon, then Chairman of the N.Z.B.C. recalled that whilst members of the board did have particular political persuasions, they were not closed to other viewpoints. McKinnon was concerned at the time about how the board appeared in a political light. He placed stress upon the ideas of Lord Normanbrook (1965)<sup>3</sup>:

"...care has usually been taken to ensure that the differing values and points of view, which in active politics are reflected by membership of political parties, are fairly reflected in membership on the board"

(Normanbrook, 1965, 8-9).

Such was his concern, that on two occasions he approached the Government to appoint well known Labour Party members to the board. McKinnon saw this as a positive action in an election year to alleviate allegations of political bias (Pers. Com.). His suggestions were not accepted. The incident provides insight into the informal controls a Government might wish to develop with a corporation.

The relationship between the corporation and the Minister of Broadcasting is also worth exploring. While the corporation remained responsible to Parliament for its activities, Parliament did not have the power to question day to day functioning of the

corporation. But the taxpayers saw Parliament as their representatives, and if the Government owned the service, then they should direct their complaints and demands to them, who in turn looked to the Minister. (Gregory, 1979. 236).

Yet corporation control had removed the day to day activities of broadcasting away from Parliament. Indeed the very reason for establishing such a control was to remove radio and television from direct political control. This placed the Minister in a strange position. He was accountable to Parliament for broadcasting, yet could have no influence on the domestic policies of the board. Public confusion, and indeed Parliamentary confusion on the nature of the Minister's role was considerable. This unresolved issue would be the source of considerable tension.

#### A New Structure

In March, 1973 the Broadcasting Authority announced its decision on the second television channel. They granted the warrant to the Independent Television Corporation. Four days later the Government jointly announced with the proponents of the scheme, an agreement which in return for \$50,000 in compensation, the Independent Television Corporation would not uplift its warrant. The Minister had, two months earlier, announced the Government plans for broadcasting. The Labour Government was going to split the N.Z.B.C. into three separate and independent corporations, two for television and one for radio. The Minister, R.O. Douglas set up a committee of four to prepare a white paper to bring about the proposed structure. (McGill, 1973, 6).

The Chairmanship of the committee was given to Kenneth Adam - ex Director of B.B.C. Television. The committee's report saw the primary principle of the new structure would be the operational independence:

.../

"The structure seeks first to give independence to the corporations so they can present a real choice to the public in programme style and content. The structure aims next to guarantee independence in resources to allow the two television services and radio to set their own priorities and pursue their own improvement and development. By its design the structure is planned to extend independence from ministerial control and from indirect pressure exercised through close capital works supervision. In the individual corporations the structures outlined are shaped to promote creative independence by focussing the organisation on those who produce the programmes in the studios and on the stations. Finally the station pursues independence from the unitary centralising tendency, which gathers as much as it can into one place and one pyramid of power and resources, thus overriding or neglecting the country's spread of talent and its regional variety".

(N.Z.C.B. 1973, 15)

In addition to the three corporations the report recommended a fourth one called the Broadcasting Council of New Zealand, to provide common services such as programme purchasing. The scheme also sought to decentralise broadcasting; TV1 production was to be based in Wellington and Dunedin, TV2 in Auckland, Christchurch and Hamilton, and Radio New Zealand focused on Wellington. The committee saw that decentralisation was compatible with the 'national community' broadcasting had built up:

"It is important here to distinguish between centralism and internationalism. We believe that local attachments can and should be strengthened and we welcome the opportunities provided for greater diversity under the Government's present plan. There is in our view no inevitable incompatibility between the regional view and the world view". (N.Z.C.B. 1973, 7)

When announcing the new plan the Minister of Broadcasting had proclaimed two guiding principles - decentralisation and competitive enterprise. The demise of the N.Z.B.C. was more than that. It had been suffering under a cloud of despair since the McLeod affair and the organisation seemed no longer appropriate. The change had been brought about to institute change. As Gregory (1975) commented:

"The Labour Government's broadcasting policy turns out to be enigmatic! At worst it is a grossly extravagant piece of Ministerial monument building, at best a somewhat confused choice of means towards an achievement of noble ends..."

(Gregory, 1975, 147).

Gregory (1982) suggests that once again it was a matter of redefining the organisational mission. He argues that the N.Z.B.C. was unable to institutionalise itself, as a permanent organisation. The key values of the N.Z.B.C. had been growth, financial independence, low cost to the consumer, and the fostering of a national identity. These were almost irrelevant to those which shaped the expectations of programme, and particularly journalistic staff. As the capital development eased off around 1968-70, the corporation was forced to re-articulate the social responsibilities to redefine itself in terms of basic consumer utility and value. (Gregory, 1982, 57). This was reflected in the 1973 report:

"It has been argued that more of these moneys should have been spent on programming. It is quite true that more could have been articulated in this way, but to the detriment of both the extent and standard of coverage. Faced with demands from every part of the country for a television signal, and remembering that many parts of New Zealand are isolated and that television could provide social and cultural benefits to these areas, the corporation

.../

has made its major priorities first channel coverage of the country, often at great cost because of the nature of the terrain. It could have spent less on coverage and not provided a service so soon to so many".

(AJHR. F.3 1973, p.5)

The N.Z.B.C. stood proudly beside its impressive record of growth:

"The corporation has undertaken to make every effort to assist the committee the Minister is to establish. Government has the power to change the structure, and while the corporation would not claim to be without fault, it nevertheless takes pride that it has achieved the present high standards of programmes and wide coverage in both radio and television. It is worth re-stating that the development has been financed entirely by its own revenue, including a licence fee that remained unaltered for ten years, and in the case of radio, a fee (now abolished) first established in 1925".

(AJHR. F.3 1973, 5).

The new Act was to take effect from 1 April 1975, with the Council being established earlier to see the old out and the new in. But the new organisations had their critics, some saying it had been conceived in haste, some staff were disenchanted, and even a former Director-General of the N.Z.B.C. expressed doubts about the financial implications. (Thorley, 1975, 11).

With the new structures barely in place there was another change of Government. Many were unsure of what the new Government would do. TV2's 1976 report to Parliament expressed the growing concern of the broadcasters:

"At the time of writing this report the future of broadcasting is being reconsidered for the second time inside three years. Signatories to this report are not primarily concerned with their own skins. We believe we have taken on the somewhat thankless responsibilities of a public service in the true sense of that term.

