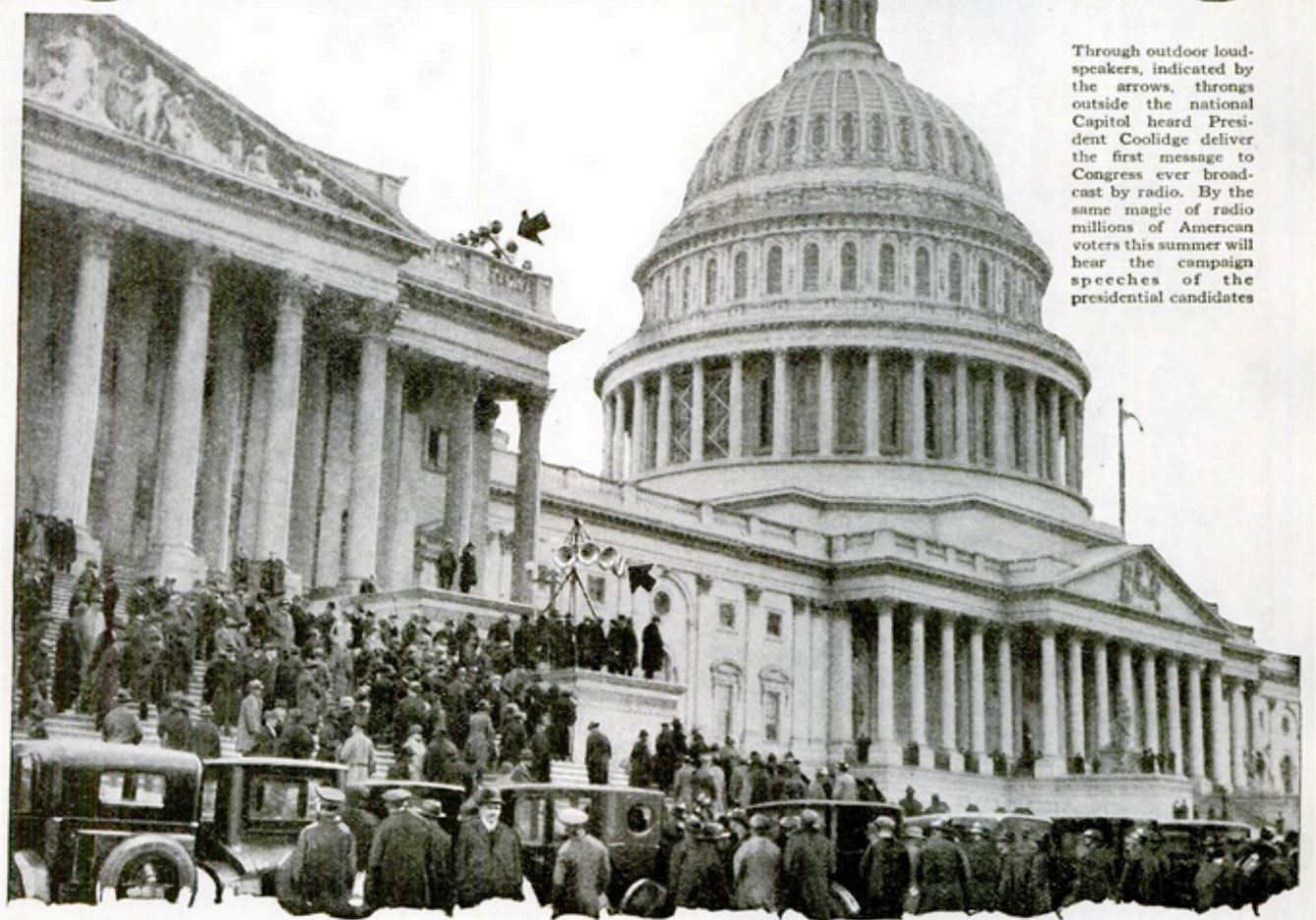




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July, 1924



Through outdoor loudspeakers, indicated by the arrows, throngs outside the national Capitol heard President Coolidge deliver the first message to Congress ever broadcast by radio. By the same magic of radio millions of American voters this summer will hear the campaign speeches of the presidential candidates

Radio's Part in Politics

By Edward G. Lowry

PRESIDENTIAL campaign year 1924 brings with it a brand-new puzzle for the politician. The puzzle is the radio fan. Politics is largely a matter of publicity. Since the 1920 campaign, radio broad-casting has developed into one of the greatest mediums of publicity in the land. Hence the politician's concern.

