



by Jamie Mandlecau.

Illustrated by Head Office

As the entrepreneurs, the communicators, the newspapers, the conglomerates, the ex-pirates, the showmen and the businessmen, fall over each other in the Great Radio Race to provide the United Kingdom with commercial radio and the B.B.C. chiefs defensively turn Radio 1 into an out-and-out "progressive" pop channel, moving Jimmy Young, the housewives' favourite with some seven million listeners to Radio 2 - the new easy-listening-middle-of-the-road-light-music-channel, we look back on the last Great Free Radio battle: the Armada (Caroline, London, 390, 355, England, Scotland, Radio City, Essex, 270, Mercur, Nord, Tower, Invicta, 227, Atlanta, Syd, RNI, Noordzee, Capital, Veronica, Albatross, King, Sutch, Hauraki, Jackie, Luxembourg, Geronimo) vs the Government in an anarchistic free-for-all that included invasion, hijacking, violent death, payola, commando style fire bombing attacks, phone tapping, Scotland Yard, the Secret Police, the CIA, NATO, and overtones of Communism interests. We ask, "What did those storm lashed ships in the North Sea really mean?"

Caroline: The New Animal.

At noon, on Easter Saturday, the 28th March, 1964, a new transmitter on board the mv "Caroline", a converted 763-ton passenger ferry, anchored 32 miles off Felixstowe in Suffolk, proclaimed her call sign and announced, "This is Radio Caroline on 199 metres on the medium waveband. We shall be broadcasting seven days a week from six in the morning until six in the evening." The Beatles' recording of "Can't Buy Me Love," sliced through the airwaves and Britain's first commercial station was on the air. The power of 5 kilowatts was soon increased to 10 kilowatts and on 9th April, the *Evening Standard* reported Radio Caroline had received more than 20,000 fan letters in her first ten days of broadcasting.

One month later, a former cargo boat, the mv "Mi Amigo", which had been previously used as Radio Nord, an American-backed offshore station broadcasting to Sweden from the Baltic and had then been used off the coast of Mexico for some time, had been fitted out in Greenore in Ireland to be used as Radio Atlanta; and it anchored fourteen miles away from the "Caroline", off Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, broadcasting a 10 kilowatt signal on 200.9 metres. The Blitz had begun!

In July, after successful merger discussions, Radio Atlanta closed for the last time. Late that night, the mv "Caroline" weighed anchor and began to move southwards, eventually re-anchoring 42 miles off Douglas on the Isle of Man. Here it became Radio Caroline North, while the "Mi Amigo" Radio Atlanta operated as Radio Caroline South. Between them, the two ships covered the greater portion of the UK. Some of the DJ's included Simon Dee, Mike Raven, Mike Allen, Tony Blackburn, Rosko, Keith Skues, Dave Lee Travis, Johnny Walker and Tommy Vance. The man behind

the scenes was Irishman Ronan O'Rahilly.

In January 1966, Radio Caroline hit the headlines when the "Mi Amigo" went adrift and aground on the beach near Frinton, Essex, in a gale. After two days on the beach, the ship was refloated and taken to Holland to be refitted.

Facts 'n Figures:

Out of a total 39 million people who tuned into the "alternative stations", Radio Caroline claimed a listening audience of 8 million which put her on top of the pirate pile. Advertisers included such names as: Unilever, Imperial Tobacco, Beechams, Pye Radio, Baby Cham, Mars, Palmolive, Colgate, Lyons, Horlicks, Charringtons, Paramount, United Artists, Airfix, Hawker Siddeley Aviation, with the highest percentage of air time allocated to USA religious organisations such as Oral Roberts and the Voice of Prophecy. The estimated costs to put both ships on the air were £400,000 and the advertising rates were around £90-£110 for 30 seconds peak time. Running costs ran as high as £6,500 per week and Project Atlanta Limited, the Caroline sales organisation, employed some 26 people in their London office and head offices in Ireland, Holland and America. Advertising rates were based on a coverage of a hundred-mile radius with a potential listening audience of some 25 millions, and one advertiser, the "News of the World," noted a 22% increase in its circulation in areas covered by the station.

The station undertook to become a working part of its listener community and sponsored sports events, dances, contests, awarding the Caroline Bell and Beat Fleet scroll to such persons as Jonathan King, the Hollies, the Monkeys, Rolling Stones, Sandie Shaw, Jimi Hendrix, Cat Stevens, Lulu, Georgie Fame, Petula Clark, the Animals, Beatles, Cliff Richard, Donovan and Roy Orbison.

