

**THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF
BBC PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING
IN SCOTLAND, 1952-1980**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and that no material within the thesis has previously been published.

SIGNATURE

ABSTRACT

This is a study of the BBC in the post-war period which focuses primarily on the history and development of BBC public service broadcasting in Scotland, and particularly within the period 1952–1980. Scottish developments in broadcasting are placed within the wider U.K. context because of the interrelationship between both, especially as BBC Scotland is only one of the BBC's regions, albeit a national region. This perspective is used in order to highlight how BBC Scottish broadcasting has evolved during this period as part of an essentially centralised broadcasting organisation. Each chapter is subdivided into a number of sections which are separately numbered and titled. The various issues and themes are discussed within a chronological framework. There are also a number of appendices which contain reference, statistical, and illustrative material which link in with the various chapters. The research draws upon a wide range of source material including BBC written archival material, taped interviews, official publications, BBC reference source material, books, pamphlets, and journal and newspaper articles.

Chapter 1 begins by tracing the early history of the BBC from its founding as a Company in 1922 up until the dissolution of that Company in 1926 and its reconstitution as a public corporation. It also discusses the BBC's local radio stations in Scotland in the 1920s and the development of Scottish regional broadcasting during the 1930s. The chapter concludes by examining the Reithian public service ethos and the development of national broadcasting through to the restart of national and Scottish regional broadcasting in 1945; it thus provides background material to the main period covered by the research. Chapter 2 focuses on the organisational structure of the BBC in Scotland and its institutional links with the BBC centrally; it discusses the formation, powers, and operation of the Scottish Advisory Council and the Broadcasting Council for Scotland; it examines the financial basis of broadcasting,

including the implication of financial policy for the provision of BBC programme services in Scotland; and concludes by analysing the impact of the organisational and resource control changes introduced due to the growth of the BBC as an institution. Chapter 3 examines the various technical, financial, and social aspects governing the geographical extension of BBC broadcasting services in Scotland. It also considers, in some detail, various radio and television engineering developments since the early 1950s. Chapter 4 focuses on the development of the television programme services. Emphasis is placed on programme policy, and to a lesser extent, programme content. Topics covered include the arrival of BBC television in Scotland in 1952, the differing regional structure of BBC and ITV, competition between the BBC and ITV, the introduction of BBC-2, and television development in Scotland up until the late 1970s. Chapter 5 discusses the development of the radio programme services. It focuses on programme policy, and to a lesser extent, programme content. Topics covered include the development of the BBC Scottish Home Service, BBC local radio, network radio, competition between the BBC and ILR, BBC community radio in Scotland, and the programme policy and development of BBC Radio Scotland. Chapter 6 focuses on three key themes in BBC broadcasting in Scotland: the BBC's dual programme responsibility (to produce programmes for Scotland and for the network audience) and Scottish images in broadcasting; centralisation; and regional devolution. Chapter 7 concludes by focusing on the immediate financial pressures and longer-term competitive challenges which the BBC faced in 1980.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Association of Broadcasting Staff
AM	Amplitude modulation
AR	Audience research
ATV	Associated Television
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCS	Broadcasting Council for Scotland
BH	Broadcasting House
BREMA	British Radio Equipment Manufacturers' Association
DBS	Direct Broadcasting by Satellite
EBU	European Broadcasting Union
FM	Frequency modulation
GAC	General Advisory Council
HF	High frequency
HIDB	Highlands and Islands Development Board
IBA	Independent Broadcasting Authority
ILR	Independent Local Radio
ITA	Independent Television Authority
ITV	Independent Television
LBA	Local Broadcasting Authority
MF	Medium frequency
NTC	National Television Council
NTSC	National Television System Committee
OB	Outside broadcast
OBA	Open Broadcasting Authority
PAL	Phase Alternation line
PCM	Pulse code modulation

PMG	Postmaster-General
PTA	Popular Television Association
SAC	Scottish Advisory Council
SB	Simultaneous broadcast
SECAM	Sequential Couleur A'Memorie
SHF	Super high frequency
SHS	Scottish Home Service
SNP	Scottish National Party
SSO	Scottish Symphony Orchestra
STV	Scottish Television
TAC	Television Advisory Committee
UHF	Ultra high frequency
VHF	Very high frequency

CHAPTER 1

THE BBC'S CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION, THE PUBLIC SERVICE ETHOS, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL BROADCASTING, 1922–1945

1.1 The BBC's Early History and Constitutional Position, 1922–1927

This study of the BBC in the post-war period which focuses primarily on the history and development of BBC public service broadcasting in Scotland, particularly within the period 1952–1980, begins by providing background material on the formative years of broadcasting up until the restart of regional broadcasting in 1945. This section traces the early history of the BBC from its founding as a Company in 1922 up until the dissolution of that Company on 31 December 1926 and its reconstitution as a public corporation on 1 January 1927. These years demonstrated that wireless (i.e. telephony without wires) could be transformed from a technical invention of interest to enthusiastic amateurs, into a workable broadcasting system operated by the BBC. Sections 1.2 and 1.3 complete the analysis of regional and national broadcasting during this period.

It was on 4 May 1922 that the Postmaster-General (PMG) (see list of Abbreviations) announced in the House of Commons that he had decided to permit the establishment of a few broadcasting stations. Subsequently a committee of manufacturers was appointed after a conference of manufacturers of wireless apparatus was held on 18 May 1922. There was no public demand for broadcasting. Indeed six of the principal British manufacturers of wireless apparatus who were fascinated by the popularity of broadcasting in the United States where there were over 200 radio stations by 1922, decided to

approach the Post Office to seek permission to operate a broadcasting service in Britain with confidence that it was a course of action worth pursuing. These British manufacturers, who were in effect the early broadcasters, were therefore engineers and their aims were commercial (i.e. to extend the market for wireless receivers). At that time there was little evidence of the informational, educational, or entertainment potentialities of broadcasting. The wireless manufacturers were prepared to provide the necessary capital and operate the service at no cost to the taxpayer. Their profits were to depend upon the sale of wireless receivers and so naturally they had a financial interest in stimulating demand for receivers by providing programmes which would be acceptable to the public. The primary interest was to sell receiving sets and a broadcasting service was required to achieve this objective.

The wireless manufacturers formed a company, the British Broadcasting Company (B.B.C.), which was a monopoly, to provide the capital, to establish and operate eight broadcasting stations, and to transmit programmes under the general control and supervision of the PMG. Some form of supervision was necessary if only to prevent interference between broadcasting stations, to monitor programme output, to control broadcasting hours, and to avoid the American unregulated free-for-all in broadcasting. In America no licences were required to operate receiving sets and it was relatively easy to obtain transmitting licences, hence the proliferation of radio stations. In Britain where radio had the potential to reach a mass audience it was perceived by the Post Office that there was a need for control to be exercised by a public authority.

After the BBC was formed on 18 October 1922 British manufacturers of wireless equipment were deemed to be eligible for membership of the company if they acquired one or more £1 shares, agreed to sell only wireless receivers manufactured in Britain of a type approved by the PMG, and also agreed to pay the BBC a royalty on receivers sold bearing the BBC mark. The mark consisted of the letters 'BBC' within a circle and

bearing the words 'type approved by the Postmaster General'. Most of the £100,000 capital was contributed by the six leading wireless manufacturers. Lord Gainford was chairman of the company and there were eight directors representing companies such as General Electric, Marconi and Siemens.¹ The PMG issued the broadcast receiving licences at 10s per annum to fund the broadcasting service, and paid the BBC half the proceeds from the licences. The BBC's income therefore consisted of royalties on receivers together with the proceeds from the licence fee. The Licence and Agreement between the PMG and the BBC took effect from 18 January 1923 but the company was granted permission to commence broadcasts two months earlier on 14 November 1922 from the Marconi Company's London station.² Under the terms of the licence the BBC was permitted to establish eight stations, to select sites for approval by the PMG, and to pay a royalty of £50 per annum to the PMG in respect of each station operated by the company. The company was registered on 15 December 1922, and the first meeting of the Board of Directors was held on 21 December at Magnet House in London during which matters such as the registration of the company and the appointment of John Reith as General Manager were dealt with.³

This scheme was acceptable at the time because in this wholly new venture it was the manufacturers, not the taxpayers, who took a risk in introducing a broadcasting service. It would have been unfair if taxpayers had been required to pay for a service which only those in possession of wireless receivers could enjoy – a principle endorsed by the Sykes Committee on Broadcasting in 1923. There was governmental control over the profits generated by the company because the Post Office ensured that only half the

¹British Broadcasting Company, "Chairman and Directors", n.d., BBC Written Archives Centre CO/6 (hereafter cited as BBC WAC).

²Wireless Broadcasting Licence (Cmd. 1822; 1923).

³Board of Directors: Minutes, 21 December 1922, Nos. 1, 9, BBC WAC CO/7/1.

proceeds of the licences were to be paid over to the company; there was however no state control over broadcasting in the sense that no government department selected programme material. The wireless manufacturers had access to the best technicians available and so there was a reasonable expectation that in technical terms safeguards would operate. Also, it was administratively more convenient for the Post Office to license one company as a monopoly supplier of broadcast material than to license individual manufacturers and thus be accused of favouring some at the expense of others. The Post Office was free to license other companies, as re-affirmed in the supplementary licence of 1923, but chose not to do so.⁴ The Directors of the company believed that they had been granted an exclusive licence to broadcast but there was no legal manufacturing monopoly. It was easier to opt for a monopoly given the need for radio manufacturers to reach agreement on the question of patents in order to start a broadcasting service and thereby generate interest in the sale of wireless receivers. It was difficult to envisage how another broadcasting company could broadcast without the use of patents controlled by members of the BBC.

Initially the licence to broadcast was limited to two years (i.e. to 31 December 1924). Nevertheless, by agreeing to accept the financial risks involved, the manufacturers were able to attain some degree of protection against foreign imported wireless apparatus. They could claim that it was entirely through their efforts that a demand had been created for wireless receivers. They were cautious of the possibility that an excess of receivers from the American market might be shipped to Britain, thus threatening the production of British receivers and therefore undermining their income. Much more likely was the possibility – which did materialise – that some individuals would build their own receivers using foreign components which would be less expensive than purchasing a receiver from a British trader which would include the BBC royalty payment. The latter problem, as will

⁴Wireless Broadcasting Licence (Cmd. 1976; 1923), p.7.

be noted, caused concern and forced the Government to appoint a Committee to examine the issue.

It was John Reith who converted the commercially founded British Broadcasting Company into what was to become a renowned and established British institution which not only began to reflect historical events but itself became a subject of historical interest. John Reith was born in Stonehaven in Scotland on 20 July 1889. He was the youngest son of a Church of Scotland minister in Glasgow, the very Rev. Dr. George Reith.⁵ John Reith had a somewhat austere upbringing and his father exerted a significant moral influence during his childhood years. In later years Reith served a five-year engineering apprenticeship in locomotive shops in Glasgow, and in 1913 he travelled to London to seek employment and joined the firm S. Pearson and Son Ltd. The following year he joined the forces and went to war. He returned to Glasgow in 1920 to become General Manager of the engineering firm William Beardmore and Company of Coatbridge. Reith resigned from this company in March 1922. On 13 October 1922 he scanned the advertisements for public appointments in a newspaper and noticed one which invited applications for officers, including General Manager, of the British Broadcasting Company. Reith applied for the post of General Manager and was interviewed on 13 December. On the following day he received a telephone call from Sir William Noble, Chairman of the Broadcasting Committee, informing him that he had been offered the appointment. Thus began an influential partnership between Reith and the BBC which profoundly influenced the purpose and direction of British broadcasting for many years. A year later on 14 November 1923 John Reith was appointed Managing Director of the Company.

Broadcasting began on 14 November 1922. At that time John Reith knew little about the potentialities of broadcasting. There was a conflict between his Presbyterian

⁵Charles Stuart, ed., The Reith Diaries (London : Collins, 1975).

background and his ambitions which influenced his temperament. He may have experienced a sense of Calvinist predestination – a belief that God had predestined him to take charge of this new medium of communication. Years after he left the BBC in June 1938 to become Chairman of B.O.A.C., he was to regret that decision to leave the BBC because he believed that the programme standards which he had sought to maintain were sliding into oblivion.⁶ However, many of the assumptions on which the BBC was founded were altering even before Reith left the Corporation. He would have had difficulty in coping with the post-war BBC, particularly the expansion of television. His philosophy perhaps served the BBC best in the early years when it was seeking to become an accepted and an established institution; in the post-war years his philosophy was subject to increasing strain. As Asa Briggs pointed out, Reith held firmly to his moral beliefs and this placed him at odds with broadcasters in the post-war years.⁷ Reith was both paternalistic and authoritarian. More than this, in the post-war period no-one was once again able to exert an influence comparable to that which he had exerted during the formative years of broadcasting.

John Reith wanted broadcasting to be funded from public rather than private sources, and to operate under unified control as a national institution. Central control was deemed to be efficient, economical, and likely to maintain high standards. The BBC represented a mixture of private enterprise and public control. Reith, however, was aware that central control could constrain local initiatives in broadcasting. In his book Broadcast over Britain, published in 1924 before the BBC became a public corporation, Reith stated:

With all the central control and the central management affairs, there still remains ample scope for the exercise of the ingenuity and enterprise of the local staff, assisted by their local advisory committees. The stations should be centres of real

⁶J.C.W. Reith, Into The Wind (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), p.528.

⁷Asa Briggs, "The BBC's Historian, Asa Briggs, Remembers Lord Reith", The Listener Vol. 85, No. 2204 (24 June 1971), pp.805–6.

interest and influence in their Areas.⁸

Unified control also involved the provision of a public service which could be extended to all parts of the country. It necessitated the need to sever the link with the radio trade. A purely commercial system might have been expected to concentrate only on providing a broadcasting service in the large cities rather than in rural and sparsely populated areas; it might also have focused more extensively on programmes geared to popular tastes thus narrowing the range of programme output. Likewise Reith did not want broadcasting to be subject to excessive Government control. His definition of serving the national interest involved transmitting the best material available to the BBC throughout most parts of the country within the resources available. Reith thought it did not involve pandering to popular taste; it did involve investing radio with a social purpose. Reith wanted broadcasting to widen the personal experience of the audience which it served. Given that Reith had grown up in an age devoid of broadcasting it was perhaps natural that he would be more in awe of its possibilities and less likely to take it for granted than subsequent generations.

One of the factors which Reith and the BBC had to take account of was the appointment by Government of Committees of Inquiry to examine the broadcasting services. In the period 1922–1926 before the reconstitution of the BBC as a public corporation there were two such committees of Inquiry: the Sykes Committee in 1923, and the Crawford Committee in 1925. The problem referred to earlier in this section whereby some people built their own receivers using foreign components rather than purchase the more expensive British-built receivers, highlighted the need to clarify the conditions under which licences should be issued. So on 24 April 1923 the Government appointed a Committee chaired by Sir Frederick Sykes to consider the options available. It seemed unfair for users of ready-made sets to pay a BBC royalty to meet the cost of

⁸J.C.W. Reith, Broadcast Over Britain (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924), p.72.

broadcasting whereas users of home-assembled sets escaped paying such a royalty. The Sykes Committee, whose report was published on 23 August 1923, favoured the issue of a single annual receiving licence (value 10s) of which 7s 6d should be paid to the BBC; it wanted the royalties system to cease – in effect a withdrawal of the conditions about British origin and the marking of receivers with the BBC emblem; and finally it proposed that the BBC's licence should be extended for a further two years until 31 December 1926. Despite the proposed increase in the BBC's share of the licence income and the two year extension of the licence, this did not persuade the BBC to waive its rights against the use of foreign components and receivers.

A compromise solution was reached on 1 October 1923 which can be noted as follows: (1) the BBC's licence was extended until 31 December 1926;⁹ (2) up to 31 December 1924, two types of licences would be issued – the 10s licence, of which 7s 6d would be paid to the BBC covering receivers with the BBC mark, and a separate constructors licence (value 15s) of which 12s 6d was to be paid to the BBC on sets constructed using British made components; (3) the BBC royalty payments from its members was to be reduced; and (4) from 1 January 1925 only the single 10s licence would be issued involving the cessation of the royalty system, the BBC marking and protection from foreign apparatus. There was also a provision for adjustments to be made in the proportion of the licence which the Post Office paid to the BBC. The growth in the number of licences which were purchased enabled the constructors licence to be dropped and the standard 10s licence to be introduced earlier than planned (i.e. on 1 July 1924). Only the restriction on the use of foreign apparatus was continued until 31 December 1924. Thereafter one single 10s licence covered the use of apparatus for experiments and for broadcasting.

⁹Wireless Broadcasting Licence (Cmd. 1976; 1923), Para. 1.

Between the years 1922 and 1926 the number of licence holders increased from 35,000 to over two million. The Sykes Committee in 1923 reaffirmed the belief that broadcasting should not become an unrestricted commercial monopoly or a financial burden on the taxpayer.¹⁰ The Government had since then taken note of the expansion of broadcasting and so in the Summer of 1925 it appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of the Earl of Crawford to advise on the scope of the broadcasting service and its management, control, and financial aspects after the expiry of the BBC's licence on 31 December 1926. The Committee's report, published on 2 March 1926, outlined its recommendations for changes which were to lead to a transition in the status of the BBC from company to public corporation. The report stated:

Broadcasting has become so widespread, concerns so many people, and is fraught with such far-reaching possibilities, that the organisation laid down for the British Broadcasting Company no longer corresponds to National requirements or responsibility. Notwithstanding the progress which we readily acknowledge, and to the credit of which the Company is largely entitled, we are impelled to the conclusion that no company or body constituted on trade lines for the profit, direct or indirect, of those composing it can be regarded as adequate in view of the broader considerations now beginning to emerge.¹¹

Broadcasting was expected to remain a monopoly, the BBC was to become a public corporation, and the PMG remained the Parliamentary spokesman on broad questions of policy affecting the broadcasting service. The BBC's status and duties were now clearly expected to correspond with those of a public service. The Crawford Committee proposed that the new licence should operate for ten years, but also mentioned that the Government should be free at a later date, should circumstances change, to supersede or modify the BBC. There was thus a qualifying clause about the BBC's monopoly, although the Committee did not elaborate upon what it regarded as constituting such a change in circumstances. It had the foresight to recognise that future circumstances might render the monopoly obsolete. The BBC was regarded now as a public utility

¹⁰The Broadcasting Committee : Report (Cmd. 1951; August 1923), p.6.

¹¹Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1925 (Cmd. 2599; March 1926), pp.4–5.

whose resources had to be efficiently developed in the national interest. In September 1926 Reith sent a memo to all Station Directors asking them to review the usefulness and efficiency of existing staff with a view to transferring them to the Corporation at the end of the year. At midnight on 31 December 1926 the BBC was transformed from a limited company in the private sector into a corporation in the public sector.

On 1 January 1927 the British Broadcasting Company became the British Broadcasting Corporation. With the transition from Company to Corporation the staff of over 700, together with all assets, including twenty low-power transmitters and one high-power long wave station, passed to the new corporation. Reith became Director General, and a Board of Governors with the Earl of Clarendon as Chairman, replaced the Board of Directors. In the Radio Times a message from the Earl of Clarendon was published, part of which read as follows:

The progress that has been achieved by the British Broadcasting Company, and the nature and importance of its contribution to the well-being of the community, are known to us all. Innumerable and serious difficulties have been overcome, and the far-sighted policy pursued had embraced developments of the service far beyond what has yet been achieved. It will be our constant aim to carry out to the best of our ability the plans which are already in train for the completion of these developments.¹²

Reith wanted the Company to become a Corporation because of the emphasis on public service. Asa Briggs stated:

Without the initiative of business enterprise there would have been no BBC: without a concept of public service there would have been no Corporation. Reith saw the Corporation as the logical successor to the Company.¹³

Reith wanted the BBC to be a public service both in its constitutional structure and its programme output. It was to become a public service in which wireless manufacturers had no direct control.

¹²Radio Times, 31 December 1926, p.5.

¹³Asa Briggs, The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Vol.1: The Birth of Broadcasting (London : Oxford University Press, 1961), p.401.

When the BBC became a public corporation what was significant was that the new authority was established under Royal Charter and headed by a Board of Governors. This development was not repeated in the establishment of the nationalised industries after 1945, or indeed the Independent Television Authority (ITA) which was established by Act of Parliament in 1954. This appeared to give the BBC a degree of status unlike that of other public corporations, although the BBC and nationalised industries both exercised control over their day-to-day administration; it also divorced the establishment of the BBC from any political decision (i.e. by indicating that the BBC was not created by the Government). The charter gave the BBC a greater degree of independence than it would have experienced if it had been established by statute. For example, the issue of impartiality which was a statutory obligation for Independent Television (ITV) was not so for the BBC where it was merely embodied in a code of practice. The appointments to the BBC Board of Governors were made by the Queen in Council (in effect the Prime Minister) and not by a Departmental minister. There was governmental control over broadcasting but no detailed ministerial intervention. Indeed the Corporation was given independence in its daily programming and administration thus leaving the Government to exercise control over general policy affecting the conduct of the broadcasting service. So despite the status, authority and independence conferred by the Charter, the BBC had only relative autonomy from the Government which determined the level of the licence fee and allocated wavelengths. The Post Office could scrutinise BBC estimates, and the Public Accounts Committee could scrutinise BBC Accounts –although the latter were audited by a firm of Chartered Accountants and not by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Successive Governments had the power to appoint and to remove Governors, to control the level of capital expenditure, to decide not to renew the licence, to establish additional broadcasting stations, to prescribe the hours of broadcasting, to veto broadcasts, or to appoint Committees of Inquiry to examine the conduct of BBC services. In short, governmental powers over the BBC were considerable.

The Royal Charter set the objects for which the BBC was incorporated, and outlined its powers and organisation whereas the licence and Agreement authorised the BBC to use stations and equipment for broadcasting and specified the technical conditions for the operation of these stations. The Postmaster General was the sole Minister responsible for broadcasting hence he had control over the social and technical aspects of broadcasting. If there had been a Minister specifically responsible for the social aspects of broadcasting then it was possible that this might have lessened the BBC's independence of Government. The PMG was primarily concerned with the technical aspects, thus the social aspects of broadcasting derived incidentally from the PMG's responsibilities for technical aspects. Also, with public corporations a distinction can be drawn between general (long-term) policy for which there was accountability to Parliament, and daily administration where greater autonomy was permitted. Interestingly, in the BBC it was the daily activities which were of most concern to the public and which were likely to form the basis of Parliamentary questions, yet it was only with BBC general policy that the Corporation was responsible to the public through parliament. The BBC furnished Annual reports to the PMG for presentation to Parliament, but unlike other public corporations there was a greater identification of general policy with daily activities in the BBC. Although governments disliked intervening directly in broadcasting for fear of being accused of imposing a form of censorship, the Corporation for its part recognised that it could never be totally independent of Government and Parliament, nor more autonomous than other public corporations.

1.2 The Development of Scottish Regional Broadcasting, 1923–1945

During the inter-war years radio increasingly filled the leisure hours of many people, particularly those living in remote areas. The price of wireless receivers fell and so an increasing number of people had access to radio. In December 1923 there were over 500,000 licences in force in the United Kingdom, but this figure had risen to almost 10 million by 1945. Broadcasting created radio personalities and it also exposed listeners to metropolitan culture and national news. It soon became one of the most important social and cultural influences on society. In contrast to the potential for programme diversity there was the counterbalancing element of standardisation – of views, of news, of accents, of culture. Through radio, listeners were exposed to the same music and the same forms of entertainment. Throughout this period local and regional culture tended to be diminished at the expense of metropolitan culture.

Broadcasting initially began on a local basis in 1922. The BBC opened its first Scottish station (5SC), located at 202 Bath Street Glasgow, on 6 March 1923. The BBC chose Glasgow as the site for the first station in Scotland because a large percentage of the population of Scotland lived in or near Glasgow. The programmes from the Glasgow station were broadcast from a transmitter installed in a tower room of the Port Dundas Power Station of the Glasgow Corporation Electricity Department. Glasgow was designated as a main station because it used what was then regarded as a high power transmitter. Programmes normally began at 3.30pm, with close down varying between 10.30 pm and midnight. Regular programmes included local news, topics for women, and children's corner. National news was taken on a simultaneous broadcast (SB) from London. On 7 November 1924 staff at the Glasgow station moved to 21 Blythswood Square and remained there until 1930 when a further move took place to 268 West

George Street. In 1938 the BBC moved again, this time to Hamilton Drive. During the first six months of the opening of the Glasgow station about 6,000 licences were issued. The Glasgow station was followed by the opening on 10 October 1923 of a station at Aberdeen. The BBC's main station at Glasgow closed on 12 June 1932 when regional broadcasting superseded the local stations.

Aberdeen which was the BBC's most northerly station was opened as a main station. The opening ceremony took place in the studio at 17 Belmont Street on premises which belonged to the Aberdeen Electrical Engineering Company. Among those present at the opening ceremony were John Reith (Managing Director of the BBC), Sir William Noble (a director of the BBC), and Captain P.P. Eckersley (the BBC's Chief Engineer). The opening address at 9.00pm on 10 October 1923 was followed by music from the Pipers and Military Band of the 2nd Gordon Highlanders. It was perhaps unfortunate that the site for this station was chosen so close to nearby electrical generators because this tended to interfere with the clarity of transmissions. Programmes from the stations normally began at 3.30 pm with closedown occurring between 10.30 pm and midnight. Typical programmes broadcast included a regular children's corner, a women's Half Hour, local news, national news from London, and weather forecasts for farmers. Listeners to the Aberdeen station, unlike those who listened in to the Edinburgh Station which was opened in 1924, were less inclined to accept simultaneous broadcasts from London.¹⁴ Instead they preferred a greater volume of locally originated programme material. In the late 1920's with the introduction of the Regional scheme, some staff were transferred to Head Office. However, due to Aberdeen's position as the only station in the North of Scotland, together with the presence of fierce criticism of any attempt to reduce the station's programme activities, the Aberdeen station was permitted to continue broadcasting its own programmes on a separate wavelength until 9 September 1938.

¹⁴"Scotland : Miss Edwin's Notes", n.d, p.5, BBC WAC R13/369/1.

On 1 May 1924 the BBC opened a relay station at Edinburgh. It was regarded as a relay station because it had a more limited transmitter range than the Glasgow or Aberdeen stations. On the opening day a concert was broadcast from the Usher Hall. Programmes that evening began at 7.30pm and the opening speeches which were simultaneously broadcast to all stations, began at 9.00pm. National and local news were broadcast half an hour later and the service closed down at 10.15 pm.¹⁵ Those present at the opening ceremony included John Reith (Managing Director of the BBC) and the Lord Provost of Edinburgh. The transmitter at Edinburgh was installed in a wooden hut on the quadrangle of Edinburgh University's Old College with the aerial suspended from the University chimney. Interestingly, the historic civic rivalry between Edinburgh and Glasgow resulted in a decision to receive programmes from London rather than from Glasgow. Indeed a glance through the Radio Times confirms that many programmes were taken on SB from London. Programmes tended to begin at 5.00 pm and close down between 11.00 pm and midnight. Edinburgh had its own children's corner programme broadcast regularly and National News was taken from London. The first BBC offices in Edinburgh were located at 79 George Street; new premises at 87 George Street were officially opened on 31 July 1925. In common with the other Scottish local stations, the Edinburgh Station's programme activities were scaled down from January 1928 in preparation for the Regional scheme. Unlike Aberdeen, there was little outcry over this probably because as a capital city Edinburgh could be expected to be called upon to supply a reasonable number of Regional programmes. Anyhow, from 30 September 1928 when Mr Cleghorn Thomson became Regional Director, a decision was made to base a Press representative in Edinburgh to serve the Scottish Region. Also, the headquarters of the BBC in Scotland was transferred to Edinburgh. Staff moved out of the George Street premises on 29 May 1930 and into new premises at 5 Queen Street. Many

¹⁵Radio Times, 25 April 1924, p.205.

Glasgow staff moved over to Edinburgh on 14 July 1930. On 12 June 1932 the Edinburgh local transmitter closed down when the Scottish regional transmitter came into service.

The last of the four local BBC stations in Scotland was located in Dundee. In February 1924 Dundee Town Council indicated that it wanted a main or at least a relay station for the city. Dundee was eventually granted a relay station. The opening ceremony took place on 12 November 1924 at the Caird Hall during which the Lord Provost declared the station open. Also present at the opening ceremony were Rear Admiral C.D. Carpendale (BBC Controller) and Mr D. Millar Craig (Assistant Controller for Scotland). The evening programmes on the opening day lasted from 7.30–9.55 pm and the opening speeches were SB to all stations. The BBC's offices and studio in Dundee were located at 1 Lochee Road. The transmitter was housed at Caldrum Jute works and the aerial was attached to a pole from the highest chimney stack in the city. With the policy of centralisation the Dundee studio closed down on 1 October 1929, leaving only the transmitter operational. The latter closed down on 12 June 1932 with the opening of the Scottish Regional transmitter at Westerglen. Thereafter Dundee had no BBC presence and so only outside broadcasts were taken from the city.

For almost a decade, programmes in Scotland were broadcast during the evenings from these local stations, each with their own wavelengths and local programmes. They could contribute material to other stations and did take varying numbers of programmes in simultaneous broadcast from London. Listeners in the remoter parts of Scotland did not have access to local programmes. The Glasgow and Aberdeen stations supplied more original material than the Edinburgh and Dundee relay stations. It was only with the advent of the Regional Scheme when the four low-power local stations were replaced by two high-power transmitters, that it was possible to extend Scottish broadcasting coverage. From November 1928 the Northern Area Director became known as the

Scottish Regional Director under the Regional Scheme. This scheme offered a choice of programme (national or regional), better reception, better quality programmes, and also brought all Regions into greater contact with national events, although at the expense of localised services. Thereafter broadcasting in Scotland was viewed as a National service within a much larger U.K. broadcasting service.¹⁶

The BBC regions were chosen on administrative, technical and economic grounds. In these inter-war years the BBC did not strictly address a national community because there were regional services and anyhow not all parts of the country could receive radio broadcasts. For those areas with access to sound broadcasts the National Programme remained the senior of the two services. Indeed under the system of simultaneous broadcasting the principle which was adopted was that so-called 'provincial' programmes should concentrate on purely local matters thus in practice eliminating those provincial programmes which were of a similar character to those available from London and broadcast at the same time.¹⁷ London had access to the best talent and facilities and so the BBC in Scotland tended to focus on traditional material even in the post-war period thus prompting John Gray, former BBC Chief Assistant, Radio, in Scotland, to remark that in broadcasting terms Scotland tended to turn inwards and backwards.¹⁸ Scottish material tended to encompass folk culture, Scottish history, and local news, which were not covered by the U.K. National Programme. The Regional Scheme enabled those listeners who wished to receive the National Programme from London to be able to do so without being interrupted by any Scottish programme transmitted on a separate wavelength.

¹⁶Melville Dinwiddie, The Scot and His Radio : Twenty Five Years of Scottish Broadcasting (Edinburgh : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1948), p.14.

¹⁷Control Board : Minutes, 20 November 1928, No. 2, BBC WAC R3/3/4.

¹⁸Taped Interview with John Gray, Edinburgh, 5 April 1988.

Likewise those who preferred to listen to mainly Scottish programmes were able to do so without being deprived of access to the National Programme. These changes gave greater freedom to Scottish producers to build up a diet of Scottish programmes within available resources without having to deny listeners in Scotland any item in the National Programme each time a Scottish item was broadcast.

The background to the BBC's regional Scheme which replaced the local stations can be traced to the desire to give listeners in all parts of the country, including many rural areas, access to radio programmes as well as providing a choice of programmes for those people already able to receive broadcasting services. From November 1926 the BBC planned to build five high-power medium wave stations to replace the existing local and relay stations. Although the BBC Regions were based primarily on technical considerations in order speedily to extend broadcasting throughout the country, the arguments in favour of greater centralisation of output were not wholly technical. It was intended that all material, except Regional programmes, should originate in London on the grounds that the best talent and facilities could be found there. The Control Board Minute for 17 November 1926 noted:

The point is that we should give the listener the best, and the best can be only given where the funds available are spent upon a few good programmes sent S.B. to many centres rather than diluted to make every centre an origination of two programmes each.¹⁹

Aware of the concern of Regional Directors as to the local programming implications of the policy of centralisation, in the following year Reith wrote:

The local cultural loss should be, to a considerable extent, offset by the quality of the London programmes, and to a further extent by the activities still open to Regional directors.²⁰

¹⁹Control Board : Minutes, 17 November 1926, p.4, BBC WAC R3/3/2.

²⁰Reith to Regional Directors, 25 April 1929, p.1, BBC WAC R49/571/2.

In August 1927 an experimental transmitting station came into service at Daventry in Northamptonshire in order to assess the reception area of a high-power medium wave transmitter. In practical terms the trend towards centralisation of output did not diminish appreciably until the arrival of very high frequency (VHF) broadcasting on low power in the 1950s offered opportunities for the planning of genuine local radio stations.

The regional scheme came into force on 1 October 1929. During that year several areas were considered near Falkirk to find a suitable site for the Scottish Regional station. In the following year construction work began at Westerglen. The Scottish Regional Station was subsequently opened at Westerglen on 12 June 1932. The Scottish transmitter was synchronised with the transmitters at Brookman's Park in London and at Moorside edge in Huddersfield due to the scarcity of wavelengths. Synchronisation which involved the operation of transmitters on the same wavelength enabled many areas of the country to be covered than would have been possible. The opening of the Scottish Regional station resulted in the closure of the Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee transmitters, and the conversion of Aberdeen into a local station. Partly due to the difficulty of receiving other stations, Aberdeen retained its wavelength and programme centre. However, with Aberdeen now operating as a low-power station this caused some reception problems for listeners in the scattered communities in the Highlands. In other areas listeners could choose between the National Programme from London and the Scottish Regional Programme transmitted on separate wavelengths. Outwith Scotland the four other Regional services covered the Midlands, the North of England, the West of England and Wales, and Northern Ireland. Prior to the opening of Westerglen only the more populous areas in Scotland received programmes, thus placing rural areas at a disadvantage. With the advent of the Regional Scheme programme policy had to reflect these changes. Two other Regional transmitters were opened in Scotland during the 1930's: Burghead near Elgin in October 1936 to serve the Highlands, and Redmoss near Aberdeen on 9 September 1938. This brought an increasing number of people in

Scotland within range of the National and regional programmes, although the problem remained of encouraging more people in Scotland to listen in to radio.

The BBC Regions were too large to represent communities with a common sense of social and cultural identity. Scotland was a nation of regions and so could not easily be treated as a single region as the BBC sought to do. Also, listeners in Scotland and BBC staff in Scotland experienced a greater sense of separate identity from London than did listeners and staff in the English regions. Friction between London and the regions was not uncommon. For example, Regional Directors disliked the practice whereby officials at Head Office negotiated with outside bodies and individuals in their regions without informing them, thus undercutting their authority.²¹ The appointment of a Director of Regional Relations did subsequently serve to some extent to strengthen the position of Regional Directors in their contacts with London. Another point just alluded to was that broadcasting in Scotland was not regarded as so popular a pastime as it was in other parts of the U.K. thus prompting the incoming Scottish Regional Director to agree with Reith that there was a need in Scotland to popularise broadcasting and increase the number of licence-holders in proportion to the population.²² Most daytime programme items were taken from London and the other regions, whereas during the evenings Scottish items were fitted into the programme schedule. The output of the Scottish station was designed to cater for the whole of Scotland, not local areas, and this resulted in some degree of submerging of cultural diversity within Scotland. The Scottish Regional Director, whose powers did not extend to technical matters, was given a weekly programme allowance which was fixed quarterly. The amount could be exceeded in any given week provided that the excess was saved within the quarterly period. Scotland, in common with other regions, could also apply for a special grant to cover any specifically

²¹Control Board : Minutes, 18 March, 1930, No.1, BBC WAC R3/3/6.

²²Melville Dinwiddie to John Reith, 1 August 1933, BBC WAC R13/369/2.

expensive programme. The Scottish Regional Director had to decide on the balance between the transmission of London material, English regional material, and Scottish originated material. But financial considerations constrained this decision-making process as Asa Briggs noted:

There were few outside programmes which they were bound to take, but their ability to produce local programmes was limited not only by human resources but by programme finance.²³

The Scottish Region, in common with the other regions, was at a disadvantage compared to London because it did not have the staff, training or material resources (studios and equipment) to specialise in the type of output which was of a sufficiently high standard to be confidently recommended for national broadcasting to any great extent.²⁴ Although expenditure could be shared on programmes contributed to the National Programme, in general regional programmes were expected to contrast with the National Programme and this placed further constraints on the ability of Scotland to produce programmes which were likely to have a national appeal.

The introduction of the Regional Scheme thus brought about advantages and disadvantages. In his book on broadcasting and society in the inter-war years, Mark Pegg stated:

The introduction of the Regional Scheme did change the relationship between the BBC and its audience. Its introduction drew more listeners within reception distance of a transmitter for the first time and provided the majority of listeners with a choice of programme, before 1939.... The BBC, for its part, accepted the need for better public relations and positive efforts to research the tastes, habits and problems of the audience. Nonetheless, the reins of control for the regional programmes were still held tightly in London.²⁵

By the early 1930s the centralised nature of broadcasting was commented upon. An

²³Asa Briggs, The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Vol.2 : The Golden Age of Wireless (London : Oxford University Press, 1965), p.329.

²⁴Regional Directors' Meeting : Minutes, 4 May 1934, No.6, BBC WAC R34/735/1.

²⁵Mark Pegg, Broadcasting and Society 1918–1939, (London : Croom Helm, 1983), p.35.

article in The Listener in 1934 on the constitutional position of the BBC stated:

The British system, though it has a number of regional stations both in its Northern and Southern areas, is largely centralised on a National basis in London, and pivoted on Broadcasting House.²⁶

It is not simply a case that it was more cost effective to centralise production; there was an implicit assumption that culture emanating from local areas was in some sense inferior to metropolitan culture. Central control from London was viewed by Reith and the BBC as consistent with the Corporation's monopoly position, the efficient use of resources to expand broadcasting, and the maintenance of public service ideals (i.e. uniformity in both policy and standards). BBC Regions, such as Scotland, were not expected to embark on any project if such work could be performed at higher standards and more economically by London. Regions were indeed expected to provide "...a distinctive contrast to the more highly developed and standardised Metropolitan programmes transmitted as 'National'".²⁷ In practical terms this resulted in regions concentrating only on producing programmes which London could not supply and this meant, as George Bruce remarked, that listeners became accustomed to looking to London for coverage of U.K. and international news.²⁸ It seemed that broadcasting which began on a local basis because of technical factors (i.e. absence of high power transmitters) had been replaced by a more authoritative and paternal approach to broadcasting in which the professionals replaced the amateurs.²⁹

²⁶Ernest Barker, "The Constitution of the BBC", The Listener Vol.11, No.260 (3 January 1934), p.13.

²⁷Control Board : Minutes, 14 January 1930, No.8, BBC WAC R3/3/6.

²⁸George Bruce, Notes for a Consideration of the Ethos and Ethics of Broadcasting and of British/Scottish Society (Edinburgh : Nevis Institute, 1977), p.3.

²⁹Paddy Scannell, and David Cardiff, "Serving the Nation : Public Service Broadcasting before the War", in Popular Culture : Past and Present, ed. Bernard Waites, Tony Bennett and Graham Martin (London : Croom Helm, 1982), p.166.

In 1935 the BBC undertook a survey of the regions. The Report on the Regions by the Director of Regional Relations was compiled in January 1936. This report drew attention to the dangers resulting from centralisation in London. Siepmann, the Director of Regional Relations, argued in the Report that the regions were being deprived of opportunities for self expression due to lack of resources. He commented:

Centralization represents a short-sighted policy. The provinces are the seedground of talent and the ultimate source of our supply for London programmes. The existence and development of our Regional work provides an effective insurance policy against the drying up of sources of supply for our programmes.³⁰

Siepmann wanted a greater delegation of responsibility to Regional Directors; for opportunities for Regional staff to raise their professional standards; better studio facilities to enrich provincial life and improve programme quality; more regional listener research to help shape programme policy; and more regular contacts between London and the regions. The policy whereby Regions were not to embark on projects which could be produced better in London had impoverished regional programme initiatives. Siepmann thought that a greater proportion of regional material could be included in the London Programme. In Scotland he argued in favour of an extension of facilities for talks, outside broadcasts and feature programmes.

The mere fact that the BBC decided to initiate a survey on the regions appeared to indicate at least some concern about the degree of centralisation which had taken place since 1929. In commenting upon the Siepmann Report, the BBC's Controller of Programmes agreed that more regional material should be broadcast nationally if standards were acceptable, but added that there was no desire to establish autonomous regional programme centres which would merely replace London centralisation with local centralisation. The Ullswater Committee's Report which was published on 16 March 1936 referred to the size of the BBC regions and stated that it was undesirable that large

³⁰"Report on Regions", January 1936, p.2, BBC WAC R34/845.

populations which differed widely in their character and culture should be combined within a single region.³¹ The Committee wanted the BBC to increase the volume of material originating within the regions. In June 1936 the Government published its recommendations on the Ullswater Report and accepted that the Corporation should continue a policy of decentralisation and thus include a higher proportion of regional material. The BBC outlined its decisions on the report by the Director of Regional Relations in July 1936. The Corporation accepted that broadcasting had to reflect the life of the whole country, not merely that of the metropolis. Regional programmes contrasted with metropolitan output and also catered for local interests. The BBC stated:

There is thus considerable and definite justification, not only for the existence of the Regional organisations, but also for the development of their activities.³²

However, the BBC added a cautionary note about the limitations on the autonomy of the regions consistent with the need to ensure uniformity of policy in some areas such as staffing and programme standards. Greater provision was later made for the representation of regional views in London and for more specialised staff in the regions.

In a book published in 1941, P.P Eckersley (the BBC's first Chief Engineer) looked back upon the Regional scheme and remarked that it had failed to live up to expectations. He complained that although the Regional scheme was designed to represent a technical means to provide alternative outlets for alternative programmes, it was being used as a double outlet for virtually the same material.³³ Regions such as Scotland were never able to provide a complete service devoid of sustaining material from London or other regions. During the war years there was no Scottish broadcasting although a small number of

³¹Report of the Broadcasting Committee 1935 (Cmd. 5091; February 1936), p.9.

³²"Decisions on D.R.R.'s Report on the Regions", July 1936, p.2, BBC WAC R34/845.

³³P.P. Eckersley, The Power Behind the Microphone (London : Jonathan Cape, 1941), p.129.