If we are no longer required we can say most sincerely that despite an almost permanent state of crisis we have all enjoyed our association with broadcasting. We do not believe that the function of this report should be to attempt to influence the Government as to what should or should not be done. But we do appeal to the Government to recall that the lives and careers of real people are in its hands and it is barely two years since they were wrenched from the old N.Z.B.C."

(AJHR, F.12, 1976, p.9)

What essentially was being questioned was whether the new three corporation system was providing the best service. The two television channels were behaving like ice cream vendors on the beach. Ian Cross (Pers. Com.) explains:

"When you looked at their schedules you found we spent millions of dollars in overseas funds to bring the programmes into the country. The competitive television programmers then set about using this investment to prevent, to reduce the audience for these programmes. If you had a good programme on at eight o'clock of a light entertainment variety, a popular sit com I would put one dead against it, to halve the audience because I couldn't afford to allow you that audience. That means only half the people would be able to see that programme ..."

(Pers. Com.)

In June 1976, the Minister, now H. Templeton, announced that the broadcasting services would be amalgamated back into a single corporation, but the units (TV1, TV2, and Radio N.Z.) would 'retain their individuality and operational independence':

"Closer control and better co-ordination by a single board will allow better management, particularly in financial, regulations, administration, and staffing matters. It will also permit more effective planning of the future development of the broadcasting services in a period of rapid change"

(N.Z. Min. Br. P.S. 22 June 1976)

As grounds for the re-organisation, the National Government cited the need to 'rescue' the corporations from a financial chaos:

"The present parlous state of broadcasting's finances - a direct result of the curious and impractical structure created by the previous Labour Government - simply underlines the necessity for the broadcasting system to be directly accountable to the Government. Taxpayers cannot be expected to go on pouring money into broadcasting without having a voice, through their elected representatives in Parliament, in how that money is spent"

(N.Z. Min. Br. P.S. 22 November 1976).

But on the one side of the coin, the order had created a good environment for radio. For too long it had been the poor cousin to television which had absorbed revenue and captured the public imagination.

The National Government also reinstated the Broadcasting Authority (removed by Labour) now called Broadcasting Tribunal. It was charged with adjudicating warrant applications, receive and determine complaints and advise the Minister.

The field of communications was widening, especially telecommunications. Broadcasting could no longer be considered in a separate light. The Government established in response to this trend a 'Communications Commission', to advise Government, 'on developments in telecommunications

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including broadcasting and other technical fields involved in modern communications." (Comm. Comm, forward)

The Commission's function was to attempt to alleviate planning problems which went across Government departments in the tele-communications area. One recent example of such a conflict was found in the microwave links developed solely for television networking. The Post Office, which has control over all the point to point communications sought control of the broadcasting system. However, the corporation retained this control.

The Communications Commissions report concluded:

"...there is a need in New Zealand for some continuing arrangement which includes functions of co-ordination and national tele-communication planning, and which ensures that ..... care (is taken) ,... for the benefit of the public, the Government and all those employed in tele-communications"

(Comm Comm, 1977, 263)

### Revenue

Another continuing problem of the last ten years of broadcasting has been the static licence fee. Despite increasing demands from the public, and cost increases, the licence fee has remained unaltered. The 1978 report of the B.C.N.Z. despairingly noted:

"Successive Governments have required broadcasting to convert television to colour, to expand two channels at a rapid pace, and to maintain and improve radio and other broadcasting services. In fulfilling its duties as a servant of Parliament and the people by meeting an increased demand further extensions to broadcasting (especially to television) the corporation must remind the country that it can provide no more than it can afford, by the efficient management and disposition of resources available to it. Beyond that, public expectations can be met only by increased commercialisation of broadcasting, or an increased licence fee".

(AJHR. F.3 1978, p.4)

The result was increased commercialism. Sponsorship of programmes was allowed for television. But the change was not without its critics:

"Before our very eyes we watch the most brazen commercial practices on our public service channels. The money changers have almost taken over the temple" (Stirling, 1981, A. 14)

Ian Cross, Chairman of the B.C.N.Z. for the period comments that this increased commercialism was essential to meet the demands of development (Pers. Com.). Cross brought about a further reorganisation in 1980. The two television networks were collapsed back into one unit, becoming Television New Zealand. The reorganisation sought to bring greater complementarity to New Zealand television. The corporation had seven objectives for the television reorganisation, and it provides a useful insight into the present concept of television. The seven objectives sought to:

- "1) provide the kind of complementary programming which a two channel public broadcasting system can offer the public,
  - 2) offer scope for regional television,
  - 3) eliminate those competitive practices which annoy viewers,
  - 4) give better service to advertisers,
  - 5) rationalise the use of existing production resources and avoid duplication of effort with television,
  - 6) cater for the minority and cultural audiences at more suitable times than is usually possible at present,
  - 7) fulfill the social, cultural and educational potential of television,"
- (AJHR, F.3 1979, 4)

.../

Clearly television was firmly set in the public service mould, attempting to service groups which would not receive much attention by a strictly commercial service. Yet it still utilised advertising for revenue. But what of radio?

Public radio had suffered with the expansion of television. 'From 1967, the objectives of the N.Z.B.C. were totally bound up with television, establishing a national network, then a second, followed by the introduction of colour. Radio's priorities were largely ignored and its gradual extension of services ground to a halt, as the resources of the corporation were diverted to the high capital costs of its new glamorous sister' (Russell, 1982, B 21). Staff were creamed off for television, the radio licence fee was amalgamated into a television licence, and there was little capital expansion. But once again that operational independence of a corporation, then a separate division, radio has fought back. New ideas, programmes and equipment were able to be deployed. If the reorganisation of Roger Douglas achieved anything, it certainly emphasised the need for radio to be administered separately from television.

Private enterprise broadcasting has also made an impact in recent years. Since the first warrants issued to Radio Hauraki and Radio i in Auckland, there are now fifteen private commercial stations competing in ten centres about the country.<sup>4</sup> In 1984 private television has once again been discussed. In the last months of the National Government, plans were announced by Minister Ian Shearer for regionally based private enterprise television. The new Labour Government reiterated those plans. Private enterprise has reclaimed a sizeable share of the broadcasting sector.

