

Broadcasting in the Seventies

The BBC's plan for network radio and
non-metropolitan broadcasting

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Foreword

by the Rt Hon. Lord Hill of Luton, Chairman of the BBC

The BBC is a public service and wishes to remain one. The BBC unhesitatingly accepts that this implies a responsibility to provide a comprehensive service meeting the needs of minorities as well as majorities. It is convinced that it will be the better able to remain truly comprehensive and securely independent if it continues to be financed by the licence fee method and is not exposed to the pressures which a commercial system cannot as easily resist.

But this firm adherence to the public service principle does not mean, and should not mean, that the wishes of viewers and listeners should be arbitrarily disregarded, or that large audiences for popular programmes should be seen as a sign of failure to fulfil the comprehensive purpose. Nor does the BBC's wish to provide services in all those fields in which broadcasting can satisfy a public need justify the charge that it is seeking to preserve a monopoly. Whatever else happens the public service which the BBC provides should be complete, nationally and locally.

The proposals in this paper deal mainly with the future of radio. The speculation of the last few months has at least shown that interest in radio is very far from dead. It has a clear role of its own, alongside television, yet distinct from it. The plans here outlined are designed to enable BBC radio to play a full part in the broadcasting pattern of the seventies.

We have thought it right, indeed inevitable, that before publishing any plans for public discussion we should consult the BBC's General Advisory Council, the National Broadcasting Councils, the Regional Advisory Councils, the Chairmen of Local Radio Councils, and the Music Advisory Committee. We have gathered their views and taken them fully into account, adjusting our proposals on a number of points to meet their views. We have also had advance consultations with our trade unions and these will continue in parallel with the public discussion now to begin.

The purpose of these plans is, firstly and mainly, to adapt our service to a changing world to meet changing tastes and needs. Secondly, and secondarily, they enable us, as far as we are able to judge, to live within our prospective income for sound broadcasting in the next five years. The BBC asks that they should be studied as a whole. While recognising they involve both gains and losses, it believes that the losses are necessary if the gains are to be achieved and that the result, on balance, will be better broadcasting.

July 1969

The Problems

The last few years have seen significant changes in BBC radio. It has moved into new areas – the Music Programme, Radio One, local radio. These changes, however, have been grafted piecemeal on to a tree planted in an earlier age of broadcasting, and we have now looked at the radio services as a whole, to see how they might be rationalised and reshaped to serve the audiences of the seventies.

As part of this study of radio's future, an analysis of the problems has been carried out by an internal study group, assisted by McKinsey & Co.

In any review of BBC services, the central consideration must be the public service element in broadcasting. This is an issue on which there has recently been a good deal of discussion, but clearly one function of any nation-wide public service is simply to satisfy the public. In the case of radio, this means the 18 million people whose licence fees pay for it. Radio networks must surely be shaped with proper regard to what the public in general has shown it wants.

At the same time, public service broadcasting is not just concerned with chasing the biggest audiences. It implies positive responsibilities, which we intend not only to maintain but also to develop. Over the years, BBC radio has built up certain distinctive social, cultural, and educative functions. It caters for significant minorities and it tries to play a part in helping to create well-informed opinion on the major issues of the day. These functions will be sustained in the new pattern for radio.

The reassessment of radio has obviously been given fresh urgency by its money problems. The BBC is no more free than the private citizen to live beyond its income. Ends must be tailored to means. None the less, in reviewing radio's priorities we have had primarily in mind these twin functions of serving the public at large and meeting the special responsibilities of public service broadcasting.

The role of radio cannot be judged in isolation. There are still some fields in which it has a unique role, but it has to live with the other mass media, above all with television. It has also to take account of the broad movements within the community it serves. It should not be 'trendy' in the pejorative sense, but it should certainly be relevant. In looking to the future we have had to consider two significant new factors – one peculiar to radio, the other affecting television as well.