Rocking the Boat.

The first European countries whose state monopoly of radio was challenged, were Denmark and Sweden. In 1958, Radio Mercur began transmissions to Denmark and was followed by a Swedish station called Radio Nord. In 1962, Radio Syd commenced transmissions from off the Swedish coast. In May 1960, Radio Veronica anchored off the Dutch coast - broadcasting for several months in English as well as Dutch, inviting advertisers in East Anglia to get in touch. In 1962, Radio Uilenspiegel, broadcasting from a cement ship anchored off Antwerp, Belgium, suffered a fate that threatened all the radio boats - it ran aground in heavy seas and was a total loss. That these stations were both popular with their listeners and financially successful, set many groups of people in the UK to thinking about the possibilities for action closer to home.

Radio London - The Big L.

On 19th December, 1964, Radio London began broadcasting from a converted U.S. minesweeper anchored 32 miles off Frinton-on-Sea. The American style radio of Big L was heard on 266 metres. The station had cost some £2 mill-

ion to put on the air. The financial backing came from English and American investors through a trust situated in the Bahamas. Advertising rates were around £56 per 30 sec. peak time slot and in January 1965 the station was able to claim it had £200,000 worth of advertising in prospect, and rivalled Caroline for king of the listener pile. DJ's earned up to £50 a week.

The Ack Ack Brigade.

Not all the stations were as professional as Caroline or London. Smaller organisations set up transmitters on the disused World War II ack-ack forts in the Thames Estuary. On Shivering Sands Fort, pop singer Screaming Lord Sutch began Radio Sutch. He relinquished ownership of the fort to Reg Calvert for the sum of £5,000 and the name was changed to the ill-fated, Radio City. A few miles away, Radio Invicta broadcast from the Red Sands Fort. Saboteurs cost the owner, Tom Pepper, one boat and some £1,000 when the station proved to be effective. Later, he and two colleagues were the first pirate victims when their supply boat, the "David", sank in a sudden squall. Though Pepper tied himself to a board, he froze in the winter waters. Pirate Radio was slowly but surely losing its romantic associations. The war was just beginning.

Rule of The Strong Right Hand.

In December, 1964, their precarious position was brought home to the pirates when the Dutch government took action against Radio Noordzee, an offshore radio and tv station broadcasting from an artificial platform mounted on steel stilts in the sea-bed, six miles north-west of the seaside resort of Noordwijk. In a dramatic air and sea operation, the island platform was seized by Netherlands police and put out of action.

Radio City increased its power and Radio Invicta became Radio King, a sweet music station. When new DJ Mike Raven arrived for duty at the Red Sands Fort he found, much to his surprise, three men who had been marooned for over three weeks. When water and tinned food supplies had run out, they survived by eating dehydrated peas. Then Radio City decided to expand, using the Fort Knock John as a base to test equipment, clashing with the plans of a South-end businessman, Mr. Roy Bates, to use the fort as the base for another pirate station, Radio Essex. A month long battle of boardings and counter boardings followed. In November, Radio Essex broadcast on 222 metres, the first 24-hour station and the only localised station, concentrating on the county of Essex.

Ringin In the New Year.

Early 1966 saw the real offshore boom. Radio 390 "Your Family Station", took over from Radio King. In the north, Radio Scotland broadcast from the 500-ton former Irish lightship, "Comet." Radio 270 broadcast from a 160-ton converted Dutch lugger, the "Ocean 7", anchored three miles off Scarborough. A massive show biz Hilton Hotel party launched Radio England and Britain Radio, both

stations broadcasting from the same ship, the 480 ton "Laissez Faire", a former U.S. Liberty ship. There were now some ten stations broadcasting and still more planned: Radio 365 was going to take to the air, covering the north of England, Radios Channel, Caesar, Mayflower, Freedom, Manchester were all in the works. Radio London reported an income yearly of £600,000 and Caroline claimed £750,000 in the first 18 months with advertising still pouring in. To meet the threat of the new pirates, both organisations increased their transmitter power.

Government goes pirate hunting.