When those fellow Ohio editors—and publicity experts—Warren G. Harding and James M. Cox ran against each other for the presidency, there were but 15,000 sets in the country. That figure is the estimate of the Department of Commerce radio experts. Today, Secretary Hoover estimates that there are no less than 5,000,000 radio receiving sets in regular use. Since—through loudspeakers and extra head sets—each receiver probably averages at least two listeners, it is probable that some 10,000,000 people hear what the radio waves are carrying each day.

To a political spellbinder, eager to sell

Mr. Lowry is one of America's foremost political writers. Through his close personal contact with the leaders of both the Republican and Democratic organizations, he is able to present here the first comprehensive estimate of the tremendous part radio will play in electing our next President.

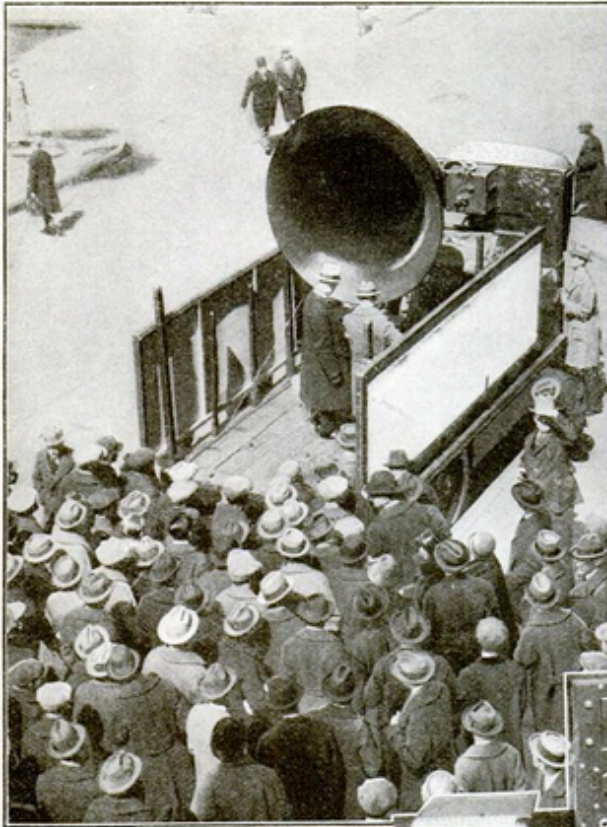
his wares, that is an audience such as no man before, even in his wildest dreams, ever hoped to reach. Probably the most ambitious spellbinder this country has ever known is James M. Cox. His campaign in 1920 was a marvel to foe and friend alike. During the last three months of his campaign, Cox traveled more than 10,000 miles in his special car, talking on an average of 10 times daily to audiences ranging from mere handfuls of people to the 30,000 who assembled to hear him on notification day at the Dayton Fair Grounds.

Cox was able to achieve this almost

superhuman task because he was physically stronger than nine out of 10 men of his age; and he was considerably younger than the average presidential campaigner. Also, to keep himself fit, he carried with him his own cook and masseur.

HOW many people heard Mr. Cox? There is no way to ascertain the exact number, but newspaper correspondents who traveled with him once figured that he may have made his voice heard to 1,500,000 at the most. A more conservative estimate would be 1,000,000, or but one-tenth the number the Democratic candidate in 1924 can reach in one evening from his comfortable front porch, if he can arrange for an adequate chain of broadcasting stations to carry his message to the radio fans of the whole country.

Indeed, through the magic of radio, either of this year's candidates, if his line is connected with such a chain of



The corner soapbox—1924 edition. This powerful radio receiver with loud-speaker, mounted on a motor truck, is designed to carry the voice of a distant campaign orator to the street-corner crowds. It may play an important part in this year's presidential campaign

Democrats, and independents. It is the latter who turn the tide of a political battle. Regulars vote straight. It doesn't take so terribly many independents to give one candidate or the other a victory. In 1916 it took but 591,385 of them to keep Mr. Hughes out of the White House and to keep Mr. Wilson in.