First, there is the fundamental change in the nature of the radio audience. The millions who once listened of an evening to 'In Town Tonight' and 'Itma' now watch television. Radio's peak hours have moved to breakfast time and lunch time. There are still people without television or with a personal preference for radio, but for most people radio is now mainly for the day time. They see it less as a medium for family entertainment, more as a continuous supplier of music and information.

Second, the success of the local radio experiment has opened up new opportunities for broadcasting outside London, and this at a moment when centrifugal forces are apparent in society as a whole. It is not only Scotland,

Wales, and Northern Ireland which look for a separate identity. In England, too, there seems to be a growing resistance to the apparently inexorable magnetism of London. Any national broadcasting organisation must create a system of broadcasting which enables this more localised feeling to express itself and which provides focal points for community interest. This is why we welcomed the chance to start an experiment in local radio. This is why we have taken a fresh look at the role of BBC television outside London.

But before considering developments in localised broadcasting, they must be set in the framework of the national programmes. In television, the pattern is clear: BBC-1, BBC-2, and the new dimension of colour spreading across both. In radio, the national pattern is more complex.

Network Radio

Traditionally, broadcasting has been based on the principle of mixed programming. On a single channel, the public is offered the whole range: news, documentaries, plays, music, light entertainment, serials, sport – all types of programmes, covering all interests and all ‘brow’ levels.

But experience, both in this country and abroad, suggests that many listeners now expect radio to be based more on a different principle – that of the specialised network, offering a continuous stream of one particular type of programme, meeting one particular interest. One channel might offer pop, another serious music, another talk programmes, and so on. Already BBC radio has moved in this direction, first with the Music Programme, then with the all-pop Radio One.

It is against this background that we have re-examined the output of the BBC’s radio networks, and our proposals fall broadly into two groups.

Radios One and Two

The audience for Radio One has amply confirmed that there is a demand for pop music, as distinct from the more traditional styles of light music. Any deficiencies which may be alleged against Radio One arise from shortage of resources and limitations on the use of records, not from any BBC inhibitions.

At the same time, the creation of Radio One has jarred against Radio Two. For parts of the day the two have to operate in tandem and the ride is not always smooth. They are very different not only in type of music but in style of presentation. To their respective fans, Emperor Rosko and Eric Robinson barely inhabit the same planet let alone the same air waves.

A first priority, therefore, must be a cleaner separation. We would like to keep them apart all the time, but there is not sufficient money, so our present objective is to separate them throughout the day, and possibly again in the late evening.

On this basis, we propose to continue Radio One as an all-pop network, and in time to convert Radio Two to another all-music network, presenting all that is covered by the umbrella of 'light music' – anything from Sinatra to Lehár. (It is sometimes suggested this should be called a 'sweet' music channel, but light music offers more variety than continuous saccharine.)

But these changes cannot be achieved until two conditions have been met. First, for Radio One, the extra output will need to come from records, and not only because of cheapness. Discs are the life blood of any pop network, and we will need to negotiate an agreement to use more of them. Second, for Radio Two, the speech programmes it now broadcasts will need to be transferred to Radio Four. This will not be possible in all cases (with 'Woman's Hour', for instance) as long as schools programmes occupy substantial slices of the morning and afternoon periods on Radio Four.

Radios Three and Four

Few aspects of British broadcasting have aroused more passion than the Third programme, so we had better again make it clear that we are not abandoning programmes for minorities. What we have needed to consider is whether this function is best fulfilled within a single enclave. There is a good deal of evidence that some listeners are deterred by the label 'The Third'. Programmes originated on the Third invariably attract bigger audiences when repeated on Radio Four. An evening concert of standard classical music will win more listeners on Radio Four than on the Third.

We have also had to consider finance. The Third costs much more per hour than any other network, yet it has by far the smallest audience. At a time of stringency it would obviously be nonsense to pay less attention to the cost of minority programmes than to the money spent on programmes heard by millions. It is essential to produce programmes for minorities, but it is only common sense to reconsider what proportion of scarce resources should be devoted to these programmes, how they might be made available to the widest potential audience and whether some of the more specialised are really appropriate to the medium of broadcasting.

