

“A car—poleese c-a-r.”

“You must be crackers bye, we just has the dory here—this detachment is Forget-Me-Not, Newfoundland.”

That was just the start of an inter-provincial line tangle. We resolved to watch for the Newfoundland accent and not to be caught like that again. But the next time the radio jumped its air-lane we fell hard again. Every Fall, in this division, a man is assigned to go around the province assisting in the enforcement of the game laws as laid out in the Lands and Forests Act. We were trying to locate this man by calling around the detachments. A voice answered one signal.

“Is the Lands and Forests man at your detachment?”

“The Lands and what man?”

“Lands and Forests—you know.”

A long silence—then—

“Has he anything to do with the Wheat Board?”

This time we had Manygophers, Manitoba.

We knew without asking that we had Quebec on the radio one morning. Our junior man began turning prematurely gray when the bulletins came in both French and English. At that he was lucky he was not at the next detachment over in Cape Breton where one morning the NCO entered his office and found his radio spouting Gaelic. Two women had possession of the air and stubbornly warded off every attempt made to wrest it from them. The frustrated NCO, not having the Gaelic, had to admit defeat and leave the airways to the victorious housewives. He finally called the radio technician to help him out. The technician found the line to the radio tower crossed with a rural telephone line so the NCO regained the use of his radio without a headlong clash with the two Scotch Highlanders.

We began to get more accustomed to the radio's frolicking, such as skipping several thousand miles or switching languages on us. Everyone noticed it immediately though the day it slowed down

to a Texas drawl. An oil company joined the network and we began to follow the daily activities of a crew drilling an oil well. Now we started getting oil and some gas in our bulletins.

The next one to join the hook-up was a Texan rancher. Now we had westerns on our daily program. It was inevitable that the radio would gallop across the border into Mexico. A hombre started pouring Spanish out our loudspeaker. No one ever found out whether this guy was an oil man, rancher, a sheriff, or the bad guy.

One day just when the programs were at their best the chief radio technician came into the office. Newfoundland was booming in. A dispatcher at a town station was urging a car to hurry to the corner of Rumpus and Whacko streets to break up a fight. Up in Quebec, three French-speaking members were trying to corner a smuggler. The Texas oil man was chewing out somebody, the Mexican was yelling and in the background the rancher's steers could be heard.

“Interesting, eh?” we asked the Chief.

We expected he would be proud of his network. This was the man who had started the system from its first 50 little watts. He had climbed every high windy hill in the province testing or putting up radio towers. He had painfully gathered shingle splinters off every detachment roof in the division while putting up aerials. Now, eight years later, he could sit back in comfort and enjoy the product of his pioneering hardships.

But instead of beaming with paternal pride, he made a grimace. “It's slowly driving me nuts,” he said.

We tried to point out to him what he had accomplished. A far-flung network broadcasting in four languages from three different countries. Broadcasts direct from the scenes of crime, from oilfields, from ranches, farm kitchens. Drama, comedy, variety, static, everything a radio network could have.

“But it's doing everything the books said it couldn't do,” he groaned. “It has