The main governmental arguments against the pirates were: they stole wavelengths, they paid no copyright on the records played, they were a hazard to shipping as they interfered with ship to shore communication, they flouted international regulations and gave the country a bad name abroad. The pirates' reply was simple: people had the freedom of choice, to listen to any broadcast without government dictation. Before the pirates, the record industry was run by four major companies and now new minor labels were winning 20% of the market. There was no arguing that the pirates were filling the gap between the BBC and its listeners. It was also pointed out that the pirates were in international waters and breaking no law. Technically, they were legal. All the leading stations paid a percentage of money to the Performing Rights Society and contrary to the claims of damaging the interests of performers and composers, they were daily assailed by record companies, promoters and musicians to broadcast their work. The GPO cut the ship to shore radio links with the pirates, announcing messages would only be handled in an emergency. When the tenders servicing the pirates left for international waters, H.M. Customs and Excise ruled all on board had to carry passports, stores were inspected. Other authorities involved included H.M. Waterguard, H.M. Immigration, Special Branch, CID, Board of Trade, Ministry of Transport, British Railways, Port of Health Authority, Trinity House and the Local Harbour Board - for each trip made! The tenders travelled three or four times a week, carrying food, fuel, water, relief crew, disc jockeys, records, mail and instructions from the shore-based office.

It was widely known that the Postmaster General, Mr. A. W. Benn, was preparing legislation to stop the pirates. The events surrounding the Radio City station on 19th June hastened his task.

Radio City - The Tower of Power.

The 22nd June, 1966 Radio Caroline "Newsbeat," best sums up the event. "Thirty-seven year old Mr. Reg Calvert, manager of many pop beat groups including the Fortunes, and owner of the pop radio station, Radio City, was shot dead in a mansion near Saffron Walden, Essex. A man is reported to be helping police with their inquiries. A shroud of mystery sur-

rounds the activities of Mr. Calvert with conflicting reports of the future of his station. Last Monday he asked Scotland Yard to investigate an alleged boarding of his station by unknown people."

The event became headline news with speculation centred on the Radio Caroline-London rivalry. Why had ten people, including one woman, boarded the station on 19th June? Who were they? Who was the mysterious woman? Why had Reg Calvert been shot? Intense competition was alleged to have sparked off a pirate war. The *Daily Telegraph* announced, "Men whose names are pronounced with ease in City circles offered to buy each other up, or off. There was talk of 'punch-ups' in normally quiet and respectable offices. There was even talk of blackmail."

Major Oliver Smedley was charged with the shooting. He was concerned with a company, Project Atlanta who operated Radio Atlanta, later amalgamating with the Caroline organisation. Project Atlanta lent Calvert money and a £10,000 transmitter. Calvert then set about dealing with Radio London. Project Atlanta used the transmitter as a stronghold over Calvert to get in on the deal and boarded the fort to protect its property. Calvert threatened to use nerve gas to take back the fort, scaring off the Radio London deal. The next suggestion was a tie-up with Radio 390, though this was nipped in the bud when Reg Calvert forced an entry into Smedley's home and was killed. The jury deliberated for little more than a minute to find Major Oliver Smedley "not guilty" of manslaughter.

Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Gone!

The end of July saw the first reading of the Government's Marine Broadcasting Offences Bill that would make it illegal for British Citizens to provide programme material for off-shore radio stations, to work for them, to take advertising time on them, to supply them with equipment, food or fuel, or assist them in any way. Conviction in a Magistrate's Court carried a fine of £100 and/or 3 months' imprisonment; or up to 2 years imprisonment on conviction in a higher court.

With an estimated lifetime of nine months, the pirates unleashed their master plans on how they'd beat the legislation: non-British crews, international advertisers, supplies from European based boats/planes/helicopters - Caroline engineers cleared a helicopter landing pad on top of the Rough Sands Fort, eight miles off Felixstowe in international waters. However, Radio Essex also laid claim to the fort and when it transferred equipment there, the two organisations came into conflict. Newspaper headlines declared another pop war". After many boarding attempts, Radio Essex owner, Roy Bates, declared he was going to build an electric fence around the Fort. His armoury included six shotguns, a flame thrower, an air rifle and petrol bombs. One attempt left a man stranded, and a boat on fire.

The rest of the pirate crew weren't faring much better. A man threatened murder on board the

"Laissez Faire". Amid financial difficulty brought on by advertising shortage and shareholder clashes the end loomed dangerously close. Successful prosecutions were brought against Radio City, Radio 390, Radio Essex and Radio Scotland for using a transmitter without a licence.

At 00.01 a.m. on 15th August, 1967, the Marine Offences Act became law. Only Radio Caroline weathered the storm, changing the call sign to Radio Caroline International.

Caroline Hijacking.