With these points in mind, we propose to realign Radios Three and Four. On Radio Three the separate labels of Music Programme and Third Programme will disappear and the entire output of the network put under the single heading of Radio Three, which will concentrate wholly on music and the arts. The day time stream of music will be maintained and it will now be extended more into the evening. At the same time, Radio Three will continue to carry, in the evening, some of the more specialised drama, poetry, and other cultural programmes which have been a feature of the Third.

The more factual programmes which have been broadcast on the Third – documentaries, current affairs – seem likely to fit better into a reshaped Radio Four. We have explained that the schools programmes will delay the full rationalisation of Radio Four, and we will enlarge on this later, but our

aim is to make this largely a speech network. There will be a strong emphasis on news and topical programmes, but remembering those people who rely solely on radio, or prefer it, Radio Four will continue to carry general entertainment programmes.

News

In the television age, one field in which radio still has a really distinctive role is news. Radio may lack the immediate impact of television as a news medium, but it can offer far more coverage, and far more flexibility.

But we have decided against a network concentrating entirely on news. We believe that there are two different audiences for radio news, just as there are for newspapers. Some listeners want only brief, capsule news. Others want longer bulletins, followed by programmes amplifying the news and presenting comment.

The demand for news in brief will be supplied on Radios One and Two. Both will carry hourly summaries – Radio Two on the hour, Radio One on the half-hour. At the same time, the programmes on an all-music Radio Two will be capable of being interrupted immediately for a news flash, or for longer coverage of any big story.

The demand for more detailed news and current affairs will be supplied on Radio Four. We cannot fully expand the journalistic output on Radio Four until we can complete the rationalisation of the network, but in the meantime we plan to develop the four main news and magazine periods – breakfast time, lunch time, early evening, and late evening.

Education

Education programmes on radio at present comprise not only schools broadcasts on Radio Four but also further education on both Radios Three and Four. To this will be added an increasing commitment to the Open University.

The Government has been asked by the Open University to build a new vhf network for it in due course, but we believe it could be to the joint benefit of the educational world and the general listener if education programmes could be separated from the national networks more quickly. We are, therefore, prepared to make the vhf network now carrying Radio Four available for education at mutually agreeable times. When this network is not required for education, it would continue to carry the normal Radio Four programmes. We recognise that schools without vhf sets would need time to re-equip, so we would propose to delay the change until the autumn of 1971.

This move would temporarily relieve the Exchequer of the prospect of having to spend £4 million on building the new vhf network which will eventually be needed, but it would involve additional operating expenditure for the BBC. We hope, therefore, that the Government will agree to defray some of the cost of the BBC's educational programmes. We are presenting

certain proposals, which are also designed to open the way for further developments in educational broadcasting, both on radio and television.

Stereo

For radio, stereo is potentially as exciting a development as is colour for television. It adds a new dimension to listening. The present limited stereo output on Radio Three is successful, and an increase of standard classical music in the evenings should provide some opportunities for expanding it.

There is, however, an insistent demand for stereo to be extended to other networks and to more parts of the country. It would be idle to pretend that, at present, there is much chance of this, but it would be relatively simple to equip local radio stations to transmit in stereo and we are studying other ways of doing more to meet one of radio's long-term priorities.

Local Radio

No human organisation should claim infallible prescience, but we may fairly argue that the BBC was championing local radio before some of its present advocates found their voices. We seized the chance to start the present experiment in 1967, and we believe this has proved that local radio is not only viable, but an integral part of any broadcasting system.