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## Review

During the last two decades the public broadcasting sector has faced tremendous constraints - of technology, finances and public demands. These have necessitated considerable commitment by the State, just to maintain its control on the sector. Other changes too, have brought new demands and ideals to the service:

Private enterprise also made its mark, once it had forced its way back into broadcasting. All these moves have combined to alter broadcasting. They have necessitated tremendous renovations of the organisations that have administered broadcasting.

This chapter has attempted both to look at the events of the last twenty odd years, and the forces that have helped shape them. Broadcasting is as ever to the fore of social debate, emphasising its importance.

The final chapter brings this thesis to a close. It seeks to draw together the threads, the themes that are strongly evident throughout broadcasting's development.

Footnotes

1. The movie company Kerridge Odeon unsuccessfully requested permission in 1960 to establish seven radio stations in various cities. The first application for operating private television was made by G. Dryden in 1963. He wanted a station in the Auckland region. The application was unsuccessful (Ross, 1971, 34-5).
2. See the 'News Media Ownership Act 1965'.
3. W.S. McKinnon was influenced in his role as Chairman of the N.Z.B.C. by the article of Lord Normanbrook, Chairman of the B.B.c. Many of the ideas expressed by Normanbrook (1965) were utilised by McKinnon (Prcs. Com.)
4.

Radio Hauraki, Auckland	1XA
Radio i, Auckland	1X1
Radio Pacific, Auckland	1XP
Radio Magic 9 <sup>1</sup> FM	MJK
89 FM, Auckland	ROQ
898 FM, Hamilton	1JJJ
Radio Waikato, Hamilton	1XW
One Double-X, Whakatane	1XX
93FM, Hawkes Bay	
Radio 2XS PalmerstonNorth	2XS
Radio Windy 89 Wellington	2XW
Radio Avon Christchurch	3XA
4XO, Dunedin	4XO
Radio Central, Alexandra	4XA
Foveaux Radio, Invercargill	4XF

CHAPTER 8CONCLUDING REMARKS

This thesis has articulated a comprehensive account of the development of Broadcasting in New Zealand. It has chronicled the emergence of Radio and Television from the very early days of Wireless Telegraphy. It has looked at the various forces which have shaped the activity into its present form. Particular individuals, groups and specific structures have channelled the activity in distinct ways. Chapters three to seven follow the development of broadcasting; yet each chapter adopts a different emphasis, cutting into the subject matter in its own way, and is intended to emphasise changing and different conditions. Such an approach enables a capturing of both the sense of the development, the progression of an activity, and allows some exploration of the wide variety of forces which have shaped that activity.

This research has placed considerable stress upon the articulation of an account of broadcasting which accommodates both social structure and human agency. Many examinations of broadcasting, and indeed much social science research, has failed to develop social theory which reconciles both individuals and structures. People's ideas, emotions, aspirations and failings are often as determining on the nature of broadcasting as the structures inherent in our society. Consider for example the contribution of Scrimgeour. At various points of time and space his conceptions and actions were crucial to the development of broadcasting. Yet also important were the sets of relations which confronted him, offering him the opportunity to make such actions and reinforcing many of his decisions.

The dichotomy encountered in social theory between structure and agency can be resolved by reference to process. Many social theorists up to now have largely ignored the development of

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activities through time and space. The study of social change has remained largely the preserve of historians. An examination of process can provide social theorists with a unique insight which incorporates structures and agencies together. This enables activities to be studied in a manner which better reflects their involvement as a dynamic mixture of structure and agency.

This analysis followed the advice of Abrams (1982). By exploring the nature of events we can gain illustrative comment on the nature of the activity. Abrams sees events as 'decisive conjunctions of structuring at which human agency encounters social possibility'. The first Labour Government's action of nationalising private radio stations and establishing the Commercial Broadcasting Service is a good example of agency and structure meeting each other. Reformatations in the State-Economy and State-Civil Society relationships were to bring about a questioning of private enterprise in general. The new Labour Government, with an overwhelming mandate for reform, saw the private stations as a potential threat. Yet the conceptions of Prime Minister Savage were also influential in this development. His ideas and influence led to the establishment of a State-owned commercial radio service.

To adequately explore the development of broadcasting, it was necessary to look in detail at organisations. People and resources are grouped together, in time and space, by organisations to achieve courses of action. By their very nature, organisations cross the analytical boundaries of State, Economy and Civil society spheres. The actions taken by organisations may directly contradict the conceptions of one or more of these spheres.

Organisations such as the N.Z.B.C. embody a number of contradictions. The actions to gain advertising for television for instance, may run directly against the goal of a 'neutral' public service.

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For example, minority interest programmes during peak hours may be accorded a low priority in view of revenue crisis. Recognition of this requires thinking about organisations in terms of the demands of commodity production, (eg., in broadcasting advertising) and non-commodity uses (eg., in the public service principles of catering for needs). These two components are often incompatible providing a source of tension in the operations of the organisation.

The conceptions inherent in the organisations, provide a focal point for the operation of the activity. Often individuals will seek to renegotiate the dominant conceptions of an organisation. Shelly, for instance, successfully outlined concepts which sought to improve New Zealand's cultural tastes. Others have been less successful. Some have been expelled for their actions.

Organisations then must face considerable tensions, especially those developing from commodity - non-commodity production. This incompatibility is often the basis for reorganisation and change. The demise of organisations such as R.B.C.N.Z. or the N.Z.B.C., can in part be associated with an inability to resolve such dichotomies. The N.Z.B.C.'s overriding commitment to growth, and not to the development of social and programme ideals, was very influential in its demise as an organisation.

During this thesis, three particular aspects of the development were probed in detail. The first was centred on the development of technology. Radio and television are twentieth century products. The development and further refinement of that technology that granted their very existence, has been well documented. Any history of broadcasting must recognise the primary importance of that technology, but it must not also dominate that account. The technical ability to achieve something does not explain its implementation, impact, and further development. The introduction of television, for instance, was achieved decades after the technical achievement.

