

# Battle Is On for Political Radio Time

## Reece Asserts Free Time Given Truman April 5 Was 'An Abuse'

BATTLE FOR RADIO time in waging the 1948 Presidential campaign was touched off last Monday by GOP National Chairman Carroll Reece.

Mr. Reece served notice on three networks—NBC, MBS and ABC—that he may request free time equal to that given President Truman during the \$100-per-plate Jefferson Day dinner April 5. He declared the President's address was part of the Democrat's fund-raising campaign and constituted "an abuse of radio facilities, and possibly a violation, of the spirit at least, of the legal restrictions upon political contributions by corporations."

He estimated value of the free time at \$30,000 in addition to approximately \$200,000 brought to Democratic party coffers "as the result of the Washington dinner alone . . ."

Both parties are fully alert to radio's effectiveness in reaching the electorate and both have benefited by free time. An appreciable amount of time was given the GOP during its Lincoln Day campaign for funds. Republican Congressmen are heard regularly by

radio listeners in home districts, either through regularly scheduled live broadcasts or by recordings made in Washington and shipped to stations. At least 25 GOP Congressmen have weekly or bi-monthly programs—presented as public service—with possibly an additional 50 legislators expecting to complete arrangements for free time.

### Statistics Unavailable

A significant number of Democratic Congressmen enjoy the same air privileges although party headquarters in Washington does not yet have statistics available.

During the 1946 Congressional elections Democrats and Republicans alike bought time from the networks and local stations [BROADCASTING, Feb. 10], and are planning an even greater purchase during the Presidential campaign.

Mr. Reece's complaint was voiced in letters to: Mark Woods, president, ABC; Edgar Kobak, president and general manager, MBS; and Niles Trammell, president, NBC. CBS did not carry the Presidential address. Text of Mr. Reece's letter follows:

On Saturday night, April 5, three of the four major radio networks of the country, including your own, were tied up for 20 minutes by the broadcast of a speech delivered by Mr. Truman from the Jefferson Day \$100-per-plate dinner in Washington, D. C. As made clear by the announcers, the purpose of this dinner in Washington, and of similar din-

ners held throughout the country on the same day, was to raise campaign funds for the Democrat National Committee, presumably for use in preparation for, and during, the 1948 Presidential campaign. In view of the fact that the chairman of the Democrat National Committee, Robert E. Hannegan, and the executive director of that Committee, Gael Sullivan, have both publicly announced the belief that Mr. Truman will be a candidate for the Presidency next year, it would perhaps be justifiable to say this affair was staged for the purpose of helping to raise Mr. Truman's own campaign fund.

I am informed by those familiar with such matters that the normal cost of the radio time thus utilized for campaign fund-raising purposes would be approximately \$30,000 and the newspaper reports state that as a result of the Washington dinner alone the Democrat National Committee was enriched by approximately \$200,000.

It seemed to me for many years past that such use of free radio time for the avowed purpose of raising campaign funds constitutes an abuse of radio facilities, and possibly a violation, of the spirit at least of the legal restrictions upon political contributions by corporations. I realize, of course, that this is an inherited abuse for which I am not inclined to hold the broadcasting companies responsible. It is, in my opinion, one of the many heritages

from the days when public office was considered private property. I fear the impression has grown up that free radio time is a royal prerogative, something to be given without question whenever requested and without regard for the purpose to which it may be devoted. I feel confident that the broadcasting industry must regard this not only as a nuisance, but as a very expensive nuisance, for the reason I have indicated above. And I am quite sure that the listening public is not at all enthusiastic about having the nation's broadcasting facilities tied up for political purposes at a time when many would prefer to listen to their favorite programs.

However, this use of free radio time has come to be accepted, and so long as the present Administration remains in power, I see no possibility of any change in that situation. In view of the frankly partisan nature of the address delivered by Mr. Truman (in addition to the fund-raising phase to which reference has been made) I believe that I would be justified in asking on behalf of the Republican Party that an equal amount of free time at a comparable period be allocated to us when it might best suit the convenience and interests of the Party. I assure you, however, that if such an allocation of time should be requested and granted it would be used for proper political purposes—not as an excuse for extracting reluctant campaign contributions from the pockets of office-holders.

I do not at this time make that request, but I think in all fairness I should let you know that I do not foreclose that possibility if future developments should, in my opinion, justify such a request.

## Legislative Mill

H. R. 165—To authorize House Interstate & Foreign Commerce Committee to investigate "the administration of the provisions of the Communications Act of 1934 . . . or interstate or foreign communication by wire or radio, or interstate or foreign transmission of energy by radio . . ." and granting subpoena powers to the Committee. Introduced March 31 by Rep. Charles A. Wolverton (R-N.J.).

H. R. 2861—To permit emergency amendment to the Norris-La Guardia anti-injunction law so that the President may direct the Attorney General to require injunction against threatened telephone strike. Introduced March 31 by Rep. Fred A. Hartley Jr. (R-N.J.) and reported from House Labor Committee on April 2. Due to be passed over in view of Labor Committee action on Hartley bill.

H. R. 2984—To amend the act regulating the height of buildings in Washington, D. C., providing that no radio, television or other transmitting antennae can be erected when the radius of the height of the antennae includes homes, playgrounds or schools, or tends to create hazards or affect the "beauty of the nation's capital." Introduced April 9 by Rep. Sid Simpson (R-Ill.) and referred to Committee on the District of Columbia.

H. R. 3020—"Labor-Management Relations Act" introduced April 10 by House Labor Committee Chairman Fred A. Hartley Jr. (R-N. J.), to amend the National Labor Relations Act. (See story page 20.)

## CROSLY IS AWARDED THIRD TELEVISION CP

CROSLY Broadcasting Corp. last week was awarded its third construction permit for a new commercial television station. The present grant is for channel 5 (76-82 mc) facilities at Dayton, Ohio. The WLW Cincinnati licensee presently holds CPs for video also in Cincinnati and in Columbus Ohio.

Comr. Clifford J. Durr voted not to grant the Dayton outlet, which is authorized to use 50 kw visual power with 25 kw aural. Antenna height is 506 feet.

WLWT Cincinnati is assigned channel 4 (66-72 mc), 34 kw visual, 17 kw aural; WLWX Columbus, channel 3 (60-66 mc), 48 kw visual, 24 kw aural.

## Video Time Signals

LONGINES-WITTNAUER Watch Co., New York, last week started a 52-week series of video time signals on WABD New York (Du Mont), each of 60-seconds duration and telecast on a three-a-week schedule. Contract was negotiated directly with Alan Cartoun, television manager of the watch company, by Miss J. F. Kennedy of the Du Mont spot sales staff.

IT TAKES 5000 WATTS  
TO COVER THIS TRI-STATE  
AREA, AND WSAZ HAS THEM



# WSAZ

HUNTINGTON, W. VA. 5000W. DAY 1000W. NIGHT  
930 KC. ABC AFFILIATE

represented by THE BRANHAM COMPANY

CBS **WJNO**  
Where "Dum and Bradstreet meet Hooper and Crossley!"  
THE VOICE OF THE PALM BEACHES