We seek, therefore, to develop local radio as a major element in the BBC's services. We make no claim for monopoly. The BBC has matched up to competition in television and, given equal opportunities, it could do so in radio. This, however, is an issue it is not for us to decide. We are concerned only to make clear that we regard local radio as a vital part of the BBC's services. It is now widely acknowledged that the BBC's experimental stations have done well. The predominantly young staffs have produced bright, lively programmes, which have excited genuine local interest and participation. Local news and information is the bread and butter of every station, but each of them broadcasts a wide range of other programmes: features about local music and the arts, discussions about local issues, programmes for schools, religious programmes including local services, programmes for the blind, for old people, for immigrants, for local shoppers, programmes on local sports and hobbies. The experiment has proved that there is a demand for local radio. We want to satisfy it over the country as a whole.

We have put forward to the Postmaster General a provisional scheme for expanding our local network to about forty stations, which would reach nearly 90 per cent of the population of England. These stations would basically have to be vhf services, and this would cut down the number of people able to listen until the sale of vhf sets expands. In the context of the reallocation of frequencies mentioned elsewhere in this paper, it may prove practicable to provide some medium-wave support for the stations, but this could only be fully effective in day time, and in the long run it seems

certain that the radio public will prefer the greater clarity and freedom from interference of vhf.

With the establishment of local radio, we believe that the present regional and area radio programmes would be progressively superseded. The local stations would offer a far bigger output of much more direct, personal interest to the listeners. As local stations develop in the main conurbations, we would propose in England to discontinue 'opt-outs' – periods when a separate region or area opts out of the main Radio Four service in order to transmit programmes just for its own part of the country. We recognise that this would mean a minority of people losing their present regional programmes, but we believe that there is a clear balance of advantage. At present listeners to regional radio hear about five hours of regional programmes a week, often dealing with matters remote from their own locality. With local radio, nearly 90 per cent of the population of England would get at least five hours a day of radio programmes dealing with their own localities.

We think it reasonable to suggest, too, that the BBC's output should be seen as a whole. Local radio would dovetail with the new pattern for television outside London which will stem from our fresh proposals for the regions.

The Regions

The BBC's broadcasting outside London is at present based on six large regions. Three cover Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland; the other three carve up England (North, Midlands, South and West). London acts as the centre for a South-East Region.

The three nation-regions serve homogeneous communities. On radio, they regard their present localised programmes, departing from the main Radio Four network at certain times of day, as in effect a national service for their respective countries. Whether or not they choose to divert some of their resources into local radio, it seems essential to sustain these national medium-wave programmes.

With the English regions, there is no such homogeneity. The boundaries were drawn some forty years ago not on any basis of community interest but to match the range of the transmitters. These are regions devised by engineers rather than sociologists. The Midland Region stretches from the Welsh border to the North Sea. The North Region has to cover Liverpool and Newcastle, Manchester and Hull, Lincoln and Carlisle. The South and West Region serves an area stretching from Land's End to Brighton. Over the years we have sought to meet this problem by creating five additional areas within the regions, but we now feel that the time has come to replan the structure.

We respect the loyalties which the present English Regions have created but we now propose to replace them with eight smaller and more socially logical regions. These will be based on the existing regional and area

centres: Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich, Plymouth, and Southampton. In the longer term, as money permits, we would hope to set up further centres, with one in the East Midlands as a first priority.

In television, these new-style regions will be the basic unit of English broadcasting outside London. As with the present regions and areas, they will each produce daily news bulletins and news magazines, and they will also start their own Saturday sports reports. At the same time, we intend to expand their production of general programmes. These have been confined in the main to the existing three regions: a total of about 150 a year. Within the next two or three years, we intend that each of the new regions should produce a weekly general programme: a total of about 400 a year, over and above their daily news magazines.

We have been impressed by the insistence of our Regional Advisory Councils that the relationship between London and the rest of the country needs to be two-way. It is, of course, the responsibility of national networks to express the rich diversity of the national life and not simply the culture of the metropolis. This will continue. The national networks will remain deeply rooted in the life of the nation. We also intend that the facilities at the three big production centres in England outside London (Birmingham, Bristol, and Manchester) shall be used increasingly to supply the national television services, partly by programmes initiated in London and partly by programmes created at these three centres. To ensure the full use of these production facilities, one studio in London will be closed down.