Scottish items were included in the National Programme. It was only in July 1945 with the allocation of a separate wavelength to Scotland that it became possible to introduce the Scottish Home Service and thereby increase the volume of Scottish items broadcast. In the post-war period Scottish broadcasting was in a better position adequately to reflect the life, culture and interests of the people of Scotland.

1.3 The Reithian Public Service Ethos, and the Development of National Broadcasting, 1927–1945

Even before the British Broadcasting Company became a public Corporation in 1927 the potentialities of broadcasting were recognised. In an article in the monthly journal Nature it was stated that broadcasting involved not merely an amalgam of scientific and technical factors but also encompassed a variety of influences on a whole range of human activities – political, commercial, educational, recreative and social.³⁴ Radio permitted the broadcaster's voice to reach innumerable homes particularly with the extension of broadcasting during this period. It allowed home-centred fireside listening. Broadcasting both reflected society and was influenced by society. It broadened cultural and intellectual interests, although it increasingly tended to project national events with greater frequency than regional or local matters of interest. It was the social purposes offered by the technical possibilities of the medium of radio which Reith wished to develop, and these together with other aspects of broadcasting, including pioneering development in television broadcasting, will be examined in this section which concludes the overview of BBC broadcasting before 1945.

There were limitations on the extent to which broadcasting could bridge the gap between regional cultures, different cultural tastes (i.e. highbrow, middlebrow, and lowbrow), and different social classes. However, listeners were undoubtedly exposed to a selection of the best of the various arts and all within the comfort of the family home. Writing in The listener in 1932, ten years after the start of broadcasting, Sir Oliver Lodge noted his impressions of broadcasting:

In music we are given the best of the old masters and of the new. We are

³⁴"Broadcasting in Great Britain", Nature Vol.117, No. 2944 (3 April 1926), pp.473–4.

privileged to hear the great conductors of the age without a special journey to London. We can listen comfortably from our easy chairs to our great teachers in philosophy and science, in literature, and theology. We are not given partisan politics, but we have an opportunity of listening to every party.³⁵

The question was really the extent to which such appreciation extended throughout the social spectrum, and throughout all parts of the country. Not everyone was enthusiastic about radio. Newspaper proprietors, news agencies, theatre managers, publishers, recording companies, and recording artists were concerned about the spread of radio for fear that it might undermine their vested interests. Equally not all people were enthusiastic about metropolitan news and culture. Also, not everyone was willing to purchase a wireless receiver. Many people still continued to buy books, read newspapers and go to the cinema. Indeed in 1926 the Crawford Committee on Broadcasting did not think that broadcasting would pose a threat to other means of communication. Radio offered the broadcaster a direct and intimate contact with his audience yet at the same time it offered him an audience which could be counted in millions. This potential power of broadcasting was partly responsible for the attempt to invest it with a social purpose as embodied in the Reithian public service ideals.

The origins of the Reithian public service ethos and the constituent elements of this ethos need to be considered. The history of broadcasting was for over thirty years the history of one institution, namely the BBC. The BBC enjoyed a monopoly of broadcasting until the advent of commercial television in 1954. The monopoly assisted the practical operation of the Reithian ideal of public service as reflected in the provision of programmes which satisfied the three criteria of information, education, and entertainment. John Reith used his influence to ensure that the BBC took a lead in cultural taste rather than merely followed existing cultural trends. Although the British Broadcasting Company was born of a merger of commercial interests when wireless manufacturers decided to

³⁵Sir Oliver Lodge, "Ten Years of Broadcasting : 1 – The Renaissance of the Twentieth Century", The Listener Vol.8, No.201 (16 November 1932), p.704.

merge into a single cartel, Reith was anxious for the broadcasting service to operate as a public service. The freedom of the BBC from both commercial pressure and direct Government control assisted Reith in putting his public service ideals into practice. He not only wanted the BBC to be a public service in performance, but also in constitutional terms. He envisaged that both would interact with each other. For example, the Board of Governors was regarded as the most appropriate mechanism for ensuring that the BBC carried out its public service duties to inform, educate, and entertain the audience and to maintain uniformly high programme standards in this process. Reith wished to secure as much independence as possible for the BBC within the technical, financial and political structure in which the Corporation operated. Also, during this period announcers were carefully selected in order to project the public image of the BBC. This was possible because the BBC began as a small organisation and Reith was able personally to know most of his staff; it proved less easy in later years due to the growth of the BBC. Reith's cultural mission appeared to give the BBC too much influence as an arbiter of public tastes and as a definer of standards. However, Reith often argued that the public did not know what material it wanted, thus it was left to the BBC to provide the necessary cultural enlightenment and cultivate a more informed democracy. He believed that culture could be communicated successfully to a mass audience. In this he was later proved to be over optimistic in his estimation of public taste.

John Reith believed that the BBC had both an ethical and an intellectual responsibility towards the audience which it served. In his autobiography he stated:

It was, in fact, the combination of public service motive, sense of moral obligation, assured finance, and the brute force of monopoly which enabled the BBC to make of broadcasting what no other country in the world has made of it – these four fundamentals.³⁶

To use broadcasting primarily as a means of entertainment would be to Reith a waste of precious resources. He wanted to invest broadcasting with a richer social purpose. The

³⁶J.C.W. Reith, Into the Wind (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), p.99.

absence of regular scheduling and continuity announcers was a sign that the BBC expected listeners to choose their programmes intelligently. Reith summed up BBC policy in these early years in the following terms:

So the responsibility as at the outset conceived, and despite all discouragements pursued, was to carry into the greatest number of homes everything that was best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour and achievement; and to avoid whatever was or might be hurtful. In earliest years accused of setting out to give the public not what it wanted but what the BBC thought it should have, the answer was that few knew what they wanted, fewer what they needed. In any event, it was better to over-estimate than to under-estimate.³⁷

BBC policy was to bring to the microphone the best exponents available on different topics, although with mixed results because in a field such as light entertainment, variety artistes feared that on radio they would quickly exhaust their material. The justification for the Reithian ethos was also linked to the BBC's conception of the audience which it served. The BBC tended to address the audience as a collection of individuals, often within families, rather than as a mass audience. Indeed in a speech which Lord Reith delivered in March 1963 to mark the fortieth anniversary of Broadcasting in Scotland, he stated that the pioneers of broadcasting spoke in times of public service not mass communication – individuals counted far more than masses.³⁸ This was a point emphasised by the BBC in the immediate post-war period when in seeking to outline the dangers of introducing a commercial broadcasting system, it argued that such a system would only provide programmes geared to a mass audience. The BBC preferred to think of the audience in terms of majorities and minorities – all listeners would at different times fall into both categories depending upon their tastes and interests. The Reithian ethos tended to atomise the audience rather than view it in unitary terms. The BBC's conception of its audience was reflected in the use of mixed programming whereby in any given day a diversity of interests would be catered for on one channel. The audience was expected to listen to the radio selectively and intelligently. Not only did the BBC think of

³⁷Ibid., p.101.

³⁸British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC 40 Scotland (Edinburgh : BBC, 1963).

its audience as comprised of individuals; the BBC was thought of by the listeners as one individual with many voices but only one mouth. In one sense it meant that the BBC was regarded as a body greater than the sum of its parts.³⁹ In another sense this was true because all announcers tended to sound alike.

The issue of the accents used by announcers was at times a particularly sensitive one between the regions and London. It was closely linked in with Reith's conception of the BBC as a public service broadcasting organisation. In 1924 in referring to the pronunciation of words on radio, Reith stated:

We have made a special effort to secure in our various stations men who, in the presentation of programme items, the reading of news bulletins and so on, can be relied upon to employ the correct pronunciation of the English tongue.⁴⁰

During 1926 Reith established an advisory Committee on Spoken English, later replaced by a Pronunciation Unit. He sought to avoid bringing local accents and dialects to the microphone partly because he wanted announcers to sound intelligible in all parts of the country and not irritate anyone; and partly because the standard BBC accent reinforced the authority of the BBC. For example, in 1927 reference to the need for a first-class announcer for the proposed Scottish Regional station was explicitly taken to mean one with a perfect English manner of speech.⁴¹ However, there was strictly speaking nothing resembling 'BBC English' because the BBC never imposed its own pronunciations on English words. The problem was that the particular accent which the BBC opted for (i.e. an educated Southern English voice known as received pronunciation) tended to identify the BBC with a particular section of society – Southern English, middle and upper middle class, and public school educated. During a period in which radio was the dominant

³⁹Stuart Hood, "The Corporation", Encounter Vol.24, No.4 (April 1965), pp.76–80.

⁴⁰J.C.W. Reith, Broadcast Over Britain (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1924), p.161.

⁴¹Northern Area Director to Director-General, 31 October 1927, p.1, BBC WAC R13/369/1.

medium, accents were more noticeable than they would have been if they had been accompanied by visual images as in the post-war television era. It appeared that there was a class barrier which was being erected between the BBC and some members of the audience which it served, although this was less evident in Scotland. This may have been due to the alleged greater professionalism of announcers in London in comparison with their counterparts in the regions.⁴² Nevertheless accents delivered by announcers of Scottish birth tended to emanate from educated Scots who had lost their broad Scottish accent. Only from the 1960's was a wider range of regional accents heard on the BBC. Scottish listeners were, however, more inclined than those in England to believe that the BBC belonged to them thus not perceiving a significant social distance between BBC staff and the public which they served.

The BBC was able to pursue a Reithian policy of public service because it could take its audiences for granted given the absence of any national competitive broadcasting system; it could provide a variety of services because radio was a less expensive medium than television; and, most importantly, because income was guaranteed via the licence fee regardless of the popularity of individual programmes.⁴³ Reith's strength of character as Director-General was also a significant factor. Unfortunately the Reithian ethos tended to become associated with metropolitan rather than local or regional culture. This reflected a narrowness in Reith's outlook. He combined his high-minded policy with a degree of caution in not wishing to offend either the Government or important individuals in society. Yet in a sense it was almost impossible to pursue fully the Reithian idea of informing the public without offending somebody since news which was reliable and impartial might also be controversial. Nonetheless, the Reithian ethos enveloped

⁴²Regional Directors' Meeting : Minutes, 4 March 1937, No. 119, BBC WAC R34/735/2.

⁴³Sir George Barnes, "Reflections on Television", BBC Quarterly Vol. 9, No.2 (Summer 1954), pp.68-9.

programme staff because they believed that they belonged to a closed community. Conflicts among staff over the direction of BBC policy were in most cases internalised rather than made public. It was only with the growth and complexity of the BBC, especially during the early war years, the departure of Reith in June 1938, and the experience of war-time broadcasting, that the Reithian ideals began to come under greater pressure. The physical growth of the BBC with a staff of almost 4,000 by the time Reith left in 1938 made it increasingly difficult for Reith to stamp on it his public service ideals. In particular Reith disliked the use of listener research and the development of television, both of which from his perspective were viewed as threats to his public service philosophy because they would pander to popular rather than 'serious' cultural tastes. Reith never really accepted the development of television, firstly because he had a greater affinity with, and acquaintance of, sound rather than television broadcasting; and secondly because television threatened to impose far more pressures on the Reithian public service ethos than sound broadcasting had ever done. Yet it was initially within sound broadcasting during the war years that the challenge to the Reithian ideals first became most evident. The Forces Programme which was created to cater for more popular tastes and maintain the nation's morale, paved the way for a more far reaching departure from Reith's public service ideals which came to fruition during the post-war reorganisation of the broadcasting services. The remainder of the section thus covers those two aspects of broadcasting noted above, namely the introduction of systematic audience research and the development of television.

Although the BBC had a series of Advisory Committees these had inherent limitations in their ability to keep the BBC in touch with public opinion. So on 1 October 1936 the BBC established a Listener Research Department. It was an attempt to introduce a systematic study of audience reaction to programme material, a reaction which could not be gauged accurately via letters from listeners since these tended to come from middle class listeners and were not necessarily representative of public opinion. Indeed

it can also be said that those people who were critical of BBC programmes were more likely to send letters than those who praised BBC output. So although the BBC never regarded itself as out of touch with public opinion due to the large correspondence it received from listeners, the Corporation was anxious to determine the number of listeners who tuned in to its broadcasts as well as the reaction of listeners to these broadcasts. Licence figures only indicated ownership of receivers and because there was only one licence per household there were obviously more listeners than licences. Also, unlike the theatre and the cinema there were no box office receipts or applause from the audience. The collection of data on listening habits was regarded as a means of assisting programme planning and demonstrating that the BBC did take account of listener preferences. The BBC appointed Robert Silvey as its Listening Research Officer. Reith dislike the whole philosophy behind audience research because he was suspicious that public opinion would in time be allowed to influence or even dictate programme content. If so, then this would circumvent the Reithian belief that the BBC should provide those programmes which it [the BBC] thought was in the best interests of the public which it served. Reith suspected that audience research would become the master rather than the servant of programme planners. He may also have suspected, and quite rightly, that given a free choice the public would prefer more popular to more serious programme material. Nevertheless the BBC went ahead and used two methods to ascertain listener preferences: daily interviews in each region to determine which programmes the public listened in to on the previous day; and listening panels to gauge audience reaction to programmes. The social survey of listening was later expanded in 1948 to encompass the viewing of television programmes. The survey undoubtedly became more complex when programme output and services were expanded after the war. The use of regional audience research, such as in Scotland, did enable the BBC to gauge the reaction of listeners in Scotland to the choice between National and Scottish Regional output, but ultimately it was the BBC who decided on the use to which the results obtained were put in determining programme policy.

The focus in this discussion on broadcasting prior to 1945 has concentrated primarily on sound broadcasting and naturally so, because for the bulk of the audience during this period, BBC broadcasting was in effect radio broadcasting. However, although the growth of television broadcasting, its eclipse of radio broadcasting, and its extension to the regions such as Scotland did not occur until the 1950s, the origins of television broadcasting can be traced to the inter-war years. By the early 1930s many of the basic ideas about the operational characteristics of television had been formulated. In 1929 the BBC gave the Baird Company facilities for experimental transmissions using low definition television (30 lines per picture).

In August 1932 the BBC arranged with Baird Television public experimental transmissions from the Corporation's London station at Brookman's Park. The drawback with this system was that, because it operated at only thirty lines per picture, little detail could be produced. Also, in the Baird system each picture was repeated 12½ times per second and so irritating flicker was visible. A suitable system had to be one which would provide better picture definition (i.e. more lines per picture) and less flicker (i.e. more pictures per second). On 14 May 1934 the Government appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Selsdon to consider the development of television, to advise the PMG on the relative merits of the several television systems, and the conditions under which any public service of television should be provided. The Report of the Television Committee was published on 14 January 1935.⁴⁴ Given the inherent limitations of low definition television the Selsdon Committee sensibly rejected its use in any public television service. The Committee instead recommended that any system adopted had to produce at least 240 lines per picture and a minimum picture frequency of twenty-five per second. High definition television thus required the use of very high frequencies which had a shorter range than the medium waves used for radio broadcasting. The Committee

⁴⁴Report of the Television Committee (Cmd.4793; January 1935).

wanted Baird and Marconi-EMI to be allowed to demonstrate their systems in a service operating from London. Thereafter a network of stations could be built to serve the rest of the country. The Government subsequently accepted the Committee's recommendations.

In the absence of any television licence the initial system had to be funded from the 10s sound licence. The Selsdon Committee had recommended that the BBC should be entrusted with control over television and so on 2 November 1936 it was the BBC which introduced the first regular public high definition VHF television service in the world. The service began on an experimental basis, broadcasting for one hour each evening from two small stations at Alexandra Palace, London. The Baird (240-line) and Marconi-EMI (405-line) systems were used alternately until 8 February 1937 when the latter system was officially adopted. In those pioneering days few people possessed television receivers (which only had 8" x 6" picture tubes), because they were expensive since unlike the early wireless receivers they were not assembled by amateur enthusiasts yet neither were they mass produced. Anyhow, there were few programmes, broadcasting hours were limited, and transmissions were confined to the London area. Reith had misgivings about the potential impact of television, fearing that it would encourage passive viewing among the audience. Others believed that television would make casual listening impossible due to the presence of the visual element. Television had the potential to simplify complex ideas through visual presentation, but it also, as Richard Hoggart later remarked, was not always able to distinguish between sincerity and assumed sincerity.⁴⁵

The television service closed down on 1 September 1939 due to the war. In September 1943 the Government appointed a Committee chaired by Lord Hankey to advise on the development of the post-war television service. In due course the

⁴⁵Richard Hoggart, "The Uses of Television", Encounter Vol.14, No. 1 (January 1960), pp.38-45.

Committee recommended that television should be restarted in London on the pre-war line standard (i.e. 405 lines), operated by the BBC, and extended to six of the most populous areas of the country.⁴⁶ In radio, regional broadcasting was suspended due to the war and a single National Home Service Programme was introduced, supplemented by a Forces Programme. The Minister of Information assumed some of the powers which had previously been exercised by the PMG, and the licence fee was replaced by annual Grants-in-Aid. These conditions prevailed for the duration of the war years.

The following chapter begins the study of the history of BBC Public Service Broadcasting in Scotland in the post-war period, particularly since the early 1950s, by focusing on the organisational structure of BBC Scotland and its institutional links with the BBC centrally. It also considers the financial basis of broadcasting, including the implication of financial policy for the provision of BBC programme services in Scotland, and the impact of the organisational and resource control changes introduced because of the growth of the BBC as an institution.

⁴⁶Report of the Television Committee 1943 (London : HMSO, 1945), p.6.

CHAPTER 2

THE BBC'S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH

2.1 BBC Organisational Structure : Governing, Managing and Advising the Corporation

This section which is essentially concerned with the organisational structure of the BBC in Scotland and its institutional links with the BBC centrally, begins by focusing on the Board of Governors, the Board of Management, and the BBC's Advisory Structure. Together they provide the background to the more detailed analysis of the changes in BBC Scotland's organisational structure in the period from 1950 to 1980. The information in this section in turn provides the background to the examination of the Broadcasting Council for Scotland and the Scottish Advisory structure which are dealt with in section 2.2. The financial basis of broadcasting, and the organisational and resource control changes introduced due to the growth of the BBC as an institution and its operational activities, are discussed in the final two sections of Chapter 2.

The Corporation which succeeded the British Broadcasting Company on 1 January 1927 was independent of detailed political control yet it had to be accountable to the public since it was expected to operate in the public interest. It was therefore the BBC Governors, the non-professionals, who were to act as trustees for the national interest. They were finally responsible, subject to ministerial responsibilities, for the conduct of the

service provided. They were expected both to represent the public interest in broadcasting and also to protect the broadcasters from undue pressure from external sources. In constitutional terms the Board of Governors are the BBC because the Board is ultimately responsible for BBC policy. However, the Governors can do little without the manpower and technical resources which are under the day-to-day control exercised by the Board of Management. To reinforce their public role the Governors have in general never sought to include anyone directly involved in broadcasting in any professional capacity. In this sense the Board differed from the Board of Directors of a large corporation because the latter would include executive directors. Members of the Board covered a wide spectrum of experience in public affairs but inevitably they brought to broadcasting their own conceptions of society and the national interest.¹ The Governors were expected to acquaint themselves with the broad range of programme output, but only the Chairman made broadcasting his first interest and responsibility, although not necessarily his sole concern.

The Governors of the BBC were expected to represent the interests of broadcasting as a whole rather than represent particular geographical areas of the country. This principle was modified to some extent when the Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales were established because their Chairmen, who became members of the Board of Governors, were expected to represent the interests of these two countries. All Governors were appointed by the Queen In Council (i.e. by the Crown on the advice of Ministers) but they did not represent the interests of any particular Government, political party, or section of the community. The appointments were made on a part-time basis to last for five years with provision for re-appointment. The five-year term was regarded as a period not so long that Governors would begin to identify themselves too closely with Management yet not so short that Governors would be incapable of understanding and

¹Asa Briggs, Governing the BBC (London : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1979), p.20.

effectively exercising control over the BBC. However, the part-time nature of the appointments did place constraints on the ability of the Governors adequately to supervise the BBC. It was understandably difficult for even the Chairman to read the large volume of reports presented to him, to listen to and to view broadcasts, to discuss policy matters with the Director-General and his senior officials, to attend meetings of the advisory bodies, to visit BBC studios, to represent the BBC on important occasions, and to keep in contact with the public.

The Board of Governors normally met on Thursday every fortnight for lunch and an afternoon meeting. These meetings were on occasion held in different parts of the country to prevent accusations that the Board represented a London bias. The Director-General presented most of the Reports to the Governors and he attended all their meetings. The Board of Management normally submitted recommendations for approval by the Board of Governors; only on matters of public controversy did Management submit alternative proposals. In turn the Governors had access to the minutes of the advisory bodies and that of the Broadcasting Councils. With a Board of Governors, authority and responsibility were inseparable. In 1962 the Pilkington Committee stated that if both were not in the same hands then those who had effective power would not be answerable and those who were answerable would not have effective power.² Power was exercised collectively in the sense that individual Governors had no authority except collectively as members of the Board. The most concise yet perceptive account of the role and functions of the Governors was outlined by Lord Normanbrook, (Chairman of the BBC 1964-67 and previously head of the Home Civil Service), in a lunchtime lecture delivered

²Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960 (Cmnd.1753; June 1962), p.126.

in December 1965.³ Lord Normanbrook wanted the Governors to exercise greater control, and indeed when Lord Hill (ITA Chairman 1963–67) became BBC Chairman in September 1967 it appeared that this would be so. Hill accepted Normanbrook's ideas on the role of the Governors. He wanted a strong Board of Governors which could be seen to govern. In 1969 Lord Hill offered the experienced retiring Director–General, Sir Hugh Greene, a seat on the Board of Governors perhaps as a means whereby the Governors could gain detailed knowledge of the work of the Director–General and the Board of Management since lack of knowledge could undermine the effectiveness of the Board of Governors. Sir Michael Swann, Principal and Vice–Chancellor of Edinburgh University, who succeeded Lord Hill as Chairman in January 1973 concurred with Hill's views about the role of the Governors but did not wish to become an executive Chairman. Swann served as Chairman until July 1980.

The Board of Management, headed by the Director–General, was in overall control of decision making on a daily basis. It was, however, ultimately accountable to the Board of Governors for its actions. On 1 December 1947 the BBC's administrative reorganisation resulted in the appointment of five Directors forming a Board of Management under the Chairmanship of Sir William Haley the Director–General. In 1950 this Board comprised in addition to the Director–General the following members: Sir Noel Ashbridge (Director of Technical Services); Basil Nicolls (Director of Home Broadcasting); Sir Ian Jacob (Director of Overseas Services); Sir Norman Bottomley (Director of Administration); and George Barnes (Director of the Spoken Word).⁴ Below these five Directors in the Organisational hierarchy there were eleven Controllers which included, for example, Melville Dinwiddie

³Lord Normanbrook, "The Functions of the BBC's Governors", the BBC Lunchtime Lectures, fourth series, 15 December 1965 (London : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1965).

⁴BBC Yearbook 1951 (London : BBC, 1951), p.164.

(Controller, Scotland), Harman Grisewood (Controller, Third Programme), Norman Collins (Controller, Television), and R.E.L. Wellington (Controller, Home Service). Below the Controllers, home broadcasting was also served by fourteen professional heads such as Cecil McGivern (Head of Television Programmes) and Robert Silvey (Head of Audience Research). The Board of Management were also in contact with other senior staff such as Harold Bishop (Chief Engineer) and the heads of the various engineering departments. The Controller, Scotland, was directly responsible to the Director of Home Sound Broadcasting. By the mid 1960s the Controller (Andrew Stewart) continued to be listed in the BBC Handbooks under the Director of Sound Broadcasting (Frank Gillard), but he was also responsible to the Director of Television (Kenneth Adam) and the Director of Engineering (Francis McLean) for day-to-day working in matters concerned with television and engineering developments. By the late 1960s with the redesignation of posts after the McKinsey study, Alasdair Milne who was the Controller of BBC Scotland was responsible to Frank Gillard (Managing Director, Radio), Huw Wheldon (Managing Director, Television) and James Redmond (Director of Engineering).⁵ Although the Board of Management, which met weekly, was ultimately responsible to the Board of Governors for the management of the broadcasting service, a great deal of responsibility was delegated to the various departments. The task of managing the BBC became increasingly difficult due to the growth in the number of staff and the increasing complexity of the organisation as new services were developed. The staff of about 12,000 in 1950 had doubled by 1970 but increased at a more modest level during the 1970s reaching almost 28,000 by 1980.⁶ The largest percentage increase (10 per cent) had taken place during 1963 and early 1964 due to recruitment of staff for BBC-2 which began transmissions in April 1964; there was also a notable increase in 1968-69, partly due to

⁵BBC Handbook 1969 (London : BBC, 1969), p.184.

⁶BBC Annual Report and Handbook 1981 (London : BBC, 1980), p.68.

the expansion of local radio.

Before turning to BBC organisational structure in Scotland a few comments can be made about the BBC's advisory structure. At the apex of the BBC's advisory structure is the General Advisory Council (GAC). The GAC was established in 1934 to provide the BBC with constructive advice on programme and policy matters. The GAC's membership was chosen by the BBC as a representative sample of the main interests which broadcasting served; it was also taken to represent a balance in terms of age range, geographical coverage, gender and occupational experience. The Council's meetings, which were held in private, were attended by the BBC Chairman and Director-General and some members of the Board of Governors and Board of Management. In common with other advisory bodies the GAC was accountable directly to the BBC and not to the public as such. The advisory nature of the council did limit its influence but the existence of the Council did to some extent force senior staff to be more careful in formulating and justifying policy decisions in the knowledge that they might have to defend these decisions in the presence of senior staff and Council members. As a former Chairman of the GAC once noted, this may indeed have given the Council more influence than might have been expected.⁷ However, Lord Aldington another former Chairman of the GAC stressed the limitations imposed by the advisory nature of the Council. In a BBC lunchtime lecture he stated:

Nothing the General Advisory Council says is binding on the BBC. We do not have, nor do we seek, any executive powers. We are advisers and not supervisors. We are advisers and not umpires or arbitrators in any disputes between the BBC and complainants against them.⁸

⁷Estimates Committee Sub-Committee D : Minutes of Evidence, Monday 5th May 1969 : British Broadcasting Corporation. (H.C. 93-X; 5 May 1969), p.181.

⁸Lord Aldington, "Advising the BBC", in BBC Lunchtime Lectures, ninth series, 3 December 1974 (London : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1974), p.5.

The absence of executive responsibility enabled the GAC to take a more detached view of broadcasting matters and thus view issues from a different perspective from that of BBC management or the broadcasters. The GAC was useful to the BBC as a sounding board to enable the Corporation to gauge public opinion on proposed policies.⁹

In addition to the General Advisory Council the BBC could also draw upon advice from the Regional Advisory Councils, the School Broadcasting Councils, and the many advisory committees. The Regional Advisory Councils were established under the new Charter in 1947. The Scottish Advisory Council, which was one of these regional councils, was a forerunner to the formation of the Broadcasting Council for Scotland (BCS), both of which are discussed in section 2.2. The purpose of the regional Advisory Councils, which were established in each of the six BBC regions outside London, was to advise the BBC on Regional programme policy. Unlike Scotland and Wales where Broadcasting Councils were established in 1952 to replace the Advisory Councils, the English Regional Councils continued in existence but with no control over policy or programme content. The Chairmen of the Regional Advisory Councils served on the GAC, and the Chairmen of the various advisory Committees were ex-officio members of the appropriate Regional Advisory Councils. The advisory structure was one method whereby external opinions could be brought to bear in shaping BBC policy, although in general neither the advisory bodies nor their members achieved a high public profile.

The policy making and advisory links between the BBC in Scotland and the BBC centrally as at 31 March 1980 are illustrated in diagrammatic form in Appendix 2.1. The discussion which follows concentrates on changes in the organisational structure of the BBC in Scotland during the period 1950 to 1980. This structure was subject to change in the three decades since 1950 as a result of the expansion of programme services in

⁹Ibid., p.6.

Scotland, particularly the introduction of television in 1952, and the establishment of community and area radio stations from the mid 1970s. Changes took several forms as follows: the renaming of titles of posts; the introduction of new posts and the demise of others; the reorganisation of programme services into various departments which were also subject to alteration during this period; and finally the reallocation of staff not only within programme departments but also between the various studio centres in Scotland. With the growth in the number of staff employed by the BBC in Scotland from 197 (as at 31 March 1950)¹⁰ to 1204 (as at 31 March 1980),¹¹ and the greater complexity of the structure since 1950, the analysis which follows therefore concentrates primarily in broad terms on all aspects of the type of changes noted above. The discussion begins by focusing on BBC headquarters in Glasgow followed by studio centres in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and then the area and community radio stations and the Dundee studio.

In the post-war reorganisation of 1947 the regions were administered by Controllers and so Melville Dinwiddie who was the BBC's Scottish Director based in Glasgow became known as Controller, Scotland. In 1950 as the most senior BBC official in Scotland, Dinwiddie was assisted in non-programme matters by the Scottish Executive (previously known as the Administrative Officer, Scotland) and the Assistant Publicity Officer (Scotland). Programme Services were under the control of Gordon Gildard who was until September 1962, Head of Scottish Programmes (previously referred to as Scottish Programme Director and based in Edinburgh). The principal production staff in 1950 comprised a Head of Scottish Music, the conductor of the BBC Scottish Orchestra (Ian Whyte), a drama producer, features producer, Gaelic producer and assistant, Variety

¹⁰British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the year 1950-51 (Cmd.8347; September 1951), p.110.

¹¹Ian Phillips (BBC Director of Finance) to Author, 15 May 1989, p.2.

producer, Children's Hour Organiser (Miss Kathleen Garscadden), News Editor (James Kemp) and news assistants, talks producer, Religious Broadcasting Organiser (Rev. Ronald Falconer) and assistant, Outside Broadcasts producer, and three announcers. In total there were 138 staff (42 monthly and 96 weekly).¹² The Engineering Division in Glasgow was under the control of F.W. Endicott, Regional Studio Engineer (Scotland), known prior to 1950 as the Engineer-in-Charge. The Regional Studio Engineer was assisted by several staff which included an Assistant Engineer-in-Charge and a Senior Recording Engineer-in-Charge. The Engineering Division had a total staff of forty-seven (31 monthly and 16 weekly). A BBC Education Officer was also based in Glasgow to assist the School Broadcasting Council for Scotland which had been formed in 1947.

The title of Controller (Scotland) has not altered throughout this period but changes in the titles of other posts have taken place; the occupant of the Controllership has also changed. Dinwiddie retired in July 1957 after almost twenty-four years as head of the BBC in Scotland. He was succeeded by Andrew Stewart who had been Scottish Programme Director from 1935-1948 and latterly Controller, Northern Ireland (1948-1952) and Controller, Home Service (1953-1957). Stewart retired ten years later to be succeeded by Alasdair Milne, the former head of "Tonight" productions. When Milne left to become Director of Programmes (Television) in London, he was succeeded in January 1973 by Robert Coulter. In 1975 Alastair Hetherington was appointed from outside the BBC to become the new Controller and he took up his duties in January 1976. He was, in turn, succeeded in May 1979 by Patrick Ramsay, previously Controller, Programme Services in London since 1972. The titles and office-holders of other posts have changed. In 1960 the Scottish Executive and the Assistant Publicity Officer (Scotland) were retitled Administrative Officer (Scotland) and Assistant Information Officer (Scotland) respectively. Douglas Stewart, the Information Officer (Scotland) was based in Edinburgh,

¹²BBC Staff List, October 1950, pp.25-6.

although from 1 December 1969 he became one of two Publicity Assistants when the new post of Press and Promotions Officer (Scotland) was introduced which was based in Glasgow. By 1979 BBC Scotland had a Head of Information. The BBC in Scotland had the services of a Head of Administration from October 1963 to replace the post of Administrative Officer (Scotland). Two other posts created were the Chief Assistant (Edinburgh) and a Chief Assistant (Planning and Programme Services). The former post was held by Aidan Thomson and it replaced the post of Assistant Head of Programmes, Scotland (I)(Sound); the latter of the two posts was held by G.D. Runcie and it replaced the previous post of Assistant Head of Programmes, Scotland (II)(Television). These changes left just one Assistant Head of Programmes who was based in Glasgow. In the mid-1970s other senior posts which were created included a Chief Assistant, General (later retitled Chief Assistant to the Controller, Scotland), and an Accountant, Scotland. In 1977 the BBC appointed Mr. B. Mitchell to the newly-created post of Head of Finance, Scotland. Mitchell had previously been the Scottish Programme Executive but this latter post now lapsed. By 1980 senior staff below the level of Controller (Scotland) included, for example, Assistant Controller (Pat Walker), the Secretary (Christopher Irwin), the Head of Information, (William Carrocher), Head of Television (Pat Chalmers), Head of Radio (John Pickles), Head of Finance (B. Mitchell), Head of Administration and Development Services (A.M. Brown), and Head of Production Resources and Engineering (J.J. Jarvie).

Programme Services within BBC Scotland underwent various changes since 1950. With the arrival of television in Scotland in March 1952 the BBC staff complement was modestly increased most notably with the appointment of a Television Organiser, an Outside Broadcast producer (Television), a Stage Manager (Television), and later on a Television Production Assistant and Television News Assistant. In April 1952, 144 programme staff were based in Glasgow, supplemented by 87 staff in the Engineering

Division.¹³ In the late 1950s the number and type of television posts increased appreciably. The post of Television Organiser (Scotland) lapsed and was replaced by an Assistant Head of Scottish Programmes (II)(Television) in charge of staff such as television Outside Broadcast producers, Stage Managers, and Production Assistants as well as Film Editors, Film Cameramen, a Film Sound Recordist, a Designer, Make-up Supervisor, Wardrobe Supervisor, and a Floor Manager. BBC Scotland also began to appoint television producers covering subject areas such as sports, current affairs and light entertainment. The use of current affairs producers together with an increase in the number of Television Production Assistants occurred at the time when BBC Scotland introduced the first television news bulletin on 30 August 1957, the day before the start of Scottish Television (STV) transmissions in central Scotland.

By 1960 the total number of Programme Services staff based at Glasgow was 260, almost exactly four times the number of programme staff based at Edinburgh;¹⁴ there were also 117 engineering staff. In the early 1960s programme staff in Glasgow began to be grouped into distinct departments covering subject areas such as Music, News, Current Affairs, Religion, Drama, Light Entertainment, and Sport and Outside Broadcasts. A Film Unit was also formed staffed by a producer (later designated Manager, Films), Film Editors and Film Cameramen. With the advent of Gaelic television programmes in March 1962 a Television Production Assistant for Gaelic joined Production Assistants in other programme areas. Also, with the advent of schools television programmes one of the producers was specifically designated as a Schools Television Producer. With the division of programme services into more clearly defined subject areas the number of specialist staff in some areas such as News and Current Affairs became evident. News staff now

¹³BBC Staff List, April 1952, p.23.

¹⁴BBC Staff List, May 1960, p.31.

comprised a News Editor (James Kemp), News Assistants, and an Industrial Correspondent. By the mid-1960s News and Current Affairs was staffed by a Scottish Editor, an Assistant Scottish Editor, a Chief News Assistant, Senior News Assistants, News Assistants, an Industrial Correspondent, and a Current Affairs Producer. Gaelic radio programmes were provided by Fred MacAulay (Senior Gaelic Producer) and two Gaelic producers – from the mid-1970s one Gaelic Producer specialised in radio, the other in television. In music BBC Scotland had the services of J. Loughran as Conductor of the Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and Ian Sutherland as Conductor of the Scottish Radio Orchestra. In Drama there were producers covering both radio (J.S. Conn) and television (Pharic MacLaren), and in Light Entertainment there was a Senior Television Producer. In 1966 the total number of programme staff in Glasgow reached 481 with an additional 168 attached to Engineering Division.¹⁵

By the mid-1970s further changes in the organisation of staff and the titles of posts had occurred. News and Current Affairs were separated and the News Assistants were redesignated Regional News Assistants. The Editor of News (Scotland) was now assisted by a Deputy Editor. Furthermore, with the increasing importance of newsworthy themes such as political devolution, north sea oil developments, and a resurgence of support for Scottish nationalism, the BBC in Scotland began to reflect these changes in its organisational structure. The News Department in Glasgow was bolstered by the appointment of an Economics Correspondent and later by a Political Correspondent (James Cox, who replaced Chris Baur who had been based in Edinburgh). The Regional News Assistants now became known as News Sub-Editors. By October 1977 the Radio 4 Scotland opt-out service had an Executive Producer (Current Affairs) when the post of Senior Producer Topicality Radio lapsed. Other programme areas were not neglected. For example, the new post of Head of Drama Television (Scotland) was created, and in

¹⁵BBC Staff List, June 1966, pp.33-4.

Light Entertainment a Senior Producer for Popular Music joined the existing Senior Light Entertainment Producers for Television and Radio. Two years later the post of Religious Broadcasting Organiser, was finally renamed Head of Religious Programmes (Scotland). By that time, Current Affairs which had previously been headed by a Senior Producer (Matthew Spicer) was retitled Editor, Current Affairs in the same way that News Division had for several years been under the overall control of an Editor.

Turning from programme staff to Engineering Division in Glasgow, the most obvious changes since the early 1950s can be noted. With the arrival of television in Scotland in 1952 the Regional Studio Engineer for Scotland was assisted by two Assistant Engineers-in-Charge, one for Radio and one for Television – the latter was a newly created post. In the mid-1950s the Regional Studio Engineer became known as the Scottish Engineer; ten years later the post was retitled Head of Engineering (Scotland) and there were some minor changes in the titles of other engineering posts. More obvious changes occurred towards the beginning of the 1970s subsequent to the outcome of the BBC-wide McKinsey investigation. For example, with the emphasis on managerialism and regrouping of responsibility for control over resources, the Head of Engineering (W.A. Jackson) was redesignated Head of Programme Services and Engineering; similarly the Engineer-in-Charge, Operations Scotland (B.J. Slamin) became known as the Manager, Operations (Scotland). Some other posts were given Manager/Deputy Manager status. Finally, the Engineering Division itself became known as Programme Services and Engineering.

Apart from Glasgow, the BBC in the early 1950s also had studio facilities in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, but on a smaller scale. The organisational structure at Edinburgh was consequently less complex in comparison with the BBC's Headquarters at Glasgow. In 1950 an Administrative Assistant, the Publicity Officer (Scotland) and programme and engineering staff were based in Edinburgh. From 1953 the Clerk to the newly formed Broadcasting Council for Scotland was also based in Edinburgh, but during

the 1970s was transferred to Aberdeen and later to Glasgow. As noted earlier, the post of Chief Assistant (Edinburgh) was created in the early 1960s but this post lapsed in 1970; it was replaced on 1 September 1970 by a Manager in Charge of the BBCs Edinburgh operation. The title of 'Edinburgh Manager' lapsed in the mid 1970s and was replaced by the Chief Assistant, Radio, because the BBCs radio operations were mainly centred in Edinburgh. John Gray, who had previously been a Senior Producer, General Features (Radio), became Chief Assistant, Radio. Prior to the start of Radio Scotland as a self-contained service in November 1978, the BBC appointed John Pickles as Head of Radio Scotland based in Edinburgh; the post of 'Chief Assistant Radio' remained but from June 1978 Leslie Robinson replaced John Gray in this post.

Staff involved in programme services in Edinburgh in 1950 were grouped as follows: The Assistant Head of Scottish Programmes (Aidan Thomson), a Features Producer, Talks Producer, six Schools Assistants, an Outside Broadcasts Producer, and an announcer. By 1958 the Assistant Head of Scottish Programmes became one of two Assistant Heads – the other was based in Glasgow and had responsibility for television output. During this period the Schools Assistants became known as Producers/Programme Assistants (School Broadcasting); the Senior Schools Assistant thus became known as a Senior Producer/Programme Assistant. The Secretary of the School Broadcasting Council for Scotland and Head of Scottish School Broadcasting was located in Edinburgh together with a senior BBC Education Officer. In the late 1950s production staff were augmented by the arrival of two General Programme producers. From about 1964 two Agricultural producers were based in Edinburgh, the duties of whom were later split between radio and television. By the mid-1960s Edinburgh programme staff totalled seventy with a further fourteen working under Engineering Division.¹⁶ From the early 1970s Edinburgh had a Regional News Assistant (retitled News Sub-Editor about 1976), a Music Producer,

¹⁶Ibid., p.34.

a Senior Producer for General Features (Radio), and a Senior Radio producer for Religious Broadcasting, and a Television producer. The most significant changes in the staffing structure in Edinburgh took place in 1975–76 with the appointment of a Political Correspondent (Chris Baur) and a U.K. North Sea Energy Correspondent (Michael Buerk, from March 1976). These appointments were a response to the political and economic changes taking place in Scotland during this period. Prior to the start of Radio Scotland in November 1978 a Managing Editor, News (Edinburgh) was appointed. The most noticeable change in staffing occurred in News with the presence of an Editor, a Chief News Assistant, News Sub–editors and two special Correspondents – Scottish Correspondent (Michael Buerk), and an Economics Correspondent (Peter Clarke); Current Affairs was headed by an Editor assisted by a Senior Producer and four producers. Finally, the Engineering Division was under the control of an Engineer–in–Charge who from 1977 was known as the Operations Manager.

Aberdeen operated on a smaller scale than Edinburgh. The station came under the control of a Director, later known as the Aberdeen Representative. In the early 1950s there were several Programme Assistants such as George Bruce, and an Engineering Division headed by the Engineer–in–Charge. A BBC Education Officer serving the School Broadcasting Council for Scotland was also based in Aberdeen. From the mid–1950s the Programme Assistants became known as Programme Producers. About ten years later one of the General Programme producers was designated a Television producer, and a Senior News Assistant was appointed. On 1 September 1970 the Aberdeen station came under the control of a Senior Producer (Pat Chalmers) when the post of Aberdeen Representative lapsed. This was part of a wider BBC reorganisation which included the introduction of the post of Manager to replace the Chief Assistant in Edinburgh. During 1975–76 when changes in staffing were taking place in Glasgow and Edinburgh to take account of wider political and economic developments, these changes were reflected in the Aberdeen staffing structure with the designation of a Chief News Assistant and a



News Sub-Editor. Shortly afterwards Aberdeen had Agricultural producers for both radio and television. By 1980 Aberdeen was headed by a Manager (North East), and Jane Franchi was appointed as a reporter. As regards technical support, the Head of the Engineering Division, the Engineer-in-Charge, was like Edinburgh renamed Operations Manager.