F.M. radio is a similar example. This thesis has acknowledged technology and explored its ramifications. Yet it has not centred the entire account upon it. Technology grants the possibilities; people, in particular, relationships, determine application.

The second major aspect explored by this thesis has been what might be labelled 'new conceptions of broadcasting'. The way broadcasting is conceived by people, and the meanings different sections of society attach to radio and television reveal much about the way it has developed. The exploration of new views put forward by prominent individuals and influential groups has been a major component of this thesis. The contributions of Shelly, for instance, were reinforced by his position of authority, and many of his ideas were assimilated into the broadcasting sector. The Radio Hauraki pirates showed that "unsanctioned" influences can also impart their meaning upon broadcasting. Their public defiance of a long standing policy on the exclusion of private enterprise captured the public's imagination and gained widespread popular support. This helped bring about a change in direction for broadcasting. The conceptions held by individuals as they confront possibilities are important. General conceptions such as the great New Zealand egalitarian ethos and the acceptability of producing for profit, have been influential.

The third aspect probed in detail by this thesis has been the changing nature of organisations. The processes involved in such change often involve tensions between those advocating commodity and non-commodity production. The tensions also reflect the reformations of the State, Economy and Civil Society relationships. The attached responsibility assumed by the State in the Economy and Civil society during the Second World War required a reorganisation in broadcasting. The amalgamation of two services was undertaken to accommodate new priorities.

Taken together these three avenues of inquiry reveal a number of very decisive 'breaks'. These are events of significance which make particular phases in the development of broadcasting. Some were in response to technological development, for example, the

introduction of television. The implementation of this technology required a new organisation to handle it. The first broadcasts of sound were a similar break, changing the nature of radio from a point to point communicator to a broadcaster from one site to multiple receivers.

Other breaks were more in response to changes in conceptions of broadcasting. The establishment of a multi-corporation broadcasting system under the third Labour Government is one example. The nationalisation of the 'B' stations by the predecessors is a similar instance.

Breaks also occurred in response to changing State Economy, Civil Society relationships. The reforms of the Second World War, for example were an important development. Many of these controls implemented during the state of emergency were retained for the 'planned' post war society.

New Zealand broadcasting has really been a product of the State. The State has overwhelmed the nature and development of the activity since its first inception. Private enterprise has to a large extent operated on the periphery, in a service sense. Their physical contribution has been dwarfed by the actions of the State. On the other hand, their contribution has been far from minor. They have stimulated the State Service with calls for, and demonstrations of innovative and lively broadcasting.

The State became dominant in broadcasting for two reasons. Firstly, at a very early stage the State recognised the potential power inherent in broadcasting and sought to restrain it. The actions taken by the 1903 Wireless Telegraphy Act completely pre-empted any radio service. The other cause of its dominance was that the State really was the only body which could develop radio, and later, television, along the lines demanded by the community. In a small nation, seemingly dedicated to the ideals of egalitarianism, the State was the only body which could develop a widespread, high quality, public broadcasting system.

Broadcasting has also developed a sense of unity, an idea of community amongst New Zealanders, and this has proved attractive to the State. Broadcasting has an ability to draw together, to unite. This ability has been well exploited at different times. It has been used to raise money (eg, Telethon), keep up morale, (eg, the War effort), and distribute information to widespread areas (eg, Civil Defence).

The operation of radio and television on different scales have also been important. After the development of a national microwave network, television has moved to a national scale, only rarely reverting to decentralised broadcasting. Radio operates on a variety of levels, but centres on the regional level. Radio's use of the local scale has enabled it to develop close links to people (eg, talkbacks). Private enterprise radio has sought to concentrate on the local regional frame, a framework which allows them to operate profitably alone in different areas.

The question of funding sits directly astride the major tensions discussed earlier. The license funded system reflects the principles of egalitarianism. Yet the public broadcasting system in recent years has faced increased costs with a static license fee. Advertising has had to provide the much needed revenue. But increased commercialism rests uneasily alongside the public service promoted device of the license fee system. Television, for instance, regularly schedules 'regional' advertising spots, utilising a previously untapped advertising market. Yet there is little programming of regional interest items on television apart from a short regional news segment.

Advertising, once scorned and rejected time and time again by critics and administrators alike, has now become a dominant and crucial part of the service. Funding has been an area where principles are tested. Adherence to non-commercial goals such as universal coverage and minority interest programmes cause higher costs. On the other hand a strictly commercial service under-utilises

the great potential of broadcasting. The balancing of these, commodity and non-commodity concerns, is critical to the acceptable provision of broadcasting.

In conclusion this thesis has endeavoured to forge a framework that reveals the nature of the development of broadcasting. It has attempted to incorporate both structure and agency into a meaningful explanation of the particular. By its very nature, broadcasting has had a complex and chequered development. Its influence has been brought to bear on many sectors of our society. This has necessitated an extended inquiry. The task was to examine the entire development of broadcasting in New Zealand. Many of the events popularly identified with broadcasting, have become more understandable through the approach taken in this investigation. The thesis has explored the progression through time and space, of some of the important forces which have shaped and channelled the provision of broadcasting in New Zealand.

Appendix I Members of New Zealand Cabinet Responsible  
for Broadcasting.

1893-1896	J.G. Ward	(Liberal)	x
1896-1899	R.J. Seddon	(Liberal)	x
1899-1912	J.G. Ward	(Liberal)	x
1912	H.G. Ell	(Liberal)	x
1912-1915	R.H. Rhodes	(Reform)	x
1915-1919	Sir J.G. Ward	(National Coalition)	x
1919-1925	J.G. Coates	(Reform)	x
1925-1926	Sir J. Parr	(Reform)	x
1926-1928	W. Nosworthy	(Reform)	x
1928-1929	J.B. Donald	(Liberal-United)	x
1929-1930	Sir J.G. Ward	(Liberal-United)	x
1930-1931	J.B. Donald	(Liberal-United)	x
1931-1935	A. Hamilton	(Coalition)	x
1935-1936	F. Jones	(Labour)	x
1936-1940	M.J. Savage	(Labour)	+
1940-1944	D. Wilson	(Labour)	+
1944-1949	F. Jones	(Labour)	+
1949-1951	F.W. Doidge	(National)	+
1951-1957	R.M. Algie	(National)	+
1957-1960	R. Boord	(Labour)	+
1960-1963	A.E. Kinsella	(National)	*
1963-1967	W.J. Scott	(National)	*
1967-1969	L.R. Adams-Schneider	(National)	*
1969-1972	H.J. Walker	(National)	*
1972-1975	R.O. Douglas	(Labour)	*
1975	F.M. Colman	(Labour)	x
1975-1981	H.C. Templeton	(National)	*
1981-1984	Dr. I. Shearer	(National)	*
1984-	J. Hunt	(Labour)	*

\*Minister of Broadcasting  
+Minister in Charge of Broadcasting  
xPostmaster-General responsible.