Caroline International moved its offices to Holland. On board the ship, the music was still the same: Free radio at no cost to the listener. They proclaimed £300,000 worth of advertising and indeed, once again, an American religious organisation had purchased two hours daily airtime. To confuse the GPO, dummy adds were run among the real ones. The future looked rosy until the morning of 3rd March, 1968, when both Radio Caroline South and North were simultaneously hijacked by the Dutch Wijsmuller company in a claim for non-payment of bills. The ships were taken to Amsterdam, the "Mi Amigo" to be scrapped and the "Caroline" put up for sale. This left only two offshore stations, Radio Veronica off the Dutch coast and Radio Hauraki off New Zealand. After courting disaster, running aground on the rocks, Radio Hauraki was granted a licence by the New Zealand authorities and moved towards a land based operation.

Dutch Pirate War Begins.

In 1970, Radio Veronica, broadcasting on 192 metres, 32 miles off the Dutch coast between Scheveningen and The Hague, celebrated its tenth successful year of broadcasting. Then came a new neighbour, Radio North Sea International, broadcasting from the Mebo 2, a converted 570-ton Norwegian coaster. Transmitter power was an astounding 105 kilowatts, backed up by an FM transmitter and two 10 kilowatt short-wave transmitters, giving the psychedelically painted radio ship, worldwide reception. On board the ship were luxury cabins, fitted carpets and fountains in the urinals. Regular transmissions began on 186 metres. On 23rd March, RNI anchored off Clacton, Essex. Through April and May it played a cat and mouse game with the GPO, jamming the station.

In June the station changed its name to Radio Caroline International and launched an intensive anti-Labour Party campaign and evidence later suggested that the station played a decisive role in many marginal constituencies that fell to the Conservatives. By 24th July, RNI had returned to the Dutch coast off Scheveningen.

On 14th June, 1970, test transmissions began for Radio Capital, broadcasting on 270 metres, from the mv "King David", anchored five miles off the Dutch coast. From the start, the ship was plagued with troubles: the aerial collapsed, a ship's officer caught his leg in the anchor chain, while in harbour the cock on a tank of diesel fuel in the generator room

had been left open in a sabotage attempt to blow the ship up. When it returned to sea, Capital Radio was equipped with two of the latest West German rifles, two sten guns, a Browning high powered machine gun and nerve gas bombs.

RNI Leaves the Air.

On 26th August, 1970, the RNI tender "Mebo 1", was arrested in in Scheveningen harbour and chained up by a court officer. An Amsterdam night club owner claimed the station owners owed him some £3,000. Three days later this same gentleman attempted to hijack the radio ship, setting out with two tugs and a crew of more than twenty men. Their efforts to cut the ship loose from its anchor chain met with stiff opposition. DJ's provided listeners with a running commentary of the action. The attackers prepared to use a powerful water cannon on the aerial and though the station would certainly have been put off the air with the mast toppling, a high voltage arc via the water path would have killed those on the tug. Help arrived and the attackers left. The Dutch Royal Navy began an inquiry into the event. On 24th Sept. the station suddenly closed down claiming the ship had been sold to an African company and would shortly sail for the Mediterranean. The truth, as we shall see, was far more exciting.

Capital Radio Down: One to Go!

On 25th Sept. 1970, the King David lost its anchor in heavy seas and the Mayday call was sent out. The ship finally grounded on the beach at the Dutch coastal resort of Noordwijk and all the crew were landed safely. The armoury was handed over to police. Examination of the engine room later showed that the moving parts had been mysteriously lubricated with highly explosive diesel fuel: had the engines been used to check the ship's drifting, an explosion would have wrecked the engine room and perhaps blown a hole in the side. Near ready to sail again, the ship was impounded for £15,000 salvage fees. In the months following there was money offered to the owners if they would agree to jam Radio Veronica and a phoney agreement was used in a Veronica blackmail attempt.

Blackmail, Bullets and Bombs.

An article in the Dutch "Elseviers Magazine" exposed the Veronica/RNI "ether blackmail" deal in which Veronica agreed to pay £100,000 over to the RNI owners if they agreed to stay off the air. In January 1971, though Radio Veronica had placed their man on board the "Mebo 2", the former RNI owners reclaimed possession of the ship and towed her to an anchorage off the Belgian coast. Veronica sued for piracy on the high seas though a Dutch court ruled that since RNI had offered to return the money, it could continue broadcasting. Understandably there was much muttering among the Veronica owners.