In the period up until 1976 the BBC in Scotland operated studio facilities in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. However, from 1976-79 BBC Scotland opened other smaller studios. On 25 March 1976 Radio Highland in Inverness went on the air. Radio Highland was staffed by a Station Manager (William Carrocher), a Senior General Programme Producer, a General Programme Producer, a Senior Producer Gaelic, two general Gaelic producers, a News Sub-editor and an Engineering Operations Manager. Alastair Hetherington took over as Station Manager after vacating the post of Controller (Scotland) in 1978; in 1980 Fred MacAulay took over as Manager of Radio Highland. Two community radio stations were opened in Orkney and Shetland in May 1977. Radio Orkney and Shetland were two-man stations thus each was staffed by a Senior Producer/Presenter (Howie Firth at Orkney, and Dr. Jonathan Wills at Shetland) and a Producer/Presenter. In October 1979 a further two-man station was opened in Stornoway, and during the same year a Radio and a Television Reporter were based in Dundee; Alan MacKay and Neil Mudie filled these two posts. The small Dundee studio was remotely controlled from Glasgow and so no engineering staff had to be based in Dundee.

Overall it can thus be appreciated that the number of staff and the variety of posts increased since 1950, partly because of the natural expansion of programme activity, and partly because the BBC in Scotland, particularly during the 1970s, increasingly used its own staff for productions rather than use specialist staff imported from London.

2.2 The Scottish Advisory Council, the Broadcasting Council for Scotland and the Scottish Advisory Committees

Having considered BBC organisational structure in Section 2.1 this section focuses primarily on the Broadcasting Council for Scotland whose formation was sanctioned in 1952 and which had control over the policy and content of radio, and later television, programmes in Scotland. Its forerunner was the Scottish Advisory Council which was, however, a purely advisory body. It was the Government White Paper of July 1946 which stated that in order to ensure that the BBC's Regional Directorates were kept in close touch with movements of thought and opinion in their regions, there should be established in each region a Regional Advisory Council to advise the Corporation on all matters affecting the regional programme policy.¹⁷ This was duly incorporated in the new Charter which took effect from 1 January 1947 and was to remain in force for five years.¹⁸ Appointments to these Councils were to be made by the BBC, although the Corporation was prepared to consider consultation with the Government to ensure that the Councils were of the type envisaged by the Government in its White Paper.¹⁹

Prior to the formation of the Scottish Advisory Council (SAC), Melville Dinwiddie (Scottish Director) consulted with his senior staff and sent to the Director-General a list of twenty names of individuals who might be invited to become members of the Council. The BBC did not consult organisations for names of potential members. Members were

¹⁷Broadcasting Policy (Cmd.6852; July 1946), p.6.

¹⁸Broadcasting : Draft of Royal Charter for the Continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation for which the Postmaster General proposes to apply (Cmd.6974; December 1946), p.8.

¹⁹Board of Governors : Minutes, 25 July 1946, No.186, BBC WAC R1/1/14.

not expected to be chosen to represent particular organisations or interests;²⁰ they were expected to be capable of providing informed advice on broadcasting. Dinwiddie's first preference for Chairman of the SAC was Sir Hector Hetherington, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Glasgow University, and he in fact did become Chairman and, in doing so, also became ex officio, a member of the BBC's General Advisory Council. The list of names of potential members of the Council was intended to reflect a broad range of interests, age groups and geographical areas within Scotland. Dinwiddie stated:

It is hoped that the Membership of the Committee will be so balanced as to benefit by their constructive contribution, without being unduly influenced by their extreme viewpoint.²¹

About twenty-four members initially sat on the Council and the number varied little thereafter. The terms of office for members was staggered and it was expected that the SAC would hold three meetings a year. The BBC Governors wanted all Regional Directors to keep a continuous watch for future likely nominees for membership of these Regional Advisory Councils. A few days before the Scottish Council met, the Director-General mentioned that it was likely that the Scottish and Welsh Advisory Councils would raise the question of the allocation of revenue to Scotland and Wales in relation to the number of licence holders in those countries. Although the Board of Governors viewed the issue as outside the terms of reference of the Advisory Councils, it was sufficiently concerned to ask the Director-General to prepare a statement on the allocation of expenditure, just in case the topic was raised by the Councils.²²

The first meeting of the SAC was held on 27 January 1947 at Broadcasting House.

²⁰Board of Governors : Minutes, 2 October 1946, No.236, BBC WAC R1/1/14.

²¹Scottish Director to Director General, 7 September 1946, BBC WAC R6/187.

²²Board of Governors : Minutes, 23 January 1947, No. 24, BBC WAC R1/1/15.

Edinburgh. For this meeting notes were prepared on the range of output of the Scottish Home Service. The meeting began with the Chairman introducing Sir William Haley, BBC Director-General, who then proceeded to describe the work of the BBC with particular reference to the reorganisation of the Sound services in 1945. Melville Dinwiddie followed this with a short statement on BBC programme policy in Scotland. Members asked a number of questions ranging from the development of rural talent to the problems of provinciality. The Chairman later prepared a paper outlining the functions of the Council for discussion at the second meeting. In that paper, Sir Hector Hetherington outlined what he took to be the two principal functions of the SAC: (1) to review past and present radio programme output from the point of view of both policy and performance; and (2) to suggest possible developments as a result of this continual process of review. The SAC continued to meet regularly until 25 November 1952. From January 1953 this purely advisory body was superseded by the Broadcasting Council for Scotland which had more substantive (i.e. executive) powers over radio broadcasting in Scotland.

The Beveridge Report on Broadcasting, published in January 1951, recommended the establishment of Broadcasting Commissions (or Councils as they were later called) for the BBC's national regions. Before the Government responded to the Beveridge Committee's recommendations, the BBC Governors put forward their own views about the possible introduction of Broadcasting Councils. The Governors feared that this proposal would undermine the unity of the BBC, reduce the volume of regional contributions to the U.K. Sound Networks, and impose unreasonable financial burdens if the changes resulted, as they were expected to do, in demands for greater regional broadcasting. In the absence of more wavelengths it was argued that a greater volume of regional broadcasting could only be achieved at the expense of other parts of the U.K. It was even stated that an increase in local material would lead to a deterioration in BBC standards. The Paper went on to observe that:

The Commissions would, by their nature, be continually forced to pull against the Corporation. Their policy could not help being expansionist and inflationary. There would be continual pressure upon them to give greater prominence to Nationalist

activities that was their proper due. Such pressures are already upon the BBC but can be resisted better by the Corporation than would be possible by the Commissions.²³

Staff in the national regions would, it was believed, have divided allegiances. For example, if a difference of view arose between the Corporation and the Commissions, this would place the Regional Controller in a difficult position. Also, if the Commissions were only granted control over radio and not television broadcasting then this would result in unhealthy competition between both broadcasting mediums. The Board of Governors was similarly not impressed by the proposal that a Scottish, a Welsh and a Northern Ireland Governor should be a member of the Board. They disliked the concept of a functional or representative Board where individual Governors would naturally protect or promote any particular interest. To prevent sectional rivalries it was argued that individuals should be chosen for their suitability to be Governors and therefore the fact of their nationality should be of merely secondary importance. In a debate in the House of Lords just after the publication of the White Paper (Cmd. 8550) it was confirmed that the new BBC Charter would make provision for the establishment of Broadcasting Councils. Lord Reith expressed his dislike of the intention to introduce these Councils. He said that he could foresee confusions, conflicts and divisions of authority and responsibility. He added that these Councils would be subject to constant pressure to extend their powers and spheres of influence thus ultimately weakening the BBC. He drew attention to the divided loyalty of Regional Controllers – would they owe loyalty primarily to the Councils, or to the Director-General?²⁴

The Government's White Paper of May 1952 confirmed that the New Charter would

²³"The Regional Commissions", 15 February 1951, p.1, BBC WAC R4/1/18.

²⁴176 H.L. Deb. Ser. 5, Col. 1293 (22 May 1952).

make provision for the establishment of Broadcasting Councils for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland whose primary function would be to control the policy and content of their Home Service programmes. In fact only Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales were established. A paper was prepared for the meeting of the SAC on 3 June 1952 regarding the renewal of the Charter as it affected Scotland. Devolution was taken in practice to represent control of the Scottish Home Service within the limits of a block grant to cover expenditure on staff, equipment and accommodation. The crucial issue with the formation of the Broadcasting Council was taken to be the problem of combining the maximum of devolution with the minimum of central financial control necessary to maintain the unity of the BBC. The problem posed was whether the Council should be given executive power, and if so, within what limits consistent with the preservation of overall BBC policy and standards.²⁵ Would the loyalties of BBC staff in Scotland reside with the Council or with London, particularly in the situation where Scottish programme staff already had a dual responsibility (i.e. to supply material to the Sound Networks and not simply for Scottish domestic consumption); also, if the Council only had control over staff wholly employed on the Scottish Home Service, would the Council be able to resolve conflicts over policy between Scotland and London or would such a task be left to the Board of Governors? It was in any case difficult to determine which staff were wholly employed on the Scottish Home Service (SHS) because some SHS programmes were taken by the other Sound Networks for U.K. transmission.

The BBC's new Charter came into operation on 1 July 1952 and was to continue in force for ten years. It made provision for the BBC to establish two National

²⁵Scottish Advisory Council : Paper No. SAC/4/52, 3 June 1952, p.1, BBC WAC R6/188.

Broadcasting Councils in Scotland and Wales respectively.²⁶ The Broadcasting Council for Scotland (BCS) was to be chaired by a National Governor for Scotland who automatically became a member of the BBC's Board of Governors in London. The Charter stated that the National Governor should be selected taking into account his knowledge of the culture, characteristics and affairs of Scotland, and his closeness to Scottish opinion.²⁷ There were eight members of the BCS in addition to the National Governor. These members were selected, not elected, in late 1952, for appointment by a panel nominated by the General Advisory Council. It was noted by the Board of Governors that at the meeting of the GAC on 8 October 1952 the Council would be asked to nominate separate panels for the appointment of members of the National Broadcasting Councils.²⁸ A GAC panel, chaired by Sir John Falconer (a former Lord Provost of Edinburgh who was Chairman of the SAC), invited organisations to submit the names of individuals for consideration for membership of the BCS. The Board of Governors made the appointments to the Council in December 1952; the National Governor was appointed in the same manner as other members of the Board of Governors and so was a political appointment in contrast to the other members of the Council who were appointed by the BBC. Lord Clydesmuir the first BBC National Governor for Scotland was a former Secretary of State for Scotland. Members of the BCS were expected to represent the public interest not sectional interests. Five of the eight members were to be selected after consulting representative cultural, religious and other bodies in Scotland whom the GAC panel selected as being concerned with Scottish broadcasting policy; the other three

²⁶Broadcasting : Copy of a new Charter of Incorporation granted to the British Broadcasting Corporation (Cmd.8605; July 1952), p.9.

²⁷Ibid., p.7.

²⁸Board of Governors : Minutes, 4 September 1952, No.148(b), BBC WAC R1/1/20.

members were to be selected as being representative of Local Authorities in Scotland.

The BCS, thus representative of the 'Great and Good' in Scottish society was designed to keep the BBC conscious of its Scottish dimension. The functions of the Broadcasting Councils as defined by the Charter are worth quoting in full as follows:

(a) the function of controlling the policy and the content of the programmes of that service among the Home Sound Services which the Corporation provides primarily for reception in the country for which the Council are established, and exercising such control with full regard to the distinctive culture, interests and tastes of Our People in that country; (b) such other functions in relation to the said service as the Corporation may from time to time devolve upon them; and (c) the function of tendering advice to the Corporation in regard to all matters relating to other broadcasting services of the Corporation which affect the interests of Our People in the Country for which the Council are established.²⁹

The relationship between the BCS and BBC staff in Scotland was analogous to a certain extent with that between the Board of Governors and the BBC staff as a whole. However, the method of appointment, the power, and the responsibilities of the BCS differed from that of the Board of Governors, not least because the Council only had control over radio programmes produced within and for Scotland. The list of functions of the BCS was more grandiose in theory than it was to prove to be in practice. The Council was useful as an intermediary with London when Scotland lobbied for more resources or wished to convey complaints direct to the Board of Governors. However, the attitude of the Council to the opportunities and influence at its disposal in shaping broadcasting policy did vary over time according to the prevailing broadcasting climate, the personality of the National Governor, the willingness of the Council to use its power, the composition of membership of the Council, the views of the Board of Governors and Board of Management towards Scottish broadcasting, and not least the unity of the BCS on various issues.

The first meeting of the BCS was held on 14 January 1953 at Broadcasting House,

²⁹Broadcasting : Copy of a New Charter of Incorporation granted to the British Broadcasting Corporation (Cmd.8605; July 1952), p.10.

Edinburgh. The meeting was also attended by Sir Alexander Cadogan (BBC Chairman), Sir Ian Jacob (Director-General), Mr. R.E.L. Wellington (Director of Home Sound Broadcasting), and Melville Dinwiddie (Controller, Scotland). At that meeting it was agreed that future meetings should be held at monthly intervals alternating between Edinburgh and Glasgow. The first Report of the BCS was submitted by Sir Cecil Graves (Acting Chairman), who had been joint Director-General of the BBC 1942-43, to Sir Alexander Cadogan (BBC Chairman) on 31 March 1953. The Annual Reports of the BCS were incorporated in the BBC's Annual Report which was presented to Parliament. The BCS could also prepare special reports on its own initiative or if requested to do so. The minutes of the BCS were seen by the Board of Governors and Board of Management, although it should be noted that these minutes did not necessarily convey either the tone of each meeting or matters discussed over working lunches. From the beginning BBC Scottish Management was willing to take advantage of the limited knowledge of Council members regarding BBC operational activities in order to thwart any radical changes in policy. The Controller (Scotland) wrote on this theme to the Director General:

My general feeling of the Council and its members is that they are thoroughly interested and most anxious to learn and give all the help they can. We will do everything we can to guide their enthusiasm into the proper channels so that they keep to their Terms of Reference in dealing with the policy and content of the Scottish Home Service.³⁰

Scottish Management soon became aware that any differences of opinion on technical or programme policy matters between staff in Scotland and those at Head Office could be brought to the attention of the Board of Governors via the National Governor, and thus on occasion be beneficial to Scotland. For example, the BCS was prepared to pursue at Board of Governors level the need for the Scottish Home Service to be transmitted during the early evening from the television sound transmitter at Kirk O'Shotts to those people living in the fringe areas of medium wave transmitters until the SHS could be received from VHF Sound transmitters. On 5 October 1953 the Board of Management rejected this

³⁰Controller, Scotland to Director-General, 2 February 1953, BBC WAC R6/7.

suggestion on technical and cost grounds. The Scottish Controller asked for the decision to be reconsidered but the original decision was confirmed. It was then that the BCS members decided to ask their Chairman to pursue the matter with the Board of Governors thus prompting the Scottish Controller to remark:

This is the first instance of an obvious defect in the organisation of the Council, whereby a difference of opinion between Regional and Head Office staff can be reflected at the Board of Governors level.³¹

In policy terms the first general point to note about the BCS was that it was initially authorised to control only the policy and content of programmes in the SHS because the Light and Third Programmes were provided for reception in the U.K. as a whole. On this theme the first BCS paper defined policy as follows:

The broad policy of the Scottish Home Service is to take the best items available from wherever they may be found, so as to provide balanced and satisfying entertainment for Scottish listeners. For the past five years, the Corporation has given almost complete autonomy to the staff in Scotland, to initiate as many items as money and talent will permit. The basis of the programme is, of course, the Home Service from London, and Scottish items or suitable material from other Regions and Overseas are built into this basic schedule.³²

Control over television output produced within Scotland in addition to or to replace U.K. network output (i.e. the Scottish opt-out programmes) only followed after the publication of the Pilkington Report on Broadcasting in 1962. Indeed devolution to the BBC Regions with regard to television was not envisaged in the White Paper of 1952 at a time when television was gradually being extended to the regions. For some time the BCS sought parity of responsibility in television output.³³ This was sensible because by the early 1960s television was more popular than radio in Scotland and it was taking up an increasing

³¹Controller, Scotland to Director of Technical Services, 6 November 1953, BBC WAC R6/7.

³²Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Paper No. BCS/1/53, 8 January 1953, p.1, BBC WAC R6/8/1.

³³Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Minutes, 7 November 1958, No.119, BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1958-59.

proportion of time at BCS meetings. The Board of Governors had sympathy with the Council's desire for responsibility over television development in Scotland. The BCS had responsibility over the content of Scottish Regional programmes but only acted in an advisory capacity with regard to other BBC services transmitted in Scotland which affected the interests of the people of Scotland.

A fundamental point which must also be stressed about the BCS was that despite the functions of the Council as outlined in the Royal Charter, this arrangement left the BBC centrally with the power to prescribe the detailed definitions of powers to be delegated to the Council. Indeed the powers of the BCS were subject to such reservations and directions as appeared to the BBC to be necessary from time to time for reasons of finance or in the interest of due coordination and coherent administration in the BBC.³⁴ These were substantial qualifying clauses. The BCS acted in an advisory capacity in matters such as operating expenditure, capital development, and the planning of the transmitter network. Many years later Sir Charles Curran, BBC Director-General, commented upon the constraining factors which influenced the operation of the Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales. He stated:

These were clearly potential major limitations on the freedom of action of the Broadcasting Councils, and they constituted the possible grounds of conflict over the respective jurisdictions of the Board of Governors and the National Broadcasting Councils, and between the National executive in London and the local executives in Scotland and Wales.³⁵

In an essentially unitary broadcasting organisation in which Scotland represented only one Region, albeit a National Region, ultimate control remained at the centre (i.e. in

³⁴Broadcasting : Copy of a New Charter of Incorporation granted to the British Broadcasting Corporation (Cmd. 8605; July 1952), p.11.

³⁵Charles Curran, A Seamless Robe : Broadcasting – Philosophy and Practice (London : Collins, 1979), p.53.

London) in matters affecting the whole broadcasting service. The argument pivoted on just how much control London needed to retain. The BCS had control over the balance between Scottish and Network material broadcast in Scotland and in the appointment of staff whose duties were solely connected with the broadcasting services in Scotland, but there was no fiscal autonomy. Nevertheless, the presence of the National Governor for Scotland on the BBC Board of Governors appeared to give Scotland an input into the formulation of policy which was denied to any English Region. Also, although the Chairman of the English Regional Advisory Councils were members of the BBC GAC, the GAC and these Councils did not meet as frequently as the Board of Governors or the BCS.

The effectiveness of the BCS depended in part upon the use which it made of the powers at its disposal and on how much information Scottish Management was prepared to release to the Council. There was a tendency during the early years for members to be unwilling to take risks that would have involved unpopular decisions. They may also have been unable fully to grasp the non-technical implications of technical matters. Given that members were part-time and had few contacts with programme or engineering staff this prevented them from becoming aware of all aspects of broadcasting in Scotland. John Gray, a former BBC Chief Assistant in Edinburgh, remarked that members of the BCS needed to find out where the boiler room was and to see for themselves how the system operated.³⁶ The problem was that members of the BCS too often stayed, in metaphorical terms, on the bridge rather than venture into the engine room. Equally Scottish management were never enthusiastic about regular contacts developing between the BCS and BBC staff in Scotland. In giving evidence to the Estimates Committee in March 1969, Frank Gillard (Managing Director of BBC Radio) stated that the Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales had executive responsibilities but added:

³⁶Taped Interview with John Gray, Edinburgh, 5 April 1988.

This does not mean that those two Councils have very considerable executive authority if they wish to employ it. In fact there is no written constitution and the need for such a thing has not been felt, and the relationship has worked itself out in a practical way and a very effective way.³⁷

Gillard went on to mention that the Broadcasting Councils would probably feel that they owed some allegiance to the Board of Governors and that this would express itself through the National Governor who sat on both the Board of Governors and the Broadcasting Councils. This was not necessarily true particularly if tension and disagreements existed between Council members and the National Governor. For example, in October 1967 members of the Council were critical of Lady Baird (National Governor for Scotland) and the Board of Governors for not being consulted about the appointment of Alasdair Milne as the new Controller of BBC Scotland, particularly since the Controller was the most senior adviser to the Council on policy and programme matters in Scotland.³⁸ Members were never obliged to accept the advice of the National Governor, although in most instances they did so. It was also in the interests of the Council to have a Chairman who had good relations with the BBC Chairman who might then be persuaded to be more sympathetic towards the interests of Scottish broadcasting. Such a situation prevailed, for example, when Lord Normanbrook was BBC Chairman and Sir David Milne (a former Permanent Under Secretary of State for Scotland) was National Governor for Scotland; it was less so when Lady Baird succeeded Milne as National Governor in November 1965. However, it must be added that because the National Governor constituted only one member of the Board of Governors this meant that he/she had to think in terms of the interests of U.K. broadcasting, not merely Scottish broadcasting. The National Governor was though expected to give priority to Scottish interests; the fact that he/she was in a minority within the Board of Governors only

³⁷Estimates Committee Sub-Committee D : Minutes of Evidence Monday, 17 March 1969 : British Broadcasting Corporation (H.C. 93-vii; 17 March 1969), p.111.

³⁸British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1967-68 (Cmnd. 3779; October 1968), p.115.

mattered if it was accepted that there was an anti-Scottish bias within the membership of the Board. Overall the BCS had never had a high public profile and indeed was prompted in one of its annual reports to emphasise the marked degree of ignorance of its place, function, and existence, despite the many years in which it had oversight of the policy and content of BBC Scottish broadcasting output.³⁹ This may have been as much a reflection of the degree of effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of the Council in safeguarding Scottish interests in Broadcasting, as of uncertainty as to the precise role of the BCS within the structure of Scottish and indeed British broadcasting.

This section concludes with a few brief comments on the Scottish Advisory structure. In the early days of broadcasting the BBC was advised by specialists on different subjects. As the functions of the BBC were expanded the Corporation gradually established a variety of advisory committees. Many of these committees operated on a regional basis, hence the BBC in Scotland could draw upon the advice of its own advisory committees. These committees were purely advisory in nature and so unlike the BCS they did not exercise control over broadcasting policy in Scotland. The chairman of the various Scottish advisory committees and the School Broadcasting Council for Scotland were ex-officio members of the Scottish Advisory Council during its existence which lasted from 1947 to 1952, and latterly the Central U.K. Committees. Naturally this arrangement did not extend to the BCS which superseded the Scottish Advisory Council. Also, the Chairmen of the SAC were ex-officio members of the General Advisory Council whereas the Chairmen of the BCS were members of the Board of Governors which had ultimate control over BBC policy. During the period 1950–1980 the BBC in Scotland could draw upon the advice of the following bodies: The School Broadcasting Council for Scotland; Scottish Religious Advisory Committee; Scottish Music Advisory Committee; Scottish

³⁹British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1966–67. (Cmnd. 3425; October 1967), p.118.

Appeals Advisory Committee; and the Scottish Agricultural Advisory Committee. Towards the end of the 1970s three further Committees were formed: Gaelic Advisory Committee; Orkney Advisory Committee; and the Shetland Advisory Committee. The School Broadcasting Council for Scotland, which unlike the advisory committees had executive responsibility (for schools broadcasting) rather than merely an advisory role, normally consisted of between twenty-three and twenty-eight members. In addition to the Chairman and Vice Chairman, members were nominated by the following bodies: Scottish Education Department (two members); Association of County Councils in Scotland, and the Scottish Counties of Cities Association (two members each until the mid-1970s when the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities created by local government reorganisation in 1975 put forward four members); Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (normally two members); National Committee for the Training of Teachers, later known as the Scottish Council for the Training of Teachers (two members until 1967); Scottish Secondary Teachers Association, the General Teaching Council and the Joint Committee of Colleges of Education (one member each from the mid-to-late 1960s onwards); Educational Institute of Scotland (normally four members); Scottish Council for Research in Education (one member); and finally the BBC (ten to twelve members in the 1950s, but an average of six to nine members thereafter). The average membership of the other Advisory Committees ranged from twelve to fifteen members; the Gaelic, Orkney and Shetland Advisory Committees had a smaller membership averaging four to six members. The Scottish advisory structure provided a valuable source of advice for the broadcasters in the formulation of broadcasting policy in Scotland; the use to which that advice was put was solely the responsibility of BBC Scottish Management.

2.3 BBC Financial Policy and Resources

The BBC believed that the nature and source of income of an organisation affected both its character and the type of service which it provided. This was deemed to be as true of broadcasting as of any other activity providing a service to the public. The discussion which follows focuses on the financial basis of broadcasting. It begins with an examination of the licence fee system through which the BBC received the bulk of its income, how this income was used to fund the BBC's various activities, and the variety of factors which increased costs in the post-war period. The discussion then moves on to consider the method by which the BBC allocated financial resources to Scotland, financial policy with regard to operating and capital expenditure in Scotland, and the implications of all these factors for the provision of BBC programme services in Scotland.

The licence fee system established a direct relationship between the BBC and the public which it served in contrast to either general taxation or the indirect relationship which existed with the funding of commercial broadcasting. The licence fee was similar to a poll tax in that with the exception of concessionary licences the same fee had to be paid by all individuals regardless of ability to pay, but unlike general taxation it was only paid for by those who made use of the service. The BBC regarded the licence fee as a buttress to its independence from detailed governmental control but this independence was only relative given that the setting of the licence fee was a political decision. However, the BBC was free to decide on the allocation of licence income between its various broadcasting services. Yet it was uncertainty over licence fee increases, particularly during periods of inflation and rising costs, which hindered this task where long-term planning considerations were involved. The licence fee was related to the BBC's public service role and not its monopoly of broadcasting because the arrival of Independent Television in 1954 funded by advertising did not alter the BBC's method of funding via the licence fee. Thereafter when the BBC changed its attitude and finally

recognised Independent Television as a public service broadcasting system this questioned the original belief that the licence fee was essential to the BBC and the maintenance of its public service role. By the 1980s the financial doctrine which underpinned the BBC-ITV duopoly was not that advertising was incompatible with public service broadcasting, but that competition for advertising was incompatible.⁴⁰

The level of the licence fee and the proportion of that fee which was actually paid to the BBC had varied over the years. The original licence set in November 1922 was 10s.⁴¹ Even after the advent of a limited television service in November 1936, the 10s Sound licence was retained until June 1946 when it was increased to £1 (Sound only), and a separate combined licence of £2 covering both radio and television was introduced.⁴² The Sound-only licence was subsequently increased on only one further occasion in August 1965; in February 1971 this licence was abolished because of the cost and difficulty of enforcing the system, and so thereafter only one type of licence was issued covering the use of both radio and television. With the increasing costs of broadcasting in the post-war period mainly attributable to the expansion of television broadcasting, the combined licence which was first issued in 1946 was increased at fairly regular intervals thereafter. With the advent of a full colour service on BBC-2 in December 1967 a separate £10 colour licence was introduced on 1 January 1968; the combined licence for monochrome receivers was £5. Indeed the Government had stated in its White Paper of December 1966 that the cost of colour programmes should not fall

⁴⁰Michael Starks, "Paying for Broadcasting : Public funds for a Public Service", Political Quarterly 56 (October-December 1985), 378.

⁴¹Wireless Broadcasting Licence. (Cmd. 1822; 1923), p.11.

⁴²Broadcasting Policy. (Cmd. 6852; July 1946), p.21.

upon viewers in general given that at the outset colour would only be available to a small minority of viewers, hence the reason for the £5 supplementary licence for those equipped to receive colour programmes.⁴³ By November 1979 the licence fee for monochrome receivers had increased to £12, and for colour receivers to £34.

In addition to the increase in the level of the licence fee there has also been a spectacular growth in the number of licences purchased. In January 1927 when the British Broadcasting Corporation took over from the British Broadcasting Company the BBC indicated in its first Annual Report that there were 2,178,447 licences in force.⁴⁴ This figure increased to almost 9 million by December 1938⁴⁵ and to over 10 million in 1946⁴⁶ when the radio-only licence was supplemented by the combined licence. Given that most households already possessed radio sets by this time, the number of radio licences naturally increased only very slowly thereafter and reached a peak of just under 12 million in 1950. Subsequently the number of radio licences declined because more people began to purchase television receivers and consequently bought a combined licence for both radio and television reception. By the time the radio-only licence was abolished in February 1971 the number of these licences had dropped to just over two million.⁴⁷ In

⁴³Broadcasting (Cmnd. 3169; December 1966), p.6.

⁴⁴British Broadcasting Corporation : First Annual Report, 1927 (Cmd. 3123; 1928), p.8.

⁴⁵British Broadcasting Corporation : Twelfth Annual Report, 1938. (Cmd. 5951; February 1939), p.3.

⁴⁶British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1945-46. (Cmd. 6985; December 1946), p.3.

⁴⁷British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1970-71. (Cmnd. 4824; December 1971), p.153.

contrast to this there was a steady increase in the number of combined licences. These began to increase significantly in the early 1950s with the expansion of BBC television to the regions; the rate of increase only began to taper off in the 1960s. The number of monochrome licences reached a peak in 1970 when over 15.5 million licences were in force throughout the U.K.⁴⁸ The number of monochrome licences purchased declined thereafter, first slowly up until the mid-1970s, and then more rapidly due to the increasing number of colour licences bought. By 1980 the number of monochrome licences had fallen to just over five million.⁴⁹ By contrast the number of colour licences increased in line with the extension of colour services throughout the country (first on BBC-2 and thereafter on all three television networks) and with the willingness of the public to switch from monochrome to colour. The latter was mainly dependent upon the falling cost of colour receivers, hire purchase restrictions, and the conditions attached to the renting of receivers. In January 1968 when the colour licence was introduced there were 20,428 of these licences in force as at 31 March that year.⁵⁰ Ten years later the number of colour licences exceeded 11 million, reaching almost 13 million by 1980. It was not until the mid-1980s that the number of colour licences equalled the number of monochrome licences which had been bought in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These trends in the number of licences bought were of immense importance to the BBC in ensuring that it had sufficient income to fund the expansion of the radio and television broadcasting services. However, apart from the level of the licence fee and the number of licences purchased, the other element in the equation which determined the BBC's income was

⁴⁸British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the year 1969-70. (Cmnd. 4520; November 1970), p.149.

⁴⁹BBC Annual Report and Handbook 1981 (London : BBC, 1980), p.105.

⁵⁰British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1967-68 (Cmnd. 3779; October 1968), p.134.

the proportion of licence income which successive Governments were prepared to pay to the Corporation.

The amount of licence fee and the number of licences purchased does not by itself accurately represent the actual income which was paid to the BBC. From the gross income the Post Office deducted expenses for collecting licence revenue and for administering the enforcement of the system. After 1 April 1954 the deduction of Post Office collection and detection expenses was made equivalent to the expenses actually incurred. Even after these deductions had been made the BBC did not receive 100 per cent of the remainder of the licence income. From 1 July 1952 to 31 March 1953 the BBC received 85 per cent of net licence income (i.e. gross income minus Post Office expenses).⁵¹ This figure increased to 86 per cent for 1953–54 after BBC representations that its income was insufficient for the adequate conduct of its domestic services. From 1 April 1954 to 31 March 1957 this system was altered and the Government instead deducted a fixed sum which varied over these three financial years: £2 million (1954–55); and £2.75 million (1955–56 and 1956–57).⁵² Thereafter the Government reverted to the original system whereby the BBC received a percentage of net licence income.⁵³ These figures were as follows: 87½ per cent (1957–58 and 1958–59); 92½ per cent (1959–60); and 95 per cent (1960–61). It should also be noted that from 1 August 1957 the Government imposed a £1 excise duty on each licence, but none of this money was

⁵¹Broadcasting : Copy of the Licence and Agreement dated the 12th Day of June 1952, Between Her Majesty's Postmaster-General and the British Broadcasting Corporation (Cmd. 8579; June 1952), p.2.

⁵²Broadcasting : Copy of an Agreement Dated 28th June 1954, Between the Postmaster-General and the British Broadcasting Corporation (Cmd. 9196; July 1954), p.2.

⁵³Broadcasting : Copy of An Agreement Dated 1st February 1957, Between the Postmaster-General and the British Broadcasting Corporation (Cmnd. 80; February 1957), p.2.

allocated to broadcasting; the excise duty was abolished on 1 October 1963. From 1 April 1961 the BBC received the full proceeds of the licence income, minus the excise duty.⁵⁴ So only after October 1963 did the BBC receive the full proceeds of net licence income.

The BBC is a large and complex organisation whose staff and programme activities have increased significantly in the post-war period. With the expansion of television the BBC's overall costs increased considerably because television was a more costly medium than radio. Competition from ITV also served to increase costs yet the BBC, unlike ITV, could not increase its charges to compensate for increased expenditure. This was less of a problem when income from increased sales of licences was able to cover costs; it became a problem when during periods of expansion, licence fees were not increased sufficiently frequently and at realistic levels to cover such costs. During the 1960s the BBC as a whole experienced a period of rapid expansion due to a variety of factors: the introduction of BBC-2; colour television; the extension of UHF television coverage which required the provision of many relay stations; the extension of VHF radio coverage; increases in broadcasting hours; the changeover to a new line standard in television; the reorganisation of the radio networks; and the introduction of local radio. The effects of increased costs during this period would have been more severe if there had not been a steadily increasing yield of income from broadcasting licences combined with improved methods to detect licence evasion. Towards the end of that decade the BBC entered a harsher financial climate.

In the 1950s costing was regarded as a device for assisting programme planners in making economies and in taking policy decisions, but not an end in itself. By the 1970s with the onset of increasing financial problems, costing in the BBC assumed much

⁵⁴Broadcasting : Copy of an Agreement Dated 2nd June 1960, Between the Postmaster-General and the British Broadcasting Corporation (Cmnd. 1066; June 1960), p.2.

greater importance. In a lecture to the Royal Institute of Public Administration on 25 November 1957, J.G.L. Francis (Chief Accountant at the BBC), stated that costing must be the servant not the master of the programme planners.⁵⁵ By the 1970s the priorities had altered. The licence fee no longer insulated the BBC from financial pressures. With rising costs, inflation, and smaller than anticipated increases in the licence fee, the BBC feared that at some stage the licence fee intervals might be so short as to degenerate into annual grants-in-aid and hinder long term planning. The BBC sought to demonstrate its commitment to good budgeting by calling in McKinseys, a firm of Management Consultants who recommended changes in methods of financial accountability. The McKinsey study is discussed in the following section, but what can be noted here is that the principle behind setting productivity targets was to aim for greater global savings. However, within the atypical world of broadcasting there were inherent limitations on the effectiveness of importing business methods. During the 1970s, increases in the sale of colour licences could not prevent the BBC from borrowing on a more continuous basis. The BBC disliked the idea of borrowing, preferring instead for many years to finance development from income rather than from loan capital which would incur interest charges. Perhaps more importantly the BBC did not wish to engage in deficit financing on a continual basis for fear that this might encourage Ministers to postpone increases in the licence fee in the knowledge that the Corporation could increase its borrowing to finance expenditure. Likewise the BBC rejected accepting advertising for fear that this would alter the character of the service provided, would be extended to all BBC services, and would reduce pressure on Governments to increase the licence fee.

The discussion so far has focused on the BBC as a whole in order to provide a background to financial policy and resources in the Scottish regional context. Scotland was allocated an annual budget which could be spent at the discretion of the Scottish

⁵⁵J.G.L. Francis, "Costing in the BBC", Public Administration 36 (Spring 1958), 37-45.

Controller and his senior staff. Overspending on any individual programme or series of programmes normally had to be compensated for by altering the allocation to other projects. Some regions generated a surplus of income whereas others, such as Scotland, operated at a deficit. The surplus of income in some regions was used to meet deficits in other regions. If the BBC in Scotland had received funding in direct proportion to the number of licence payers in Scotland then on this basis Scotland would have received much less income than it did receive. So the BBC argued that on a per capita basis Scotland received proportionally more money than the English Regions, although programme resources were more thinly spread compared to London. No BBC region could consistently support the complete service of Home, Light and Third Programmes it received out of the income arising from within each region. The BBC therefore expected each region to meet the expenditure on its own programme service and to contribute towards shared services in accordance with its capacity to pay which was determined by licence income. For example, as at 31 March 1953 the BBC in Scotland had a deficit of £409,000 because the total income generated (£1,049,000) was less than the total expenditure of £1,458,000 which represented the total of radio and television operating expenditure (£1,376,000) as well as capital expenditure (£82,000) in Scotland.⁵⁶ All the other regions had a deficit except London and the North Region. However, given that the surplus in some regions was used to offset the deficit in others, there was a surplus of £167,000 in England but much larger deficits in the three national regions, thus the total BBC deficit as at 31 March 1953 was £760,000. Given that the format for presenting the analysis of income and expenditure in the BBC Annual Accounts has varied over the years a consistent format can be found in the Appendices 3.4 and 3.5. These provide both an analysis across the BBC regions and a more detailed analysis relating only to Scotland; both tables can be compared with each other. An analysis of the BBC

⁵⁶British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1952-53 (Cmd. 8928; September 1953), p.69.

Accounts over the three decades since 1950 indicates that during no year did Scotland operate at a surplus.

Before considering in detail the method for determining both operating and capital expenditure in Scotland a few comments can be offered on the trends in BBC expenditure in Scotland up to 1980. From 1962–63 onwards the BBC Scotland deficit began to increase at an accelerated level. The deficit which had remained at over £600,000 for about four years, rose to over £1 million as at 31 March 1963.⁵⁷ This was mainly attributable initially to the increase in television expenditure in Scotland and latterly by increases in capital expenditure due to the opening of new studios and the extension of the transmitter network. The BBC centrally however subsidised the cost of extending BBC services to remote and scattered communities in Scotland. The greater deficit as at March 1963 was not unique to BBC Scotland because the overall BBC deficit increased significantly, mainly due to the conversion of the surplus in England into a deficit primarily caused by preparations for BBC–2. The increase in operating expenditure due to the arrival of BBC–2 was followed by a significant increase in capital expenditure when BBC–2 was extended outwith London and the Corporation sought to extend the UHF transmitter network which carried the BBC–2 transmissions. In Scotland the much greater deficit evident during 1962–63 continued to increase until 1965–66 when it was again reduced to over £600,000 for two years. During 1967–68 the Scottish deficit again increased appreciably due to significant increases in both television operating expenditure and capital expenditure; radio expenditure remained at a more constant level. Thereafter the Scottish deficit remained over £1 million (and indeed exceeded £2 million during 1970–71 and 1973–74) until the mid 1970s when it increased to £4,386,000⁵⁸ due primarily to a

⁵⁷British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1962–63. (Cmnd. 2160; October 1963), p.99.

⁵⁸BBC Handbook 1976 (London: BBC, 1975), p.102.

significant increase in television expenditure and to a lesser extent radio expenditure. Only the increase in total income during 1975–76, due to the increased number of colour licences purchased and the higher level of licence fee, helped to reduce the total deficit as at 31 March 1976. Although the total hours of radio and television broadcasting during this period did not increase significantly, the extra costs generated were primarily attributable to higher staff and material costs fuelled by inflation, a factor common throughout the BBC. Indeed the BBC as a whole ended the financial year 1974–75 with a £17 million deficit which was converted into a surplus by the end of the following financial year. During the remainder of the 1970s the BBC Scotland deficit increased, reaching £9 million as at 31 March 1980.⁵⁹

Turning from the broad trends in BBC Scotland expenditure over the three decades up to 1980 to a closer analysis of the factors which governed the figures for operating and capital expenditure, the following points can be noted. In determining the surplus or deficit in any BBC region the total expenditure (Radio and Television operating expenditure, and capital expenditure) was deducted from total income. The total income represented income from licences plus other net income on a smaller scale such as that derived from BBC publications. In Scotland the number of broadcast receiving licences increased from 1,120,968⁶⁰ in December 1950 to reach 1,641,240⁶¹ as at March 1980. Although the number of radio licences in Scotland had fallen to over 160,000 by the time this licence was abolished in 1971, the number of monochrome television licences in Scotland increased every year since the early 1950s to reach a peak of over 1.4 million

⁵⁹BBC Annual Report and Handbook 1981 (London : BBC, 1980), p.101.

⁶⁰British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1950–51 (Cmd. 8347; September 1951), p.99.

⁶¹"Television Licences in force in the United Kingdom March 1980", (Television Licensing Organisation, Bristol : figures supplied by Ian Phillips, BBC Director of Finance).

in the early 1970s; the decline in the number of monochrome licences purchased thereafter was compensated by the increase in the number of colour licences taken out in Scotland which increased from almost 100,000 in 1972 to reach 1.2 million by March 1980. The BBC thus had an increasing source of income with which to fund its broadcasting services. In determining the separate levels of radio and television operating expenditure in Scotland the BBC applied the following principles. Where BBC Scotland contributed programmes to the networks, the network covered the cost of these programmes, thus releasing more resources available for making programmes for Scotland or for the network. There was thus an inbuilt incentive for Scotland to get material taken by the Radio and Television networks. Scotland was, however, primarily expected to produce programmes which would be of interest to listeners and viewers in Scotland; these programmes had to be funded from the Scottish budget. London budgeted each year for a percentage of regional output which might be capable of being networked and where costs would thus be borne by the BBC centrally. In practice Scotland often lacked the manpower or technical resources to provide a consistently high-level of output acceptable for the networks, especially in the higher cost medium of television. In addition to covering the cost of programmes produced within and for the Scottish audience, BBC Scotland, like other regions, was also expected to contribute towards the cost of shared services. The BBC centrally also had to fund the high cost of extending transmitter coverage in Scotland. Capital expenditure was apportioned by London according to licence income within each region and not according to actual expenditure incurred. Scotland made known its capital requirements to London on an annual basis.

The breakdown in regional expenditure was a by-product of the Beveridge Report on Broadcasting which favoured a means of indicating how income was being spent in the regions. This was difficult to determine because of the operational characteristics of the system. For example, since no region could consistently exist on the income which the licences produced within each region they were thus dependent upon the networks

for sustaining material. Also, capital expenditure on facilities in London was of direct benefit to all the regions and not just to London. This partly explains the BBC formula for apportioning capital expenditure in accordance with licence income within each region rather than according to the actual level of expenditure within each region. This had the effect of blurring variations in actual rates of capital expenditure between the regions. Rates of operating expenditure were factual. By far the most significant element in BBC Scotland's annual operating costs related to staff costs. In 1980 these represented 69.1 per cent of operating costs.⁶² Radio and Television expenditure and output increased in the period up to 1980 but significantly Scotland's share of Radio and Television network programmes and other costs rose steeply from the mid-1970s, although an increasing proportion of money was recovered by BBC Scotland for radio and especially television programmes which were contributed to the networks. Expenditure on television in Scotland first exceeded that of radio expenditure during 1962-63 if no allowance is made for Scotland's share of network and central costs;⁶³ the gap between radio and television expenditure in Scotland widened thereafter reflecting the much higher cost of television programmes rather than the volume of television output as measured by hours of television broadcasting. Apart from the availability of resources, the use to which those resources was put was also important. Indeed during 1977 attention began to be focused on BBC Scotland's management of its resources after the discovery that overspending on the programme allowance had taken place. 'Cash crisis hits BBC Scotland' was the headline printed on the front page of the Glasgow Herald.⁶⁴ What was significant was

⁶²Committee on Scottish Affairs : The BBC Cuts in Scotland : Minutes of Evidence Wednesday 2 April 1980. (H.C. 539; 2 April 1980), p.6.

