

PRESS RELEASE:

Assesment of the Sound Broadcasting Situation
in the U.K. - April 1969.

The Labour Government's evaluation of its experimental local B.B.C. stations falls due before July 1969. The National Commercial Radio Movement believes that the Government in its dilemma will uphold the monopoly of the B.B.C. sound broadcasting system by adopting one of the following courses of action.

- (a) A slow expansion of B.B.C. local stations further financed by an increase in the sound radio licence fee.
- (b) An attempt to finance these stations by establishing local advertising councils to act as advertising agents, the B.B.C. remaining as programme contractors.

We are on behalf of listeners completely opposed to either of these courses without the introduction of independent radio stations. The G.L.C. Bill to introduce local commercial radio stations to London has held little success with the present Government.

Statement of National Commercial Radio Movement
Policy in the light of current situation

The provision of an adequate choice of competitive commercial radio stations available to the maximum numbers of the public, living both in town and country can only be provided by stations having a regional service area, that is of the order of 50 miles coverage. These stations should be situated in the V.H.F. Band II between 97 - 100 Mhz and should take priority in frequency allocation over local radio in order to give listeners the choice of at least three regional commercial stations in any one region.

We are opposed to control of independent radio stations by an "Independent" broadcasting authority in whose hands the word independent loses much of its true meaning. The necessary control can be effected by the establishment of a council to issue frequencies on a renewable licence basis.

Local radio, be it B.B.C. or commercial, has a different role to play in the community, and would be of little use as an entertainment medium in competition with the B.B.C. National programmes. Accordingly local station frequencies can be found both in Band II V.H.F. and medium wave international common frequencies.

A minority of potential commercial radio operators shy away from V.H.F. broadcasting in the mistaken belief that V.H.F. would produce low audience figures. This is in our opinion a fallacy, radio manufacturers are now producing V.H.F. car radios, these would fall in price with the upswing in demand, and the appearance of cheap V.H.F. only sets would be assured.

We are currently in contact with Musicians' Union in an effort to ease their acceptance of commercial radio, a prime discussion point being that regional commercial stations would be in a position to offer acceptable financial rewards to balance an increase in the ratio of recorded material to live performances. Some potential stations operators have hinted the formation of their own orchestras.

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