In television, the eight new Regions will all feed the national news and current affairs programmes; in radio, the local stations will also provide a more comprehensive news and current affairs coverage for the national networks, while the major centres outside London will continue to provide non-news programmes to the networks.

When we put these proposals to our Advisory Councils, however, they voiced certain anxieties. They feared that while there might be studio brawn in the regions, the creative brain would come solely from London.

To meet these doubts, therefore, we propose that the regional initiative should be sustained in two ways. First, at the production centres in Birmingham, Bristol, and Manchester there will be a senior executive, who will be in charge of the facilities and who will have a specific responsibility for nourishing creative talent on the spot. Second, a senior controller will be appointed to supervise the local output from the eight regions, and to represent the new regions and local radio stations to central management. He will have direct access to the Director-General and he will have a status similar to the Controllers of the National Regions.

This organisational structure will provide a useful additional safeguard, but we believe that the real guarantee for creative development outside London will lie in substantially increased production work: in the wider opportunities now offered in the plans for many more local stations in radio, for expanding television output in the new regions, and for increasing programme activity in the three big English centres.

In due course, under the terms of the BBC's Charter it will clearly be necessary to review the pattern of Regional Advisory Councils, but in the meantime the present Councils will continue in operation.

Frequencies

We have touched already on the question of frequencies, but our prime preoccupation is to narrow two of the more serious gaps in our medium-wave coverage.

The present frequency pattern is: Radio One medium-wave only, Radio Two long wave and vhf, Radios Three and Four medium-wave and vhf. On Radio Four each region or area which wants to 'opt-out' of the main network programme needs a separate frequency.

The medium-wave coverage on Radio One is at present 86 per cent of the population by day, reduced by foreign interference to only 33 per cent at night. We propose to reinforce the Radio One transmitter network to bring in another $4\frac{1}{2}$ million listeners by day and night.

The present medium-wave coverage on Radio Four is 98 per cent by day and 70 per cent by night. If Radio Four's vhf network is to be hived off for part of the time to education, it is obviously essential to strengthen it on the medium-wave. We therefore propose to raise the coverage to 99 per cent by day and 95 per cent by night, including special provision for Wales, where night time reception is particularly poor.

We would be able to make these improvements once local radio is sufficiently established for us to end regional and area 'opt-outs' in England. This would release the medium wavelengths at present used for these services.

Further decisions about frequencies must await the Government's decision about local radio, but we are prepared to consider reallocating the medium waves now used for Radio Three as part of a general pattern of providing improved medium-wave support for the other networks and local stations. This would leave Radio Three on vhf only. Such a high-quality output is, in fact, best heard on vhf, but we recognise that, in the short term, some listeners would be deprived if it were taken off the medium wave, and we would only wish to make the change if we were satisfied that there was a clear balance of advantage to the reception of BBC radio services as a whole. There is, for instance, the possibility that one medium frequency might be used in several ways: to restore a second European medium-wave channel to the External Services, to give still further Radio Four coverage in Wales, or to retain some medium-wave support for Radio Three in day time.

Finance

The plans set out in this paper for reshaping radio cannot be achieved unless we can master the financial problems. The sale of radio licences has long since reached a plateau, yet costs go on rising. At present BBC radio is still just in credit, but by 1974, at present levels of expenditure, it will be running an annual deficit of £4½ million and will have an accumulated deficit of nearly £12 million – and this without taking any account of local radio. It follows that there is nothing to spare from our present income to finance local radio, and the BBC has had to tell the Government that, if we are to develop the local radio system proposed, we will need additional revenue of £5,200,000 a year.

Setting aside local radio, therefore, we are left with having to eliminate the prospective deficit on national radio. One obvious solution would be to cut output, but this we have rejected, at least until all other measures have been tried.