⁶³British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1962-63 (Cmnd. 2160; October 1963), p.99.

⁶⁴Murray Ritchie, "Cash Crisis Hits BBC Scotland", Glasgow Herald, 9 December 1977, p.1.

the delay in recognising that overspending in the first half of the financial year 1977–78 had occurred. The expected deficit of £400,000 represented four per cent of BBC Scotland's £10 million budget for 1977–78, and obviously an even smaller percentage of the BBC's national deficit. The situation was resolved without significant cuts in programme output in early 1978 and a Head of Finance was appointed in the previous year. There may have been concern about Scotland's share of the cost of network programmes and central services, but as part of a larger organisation BBC Scotland had to accept the mix of positive and negative aspects inherent in the essentially centralised control over the allocation of financial resources.

2.4 The McKinsey Reforms and the Development of

Professionalism and Managerialism

This section concludes the examination of BBC organisational structure by analysing the reasons why the BBC utilised the services of a firm of Management Consultants during 1968–69, the proposals which emerged from this study of BBC managerial practice and cost control, and their implications for BBC organisation and programme output at the U.K. level in general and within Scotland in particular.

In 1967 Prime Minister Harold Wilson asked Lord Hill, BBC Chairman, to instigate a review of BBC finances. The initial study concluded that a firm of Management Consultants should be used to ascertain in what areas of BBC financial practice economies could be made. By using an external firm of consultants, Hill hoped to convince critics that the BBC was continually seeking to operate on a cost effective basis. So in the following year the BBC called in McKinseys the International Management Consultants to review operational practices within the Corporation to suggest improvements of potential long term benefit.⁶⁵ This was the first time that the BBC called in an external team of Management Consultants on its own initiative. The expansion of BBC services referred to in the previous section had required additional manpower and material resources and exerted pressure on BBC finances. The BBC had grown within a relatively short time span into an industrial complex with a proliferation of professional specialisms. By the late 1960s BBC management needed to tighten financial control procedures without stifling the creative talents of producers. The dilemma was summed up by Tom Burns as follows:

All in all, then, the 1969 reorganisation had to deal with the unending problems of providing for administrative control and coordination and of providing and promoting harmony and a reasonably unitary (though not unchanging)

⁶⁵British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1967–68 (Cmnd. 3779; October 1968), p.13.

consciousness of purpose without at the same time provoking resentment or suffocating initiative – of how to build authority into the system without a return to the authoritarianism of the earlier generation, and of how to support individual enterprise and imaginativeness without endangering the existence of the BBC by creating dangerous hostilities outside it and debilitating conflicts within it.⁶⁶

In April 1968 the BBC asked McKinseys to examine the domestic radio and television services, including the BBC's regional structure. The BBC hoped to counter the arguments of critics who argued that the Corporation had too many administrators and was wasteful of the resources at its disposal. Charles Curran, BBC Director-General, accepted that the public relations aspect was not insignificant.⁶⁷ Ministers had been reluctant to increase the licence fee to a level which would comfortably cover operating costs. The McKinsey diagnostic Report, intended only for internal circulation, was placed before the BBC. The BBC stated that McKinseys would be concerned if their report was publicly distributed because, it was argued, this would affect their relationship with any future clients.⁶⁸ The McKinsey recommendations were examined by a BBC internal Committee headed by General Mansell (Controller, Radio 4, and subsequently Director of Programmes (Radio)).

McKinseys reported that BBC management had done a satisfactory job of planning and controlling resources but nevertheless believed that the BBC should redefine its managerial responsibilities. They were thinking in terms of the need to delegate accountability for the operation of individual budgets as well as ensuring that Management

⁶⁶Tom Burns, The BBC : Public Institution and Private World (London : Macmillan Press, 1977), p.223.

⁶⁷C.J. Curran, Money, Management and Programmes (London : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1970).

⁶⁸Estimates Committee Sub-Committee D : Minutes of Evidence, Wednesday, 11 June 1969 : British Broadcasting Corporation (H.C.93-xii; 11 June 1969), p.226.

had better access to more detailed information about costs. At the beginning of their investigation of BBC operational practices McKinseys encountered two distinct factors which appeared to place constraints on the efficient management of resources as judged in comparison with any typical business organisation. These two factors were, (1) the public service ethos in broadcasting, and (2) the inbuilt constraints on existing management methods in the BBC. According to the first factor it can be argued that the whole philosophy of public service broadcasting implied that there were particular standards which could be applied to judge the worth of any individual programme other than the benchmark of cost effectiveness. A more cost effective programme was not necessarily a better quality programme. To attempt to streamline programme output by drawing comparisons with, for example, a car assembly line was likely to be non-productive since each individual programme represented a unique one-off product. A varied and complex mix of manpower and technical resources were used on each programme, whether they originated in London or Scotland. Also, there was the possibility that excessive cost control might stifle producer creativity, the base line in public service broadcasting.

The second factor which McKinseys had to take note of were the existing constraints on management methods. McKinseys soon realised that the BBC was an atypical organisation. It was not typical in the products which it produced. More fundamental than this the BBC was not typical because there were so many decision makers. Unlike any other organisation of similar size, the BBC had a far greater number of decision makers since many day-to-day decisions were delegated to the level of producers. This rather diffuse and apparently decentralised decision-making structure was a product of the nature of broadcasting as an activity. McKinseys had to devise a managerial structure relevant to the needs of broadcasting. The aim was to streamline the decision-making structure by reducing the number of key decision makers and by simplifying the chains of command. This was combined with an emphasis on competitive

scheduling, more co-productions, and the adoption of stranded programming (i.e. a series of programmes perhaps with a common theme, broadcast in a regular time slot, and invariably aimed at a majority audience). Nicholas Garnham summarised the situation:

The single programme created by the single individual becomes more and more difficult for the administrative machine to digest. Programmes are conceived in strands and these strands inevitably impose their conformity on the individual programme components.⁶⁹

This, as will be noted later, had an adverse effect on the ability of BBC Scotland to secure network transmission for some of its programme output.

For many years Reith's distinction between the role of Management and that of creative staff was maintained. The practical outcome of the McKinsey study was that creative staff were no longer shielded from the burdens of administration since they were expected to be responsible for programme costings. Full responsibility for current and capital expenditure was entrusted to the three Heads of Television, Radio and External Services. They were now designated as Managing Directors directly answerable to the Director-General thus becoming the Corporation's senior line management. These changes thus placed the stress on managerial accountability combined with greater delegated authority. For example, before 1969 the Directors of Sound and Television broadcasting had no responsibilities for finance, personnel, engineering or public relations. These were the responsibility of the Directors of Administration, Engineering and Public Affairs. The latter now provided support for the Director-General and the Managing Directors for matters common throughout the BBC. So with the exception of research, capital development and transmitter planning which were all controlled by the Director of Engineering, all other engineering staff were to come under the control of the Managing Directors of either Radio or Television; engineers had previously only been on attachment

⁶⁹Nicholas Garnham, "Saving a Public Service", New Society Vol.16, No.416 (17 September 1970), p.505.

from the Engineering Division. By giving Managing Directors control over such staff it is possible to appreciate that the changes increased managerial control and accountability. The requirement for individual programmes to be costed and kept within a given budget was designed to make production staff more accountable for the requisition and deployment of resources at their disposal. The BBC, though, maintained that managerial efficiency and artistic excellence were not necessarily incompatible.⁷⁰ Devolution permitted a greater degree of central control over the allocation of resources because Management was provided with more adequate and up-to-date information on the disposition of programme resources. Producers now tended to feel financially accountable rather than responsible generally for the deployment of resources. This was more so in television rather than in radio because the lower costs of radio production did not require control over the total cost of each individual programme. In radio it was possible to submit plans to Network Controllers consisting of an aggregate of individual programme budgets. However, in television producers were allocated production budgets and were expected to be accountable for the whole cost of each of their productions, not merely part of them. Savings targets which had previously been represented by overall sums were now expected to be linked to specific proposals for economies. In July 1969 the Estimates Committee concluded that on the evidence available to them their impression was that the BBC was fully cost conscious and that its methods of financial control were adequate to ensure the efficient use of its resources.⁷¹

Two brief points about the McKinsey study can be made before considering its implications for broadcasting in Scotland. Firstly, with the establishment of production

⁷⁰British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1969-70 (Cmnd. 4520; November 1970), p.11.

⁷¹Third Report from the Estimates Committee : British Broadcasting Corporation (H.C.387; 23 July 1969), p.xii.

budgets there was a temptation for the previous year's costs to be taken as the base line for current costs; and secondly there was a possibility that producers might spend up to the budget allowed for each programme for fear that the subsequent year's budget might be cut. These factors would thus reduce the incentive to make savings. Turning from operating to capital expenditure it can be noted that unlike most business enterprises, increases in BBC capital expenditure did not increase the Corporation's income with perhaps one exception: the extension of transmitters did bring an increasing number of people within range of BBC radio and television services and so indirectly increased licence income by increasing the potential number of licence holders. Nevertheless as the extension of the transmitter network neared 100 per cent the BBC's costs increased significantly because of the high cost of providing many relay stations in sparsely populated areas such as in the north of Scotland and on the western seaboard. It thus appears to be difficult to establish precise criteria for efficiency in the use of capital in the BBC compared to commercial companies. In recommending that the BBC should seek to apply cost-conscious methods to capital projects and not simply to operating expenditure, McKinseys suggested changes that went beyond the BBC's existing costing procedures.

The McKinsey reforms had implications for organisational structure and resource control within BBC Scotland. McKinseys were asked to include a review of the regions. The McKinsey team visited Glasgow and the reforms which followed tended, in common with the BBC as a whole, to affect television more than radio because of the greater costs and complexity of television productions. It was much easier for radio producers to set and then keep within a workable budget. Productivity targets were set and there was a strengthening of central control of information on the deployment of resources. Producers in Scotland were expected to estimate costs before embarking on any production, and then seek to try and keep within these costings. Producers were thus given control over their own budgets rather than have to negotiate for funds from several

central budgets; it invariably involved making producers more accountable for these budgets. In Scotland there was a greater need for television producers to work out their costs in some detail particularly as they were only beginning to gain experience of large-scale productions and new technical developments in comparison with the larger television production facilities in London. In common with the stress on managerialism elsewhere in the BBC, similar changes took place in Scotland. As noted in section 2.1, some senior posts were retitled and given managerial status. Also, as part of the overall desire to increase efficiency and reduce costs in the regions, McKinseys suggested the need for economies in the regional orchestras, discussed in Section 5.6.

There is one aspect of the McKinsey study which had important implications for Scottish programme output. The greater emphasis on strands of output to fit in with predetermined budgets which was mentioned earlier did have an adverse effect on the networking of Scottish material. The emphasis on programme series rather than on a sequence of individual programmes each involving separate producers, was disadvantageous to Scotland. Stranded programming was less costly and facilitated greater financial and organisational control in comparison with individual, and often expensive, productions. However, this made it increasingly difficult for BBC Scotland to contribute the occasional individual production, except perhaps in an area such as drama, particularly since editorial control over programme strands increasingly took place outwith Scotland. In a series of pyramids, each representing different programme areas, the top of the pyramid of stranded programming was invariably London thus making it increasingly difficult for BBC Scotland to get material taken by the networks. Production staff in Scotland naturally wished to see their credit on work that would be networked, and anyhow the financial investment in material taken by the networks could be recovered from the BBC centrally thus releasing more resources within BBC Scotland for local or network programmes. Scotland continued to be successful in getting, for example, drama serials taken by the network, such as "Sunset Song" the six-part dramatisation of Lewis

Grassic Gibbon's famous novel which was shown on BBC-2.

The outcome of the McKinsey study can also be viewed against the background of the development of professionalism within the BBC which pre-dated the stress on managerialism from the late 1960s onwards. By the time the BBC decided to call in McKinseys there was already a transition within the Corporation from the Reithian public service ethos to a professional ethos. This was noted in 1965 by Richard Hoggart, previously a member of the Pilkington Committee on Broadcasting.⁷² In Reith's time the goal of professionalism was subordinate to the task of using broadcasting to raise public taste. During the 1950s and 1960s the growth in size and complexity of the BBC tended to undermine the rather gentlemanly club which had been characteristic of the Sound broadcasting service during the formative years of the BBC. In his autobiography, Reith recalled that he was interested in people who wanted to work in the BBC and nowhere else.⁷³ He did not want them to treat the BBC as just another employer. However, changes occurred thereafter due to the growth of the BBC, especially the television service, and the influx of many new younger staff eager to develop the possibilities of the medium of television. The interchange of staff, artists and ideas between the BBC and ITV reduced the uniqueness of the BBC and was also accompanied by internal tension within the Corporation for audiences, and for resources. The BBC became just another employer with its own professional career structure and staffed by professional broadcasters who did not all adhere to the strict Reithian definition of public service broadcasting. These changes were also accompanied by the growth of unionism within the BBC. It seemed as if loyalty towards the BBC and the public service principles it

⁷²Richard Hoggart, "The BBC's Duty to Society – Part 8", The Listener Vol.74, No.1897 (5 August 1965), p.190.

⁷³J.C.W. Reith, Into the Wind (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), p.139.

represented was being replaced by loyalty to a career path. It could no longer be taken for granted that all staff would operate an agreed policy in the public interest given that the proliferation of specialisms led to disagreements between them. By the late 1960s the BBC began to resemble an industry in which reference was made to management techniques, productivity, cost control, programmes as commodities which were bought and sold, and audience research widely used as a guide to the popularity of programmes. Increased union activity led to a dispute in September 1969 between the BBC and the Association of Broadcasting Staff over pay and conditions which even led on 4 November 1969 to the appointment of a Court of Inquiry to examine the causes of the dispute.⁷⁴ Tom Burns drew the distinction between working for the BBC and working in the BBC, with the latter deemed to have replaced the former.⁷⁵ There appeared to be a conflict of interest between the desire to devote one's energies in a commitment to public service (i.e. working for the BBC as a vocation), and careerism (i.e. working in the BBC as a career structure). Burns went on to argue that professionalism with its emphasis on professional judgements as to what constituted excellence in programme standards did appear to be eroding the whole concept of public service broadcasting. He stated:

The increasing salience of such preoccupations is a further, and definitive, mark of the transition of broadcasting from an occupation dominated by the ethos of public service, in which the central concern is with quality in terms of the public good, and of public betterment, to one dominated by the ethos of professionalism, in which the central concern is with quality of performance in terms of standards of appraisal by fellow professionals; in brief, a shift from treating broadcasting as a means to treating broadcasting as an end.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Report of a Court of Inquiry under Mr E.T.C. Grint, C.B.E. into a dispute at the British Broadcasting Corporation (Cmnd. 4240; December 1969).

⁷⁵Tom Burns, The BBC : Public Institution and Private World (London : Macmillan Press, 1977), p.106.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p.125.

In February 1977, Howard Newby (Managing Director, BBC Radio), wrote an article in The Listener on the role of broadcasters in society entitled 'Broadcasting – A Professional view'. In it he spoke about the apolitical professionalism in the BBC, and that these professionals were responsible to the Board of Governors.⁷⁷ A month later the Annan Report on Broadcasting commented on BBC public service broadcasting:

There has first been a subtle change in its ethos. The old loyalty to public service broadcasting, so clear in the days of Reith or Haley, has diminished.⁷⁸

Perhaps the emergence of managerialism after the McKinsey Reforms was not unexpected and could be regarded as one of the consequences of the greater professionalism within the Corporation in the sense that a means had to be devised to oversee the work of a diverse number of specialisms. McKinseys provided a blueprint for giving greater control to management via access to more detailed and up-to-date programming costs, and by making producers responsible for their own programme budgets. Control was increasingly shifted from production departments to central administration staffed by many ex-producers. As Anthony Howard stated: "The poachers, in fact, proved to be highly effective gamekeepers".⁷⁹

In Reith's BBC the staff worked towards one goal, namely the provision of programmes geared to raising public information and cultural taste. From the late 1960s this goal was supplemented by a diversity of goals which included professionalism and financial efficiency. On 11 December 1963 just prior to the introduction of BBC-2, Stuart

⁷⁷Howard Newby, "Broadcasting – a Professional View", The Listener, Vol.97, No. 2497 (24 February 1977), pp.240–1.

⁷⁸Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting. Chairman : Lord Annan (Cmnd. 6753, March 1977), p.81.

⁷⁹Anthony Howard, "Inside the Goldfish Bowl", New Statesman Vol.94, No.2424 (2 September 1977), p.307.

Hood (Controller of BBC Television), commented in a BBC lunchtime lecture that with the imminent arrival of BBC-2, funds would be available to support creativity and experimentation because the primacy of programmes in the BBC had priority over the actions of the accountants, whereas in commercial television the reverse was deemed to be the case.⁸⁰ By the end of the 1960s this situation had altered appreciably given the primacy of cost control throughout the BBC.

The following chapter examines the various technical, financial, social and cultural aspects governing the geographical extension of broadcasting in Scotland. It also considers, in some detail, various radio and television engineering developments since the early 1950s.

⁸⁰Stuart Hood, "The Prospect before Us", in BBC Lunchtime Lectures, Second series, 11 December 1963 (London : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1963).

CHAPTER 3

THE BBC'S GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENSION OF BROADCASTING AND ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENTS

3.1 Transmitter Development : Technical, Financial, Social and Cultural Aspects

The nature of the programme services provided by the BBC in Scotland depended to a significant extent on technical factors and not merely on organisation or programme policy. This section focuses on the BBC's radio and television transmitter development programme in Scotland from the early 1950s up to 1980. It also analyses the various technical, financial and social aspects which have governed the extension of the BBC's broadcasting services in Scotland. The principal engineering developments during this period are examined in section 3.2.

A variety of factors influenced the rate of BBC transmitter development not only in Scotland but throughout the U.K.: the service range of each transmitter; the number of people served by any given station; the costs involved; the practical difficulties in siting and building transmitters; the need to abide by International frequency regulations; and the existing level of social amenities (including broadcasting services) available in particular areas. Not all these factors were given equal priority. Technical factors invariably, but not always, influenced the rate of transmitter development. The broad principle adopted by the BBC in extending broadcasting coverage was to concentrate on the provision of services to the four nations which constituted the United Kingdom, and thereafter to give

priority to the size of population to be served. These were the main priorities according to Mr David Gammans, the Assistant Postmaster-General, in a written reply to a Parliamentary question concerning broadcasting coverage in Scotland.¹ Inevitably areas which were expensive and difficult to cover, such as remote areas of Scotland where there were scattered communities, were at a disadvantage in comparison with more populous centres where there was also a more even geographical contour. Transmitter development was also dependent at a more general level upon the capacity of industry to supply the necessary equipment and on the ability of the Post Office to provide cable or radio links between stations. It should also be noted that the shortage of frequencies, which were allocated at International level, also governed the number and locations of transmitters. Indeed given that there was an insufficient number of frequencies to provide a different one for each transmitting station, stations using the same frequency (such as relay stations) had to be separated geographically and operated on low power to prevent interference from occurring. This governed the maximum power of each station, and with signals diminishing in strength according to the distance from the transmitter, this influenced the size of each service area. Also, relay stations had to be sited carefully in order to receive signals from existing stations for re-broadcasting at a satisfactory standard of quality. These technical factors, together with other technical issues and financial as well as social/cultural aspects, will be considered at various stages in the discussion which follows on the BBC's transmitter development programme.

After the war the BBC sought to improve radio and television coverage. When television recommenced in June 1946 it was initially confined to the London area. The BBC therefore prepared a plan for nationwide television coverage which involved the construction of five high-power stations, one of which was to be located in the populous central belt of Scotland. The location of these transmitters was designed to take television

¹507 H.C. Deb. ser. 5, Col.174 (19 November 1952).

to as many people as possible within given resources. The centres of population lying between these areas were expected to be served by five medium-power stations, one of which would be located near Aberdeen. The BBC sought to devote significant resources to television development but could not ignore the needs of the listening audience. A General Advisory Council Paper on the development of the television service stated:

The maintenance of a proper balance between the necessity to develop television vigorously and the equal necessity to ensure that the BBC's 12,000,000 Sound licence-holders are given the best possible service insofar as it is effected by capital development is not easy to determine.²

Initially the Government only authorised the construction of the high-power stations; on 14 March 1951 the Government announced that the plan for five lower-powered television stations had been postponed indefinitely because it would have interfered with the resources required for the Government's defence programme. In December 1952, shortly after all the initial five high-power stations were in operation, the Assistant PMG stated in the House of Commons that the Government believed that it was not in the national interest at a time when industrial investment was limited due to Britain's defence and export efforts, to devote more resources to the construction of new stations or the manufacturing of television receivers.³ The opening of new stations would have boosted the demand for television receivers. So during 1952, Scotland was served only by one television transmitter located at Kirk O'Shotts covering the central belt.

The BBC provided a wider range of programme services in Scotland on radio. In 1950 the transmitters at Westerglen (Central Scotland) Burghead (Moray Firth) and

²General Advisory Council : Paper G.A.C. 160, 1 December 1950, P.3, BBC WAC R6/30/14.

³509 H.C. Deb. ser. 5, Cols.39-42 (8 December 1952).

Redmoss (near Aberdeen) provided the SHS programmes. These transmitters also broadcast the Light Programme; the Third Programme was broadcast from local transmitters at Edinburgh, Glasgow, Redmoss and Dundee and so coverage was less than the SHS or the Light Programme. Under the Copenhagen Plan which took effect on 15 March 1950, one medium wavelength was allocated to the SHS. Overall the plan restricted the number of wavelengths available to the U.K. and so limited the number of transmitters which the BBC could use to overcome poor reception. After the plan took effect the number of stations operating on medium wavelengths almost doubled in Europe thus giving rise to interference in Scotland during the hours of darkness when the atmosphere reflected signals over longer distances. The SHS shared the 371m wavelength with stations in Spain and Yugoslavia. A temporary low power transmitter was opened at Dumfries on 24 December 1952 but realistically only the higher frequencies of VHF offered the prospect of improving reception especially with the increase in the number and power of transmitters in Europe. Government restrictions on BBC capital development continued into 1953. In April of that year the Assistant PMG outlined the Government's position in reply to a Parliamentary question expressing concern about poor broadcasting reception in some areas of the country. Mr Gammans stated:

I am fully aware that in some parts of the country the reception of BBC sound programmes is poor, and I can assure my hon. friend that both the BBC and the Government will keep this fact well in mind in their plans for future development in sound and television. The only satisfactory solution to the problem is V.H.F, but the rate of progress which can be made with it and other developments must be determined by the amount of capital investment which would be justified in the light of our general economic position.⁴

Restrictions on capital development together with the disproportionate cost of serving small isolated communities with VHF in mountainous country where signals were screened by hills, placed constraints on the extension of broadcasting services in Scotland.

⁴514 H.C. Deb. ser. 5, Col. 100 (29 April 1953).

The first VHF radio station opened in Scotland providing the Home, Light and Third programmes, was opened at Meldrum serving North–East Scotland, on 29 March 1956. The BBC's first VHF station had been brought into service almost a year earlier at Wrotham in England on 2 May 1955. In August 1956 the PMG approved the construction of six VHF radio stations, one of which was to be located at Kirk O'Shotts serving Central Scotland. Despite this ongoing transmitter programme the BBC was not under any obligation either to provide 100 per cent broadcasting coverage or to supply transmitters for many of the small Scottish communities. Indeed in a paper which was prepared in November 1949 for the Beveridge Committee on Broadcasting, the Scottish Advisory Council stated:

If all Scotland is to be provided with sound broadcasting and television, it is obvious that technical resources far in advance of any hitherto provided must be secured.⁵

In Scotland the problems facing engineering staff included high mountains, deep glens, long distances, a rugged coastline, and a scattered population in the Highlands. Also, it was only when electric power was extended to the Highlands that listeners were able to use mains–powered radio receivers rather than battery radio sets. BBC engineering staff visited Scotland to survey possible transmitter sites and consult with Scottish–based engineering staff. Final technical decisions were, however, taken by London because they had the expertise and the responsibility for the overall planning of the transmitter network. Scottish listeners and viewers however continually voiced their concern at the BBC in Scotland for deficiencies in broadcasting coverage. Two years after the arrival of television in Scotland, the Assistant PMG was asked in March 1954, (1) what percentage of the total area of Scotland received television, (2) the cost of providing 100 per cent coverage, and (3) whether areas without any service would have priority over any intention to introduce alternative programmes for areas already covered by a BBC service. Mr Gammans gave

⁵Scottish Advisory Council : Paper No. SAC/8/49, Para. 2, BBC WAC R6/188.

the following reply:

The television station at Kirk O'Shotts gives coverage to 26 per cent of the total area of Scotland; this contains 79 per cent of the total population. When the two additional stations planned for North-East Scotland are working, these percentages will increase to 39 and 89, respectively. An estimate of the cost of providing complete coverage would be quite hypothetical since it is not possible under the BBC's plan to cover 100 per cent of the area of the United Kingdom. Nor are those plans affected in any way by the proposal to introduce an alternative service.⁶

So although remote areas benefited from a postal service for the same cost as people living in cities, the same principle was not applied to broadcasting.

By the mid-to-late 1950s listeners and viewers in Scotland benefited from new transmitters. A VHF Radio station was opened at Kirk O'Shotts on 30 November 1957 serving over four million people, and television stations were opened at Meldrum, Rosemarkie (on the Black Isle opposite Inverness), and at Sandale (near Carlisle), the latter serving both England and Scotland. Nevertheless, in its Annual Report for 1956-57 the Broadcasting Council for Scotland recognised that some people would have to accept something short of a first-class service, but stated:

To provide first-class reception for every area is more than the present wavelength and financial situation will allow, but in some fringe areas, the radio relay system has helped local reception.⁷

The opening of the Rosemarkie transmitter on 16 August 1957 in fact brought television to 93 per cent of the population of Scotland and left only the Western Highlands, the Islands and parts of the Borders without any television service. The BCS urged BBC

⁶525 H.C. Deb. ser. 5, Col. 142 (25 March 1954).

⁷British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1956-57 (Cmnd. 267; October 1957), P.24.

Scottish Management to give a high priority to extending coverage to remote areas. In the following year's Annual Report the Council stated:

There is a general agreement among the Council, the Highland Panel, Members of Parliament and local bodies of the urgent need to extend the television and sound broadcasting services and the Council brings this to the notice of the Board and the Postmaster-General.⁸

For many years the Government had recognised the social problems encountered in areas which suffered from lack of adequate broadcasting services. In a Parliamentary reply to Mr Jo Grimond (MP for Orkney and Shetland) in May 1957, Kenneth Thompson (Assistant PMG) referred to the social/cultural aspects of broadcasting coverage:

We have every sympathy with what the hon. Gentleman has said about the desirability of extending the BBC services to those remote parts, and the advantages which would accrue to the people receiving those services. We know and share the views which he has expressed about sound and television programmes for rural communities, which are often denied the more normal forms of pleasure and entertainment upon which other communities in more populous areas have come to rely.⁹

However, social and cultural considerations have never been accorded a high priority in determining the extension of broadcasting services. Remote communities in Scotland experienced higher food and transport costs and often had few leisure facilities. Newspaper and postal services were delayed, and there were often no cinemas or touring theatre companies. These areas sometimes wished to attract labour and encourage tourism, but the absence or poor provision of broadcasting services made this task that much more difficult. In extending broadcasting coverage, priority was given to providing the Scottish Home Service because of its high content of Scottish material. When

⁸British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1957-58 (Cmnd. 533; September 1958), P.28.

⁹570 H.C. Deb. ser. 5, Col. 372 (14 May 1957).

television arrived in remote areas there was the possibility that mixed feelings would emerge because it could be regarded either as a threat to indigenous culture or as a means of stimulating local culture. However, rural areas with their own cultural traditions also wanted access to the wide range of programme material which reflected life in other parts of the country. Broadcasting was of value during the long dark winter evenings in the north of Scotland and in the Islands; school broadcasts which schoolchildren in other parts of the country took for granted were welcome and so also was material which helped to sustain Gaelic language and culture. Indeed in a submission to the Pilkington Committee on Broadcasting in November 1960, An Comunn (the Highland Association) stated:

Our desire is that adequate provision be made, in time and resources, to ensure that the needs of the Gaelic-speaking communities in the Highlands are met.¹⁰

The social dimension of broadcasting was more evident during the 1970s, as will be noted, due to the resurgence of Scottish national identity and the social implications of rapid economic development in remote areas.

During the late 1950s new VHF radio stations in Scotland were opened at Rosemarkie and in Orkney. A station at Sandale near Carlisle provided VHF programmes for South-West Scotland from England until several years later when the television transmitter at Kirk O'Shotts was linked with Sandale to relay BBC Scotland programmes. Television stations were also opened in Orkney and at Thrumster (near Wick). On 20 May 1960 the PMG approved stage II of the BBC's Television/VHF Radio plan, stage I having been authorised in June 1959. However, stage II was still expected to leave gaps in coverage such as in the Central Highlands, the Islands and South-West Scotland. In

¹⁰Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960. Volume 2. Appendix E. Memoranda Submitted to the Committee (Cmnd. 1819-I; September 1962), P.937.

general, as the broadcasting services were extended to fill pockets of non-reception, many low power stations were needed, thus increasing capital costs.¹¹ The BBC sought as a public service broadcaster to bring services to as many people as possible but there were no guarantees of 100 per cent coverage. In 1962 the Pilkington Committee stated:

The concept of the comprehensive service applies not only to programme content, but also to the geographical range or coverage of the transmissions. It has never been accepted that services of broadcasting should be available only to those for whom they can be provided easily, or economically. Both the BBC and the ITA have regarded it as their duty, as public corporations, to see that their existing services are as nearly as possible available to everybody in the whole of the country.¹²

By 1962 television was available to 95 per cent and VHF Radio to 93 per cent of the population of Scotland. Despite this the Islands wished to receive a television service before viewers on the mainland received alternative services. Indeed the BCS in discussion with Sir Harold Bishop (BBC Director of Engineering), questioned whether the corporation as a public service body was failing in its duty to isolated and homogeneous communities.¹³ The BCS believed that the Government should not have authorised the start of a second BBC television channel until almost everyone had the opportunity to receive at least one television channel, despite the prospect that the new channel might offer opportunities to show regional material. It should also be noted that the use of U.K. statistics on broadcasting coverage often tended to mask problems experienced in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland where most of the few per cent of the population who could not receive television services lived.

¹¹E.L.E. Pawley, "The Technical Problems of Broadcasting. 1. Sharing the Ether", Engineering 189 (1 January 1960), 22.

¹²Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960 (Cmnd. 1753; June 1962), P.9.

¹³Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Minutes, 6 July 1962, No.125(b), BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1960-64.

On 22 June 1963 a television and VHF radio station was opened at Oban, thus completing the Great Glen chain of low power relay stations which improved reception in the South-West Highlands. Shortly afterwards a Television/VHF Radio station came into operation at Ashkirk in the Borders on 1 July 1963. On 22 December 1964 the PMG approved stage IV of the relay station programme. The Sandale (Scottish) television transmitter came into service on 27 September 1965, and on 14 March 1966 a television and VHF radio relay station was opened at Skriaig thus bringing BBC-1 VHF coverage to 97.6 per cent and VHF radio to 95 per cent of the population of Scotland. On 9 July 1966 BBC-2 finally arrived in Scotland via the Blackhill transmitter. Later that year on 19 December a television/VHF radio station at Kingussie and a television relay station at Girvan came into service. By 1967 about 40 per cent of the geographical area of Scotland remained outside the coverage area of BBC-1 transmissions. During that year BBC-1 relay stations were opened at Lochgilphead (on 8 May), Ayr (on 3 July), and Ballater (on 30 December). On 30 September 1967 Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4 replaced the previous Home, Light and Third Programmes. Radio 1 was transmitted on medium wave from Burghead, Redmoss and Westerglen; Radio 2 was served by the high-power long wave transmitter at Droitwich and reinforced from December 1967 by low-power medium wave stations at Edinburgh and Glasgow, and from 1 October 1968 by stations at Aberdeen and Dundee; Radio 3 was transmitted from Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Redmoss; and Radio 4 from Burghead, Dumfries, Redmoss and Westerglen. Radios 2, 3 and 4 were also available on VHF.

The extension of the 625-line UHF transmitter network posed greater problems in filling gaps in coverage compared to the 405-line VHF system because of its different propagation characteristics (i.e. shorter range, signals deflected by obstacles). There was criticism that the BBC was unfair to Scotland on a population and on an area basis.¹⁴

¹⁴J.W. Robertson, "BBC failing in coverage of remote areas", Glasgow Herald, 13 March 1970, P.12.

This has to be viewed against the background of the technical factors which influenced transmitter development. In planning relay stations in remote areas of Scotland, as elsewhere, the BBC initially tested different sites to determine which ones could provide the best coverage with the minimum transmitter power. Many relay stations were built during the 1970s to fill most gaps in broadcasting coverage. Sites for these stations were carefully chosen in order to be capable of receiving signals from an existing station and re-broadcasting them using a channel and power level that would not interfere with other transmitters yet also provide the maximum coverage possible. Access to sites could be difficult over uneven terrain or where long access roads were needed as in the North and West of Scotland. It was necessary to have good access during the building phase, but less so when stations become operational since most were designed for unattended operation. After surveying and testing sites capable of receiving an electricity supply, sites would have to be bought or leased because the BBC had no powers of compulsory purchase. Planning permission would delay the building of transmitter stations if the BBC encountered legal or administrative problems. In remote scenic landscape in Scotland the BBC could be forced to provide a building or mast which blended in with the landscape. On purely technical rather than aesthetic grounds, when the UHF 625-line stations began to replace the VHF 405-line stations, the new stations had to be sited on high ground due to the propagation characteristics of UHF signals. However, suitable high ground was not necessarily near to convenient access roads. The need to supply many UHF relay stations for remote areas meant that they had to be designed for unattended operation thus requiring reliable computerised equipment. Whenever equipment broke down this was most likely to pose problems for BBC engineers during the winter months when many parts of the Highlands of Scotland became inaccessible due to heavy snowfalls. Indeed breakdowns in the electricity supply, particularly if that supply was carried on a poled route, were more likely to occur during the winter. To compensate for such an eventuality, stations could be provided with a diesel alternator but this presupposed the existence of good access roads to deliver the diesel oil. In practice the

BBC normally provided reserve transmitting equipment which would become operational automatically if a fault occurred in the main transmitter. But since this could only provide a sustaining service at 25 per cent of normal power it was regarded as a temporary expedient. Anyhow if a fault persisted and there were delays in getting access to a site due to bad weather, the public experienced a greater degree of inconvenience. The provision of a full-power reserve transmitter to obviate this problem inevitably involved higher capital costs both for the extra equipment and the space required to house such equipment. In summary, a variety of technical factors determined to a significant extent the ability of the BBC to extend transmitter coverage in Scotland. Some, but not all, of the technical constraints could be overcome by a commitment to utilise financial, manpower and material resources. Speaking in the House of Commons in November 1969, Robert MacLennan (Labour MP for Caithness and Sutherland) stated:

One must recognise that technical and economic difficulties make it impossible for the services to be extended immediately throughout such a geographically difficult area as the Highlands of Scotland, but what is quite unacceptable, and what induces a sense of unfairness in the minds of many of my constituents is that the planned progress is so slow.¹⁵

Progress depended upon the BBC's estimation of the various priorities requiring capital development.

As a consequence of the serial nature of extending broadcasting coverage (i.e. remote areas tend to be the last to be served), in 1970 when the UHF network ceased to be extended, a lower percentage of the population in Scotland in comparison with England had received television. The BBC was working on plans to extend UHF television coverage to communities of 1,000 or more people – this became known as Phase 1 of the UHF project. It was not practical at the time to extend coverage to 100 per cent of

¹⁵791 H.C. Deb. ser. 5, Col. 1075 (17 November 1969).

the population as the Television Advisory Committee had acknowledged.¹⁶ The use of VHF to fill in gaps in coverage would have prevented its use for other television services, so what was required were more UHF relay stations. The problem was that the UHF transmitter programme required four to five times as many transmitters as had been used to extend VHF television during the 1950s and 1960s, primarily because of the shorter range of UHF signals. Also, the UHF transmitter programme was serial in nature in that the location of stations later in the programme depended upon the coverage obtained by earlier stations. The aim was to bring the UHF service to as many people as quickly and as economically as possible as well as trying to maintain a geographical balance to enable the four countries of the U.K. and the regions of England to be treated on roughly equal terms. Main transmitters covering populous areas were built first, followed by the relay stations. In order to economise on capital expenditure, the programme feed from a relay station had to be obtained direct from another transmitter without the use of additional links and this therefore dictated the sequence in which relay transmitters were built. By March 1970, BBC-2, which had initially been transmitted in Scotland from Blackhill in Central Scotland and from 29 July 1967 extended to the Aberdeenshire area via the Durris transmitter, had reached a population coverage of 75 per cent in Scotland because of the opening of two further stations at Angus (on 28 July 1969) and Craigmilly (on 27 October 1969).¹⁷ Reception of the BBC-1 405-line VHF service and Radios 2, 3 and 4 on VHF had reached 98 per cent of the population of Scotland. All these figures were lower than the U.K. broadcasting coverage figures because as at March 1970 the BBC-1 405-line service was available to 99.5 per cent of the population, BBC-2 available to 87 per cent, and Radios 2, 3 and 4 on VHF to just over 99 per cent. However, VHF

¹⁶Television Advisory Committee 1972 : Papers of the Technical Sub-Committee (London : HMSO, 1973), P.17.

¹⁷British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1969-70 (Cmnd.4520; November 1970), P.132.

radio coverage in Scotland was much higher than coverage of Radios 1, 3 and 4 on medium wave and Radio 2 on long wave and medium wave during daytime hours, and even more so during the hours of darkness. With the UHF network for BBC-1 replacing the 405-line VHF service, the coverage of BBC-1 on UHF was much less than the 98 per cent figure achieved on VHF. Indeed by March 1971 when coverage of BBC-2 (UHF) had reached 76 per cent in Scotland, the figure for BBC-1 (UHF) was only 53 per cent. BBC-2 was transmitted from Rosemarkie in July 1970. In addition to the extension of both BBC-1 and BBC-2 on UHF and of VHF radio in Scotland, the BBC was also seeking to extend colour television. From 13 December 1969 BBC-1 in Scotland was duplicated in colour when the UHF transmitter at Blackhill was brought into service thus reaching 50 per cent of the population in Scotland; viewers had already received BBC-2 colour programmes since 1967. During 1971 the transmitters at Angus and Craigkelly began to transmit BBC-2 in colour. By March 1973 when BBC-1 in colour had been radiated from the transmitter at Rosemarkie, BBC-1 and BBC-2 coverage of colour transmissions increased to 83 per cent. The extension of colour reception throughout Scotland persuaded an increasing number of people to purchase colour receivers. Fewer people relied upon monochrome transmissions on the BBC-1 405-line VHF network which ceased to be expanded in Scotland. Indeed stage V of the VHF television transmitter programme was completed on 7 April 1969 when the television relay station at Millburn Muir was brought into service.

In May 1973 the Government appointed a Committee chaired by Sir Stewart Crawford to examine the coverage of the broadcasting services in the national and the English regions. The Committee's Report was published on 21 November 1974. Several organisations and individuals submitted written or oral evidence to the Committee, and Committee members visited several parts of the country, including Inverness in February 1974, in order to gain information on regional broadcasting coverage. In Scotland the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB) emphasised the need to improve

television coverage as a social amenity in order to halt depopulation, attract labour, and not discourage tourists who were accustomed to a wider range of broadcasting services. With its concern to encourage social and economic development in the Highlands and Islands the Board stated:

It is our belief that the development of broadcasting services in the U.K. takes too little account of regional development policy. The allocation of resources and the setting of priorities are determined by reference to the needs of the majority, not to meeting requirements arising from the social and economic aims of government's regional development programmes.¹⁸

Attention was drawn to the fact that despite the existence of a uniform licence fee, licence payers in remote areas did not receive the same quality or range of services as those available to people living in more populated areas. A differentiated licence fee system based on regional variations was not a practical possibility. The Post Office had for many years consistently argued that the licence fee only covered the use of a receiving set and that this fee could not be adjusted in accordance with the amount of its use or the quality of the reception received. The HIDB argued that if the national interest was benefiting from industrial development in rural areas then the nation should help to pay for the cost of improving social amenities, including broadcasting coverage, in these areas. The committee on Broadcasting Coverage accepted that the lack of television in some areas was a discouragement to tourists and would not stem depopulation. The latter posed a social and economic threat to some areas by causing an imbalance in the age structure of the population. The Committee stated that broadcasting could help to bolster Gaelic language and culture, to reinforce Scottish national identity, and to cover the social and economic changes brought about by North Sea Oil development and the corresponding rapid industrial development in hitherto isolated rural areas in Scotland.

¹⁸Highlands and Islands Development Board: Memorandum to the Committee on Broadcasting Coverage, 1 February 1974, Para. 4, Scottish Record Office Com.1/326 (hereafter cited as SRO).

The Crawford Committee on Broadcasting Coverage examined Phase 1 of the UHF plan to extend television to communities of 1,000 or more people and offered the following comment:

It should also be said that a cut-off point of population groups of 1,000 and more is liable to bear harshly on the smaller communities in the more mountainous areas of the United Kingdom, where employment opportunities are limited, where there are usually few other educational and entertainment amenities, and where there is often a danger of depopulation in consequence.¹⁹

So the Committee advocated for social reasons that coverage should be extended to communities of between 500 and 1,000 people. The Committee's report stated that social rather than merely technical factors (i.e. the availability of programme feeds) should influence the sequence in which gaps in coverage were filled during Phase II of the UHF plan. It was hoped that within Phase II priority would be given to Northern Scotland; Phase II of the UHF construction programme was approved by the Government in December 1976 and it was hoped that this would bring UHF coverage up to that of VHF coverage by the early 1980s. The BBC anyhow wished to end duplication of VHF services to avoid wasting resources, but could not realistically achieve this until UHF coverage matched VHF coverage. The Committee's proposals for regional variations in television within Scotland are discussed in Chapters 4 and 6. What can be noted here is that the Committee was thinking in terms of sub-opt-outs (i.e. opt-outs from BBC Scotland) in the North of Scotland and the technical capability for Scotland to opt-out of BBC-2, to transmit separate programmes both of which would have altered the BBC's emphasis in television from treating Scotland as a single community to a situation similar to the ITV structure within Scotland. As regards radio broadcasting coverage, the Crawford Committee of 1974 recommended that the BBC should seek to identify unserved areas of VHF transmitters and extend VHF radio coverage to as many areas as possible.