The incident finally came to a head on 15th May, 1971. Millions of listeners in Britain and on the

Continent followed the dramatic events as the call went out: "Mayday! Mayday! This is the radio ship Mebo 2, four miles off the coast of Scheveningen, Holland... we require assistance urgently due to a fire on board this vessel caused by a bomb being thrown into our engine room... Mayday! Mayday! This is an S.O.S. from Radio North Sea International.

As records continued to be played between Mayday calls, the crew fought the blaze with hand extinguishers for an hour until rescue tugs and a firefighting vessel arrived. It was later revealed that the bombing was the work of paid commando frogmen who had boarded the ship from a rubber dingy and placed an ounce of dynamite on a pipeline leading to a 250 gallon oil tank. On 18th May, the *Evening Standard* reported, "Dutch police have arrested the man who is alleged to have given the order to blow up Radio North Sea International's ship Mebo 2." The man was a Veronica director. He had paid the divers £1,200 in advance to buy the equipment. All were later sentenced to one year's imprisonment. Though the ship had been badly gutted, when it was found the studios and transmitter room were untouched, the crew and disc jockeys returned and normal broadcasting was resumed. Later that same month, the fate of Capital Radio was sealed when the operators of the station were officially declared bankrupt.

Veronica on 192 metres and RNI on 220 metres, medium wave, were left alone to battle for the thin share of advertisers.

Mutiny As Radio Caroline Returns.

Late 1972 saw the return of Radio Caroline International. Her Dutch creditor had sold the "Mi Amigo" for £2,500 and the buyer refitted her under the guise of housing a "pirate museum." The ship anchored just outside Dutch territorial waters off Scheveningen, between Veronica and RNI, broadcasting on 259 metres, medium waveband. The future looked bright for the station with both crew and DJ's working on the understanding that no wages would be paid until the station was successful. Amid fighting on board among crew and DJ's and gun threats from the captain, all over wages disputes, the ship was towed into Amsterdam harbour - only after payment of the disputed £4,500 wage claim, harbour dues, cleaning up the ship for a seaworthiness inspection that included welding up a hole in the side of the ship, was owner Ronan O'Rahilly able to see his station safely back to sea in her old anchorage, broadcasting regularly on 252 metres, medium waveband. Plans for new aerials and more powerful transmitters, with broadcasts directed at the UK, are again in the air.

The Strasbourg Treaty.

In the 1940's the European Broadcasting Union set up a study group comprising 32 nations to consider the allocation of wavelengths. This led to what became known as the 1948 Copenhagen Plan, but of the 32 countries, only

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25 agreed to the final allocations. To date, more than 50% of long-wave and medium-wave broadcasting stations in Europe are operating on frequencies other than those allocated by the Copenhagen Plan... so why go for the pirates? Later, in the early sixties, in a move against the pirates, the Council of Europe was used in an attempt to prohibit radio broadcasts from stations outside national territories: of 17 members, 3 voted against and 3 abstained from signing the Strasbourg Treaty.

Land Based Pirates.

When Radio Caroline was finally pirated from the high seas, a new animal arrived - the land based pirate. They can be heard every week, most with very low power and limited range. However, one station, Radio Jackie, transmits with a fairly high power, has good music and professional programming. It operates with portable equipment - a small 20 watt transmitter, a car battery and a cassette tape recorder. The aerial is a long wire (about 180ft) strung between two trees. Ever on the lookout for the GPO men who have cost the station some £2,000 in three years in fines and equipment confiscations, the station continues to broadcast and will no doubt improve. It can be heard on Medium Wave: 227 - Vhf 94.4 MHz each week-end. Other land based pirates include Radios Star, In-victa, Odyssey, Aquarius...

IBA Commercial Radio.

London, Manchester, Glasgow and Birmingham will have local stations on the air by the end of 1973 or early 1974. Other stations will open in the following years until there is a possible maximum of some 60 stations. In the first instances, the local radio stations will use 261 or 194 metres on the medium waveband. Test transmission in January for the London stations resulted in interference with Radio Veronica on 538 metres. When the station complained it was pointed out by the GPO that Veronica was illegal and had not been allocated use of that waveband. Veronica threatened to jam 206 metres - the BBC London local waveband.

Talking to Ronan O'Rahilly:
Mr. Caroline.