(Official N.Z. Yearbooks 1936-1960)  
(Scholefield, 1950)  
(Wilson, 1969)  
(Lambert and Palenski, 1982)

Appendix IIA CHRONOLOGY OF NEW ZEALAND BROADCASTING

- 1894 Rutherford experiments successfully at Canterbury.
- 1895 Wireless telegraph invented by Marconi.
- 1903, Jan. Passmore sends signals 200 yards
- 1903, Winter Passmore sends signals 6 miles
- 1903 THE WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY ACT
- 1906 Otago Boys High School experiments  
Wireless transmission of speech and music in USA (Fessenden). This established the feasibility of radio telephony and radio broadcasting.
- 1908 POST AND TELEGRAPH ACT
- 1914 Prof. of Physics at Otago, Dr. Robert Jack becomes involved in broadcasting. Labelled 'prophet of broadcasting' and is its first practitioner.
- 1919 Prof. Jack resumes experiments after war.
- 1921 A number of visiting ships in New Zealand made broadcasts in New Zealand waters, e.g., the EASTERN PLANET in Lyttleton, 20 August.
- 1921, Nov 17. First a series of long ranging concerts broadcast in Dunedin. This really planted broadcasting in New Zealand.
- 1922, Feb. First broadcasting station takes to the air in Wellington non commercial and private and was owned by the International Electric Co.
- 1922, Mid. Auckland followed with a radio station.
- Parliament proposed to divide the country into a number of administrative areas (8,6 or 4 of them) to then issue licences.
- 1922, Aug. Mr D.G. Sullivan, MP questioned the Government's intention to operate a national radio service. Mr Coates replied that the Government preferred to follow whatever policy was decided in Great Britain.

- 1922, End Six New Zealand associations were engaged in broadcasting of a somewhat sporadic nature for the entertainment of 572 holders of listeners permits.
- 1923, Jan 18 "RADIO TELEGRAPH REGULATIONS FOR AMATEUR EXPERIMENTAL AND BROADCASTING STATIONS" gazetted. These contained a series of four radio districts a plan of future distribution of radio stations etc.
- 1923 The N.Z. Dairy Co., sought permission to establish a radio station to broadcast to its farmers in the Waikato. This was the first concrete proposal that the Government had received and was liked by the Postmaster-General but not by Cabinet who did not want to develop broadcasting regionally.
- 1923, May 21 First Broadcasting Licence issued under the Regulations to Radio Service Ltd of Auckland. Eighteen other stations would be licenced this year.
- 1923, Nov Government expressed a desire for a dominion wide scheme of broadcasting and controlled by an organisation under semi-Government control.
- 1923 By the end of 1923, 2,000 receiving licences had been issued.
- 1924, Oct POST AND TELEGRAPH AMENDMENT ACT. This provided that part of the licence revenue could be paid in assistance of persons or companies who in consideration of payment under this section agree to undertake a broadcasting service.
- 1925, March New Radio Regulations were gazetted. These regulations most notably increased the annual listeners fee from 5/- to 30/-
- 1925, April A Government subsidy of £15 per week was instituted for one station in each of the four main centres.
- 1925, Winter Coates became Prime Minister, he was previously Postmaster-General.
- Goodfellow announced that he was prepared to establish a radio station in Auckland if it could broadcast to all the suppliers in the Waikato.

- 1925, Aug 22           The Government (The Reform Party) contracted with the newly formed Radio Broadcasting Company Ltd. (Goodfellow and Harris were Trustees). A five year contract to purchase 4 stations, one each in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. The Company was to be funded with Private shareholdings, licence fees for operating costs, and Government loans for capital expansion.  
The company was given 6 months to commence broadcasting.
- 1925, Nov 25           1YA passed into company control.
- 1926 Feb               Delays in the manufacturing end of the station plant meant that the company would be unable to meet the 6 month deadline so an extension was granted to the end of June.
- 1926, Aug              1YA in service.
- 1926, Sept             3YA in service.
- 1926, End             The Government accepted the company proposal that the new Wellington station should be increased in power ten fold. (5,000 watts instead of 500).  
The Government secured a first mortgage over the plant and £15000.
- 1928                  The United Party came to power but depended on the small Labour Party for support.  
At this time the company was looking forward to the opening of the last metropolitan station they had undertaken to build.
- 1928, Oct             THE COPYRIGHT (TEMPORARY) AMENDMENT ACT set up a one man commission (Mr A.D. Thompson of Lower Hutt) to determine the percentage of licence fees to be paid to the Australasian Performing Rights Association from 1 October 1927 to 31 August 1929.
- 1928, End             Three Dunedin stations (4ZL, 4ZM & 4ZO) circularised the remaining 5 stations owned and operated by various business firms (1ZB, 1ZQ, 2ZM and 2ZK and 3ZC) suggesting that they form an association in order to make some effort to get some monetary return for trouble incurred in the running of the station.  
During this year 10 private radio stations were functioning, two of those were operated by radio societies.