¹⁹Report of the Committee on Broadcasting Coverage. Chairman: Sir Stewart Crawford (Cmnd. 5774; November 1974), p.15.

particularly in Northern Scotland where separate services could be provided, and also in other areas which experienced poor medium frequency reception. The Committee also wanted the BBC to extend local radio to Scotland after an adequate national service had been developed, and then only to extend it to smaller populated areas than the ILR stations covered in Scotland.

Towards the end of the 1970s an increasing number of UHF relay stations had to be built to fill gaps in broadcasting coverage. By 31 March 1975 there were nine main and eight relay stations in Scotland bringing UHF television coverage to 87 per cent of the population compared to a U.K. coverage figure of 95 per cent. There was a significant increase in the number of relay stations required to serve a small percentage of the population, hence the cost per viewer rose dramatically. Nineteen UHF transmitters were brought into service during 1975–76 and a further twenty-six stations followed in 1976–77, thus increasing coverage to 95 per cent by March 1977 and doubling the number of transmitters in operation.²⁰ The law of diminishing returns appeared to operate because under Phase II of the UHF plan about 250 relay stations were required throughout the U.K. in order to reach an additional 0.3 per cent of the population (i.e. about 175,000 people).²¹ With regard to radio, the frequency changes which took effect on 23 November 1978 as a result of the outcome of the Geneva Conference of October 1975, tended to increase coverage throughout the U.K. of Radios 1 and 4 but resulted in some loss of coverage for Radios 2 and 3, but the movement of Radio 4 from the medium to the long frequency band did allow Radio Scotland greater freedom to develop its own programmes on medium wave. Radio Scotland also broadcast some programmes on VHF; the area and community stations also broadcast on VHF. During 1980 what appeared to be of most concern following the Government's decision in May of that year

²⁰BBC Handbook 1978 (London: BBC, 1977), p.116.

²¹*Ibid.*, P.80.

that 405-line television services should be phased out over a five-year period commencing 1982, was that communities of less than 500 people (i.e those outwith Phase II of the UHF Plan) would each have to cover the cost of providing a small relay transmitter. So even in 1980 remote rural communities in Scotland continued to be at a disadvantage than more populous areas with regard to coverage of broadcasting services.

3.2 Engineering Developments: VHF Radio Broadcasting,

UHF Television Broadcasting, Colour Television,

Stereo Broadcasts, Studios and Equipment

This section considers in some detail the principal technical developments in Broadcasting since the early 1950s. It eventually links in at various junctions with points discussed in the previous section on transmitter development. This section is divided into five broad areas of technical developments: (1) VHF Radio broadcasting and its implications for improving both broadcasting coverage and sound quality, and for permitting the introduction of localised broadcasting services; (2) UHF television broadcasting on a higher frequency than VHF television which offered better picture quality, particularly for colour television, and compatibility with European systems, but which posed problems in extending it throughout remote and hilly terrain in Scotland; (3) colour television from the early experiments in the mid-1950s to the launch of a colour service on BBC-2 in 1967, and on both BBC-1 and ITV in 1969; (4) the development and extension throughout the country of stereophonic broadcasts; and (5) the provision of studio facilities and equipment in Scotland.

The BBC engaged in experimental work on very high frequency (VHF) sound broadcasting during the 1950s. This work opened up the possibility of improving broadcasting coverage and sound quality by reinforcing existing radio services on long and medium wavelengths, and of permitting the introduction of more localised radio services in England as well as diversifying the Scottish Home Service output in some parts of Scotland. The BBC initially envisaged a VHF service using a chain of frequency modulation (FM) stations of various powers giving near complete coverage of the Home, Light and Third programmes. Improving coverage of existing services using VHF was given a higher priority than fragmenting services within regions. Given the insufficient number of medium and long wave channels and the consequent problem of interference on

medium wave from too many Continental stations, the use of VHF opened up the possibility of increasing the number of channels and in improving reception. In 1950 it was accepted within the BBC that the use of VHF as a solution to the deterioration in reception conditions would however be a long-term remedy.²² Interference on medium wave was particularly noticeable during the hours of darkness when the atmosphere reflected waves over longer distances, thus giving rise to interference.

The propagation characteristics of VHF with its shorter wavelengths differed somewhat from those of medium or long wave.²³ VHF coverage was the same at night as during the daytime but signal strength did decrease rapidly according to distance from the transmitter, hence the need for correspondingly more transmitters. VHF signals were also more likely to be affected by the contours of the terrain over which they travelled, hence the heights of the transmitting and receiving aerials were more important than they were with medium wavelengths and this obviously influenced the siting of stations. Unlike medium waves, VHF waves were not however reflected by the atmosphere but instead escaped into outer space thus not producing interference between stations over long distances. The problem with VHF was that hills cast partial shadows and so reduced the reception of signals from the transmitter, thus appearing not ideal for serving mountainous areas such as in the North of Scotland. Indeed VHF signals could also be distorted before reaching the receiver by being reflected off large buildings (i.e multi-path reception) and so the inability of VHF signals to bend as easily round corners than LF and MF thus gave rise to gaps in broadcasting coverage. It can also be noted that VHF was affected by any form of electrical interference (such as car ignition systems) or bad weather if the

²²Board of Governors : Minutes, 23 November 1950, No.380, BBC WAC R1/1/18.

²³Sir Edward Appleton, "The Advantages of V.H.F.", The Listener VOL. 53, No. 1369 (26 May 1955), PP.925-6.

signal was weak and that the signals could not be received on existing radio sets. However, the technical characteristics of VHF made it ideally suitable for providing local radio services with a much better quality of reception than either medium or long waves and with less possibility of mutual interference between stations. The greater number of stations required with VHF was likely to increase capital costs but it opened up the possibility of again providing local broadcasting as the BBC had done in the 1920s.

Given that on balance the advantages of VHF outweighed the disadvantages, a decision had to be made regarding which system of modulation to adopt: frequency modulation (FM) or amplitude modulation (AM). FM had advantages over AM with regard to the level of hiss (noticeable during programme pauses), and electrical interference. This was important because the greater degree of noise suppression with FM permitted a larger area to be served by transmitters before interference became noticeable, particularly in areas where field strength was low due to physical obstructions such as hills or tall buildings. In October 1952 the PMG asked the Television Advisory Committee to consider the issue of VHF sound broadcasting and what form of modulation should be adopted. The BBC also conducted experimental VHF broadcasts from Wrotham in Kent. FM required a wider bandwidth than AM resulting in the use of fewer channels in any given band of frequencies but it could provide good reception to larger areas than AM and thus incur lower capital costs. On 16 December 1953 the Television Advisory Committee recommended the adoption of FM as the method of modulation to be used for VHF broadcasting.²⁴ On 10 February 1954 the Government accepted this recommendation.

The Beveridge Committee on Broadcasting, whose Report was published in 1951, had recognised the benefits of VHF with regard to the improvement of existing coverage of services and of increasing the diversity of programmes through localised services. The

²⁴Second Report of the Television Advisory Committee, 1952 (London: HMSO, 1954), P.13.

Committee stated:

Use of V.H.F. could make if possible not merely to give the existing BBC programmes to people who now fail to get them, such as in the North and West of Scotland, but to establish local stations with independent programmes of their own.²⁵

The Committee supported the establishment of experimental local stations by the BBC. The BBC did proceed to use VHF to bolster coverage of the existing sound networks, and in the 1960s it was used as the basis for local radio stations. On 30 November 1957 the BBC introduced VHF from the Kirk O'Shotts transmitter in central Scotland. A BBC pamphlet on the new service accepted that those people in remote areas would not receive VHF transmissions, but added that BBC policy was to provide services only where it was reasonably practicable to do so, the problems of remote areas only being noted for future consideration.²⁶ In areas which received VHF signals, listeners either had to purchase a new receiver or have an adaptor fitted to their existing receiver. The higher cost of VHF receivers and the need to use an outdoor aerial in some areas was a disincentive to purchasing these receivers. The BBC wanted all new receivers to be equipped to receive VHF, preferably with push-button tuning to facilitate switching between channels. Transistors which were becoming increasingly popular were not equipped to receive VHF. It should also be noted that daytime reception on MF and LF was adequate for many people and that fewer people listened to radio during the dark winter evenings, when medium wave reception was poor, because many tended to watch television. It was difficult to persuade listeners to equip themselves to receive VHF so that even by the 1970s the BBC could not regard the VHF networks as the main carrier of its programmes. The BBC sought to use VHF not only to reinforce existing services

²⁵Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949 (Cmd. 8116; January 1951), P.79.

²⁶British Broadcasting Corporation, VHF. The BBC's New Sound Broadcasting Service in Scotland (London : BBC, 1957), P.5.

but also to vary national programmes. In December 1957 the Broadcasting Council for Scotland approved proposals for some area broadcasting from Meldrum, Rosemarkie and Sandale (and later on from Orkney). These programmes were expected to consist of local news, sport and topical magazines.²⁷ The local variations introduced in Summer 1958 involved the broadcasting of a ten-minute weekly newsletter, with Meldrum and Rosemarkie also transmitting a weekly fifteen-minute magazine. It was not possible to fragment the SHS from the Kirk O'Shotts transmitter serving central Scotland. In 1961 the Stockholm Conference assigned VHF frequencies and the U.K. obtained frequencies for four high-power radio networks, three of which were later used for Radios 2, 3 and 4. The U.K. also gained VHF channels for low-power local radio stations, all of which were sited in England in the late 1960s. These and the Scottish Community radio stations established in the 1970s are discussed fully in Chapter 5.

The improvements brought about by VHF to radio broadcasting were mirrored by improvements in television broadcasting due to the use of ultra-high frequencies (UHF) and the change in the line definition standard from 405 to 625 lines which was recommended by the Television Advisory Committee in May 1960 and sanctioned by the Government in 1962. Television re-started on 405 lines after the war partly because unavoidable delays would have resulted if a decision had been made to re-start television on a higher lineage. The use of UHF on 625 lines (Bands IV and V), approved by the PMG in July 1963 to carry BBC-2 programmes, offered the prospect of better picture quality, particularly at a time when consideration was being given to introducing a colour television service, a third television network, and an increase in the size of the screen in television receivers. However, these changes did require a wider frequency channel and so fewer television services were possible. It also required the building of many relay

²⁷Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Minutes, 6 December 1957, No. 104, BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1955-57.

transmitters because UHF covered a more limited transmission area than VHF. It was not possible to avoid having to place UHF stations closer together than VHF stations by using larger transmitting and receiving aerials or by using more powerful transmitters. UHF transmissions were also more easily impeded by obstacles, hence the need for more transmitters and careful siting of those which were built, many of which were designed for unattended operation and thus further increased capital costs. Nevertheless there were advantages in using UHF because apart from better picture quality due to a reduction in the visibility of the scanning lines, there were also fewer ghost images on the screen because of the use of more highly directional aerials, and there was no need to use standard convertors which degrade picture quality when moving from 405 lines to a higher line standard. The BBC introduced the first line convertor in 1963 which was subsequently used to convert programmes made on 625-lines to the BBC-1 405-line standard. The latter process did not degrade picture quality because the conversion took place from a higher to a lower line standard. It can also be noted that the BBC's 405-line VHF transmissions in Band I had been subject to interference in some parts of the country because of the 'Sporadic E' effect. The latter name was used to denote the drifting clouds of ionised gases formed in the upper atmosphere by solar radiation which tended during the summer months to reflect television signals from Continental stations, who shared the same channels as the U.K. This interference would have been more unacceptable if colour rather than monochrome signals had been transmitted on 405-lines VHF as opposed to 625-lines UHF.

A change in lineage offered the prospect of relieving the radio industry from having to produce 405-line receivers capable of being adapted to 625-lines, as well as assisting manufacturers to compete in overseas markets. Few 405-line-only sets were manufactured after 1964 when BBC-2 was transmitted on 625-lines; dual standard 405-625 line sets continued to be produced until 1975 when they were also phased out. By 1975 even the 405-line sets were no longer economically repairable. Given that there

were advantages in using the higher line standard the main question which had to be answered was how the changeover should take place. The two main possibilities were the duplication method and the switchover method. The duplication method involved duplicating existing programmes on 625-lines and then transmitting them in UHF simultaneously with VHF 405-lines. The VHF 405-line services would thus not cease in any area until UHF coverage was complete. In contrast to this the switchover method would require equipment capable of 625-line operation to be installed nationwide with 405-line transmissions ceasing on an appointed day. This method was likely to pose problems not least because viewers might not all have purchased new receivers or had old sets converted in time, there would have been a sudden loss of sales of old receivers prior to the switchover date, and viewers would be forced to replace 405-line sets before their useful life had expired. The duplication method had several advantages: it permitted viewers to receive 625-line services much sooner; it permitted ongoing experiments in the range and coverage of UHF transmissions; and it ensured a steady level of sales and replacement of old receivers during the changeover period. Taking all these factors into account the Television Advisory Committee and the Pilkington Committee of Inquiry recommended the use of the duplication method. In 1967 the Government authorised the BBC and ITA to proceed with establishing a UHF transmitter network to duplicate 405-line services, and to introduce colour in these services. This was what the TAC recommended in its 1967 Report.²⁸ By March 1974 only about 10 per cent of households still relied upon 405-line VHF television, but in North-West Scotland only the 405-line service was available. Two years earlier the TAC had recommended that 1980 should be adopted as the target date for the closure of VHF 405-line services, assuming that UHF

²⁸Report of the Television Advisory Committee 1967 (London: HMSO, 1968), P.14.

coverage had reached 96 per cent by this date.²⁹ By 1980 most 405-line receivers were obsolete and it was becoming increasingly expensive to maintain 405-line services. In November 1980 the total number of 625-line transmitters in service throughout the U.K. reached 1,000 giving a total coverage of 98.9 per cent of the population.³⁰ Needless to say with Phase II of the UHF plan only covering communities of over 500 people, most of the unserved areas by this date were located in Scotland. In May 1980 the Home Secretary announced that a phased closure of 405-line services would begin in 1982 and extend over a period of 5 years. This in effect prolonged the expected closure of 405-line services because the TAC had recommended in 1967 that 405-line services should cease in 7-10 years by which time 405-line receivers would be obsolescent.

The introduction of UHF transmissions was closely linked with the development of colour television. The development of colour television involved the interplay of technical, economic and political factors. In May 1953 the Television Advisory Committee recommended that any colour television system should be compatible in that colour transmissions should be capable of being received on monochrome sets. In the following year the Postmaster-General asked the TAC to specifically consider the issue of colour television.³¹ From October 1955 the BBC began to work on an adaptation (using 405-lines) of the American National Television Systems Committee (NTSC) system. These tests took place in co-operation with the Post Office and the radio industry outwith normal television transmission hours. The intention of the tests was to promote receiver

²⁹Television Advisory Committee 1972 : Papers of the Technical Sub -Committee (London: HMSO, 1973), P.25.

³⁰BBC Annual Report and Handbook 1982 (London : BBC, 1981), P.64.

³¹Television Advisory Committee : Minutes, 11 February 1954, No. 4(a), BBC WAC T16/208/7.

development, to test colour television equipment, to check the compatibility of the system, and to review any problems arising in the transmission and reception of colour signals. The BBC was anxious to start a limited colour service on 405-lines even although a higher lineage was more likely to be suitable for producing colour images on receivers. However, in May 1960 the TAC recommended that colour television should only be introduced on the line standard which would be eventually adopted for monochrome transmissions.³² A decision therefore had to be reached on line standards before any decision could be made about the introduction of colour. Given that the TAC believed that television should be transmitted on 625-lines in Bands IV and V the implication was that any colour system should only be introduced on this line standard. On 9 December 1960 the BBC sought the approval of the PMG to introduce a limited experimental colour service from November 1961, but this request was turned down. The PMG indicated in the House of Commons that the arguments of the TAC against the introduction of such a service were convincing.³³ The PMG was unwilling to make any decision until the Pilkington Committee had completed its examination of broadcasting. In February 1961 the BBC submitted a memorandum on colour television to this Committee arguing that any delay in authorising the start of colour television pending an ultimate decision on line standards would be detrimental to the development of colour television in Britain and to Britain's export opportunities.³⁴ On 13 April 1961 the BBC made further representations to the PMG on this issue, but on 10 May the PMG again rejected the BBC's request to start a limited colour service on the existing 405-line standard. The PMG believed that

³²Report of the Television Advisory Committee 1960 (London : HMSO, 1960), P.13.

³³632 H.C. Deb. ser. 5, Cols. 403-6 (14 December 1960).

³⁴Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960. Volume 1. Appendix E. Memoranda Submitted to the Committee (Cmnd. 1819; September 1962), P.122.

it would be both unwise and unfair to the public to encourage the sale of colour sets on the lower line standard, and that there was no export market for colour sets on 405-lines that might benefit British manufacturers.³⁵ The Pilkington report, which was published in June 1962, recommended that only a compatible 625-line colour system should be considered.

With a decision reached on the type of transmission to be used for colour television, attention was switched to a consideration of the type of colour systems which could be adopted. During 1963 the BBC began to critically assess the French SECAM colour system and compare it with the American NTSC system. A variant of the American system developed by the German Telefunken Company and known as Phase alternation Line (PAL), was also being developed. All three systems had 95 per cent of their parts in common; the differences were located in the coding, de-coding and transmission of signals. The PAL and SECAM systems contained simpler electronics than NTSC at the transmitting end, but more complicated circuitry in the television receivers. For example, unlike the American system, SECAM transmitted colour signals during alternative lines rather than simultaneously and so receivers using the French system had to include a means of storing the colour signals for the duration of one line. The PAL system had the advantage that it was European and compatible with the American system and so could act as a compromise choice. The PAL signal was less subject to distortion than the NTSC signal, and PAL receivers were only four per cent more expensive than NTSC receivers. So by late 1965 the choice of a common colour system for Europe in effect involved a choice between PAL and SECAM. Subsequent improvements in the PAL system involving the elimination of errors in hue caused by reflected signals in mountainous country tended to bring it more in favour with British engineers in the British Radio Equipment Manufacturers' Association (BREMA). So on 3 March 1966 the

³⁵640 H.C. Deb. ser.5, Cols. 52-4 (10 May 1961).

Government granted permission for the introduction of colour on BBC-2 625-lines UHF using the PAL system.

On 1 July 1967 the BBC introduced an experimental colour television service on BBC-2, the first colour service in Europe. The original starting date was intended to be late 1967 but the Television Service pressed for an earlier start in order to make use of outside broadcast units at summer sporting events such as Wimbledon. This colour service which was not available in Scotland was limited to about five hours a week. The two BBC-2 transmitters in Scotland at Blackhill and Durriss only began radiating colour programmes in Central and North-East Scotland on 30 October 1967. The full service began on 2 December 1967 accompanied by an increase in colour transmissions to over thirty hours a week. Colour television was regarded as natural television but it was also costlier television. Plans proceeded for the introduction of colour on all three networks but this provoked criticism because some viewers in Scotland could only receive one channel and only in black-and-white. Edward Short (PMG) dismissed any idea of suspending plans to extend colour services until all viewers in Scotland had access to equivalent services. He stated:

It would be wrong to deny the vast majority of viewers the opportunity to see colour television because a relatively small number of people are not within reach of either service.³⁶

On 15 November 1969 colour television became available on all three channels; colour was available from the Blackhill transmitter serving Central Scotland, on 13 December. The BBC hoped for an increase in the purchase of colour licences to cover additional costs such as colour cameras, more powerful lighting, air conditioning and larger technical areas within studios, and more staff to operate colour equipment. Increased sales of

³⁶750 H.C. Deb. ser. 5, Col. 305 (20 July 1967).

colour licences did materialise during the 1970s, although sales of colour receivers in Scotland were relatively low in comparison with other parts of the U.K.

Stereo broadcasting was another technical development in which the BBC engaged in experiments since the 1950s. In 1958 the BBC sought to develop a compatible system in which both stereophonic channels broadcast from a single VHF transmitter would not impair monophonic reception for listeners who only had mono receivers. On 13 and 14 January 1958 the first BBC experimental stereophonic transmissions took place in London outwith normal programme hours using VHF and television sound transmitters. In July 1966 a limited stereo service was introduced on the Third Programme and Music Programme but these transmissions were confined to South-East England. In Autumn 1972 stereo was extended to Radio 2 but only in London and South-East England. Stereo was expected to be provided in Central Scotland in April 1974 after the Kirk O'Shotts transmitter was modified to receive the stereo signal but it was delayed due to an industrial dispute. The music studio at Glasgow was however converted for stereo operation. Stereo subsequently became available on Radios 2, 3 and 4 and on Radio Scotland covering Central and Southern Scotland thus reaching 80 per cent of the population. Radios 1 and 2 had to share transmission time for stereo purposes because of the lack of frequencies. To extend stereo on VHF the BBC used a distribution system based on the use of pulse code modulation (PCM) which prevented any deterioration in the stereo signal over long distances and thus permitted uniformly high technical quality throughout the country. Stereo was extended to the transmitter at Sandale in November 1978, serving Dumfries and Galloway; the transmitters at Meldrum and Rosemarkie operated in stereo from December 1980.

This section concludes with a brief review of studio accommodation and equipment in Scotland. The headquarters of the BBC in Scotland in the post-war period were based in Glasgow but the oldest inhabited Broadcasting House in Britain was located in

Edinburgh. The longevity of the Edinburgh premises at Queen Street, first opened in 1930, is even more remarkable given the following comment by the BCS in its second Annual Report:

The premises in Glasgow are most suitable, if becoming congested, but new premises must be found in Edinburgh, because the present building is no longer adequate as a broadcast centre for a capital city.³⁷

In general, studio facilities in Scotland could not match the concentration of production resources in London. Indeed the arrival of television in Scotland in March 1952 was not accompanied by the provision of television studio facilities. The BBC had no plan to provide any studios outside London, although outside broadcasts from Scotland could be included in the television output.³⁸ In the mid-1950s Scotland got exclusive use of an O.B. unit for this purpose. In the early 1950s the BBC had been subject to restrictions on capital development and pressure to extend television to the regions and so the provision of television programmes from outwith Scotland was regarded as a higher priority than the provision of television studio facilities within Scotland. For many years the lack of a television studio in Edinburgh caused problems because visitors to the city could not always allocate time to travel to Glasgow for a televised interview. Facilities and equipment were however gradually improved over the years. In August 1957 television studios were opened in Glasgow, and on 20 January 1959 the BBC opened a centre at East Kilbride as an operations base for BBC Scotland's television Outside Broadcast unit. Up to 1962 there were still no television news interview studios in Aberdeen and Edinburgh, but in July 1962 a television studio was opened at Broadcasting House

³⁷British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1953-54 (Cmd. 9269; October 1954), p.39.

³⁸498 H.C. Deb. ser. 5, Col. 1659 (2 April 1952).

Aberdeen thus permitting items from the North-East to be included in Scottish and Network output; in May 1963 a single camera television studio was opened in Edinburgh. On 17 February 1964 the first major television studio (studio A) outside London to be equipped for dual standard operation (i.e 405 and 625 lines) was brought into service in Glasgow. Studio A replaced BBC Scotland's temporary studio at Springfield Road. It provided material for BBC-2 which began broadcasting in the London area in April 1964, but given that the BBC's second television channel had not reached Scotland, programmes had to be recorded in Glasgow with videotapes sent to London to be broadcast. The BCS was anxious for Scotland to be allowed to benefit from the new facilities. The Council stated:

While the Council is keen for the networks to take programmes from Scotland, its immediate responsibility is to the Scottish audience: hence the Council naturally hopes, and assumes, that there will be technical facilities available in Glasgow for converting programmes recorded on 625 lines down to 405 lines for broadcasting in Scotland.³⁹

In Edinburgh a three-camera studio was brought into service on 29 December 1969. In January of the following year BBC Scotland gained a colour O.B. unit. Studio A in Glasgow was fully colourised by August 1971 but the Edinburgh and Aberdeen studios remained in monochrome. The difference was noticeable in a programme such as "Reporting Scotland" where the picture switched between the Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen studios to obtain news reports throughout the country. Apart from colour cameras and other technical equipment, studios converted for colour operation had to be provided with more powerful lighting because colour cameras were less sensitive than monochrome cameras. In March 1975 the Edinburgh studio was colourised, followed by the Aberdeen studio. By this time studio 1 in Glasgow had been adapted for stereo

³⁹British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1962-63 (Cmnd. 2160; October 1963), P.109.

operation. Other technical developments included the provision of PRESFAX which enabled the Scottish presentation announcer to have details on a visual display unit of the announcements made on BBC-1 and so permitted the placing of a Scottish voice over London trails and caption sequences. Towards the end of the 1970s a new radio studio was provided in Edinburgh to cope with the increase in hours of output from the new Radio Scotland service due to begin in November 1978, and a small remotely controlled television studio in Dundee was brought into service. With the expansion of programme services in Scotland and the need to replace the existing BBC premises in Edinburgh, a site was purchased at Greenside Place as the location for a new Broadcasting Centre, not least because it was close to the meeting place of the proposed Scottish Assembly. However, with the increased financial pressures experienced by the BBC as a whole and the failure of the 1979 Devolution Referendum to produce a decisive vote in favour of establishing a Scottish Assembly, plans for the new centre were revised. Studio 3 in Edinburgh was refurbished pending a decision on the new BH, and so by the beginning of the 1980s the Edinburgh premises remained as the BBC's oldest existing building in the U.K.

The following chapter focuses on the development of the Television Programme Services. Emphasis is placed on programme policy, and to a lesser extent, programme content. It covers in chronological order topics such as the arrival of BBC television in Scotland, competition with independent television, and television development in Scotland up until the late 1970s.

CHAPTER 4

BBC TELEVISION BROADCASTING AND COMPETITION WITH INDEPENDENT TELEVISION

4.1 The Post-war Development of Television, and the arrival of

BBC Television in Scotland, 1946–1952

This chapter builds upon the discussion in the first three chapters of the early history of the BBC, and the organisational, financial and technical aspects of broadcasting. It focuses on the development of the television programme services in the post-war period, particularly from the early 1950's up to 1980. The emphasis throughout the chapter is on programme policy and, only to a lesser extent, on programme content. Various aspects of the development of BBC television in Scotland are placed within the context of developments in broadcasting at the U.K. level. This perspective is used in order to highlight significant aspects of how Scottish broadcasting has evolved during this period. The various issues and themes are discussed within a chronological framework beginning with the background to the arrival of television in Scotland in 1952 and proceeding up until the period immediately following the publication of the Annan Report on Broadcasting in 1977. Chapter 5 follows a similar arrangement in discussing the development of the BBC's radio broadcasting services.

The BBC's television service re-started after the war, on 7 June 1946 in the London area. The service was extended throughout the country, initially by using high-power transmitters. The television service was first extended to the regions with the opening of the Sutton Coldfield station at Birmingham on 17 December 1949; television

reached Scotland on 14 March 1952 when the Kirk O'Shotts station in central Scotland was opened. The post-war development of television not only led to the growth of the BBC in size and complexity; it also affected the status of television within the BBC in relation to the sound broadcasting services.

On 9 October 1945 the Government announced that it had accepted the report of Lord Hankey's Committee on Television. The Television Committee stated that the BBC's television service should re-start on the pre-war line standard because any change would have caused a two-year delay in resuming the service, it would have failed to stem the dispersal of specialised staff (engaged on war work) who had been employed on television by the BBC before the war, and would have rendered pre-war receivers obsolete. Also, the early resumption of television gave the BBC an opportunity to deepen its experience in using the 405-line VHF system before opting for a new line standard or method of transmission. In June 1946 the television service restarted on the pre-war line standard but was confined to London, hence the service appeared to be experimental. There was pressure to extend television to the regions and there were practical reasons for conceding this demand as the Hankey Committee stated:

... it should be borne in mind that it is only by extension to the main centres of population in this country that the public will be convinced that Television has passed the experimental stage.¹

The extension of television would permit the mass production of receivers and lower their costs. To extend coverage the BBC planned to build five high-power and five medium-power transmitters. One of the high-power stations was to be located in central Scotland, and one of the medium-power stations at Aberdeen. Television was to be transformed from being regarded as merely an extension of sound broadcasting, into a full service in

¹Report of the Television Committee 1943 (London : HMSO, 1945), p.7.

its own right with its own characteristics and possibilities. The re-start of television in 1946 represented a second beginning for this new service given that it had only opened for a short period before being closed due to the onset of war in 1939. In the immediate post-war years television was not accorded a high priority in terms of capital resources. Those who worked in sound broadcasting regarded themselves as working for the main broadcasting service and resented the growth of the television service. Initially television resources were concentrated in central London and not regionalised. Indeed in the 1944 Report on conditions for a post-war television service it was stated that:

Regional activities must play a part in Television, but clearly such activities could economically be produced only in the centralised London studio plant.²

Television was not extended to the regions until 1949, but contributions of programme material to London were initially confined to outside broadcasts. In an article in the Autumn 1949 issue of BBC Quarterly, Sir William Haley (BBC Director-General) stated that television, a more expensive medium than radio, was merely an extension of broadcasting – closer to the world of radio than to the world of films.³ The centre of power thus remained in Broadcasting House and not in the emerging television service. Television was merely regarded as radiovision (i.e. the addition of visual images to sound programmes). In December 1949, listener research was however extended to cover television, and in the following year the BBC appointed a Director of Television (George Barnes) with a seat on the Board of Management .

With the growth of television, staff working in the television service wanted their

²Gerald Cock to Director-General, "Report on Conditions for a Post-War Television Service", 24 January 1944, p.5, BBC WAC T16/184.

³Sir William Haley, "An Extension of Broadcasting", BBC Quarterly Vol. 4, No. 3 (Autumn 1949), pp.129-36.

special skills to be recognised in terms of status and remuneration. They wanted television to be recognised as a service in its own right rather than merely as a department. The extension of television coverage and broadcasting output resulted in television claiming an increasing share of resources; it was accompanied by the growth of the television audience and an increase in the number of combined (i.e. television and radio) licences purchased. Radio, however, remained the premier service and so support for the proper development of television only materialised at the highest levels within the corporation when Sir Ian Jacob succeeded Sir William Haley as Director-General in December 1952. Jacob recognised that television would become the dominant medium, and he remained at the BBC to witness the ascendancy of television over sound broadcasting.⁴ Television did remain at a disadvantage in comparison with sound broadcasting because radio could broadcast for longer hours, it could provide a wider range of programme material, and it was less of a drain on material and manpower resources. Television had to begin to provide a more complete service, particularly for those people who no longer listened to radio during the evenings. The Television service was extended outside London by the provision of high-power stations at Kirk O'Shotts (central Scotland), Sutton Coldfield (Midlands), Holme Moss (North of England), and Wenvoe (south Wales and west of England). All these stations were connected with Alexandra Palace in London to provide a network. The plan for five medium-power stations at Newcastle, Southampton, Belfast, Aberdeen and Plymouth was deferred in March 1951 by Government restrictions on BBC capital development due to the needs of rearmament; these restrictions were withdrawn in July 1953. The remainder of this section focuses primarily on the background to the arrival of BBC television in Scotland in March 1952.

⁴Asa Briggs, The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Vol.4 : Sound and Vision (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.9.

In March 1948 Sir William Haley, BBC Director-General, stated that television would be extended to Scotland when labour and materials became available. On 9 February 1949 the Postmaster-General announced a development plan for bringing the main centres of population within the range of television via five transmitting stations which would cover 80 per cent of the population of the U.K. Later that year the BBC received permission from the Government to build five high-power and five medium-power stations, although work on the latter was, as noted, postponed in March 1951. The BBC began test transmissions in order to determine a suitable site in Scotland for one of the high-power stations. Several sites were investigated using a mobile transmitter which radiated test signals from an aerial suspended about 600 feet above ground by a balloon.⁵ After field strengths were examined and field strength contour maps prepared to illustrate the probable service area, a site at Kirk O'Shotts almost midway between Glasgow and Edinburgh was chosen for the high-power station. The PMG was then approached to obtain approval for the use of the site which would serve the populous central belt of Scotland. In January 1950 the BBC announced that orders had been placed for the supply of a 50kw vision transmitter (then the most powerful television transmitter in the world), and a 12kw sound transmitter. Plans for the building of the station were passed on 10 May 1950 and work on the site commenced on 20 June. Kirk O'Shotts was the third high-power station to be built under the BBC's plan to expand television coverage. In September 1950 work began on the construction of a two-way microwave radio relay link between Manchester and Kirk O'Shotts. It was the opinion of the Television Advisory Committee that a radio link was preferable to the use of cable.⁶ The link was carried by a series of seven hilltop beacons, each thirty miles apart.

⁵"Kirk O'Shotts Television Transmitting Station", Engineering 171 (29 June 1951), 793.

⁶Television Advisory Committee : Minutes, 8 September 1949, No. 2(b), BBC WAC T16/208/6.

Bad weather and shortages of labour and materials contributed to the delay in bringing television to Scotland, and these delays prompted questions in the House of Commons.⁷ In January 1952 Noel Ashbridge (BBC Director of Technical Services) indicated that the Post Office had told the BBC that the earliest firm date they could give for providing a daily service from Kirk O'Shotts was 15 March 1952.⁸ The Board of Management however wanted the two-way radio link between Manchester and Kirk O'Shotts to become operational on 14 March. The signals which reached Scotland were sent by coaxial cable from London to Manchester via Birmingham and then on to Kirk O'Shotts by the radio relay link. The first official test transmissions took place on 15 January 1952. Kirk O'Shotts was purely a transmitting station and there was no provision of any television studio facilities in Scotland. Scotland was expected to broadcast the same programme as Alexandra Palace in London, hence the televising of Scottish originated material was to depend upon the use of an outside broadcast unit. The BBC did not intend to build television studios outside London until after 1954. However, the BBC argued that the concentration of production facilities in London would enable all viewers to benefit from the high standards and techniques used. It was not certain, however, to what extent London programmes would interest people in Scotland.

The BBC's television service in Scotland began on 14 March 1952, using a low power transmitter. The Board of Management believed that the Kirk O'Shotts television station should be opened using the low-power transmitter because towards the end of the previous year it was impossible to foresee when the high-power transmitter would be ready. The Board of Governors agreed, and also decided that the Secretary of State for

⁷480 H.C. Deb. Ser. 5, Cols. 919–20 (8 November 1950).

⁸Board of Governors : Paper G.7/52, 11 January 1952, BBC WAC R1/3/96.

Scotland should be invited to perform the opening ceremony.⁹ This ceremony was held in Broadcasting House, Edinburgh. Lord Tedder (Vice-Chairman of the BBC Board of Governors) invited the Rt. Hon. James Stuart (Secretary of State for Scotland) to declare the station open. Also present at the thirty-minute opening ceremony which began at 7.30pm was Sir William Haley (BBC Director-General), four of the six BBC Governors, Melville Dinwiddie (the BBC's Scottish Controller), and the Rt. Hon. James Miller (Lord Provost of Edinburgh). The opening speeches were followed by Scottish country dancing. Concern over the implications of the arrival of television in Scotland prompted Melville Dinwiddie to make the following remarks in the Radio Times for that week:

At the start viewing will take up much time because of its novelty, but discrimination is essential so that not every evening is spent in a darkened room, the chores of the house and other occupations neglected. We can get too much even of a good thing. Television is one of those luxuries that will soon become a necessity of modern life, but we need to treat it with discretion.¹⁰

On the day when transmissions began the Glasgow Herald looked forward to the evening's opening ceremony but made a cautionary note about the type of television service which was to commence – not primarily a Scottish television service but rather the arrival of television from England to Scotland:

It should be clearly understood that the occasion heralds television in Scotland, not Scottish television. For an indefinite time most of the programmes viewed in Scotland will come from the South, though Scotland in one way or another will contribute to the national service. It is the declared policy of the BBC to provide as wide a national television coverage as possible before considering the development of regional programmes.¹¹

⁹Board of Governors : Minutes, 20 December 1951, No. 255(c), BBC WAC R1/1/19.

¹⁰Radio Times, 7 March 1952, p.5.

¹¹"How Television came to Scotland : Promise of 1948 fulfilled", Glasgow Herald, 14 March 1952, p.4.

The BBC believed that the extension of the transmitter network merited a higher priority than the provision of studio facilities outside London. In its Annual Report published in September 1952, the BBC made the following comment upon the arrival of television in Scotland:

The Scottish Press and public greeted the arrival of television with enthusiasm and, although there has been some disappointment at the lack of Scottish studio facilities and the consequent paucity of Scottish items in television programmes, first reactions to the new medium have been very favourable.¹²

With the arrival of television in Scotland, many people watched the service from outside shop windows. The impact of television on sales of 12" television receivers in Scotland was disappointing. By March 1952 when transmissions began, only thirty thousand television sets had been sold. This figure exceeded the number of television licences by almost twenty thousand, hence a considerable number of sets were unlicensed. Many Scots were not prepared to buy a licence until they could fully estimate the value of the new service. The Scottish Advisory Council however remarked:

Although present indications are that television has been accepted more cautiously in Scotland than elsewhere in Britain, the number of viewers will rapidly increase and the demand for more Scottish terms will become clamant.¹³

Sales of receivers were reported as being much lower in Scotland than in other parts of Britain according to figures for 1952 issued by the Radio and Television Retailers'

¹²British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1951-52 (Cmd. 8660; September 1952), p.37.

¹³Scottish Advisory Council : Paper No. SAC/5/52, N.d., No. 5, BBC WAC R6/188.

Association.¹⁴ Demand for sets did however increase just prior to the Coronation in June 1953, and sales were also assisted by the reduction in purchase tax in the budget. Radio remained the dominant medium and many people in Scotland were still interested in their favourite radio programmes for some time after the introduction of television.¹⁵ This was understandable given the limitations on broadcasting hours, the narrower range of programme output compared to radio, and the fact that for some time Scotland was unable to transmit opt-outs because production staff and engineering facilities were committed to network requirements. Nevertheless, the arrival of television resulted in some alterations in the timings of the more popular items on the Scottish Home Service six months before the television service opened so that most of the programmes which had a wide appeal could be heard outside the normal hours of television transmissions.

The arrival of television in Scotland advanced the goal of the BBC to bring television services to 80 per cent of the population of the U.K. The high-power transmitter at Kirk O'Shotts came into operation in August 1952 thus extending the service to a potential four million people, including those who lived in the hilly country to the north of the station. This was possible because the station was situated on high ground 900 feet above sea level and the mast which carried the transmitting aerial towered 750 feet. The aerial had built-in heaters to prevent the surface from being covered by ice. The low-power transmitters were held in reserve in case serious faults developed in the high-power transmitters. It took many years and the provision of several smaller transmitters before the BBC could deliver a television service to most of the remaining 20 per cent of the population of Scotland. By March 1952 net licence income in the U.K., from sound-only

¹⁴"Slow TV sales in Scotland", Glasgow Herald, 18 February 1953, p.4.

¹⁵British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1952-53 (Cmd. 8928; September 1953), p.26.

licences was £9,742,610, almost four times the figure for combined (i.e. television and radio) licences.¹⁶ The ratio of radio to television operating expenditure, consisting mainly of artists costs and production and engineering staff costs, was roughly of the same order.¹⁷ However, television development was absorbing a greater volume of capital expenditure than radio development as television was extended to the regions. This gap widened in subsequent years, and during 1958–59 television operating expenditure also exceeded radio expenditure.

¹⁶British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1951–52 (Cmd. 8660; September 1952), p.99.

¹⁷Ibid., pp.102–3.

4.2 Criticism of the BBC's Broadcasting Monopoly: the Arguments examined

An examination of television broadcasting both within the U.K. in general terms, and within Scotland in particular from the early 1950s, must begin with the background to the events which led to the end of the BBC's monopoly of broadcasting. The monopoly which was initially based on technical and administrative factors was later justified by the BBC according to programme criteria (i.e the maintenance of a wide range of high quality programmes). With the limitation on the number of wavelengths and the fact that the Post Office regarded the monopoly as administratively more convenient to supervise, successive Governments opted to license one corporation rather than several corporations. Reith did much to establish the BBC as a relatively independent institution with its tradition of public service, high standards and moral responsibility towards the public which it served. The pre-war BBC was like a national Church, it was often regarded as elitist, and it sought to provide what it regarded as a balanced programme output to as large an audience as possible. The monopoly was justified by the BBC because it appeared to sustain those high standards. However, criticism of the monopoly became a more prominent issue in the immediate post-war period thus ensuring that the Beveridge Committee on Broadcasting, unlike previous committees of Inquiry, would be unable to take the monopoly for granted. This section therefore focuses on the various arguments for and against the retention of the monopoly in the period up until the early 1950s.

Several factors emerged which prompted much greater criticism of the BBC's broadcasting monopoly by the early 1950s. British broadcasting which was often viewed as the best in the world did not prove that a better non-monopolistic system could not be developed. The criticism of the American system of broadcasting did not imply that the only alternative to the British system was one based upon American methods of practice. The BBC had developed a strong link between the concept of monopoly and that of public service, hence it was easy to accept that the only alternatives to the British

system consisted either of a State-operated monopoly, or an American commercial system. The continuation of the monopoly did, however, deny alternative outlets for the work of authors and composers as well as alternative sources of employment for broadcasting staff. It may have been the centralised nature of the BBC which fuelled criticism of the monopoly; a federal system of broadcasting might have avoided the dangers of a concentration of power and been more able to adequately reflect life outside the metropolis, such as in the BBC's national regions like Scotland.

During the Second World War some material was published by former members of staff of the BBC who were critical of the monopoly. An example was the book published by P.P. Eckersley, the BBC's first Chief Engineer.¹⁸ Criticism ranged from concern about the centralised nature of the BBC on regional programme development, through to concern about freedom of speech given the greater influence of broadcasting than the Press upon public opinion. Later on, television was regarded as having a greater influence than radio since it was possible to listen to radio with half an ear, but not possible to watch television with half an eye.¹⁹ On this basis it was in television rather than in sound broadcasting that the BBC's monopoly was most in need of being dismantled. Also, in television the BBC had nothing to compare with the varied radio services, their regional element, such as the Scottish Home Service, and their wide coverage throughout the country. In both broadcasting mediums the BBC did not broadcast its own editorial opinions, but it did control access to the microphone. What appeared to be needed was greater diversity of programme outlets within the large monolithic structure of the BBC, and the transfer of more authority from London to the regions. Four articles published on successive weeks during October and November 1944 in the Economist considered the

¹⁸P.P. Eckersley, The Power behind the Microphone (London : Jonathan Cape, 1941).