Some of the thoughts in the minds of national political leaders

This convention broadcasting set-up gives a fairly good idea of the opportunity open to the presidential spell-binder, if he desires to talk to the whole country at once. The undertaking is an expensive one. It involves tying up important trunk lines of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company from the city in which the candidate speaks for at least three hours. While the telephone company regarded this as a public service to its radio audience in the case of the conventions, it took a different attitude regarding messages of individual campaigners to potential voters. In national broadcasting, not only are wires tied up, but an extensive staff of engineers must be on the job, all over the

Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce, not only is radio dictator of the United States, but is an ardent radio fan as well. He is cited by Mr. Lowry as one of the men who, while not considered good public speakers, have found themselves in demand as radio speakers because of their clearness



broadcasting stations, can talk through his own home or office telephone to an audience greater possibly than the total number of people who heard the voices of every presidential candidate since the time of Lincoln! Certainly this is a phase of present-day campaigning that can not be overlooked.

OF COURSE, there is the view that Cox in 1924, by his vigorous campaign, made himself known personally to a great number of his fellow citizens. That was an asset worth something, but it is probably offset by the fact that many who rallied to hear his speeches, but who were in the back rows, could not hear his voice. Everybody who tunes in can hear everything that the radio spellbinder has to say. Moreover, as every radio fan knows, when he hears a speech over the radio he is impressed by a certain intimacy, a sense of contact with the speaker. Especially is this true when listening in by headphones, when it seems to the auditor almost as if the orator were addressing his words to him alone.

"Let me talk to a man face to face and I will convince him!" public speakers have been declaring for years. And now radio gives them at last an opportunity to make good their boast.

Another thought is that those who turned out to Democratic rallies in the 1920 campaign were Democrats. They would have voted for Cox whether they had heard him or not, for the most part. The candidate who campaigns by radio reaches a mixed audience of Republicans,

about this new radio puzzle are these: Radio is a campaign bet that cannot be overlooked. It is not a substitute for political rallies, for newspaper publicity, booklets, and other tried methods of campaigning. It alone will not beat a political organization. But it is something new in campaigning, something that may prove sufficiently influential to turn the tide of public sentiment. It may materially increase the number of voters. Ordinarily, 18,000,000 votes in a presidential election is a fine record, though in 1920, due to the heat of the campaign, almost 25,000,000 votes were cast. Take either number and 10,000,000 radio fans are a powerful element.

RADIO presents not a few practical problems to the political managers of the Republican and Democratic parties, both of which plan to use radio broadcasting during the campaign. As this was written, the most that either party had done was to arrange for the broadcasting of the speeches, the noise and the other audible features of the conventions, from Cleveland and from New York. The biggest question, cost, did not come up for solution, because the radio companies were eager to broadcast the convention proceedings as fine programs for their audiences.

This means that, whereas the national conventions of 1920 were limited to the lucky 30,000 who were able to get tickets in Chicago and San Francisco, the 1924 conventions were open to all who had the necessary receiving set.

country, to see that amplifiers and trunk lines are working right. This service is expensive to the telephone company and the user alike.

IT IS true that the broadcasting companies who work entirely by radio are perfecting a system of re-broadcasting, without the use of the land wires. However, at the present time but one large re-broadcasting station of this sort is in operation, and it appears unlikely that this method will be sufficiently developed to cover the country in the 1924 campaign.

An idea of the arrangements necessary for nation-wide broadcasting may be gleaned from the way the President's recent speech before the Associated Press editors in New York was handled. The President spoke at a luncheon at the Waldorf Hotel. His entire message, and even the side remarks of those near him, the tinkling of ice in the glasses and the rattle of dishes, was heard by radio fans all over the country, for, besides being broadcast direct from New York, the words of the President were carried also over the telephone lines to Washington, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, and Providence to be re-broadcast. It is probable that that speech, delivered to a few score of editors in New York, was heard simultaneously by several million people.

At its present stage of development, radio broadcasting probably lends itself best as an adjunct of a regular political campaign. To use radio, the candidate making a front-porch campaign, as did