- 1929, Jan A conference of radio dealers in Wellington debated various schemes for the 'B' stations service.
- 1930 Ward succeeded by Forbes. Before the 1931 election Forbes enticed the Reform Party into a coalition, with him remaining as Prime Minister, and Coates as Minister of Unemployment and another Reform Leader, Downie Stewart as Minister of Finance. The Empire SW service proposal gained the approval of the delegates to the Imperial Conference but when the scheme was placed before the Governments of the Dominions, they appreciated its value but felt unable to give financial support.
- 1930, Sept 11 Meeting held in the 'B' station stronghold of Dunedin discussed the proposed Copyright demands of the Performing Rights Association, more than 1,000 people attended and the first branch of the New Zealand Listeners League was formed at the meeting.
- 1930, Oct Unexpectedly the Postmaster-General, J.B. Donald told Parliament that his Department would take control of the Broadcasting Service when the contract expired in 1931. The intention to nationalise was warmly received by the Labour Party and attacked by the Opposition (Reform) and generally ill received by the radio-audience.
- 1931, April 14 Broadcasting to schools was inaugurated from 2YA.
- 1931, June The P.G. was searching for a suitable successor to the Company and he invited its suggestions. They proposed a public company, which was considered but no part was accepted. A Bill to make broadcasting a State enterprise was introduced by P.G. Donald.
- 1931, Sept A UNITED-REFORM Coalition came to be Government and they lengthened the life of Parliament to four years. The new P.G. Adam Hamilton, although from the Reform and Private-enterprise wing of the Coalition he freely accepted the principles of State control.

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1931, Nov.

The Bill was passed - a public corporation was established with a board to carry on public broadcasting services to develop and improve these, and in part to be funded by licence fees. The board was given power to take over existing stations on Ministerial authority and did take over four stations (1YA, 2YA, 3YA and 4YA) of the broadcasting company, established four new stations in the main centres and provided programme services to private provincial 'B' stations. One of the first acts of the new board was the appointment of a coverage commission. Another one of the board's early acts was the issuing of a questionnaire which was sent out to all listeners. It was answered by 24,000 people, 40% of those sent out.

A New Zealand Alliance of 'B' Stations was formed under the leadership of 1ZR, Auckland and 2ZW Wellington. The Alliance kept the interests of members continually before the notice of members of Parliament and of the public.

1932, Jan 1

The Act's changes took effect but neither the members of the board nor its employees were members of the Public Service. An advisory council was established consisting of 8 members for the purpose of advising the board in respect to its functions.

1932

Auckland 'B' stations interests, organised by the 1ZR club at the instance of Rev, C.G. Scrimgeour petitioned Parliament for a share of the radio licence revenue or alternatively that they be allowed to indicate in their announcements of a limited number of programmes addresses, and products of their sponsors.

In Wellington a deputation introduced by Peter Fraser MP weighted on the PG to protest against a reported intention to limit sponsorship on 'B' stations.

Television was demonstrated by Zuorykin overseas. The BBC SW service to the Empire was officially opened.

1932, Sept

An agreement is reached between the Post and Telegraph department and provision is made for payment to the board of 5/6 of the licence fees received from the listeners.

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- 1933, Sept Mr J.K. Woods, Secretary of the NZ Federation of 'B' stations made it public that he had been advised by the PG that after 31 March 1934 no 'B' station would be permitted to broadcast sponsored programmes. Meanwhile during the course of the year, the Government bought out the leading 'B' class stations 1ZR Auckland and 2ZW Wellington.
- 1934 Parliament decided on the retention of broadcasting as a public utility.
- 1934, March 31 After this date no sponsored programmes were permitted on private radio stations.
- 1935, March The Regulation against the broadcast of controversial material was revoked and the board was given the responsibility of deciding what should be broadcast.
- 1935, April THE BROADCASTING AMENDMENT ACT 1934-35 This restored a prohibition on advertising and the board was given the task of supervising all stations programme output with the power to recommend to the Minister that licences be cancelled for non compliance with its standards. It also placed a ceiling on the number of private stations that might be licenced, the total not to exceed those licenced on the 31 March 1935. The licence fee was reduced from 30s to 25s from 1 April. The board was given a new composition as two members were to be nominated by organisations which were representative of the holders of receiving licences.
- 1935, Aug The plight of the 'B' stations was further aggravated by claims for compensation for the use of copyright discs of Gramophone manufacturers. The national stations and 8 private stations subsidised by the broadcasting board were not affected as they were covered by an agreement with the Gramophone Companies.
- 1935, Sept A conference of 'B' stations in Wellington passes resolutions in favour of complete freedom of the air, the removal of the ban on controversial matter, and for the obtaining of revenue by unrestricted advertising. These resolutions were put before the Prime Minister by a deputation from the conference who replied that the Government's policy was against advertising.

- 1935, Nov  
Shortly before the General Election, the transmissions of 1ZR Auckland were jammed, allegedly by the Government who feared the influence of the broadcast against them in the General Election.
- 1935, Nov 27  
GENERAL ELECTION  
Labour gains 28 seats and won office.
- 1931-1936  
Many amateur stations are forced to close due to funding restrictions.
- 1936, May  
The Postmaster-General announced that the Government had yet not decided whether the broadcasting board would be abolished, reconstituted or altered in some way.
- 1936, July 1  
BROADCASTING ACT  
This abolished the board and established a Government Department. THE NEW ZEALAND BROADCASTING SERVICE with a Director answerable to the Minister of Broadcasting. Labour continued a policy of no new private warrants to be issued and the remaining private stations accountable to the Minister. The Act also empowered the Minister to establish commercial stations and prohibited advertising from other stations public and private.  
The Prime Minister, M.J. Savage became the first Minister of Broadcasting.
- 1936, July 6  
Director of Broadcasting appointed - Prof. J. Shelley
- 1936, Sept.  
M. Savage announced that Parliament would be broadcast.
- 1936, Oct. 30  
1ZB opens commercial transmission.
- 1936, Oct  
Scrimgeour appointed Director of the Commercial Broadcasting Service.
- 1936, Nov.  
With the commercial service underway, the Government turned somewhat impatiently to the private stations. All stations had to be valued by November 1936.
- 1937, April  
Firm offers were made by the Government for the purchase of private stations. Replies requested by 30 April.