¹⁹"The BBC", Economist Vol. 150, No. 5366 (29 June 1946), P.1036.

future organisation of broadcasting. They commented that the public-spirited nature of the BBC was no guarantee against the negative effects of monopoly, since the power of broadcasting to influence people was mightier than the pen.²⁰ These articles, which were intended to widen the range of public discussion on the subject, stated that a competitive broadcasting system would widen programme choice in a manner similar to the choice which existed with regard to books, journals, newspapers, theatres, and cinemas. The articles published in the Economist questioned whether the BBC's monopoly was the best system imaginable:

Why should we believe that, without experience and without experiment, and almost without thought, we should have hit, at first go, on the perfect system?²¹

Prior to the expiry of the BBC's Charter in 1946 a series of articles were published which focused on the possibility of introducing competitive broadcasting. In February 1946 Prime Minister Clement Attlee stated that the Government had decided that it was not necessary to institute an independent inquiry into the monopoly before the renewal date of the BBC's Charter. This decision was criticised in several press and journal articles.²² Sir Frederick Oglivie, Reith's successor as Director-General from 1938-1942 wrote a letter criticising the monopoly, which was published in The Times on 26 June 1946. Oglivie supported greater autonomy for broadcasting in Scotland and Wales. Nevertheless, the White Paper of July 1946 rejected the demand for an inquiry into broadcasting which would have covered the issue of the BBC's monopoly. The Government argued that it

²⁰"A Plan for Broadcasting - 1", Economist Vol. 147, No. 5279 (28 October 1944), p.565.

²¹"A Plan for Broadcasting - 4", Economist Vol. 147, No. 5282 (18 November 1944), p.662.

²²R.H. Coase, "A B.B.C. Enquiry?", Spectator Vol. 176, No. 6149 (3 May 1946), pp.446-7.

was too early to foresee the effects of technical progress and that therefore broadcasting ought to remain a monopoly. The BBC's Charter and licence were therefore renewed from 1 January 1947, but significantly only for five years.²³ The White Paper indicated that the pre-war Committees of Inquiry on Broadcasting had supported the BBC monopoly, but R.H. Coase who published an influential book in 1950 on the issue of the monopoly, took exception to this line of reasoning. He argued that the Sykes Committee did not recommend that there should be a monopoly, the Crawford Committee only received evidence which supported the monopoly, and the Ullswater Committee accepted the monopoly but without discussing it.²⁴ On this basis the assumptions on which the arguments in favour of the monopoly were based had never been questioned, and neither had the organisation or funding of alternative systems been fully examined. By 1950 the problem of the organisation and control of broadcasting was essentially the problem as to whether the BBC's monopoly should continue.²⁵

There were several major arguments put forward by the supporters and critics of the monopoly and these can be classified according to the social/cultural, economic, political, administrative, and technical aspects of the issue. Each of these will now be discussed. The social/cultural purposes of BBC broadcasting (ie. to enlarge public taste through the provision of a wide range of high quality programmes) has to be viewed in the context of the social possibilities offered by the presence of a competitive system (ie. a wide range of programme output to cater for the interests of all social classes).

²³Broadcasting : Draft of Royal Charter for the continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation for which the Postmaster General proposes to apply (Cmd.6974; December 1946), p.3.

²⁴R.H. Coase, British Broadcasting : A Study in Monopoly (London : Longman, 1950). pp.158-9.

²⁵John Coatman, "The Future of the BBC", Political Quarterly Vol. 21, No. 3 (July-September 1950), p.273.

However, there was the possibility that a system operating on commercial lines might be more concerned with the criterion of popularity rather than that of merit. The BBC had consistently argued that the popularity of programmes as measured by listener research did not dictate programme policy.²⁶ The public could not be expected to provide a considered opinion on a non-existent competitive service. Supporters of the monopoly within Parliament and throughout the country believed that with the introduction of a commercial system as a competitor for the BBC, the social purpose of broadcasting would be diminished because advertisers would indirectly influence programme content and so narrow the range of output to those programmes likely to attract the largest audience. This line of argument was neatly summed up by Herbert Morrison (Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons 1945–1951) when he stated that the man who paid the piper would call the tune.²⁷ He was right to suppose that it was the larger businesses who would be able to pay television advertising rates, but wrong to suppose that Britain was likely to adopt sponsored television in which advertisers would influence the content and scheduling of programmes to sell their products. Nevertheless, the fact that the Government was proposing to introduce systems of control to obviate dangers inherent in commercial broadcasting was taken by the pro-monopolists as an admission that such dangers did not arise with BBC public service broadcasting. The use of spot advertising was a solution to this problem because it divorced advertisers from any direct influence on programme content. Anyhow, since advertisements appeared in quality newspapers then it could be argued that they should not have been excluded from broadcasting. Critics of the monopoly could focus on the newspaper analogy because the existence of the BBC's broadcasting monopoly stood ill at ease with the wide range

²⁶Home Broadcasting Committee : Minutes, 27 September 1949, No. 440, BBC WAC R34/414/2.

²⁷Herbert Morrison, "Commercial Television : the argument examined", Political Quarterly Vol.24, No. 4 (October–December 1953), p.342.

of local and national newspapers. On this basis competition in broadcasting could provide an outlet for greater coverage of Scottish topics. Despite this, monopolists such as Herbert Morrison, were not convinced that competition would lead to anything other than a lowering of programme standards. Morrison stated:

The Promoters and Controllors of commercially sponsored TV would have an interest in disregarding decent standards and promoting programmes of a debased character for the purpose of attracting the maximum audience of all ages.²⁸

It was this belief, combined with the view that a commercial system would be unable for financial reasons to cater for regional culture, which posed doubts on the ability of a competitive commercial system to uphold the social purpose of broadcasting and widen cultural horizons.

In addition to the social/cultural aspects of the monopoly, several economic arguments were marshalled both for and against the retention of the monopoly. A prosperous commercial system might raise broadcasting standards but it could not be provided cost-free to the public because advertisers would merely shift their advertising costs to the goods and services which they provided to the public. In comparison with the direct method of funding the BBC via the licence fee, this would represent an indirect method. However, anti-monopolists could argue that in theory advertisements could stimulate the production of goods, lower production costs, and thus absorb the cost of such advertisements. But the need for commercial television to attract production and technical staff from the BBC, given that the BBC represented the only major reservoir of skilled personnel, would lead to a salary and fee warfare thus increasing costs for the BBC and placing more pressure on government to increase the licence fee. However, the Government could argue that a commercial system would enable a larger volume of

²⁸Ibid., p.341.

programme material to be offered to the public without having to increase the licence fee to a significant extent; it was thus a safer political option in financial terms. Advertising agencies and television manufacturers no doubt foresaw the commercial benefits of competitive television broadcasting, but newspapers were likely to be more cautious for fear of losing advertising revenue. In regional broadcasting terms, there was the question as to whether a commercial system would be willing to use resources to develop regional programmes. The Scottish Advisory Council agreed with the BBC view that commercial television would be of no benefit to Scotland, partly because it would only cover populous areas, and partly because programme content would be English-dominated. At its meeting on 3 June 1952 there was unanimous agreement within the Council that the introduction of sponsored items in either radio or television would be inadvisable.²⁹

Political factors played a crucial role in the decisions which were made about the monopoly. Lord Woolton, Chairman of the Conservative Party, who took over the chairmanship of the Cabinet's Broadcasting Policy Committee was, like Winston Churchill, not in favour of retaining the monopoly. Also, the influx of Conservative backbenchers (some of whom had interests in advertising and in the electronics industry) after the General Election of 25 October 1951, put pressure on the Government to consider ending the BBC's monopoly. Professor H.H. Wilson argued that the Conservative Party leadership were influenced by a group of Conservative backbenchers into supporting the introduction of commercial broadcasting. In his book he stated:

This study would seem to establish the fact that a small number of M.P.s, well organised, with good connections among both Party officials and outside interests, and pushing a definite, limited programme, may exert considerable influence and even overwhelm an unorganised majority in their own party.³⁰

²⁹Scottish Advisory Council : Minutes, 3 June 1952, p.4, BBC WAC R6/188.

³⁰H.H. Wilson, Pressure Group : The Campaign for Commercial Television (London : Secker and Warburg, 1961), p.208.

Undoubtedly there were pressures but it may be difficult to isolate the influence of them from so many other factors. Pressure group activity was present due to the formation of two associations – one in favour of retaining the monopoly, and one in favour of ending it. The formation of a National Television Council (NTC) to oppose the creation of commercial broadcasting was announced in The Times on 4 June 1953. Several distinguished individuals, such as Lord Beveridge and Bertrand Russell, supported the NTC. On 2 July 1953 a Popular Television Association (PTA) was formed to oppose the BBC monopoly in television, and to press the case for the introduction of commercial broadcasting. Members of the PTA included Malcolm Muggeridge and the historian A.J.P. Taylor. These pressure groups did not, however, involve the public to any significant extent.

The Government had to take note of the administrative and technical arguments in addition to the factors already outlined in the preceding paragraphs. The Post Office preferred to license one broadcasting organisation because it was administratively less complex than overseeing a multitude of separate corporations. The Post Office would have encountered greater difficulty in allocating wavelengths and regions between competing broadcasting companies. The number, power, location, and wavelengths of stations had been planned centrally. However, the shortage of frequencies which was the original technical reason for supporting the continuation of the monopoly was becoming less credible because VHF offered the possibility of overcoming the shortage of wavelengths, and thus permitting the establishment of several local stations, each with a restricted radius. The BBC believed that it could use VHF to diversify broadcasting and improve coverage of existing services in remote areas. However, despite restrictions on capital development, the BBC could be accused of technical conservatism at least to the extent that regions such as Scotland might have received television services much sooner than 1952. One of the arguments of critics of the monopoly was that regional television development would have proceeded at a faster rate if a commercial system had existed.

The technical arguments were examined by R.H. Coase. His view was that although the number of wavelengths limited the number of programmes that could be transmitted at any given time, the number of broadcasting organisations could be greater than the number of wavelengths because time on any station could be shared. He stated that it was not sufficient to demonstrate that the allocation of wavelengths should be carried out by a central authority; it must also be shown that it was desirable that this authority should also operate the broadcasting stations and produce the programmes. Coase stated that the technical argument had never been developed in this manner.³¹ The implication was that the allocation of wavelengths, the operation of broadcasting stations, and the production of programmes were separate functions and need not be performed by the same organisation. The BBC's monopoly was however in the physical means of broadcasting and did not constitute a monopoly of opinion since the Corporation was forbidden to broadcast any editorial opinion. The availability of space in Band III for another television network, and the prospect of VHF, made it increasingly difficult to believe that technical factors would in the long-term necessitate the continuation of the monopoly. Not surprisingly the BBC believed that the technical arguments were not the strongest ones to deploy in seeking to defend the monopoly. In an interview with Malcolm Muggeridge over two decades later Reith recalled:

Technically, I thought that a monopoly was justifiable, but I was far, far more interested in the monopoly in terms of the intellectual and ethical standards of the content of its programmes.³²

In a period in which television broadcasting was growing in importance to become within a few years the primary medium of communication, the question as to whether

³¹R.H. Coase, British Broadcasting : A Study in Monopoly (London : Longman, 1950), p.181.

³²J.C.W. Reith, and Malcolm Muggeridge, "Lord Reith in conversation with Malcolm Muggeridge – Part two", The Listener Vol. 78, No. 2019 (7 December 1967), p.744.

the BBC should retain control of this medium was highlighted in 1949 at the time when the Beveridge Committee began its examination of broadcasting.³³ The question of the monopoly was a prominent issue in many of the submissions of evidence to this committee. Unlike previous committees of Inquiry into broadcasting, the Beveridge Committee would not be able to so easily take the monopoly for granted. The nature of the evidence to, and recommendations of, the Committee with regard to the issue of monopoly and of Scottish broadcasting, are discussed in the following section. The response of the Government to the publication of the Beveridge Report on Broadcasting and the subsequent introduction of competitive broadcasting are discussed in section 4.4.

³³"The Future of Television", Economist Vol. 157, No. 5528 (6 August 1949), p.288.

4.3 The Beveridge Report of 1951 : Submissions, Recommendations, and Responses

The Beveridge Committee was appointed to consider the constitution, control, finance and other general aspects of the radio and television services of the U.K., and to advise on the conditions under which these services should be conducted after 31 December 1951. This section covers those aspects which relate primarily to television development; section 5.2 covers matters relating to the BBC's sound broadcasting services.

The Beveridge Committee on Broadcasting was the first large-scale independent inquiry since the war into the working of a public corporation. Initially Sir Cyril (later Lord) Radcliffe was announced as Chairman of the Committee but he was unable to take up his duties due to his appointment as a Lord of Appeal on 27 May 1949. The task therefore fell to Lord Beveridge, author of the widely-known Social Security Report of 1942. The appointment of Lord Beveridge to chair the Committee was announced in the House of Commons on 21 June 1949. The first meeting of the Committee was held on 24 June 1949, and a press notice was issued inviting submissions from all persons interested in broadcasting to be sent to the Committee by 1 October 1949. The Chairman and Director-General of the BBC had an interview with Lord Beveridge in which procedural matters were dealt with. In particular, Lord Beveridge asked for all the BBC evidence already prepared as well as various additional memoranda.³⁴ In total the Committee received 223 memoranda, and this together with other papers brought the figure up to 368. The range and volume of evidence was much greater than that received by any previous Committee of Inquiry. Sixty-two full meetings were held and these were supplemented by enquiries conducted by sub-committees. One of these sub-committees

³⁴Board of Management : Minutes, 27 June 1949, No. 180(a), BBC WAC R2/1/2.

visited Scotland. Melville Dinwiddie (BBC Scottish Controller) did, however, feel that the discussion was rather diffuse and did not progress much beyond the routine of day-to-day working.³⁵ All the meetings of the Beveridge Committee were held in private in order to permit greater freedom of discussion and a franker expression of opinions. A substantial number of memoranda were published in a separate volume to the main report in order to represent the wide spectrum of views offered.

This section continues with an examination of the main submissions relating to television, with particular reference to the BBC's monopoly which was broken in television, and to BBC broadcasting in Scotland. It then examines the main recommendations of the Committee, and concludes by noting the responses to, and outcome of, the publication of the Committee's report. The BBC, in its memorandum of April 1950, argued that it was in the public interest that the monopoly should be retained. The BBC referred to its impartiality, its attempt to preserve programme standards as well as cater for minorities and raise public taste, and the financial drawbacks of competition in broadcasting. The BBC stated that in a competitive situation it believed that the good programmes would be driven out by the bad, resulting in fewer programmes for minorities. It also rejected the belief that the establishment of any independent corporations in the BBC regions, such as Scotland, would bring about genuine competition, or that a commercial system would be able to adequately cater for the needs of rural areas.³⁶ The BBC's sought to emphasise that the dangers of monopoly were kept under constant review by Parliament, the press, and the BBC's own advisory structure simply because the BBC did operate as a monopoly. There were also governmental controls over the BBC's funding and

³⁵Melville Dinwiddie to W.J. Haley, 25 March 1950, BBC WAC R4/1/3/11.

³⁶Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949. Appendix H. Memoranda submitted to the Committee (Cmd.8117; January 1951), P.200.

transmitter development. The BBC rejected the idea that there was any tight internal central control exercised in the decision-making process. Indeed it argued that under sponsored broadcasting (which was not adopted), responsibility for programmes would pass out of the hands of the broadcasting service and into those of the advertising agent. Lord Reith was opposed to any attempt to end the BBC's monopoly which he believed was in the public interest. In his memorandum of 21 June 1950 he stated:

It was the brute force of monopoly that enabled the BBC to become what it did; and to do what it did; that made it possible for a policy of moral responsibility to be followed. If there is to be competition it will be of cheapness not of goodness.³⁷

The language which Reith used to justify the monopoly made its continuation much less attractive to, for example, the Scottish Radio Retailers' Association and British Actors' Equity Association. The Labour Party, however, wished to maintain the monopoly partly due to fear that competition between the BBC and a commercial system would debase the BBC's high standards. This was based on the assumption that a commercial system could not provide high quality programmes because it was not free from commercial profit-making pressures. The Fabian Research Group took a different view because although it accepted that broadcasting should remain a public service financed by licence fees, it did not believe that the BBC should enjoy a cultural monopoly (i.e. the power to decide which programme material people should receive). There was criticism that the BBC had been slow to develop television because its main experience was with sound broadcasting.

The Beveridge Committee received several submissions which argued that the BBC had been slow to develop regional broadcasting, or to extend television throughout the

³⁷Ibid., p.364.

country. Scotland did not receive a television service until over a year after the Beveridge Report was published, and so understandably most of the written submissions to the Committee on Scottish broadcasting matters covered radio rather than television broadcasting. However, some submissions, such as that prepared by the SNP, commented upon the delay in providing Scotland with a television service. The SNP stated:

We find it difficult to write with restraint on television. This is the invention of a Scot, it has become a BBC monopoly, and the BBC have denied it to Scotland. London and other parts of England have enjoyed the service for many years to the pleasure of the public and the profit of the supplying industry. If and when the service comes to Scotland, it must serve the entire country – Scotland is more than Edinburgh and Glasgow, just as England is more than London and Birmingham. The programmes must be Scottish. The present assumption of the BBC is that programmes must originate in London and filter out to the "provinces".³⁸

However, as noted in section 4.1, when television did arrive in Scotland it did not provide blanket coverage for the whole of the country, and neither was there a significant volume of Scottish material due to the absence of television studio facilities. The Scottish Radio Retailers' Association also noted with disapproval the absence of a television service in Scotland and, in common with the SNP, stated that private enterprise could have provided such a service in a shorter period of time.

The Beveridge Report on Broadcasting was published on 18 January 1951. On the issue of the BBC's monopoly the Committee stated that it had found a substantial body of opinion which challenged the monopoly. It did however state that if broadcasting was to have a social purpose then competition should not be allowed to become competition for audience size:

We regret as a guiding principle in broadcasting competition for numbers of listeners. But we do not accept the assumption underlying the BBC Memorandum that the only alternative to monopoly is degrading competition

³⁸Ibid., p.440.

for listeners, and that in broadcasting a monopoly alone can have high standards and social purpose.³⁹

The Beveridge Committee was also unable to accept the supplementary argument in the BBC memorandum that the past achievements of the Corporation justified it continuing to operate on the same lines without looking more seriously at an issue such as regional devolution to Scotland and Wales. The Committee endorsed the monopoly but wanted the BBC to take action in decentralising responsibilities. Selwyn Lloyd, the Conservative MP, however, submitted a minority report objecting to the monopoly. He wanted the monopoly broken while television was still relatively young, and emphasised what he regarded as the dangers of monopoly: size; centralised control; growth of bureaucracy; Londonisation/metropolitanism; secretiveness; lack of technical innovation; a failure fully to develop television broadcasting; and a lack of alternative employment for both staff and performers. Selwyn Lloyd objected to the use of the 'brute force of monopoly' to raise standards; he wanted to raise standards by choice and not by compulsion. The Beveridge Committee was concerned about the power of monopoly but most members did not believe that the solution was to bring in market competition via a commercial system for fear that this would lead to competition for viewers rather than healthy competition to raise programme standards. Sponsoring of programmes was rejected, but three members of the Committee did not object to the use of spot advertising; only Selwyn Lloyd favoured a more overt commercial service. Overall the Committee proposed, as will be noted, safeguards against the dangers of monopoly rather than the cessation of the monopoly.

In the area of television development, and mindful of the fact that television studio facilities were concentrated in London, the Report stated:

³⁹Report of the Broadcasting Committee 1949 (Cmd. 8116; January 1951), p.43.

We recommend that the Governors of the broadcasting authority should take into immediate and serious consideration the possibility of establishing supplementary studios outside London, and that till this can be done they should adopt special measures to correct the weighting of studio television by London. All that is said elsewhere as to the need for regional programme autonomy applies to television as to sound broadcasting. The more important that television becomes in relation to sound broadcasting, the greater the need to prevent it from becoming a source of uniform ideas.⁴⁰

The Committee accepted the BBC argument that control over sound and television should remain under the same authority, but nevertheless stated that the differences between the two media was greater than that recognised in the BBC's evidence to the Committee, or in its present organisation. Basically the Committee did not want television development to be hampered by traditions inherited from sound broadcasting. Recalling Sir William Haley's view that television was an extension of sound broadcasting, the Committee stated that this may be so with regard to the reception, but not the transmission of programmes, since television productions differed from radio productions in terms of staffing, costs, equipment, and skills. The Report stated that television should enjoy greater autonomy within the BBC and that the Corporation should be prepared to borrow to finance capital expenditure on television. This would accelerate the extension of television to the regions, such as Scotland, and counterbalance the metropolitan influence in television.

The Beveridge Committee posed what it regarded as seven fundamental questions about broadcasting and it attempted to answer them. The conclusions which it reached are noted as follows: (1) the BBC Charter should not be renewed until account was taken of the potential dangers of monopoly; (2) broadcasting should be continued as a monopoly, and although there should not be separate corporations for Scotland and Wales, these countries should be given greater autonomy; (3) broadcasting should continue to be financed via the licence fee, there should be no sponsored television, but spot advertising was not entirely rejected; (4) the BBC should provide more information to Parliament and to the public on how it allocated financial resources (such as to the

⁴⁰Ibid., p.84.

regions), and should consult more often with its advisory bodies; (5) the BBC should expand upon the information contained in its Annual Report and Accounts; (6) to mitigate the effects of monopoly, the functions of the Governors should be extended to enable them to be more actively concerned with the formulation and execution of policy, that there should be a Public Representation Service providing a channel for the public to influence the BBC, and that there should be quinquennial reviews of BBC activities; and (7) to ensure that the Governors brought outside opinion to bear on BBC activities, they should have the right to interfere with executive decisions if necessary. Some of the points mentioned were implemented such as greater devolution to Scotland and Wales, the maintenance of the licence fee system, and the fuller breakdown of expenditure in the BBC Annual Accounts; other aspects which were not implemented included the retention of the monopoly, or the proposal to introduce a Public Representation Service and quinquennial reviews.

Various responses to the recommendations contained in the Committee's Report began to emerge. Preliminary consideration was given to these recommendations by the Board of Management at a special meeting on 19 January 1951 and at the usual Board meeting on 22 January. The Corporation expected to formulate its observations on the Report within six weeks and submit these to the Government.⁴¹ In January 1951 the Labour Government promised that there would be a full parliamentary discussion before final decisions were taken on the recommendations contained in the Report.⁴² On 10 July 1951 the Government published a White Paper outlining its response to the Beveridge Report. The Government began by accepting the majority view within the Beveridge Committee that the monopoly should remain:

⁴¹Board of Management : Minutes, 22 January 1951, No. 19, BBC WAC R2/1/4.

⁴²483 H.C. Deb. Ser. 5, Cols. 119–20 (24 January 1951).

The Government agree with the majority of the Committee that the best interests of British Broadcasting require the continuance of the Corporation on substantially the present basis.⁴³

The White Paper stated that the new Charter would require the BBC to delegate, to Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the English Regions, such powers as were necessary to secure a reasonable measure of independence and greater variety in programme making. The Government broadly accepted the views of the Beveridge Committee on the issue of devolution of responsibilities. The White Paper stated:

The Government attach great importance to the maximum devolution to all areas on programme policy and otherwise, and they agree with the Broadcasting Committee that the existing arrangements are inadequate.⁴⁴

However, although the Government accepted the desirability of establishing Broadcasting Councils whose chairman would be represented on the BBC Board of Governors, it agreed that overall responsibility for finance and for capital development must be reserved for the Corporation. In the latter areas the functions of the Councils would be merely advisory. The Government noted that it was the policy of the Governors to develop administrative devolution to the maximum possible extent. The proposal to introduce quinquennial reviews was rejected, but otherwise little else was to change: the PMG was to continue to remain responsible for broadcasting, and the BBC was to continue to be funded from licence revenue and to submit annual reports to Parliament (which would now incorporate the reports of the Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales). The need to improve broadcasting coverage was recognised, and although major developments were to continue to be constrained by restrictions on capital development, the Government

⁴³Broadcasting : Memorandum on the Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949 (Cmd. 8291; July 1951), p.4.

⁴⁴Ibid., p.6.

accepted that the Corporation should be authorised, with the consent of the PMG, to borrow up to £10 million for capital expenditure.

There were Parliamentary debates on the Government's Memorandum and on the Beveridge Report. In the House of Commons Mr Gordon-Walker, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, began the debate by stating that to speed up the extension of television broadcasting it was important that television should be centralised not regionalised.⁴⁵ He added that Selwyn Lloyd's arguments in the minority Report sprang from an objection to monopoly rather than from a positive desire for commercial programmes. Lady Megan Lloyd George said that most members of the Beveridge Committee favoured the retention of the BBC's monopoly not so much because the case for monopoly had been made, but rather that the case for commercial broadcasting or for alternative corporations had not been outlined to the satisfaction of the Committee.⁴⁶ As regards the lack of television facilities in Scotland and Wales, Mr Charles Ian Orr-Ewing (Hendon, North) stated:

We have heard a great deal this afternoon about devolution and about the desirability of having something for Wales and something for Scotland. Surely they ought to have television studios in which to create their own programmes from their own regions and not have something imposed on them from London and merely relayed in their vicinity.⁴⁷

No studios were provided in Scotland prior to the launch of television there in March of the following year.

⁴⁵490 H.C. Deb. Ser. 5, Col. 1429 (19 July 1951).

⁴⁶Ibid., Col. 1464.

⁴⁷Ibid., Col. 1520.

The BBC's monopoly would have survived a little longer but for the election of a Conservative Government on 25 October 1951. In order to give full consideration to the many issues raised by the Beveridge Committee, the new Government extended the BBC Charter for only six months from 31 December 1951. In May 1952 the Conservative Government published a White Paper (Cmd. 8550) in which it indicated that some form of competition would be permitted. It also made provision for devolution to the regions. The Scottish Advisory Council at a meeting on 3 June 1952, discussed those aspects of the White Paper which affected Scotland. The Council agreed that some form of devolution for Scotland was necessary although there was some uncertainty about the powers of the proposed Broadcasting Council in relation to the Scottish Controller.⁴⁸ A new Charter was published on 1 July 1952 and continued in force for ten years.

Lord Reith, who had used his efforts to defend the monopoly, had mixed feelings towards the BBC. On 29 October 1952 he lunched with George Barnes, BBC Director of Television, and later noted in his diary the attitude of Barnes towards the prospect of commercial television. Reith stated:

He is sure commercial television is coming, does not think the BBC can possibly hold its pre-war attitude and wants to lower standards still further to compete with commercial television. Miserable attitude.⁴⁹

The BBC could not, however, maintain a fixed set of standards. The monopoly did not survive, thus prompting Lord Beveridge to state that the Government was proposing to put television in the wrong hands:

In a television corporation financed wholly by advertising revenue the tune will be called by the advertisers, and the programmes will be designed to get the

⁴⁸Scottish Advisory Council : Minutes, 3 June 1952, p.3, BBC WAC R6/188.

⁴⁹Charles Stuart ed., The Reith Diaries (London : Collins, 1975), p.484.

maximum of popular appeal, irrespective of standards of taste.⁵⁰

Beveridge now had to witness Government policy forging a new direction for broadcasting.

⁵⁰Lord Beveridge, "Monopoly and Broadcasting", Political Quarterly Vol. 24, No. 4 (October - December 1953), p.347.

4.4 The Arrival of Independent Television : Structure, Funding and Programme Philosophy, 1952–1954

As a prelude to the abandonment of the BBC's broadcasting monopoly, the Government considered the recommendations of the Beveridge Committee on Broadcasting, the previous Government's White Paper (Cmd. 8291), and views expressed in debates in both Houses of Parliament. The BBC had enjoyed an exclusive licence to broadcast because successive governments decided that the Postmaster-General should not license anyone other than the BBC. The Conservative Government recognised that the monopoly had helped to establish the excellence and reputation of the Corporation, and that the BBC should be the only broadcasting organisation with any claim on the revenue from the Broadcasting receiving licences. However, the Government wished to widen programme choice and maintain the high standards of public service broadcasting and was not prepared to accept the previous Government's view, in accordance with the majority recommendation of the Broadcasting Committee, that the BBC should continue as the sole authority responsible for broadcasting. This section traces developments from the publication of the White Paper in 1952 – which made provision for competition in broadcasting – up until the period immediately following the passage of the Television Act in 1954.

The Government's White Paper of May 1952 indicated that the days of the monopoly were numbered:

The present Government have come to the conclusion that in the expanding field of television, provision should be made to permit some element of competition when the calls on capital resources at present needed for purposes of greater national importance make this feasible.⁵¹

⁵¹Broadcasting : Memorandum on the Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949 (Cmd. 8550; May 1952), p.3.

The Government stated that Parliament would be given an opportunity to consider the conditions under which a competitive television system would operate. The BBC felt compelled to prepare a comprehensive plan for the future development of its own services, including the provision of a second television channel with national coverage. The BBC Governors believed that the latter would strengthen the hand of those opposed to the introduction of commercial television.⁵² The White Paper indicated that there would be safeguards against abuses in a competitive system and that a controlling body would be required to oversee such a system. The latter was the price that was paid for securing the introduction of commercial television. Significantly, the BBC's sound monopoly was to remain intact and this could be regarded as a concession. The BBC anyhow had a less distinguished record in television broadcasting. It was with this medium that greater programme choice was needed, and more advertising revenue could be generated.⁵³ Asa Briggs noted:

Indeed, the very idea of introducing competitive television and leaving sound broadcasting as a monopoly was already an initial compromise, at least as far as principle, if not profit, was concerned, and the Government showed itself willing throughout to compromise on basic questions of control.⁵⁴

During the Parliamentary debate in February 1953 the Government was criticised for proceeding too quickly to introduce commercial television, particularly at a time when coverage of BBC television, such as in large parts of Scotland, was inadequate. The Government did not wish to wait until the BBC completed its plan to build more

⁵²Board of Governors: Minutes, 13 February 1953, No. 40, BBC WAC R1/1/21.

⁵³180 H.L. Deb. Ser. 5, Col. 664 (23 February 1953).

⁵⁴Asa Briggs, The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Vol. 4: Sound and Vision (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.910.

transmitting stations for fear that the BBC might hold back its plans in order to delay the introduction of commercial television. At this stage the BBC did not wish it to be publicly known that it accepted the need to prepare plans to meet competition since this would imply that the Corporation had accepted the inevitability of competitive television.⁵⁵ Similarly the BBC was in a dilemma as to whether it should initiate broadcasts on the pros and cons of commercial television, an issue on which it had a direct interest. On balance the Board of Management favoured such broadcasts in the public interest. The BBC was, however, concerned to hold on to the mass audience and not just minority audiences in the face of competition, hence it was prepared to compete to retain the attention of the mass audience.⁵⁶ It was noted by the BBC that the sound and television services should jointly seek to avoid undesirable programme clashes in order to benefit the BBC as a whole in a competitive situation with a rival broadcaster. There was also the question as to whether a commercial system not hindered by Government restrictions on capital development would be able to bring about a more rapid expansion of television services throughout the country since the BBC had been accused of treating television as merely an extension of sound broadcasting. The BBC was aware of criticisms that it was not making full use of its network.⁵⁷

On 13 November 1953 the Government published its memorandum on Television policy (Cmd. 9005) which developed ideas on the structure of commercial television. The BBC would remain the main instrument of broadcasting but control over television was not to remain in the hands of a single authority. In order to counter the twin arguments

⁵⁵Board of Governors : Minutes, 3 September 1953, No. 163, BBC WAC R1/1/21.

⁵⁶Board of Governors : Paper G.87/53, 20 August 1953, p.2, BBC WAC R1/3/104.

⁵⁷Board of Management : Minutes, 2 February 1953, No. 57, BBC WAC R2/1/7.

regarding the shortage of frequencies and the effects of a competitive system on programme standards, the Government stated that Band III would be used for commercial television, that a network system would operate to save costs, and that there would be no sponsoring of programmes.⁵⁸ Only spot advertising was to be permitted, to prevent advertisers from influencing programme content. A controlling body would own and operate the transmitting stations and hire its facilities to programme companies who would provide the programmes. The Government did not wish to have another monopoly in the form of a single programme company. It was envisaged that the controlling body would be funded by rentals obtained from the programme companies, the latter of which would derive their income from spot advertising. The BBC's Board of Management discussed the financial prospects of commercial television at a meeting in January 1954, and it was decided that a careful estimate should be made of the advertising rates that were likely to be necessary.⁵⁹ The Government's plan was a recipe for commercial enterprise but under effective public control, in effect a compromise solution. The Government believed that the controlling body would be able effectively to control the companies by modifying or terminating contracts, since the companies would not have invested large sums of money in fixed assets such as transmitters. Taking all these factors into account the Government summed up its attitude as follows:

The policy which the Government recommends to Parliament is designed to achieve three objectives – the first is to introduce an element of competition into television and enable private enterprise to play a fuller part in the development of this important and growing factor in our lives; the second is to reduce to a minimum the financial commitments of the State; and the third is to proceed with caution into this new field and to safeguard this medium of information and entertainment from the risk of abuse or lowering of standards.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Broadcasting : Memorandum on Television Policy (Cmd. 9005; November 1953), p.4.

⁵⁹Board of Management : Minutes, 25 January 1954, No. 36, BBC WAC R2/1/8.

⁶⁰Broadcasting : Memorandum on Television Policy (Cmd. 9005; November 1953), pp.6–7.

In the House of Commons on 14 December 1953 the Assistant PMG, Mr David Gammans sought to defend the Government's decision to introduce competition in broadcasting. The Labour Party threatened to revoke the ITV licences when it was returned to power, although the BBC did not view this as a realistic possibility.⁶¹ In a meeting with Regional Controllers the BBC's Director-General advised them not to speak publicly about the White Paper but it was noted that there would be no objection to pointing out the following: (1) that the purpose of commercial television was to sell goods whereas that of public service broadcasting was to provide a public service; (2) that a second service only provided a choice if it was planned as an alternative service; and (3) that commercial television was unlikely to bring a second service to thinly populated areas.⁶² By the time the Television Bill was published incorporating the powers which the Independent Television Authority (ITA) was expected to exercise over the programme companies, the Authority was satirically labelled as a 'television aunt'.⁶³

The Television Bill was published on 4 March 1954 and received Royal Assent on 30 July 1954. The Television Act made provision for television services in addition to those provided by the BBC. It appeared to replace one form of monopoly with another. With regulated competition between the BBC and Independent Television (ITV) there was no true breaking of the monopoly if the BBC and ITA were each to operate as monopoly suppliers of programmes. So there was duopoly rather than true competition in broadcasting. The Television Act established the ITA as the controlling authority and

⁶¹Board of Governors : Paper G.6/54, 1 January 1954, p.2. BBC WAC R1/3/106.

⁶²D.G.'s Meeting with Regional Controllers : Minutes, 2 December 1953, No. 11, BBC WAC R34/733/1.

⁶³"Television Aunt", Economist Vol. 170, No. 5768 (13 March 1954), pp.751-2.

outlined its constitution, powers, duties and financial resources; it also stated the obligations of those companies contracted to provide programmes.⁶⁴ The use of words 'independent' and 'authority' were interesting in the sense that to describe the ITA as independent implied that the BBC was not independent of detailed governmental control; to call it an authority implied that it had authority over the whole field of television whereas the BBC wished to be viewed as the main instrument of broadcasting in the U.K.

The Act, which stipulated that the ITA was to provide television services for ten years, also gave the Authority the power to establish, install and operate the transmitting stations. All members of the ITA were appointed by the PMG, and three of them were selected to look after the interests of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. No member was expected to have any financial interest in either a programme company or an advertising agency. The ITA which provided the distribution network between main and relay stations, controlled and appointed, but did not employ the programme makers. It was not expected to select programme contractors by competitive tender because then it would have been obliged to accept the highest bid; it was expected to ensure adequate competition between the programme companies. Mindful of BBC regional television output, Section 3 of the Act stated that regional ITV stations were expected to transmit a suitable proportion of regional programmes. But with only one programme company in each region there was, as will be noted, no genuine competition within ITV. The creation of local commercial monopolies appeared to indicate that a higher priority had been given to providing an alternative service to that of the BBC as opposed to a genuinely competitive service.

On 3 August 1954 the PMG announced the appointments to the ITA. Sir Kenneth Clark, Chairman of the Arts Council, was appointed as Chairman of the ITA. Dr. T.J.

⁶⁴Television Act, 1954 (2 & 3 Eliz. 2, c.55).

Honeyman, Director of Glasgow Art Galleries, was expected to make the interests of Scotland his special responsibility. On 25 August the ITA issued a press advertisement inviting applications from potential programme contractors; the first interviews to select contractors began on 28 September. Sir Robert Fraser, Director-General of the Central Office of Information, took up his duties as Director-General of the ITA on 1 October. A licence was granted to the ITA on 6 April 1955 to establish the first station in London. This licence continued in force until 29 July 1964.⁶⁵ The ITV system split the country up into geographical units in contrast to the BBC which essentially provided a U.K. service with regional opt-outs. Comparisons can also be drawn between the type of institutional structure chosen for the ITA, and the BBC's Board of Governors. Both were public bodies but the BBC was incorporated by Royal Charter whereas the ITA came into existence under the terms of the Television Act. The BBC Governors were appointed by the Queen in Council whereas ITA members were appointed by the PMG. Furthermore the emphasis in the Television Act on matters such as the balance of programme material or the need to provide sufficient regional material, had no counterpart in the BBC's Charter. Unlike the ITA, the BBC's Governors had no specific power over BBC management to arrange for the supply of material from any agency to ensure a proper balance of programme output. Overall it thus appeared that the Royal Charter defined the duties of the BBC in a less restrictive manner than did the Television Act with regard to the ITA. This may have reflected the need to appease critics of commercial broadcasting. Bernard Sendall, the former Deputy Director-General of the ITA, stated:

In the structures and organisation outlined for the competitive service efforts had clearly been made to build in potential safeguards and responsibilities to allay the fears of critics and doubters.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Broadcasting : Copy of the Licence granted on the 6th day of April 1955, by Her Majesty's Postmaster-General to the Independent Television Authority (Cmd. 9451; April 1955), pp. 2-5.

⁶⁶Bernard Sendall, Independent Television in Britain, Vol.1 : Origin and Foundation, 1946-62 (London : MacMillan Press, 1982), p.32.

ITV represented private enterprise under public control. The federal structure of ITV resulted in the establishment of autonomous programme companies, each with its own staff and resources. So unlike the BBC, the ITA's officers were responsible only for programme matters whereas in the BBC, Governors had the dual responsibility of acting as a trustee in the public interest in programme matters but also exercise control over management. The providers of the television service in ITV were not the employers or servants of the public authority (i.e. the ITA) as was the case in the BBC. Indeed unlike the BBC's Board of Governors, the ITA was separated both physically and organisationally from the production centres which it supervised.

Apart from organisational structure, differences in funding and in programme philosophy between the BBC and ITV influenced the nature of the services provided. Predictably the BBC stated that quality programming and the commercial profit motive were irreconcilable. In a paper on the future of broadcasting the Governors noted:

The idea of giving a service to the public may still be there, but it can only be a secondary motive because those who conduct and pay for the service have their own interests which in any clash of arguments are bound to take precedence.⁶⁷

It can be argued, however, that either ITV companies would generate insufficient income to sustain a quality service, or generate excessive profits and thus antagonise critics of the system. There was also the question as to whether ITV could provide a better regional television service in Scotland than the BBC. This depended upon the income likely to be generated by any Scottish station/s and whether this was used to develop a rich reservoir of Scottish material, or mainly used to pay for the cost of transmitting non-Scottish-originated material. In this context it can be noted that the value of an ITV

⁶⁷Board of Governors : Paper G.10/54, 15 January 1954, p.2, BBC WAC R/1/3/106.

franchise in terms of potential revenue rose in direct proportion to population served because viewer hours were sold to advertisers. However, costs did not rise in proportion to the number of viewers, hence the reason why large contractors tended to be more profitable. Moreover, the networking system which developed within ITV inhibited competition between companies and so worked against the ability of the smaller companies, such as those located in Scotland, to obtain more resources to develop their own production base through getting material networked. The system was, however, more genuinely regional than the BBC because Scotland was subsequently served by three programme companies in comparison with the BBC's unitary presence in Scotland, and programmes on ITV could often be transmitted at different times on different days in each region. The financial implications of this structure was that the costs of the commercial network could be expected to be higher than that of the BBC because of the duplication of studios, staff and equipment in each regional centre. No single ITV programme company had resources to match those of the BBC; equally no small ITV company had resources to match those of the network companies which were later formed. Prior to the start of ITV transmissions the BBC was, however, concerned about the potential impact of ITV on costs within the BBC. In December 1954 Sir Ian Jacob (BBC Director-General) prepared a paper highlighting his discussions with the ITA regarding mutual restrictions on the hours of broadcasting. The BBC was concerned that competition would force it to extend its hours of broadcasting and thus place greater strain on its financial, manpower and technical resources. The Director-General stated:

If television is provided by our rivals at hours of the day when we are off the air there is bound to be a considerable demand, particularly from those areas which cannot get the I.T.A.'s transmissions, for us to give similar value for money. In my view this demand could only be resisted if there are definite prohibitions in the form of closed periods.⁶⁸

⁶⁸Board of Governors : Paper G.3/55, 23 December 1954, BBC WAC R1/3/111.

The programme companies in ITV were, however, likely to want to be free to seek out the largest audiences at times of their own choosing and not of the BBC's choosing.

The programming philosophy of ITV differed from that of the BBC. There was a contrast between the BBC philosophy of providing the public with programmes which it [the BBC] thought was best for them, and the ITV philosophy of giving the public the type of programmes which the public itself wanted. Almost a year before ITV transmissions commenced, Sir Ian Jacob had not grasped the potential impact of commercial television on the BBC's own television schedules and programme philosophy. Jacob was aware that as opportunities for television widened, those for radio would diminish; he did not yet regard sound and television as two separate broadcasting activities, each catering for a different audience. Instead he regarded both services as complementary. Jacob noted:

The Corporation in its several services must, therefore, strive to include all types of material that can be conveyed by broadcasting, and should not content itself with an output which satisfies merely the less-discriminating mass.⁶⁹

The BBC view was that its programme policy and philosophy would not be altered by the arrival of a competitor. In its Annual Report for 1954–55 the BBC commented upon the impending arrival of ITV and stated:

This fact cannot affect the BBC's aims and obligations under the Charter. There will be no departure from the BBC's purposes nor from the standards which it has set itself. But the existence of an alternative broadcasting system is bound to affect the Corporation's work in many ways.⁷⁰

⁶⁹Sir Ian Jacob, "The tasks before the BBC today", The Listener Vol.52, No. 1338 (21 October 1954), pp.661–2.

