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BROADCASTING

By
HILDA MATHESON



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PREFACE

THE limitations of this little book should be made clear at the outset. It is no handbook of broadcasting activities throughout the world; it contains only the briefest mention of the way in which wireless works; there is no list of existing stations, no mention of kilocycles, no discussion of the personalities responsible for broadcasting development. All these things are liable to change with the moon, and they are best studied in the many excellent radio year-books and periodicals. The chapters which follow represent an attempt to sketch an outline map of a new country. Broadcasting has grown up so quickly, its results have been in some ways so remarkable, the area covered is so vast, that a bird's-eye view of its territory as a whole, however superficial and incomplete, may help the student of social institutions to discover its distinguishing features more clearly than a detailed study of a single part.

There is another reason for the general form this book has taken. Broadcasting,

PREFACE

whether as a commercial enterprise or as a public service, is ultimately governed by the ordinary listener, whose patronage directly or indirectly provides its revenues. The future of broadcasting rests collectively upon every citizen, upon his alert scrutiny, his intelligent co-operation. This sketch-map may perhaps enable readers to fill in for themselves the peaks, the deserts, the quagmires and the volcanos which they may find in their own particular landscapes. In other words, it may help them to judge the programmes to which they themselves listen and for which they are in a sense responsible, with that severely critical appreciation which all good broadcasters desire and which right development demands.

The experience upon which these chapters are based was gained in the course of six years' service with the British Broadcasting Corporation. For much of what is in them I am indebted to conversations and discussions throughout those years with colleagues too numerous to mention, to whom I would like to express my gratitude. I owe grateful thanks to Mr. Levering Tyson of the National Advisory Committee on Radio in Education, to Mr. César Saerchinger of the Columbia Broadcasting System, and to Mr. William Hard for valuable material concerning American broadcasting. And I am under a debt:

PREFACE

which will be apparent throughout, to those who have helped, by their own contribution to programmes, to make broadcasting what it is to-day. Most of what I believe about broadcasting and its future has grown from possibilities of which they have themselves given me the proof.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	PREFACE	5
I	THE BEGINNING OF BROADCASTING .	13
II	THE BACKGROUND OF BROADCASTING .	39
III	LIVING SPEECH	59
IV	PUBLIC OPINION	84
V	LITERATURE AND DRAMA	109
VI	MUSIC	133
VII	ENTERTAINMENT	158
VIII	EDUCATION	176
IX	BROADCASTING AND THE STATE	207
X	TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW	225
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	247
	INDEX	255

Well might we ask what Beauty ever could live or thrive
in our crowded democracy under governance
of such politic fancy as a farmer would show
who cultivated weeds in hope of good harvest :
and yet hath modern culture enrich'd a wasting soil ;
Science comforting man's animal poverty
and leisuring his toil, hath humanized manners
and social temper, and now above her globe-spread net
of speeded intercourse hath outrun all magic,
and disclosing the secrecy of the reticent air
hath woven a seamless web of invisible strands
spiriting the dumb inane with the quick matter of life ;
Now music's prison'd rapture and the drown'd voice
of truth,
mantled in light's velocity, over land and sea
are omnipresent, speaking aloud to every ear,
into every heart and home their unhinder'd message,
the body and soul of Universal Brotherhood.

ROBERT BRIDGES,
The Testament of Beauty,
Book I, ll. 717-733.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY
AND INDEX**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE field from which books on broadcasting might be chosen is at once too large and too small to make selection easy. It is too small in the sense that much that is written is of necessity out of date in a short time ; it is too large in the sense that the total output of reports, pamphlets, periodicals, year-books and other publications of broadcasting authorities would fill a library. In the following list reference is made only to what is available in English ; but it must be pointed out that a great deal of material on programme and juridical questions exists in German, and some in French.

TECHNICAL

A general understanding of the way in which broadcasting works, and of its scientific basis and limitations, is in a sense essential to any judgement of what it provides. There are a number of introductions to wireless intended for the non-scientific reader. Here it may be enough to mention the recent volume on *Wireless* by Dr. Eccles in this series.

Another side of the technical field is studio acoustics, in which broadcasting authorities and the gramophone industry have alike conducted experiments. *Broadcasting House*, a technical description published by the B.B.C. (5s.), and the special number of the *Architectural Review* (August 1932) devoted to the same subject, are both worth consulting, as well as papers by Noel Ashbridge, Chief Engineer of the B.B.C., in *Engineering*, October 16th and 23rd, 1931.