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- 1937, Dec. By Christmas, 15 stations were purchased.
- 1938, March In the course of 20 months the Government had bought 20 stations for a shade more than £20,000
- 1938, Aug Controversy surrounds the Director of the Commercial Service accused of misusing broadcasting as a Public Servant.
- 1939 N.Z. Listener founded.
- 1939, Feb 17 A special meeting is held between the Combined Control of Navigational Aids Committee and representatives of the Censorship and Publicity Committee to discuss what to do about the control of broadcasting stations in an emergency. They were concerned that broadcasting stations constitute excellent navigational aids to shipping and aircraft.
- 1939, Sept 3 War against Germany is declared in New Zealand.
- 1939, Sept 5 A comprehensive memorandum was issued by the Controller regarding the Censorship of Advertising Copy.
- 1939, Sept. The NBS mounted a 24 hour listening watch on BBC transmissions. (It was through the 2YA control rooms that news often first reached New Zealand). The declaration of war by Britain against Germany was one such case.
- 1940, Feb, 7 Preliminary plans for a mobile broadcasting and recording unit to accompany New Zealand troops to Africa were placed before the Minister of Broadcasting.
- 1940, March Prime Minister Savage dies and is succeeded by Peter Fraser.
- 1940, July A War Cabinet is announced.
- 1941, Jan. The War Cabinet initiates enquiry into steps which might be taken to reduce or rationalise the broadcasting service, the desired aim being the freeing up of manpower and expertise.

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- 1941, March A committee of enquiry is set up to look at wartime rationalisation as directed by the War Cabinet. They travelled widely in the following months.
- 1941, July, 23 The committee of inquiry reported to the Minister ways in which there might be wartime rationalisation of the broadcasting service. They recommended considerable amalgamation of the NBS and the NCBS.
- 1942, Aug 21 The War Cabinet passed the recommendation that the technical staffs of both the broadcasting services to be amalgamated under the control of the Chief Engineer of the NBS.
- 1942, Nov Scrimgeour was balloted for service in the Armed Services no normal request from Government for the exemption of a Government H.O.D.
- 1943, Feb Scrimgeour suspended from duties, suspension lifted after he signed an agreement.
- 1943, May 3 A radio service was arranged for daily broadcasts of NZ news to troops in the Pacific.
- 1943, June Scrimgeour about to enter camp and was dismissed as a controller.
- 1943 The amalgamation of the two broadcasting services by the STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT 1943, produced a unified NZBS under a single Director of Broadcasting.
- 1945, June 20 Ban on weather forecasts lifted.
- 1945 After the war broadcasting was able to go back to its put aside plans. But they were subject to many post-war restrictions.
- 1946, April 1 The departmental name changed from National Broadcasting Service to New Zealand Broadcasting Service.
- 1946, Oct, 24 The New Zealand Broadcasting Service Orchestra was established.
- 1946, Nov, 2 The North Island Travelling Recording Unit established.

- 1948, Sept, 27 Short-wave division NZBS commences regular transmissions.
- 1949 Television made the subject of investigation by an inter-departmental committee
- 1949, Nov. The Labour Government is defeated and the National Government takes over in December, pledged to fewer controls and more competition.
- 1951 Mr N.R. Palmer (Supervising Engineer) and Mr S.W. MacDonald (Developing Engineer) both of the NZBS sent overseas to study TV developments and to represent the NZBS at the 6th Plenary Assembly of International Radio Consultative Committee in Geneva.
- 1952 UHF Television developed greatly expanding the number of potential channels.
- 1953 Colour television developed.
- 1957, April Cabinet considers the need to establish a Royal Commission to look at the introduction of television.
- 1957, Nov. National Government is defeated and a Labour Government assumes office in December.
- 1958, Aug Government announced that a 625 line system would be adopted as the standard for television and certain VHF channels would be reserved for TV use.
- 1959, Feb, 23 Experimental TV station established in Auckland by the NZBS.
- 1960, Jan, 28 Government announced that a television system incorporating both commercial and non-commercial services would be established and operated by the NZBS
- 1960, Jan BROADCASTING AMENDMENT ACT 1960  
This provided for the establishment of a television service to be operated by the Minister in charge of broadcasting in association with the existing Broadcasting Service.

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- 1960, June 1                   Auckland Channel 2 opens.
- 1960, Nov                      The Labour Government is defeated
- 1961                            THE BROADCASTING CORPORATION ACT 1961  
repealed all previous legislation and  
established a corporation of three members  
to take over and operate existing services  
from 1 April 1962. The Act provides that  
the corporation may after considering the  
services already available in a locality call  
for applications or make recommendations to  
the Minister of Broadcasting on the granting  
of warrants for the establishment and  
operation of private broadcasting and TV  
stations. The corporation continued to  
supervise and control programmes broadcast  
by any stations so licenced. In this year  
Pye, Woller and Kerridge sought to operate  
private TV stations. Kerridge tendered to  
operate 7 stations in the four main centres  
and 3 provincial areas.  
Stereo FM discovered, providing a new  
dimension to radio broadcasting.  
Advertising on TV commences in New Zealand  
at Auckland.
- 1961, June 1                  Christchurch begins TV transmission
- 1961, July                    Wellington begins TV transmission.
- 1962, April 1                 THE NEW ZEALAND BROADCASTING CORPORATION  
comes into operation.
- 1962                            The NZBC establishes its own independent  
and comprehensive news service.  
Dunedin begins TV transmission.
- 1963, March                  50% of the population were receiving  
a satisfactory standard of television service.
- 1964                            A \$15 million development scheme announced by  
the Government to improve television service  
by increased power and additional relay  
stations.
- 1965                            The NZBC's board was increased from three to  
seven.
- 1966, Dec, 6                 Radio Hauraki commenced broadcasting outside  
New Zealand territorial waters in the Hauraki  
Gulf and outside the law. Televised political  
broadcasts begin as did regular coverage of  
the parties annual conferences.

