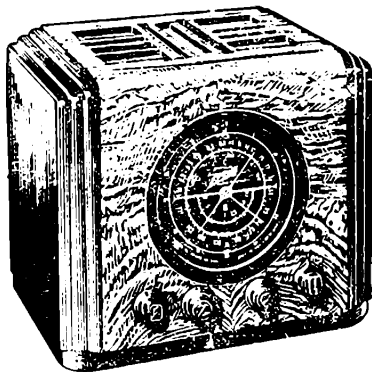


Alabang hills and looking straight into the glories of a Philippine sunset. By some occult legerdemain a Rembrandt has been brushing the canvas of the western skies. He has painted a king's dais there, in the midst of a roval court; and he has flanked it with halberdiers and gayly compared lords and lackeys. Into such resplendence the King himself steps for a moment, with flowing purple robes, golden bordered. The effulgence of mighty chandeliers sheds over the ensemble a matchless radiance ... for moments hardly to be reckoned, before Night's sable curtains shut it all away into shadow.



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Registration Of Radio Receivers And Government Financial Aid To Broadcasting Stations

Many people are unaware that we have a law (Act 3397, as amended by Commonwealth Act 107) requiring that all radio receiving sets be registered under the supervision of the Secretary of Public Works and Communications. The Act requires that all sets with the exception of those operated for official purposes by the U. S. and Philippine governments, must be registered within 30 days after their acquisition.

The purpose of this law is primarily to raise revenue through the collection of license fees. These are fixed at P10 per annum for tube sets, and P2 per annum for crystal sets. The Bureau of Internal Revenue makes the collections through the city and municipal treasurers. About 36,000 sets have been registered, and about P120,000 is collected yearly from this source.

This income is used for the purchase and distribution of radio sets among municipalities and government institutions, for financial assistance to "a station or stations which can serve satisfactorily throughout the Philippines for broadcasting, a minimum of 6 hours daily of government news, information and education, and other programs of interest or entertainment to the general public," and for general expenses.

Under this system, one station receives financial assistance out of the income derived from radio registration fees. The system has been criticised on several grounds:

First, it is argued that use of government money to assist any radio broadcasting station, whether privately owned or not, is discriminatory since the better-to-do only can afford to own radios and thus get the benefit of programs indirectly financed through this tax. Proponents of the system refute this by pointing out that radio stations should be helped here, since business houses either cannot afford, or have not been educated to the use of radio for advertising. While the number of sponsored programs has steadily increased, they do not yet bring in enough revenue to maintain first-class stations on the air. Also, it is argued, the registration fees also pay for the purchase and installation of radios in municipalities and government institutions—a direct benefit to the people.

Second, critics of the system point to the large number of radio receiver owners who evade the tax. It is estimated that not more than half of these people have ever paid a license fee. It is not to be denied that, if the system is to continue, it should be made more equitable by collecting all of the tax from everyone who should pay it.

The third argument is perhaps the most cogent. He who controls the purse strings, controls all, and, if broadcasting stations are dependent on government money for their existence, it will not be long before the government will be dictating the type of programs to be presented. In fact, it is entirely possible that government officials may present some or all of the programs themselves, in the end.

Those who visualize this possibility point to the fact that the National Information Board now broadcasts three out of the four news broadcasts going out over KZRM

daily. An assemblyman recently seized upon this fact as a dangerous omen when the budget of the National Information Board was brought before the Assembly for consideration.

Broadcasting by government agencies or bureaus is no new thing. In England the British Broadcasting Company has a monopoly over broadcasting, and it is a government agency. There the objection is not to the quality of the programs broadcast, but to their unvarying monotony. This business of uplift is all right, but too much of it can become obnoxious. The British people have no objection to education, and the finer things of life, but they frequently long for some good, plain, old-fashioned entertainment over the air for entertainment's sake.

Radio broadcasting in the United States has reached its present position of near-perfection through competition. There are so many stations, all competing for the ear of the public, and such a large number of business concerns using radio for advertising by means of sponsored programs, that the ingenuity of advertising men, artists, radio technicians and others in the game has been taxed to the limit to provide programs which will hold the listeners' attention. It is so easy to twist a dial and get another station.

Such magnificent programs as "The March of Time," presented over NBC's blue network once a week, the "Standard Symphony Hour," presented by the Standard Oil Company, the "Kraft Music Hall," with Bing Crosby as Master of Ceremonies, could only be possible where unrestricted competition calls forth men's best efforts.

It must not be forgotten, however, that these programs are also broadcast primarily to make money. Scores of other programs equally good that may be heard every night in the United States are profitable for broadcasting companies, as well as entertaining and informative to listeners. When "Time" first announced that it would broadcast "The March of Time," it stated frankly that it would drop the feature immediately it began to lose money. Until there is enough business here to pay the broadcasting stations for their efforts, it may be necessary for them to accept government money, and all that may go with it.

Station KZIB Forges Ahead

The story of radio broadcasting station KZIB is a story of struggle, courage and public service. It was begun many years ago by Beck's Department Store, when radios were few in the Philippines, and it has broadcast its programs without interruption ever since its founding.

It is no secret that broadcasting stations here lost money for years after they were founded. Radio did not catch on here as quickly as it did in the United States, and the radio audience consequently remained small. Beck's was not discouraged; it had anticipated losses when the station was started, and it kept on, not only maintaining the quality of the programs, but constantly improving them.

(Please turn to page 56)