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INDEX

- Acoustics, 46, 151, 159
Administration, 34-5, 47, 49,
52, 56-8, 95, 231-40, 244
Adult Education, 193-206
Advertisement, 21, 23, 26, 27,
28, 32-3, 36, 213, 233
America (or United States),
21-8, 36, 44, 56, 63-4, 67,
85, 89, 91-2, 93, 100-1,
105-6, 120, 135-6, 150, 171,
181, 183, 186, 197, 199, 201,
209-10, 221, 231, 235-6,
243, 245
Announcers, 48, 53-6, 66-8,
89, 204
B.B.C., 30-4, 46, 62, 67, 69, 71,
90, 124, 127-9, 139, 146-50,
153, 171, 181, 194, 196,
210-11, 230, 235-6
Books, 72-3, 75, 112, 116,
126, 132, 170, 185, 190,
192-3, 195
Censorship, 26, 236, 239
Children, 50, 62, 136, 139-43,
168-71, 178-87, 189-90
Churches, 27, 49, 52, 70-1,
103, 136-7, 150
Cinema, 28, 37, 65, 85, 103,
112, 121, 134, 145, 188, 213,
228, 231
Columbia Broadcasting Sys-
tem, 25, 232
Commercial broadcasting,
23-4, 26-8, 35, 201, 231-3
Communications, 14, 16, 19,
22, 29, 42, 45, 85, 230
Correspondence, 62, 79, 138,
190, 245
Crawford Report, 33
Denmark, 35, 79, 193, 233,
245
Discussions, 49, 77, 92, 94,
99, 195, 197, 199
Education, 16, 21, 30, 62, 69,
72, 86, 96, 116, 136, 139-43,
174, 176-206, 232
Farmers, 21, 50, 191-2, 211,
244
Federal Radio Commission,
25
Finance, 24, 27, 32, 33, 36,
149, 200-1
France, 28, 30, 35, 86
Free speech, 37, 198-200, 209,
233-7, 239
Germany, 29-30, 35, 46, 48,
101, 117, 120, 135, 146, 150,
153, 186, 195, 216, 233, 243
Gramophone, 18, 47, 69, 71,
124, 136, 151, 155, 175, 228
Group-listening, 195-7
Housewives, 50, 126, 188-90
India, 64, 155, 202-5
International aspects, 16, 30,
36, 43-4, 85, 92, 93, 98, 99,
102-4, 108, 115, 155, 182-3,
198, 207, 212-16, 223, 231,
238-9
International Broadcasting
Union, 43, 44, 156, 238
Italy, 30, 135, 153

INDEX

- Japan, 62, 155, 210, 221
 League of Nations, 103-4,
 178, 182, 212, 236, 239
 Listening, 27, 49, 80-1, 111-
 12, 121, 124-5, 133, 136-8,
 148, 150-3, 156-9, 161-2,
 165-6, 173, 176, 195-7, 207,
 226-8, 241-2, 244-6
 Madrid Conference, 43, 44
 Mechanization, 13, 15, 144,
 151, 240-1
 Military requirements, 22, 33,
 41-3, 220, 224
 Minorities, 36-7, 209, 239
 Monopoly, 27, 34, 36, 192,
 235, 237
 Music, 20, 39, 49, 76, 117-18,
 126, 129-30, 133-57, 167,
 183
 National Advisory Council
 on Radio in Education, 197
 National Broadcasting Com-
 pany, 25, 232
 News, 16, 50, 54, 88-93, 102-
 3, 104-8, 114-15, 190, 203,
 214, 219, 220-1, 230
 Outside broadcasts, 49, 172-4
 Personality, 53-4, 78-82, 93,
 100, 118, 129, 140, 166, 168,
 171, 182, 184, 186-7, 241,
 243
 Poetry, 49, 71-2, 74-5, 109,
 111, 125-30
 Politics, 86, 89-91, 94, 97-104
 Presentation, 48, 91, 124-5,
 162, 164-6, 169, 198
 Press (or Newspaper), 20, 34,
 37, 89, 90, 91, 92, 104-7,
 215, 221
 Programme-building, 20, 37,
 47-52, 56, 116, 124-6, 144,
 154, 196-7
 Radio industry (manufac-
 turers or dealers,) 20, 21,
 22, 24, 31, 32, 34, 152, 158,
 181, 225
 Receiving sets, 20, 32, 39, 140,
 145, 151, 158, 180-1, 218-
 20, 226-8
 Russia, 37, 95-6, 137, 202,
 209, 233
 Sport, 56, 88, 92, 105, 132
 Standardization, 17-18, 35,
 64, 66, 68, 119, 134, 200,
 240
 Story-telling, 167-8
 Sykes Report, 32
 Technique of broadcasting,
 20, 47, 51, 75-7, 82, 96-7,
 100, 103, 114, 116-18, 119-
 20, 122-5, 134, 152, 163-7,
 178, 181-2, 184, 196, 198-9,
 232
 Television, 110, 160, 172, 222,
 228-9
 Transmission, 24, 34, 39-40,
 45-6, 133, 151
 United States, *see* America
 War, 182, 214-23, 244
 War, the Great, 21, 22, 29, 41,
 135, 193, 214, 219-21
 Washington Conference, 43,
 44
 Wave-lengths, 25, 33, 40, 42,
 43-4, 205, 224, 230-1
 Women, 148, 188-90

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