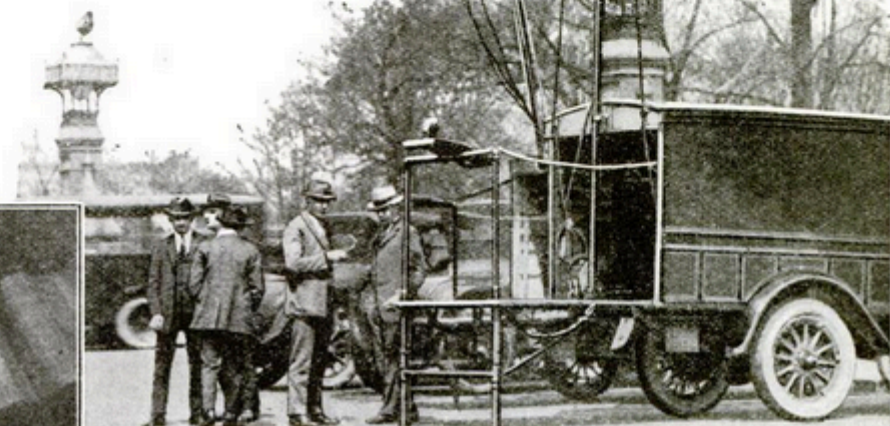
Mr. Harding from Marion in 1920, would be obliged to resort to the costly use of extensive land wire hook-ups. But the candidate making a tour, as did Mr. Cox, could have his speeches from each city broadcast by the local stations. Without a very great cost, he also could carry a broadcasting outfit in his special car, and thereby increase greatly the number of listeners to his train platform addresses.

A MAJORITY of radio stations probably do not know how much the spellbinder should be charged for the privilege of using their transmitters. Commercialization of broadcasting has not yet been accomplished generally. A few of the larger stations sell time in the air, charging about \$10 a minute when the broadcasting does not involve the use of trunk lines from one city to another. Many advertisers have found this a successful avenue of publicity. They do not attempt to advertise their wares directly over the radio, but endeavor to bring their names before the radio public through musicians, singers and other entertainers who are announced as performing "by courtesy of" the advertisers who employ them. Programs of this sort must be just as entertaining as other

audience. Acrobatics are lost to the microphone. The radio spellbinder needs a clear, concise message. He need not be an orator. In fact, many men who are not good public speakers have found themselves in demand as radio speakers.

Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover is an example. His carefully prepared addresses, read to an audience of banqueters, often is lost. Over the radio it is clear and logical. Secretary Hughes is another good radio speaker, though he is also considerable of an orator in public. Postmaster-

Radio on the stump—
one of the motorized
loudspeaker "plat-
forms" that will help
carry the voices of the
presidential campaign
to a radio audience
that is estimated at
10,000,000 Americans



On several occasions recently the speeches of President Coolidge have been heard over the radio by unseen millions, notably his address at the Lincoln's Birthday dinner of the National Republican Club and his more recent speech before the Associated Press editors in New York City. In the latter case his entire message, and even the side remarks of those near him, the tinkling of ice in the glasses and the rattle of dishes, were heard by radio fans in every part of the United States

radio features, for the radio fan with a good set can tune out an uninteresting program, and tune in a more distant station whose offering meets his fancy.

This raises another question for the spellbinder. The oldtime orator who tore off his coat and collar and who made a windmill of his body as he spoke, will not be the speaker who holds a radio

General New and Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, both of whom have had considerable experience in broadcasting, find it a boon as a means of reaching people.

THE President, who finds it difficult to speak in public, has encountered some interesting experiences when speaking over the radio. He is the first President whose message to Congress was broadcast. On this occasion, the telephone company broadcast the address not only in Washington, but in Providence, Dallas, Kansas City, and New York.

While the President was speaking, the telephone company engineers received a telegraphic query from a fan in St. Louis, listening in on the Kansas City broadcast. He wanted to know what was the rustling noise he heard along with the President's speech.

The engineers traced the rustle to its lair. It was the President fingering the pages of his message, as he read it from the rostrum of the House of Representatives.

It takes a new technique in spellbinding to hold the radio audience. The person who is seated in a crowded hall at a political rally has no choice but to hear the speaker through, whether he likes it

or not. The radio listener-in, if he wearies of the speaker, can tune him out and tune in a jazz band from another station. It takes more than cold politics to hold him.

The speaker with a good string of funny stories has the advantage over the man with heavy logic. The man with a brief message, full of interesting facts, is listened to, where the windbag with an hour of flowery oratory talks to empty space, for radio puts the acid test on policies, issues, and men. Volume of voice, graceful gestures, or the all but hypnotic effect of a powerful personality will not make up for lack of logic, coherence, and a clean-cut, convincing message in a radio speech.

THE radio listener in the quiet of his own home has opportunity to ponder on and dissect the statements that come to him through the air. He can comment aloud if he cares to in entire security. He can silence the speaker permanently so far as he is concerned by merely turning a knob. More than ever before, public speakers must stand on their own feet, and succeed or fail by their own efforts. The applause and cheering of loyal party men, who have attended a meeting for the sole purpose of stimulating enthusiasm, will not help a speaker with his radio listeners, for demonstrations of hand-clapping and shouts become merely a confused rumble in a head set that the radio enthusiast finds distinctly annoying.