- 1967, April 3           The television broadcasting hours of the four regional services was extended to 65 hours per week.
- 1967                    An amendment to the Broadcasting Corporation Act allowed the Director General of the corporation to be appointed by the corporation itself rather than by the Governor-General in council on the recommendation of the corporation, but the Amendment specified that the Director-General's salary was to be paid out of the consolidated revenue account. It was to be "such salary as may be from time to time appropriated by Parliament".
- 1968, Nov             THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY ACT 1968 established an independent authority (Tribunal) to consider and adjudicate upon the applications for warrants, to ensure the holders comply with the conditions of the warrants and the rules of the Authority, and to advise the Minister on broadcasting matters. This Act blocked attempts by newspaper companies to enter radio by limiting their possible shareholding to 35%. It also stipulated that no one person or company could run more than one radio station.
- 1969, July            An announcement is made by a consortium of companies, (UEB Industries Ltd, Kerridge Odeon Corporation Ltd., Wright Stephenson and J. Watties Canneries Ltd.) that they intend to apply for warrants to operate a national television network and radio stations in the four main centres.
- 1969, Nov            A national micro-wave network for television which enabled the four regional services to be brought together for the up to the minute presentation of news and current affairs material.
- 1969                   The Minister of Broadcasting asks the New Zealand Broadcasting Authority to conduct an inquiry into the need for a second channel, and into the best way to introduce 'private enterprise' competition as well as into the possibility of public share-participation and the protection of New Zealand Ownership and independence.
- 1970                   The public private control debate began to once more gain some heat.

- 1970, June           The NZBC announces that it will seek approval to operate the second channel itself on the grounds that it already had the facilities for duplicating channels at minimum expense.
- 1971                   Inquiry by the NZ Broadcasting Authority into television services (the Peacock report)  
It considered:  
- the need for a second channel  
- the best way for introducing private competition.  
- the consequences of any action or non action.  
The recommendations to introduce a second channel were taken up with the Government.
- 1972                   The radio licence fee was abolished.
- 1972, Nov             Labour Government elected.
- 1973, Jan             The Labour Government announces that the NZBC would be abolished and replaced by three separate corporations (2 television and 1 radio) and a Broadcasting Council to provide common services.
- 1973, July 31         A general review of broadcasting was undertaken by the New Zealand committee on broadcasting (the Adam Committee)
- 1973                   Labour introduces its Broadcasting Act in which it established three separate corporations for Radio, TV One and TV Two. It eliminated the post of Minister of Broadcasting and made the Postmaster-General responsible for warrant renewals. It excluded the granting of warrants for additional private stations and charged Radio New Zealand with the task of from time to time to develop extend and improve a radio broadcasting system for the whole of New Zealand.
- 1974                   Colour transmission was introduced into New Zealand.
- 1975, March, 31       The NZBC is abolished
- 1975, April, 1        The three corporations and council becomes operational. The Minister of Broadcasting is abolished.
- 1975, Nov.            National Government elected.
- 1976, April 1.        The post of Minister of Broadcasting is reinstated by the National Government.

- 1976, June           The Communications Commission is established by Government to advise it on developments in Telecommunications including broadcasting.
- 1976                 They repealed the 1973 Act with their BROADCASTING ACT 1976 which took effect from April 1977.  
The Broadcasting Tribunal powers were re-strengthened and the system was made accountable to the Minister. The Tribunal was responsible to issue warrants, transfer revoke, change, conditions and so forth.
- 1977, April         The Communications Commission presents its report entitled "Telecommunications in New Zealand".
- 1980                 A Broadcasting Amendment Act unified the two TV corporations into a two channel one corporation affair.
- 1980, Oct           The warrant for RNZ station 2YB is amended to provide for 120 hours per month of "access programmes".
- 1981                 The BCNZ calls for tenders to supply programmes for unused television times.
- 1982, May           The Government withdraws its financial support for the SW transmissions to the Pacific. The corporation decides to continue the service in the meantime.
- 1982, June 21       Northern Television begins broadcasting "GOOD MORNING".
- 1983                 Satellite dishes "eavesdropping" on satellite cause some problems for the Post Office.
- 1983, Oct           Postmaster-General Talbot announces that TV satellite reception systems could be used privately without fear of prosecution provided they are not distributed beyond the immediate confines of premises in which the Satellite reception equipment is housed.

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- 1984, June A third television system is announced which is to be privately owned on a regional base with a national news network. The network is to be based on four regions:
- 1) Auckland/Northland
  - 2) Waikato/Bay of Plenty
  - 3) Wellington/Manawatu/Hawkes Bay/Wairarapa.
  - 4) Christchurch/Dunedin/Invercargill
- 1984, June 14 Snap election called Labour Party pledge to establish a Royal Commission on future of broadcasting.
- 1984, July 14 Fourth Labour Government elected in a landslide result. Minister of Broadcasting, Dr. Ian Shearer loses his seat.
- 1984, Aug. Decision on third channels to be reassessed by the new Government. Royal Commission confirmed by new Minister of Broadcasting, J. Hunt.

Appendix IIIABBREVIATIONS

A.J.H.R.	Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand.
A.P.R.A.	Australasian Performing Rights Association.
A.T.L.	Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.
A.W.A.	Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd.
B.B.C.	British Broadcasting Corporation.
B.C.	Broadcasting - abbreviation in catalogue at National Archives.
B.C.N.Z.	Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand.
C.A.C.	Communications Advisory Council
Comm Comm	Communications Commission.
C.R.R. (1941)	Committee Rationalisation of Radio. Being the report to the Committee appointed by the Honourable Minister in Charge of Broadcasting on 24 March 1941, to examine the possibility of Rationalisation of the two radio broadcasting services and to submit proposals for the release of radio technicians for service in connection with the War effort.
d.	Dated
D.C.T.V.	Departmental Committee to advise the Government on the problems associated with the establishment of television services in New Zealand. est. 18 July 1949.
Gazette	The New Zealand Gazette Government Printer, Wellington.
Hansard	New Zealand Parliamentary Debates.
l.	Letter
M.S.	Manuscript Section Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington

N.B.S.	National Broadcasting Service
N.C.B.S.	National Commercial Broadcasting Service
Nat. Ar.	National Archives
N.Z.B.A.	New Zealand Broadcasting Authority
N.Z.B.C.	New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation 1961-1975
N.Z.B.S.	New Zealand Broadcasting Service predecessor ; National Broadcasting Service name established 1 April 1946 changed to N.Z.B.C. 1961
N.Z.C.B.	The Broadcasting Future for New Zealand Report of the New Zealand Committee on Broadcasting 1973
N.Z. Min. Br.	New Zealand Minister of Broadcasting
P.S.	Press Statement
Pers. Comm.	Personal Communication
R.B.C.N.Z.	Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand Ltd.
S.A.	Sound Archives.
Statutes.	New Zealand Statutes.

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