Another possible source of relief, in co-operation with the Post Office, would be more effective action against licence evasion. It is estimated that the BBC is losing £7½ million annually from combined-licence evasion and a further £2½ million from failure of people to pay their car radio licence fees. Radio's share of that would make a useful dent in its deficit.

One additional source of income that is sometimes suggested is advertising. It is argued that a number of foreign public service broadcasting organisations supplement their licence income by advertising, and if some of the results have not been happy, equally not all have been disastrous.

But the pattern of broadcasting which has been consciously created in this country is clear: a commercial system financed by advertising competing with a public service system financed by licence. Both, of course, are anxious to build up their audiences, but they operate under different pressures and produce different results. For the BBC now to accept advertising in any part of its services would decisively change this pattern. Whatever limitations might be imposed on the use of advertising at first, is it likely that any future Government would be prepared to meet any additional financial requirement by raising the licence fee? Is it not much more probable that if and when the BBC next needed more money for its authorised services it would be told to take more advertising? The breach, once made, would be steadily widened.

We feel strongly that so crucial a change should not be made purely as a spasm reaction to an immediate problem. We ourselves believe that the licence system is the best basis for the BBC, and we have therefore decisively rejected the idea of introducing advertising into our services.

We have also considered the possibility of diverting some of the television component of the combined licence fee to radio. Just before and after the war the television service took its first infant steps on money provided out of the then radio-only licence. But our forward projections show that television, too, will be hard pressed. The rise in the number of tele-

vision licences is flattening out just at a time when costs are being pushed up by colour, yet before the supplementary colour licence can be expected to produce substantial revenue.

This is not to say that radio's deficit is an exclusively radio problem. Managing directors have been appointed in all three output services – radio, television, and external services – partly to exercise a stricter control on spending. We are also closely investigating the efficiency of our central administration and service departments. We are determined that as much of our resources as possible shall go into the 'teeth' of the operation (producing programmes) and as little as possible into the administrative 'tail'.

But whatever economies can be made elsewhere, the radio service must live within its income. In saying this, it is only fair to point out that BBC radio has a good record in productivity. Since 1946, the licence fee has risen only once, by 25 per cent. Over the same period, the output of radio has gone up by 55 per cent.

Studies have shown, however, that at certain points production could be further streamlined without affecting quality. These economies will affect all departments, and must unfortunately involve some staff reductions, but we shall be consulting about how best to implement them with the unions concerned.

The effect on individuals will not be clear until we have completed further detailed studies both in the radio departments and in the central services. It does not follow that a reduction of a given number of posts means an equal number of redundancies. We cannot rule out some redundancies or early retirements, but we hope that some of the necessary reduction can be achieved through not filling posts as they become vacant through normal wastage. An organisation which depends on a continuous refreshment of creative talent cannot afford wholly to forgo recruitment or promotion, but experience suggests that at least part of the reduction can be absorbed over a period of time by normal retirement and staff turnover.

Music

As so high a proportion of radio's output is music, we have obviously had to review costs in this field. It has been pointed out, quite fairly, that BBC radio has made a unique contribution to the musical life of the country, and we fully intend to sustain this role. Our output of serious music will be maintained at the present level, and the proposals would actually increase the output of lighter music.

But a decision to maintain this level of broadcast music need not automatically imply maintaining the present level of live orchestral music. These are separate issues. We can sustain a musical output of at least the present quality by a greater use of recordings.

On the other hand there is a clear role for live music in broadcasting. It is essential if a radio service is to provide a fully representative repertoire.

There is also a responsibility on a broadcasting organisation to consider its demand for high quality live music against the background of employment opportunities for musicians in the country as a whole.