Former Senator Albert J. Beveridge,

(Continued on page 112)

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Radio's Part in Politics

(Continued from page 23)

himself an orator of note, suggested recently that radio will help restore oratory, since the public will demand facts and reasons, well and briefly stated, will tolerate only real eloquence, and will reject in disgust banal sentiment and wordy emptiness.

A phase of the subject that I mentioned above was commented on recently by Brigadier-General James Guthrie Harbor, president of the Radio Corporation of America, as follows:

"The fact that candidates are described and written up by the newspapers and magazines is not enough to satisfy the average voter. He wants to get at the sincerity and motives of the candidates and this comes only through contact. The glimpse of a man on the back platform of a train leaves an impression that no amount of writing will do. That personal touch is what men in public life have always sought, and they can establish that contact now to all parts of the country by radio. Radio will elect the next President."

SO FAR, speakers on political topics have, for the most part, confined their activities to short discussions between entertainment acts provided by the broadcasting companies. The radio spellbinder may have to follow the lead of the national advertisers and provide a band or a jazz orchestra to offer entertainment as an inducement to listeners-in to hear him.

This is no new thing in spellbinding. Senator James A. Reed of Missouri, an old-style, whirlwind spellbinder, engaged a small traveling circus to campaign with him when he last ran for the Senate. He set up his circus tent at the country crossroads, and after the band had attracted the farmers, he cut loose with politics. The radio campaigner might improve on this. The evening of politics might include music, comedy, and stunts from a good vaudeville show.

For serious political debate on topics in which the public is interested, the radio is made to order. It is interesting to reflect how many people might have heard the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates, had radio broadcasting been in use then. In those days a meeting hall that held 2500 people was monumental. Probably not more than 15,000 people heard Lincoln and Douglas in their whole series of seven debates over the state of Illinois. The course of history might have been changed had the whole country heard them by radio.

PUBLICISTS are greatly concerned as to how the Democrats and the Republicans will divide up the ether. They are worrying lest one or the other party monopolize radio broadcasting, or that rival spellbinders will spoil each other's speeches by talking at the same time. Radio engineers say these dangers do not exist, for several reasons.

In the first place, the expense of broadcasting prevents a monopoly. Neither party has a campaign chest that will per-

mit it. Second, radio fans would not stand for it, and broadcasting companies are extremely responsive to the wishes of the listeners-in. The broadcasting companies, through their associations, are dividing the time among themselves, or are using different wave-lengths without interfering with each other. Finally, there is the authority of the government, acting through the Chief Radio Inspector, to keep order in the ether. Secretary Hoover, who is responsible for the administration of radio regulations, has declared it inconceivable that any single group or person shall ever have the right to determine what communication may be made by radio.

"Radio is a public concern," he states, "impressed with public trust, and to be considered primarily from the standpoint of public interest."

So there seems little doubt that the radio spellbinder, if he has something to offer that radio fans care to listen to, will have plenty of opportunity to have his say by radio. It is up to him.

All signs point to radio's exerting a most profound influence in the presidential campaign of this year; and this year, remember, is only the beginning—an experiment even. Wider use of radio for political purposes can be predicted with certainty for the future. Political leaders will become more and more expert in its employment as time goes on. Skill in radio oratory eventually will become a necessary part of the equipment of the man in public life.

Each year there will be more radio receivers; hence, a larger audience for the radio spellbinder. And who dares say that through radio, through the better understanding of politics and political issues that it will bring to the average man, some day may not be realized the long existing dream of patriots—a perfect government?

Hay Fever Pollen Drifts to Mountain Tops

IF YOU suffer from hay fever, you haven't much chance of escaping it, even by fleeing to the top of a barren mountain, according to an announcement made recently by Dr. William Scheppe-grell, of New Orleans.

Hay fever is caused by the irritation of sensitive membranes in the breathing apparatus from the pollen of certain plants. If hay fever sufferers can keep away from this pollen, they are safe; but Doctor Scheppe-grell, flying in an airplane, has discovered that clouds of pollen are carried by the wind to the height even of 15,000 feet! When the air cools, the pollen descends, a fact that explains why hay fever sufferers find their distress aggravated at night, in the fall, or on unseasonably cold days. Pollen was found by Doctor Scheppe-grell as far as 10 miles from its source, from which he concludes that local campaigns to stamp out ragweed and other pollen-producing plants are of little benefit unless extended over wide territory.