⁷⁰British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1954–55 (Cmd. 9533; July 1955), p.14.

There was to be competition in programmes and for key staff and artists, and the BBC did eventually seek to actively compete with ITV for audiences. With the advent of ITV programmes in September 1955, an era in broadcasting came to an end.

4.5 The BBC and ITV Duopoly : the effects of Competition in

Broadcasting, 1955–1961

With the arrival of commercial television in September 1955, broadcasting entered a new phase of development. Two years had elapsed since the BBC announced its ten-year plan of expansion in June 1953, a plan designed to complete the television network, develop television production facilities in London and in the regions, extend broadcasting coverage, and plan for the possibility of colour television and a second channel. Between the years 1955 and 1961 the ITV network was developed and completed. Scotland received commercial television in August 1957 and this, together with the two further ITV stations which were opened in Scotland in 1961, influenced BBC programme policy in Scotland. The development of the ITV network and the response of the BBC to competition in television will be examined both in general terms within the U.K., and more specifically within Scotland. By 1962 ITA transmitters covered 95 per cent of the population of the U.K. and thus provided competition for the BBC in most parts of the country.

In early 1955 the BBC discussed arrangements for monitoring ITA programmes when they initially arrived in London. It was expected that this task would be extended to the regions when ITV companies began to be established outside London.⁷¹ The BBC did not have to wait very long because after test transmissions at the ITA's Croydon station on 13 September 1955, the first ITV programmes were broadcast on 22 September to the London area. On the following day an article in the Glasgow Herald commented:

⁷¹Board of Management : Minutes, 31 January 1955, No. 63, BBC WAC R2/1/10.

To an accompaniment of high-sounding phrases and suitably patriotic music, commercial television was tonight launched on its restricted sea.⁷²

It was a restricted sea because ITV programmes did not reach Scotland. A week after the start of commercial television, the BBC's Director-General reviewed the first week's programmes; it was noted that the general feeling of the BBC's television staff was that although the competitor should not be under-rated, nevertheless so far no new ideas had been presented.⁷³ However, the BBC recognised that it would be unable to identify as closely with regional audiences in comparison with the ITV companies, hence it accepted the need to extend and improve regional facilities and programme output. This, it was believed, would strengthen the Corporation's claim to additional wavelengths for the second programme. In preparation for this it was noted that regions needed more freedom to substitute local items, and an increased programme allowance to encourage experiment in regional television material similar to what had been achieved in sound broadcasting.⁷⁴ Asa Briggs commented on these plans as follows:

The arguments both for a second Television channel and for a regional component in the BBC's future pattern of television were derived as much from the experience of Sound – with echoes of the 1920s – as from a sense of the need to compete with the new programme-operating companies.⁷⁵

⁷²"Cornflour and Cabaret : Commercial TV under way", Glasgow Herald, 23 September 1955, p.7.

⁷³Board of Governors : Minutes, 29 September 1955, No. 195, BBC WAC R1/1/23.

⁷⁴Regional Controllers' Meeting : Minutes, 5 October 1955, No. 87, BBC WAC R34/733/2.

⁷⁵Asa Briggs, The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Vol. 4 : Sound and Vision (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1979), p.1021.

The BBC was initially unprepared for operating a television service which placed stress on the need to entertain the audience. This was not unexpected given the absence of any competitor. As Peter Black stated:

... everything the BBC had done until September 1955 had been done in a vacuum. Nobody knew whether the audience stayed with it because it liked it or because there was no other television to look at.⁷⁶

ITV programmes had the advantage of novelty. The BBC's initial response was to emphasise its experience in television broadcasting, the range of its output, and its public service duty to serve both minority and majority interests. There did not appear to be any desire at this stage to introduce more popular material into the programme schedules. Indeed it was re-emphasised at Board of Governors level, the importance of the BBC maintaining its standards and the quality of its programmes in the presence of competition from ITV.⁷⁷ ITV did, however, entice many key BBC producers and technical staff to work for commercial television because the BBC represented the only principal source of trained broadcasting staff. The BBC's Director-General reported that even following the announcement of the ITA of their chosen programme companies, there had been serious attempts to entice away some senior members of the BBC's television staff.⁷⁸ The BBC's loss was a gain to broadcasting staff who now had the opportunity of alternative employment and higher salaries. The BBC was forced to offer special contracts to key staff to retain their services. The Corporation was also faced with a balancing act between maintaining programme standards and sustaining the interest of the audience:

⁷⁶Peter Black, "A Generation Ago – Peter Black on the rise of television in the early fifties", The Listener Vol. 82, No. 2110 (4 September 1969), p.309.

⁷⁷Board of Governors : Minutes, 29 September 1955, No. 195, BBC WAC R1/1/23.

⁷⁸Board of Governors : Minutes, 11 November 1954, No. 226, BBC WAC R1/1/22.

The almost impossible task, therefore, which faced the BBC's television service during the next few years was to maintain the audience figures and yet produce programmes of a standard which would be sufficiently different from that of commercial television to ensure that the public could be asked to support the payment of licence fees to the BBC.⁷⁹

The ITV companies sought to capture some of the audience from BBC programmes and create a new audience among those sections of the public for whom BBC programmes had little appeal.⁸⁰ This involved the need to pioneer new programme concepts. ITV programmes were more populist in tone than BBC programmes, their presenters were less formal, and regularity was built into the programme schedules to encourage regular viewing habits. The BBC had to learn from ITV's attempt to inculcate channel loyalty. Both channels made use of the inheritance factor whereby the most popular programmes would be transmitted at peak viewing times thus encouraging viewers to remain with the channel for the remainder of the evening; the BBC was forced to do so in order to retain a respectable share of the audience.

The audience for ITV increased when coverage was extended outwith London to the English regions and to Scotland. It was also increased with the introduction of more popular programmes and by developing networking. The difficulty of filling several hours of transmission time each week was eased by the development of networking in Autumn 1956. Network and regional companies had the same contractual relationship with the ITA but the network companies did not have to produce regional programmes. The smaller companies, such as the three Scottish companies which were awarded a franchise, affiliated to one of the network companies for the supply of network

⁷⁹Grace Wyndham Goldie, Facing the Nation : Television and Politics 1936–1976 (London : The Bodley Head, 1977), p.111.

⁸⁰Bernard Sendall, Independent Television in Britain, Vol. 1 : Origin and Foundation, 1946–62 (London : MacMillan Press, 1982), p.320.

programmes from all the major companies. Despite the existence of the network, most national programmes were provided by four separate companies (i.e. Associated-Rediffusion, ATV, ABC and Granada) and not one organisation as occurred with the BBC. Given that not all ITV network companies operated from London, the system was not as centralised in programme production as the BBC. However, as will be noted, there were some similarities with the BBC to the extent that regions such as Scotland experienced difficulty in securing network transmission for the programmes which they made. Apart from networking there was one other aspect with ITV which inhibited competition between companies for audiences in any given region. There was only one programme company in each area because it was technically impossible to arrange for competing services in any region unless large parts of the country were to be left without any ITV service. The use of the split-week system rather than seven-day contracts, was used by the ITA to induce some competition into the system and thus prevent undue power from being given to one programme company based in London. This system was not extended to the later smaller companies, such as the Scottish programme companies, because they never supplied a large percentage of their own material and were not network companies; the Scottish companies were therefore all awarded seven-day contracts.

With the prospect of the opening of the first commercial television station in Scotland, the BBC had to consider how it would respond. The Broadcasting Council for Scotland stated that the BBC's Scottish television output of 1½ hours a week would be totally inadequate to deal with competition from commercial television when it arrived in Scotland.⁸¹ Andrew Stewart (Controller, BBC Scotland) asked Sir Ian Jacob (BBC Director-General) for adequate resources to compete with commercial television. In December 1956, with the plans for Scottish Television (STV) becoming clearer, the BCS

⁸¹Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Minutes, 2 March 1956, No. 33, BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1955-57.

minutes read as follows:

The Scottish Programme Contractor's intention of putting on 25% of Scottish items on Commercial Television was noted and fear was expressed that unless the BBC could forestall commercial television in this respect a large proportion of the audience might be lost irretrievably.⁸²

The BBC in Scotland was particularly concerned about the potential impact of competition on its ability to cover entertainment, news, and sporting events. These concerns were outlined in a BCS paper on the potential impact of commercial television in Scotland on BBC services.⁸³ BBC Scotland believed that there was insufficient work to offer long-established artistes and scriptwriters exclusive contracts and that therefore these individuals would be presented with more lucrative offers by STV. The BBC was also concerned about the close association between STV and the theatre contractor Howard and Wyndham. Roy Thomson, who put in the successful bid for Scotland's first commercial television station, had strong newspaper connections (he bought control of The Scotsman newspaper in 1953), and the BBC was understandably concerned about competition in the area of news output, particularly in the absence of a daily BBC Scotland television news bulletin. Nevertheless, the BBC was ready to compete with STV. The BCS paper concluded by stating:

The obvious conclusion is that Commercial Television in Scotland will aim at attracting a mass lower-middle-class audience because of its potential purchasing power and readiness to view material of little cultural value. It cannot be regarded as true competition, but this challenge has to be met and will be, with vigour.⁸⁴

⁸²Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Minutes, 7 December 1956, No. 106(e), BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1955-57.

⁸³Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Paper BCS/24/56, 30 November 1956, BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1955-57.

⁸⁴Ibid., p.4.

The main competition for the BBC in Scotland was, however, to emanate from the network programmes shown on STV rather than STV's Scottish-originated output. The BBC, for example, had no programme to compete with ITV's "Sunday Night at the London Palladium". STV was also more willing than BBC Scotland to respond to popular culture within Scotland in programmes such as the weekday lunchtime programme, "One O'clock Gang".

The background to the arrival of commercial television in Scotland and the BBC's response can now be discussed. In 1954 when Roy Thomson, a Canadian, came to Britain preparations were well advanced for the start of commercial television. On 28 November 1955 the ITA invited applicants as potential programme contractors for the central Scotland station. The financial problems encountered by the first few commercial stations (where costs exceeded advertising income), acted as a disincentive for businessmen in Scotland to consider becoming involved in tendering for the Scottish franchise. Thomson, however, carefully examined the potential revenue from advertising and the likely operating costs. In his autobiography he stated that he was convinced that commercial television would be a success after the advertising potential had been fully tapped.⁸⁵ He also received financial support from Howard and Wyndham, the theatre contractor. Thomson therefore submitted an application for the Scottish franchise. On 28 February 1956 members of the ITA spent time in Edinburgh to interview potential Scottish programme contractors, and on 30 May Scottish Television Ltd (STV) was appointed as programme contractor for central Scotland, the first company to be awarded an all-week contract because its potential audience was insufficient to support more than one programme company. The Theatre Royal in Glasgow was purchased in October 1956 and Thomson began to convert it into offices and studios. STV also affiliated with Lew Grade's Associated Television (ATV) in order to get access to network material.

⁸⁵Lord Thomson of Fleet, After I was Sixty (London : Purnell, n.d.), p.41.

Thomson's statement that he hoped to schedule 20–25 per cent of Scottish material prompted the press to enquire about the BBC's response. The BBC's Scottish Controller merely noted that the Corporation would continue to fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter to serve the whole community.⁸⁶

On 12 August 1957 a Scottish Committee of the ITA was formed in order to advise the ITA on the conduct of commercial television in Scotland. STV began transmissions on 31 August 1957 from the Blackhill transmitter, the fifth transmitter to be opened by the ITA since September 1955. The opening ceremony began with short speeches from the Lord Provost of Glasgow, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Chairman of the ITA (Sir Kenneth Clark) and the Chairman of STV (Roy Thomson). The ITA stipulated in 1956 that STV should originate at least 15 per cent of programmes itself with the balance taken from the network. In its Annual Report for 1956–57 the ITA reaffirmed this general principle:

Although it is a necessary feature of the independent television system that the bulk of the programmes should be presented over the whole network, the Authority requires each programme company to ensure that on average the output from its own resources is not less than 15 per cent of its total programme output. It is also desirable, in accordance with the provisions of the Act, that a suitable proportion of material of a company's own origination should appeal specially to regional tastes and outlook.⁸⁷

STV never did transmit 20–25 per cent of Scottish originated material as originally planned, but it was a prosperous company as reflected in Thomson's famous phrase, 'a licence to print money'. The presence of STV also prompted the BBC to make changes in its

⁸⁶BBC Scottish Programme Board (Television) : Minutes, 6 June 1956, No. 168, BBC WAC T16/108/2.

⁸⁷Independent Television Authority : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 1957 (H.C.1; 11 November 1957), p.16.

programme output.

Concern about the potential impact of a commercial station on BBC output in Scotland was raised within the Board of Governors by Tom Johnston (BBC National Governor for Scotland, who was a former Secretary of State for Scotland) in March 1956. He said that BBC Scotland's 1½ hours a week of television output would not show up favourably against the larger amount of Scottish material proposed for ITV's first Scottish station. At that time the Director-General stated that plans were being made to introduce regional television news periods towards the end of 1956, and that anyhow it was doubted whether a commercial operator could afford to originate a large proportion of programmes within Scotland.⁸⁸ There was no certainty that viewers in Scotland would prefer more Scottish material in preference to London-based programmes, but equally the BBC in Scotland could not afford to be seen to be failing in its duty towards the Scottish audience. The upshot was the introduction of a five-minute Scottish news summary, first broadcast on BBC television at 6.05 p.m. on 30 August 1957, the day before the start of STV transmissions. STV, however, pioneered "Here and Now", the first five-days-a-week news magazine programme in Britain; it also broadcast its own religious and sports programmes such as "Late Call" and "Scotsport". By the late 1950s as a result of competition from commercial television throughout the U.K., BBC Regional Controllers wished to increase regional television opt-outs to provide more local material.⁸⁹ Within Scotland, both BBC and STV programmes did however attract criticism in the press for being poor in quality, parochial, and of little interest to the network. Nevertheless, in November 1960 the BCS still voiced concern about the need to increase the volume of Scottish output to meet competition from STV, and to schedule these programmes during

⁸⁸Board of Governors : Minutes, 15 March 1956, No. 80, BBC WAC R1/1/24.

⁸⁹Regional Controllers' Meeting : Minutes, 2 September 1959, No. 480, BBC WAC R34/733/3.

main viewing hours. These views were conveyed to Gerald Beadle, BBC Director of Television Broadcasting, who attended a meeting of the Council.⁹⁰ In particular, the BCS wanted greater freedom from London with regard to programme timings given the greater freedom of STV to schedule its programmes at suitable times.

STV was the first commercial television station in Scotland but two additional Scottish-based stations were opened during 1961 which assisted in the completion of the ITA network. On 1 September 1961 Border Television went on the air from the Caldbeck transmitting station; the transmitting station at Selkirk opened on 1 December 1961. Sir Robert Fraser, Director-General of the ITA, opened the new station which was based in Carlisle. Border Television covered a population of 500,000 on both sides of the Scottish-English border and was the second smallest station in the ITA Network. This station affiliated to Granada Television to obtain its network output. It broadcast local news, country magazine and light music programmes. Due to its location Border Television was never regarded as a distinctively Scottish station. This could not be said for Grampian Television, the twelfth ITA regional station, which went on the air on 30 September 1961 just over a year after being selected as programme contractor for North-East Scotland. The smallness of the station with its news, farming and folk music programmes, enabled it to remain in close touch with the communities which it served, albeit widely scattered geographically. Grampian, which affiliated with ABC Television to obtain network programmes, prompted BBC Scotland to be concerned about the provision of local programmes, including the need for an interview studio, in the Aberdeen area. By the end of 1961 Scotland therefore had three commercial television companies in addition to the national television service provided by the BBC. However, unlike the ITV companies in Scotland, BBC Scotland has never been sure whether it is Scottish or merely part of a

⁹⁰Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Minutes, 4 November 1960, No. 115, BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1960-64..

U.K. broadcasting system.⁹¹ The BBC's programme output in Scotland was thus liable to be criticised for being either too Scottish or too British.

By the end of 1961 the ITV network was nearing completion. The population coverage of ITV programmes had increased almost fourfold since 1955 to reach over 94 per cent of the U.K. population by the end of 1961.⁹² The BBC competed with ITV in order to hold on to 50 per cent of the audience and not return to the BBC:ITV 27:73 share of the audience which it held in 1957, notwithstanding the fact that both BBC and ITV adopted different methods for measuring the size of the audience. The BBC could not afford to lose so much of its audience to the extent that it became the junior partner in the duopoly; it also had to strike a satisfactory balance between popular and serious programme material. The BBC remained a genuine national service in terms of coverage only until 1961 by which time the chain of ITV stations was completed.

⁹¹Taped interview with John Gray, Edinburgh, 5 April 1988.

⁹²Independent Television Authority : Annual Report and Accounts 1961-62 (H.C.3; 7 November 1962), p.2.

4.6 The Pilkington Report of 1962: Submissions, Recommendations, and Responses.

On 13 July 1960 the Postmaster General, Mr Reginald Bevans, announced in the House of Commons that the Government was setting up a committee to examine the future pattern of broadcasting services in the United Kingdom. The committee was expected to consider the future of the domestic broadcasting services, and to advise which services should in future be provided by the BBC and the ITA; to recommend whether any additional services should be provided by any other organisation; and to propose what financial and other conditions should apply to the conduct of all these services. The committee was chaired by the industrialist Sir Harry Pilkington of Pilkington Brothers, The Glass Manufacturer. Given that the BBC and the ITA were to remain in existence, the committee was thus precluded from recommending that broadcasting should again be organised on a monopolistic basis. The Pilkington committee received 636 memoranda from a wide variety of individuals and organisations involved in, or having close links with, broadcasting. Many of these submissions were published in separate volumes to the main report, but all the meetings were held in private. The Pilkington Inquiry was significant to the extent that it was the first time that a major Committee of Inquiry had been asked to examine a broadcasting authority other than the BBC. In order to allow time for the results of the Inquiry to be absorbed, the BBC's Charter and Licence were extended from 30 June 1962 to 29 July 1964 (i.e. coincide with the expiry date of the Television Act).

This section begins by examining the main points raised within the numerous submissions to the committee with particular reference to BBC-ITV competition, proposals for a third television channel, Scottish broadcasting output, and the powers of the Broadcasting Council for Scotland in relation to television output. The discussion then moves on to consider the principal recommendations of the committee, and concludes by noting the responses to the publication of the Pilkington Report, and the implications of its recommendations for future broadcasting developments.

The Pilkington Committee asked the BBC to give its views about the effects of the introduction of competition in television broadcasting. In February 1961 the BBC submitted a memorandum in which it stated that competition had not increased the range of programmes available. The BBC wished to plan two channels in order to gain flexibility in scheduling programmes not necessarily during peak viewing hours and so avoid the programme clashes which developed due to competition with ITV. Indeed the complementary planning of the BBC's radio networks could be contrasted with the negative effects of direct competition between BBC and ITV. The BBC had lost much of its audience to ITV in the first years of competition because it refused to reduce the number of serious programmes during peak viewing hours. In a separate memorandum dated January 1961 the BBC recognised that ITV continued to attract larger audiences, but went on to state:

In the BBC's opinion, this result has been achieved by the programme companies by a process of concentrating on the less demanding types of entertainment during the main viewing hours.⁹³

The BBC argued that the negative effects of competition included increased costs, the loss of some producers and technical staff, and the narrowing of the range of programme output. However, the BBC did benefit from competition in that it improved its production techniques in light entertainment, encouraged greater professionalism in general and enabled benefits to be derived from studying the ITV schedules. For example, the BBC discovered that audiences for minority interest programmes could be increased by placing them after popular BBC programmes, or opposite ITV's minority interest programmes. The Association of Broadcasting Staff stated in a memorandum that it was not convinced that competition had led to any major improvements in programme standards which would not have been inevitable as and when improved technical facilities were brought into service. Other submissions, such as that from the T.U.C., were critical of the BBC for allowing itself to be drawn into the

⁹³Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960. Volume 1. Appendix E. Memoranda Submitted to the Committee (Cmnd. 1819; September 1962), p.212.

competitive process by matching programme with programme, thus reducing choice for viewers.⁹⁴ Criticism of competition between the BBC and ITV formed part of a wider criticism of the networking arrangements within ITV. The absence of directly competing companies in each service area resulted in the creation of local broadcasting monopolies within ITV. STV, for example, had a local monopoly in central Scotland. Also, the networking arrangements restricted competition among ITV network companies to supply programmes to the regional companies and made the network companies reluctant to accept regional material. The difficulty which regional companies, such as STV, experienced in breaking into the network began to mirror the opportunities available for BBC Scotland to do likewise. Within ITV the network companies offered the same financial terms to the smaller companies who affiliated to them in order to pay for the supply of programmes from all network companies. Although the ITA wished to overcome any disincentives in the production of programmes by the small regional companies and to encourage a greater exchange of programmes between companies, the Authority could claim that, unlike the BBC, most network material was not produced in London.

One of the issues which the Pilkington Committee was to consider was to advise on what future services should be provided. With this in mind, a BBC memorandum on future programme policy argued that the third television channel should go to the BBC. The BBC sought to justify this as follows:

A second service would enable the BBC to increase the number of serious, cultural, and informational programmes, to cater more fully for regional needs and aspirations, to extend educational broadcasts, to experiment on the screen (because closed-circuit experiment is much less effective as well as being expensive), and to serve more interests.⁹⁵

⁹⁴Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960. Volume 2. Appendix E. Memoranda Submitted to the Committee (Cmnd. 1819-1; September 1962), p.1256.

⁹⁵Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960. Volume 1. Appendix E. Memoranda Submitted to the Committee (Cmnd. 1819; September 1962), p.225.

The BBC also envisaged that an additional channel would enable it to provide a home for regional opt-out programmes and this appeared to offer the prospect of developing BBC Scotland's television output. The BBC added that a commercially-based system could not fulfil all the tasks which the corporation hoped to implement using a second television channel because advertisers would be reluctant to advertise on a less popular channel. As regards television output in Scotland, the Pilkington Committee received several submissions commenting upon the nature of the BBC's Scottish programme output. In its memorandum of November 1960, the Saltire Society stated that it wanted to see the encouragement of the production of programmes of the highest quality suited to Scottish needs and tastes. In broadcasting terms it wanted Scotland to be treated as a nation, and also commented upon the image of Scotland projected in programmes:

We do not ask for a larger quota of material built round a Scottish parish pump. While there are, under present arrangements, some good Scottish programmes, too many project an image of the Scot as a being with none but the most parochial and shallow of interests.⁹⁶

The Saltire Society wanted programmes which showed a Scottish perspective on world events rather than a perspective filtered through English lenses. The Scottish National Party (SNP) believed that the BBC was treating Scotland as a province of England rather than as a nation. In particular, the SNP drew attention to the fact that the BCS had no control over television output within and for Scotland, and that therefore the constitutional arrangements for broadcasting in Scotland did not meet the wishes or the cultural and social needs of the Scottish nation. The SNP was also critical of BBC news which it regarded as being too parochial because it emanated from London, and thus was too metropolitan. It also wanted the BBC in Scotland to have suitable qualified announcers and producers who could take control of Scottish items of interest to the network, thus avoiding the need to import staff from outwith Scotland. The Scottish Trades Union Congress (S.T.U.C.) General Council considered

⁹⁶Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960. Volume 2. Appendix E. Memoranda Submitted to the Committee (Cmnd. 1819-1; September 1962), p.938.

the issue as to whether priority should be given to introducing a third television network rather than expand broadcasting coverage of existing services in remote parts of Scotland. The S.T.U.C. favoured the latter option and so also did Ness Edwards, the former PMG, who wanted the country to receive two good television services before any part of the country was offered three services. The BCS and the Church of Scotland Committee on Church and Nation also wanted television services to be provided for the whole country before the allocation of a third television channel was considered.

In 1959 the BCS submitted a memorandum to the Board of Governors on the Council's attitude to television in Scotland, in particular the need to operate one policy in sound and television.⁹⁷ In a memo to the Director-General in January 1960, Gerald Beadle (Director of Television Broadcasting) noted:

It does seem logical to me that the two Councils should have authority over the content of programmes mounted exclusively for their own people.⁹⁸

He was not prepared to go so far as to recommend that television personnel should be classed as Council staff, because he believed that television staff would continue to play a large part in the network operation rather than in output purely for regional audiences. In the early 1950's, television was principally a network operation with regions expected to contribute material to this network, whereas by the early 1960s the regions wanted greater latitude to produce and transmit material for their own regional audience. Beadle recognised that pressure for fragmentation of the network had programme planning and financial implications: (1) It caused regional audiences to miss the network programmes; (2) It made regions press the Controller of Programmes (Television) to plan weak output in order to prevent regional audiences

⁹⁷Broadcasting Council for Scotland, "The Broadcasting Council for Scotland and Television in Scotland", 10 November 1959, p.1, BBC WAC T16/233/3.

⁹⁸Gerald Beadle to Director-General, 21 January 1960, p.1, BBC WAC T16/233/4.

from believing that they were missing good network programmes, and this in turn would lower network standards and reduce the BBC's competitive strength in relation to ITV; and (3) fragmentation utilised more manpower and technical resources which could be used for network contributions, thus preventing the network from becoming more metropolitan. In short, although Gerald Beadle was prepared to concede that the powers of the Broadcasting Councils should be extended to cover television output, he did not think that the Councils should take this to imply any acceptance of greater fragmentation. On 15 March 1960 the Board of Governors stated that to give the Broadcasting Councils authority equivalent to that which they already possessed in sound broadcasting, implied the provision of broadcasting services in television on an equivalent scale to those available to listeners on radio. But with only one television channel the BBC could not provide a Scottish television equivalent to the Scottish Home Service on radio. This implied that the constitutional change in the powers of the BCS would only take place when more television channels became available. The Board noted that constitutional change would not of itself increase the amount of opt-out time since the latter was governed by limitations on the resources available such as money, wavelengths, and manpower. However, in a memorandum to the Pilkington Committee in December 1960, the BCS stated that because the audience for BBC television in Scotland was greater than that of the combined audience for all three radio services, the Council should be given the same responsibility in television as it exercised in sound broadcasting. In May 1961 the BCS was informed of the BBC's verbal recommendation to the Pilkington Committee that the Council's powers should be extended to cover television, although Sir Arthur Forde (BBC Chairman) stated that full implementation would only be possible when the BBC was permitted to operate a second channel.⁹⁹ In August 1961 the BBC formally stated that it favoured extending the power of the Broadcasting Councils to cover television output, but the BBC still believed that the re-arrangement of

⁹⁹Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Minutes, 12 May 1961, No. 62, BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1960-64.

programmes at short notice to cope with competition from ITV would be impaired if there was a significant increase in opting-out.

The Pilkington Committee's Report was published in June 1962. The Report was particularly critical of ITV output for what it regarded as its failure to raise the level of public taste, to cater for minority audiences, or to provide a sufficient volume of regional material. The Pilkington Committee not only rejected the ITV programme philosophy of giving the public what it wants, but also rejected the BBC philosophy of giving the public the programmes which the broadcasters thought were in the public interest since this was regarded as too patronising. The Committee indicated that it believed that the pressure of competition had caused the BBC to depart somewhat from its public service ideals, but it stated that in view of the submissions which it had received, the causes of disquiet about television were not to any great extent attributable to the BBC's service.¹⁰⁰ It can be argued that if the BBC had not engaged in competitive scheduling with ITV then those viewers who had access only to BBC television would have been presented with a narrower range of programme choice. The BBC did not want to leave ITV to put out the more popular programmes. The Pilkington Committee criticised the lack of regional programmes within ITV, and stated that programmes produced outside London were local in origin than in appeal.

Thus, though the smaller independent television companies produced more hours of programming than did the BBC Regions, items of local appeal still formed only a small part of each company's programme: and most of these items were shown at off-peak hours.¹⁰¹

This was understandable to the extent that small companies, such as STV, earned most advertising revenue from transmitting the popular programmes made by the

¹⁰⁰Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960 (Cmnd. 1753; June 1962), p.46.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p.66.

network companies, they could not match the standard of network output, and there was no incentive to substitute too many local programmes for network programmes if the latter had already been paid for. As regards the third television channel, the Pilkington Report recommended that this channel should be allocated to the BBC.¹⁰² The Committee recognised that an additional channel could provide more opportunities for programmes catering for interests in the BBC's national and English regions without depriving viewers of network programmes. Furthermore, the Pilkington Committee noted that few programmes were produced in Scotland, and that of those which were, the consensus which emerged from the various written submissions and oral evidence, was that these programmes often failed to reflect distinctive Scottish culture. The Committee took note of the various submissions advocating an extension in the responsibilities of the Broadcasting Councils and stated:

We recommend that the National Broadcasting Council for Scotland be vested, in respect of the BBC's television service in Scotland, with rights and duties comparable with those it exercises in respect of Sound radio.¹⁰³

The Committee rejected the idea of establishing a Scottish Broadcasting Corporation; the dangers of 'Londonisation' were deemed to be less than those of isolation.¹⁰⁴

The Pilkington Committee, unlike the previous Committee of Inquiry, delivered a unanimous report. So as Tom Driberg pointed out there was no minority report for the Government to fall back on if it wished to adopt a different approach to the main

¹⁰²Ibid., p.245.

¹⁰³Ibid., p.140.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p.139.

lines of argument developed in the Pilkington Report.¹⁰⁵ On 4 July 1962 the Government issued its White Paper. It agreed with the Pilkington Report that no independent Scottish or Welsh broadcasting corporation should be established, but accepted that the Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales should exercise the same powers in relation to the content of television services as they already did for sound broadcasting.¹⁰⁶ This change was to be incorporated in the new Charter due to be renewed for twelve years from 30 July 1964. The BBC was, however, prepared to treat the period 1962–64 as a transitional one during which the new powers of the Councils would be considered as already in existence and thus could be introduced within the limits of available finance and technical resources. This had the merit of providing practical experience in the operation of these powers before the new Charter came into force and thus not require the introduction of a supplemental Charter, the latter of which was suggested in the White Paper. The Chairman of the BCS supported this view, although the Council agreed that if in nine months they found a lack of co-operation between Scotland and London over the issue of opt-out television programmes for Scotland, then they would review the situation and ask for a supplemental Charter.¹⁰⁷ The Government's White Paper also indicated that it wished to see the development of two more television networks on UHF 625 lines (Bands IV and V), and agreed that the BBC should be permitted to start one of these new services by mid-1964. The latter is discussed in the following section. The Government also stated that any colour service should only commence on 625 lines UHF, and that in due course the BBC would be allowed to start transmitting some programmes in colour on their second channel. A second White Paper was issued

¹⁰⁵Tom Driberg, "Pilkington's Purge", New Statesman Vol. 63, No. 1633 (29 June 1962), p.926.

¹⁰⁶Broadcasting : Memorandum on the Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960 (Cmnd. 1770; July 1962), p.2.

¹⁰⁷Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Minutes, 7 September 1962, No. 146(a), BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1960–64.

in December 1962. The Pilkington Report, as Asa Briggs noted, helped to shape the mood in which problems and opportunities in broadcasting were viewed in the 1960s, a decade of expansion within the BBC.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸Asa Briggs, The BBC : The First Fifty Years (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1985), p.311.

4.7 BBC-2: Origins, Programme Policy, Development, and impact on Regional Output

The Pilkington Report, discussed in the previous section, recommended that the BBC should be permitted to start a second television service. The Government subsequently accepted that the BBC should be allowed to start such a service by mid-1964. This section focuses on the BBC's second television network. It considers the background to the BBC's contention that it should operate a second television network; the conflicts in priorities between starting a new channel and improving coverage of existing BBC programme services in Scotland; programme policy for the BBC's second television network and why alterations in programme scheduling took place shortly after the service began in 1964; and finally the extension of BBC-2 throughout the country to reach Scotland in 1966, and its impact on regionally produced programme material.

Before the arrival of commercial television in 1955, the BBC, in the face of potential competition, argued that its obligations to the viewing public could only be fulfilled if it operated a second television channel. In a paper written in August 1953 the Director-General stated:

Our intention of starting an alternative Programme must be realised as quickly as possible so as to ease the burden thrown on the Service by having to satisfy the Corporation's obligations within so small an output.¹⁰⁹

This view was endorsed by the Board of Governors. When commercial television did arrive, the BBC indicated that a second television channel was necessary to enable the Corporation to fulfil the requirements of the Charter to inform, to educate, and to entertain the public. In January 1955 the question of programme hours, facilities and transmitter development for a second television channel were discussed by the Board

¹⁰⁹Board of Governors : Paper G.87/53, 20 August 1953, p.2, BBC WAC R1/3/104.

of Management.¹¹⁰ In July 1955 the BBC made an application to the Postmaster-General for the use of frequencies in Band III for a second service. The BBC hoped that if approval for a second channel was given, then transmissions could begin in October 1957. The ITA was however allocated frequencies in Band III for the ITV service. The BBC then argued that competition from ITV would narrow rather than widen programme choice, hence the need for a second BBC television channel to provide complementary planned schedules.¹¹¹ In order to cater for a wider variety of tastes and so develop a full public service operation, the BBC extended its sound broadcasting services; this principle was now equally applied to television broadcasting and formed the basis for the BBC's contention that it should operate two television channels.

In a pamphlet published in 1958 Sir Arthur fforde, BBC Chairman, argued that a third U.K. television channel should be allocated to the BBC rather than to ITV because only the BBC could raise the proportion of 'serious' programmes within peak viewing hours.¹¹² The ITA was, however, in consultation with the PMG about the allocation of the third television network. The ITA's view was that the existing single channel made it impossible for the Authority to stimulate competition within ITV given the absence of more than one programme company in each area. This, together with the development of networking in ITV, had reduced competition within the system and lowered the volume of regional programme output. The ITA was therefore arguing that if the third television channel was allocated to ITV then it would be able to appoint more programme companies and so overcome these obstacles which were not fully

¹¹⁰Board of Management : Minutes, 31 January 1955, No. 62, BBC WAC R2/1/10.

¹¹¹British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1955-56 (Cmd. 9803; July 1956), p.8.

¹¹²British Broadcasting Corporation, The BBC Looks Ahead (London : BBC, 1958).

envisaged in the Television Act of 1954. At the very least the ITA believed that any new television service should be independent of the existing two networks, rather than have two services under the control of any single broadcasting organisation. The ITA stated that it would even prefer the third service to be run by a single separate state-financed corporation than operated by the BBC or by a programme company already providing programmes.¹¹³

In March 1959 the PMG stated that no third television channel in Britain would be authorised until the Television Advisory Committee had decided on the line standard to be used (i.e 405 or 625 lines). In August 1960, the BBC submitted a paper to the Pilkington Committee in which it emphasised that a second BBC television channel would provide a greater outlet for regional programme material.¹¹⁴ The Pilkington Report, published in 1962, did recommend that an additional television channel should be allocated to the BBC. The White Paper of July 1962 stated that the Government proposed to authorise the BBC to start an additional television channel on 625 lines in UHF.¹¹⁵ There was concern in Scotland as to whether the decision to start a new channel should take priority over extending coverage of the existing BBC channel. In September 1962 the Broadcasting Council for Scotland noted that BBC-2 might start in London in Spring 1964 although Scottish transmitter development already sanctioned would not be completed until much later. The Council argued that this conflicted with its stated view that those people with no television service should receive one before other people were provided with a choice

¹¹³Independent Television Authority : Annual Report and Accounts 1960-1961 (H.C. 52: 31 January 1962), p.6.

¹¹⁴Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960. Volume 1. Appendix E. Memoranda Submitted to the Committee (Cmnd. 1819; September 1962), p.88.

¹¹⁵Broadcasting : Memorandum on the Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960 (Cmnd. 1770; July 1962), p.6.

of three television channels.¹¹⁶ The Council also hoped that the new television studio in Glasgow which was to be equipped for 625 lines to supply programmes on video tape for London would not unduly interfere with the provision of programmes on the existing channel for viewers in Scotland. It could be argued that a second channel was likely to provide more opportunities for producers in Scotland for opt-out and network programmes. Indeed the presence of a second channel appeared to offer an opportunity to overcome existing obstacles which prevented a fragmentation of the network between 7.00 and 10.00 pm. Programme planners in London were believed by BBC Scotland to be resistant to allowing Scotland to schedule its own programmes at more suitable times (i.e during the early evening, and at regular time slots). The BCS commented upon planning staff in London by stating that they, "... looked inward rather than outward and appeared to think it knew best and resisted the Council's attempts at effective representation of Scottish interests at effective times."¹¹⁷ The Director-General reaffirmed that in cases of disagreement between Scotland and London programme planners, matters could be referred to him, although any disagreement had to be settled before Radio Times programme listings were sent to the printers. In its Annual Report for 1962-63 the BCS regretted that the decision to start BBC-2 had taken priority over the aim of improving broadcasting coverage in Scotland to ensure that almost everyone had the opportunity of access to one television service:

The Council has repeatedly stated its conviction that the people in the remoter places should have one dependable service before the people in the populous parts of the country are offered a third television service. Much as it welcomed the Government's decision that the BBC should start a second television service

¹¹⁶Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Minutes, 7 September 1962, No. 146(c), BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1960-64.

¹¹⁷Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Minutes, 2 February 1962, No. 28, BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1960-64.

in 1964, it cannot but regret the order of priority.¹¹⁸

The BBC did not wish to delay the start of a second channel until it achieved almost complete coverage of BBC-1, because the costs of providing a service to remote areas increased significantly as gaps in coverage were filled.

By Autumn 1963 Hugh Greene, the BBC's Director-General, had stated that the target date for the opening of the BBC's second television service would be 20 April 1964. Until national coverage of the new channel could be achieved, BBC-1 was expected to continue for a few years to present a balanced programme output for viewers who could only receive the one channel. It was intended that BBC-1 and BBC-2 would be planned together to provide a genuine choice of programmes in contrast to the programme similarities which had developed due to competition between the BBC and ITV. The new channel was not expected to capture a large audience given that its remit would include the provision of programmes for minority interests and more regional material. Transmissions were expected to start in London and the South-East in the peak viewing hours and so be immediately available to upwards of ten million viewers; they would then spread to the rest of the country as the network developed. In a BBC lunchtime lecture delivered four months prior to the start of BBC-2 transmissions, Stuart Hood, Controller of Programmes (BBC Television), stated that, "... our basic endeavour must be to give viewers, during the hours of maximum audience availability, the widest possible choice we can devise within the limits of our money and resources".¹¹⁹ Competition between the BBC and ITV for a share of the audience, especially during peak viewing hours, had for some time been held to be responsible for diminishing effective programme choice. Now BBC-2 was

¹¹⁸British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the year 1962-63 (Cmnd. 2160; October 1963), p.107.

¹¹⁹Stuart Hood, "The Prospect Before Us", in BBC Lunchtime Lectures, second series, 11 December 1963 (London : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1963), p.7.

expected to provide such a choice because the new channel was not envisaged as likely to be in direct competition with ITV.

The BBC outlined in its Annual Report for 1962–63 the general programme policy for the new channel, how it would integrate with the existing BBC television channel, and how this in turn would govern the relationship between both BBC channels and the single commercial channel. The BBC stated:

The aim when the second BBC television service opens will be to try to provide the public with alternative programmes of quality and interest and the widest possible range of choice, as recommended by the Committee on Broadcasting. This will not mean that the BBC will compete with independent television in the sense of trying to pit two BBC programmes against a single commercial programme simply in an effort to attract viewers; but it will mean competition with independent television in the broad sense of trying to take advantage of the new freedom of two channels in order to put better television on both.¹²⁰

The BBC's attempt to draw the line between healthy competition (i.e the provision of better quality programmes on two BBC networks) and unhealthy competition (i.e competition with ITV for greater audiences) had yet to be put to the test. Also, the Corporation did not state precisely how BBC-1 and BBC-2 programmes would differ from each other, and whether it was intended for quality productions and regional material to find a natural home on BBC-2 thus leaving BBC-1 as the main competitor to ITV. To prepare for the advent of the new service the BBC re-equipped studios to operate on 625 lines, planned the siting of new UHF transmitters, recruited and trained additional production and technical staff (68 extra production staff, 154 engineers, 176 technical assistants, and 189 technical operators), and created four output groups to supply programme material to both networks – these output groups consisted of current affairs, drama, light entertainment, and outside broadcasts. Overall the introduction of the new channel resulted in the growth and complexity of the BBC. Test transmissions for BBC-2 began on 4 January 1964 from Crystal Palace in London

¹²⁰British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1962–63 (Cmnd. 2160; October 1963), pp.8–9.

in order to assist the radio trade in the installation of new receivers prior to the official opening of the service. From March 1964 the BBC produced all its programmes on the 625-line standard, with BBC-1 programmes being converted down to 405 lines using a standards converter. The new service opened in April 1964.

On 20 April 1964 BBC-2 began transmissions from Crystal Palace to the London area on 625 lines UHF, two years after the planning of the network had begun. One million people were equipped with television sets capable of receiving BBC-2, but unfortunately on the opening night a power failure at Battersea power station which supplied electricity to the transmitters, blacked out Television Centre. The Government's agreement that the additional service should be provided by the BBC was not accompanied by any increase in the licence fee to help cover the costs of the new service. However, it might have been unfair for an additional charge to be imposed on all licence holders when initially only a minority of viewers could receive BBC-2. Manufacturers of receivers were understandably anxious for the new service to be extended throughout the country as quickly as resources would permit. BBC-2 was expected to develop into a national network within five years, although there would remain persistent pockets of poor reception in remote areas shielded by hills, particularly in Scotland, until many relay stations could be built. As regards programme policy, given that BBC-2 would not need to be tied to the same time schedules as BBC-1, differentially timed programmes could be catered for. However, with a short period of time, viewing figures for the new channel were found to be disappointing and so corrective action was required prior to the launch of the Autumn 1964 programme schedules.¹²¹

By September 1964 the BBC accepted the need to introduce changes in programme planning to take effect in the winter programme schedules for 1964-65. The original BBC-2 programme policy known as 'seven faces of the week', whereby

¹²¹"Poll shows few BBC2 viewers", The Times, 9 June 1964, p.12.

each evening offered viewers a different category of programme material, was to cease. This policy gave BBC-2 a distinctiveness but it complicated any attempt to make the channel complementary to the programme material available on BBC-1 given that the aim was to avoid contrasting programmes, for example by deliberately scheduling a serious programme on BBC-2 against lighter programme material on BBC-1. It also segregated viewers to such an extent each evening that it lost audiences to the other channels. It also appeared that the channel acquired a highbrow image to such an extent that viewers tended to remain with the existing networks which broadcast familiar programmes in familiar time slots. The abandonment of the 'seven faces' planning principle avoided clashes of programme material on both BBC channels and this facilitated the introduction of common programme junctions (i.e common starting times for programmes). Continuity announcers could thus state which programmes were about to be broadcast on the opposite channel. The use of complementary planning enabled a mix of minority and majority interest programmes to be broadcast on BBC-2 on any evening during the week. The change in policy sought to remove the impression that BBC-2 was the television equivalent to the Third Programme on radio and thus designed only to cater for more cultural, specialised, and by definition, minority audiences. David Attenborough (Controller, BBC-2) stated in 1966 that it would have been wrong for BBC-1 to concentrate primarily on light entertainment programmes and leave all the highbrow material to the second channel, because many viewers could not yet receive BBC-2.¹²² The public, however, continued to view BBC-2 selectively, although it should be noted that the so-called minority interest programmes were sometimes viewed by millions of people and could reach a wider audience if they were re-broadcast on BBC-1. The BBC-2 serial "The Forsyte Saga" was the most notable of the transfers to BBC-1. A point worth noting about the smaller audiences for BBC-2 was that this channel was for many years only available to a small percentage

¹²²David Attenborough, "BBC 2", in BBC Lunchtime Lectures, fourth series, 16 March 1966 (London : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1966).

of the population, it was broadcast for fewer hours each day, and it started transmissions later in the day than BBC-1.