This is an immensely difficult problem. It involves the role of the licence payer, who must ultimately foot the bill. The licence income is supposed simply to finance broadcasting. How far should it sustain a level of musical patronage beyond the immediate needs of broadcasting? Up to now it has clearly done so, but given the present financial stringency, we feel the needs of broadcasting should take precedence and that our first priority should be to the listener. Partly to increase our output of lighter music and partly to sustain the present output, we are seeking agreement to use more gramophone records. We also propose to repeat our own musical broadcasts more often, within the agreed limits. We must then propose reducing our employment of musicians, including our own standing orchestras, to nearer the level that we need for broadcasting purposes.

Our broadcasting requirements will enable us to maintain fully the following five orchestras: the BBC Symphony, the Northern Symphony, the BBC Radio, the Midland Light, and the Scottish Radio. These employ a total of 279 musicians.

By the same yardstick, however, there is a group for which we have no broadcasting need and for which financial responsibility can no longer remain with the BBC: the Scottish Symphony, the Northern Dance, and the London Studio Players, employing a total of 104 players (nineteen part-time), together with the BBC Chorus of twenty-eight. The Scottish Arts Council has asked us to consider a proposal they are preparing in relation to the Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and this we will do.

With regard to the Training Orchestra (sixty-nine players), we will fulfil the present contracts, the last of which ends in September 1971. By then, however, the BBC will have spent about £500,000 on this experiment in training musicians, and, while we would welcome the assumption of this responsibility by some other organisation, we see no prospect of being able to afford any further contribution ourselves.

This leaves three other orchestras, employing 128: the Concert, the Welsh, and the Northern Ireland. The BBC is unable to bear the full cost of sustaining all of them, but discussions about their future are proceeding with the Arts Council of Great Britain, and with the Welsh Arts Council and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

On all these proposals we are consulting with the Musicians' Union, and they have asked for an urgent and complete review of their relationships with the BBC, to which we have agreed. We are also consulting with other unions involved in the music field.

Conclusion

The proposals set out in this paper aim to reshape BBC radio into a pattern which we believe would be more logical, more attractive, and solvent. The national networks would provide four services by day, three in the evening. The average listener would have at his fingertips a wide choice:

Radio One – pop music, with hourly news summaries.

Radio Two – light music, with hourly news summaries, and merged with Radio One only during the evening.

Radio Three – a larger output of standard classical music, but with some element in the evening of cultural speech programmes – poetry, plays.

Radio Four – largely speech, with an emphasis on news and current affairs, but also offering plays, discussions, light entertainment.

In effect, a Radio Five – a system of some forty local stations, broadcasting local news and information and a whole range of community programmes.

And also, we hope, an educational channel – not only catering for schools but offering more general educative programmes for everyone.

It would be idle to pretend that an exercise involving substantial economies would offer unalloyed benefits. We believe there is a clear balance of advantage, but there is a profit and loss account which should be frankly stated.

On one side must be set: the dispersal of the three existing English Regions, the disbandment of several BBC orchestras, and a reduction in the use of outside musicians, some reduction in other radio staff and the possible loss of the medium wave from Radio Three and of part of the vhf from Radio Four; and a few may regret a shift in emphasis in Radio Three in the evening.

But on the credit side can be offered: a Radio Three offering more music while retaining some cultural speech programmes, greater separation of Radios One and Two, a more clearly defined speech network on Radio Four, the creation of eight new, more logical English regions and (we hope) some forty local radio stations, wider medium-wave coverage on Radios One and Four, and possibly a separate channel for education programmes.

The fulfilment of these plans will depend on solving the critical financial problems – internal economy for national radio, additional income for local radio. We would hope next spring to make the proposed changes in the evening output of the networks, and to complete the full rationalisation with the transfer of schools programmes in 1971. In local radio, we would propose within two years to have some twenty stations in operation, covering the larger city areas and conurbations.

With these proposals we believe we are offering a service which would cater for at least as broad a range of listeners' requirements as at present, spanning the generations and the cultures, capable of meeting any competition, and fulfilling the BBC's distinctive responsibilities as a public service broadcasting organisation.