Mention pirate radio to a stran-

ger and if he knows anything at all, the chances are he knows two things - the names Caroline and Ronan O'Rahilly. In Eire they'll tell you his grandfather died in Dublin, Easter 1916 while charging a British machine gun and they might even quote the poem Yeats wrote about him. Why call the station Caroline? Myth has it, Ronan was completely taken in by the charm of J. F. Kennedy's daughter after seeing her photograph in a newspaper on a flight to America. No matter, Caroline happened.

Q: What is the future of Radio Caroline?

Ronan - In the beginning was Caroline and there still is Caroline. We're well established in Holland with both advertisers and listeners and some of the international companies who were there in the beginning are returning. Everybody is conscious that radio works. You might say we're in the Common Market with the best of them - and again, before the rest of the country.

Q: Looking back on the last ten years, does anything special come to mind?

Ronan - Caroline achieved what it set out to do. The original motivation was to introduce a medium where the small independent record company stood a chance of making it - of competing with the monopoly, and eventually to break down that monopoly. This has been done. There are now some sixty or seventy record labels in this country. As soon as commercial radio is on the air, that will help even more.

Q: Will the IBA allocation of wavelengths prove to be an interference for you?

Ronan - Not for us, though Radio Veronica did have some listeners in the south-east of England who I believe had some interference. As for jamming any of the stations, I don't think the government will take that step. One, it's quite a difficult thing to do and they run the risk of having wavelengths moved and the BBC jammed.

Q: Did you apply for any of the IBA licences?

Ronan - No. There were a few discussions but it was made plain a camel would have more chance getting through the eye of a needle. In any case, there's no denying that Caroline effected the bringing about of commercial radio in this country and totally changed the BBC. I think it would be safe to say Caroline reared 80% of the BBC's best people. To have done all this and not even be considered is a sad statement about politics.

Q: Why back the Conservatives in the last election?

Ronan - That was specifically designed to help bring about Free Radio, which has now happened. It's flattering to have played a part in doing this. Not having been invited to play in the game means little: we still have our own back door, one that wasn't there until we put it there: Radio Caroline.

Rod Allen: Broadcast/TV Mail Editor.

Q: You've been with TV Mail/Broadcast for over ten years now and have closely followed the development of both radio and tv in this country - what do you think the radio pirates contributed to the

nation?

Rod - Commercial radio was a platform in the conservative party for many many years and I think the pirates received a certain amount of clandestine support from them. They certainly had an effect on the way broadcasting organised itself in terms of presentation. They made the BBC create Radio 1, though I think the BBC got Radio 1 incredibly wrong. The pirates were good second-hand copies of American stations and Radio 1 rates about fourth hand.

Q: What is commercial radio going to do for us all?

Rod - It's very difficult to say. One of the problems is it will not be local but regional. The first twenty stations will effectively cover 60% of the population. No station will serve an area smaller than 200,000 people. Secondly there is a strange requirement in the Broadcasting Act that the commercial stations be balanced by day and time: this means they must have a full wide range of programming - drama, gardening, talk, etc. . . . up to 50% time devoted to music which also must be balanced between light music and pop. This stems from a great Parliamentary fear that if left alone, there would be nothing but pop stations. Aside from in London, as each commercial station will have a monopoly in its own area, for the first five years or so, commercial radio will be developing in the wrong way. The great joy about American radio is you exactly know on the dial where a certain kind of radio is - this seems to me to be the justification for alternative broadcasting. This leaves us (with the exception of the London News Station) with stations that are basically going to be Radio 2 with commercials and a bit of soap opera thrown in. The London News station is interesting as it really is proposing a 24 hour service of news.

Q: What licences have been granted so far?

Rod - So far only two: one to the London News Station of the London Broadcasting Company, a consortium of five companies and six individuals who'll be joined by other interests including one or other of the London evening newspapers. The other is for the London General station and that's gone to Capital Radio headed by Richard Attenborough. What's unfortunate is that there were some very interesting applications from experienced broadcasters who've been turned down in favour of monied consortiums.

Q: What will be the effect, if any, of commercial radio on TV?

Rod - Practically none. Commercial radio is a daytime medium. TV has started to get a daytime audience but only in the afternoons. The heavy listening times for commercial radio in this case are in the morning when mum is doing housework, early morning drive time and late afternoon drive time. I don't think it'll have any effect on the content of TV at all. Rather than take advertising away, it will create new advertising. There are something like 120 National advertisers who spend more than £300,000 per year each on TV advertising. Now they won't cut down; in fact, they will add on to their budgets an extra allocation of expenses for the radio ads.