The BBC's second channel became technically within reach of a larger percentage of the population than those people who were willing to equip themselves with receivers to obtain the new channel. The BBC's plan for the extension of BBC-2 throughout the country was that the new service should be introduced quickly and to a restricted audience rather than slowly and to a larger audience. The BBC's Director of Engineering told the BCS in 1962 that a master plan covering the whole of the U.K. would be prepared and the high-power stations covering the most populated areas would be built first.¹²³ The BCS was concerned that difficulties might arise if viewers in Scotland had to pay a higher licence fee before the new service reached them. BBC-2 programmes were initially expected to reach Scotland on 12 December 1965 from a transmitter at Blackhill. Due to delays in the construction of masts and aerials caused by bad weather, it was not until June 1966 that the BBC began test transmissions from the transmitter. Regular transmissions began on 9 July 1966, and programmes began at 7.00 pm when David Attenborough introduced BBC-2 to Scotland.¹²⁴ BBC-2 was extended to the Aberdeenshire area with the opening of the Durriss transmitter on 29 July 1967; Blackhill and Durriss began radiating BBC-2 colour programmes on 30 October 1967. Production facilities in Scotland for contributing material to BBC-2 had been in service since 17 February 1964 when Studio A in Glasgow was opened. This was the first regional studio to be equipped for dual standard operation (i.e 405 and 625 lines). In the absence of a programme link to carry the 625-line signals from Glasgow to London, programmes had to be recorded on tape and sent to London. This studio specialised in the production of

¹²³Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Minutes, 6 July 1962, No. 126, BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1960-64.

¹²⁴Radio Times, 7 July 1966, p.19.

drama serials for BBC-2, and continued to do so until the late 1960s by which time the network had moved into colour production and the Glasgow studio could no longer supply programme material until it was converted for colour operation, which took place during 1971-72.

4.8 BBC Scotland Television Development, 1962–1977

This section examines television development in Scotland in terms of programme policy and programme output from the immediate post–Pilkington period in 1962 up until the publication of the Annan Report on Broadcasting in early 1977. It considers the changes in the responsibilities of the Broadcasting Council for Scotland to cover television output within and for Scotland, and Scotland's five–year television development plan (1965–70) which followed on from these changes; comparisons between the operation and development of BBC television in Scotland and BBC English regional television and Independent Television in Scotland; changes in television programme policy with greater emphasis placed on the networking of Scottish material after Alasdair Milne became Controller of BBC Scotland in 1968; the resurgence of national consciousness in Scotland in the early 1970s and the consequent need to reflect social, economic and political change in programme output; and the proposals of the 1974 Crawford Committee on Broadcasting Coverage with regard to the regionalisation of television within Scotland, and finally the preparation of evidence for the Annan Committee on Broadcasting.

The 1960s can be considered as a period of rapid expansion within the BBC as a whole, much of it as a result of the proposals of the Pilkington Report of 1962. As noted in section 4.6, this Report recommended that the BCS should be given powers in relation to television broadcasting in Scotland analogous to those which it exercised with regard to sound broadcasting. This was subsequently accepted by the Government, put into practice by the BBC, and incorporated in the new Royal Charter of 1964. With regard to television, the Charter stated that each National Broadcasting Council would have the following additional function which would be exercised with full regard to the distinctive culture, language, interests and tastes of people in the national regions:

(b) the function of controlling the policy and content of those programmes in the Television Services which the Council decides shall be provided primarily for reception in that country in replacement of or in addition to programmes provided

by the Corporation for general reception in Our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.¹²⁵

These powers were in fact put into practice by the Corporation prior to the publication of the new Charter. Towards the end of 1962 the BCS considered future television development in Scotland. It was noted that the second network would present the BBC with a strong challenge but that contributions to BBC-2 would be expected from Scotland, at least in order to put Scottish interests before a network audience. On programme development from 1965-1970, Council members thought that the current output was on the right lines and that the main objective in the first stage of television development was to expand existing work between 1963 and 1967 and seek finance for programmes rather than for capital expenditure on studios.¹²⁶ Until such time as regional resources throughout the U.K. could be converted to 625 lines – the line standard to be used for BBC-2 – regional contributions to the network had to be confined to BBC-1, thus prompting the formation in late 1962 of a working party to study increases in regional contributions to BBC-1.¹²⁷ In Scotland the five-year development plan for television was designed to give effect to the new powers of the BCS over television programme output. It was expected that the period 1965-1970 covered by the plan would be divided into at least two phases comprising 1963-67 and 1967-70. For the year ended 31 March 1962 gross expenditure on television in Scotland was £856,000, with net expenditure (i.e gross expenditure minus amounts

¹²⁵Broadcasting : Copy of Royal Charter for the Continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation (Cmnd. 2385; June 1964), p.10.

¹²⁶Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Minutes, 5 October 1962, No. 164, BBC WAC National Broadcasting Councils : Scotland, Minutes, 1960-64.

¹²⁷"Working Party on Regional Contributions to BBC-1", notes of a meeting, 11 December 1962, p.1, BBC WAC T16/651/1.

charged to the network) of £702,000.¹²⁸ This expenditure comprised the Scottish programme allowance, staff, studios and premises, engineering, and transmitting costs. The largest element within the total was represented by the staff costs (£227,000 gross expenditure; £189,000 net, after allowance was made for £38,000 charged to the network). The programme allowance for television was £163,000 gross, moderately greater than the radio programme allowance of £148,000. In 1961 the Director-General envisaged that the television programme allowance would increase to £477,000 by 1969–70, and do so by five yearly increases of £40,000, beginning on 1 October 1965. The phased increases were reproduced in a memorandum from the Controller, Scotland to the Controller of Programme Services, Television.¹²⁹ The engineering and transmitting costs were consistently greater for television than for radio, but the gap between gross expenditure on television and that on radio was narrowed only because of the additional costs involved in radio in transmitting the Light Programme, the Third Programme, and Network Three. In its Annual Report for 1961–62 the BCS was seeking to achieve an output of 10 hours a week on television from Scotland by 1970. The Council stated that the main Scottish needs in television in terms of subject areas were news, religion, current affairs, drama, entertainment, folk music and dancing, sport, and arts programmes. Towards the end of 1965, after the development plan had begun, there were five regular Scottish-originated television programmes each week and an increase in drama and light entertainment output. The limited range of programme material produced in Scotland did, however, not escape criticism. In the House of Commons Mr Norman Buchan (MP for Renfrew, West) said that the BCS had failed to ensure that the BBC paid full regard to the distinctive culture, language, interests and tastes of the people of Scotland. He stated:

Scottish B.B.C. has singularly failed to serve the Scottish people and this is equally

¹²⁸British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the year 1961–62 (Cmd. 1839; October 1962), p.95.

¹²⁹Andrew Stewart (Controller, Scotland) to Controller Programme Services, Television, 15 October 1962, p.2, BBC WAC T16/233/7.

true of commercial Scottish television, both in quality and in quantity.¹³⁰

The progress of the Scottish television development plan was dependent upon the allocation of funds by the BBC in London. These funds were in turn dependent upon the ability of the Corporation to secure adequate increases in the licence fee. In October 1964 the BBC had requested an increase from £4 to £6 for combined licences and £1 to £1 5s for sound-only licences; the government however increased the combined licence to £5 and the sound-only licence to £1 5s, and only from 1 August 1965. The BBC therefore subsequently had to curtail expansion as indicated in the White Paper of December 1966.¹³¹ The implication of this for Scotland was a two-year standstill in television development, which represented Scotland's contribution to the BBC's overall financial cutbacks. Total television programme output, (i.e for viewers in Scotland and for the network), which had increased significantly from 339 hours (1963–64)¹³² to 481 hours (1964–65),¹³³ increased at a more moderate rate for the following two years and stabilised from 1967–69 at over 500 hours each year. Within these totals the decline in contributions to the network in and after 1965–66 was compensated for by the increase in television programme hours produced by the BBC in Scotland for viewers in Scotland. For example, although contributions from Scotland to the network declined each year from 122 hours (1964–65)¹³⁴ to 77 hours (1968–69),¹³⁵ television programme output for viewers only in Scotland increased from

¹³⁰712 H.C. Deb. Ser. 5, Col.813 (13 May 1965).

¹³¹Broadcasting (Cmnd. 3169; December 1966), pp.4–5.

¹³²British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1963–64 (Cmnd. 2503; November 1964), p.130.

¹³³British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the year 1964–65 (Cmnd. 2823; November 1965), p.150.

¹³⁴ibid.

¹³⁵British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the year 1968–69 (Cmnd. 4216; December 1969), p.136.

359 hours (1964–65)¹³⁶ to 417 hours (1968–69).¹³⁷ The bulk of the television programme output in Scotland consisted of programmes taken by Scotland from the network and the other regions. During 1963–64, for example, within the total programme output of 3,675 hours, 3,336 hours of programmes were taken by Scotland from the network and other regions and only 339 hours were produced in Scotland of which 62 hours were for the network and 277 hours were for viewers in Scotland.¹³⁸ The television development plan for Scotland did not resume until Autumn 1969 when financial resources again became available to continue with the programme of development.

The development of BBC television in Scotland has to be viewed in relation to developments in BBC English regional and Scottish commercial broadcasting. These comparisons help to place into perspective the aims and achievements of Scotland with regard to television output. For technical and financial reasons television, unlike radio, could not provide extensive localised broadcasting services. Television services did not offer the same precision as geographical boundaries. The siting of transmitters and the cost of television productions placed constraints on BBC regional policy. The three large English regions prior to their reorganisation in 1970, could not claim to be serving as homogenous an audience as the BBC's Scottish region. In July 1969 the BBC published in pamphlet form its plans for reorganising non-metropolitan broadcasting.¹³⁹ Thus in July 1970 when these changes took effect and the three

¹³⁶British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the year 1964–65 (Cmnd. 2823; November 1965), p.150.

¹³⁷British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the year 1968–69 (Cmnd. 4216; December 1969), p.136.

¹³⁸British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1963–64 (Cmnd. 2503; November 1964), p.130.

¹³⁹British Broadcasting Corporation, Broadcasting in the Seventies : the BBC's Plan for Network Radio and Non-Metropolitan Broadcasting (London : BBC, 1969), p.13.

large English regions (North, Midlands, South and West) whose boundaries were originally defined by the range of transmitters, were replaced by three network production centres and smaller television regions serving more manageable communities, in Scotland the BBC maintained a unitary presence with headquarters in Glasgow and smaller studio centres in Edinburgh and Aberdeen. The BBC's three principal regional centres outside London which were based in Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester, formed the nucleus of the network production centres created because of the re-organisation of broadcasting in 1970. These centres were expected to reflect the character of the areas which they served and to contribute material to the networks. They assisted in lessening the concentration of production facilities in London to the extent that each centre specialised in a particular type of programme output: Birmingham specialised in drama, Bristol in natural history, and Manchester in light entertainment and industrial affairs. It was a recognition that London had no monopoly in innovative programme ideas, but it had adverse implications for the networking of BBC Scottish television output because Scotland's status as a national region prevented it from specialising in any single programme area. As regards the eight television regions, the BBC had sought over the years prior to reorganisation in 1970 to serve smaller communities by creating five additional areas within the three large English regions. These were replaced in the reorganisation by eight television regions located as follows: South (Southampton), West (Bristol), South-West (Plymouth), Midlands (Birmingham), East Anglia (Norwich), North-West (Manchester), North (Leeds), and North-East (Newcastle). Each of the eight television regions was designed to provide more localised services than had been possible previously with the three large regions. These stations which opted-out of BBC-1 to provide a news and magazine programme, covered a larger area than any local radio stations, but they broadcast for a shorter period of time each day and so did not provide such a wide range of programmes. They did, however, reach a large audience when material was broadcast on the BBC-1 network. The BBC regarded these stations as complementary, not competing, services on the same lines as network radio and

television.¹⁴⁰ The changes were an attempt to reflect cultural diversity and lessen metropolitan predominance in television, but the eight television regions, although each represented a smaller operational base than BBC Scotland, exhibited similarities with Scotland in that there were deficiencies in finance and facilities and sometimes film crews were sent from London to cover items of interest in these regions for network transmission. This was particularly so with regard to those five English stations which were not based in the same cities as the three large network production centres, hence like Scotland, there was concern about metropolitan bias and lack of autonomy. This did lead to a review by Huw Wheldon (Managing Director, BBC Television) which was instituted in 1975, with a report submitted to the Board of Governors in January 1977. The Wheldon Report led to Regional Controllers being given greater discretion in financial and administrative matters, and a new post of Chief Assistant to the Director-General (Regions) was created. Like Scotland, the English regions benefited to some extent from the pressure to devolve more authority.

The development of BBC television in Scotland can also be considered in relation to the presence of the three Scottish ITV programme companies. The smaller size of the ITV regions did call into question the size of the BBC regions. The federal structure of ITV was expected to keep programme makers in close touch with the communities they served. The extent to which ITV was genuinely regional does, however, have to be viewed in relation to the disproportionate influence of the major English network production companies. The Scottish ITV companies had to rely upon material from the large programme companies in England for sustaining output just as BBC Scotland relied upon network material for most of its programme output. There was never perfect competition within ITV.¹⁴¹ The network provided the smaller

¹⁴⁰BBC Handbook 1974 (London : BBC, 1973), p.58.

¹⁴¹Bernard Sendall, Independent Television in Britain, Vol. 1: Origin and Foundation, 1946-62 (London : MacMillan Press, 1982), p.66.

companies with a regular supply of programmes but it also acted as a disincentive for these companies to produce programmes above their minimal contractual commitment to the ITA. The Scottish ITV companies, like BBC Scotland, found it difficult to break into the network. In its Annual Report for 1964–65 the ITA offered the following comment on the networking of regional programmes:

Whilst the Authority regards the first task of regional companies to be the provision of programmes serving the tastes and interests of their areas, it believes that material for wider showing will emerge from time to time, and that the arrangements for the mutual use of programmes should be flexible enough to make this practicable.¹⁴²

However, given that programmes made for networking by regional companies were not guaranteed to be taken by network companies before production commenced, it was thus much more risky for small companies such as STV to make these programmes because less money would be recouped if only some companies took these programmes. The absence of competition between programme companies in any area (given that only one programme company was appointed in each area), and the disincentives to regional programme production, were the two principal criticisms of ITV. In ITV the franchise which had been allocated by the ITA to programme companies on a geographical and regional basis, (i.e. three Scottish ITV companies covering different regions) was reassembled by the network companies and divided by time (i.e. time slots for different programmes produced by different network companies supplemented by a smaller number of Scottish-originated programmes). What regional broadcasting centres in the BBC and in ITV wanted was a wider transmission of their programme material without compromising their sense of regional identity. This was the policy of Alasdair Milne who became Controller of BBC Scotland in 1968.

¹⁴²Independent Television Authority : Annual Report and Accounts 1964–65 (H.C. 26; 20 December 1965), p.11.

In 1968 Alasdair Milne, aged 37, became the youngest regional controller in the BBC's history. He sought to concentrate resources on high quality productions which could be offered to the network. Milne wanted Scotland to increase its programme contributions to both BBC television networks and he re-emphasised this approach in an article in a book published in 1970¹⁴³ and in his autobiography published in 1988.¹⁴⁴ He stated that if too much attention was focused on catering for local programmes, then new ideas for network programmes would come increasingly from London thus reinforcing their metropolitan content. On the other hand the cost of programmes which were networked would be covered by London thus releasing more resources for network or Scottish programmes. Milne wanted Scotland to play a fuller part in U.K. broadcasting without losing its Scottish identity. His policy involved concentrating on programmes in the high cost areas of drama, documentary, and light entertainment which were more likely to be accepted by the network. Scotland did contribute drama serials such as "The Vital Spark", "Scobie in September", and "Dr Finlay's Casebook" to the networks from Studio A in Glasgow; drama serials were, however, later withdrawn from Glasgow due to the lack of colour facilities. In news and current affairs, programmes such as "Reporting Scotland" and "Current Account", both introduced in 1968, offered some opportunities for Scotland to contribute to the network; some documentary films were also shown on BBC-2 after the formation of a television documentary unit within BBC Scotland. Light entertainment could be regarded as a more difficult area in which to get material networked, but programmes such as "The Stanley Baxter Show" were transmitted on BBC-1; the BCS believed it

¹⁴³Alasdair Milne, "Regional Devolution and Standards of Excellence", in Structures of Broadcasting : A Symposium, ed. E.G. Wedell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, (1970), pp.52-60.

¹⁴⁴Alasdair Milne, DG : The Memoirs of a British Broadcaster (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1988), p.52.

to be vital for Scottish entertainment programmes to be seen throughout Britain.¹⁴⁵ Emphasis was placed on these three subject areas (i.e drama, documentaries, and light entertainment) when the five-year television development plan resumed in Autumn 1969 after a two-year standstill because of financial constraints. Although programmes primarily for viewers in Scotland were not neglected and new programmes such as "Scope" (which covered the arts in Scotland) were introduced, the main priority was to divert resources into programmes capable of being taken by the networks. With the development of stranded programming from the late 1960s, as noted in section 2.4, there were fewer opportunities for Scotland to contribute single quality programmes. Scotland did not have the advantages of the network production centres in England which could develop a strand of programming without abandoning local interests. The situation varied depending upon the subject area. For example, Scotland produced drama output for the network because drama was a programme area where the network continued to accept one-off productions; light entertainment material was more difficult to export to the network.

Robert Coulter, who succeeded Alasdair Milne as Controller of BBC Scotland on 1 January 1973 was, for health reasons, not in a strong position to carry through Milne's policies and steer BBC Scotland through a challenging period both in terms of pressure for devolution within the BBC, and the need to reflect social, economic and political change in Scotland in programme output, as well as face the challenge from commercial local radio.¹⁴⁶ Scotland needed someone who had greater influence in London. The challenges facing the BBC in Scotland were recognised by the BCS at the beginning of its Annual Report for 1973-74. The celebration in Glasgow in March 1973 to mark fifty years of broadcasting in Scotland offered a brief opportunity

¹⁴⁵British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the year 1968-69 (Cmd. 4216; December 1969), p.113.

¹⁴⁶Taped Interview with John Gray, Edinburgh, 5 April 1988.

to take a retrospective view of Scottish broadcasting, but it was to the future that broadcasters urgently had to turn their attention. There was the technical challenge of improving UHF television coverage, and the programming challenge of ensuring that a greater proportion of Scottish material could enrich U.K. output. Scottish broadcasting came under greater scrutiny and this generated external criticism. In January 1974 a Better Scottish Television Association was formed in order to suggest methods for improving broadcasting output in Scotland. This Association which was based in Edinburgh and whose members included the MP Nicholas Fairbairn and the author Bill Williams, arranged for a survey of public opinion on broadcasting to be conducted by System Three (Scotland) Ltd. This survey was published on 29 October 1974.¹⁴⁷ Despite the inherent limitations of such a survey and the fact that the questions asked were often general in nature, the results indicated that BBC and ITV programmes in Scotland were regarded as less professional, less experimental, and less controversial than network programmes, and that life in Scotland was not adequately represented by broadcasting output in Scotland.

A month later, on 21 November 1974, the Committee on Broadcasting Coverage chaired by Sir Stewart Crawford, published its Report. The Committee wanted measures to be taken to develop regional variations in television to counter centralism and to reflect regional identities. The Report indicated that because BBC Scotland served a large community, a case could be made for subdividing Scotland in a way similar to that achieved by ITV. This did not entail the creation of independent BBC production centres in Scotland but rather the introduction of an element of regional diversification in the transmission of programmes on a sub-opt-out basis.¹⁴⁸ In addition to the possibility of sub-opt-outs in the North of Scotland, the Crawford

¹⁴⁷System Three (Scotland) Ltd., Broadcasting in Scotland : A Survey of Attitudes (1974).

¹⁴⁸Report of the Committee on Broadcasting Coverage. Chairman : Sir Stewart Crawford (Cmnd. 5774; November 1974), p.29.

Committee also wanted the BBC to consider the allocation of funds and technical apparatus to permit opt-outs on BBC-2, and not just on BBC-1, for the provision of local interest programmes. This proposal was influenced by comparisons with ITV, because the commercial programme companies were regarded by the Committee as catering more fully for regional needs than the BBC; the Committee thus supported the retention of the three separate ITV companies in Scotland rather than their amalgamation into one large company. With the appointment of the Annan Committee on Broadcasting in April 1974, the recommendations of the Crawford Committee were left to be considered by the Annan Committee, particularly because it had a wider remit. Material was prepared by the BBC for submission to the Annan Committee, and the broadcasters now had to await publication of its report and of the Government's response to it in order to judge the future direction of broadcasting both within Scotland and throughout the U.K.

4.9 The Annan Report of 1977: Submissions, Recommendations, and Responses

In 1969 the Labour Government planned to establish a Committee to examine broadcasting, but these plans were abandoned when Labour lost the 1970 General Election to the Conservative Party. It was therefore not until 1974 with the return of the Labour Party to power that the Committee was eventually established. On 10 April 1974 Roy Jenkins, Home Secretary, announced in the House of Commons that a Committee would be formed to consider the future of broadcasting services in the U.K, including the possible provision of additional services; it would also examine the constitutional, organisational and financial arrangements involved. The Committee was also expected to comment on the recommendations of the Crawford Committee on Broadcasting Coverage whose report was expected to be published towards the end of 1974. Lord Annan, Provost of University College London, was appointed to chair the Committee; the appointment of other members was announced on 12 July 1974. The Committee received a large volume of both written and oral evidence. The Annan Committee, which first met in July 1974, held 44 meetings. The Home Secretary asked the Committee to report in 2½ years and so he extended the BBC's Charter and Licence and Agreement from July 1976 until July 1979 to allow adequate time for debate when the report was published, and for any legislation that would require to be implemented. The Committee began its study during a period of expansion and concluded in 1977 during a period of greater pessimism about the resources available for expansion in broadcasting.

The Annan Committee received a wide range of submissions on the conduct of the broadcasting services. In 1975 the Broadcasting Council for Scotland submitted a memorandum to the Committee in which it stated that UHF 625-line television should be extended to all communities of more than 500 people before provision was made for a fourth television channel. Furthermore the Council did not want 405-line VHF television to be withdrawn from any area until UHF services could be provided

on a uniform basis. It also wanted more material to be networked on BBC-1 and BBC-2 and to be produced for viewers in Scotland. Apart from the volume of programme output, the BCS sought more flexibility in deciding whether to opt-out from BBC-1 or BBC-2. The Council noted that Scotland needed the finance and the facilities to transmit its own programme mix; in particular, there was a need for greater financial freedom when committing funds to major series, and freedom to opt-out from the networks in order to substitute Scottish material. The BCS also looked towards the possibility of greater freedom for the regions of Scotland to create their own programmes at some periods during the day and to contribute material for both a Scottish and U.K. audience. On the image of Scotland which the BCS wanted the BBC in Scotland to project, the Council stated:

To those who are not Scots it should be said that the Scotland that we seek to project is not only the known land of romance and matchless scenic beauty but also the newer Scotland of off-shore oil, industrial growth, artistic renaissance and self-government – not parochial, but outward-looking and international in its approach.¹⁴⁹

BBC Scotland NUJ Chapel supported the BCS view that there was a need for more regional contributions to the network and more Scottish opt-outs. It supported greater decentralisation of power and authority within the BBC, but not the creation of an autonomous Scottish Broadcasting Corporation. James Kemp, BBC Scottish editor of News and Current affairs from 1965–72, stated that the lack of Scottish contributions of material to the television networks denied Scottish-based producers an opportunity to raise their professional standards and that this in turn provided justification for London taking even fewer Scottish programmes.¹⁵⁰ The Scottish National Party (SNP) supported greater freedom for Scotland to opt-out during peak viewing hours, and to

¹⁴⁹Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Memorandum to the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting, c. June 1975, Para. 16, SRO COM.1/101.

¹⁵⁰James Kemp, "Future of Broadcasting in Scotland", p.3, SRO COM.1/388.

have the resources to reflect adequately social and economic change in Scotland.

The SNP summarised Scottish broadcasting in general by stating:

Scottish broadcasting suffers from being neither fully 'National', nor purely 'regional'. There is too little cash, too few facilities, and too much duplication of effort. So long as BBC London and the ITV Big Five dominate the programme schedules and sign the cheques, Scottish broadcasting will remain provincial.¹⁵¹

The need to get more material networked was not unique to BBC Scotland. In a submission to the Annan Committee, STV stated that it wanted more Scottish material networked because this would strengthen the Scottish programming base and attract talented producers to work in Scotland. The Labour Party's Scottish Council wanted better television facilities in Scotland, and arrangements for BBC Scotland to opt-out from the network without reference to London.¹⁵² The intention was to give greater freedom of control to programme planners in Scotland, but not to press for a separate broadcasting organisation for Scotland for fear that this would lead to an unacceptable degree of parochialism in programme output. The Conservative Party in Scotland were also in favour of greater networking of Scottish programmes – especially documentaries during a period of economic and industrial change in Scotland – in order to provide viewers outside Scotland with a more contemporary perspective on events within Scotland.

The ability to reflect social, economic and political change in Scotland in programme output also depended upon the financial and technical resources available. On 2 July 1975 the Association of Broadcasting Staff (ABS) (Edinburgh branch) sent a submission to the Annan Committee in which it stated that there were strong

¹⁵¹Scottish National Party : Evidence for the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting, n.d., p.8, SRO COM.1/623.

¹⁵²The Labour Party : Scottish Council, "Evidence to the Annan Commission on Broadcasting", March 1975, p.2, SRO COM.1/401.

reasons for re-directing the resources of BBC Scotland to Edinburgh because of its position as the headquarters of government in Scotland, as a financial and cultural centre, and as the home of traditional institutions such as the law and the Church. The ABS (Edinburgh branch) stated that within BBC Scotland, Edinburgh had the status of an under-equipped and under-staffed branch office, thus giving undue influence to Glasgow in television output. It was argued that the BBC should not merely have been planning to open new studios in Edinburgh but should also, at a time of radical political and economic change, move the Corporation's Scottish headquarters to Edinburgh. The Association argued that unless change of this nature was contemplated then the resources of the BBC in Edinburgh would be inadequate to cope with the new demands posed by a future Scottish Assembly should political devolution become a reality.¹⁵³ Within the BBC the issue of mini-devolution was a theme dealt with by several of the submissions of evidence to the Annan Committee. So whereas the ABS (Edinburgh branch) drew attention to the negative effects of centralisation of resources within Scotland, what was of concern to many of the other individuals and organisations were the effects of centralisation in the BBC as a whole and its influence on the development of broadcasting in Scotland.

The SNP wanted broadcasting to be devolved to the proposed Scottish Assembly, but had no wish to create an inward-looking Scottish broadcasting system. It sought a wider range of high quality programmes produced in Scotland, for Scottish broadcasters to both reflect and assert Scottish national identity, and for a high priority to be given to the expansion of existing broadcasting services in Scotland. If the SNP's aim of self-government came to fruition then the party proposed the formation of a Scottish Broadcasting Commission financed through licence fees, an advertising levy, and Treasury grant, and responsible for allocating radio and television channels. The Association of Broadcasting Staff supported the maximum possible decentralisation

¹⁵³Association of Broadcasting Staff (Edinburgh branch): Submission to Annan Committee, 2 July 1975, p.2, SRO COM.1/26.

of programme-making but within existing constitutional and financial limitations; it rejected the idea of establishing autonomous broadcasting organisations in the national regions because of its potential disruptive effects on the terms of employment and career development of staff.¹⁵⁴ Likewise, it did not support the breaking up of the BBC into individual units since this would undermine centralised bargaining arrangements for salaries and conditions of service. The Scottish Trades Union Congress (S.T.U.C.) advocated an expansion of BBC Scotland programme activities and greater devolution in decision-making, but it did not support the creation of a separate BBC Scottish Corporation. The BCS stated that BBC Scotland must have direct control over a greater proportion of expenditure in relation to broadcasting within and for Scotland. The Scottish Controller, Alastair Hetherington, blamed the centralised nature of the BBC for the failure of BBC Scotland to get a higher proportion of material taken by the networks; he hoped that it would be possible to build up staff and resources in Scotland, and secure greater access to network time.

There were two further issues on which the Annan Committee received submissions and which can be noted in this section: the allocation of the fourth television channel, and Gaelic broadcasting. The SNP supported improvements in existing services before any decision was made regarding the allocation of the fourth television channel; the party wanted the latter to be used for community and experimental programmes when it was eventually authorised. The BBC argued that the fourth channel should not be operated by commercial interests because, it was stated, this would create a fierce competitive situation between the BBC's two television channels and two commercial channels (i.e it would re-impose the negative aspects of competition in television in the late 1950s and early 1960s).¹⁵⁵ The

¹⁵⁴Association of Broadcasting Staff : Submission to the Annan Committee on Broadcasting, n.d., Para.22, SRO COM.1/22.

¹⁵⁵British Broadcasting Corporation : BBC Memorandum Choice in Television, February 1975, p.8, SRO COM.1/87.

Association of Broadcasting Staff did not support the operation of the fourth channel as a commercial service, although it believed that the IBA should provide the transmitter network and distribution links. The Labour Party Scottish Council, and the Scottish Trades Union Congress, together with submissions from other individuals and organisations, supported the improvement of reception of existing television services. As regards Gaelic broadcasting, An Comunn (the Highland Association) criticised the lack of broadcasting time and resources allocated to coverage of Gaelic language and culture. In particular, the small allocation of television time and its restriction to the North and North-West of Scotland was criticised given that Gaelic speakers were scattered throughout Scotland. An Comunn disliked the fact that the Crawford Committee on Broadcasting Coverage had been more generous in recommending improvements in Welsh television output in comparison with Gaelic television output in Scotland. It stated that the future aim should be to establish a Gaelic television service broadcasting for four hours each day to Gaelic areas (i.e. initially on an area opt-out basis in the Highlands and Islands, but with some output also broadcast on all Scottish transmitters). Television was regarded as a more important medium than radio for sustaining Gaelic language and culture. Furthermore, An Comunn went on to remark:

We should add here that we would also expect some Gaelic to be broadcast in England and Wales in order to help broaden the general level of awareness concerning non-English based cultures indigenous to the United Kingdom.¹⁵⁶

The Highland Regional Council drew the Annan Committee's attention to the need to take account of Gaelic speaking areas in broadcasting output. The SNP supported the expansion of Gaelic coverage on television and regretted that the Crawford Committee did not give the same priority to television coverage of Gaelic as it did to Welsh, but the party did not support the use of the fourth channel for Gaelic

¹⁵⁶An Comunn Gaidhealach : Submission to the Annan Committee into the future of broadcasting, 27 December 1974, para.12, SRO COM.1/184.

broadcasting because Gaels represented only 1½ per cent of the population.

The Annan Report on Broadcasting was published in March 1977. The principal recommendations with regard to television broadcasting in Scotland are noted below. The Report stated that the BBC should develop its production base in Scotland to provide more material both for Scottish and particularly network transmission.¹⁵⁷ The Committee acknowledged that the BCS wanted opt-outs on BBC-2 and not only on BBC-1, but stated that the proposed fourth television channel, (under the control of a new Open Broadcasting Authority) rather than BBC-2 should provide opportunities for a distinctively Scottish television service which would include Gaelic programmes. The prospect of regional television, as highlighted by the 1974 Crawford Report, was regarded by the Annan Committee as a more distant prospect. The Committee stated that it did not wish to place too many burdens on the BBC and so it recommended that the Corporation should continue to provide a basically national television service in Scotland rather than extensive regional variations within Scotland. It did, however, suggest that BBC Scotland should be given more flexibility over the scheduling of programmes specifically for viewers in Scotland to replace network programmes.¹⁵⁸ The Committee wanted both BBC Scotland and the ITV regional companies to contribute more material to the network, but it rejected the view expressed by the SNP and the Labour Party Scottish Council that there should only be one ITV contractor in Scotland to facilitate the networking of material; the Annan Committee stated that the three ITV regional companies in Scotland were needed because the BBC in Scotland essentially provided a service for the whole of Scotland. The Annan Report also supported the extension of production facilities in Scotland.

¹⁵⁷Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting. Chairman : Lord Annan (Cmnd. 6753; March 1977), p.405.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., p.406.

With the prospect of political devolution for Scotland, there was the question as to what the relationship would be between any Scottish Assembly and the broadcasting organisations. The broadcasters were opposed to the creation of separate broadcasting authorities answerable to Assemblies in Scotland and Wales, for fear that the latter would bring political influence to bear on programme content. Anyhow, control of frequency planning had to remain under central control because of the U.K.'s international obligations. The cost of broadcasting was another matter. In this the Annan Report stated:

If therefore broadcasting in Scotland and Wales were to be separated from broadcasting services in England, it would cost the people of Scotland and Wales dear, particularly if the Scottish and Welsh broadcasting authorities had to pay the English Authorities for popular programmes.¹⁵⁹

The Annan Committee wanted the BBC to remain the main instrument of broadcasting in the U.K., to continue to be financed by licence fees, but have particular responsibilities in the national regions. The SNP's proposal that there should be a completely autonomous broadcasting authority in Scotland was rejected. The Committee did, however, question whether the National Broadcasting Councils were representative of the communities which they served, hence the suggestion that the range of interests and views on these councils should be widened. Summing up the case against the creation of separate broadcasting authorities for the national regions, the Committee stated:

To talk of devolving responsibility for broadcasting to some body in the national regions is meaningless unless the power to plan the use of frequencies goes with it and that would be impracticable. Since the same frequencies are used many times throughout the country, the strategic decisions on the number of services and the frequencies to be used to provide them must continue to be taken centrally, unless there is to be a drastic reduction in the number of services

¹⁵⁹ibid., p.72.

everywhere.¹⁶⁰

The Committee stressed that they were not suggesting that improvements could not be made in the provision of, and control over, broadcasting services in Scotland. Indeed, as already noted, the Committee's support for increased Scottish contributions to the network was one step in this direction.

A variety of responses flowed from the publication of the Committee's Report. The BCS issued a press statement on 9 May 1977 in which it welcomed Annan's recognition of the need for BBC Scotland to exercise greater financial and managerial authority. Alastair Hetherington (Controller, BBC Scotland), and Professor Alan Thompson (BBC National Governor for Scotland) both welcomed most of the Scottish recommendations contained in the Report, particularly those advocating that BBC Scotland should produce more network television programmes and have greater control over capital and operating expenditure. There was more concern in England about the Annan Report's recommendation that the BBC should cut back on its regional centres to concentrate programme-making at the large network production centres, since the small BBC centres were deemed to have inadequate equipment and insufficient resources for bold programming. The Government published its White Paper on Broadcasting in July 1978. The Government hoped that the broadcasting authorities would take note of the view expressed by the Annan Committee that there should be an increase in the output of Gaelic programmes. The Government also agreed that the BBC should remain the national instrument of broadcasting in the U.K. with responsibility for providing services catering for the particular needs of people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This ruled out any possibility of creating a separate broadcasting authority in Scotland. The Government did, however, agree that a greater degree of autonomy should be given to the National Broadcasting Councils. In particular, the White Paper stated that these Councils should be allocated money

¹⁶⁰Ibid., p.405.

for programmes made specifically for transmission in Scotland and Wales, and should themselves decide how to divide this allocation between radio and television; and that they should have an annual budget for minor capital investment.¹⁶¹ The Government also stated that changes in the appointment of members to these Councils should take place (i.e. lay members, other than the National Governors, would be appointed with the Home Secretary after consultation with the Secretary of State for Scotland or Wales and the BBC Chairman rather than by a panel of the BBC's General Advisory Council). As regards the fourth television channel the Government stated that it should be supervised by an Open Broadcasting Authority (OBA) which would acquire but not produce programmes. Finally, a phased programme would operate for closing existing 405-line transmitters so that eventually the whole country would be provided with 625-line UHF transmissions; and the plan to extend UHF television to all communities of 500 or more people, many of which were located in Scotland, would not be hindered by the development of a fourth channel.¹⁶² Some of the Government's aims, such as the creation of an OBA, were not accepted by the new Conservative Government in 1979. Further details on the aftermath of the publication of the Annan Report on broadcasting in general in Scotland are discussed in section 6.3.

The following chapter adopts a similar pattern to chapter 4 but discusses the development of the BBC's radio programme services. Emphasis is placed on programme policy, and to a lesser extent, programme content. It covers in chronological order a number of topics including the development of the BBC Scottish Home Service, BBC Local Radio Broadcasting, Network Radio, competition between BBC and Independent Local Radio, Community Radio in Scotland, and programme policy and development with regard to BBC Radio Scotland.

¹⁶¹Broadcasting (Cmnd. 7294; July 1978), p.23.

¹⁶²Ibid., p.13.

CHAPTER 5

BBC RADIO BROADCASTING AND COMPETITION WITH INDEPENDENT LOCAL RADIO

5.1 The Post-War Reorganisation of Broadcasting and the Development of the Scottish Home Service, 1945-1951

This chapter focuses on the development of the BBC's radio broadcasting services in the post-war period up until 1980. In common with chapter 4, emphasis is placed on programme policy, and to a lesser extent, programme content. The Scottish developments in BBC radio broadcasting are placed within the wider U.K. context in order to highlight how BBC radio in Scotland has evolved during this period. The discussion of various issues and themes within and between sections takes place within a chronological framework as in the previous chapter. The time span covers a range of topics from the introduction of the BBC Scottish Home Service in 1945 to the formation of BBC Radio Scotland in 1978.

This section focuses on the reorganisation of the BBC's sound broadcasting services after the war and the programme policies which were associated with each of the sound broadcasting networks established during 1945 and 1946; it examines the introduction of the BBC Scottish Home Service (SHS) in 1945 which marked the resumption of Scottish regional broadcasting after the war; the relationship between the Scottish Home Service and the other sound networks is discussed; a review of Scottish programme output is considered in relation to why the period from 1947 to the mid 1950's has been regarded as the golden age of Scottish radio broadcasting; and finally it discusses the stratification of the radio networks by the early 1950's.

On the outbreak of war in 1939 regional broadcasting was discontinued, and a single Home Service was broadcast, supplemented in January 1940 by a Forces Programme. Before the end of the war the BBC had begun the process of analysing what kind of programme services should be offered to the public when the war was over. The Forces Programme contained much lighter programme material (i.e. dance music, variety, sport) than the Home Service and represented the first real attempt by the BBC to cater for a particular category of listener. The popularity of this programme which helped to maintain the morale of the nation, gave an indication that perhaps provision should be made for such a programme service after the war. The Home Service, however, was not aimed at one definable group and could neither compete with the more popular items on the Forces Programme nor adequately cater for minority audiences. This indicated the need for a separate network catering for more specialised interests. The upshot was the BBC's plan to introduce three radio services: the traditional Home Service (the middle strand in BBC broadcasting which was not expected to operate as a national network programme because it had a regional element); a Light Programme (to replace the Forces Programme and compete with Radio Luxembourg by providing entertainment programmes); and an arts programme later renamed the Third Programme (to cater primarily for minority and specialised interests).

In 1940 Regional Directors agreed to recommend strongly that in any post-war reorganisation of the BBC services, regional broadcasting should be given greater scope. What was envisaged were separate services for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to complement the national service. The use of a large number of low-power stations to transmit material of local interest was also advocated.¹ Early in 1945 the Director-General told Regional Directors that the Corporation wished to restart regional broadcasting on a strong footing, to encourage competition within the BBC to produce the best programmes consistent with the most efficient allocation of resources and

¹Regional Directors' Meeting : Minutes, 1 August 1940, No. 460, BBC WAC R34/735/3.

manpower, to strengthen regional output, and to lessen antagonism between the regions and London.² Regional broadcasting represented one element in a projected restructuring of the format of the radio services. The different programme services were initially referred to by the BBC in the planning stage as Programmes A, B and C. Programme A was intended to be a regionalised programme of the same cultural standard as the Home Service and aimed at the middle-brow audience; Programme B was expected to be a popular programme presenting lighter material, not aimed at a mass audience, but nevertheless contrasting with programme A; and programme C was to be aimed at a high cultural level focusing on the arts and serious discussion, to be experimental in nature, and to provide an intelligent alternative during peak listening hours to programme A. The Board of Governors approved in principle the latter recommendation of the Director General.³ The regional components of programme A were to be allowed to make contributions to programmes B and C. In April 1945 Basil Nicolls (Senior Controller) prepared a revised outline of the structure of the post-war sound services.⁴ In it the title suggested for programme A was the National Programme with the components supplied by the regions to be named geographically, such as the Scottish programme; possible titles for programme B which were suggested included the National Alternative programme, BBC Popular programme or BBC Light Entertainment Programme; and the title proposed for programme C was the Arts programme. No simultaneous broadcasting (SB) was to be allowed between any of the three programmes, except that regions contributing to Programme C could take their programme on SB in their regional programme; regional programmes were expected to be contrasted with programme B. Programmes A, B, and C eventually became known as the Home, Light and Third programmes.

²Regional Directors' Meeting : Minutes, 7 February 1945, No. 10(b)(d), BBC WAC R34/735/4.

³Board of Governors : Minutes, 22 March 1945, No. 58, BBC WAC R1/1/13.

⁴Basil Nicolls, "Post-war Home Programme Set-up", 23 April 1945, BBC WAC R34/574.

On 29 July 1945 the Home Service was restored on a regional basis and the Light Programme was introduced. The basic Home Service covering London and the home counties was supplemented by six regional services which included the Scottish Home Service (SHS). Both these programmes were supplemented by the Third Programme on 29 September 1946. The changes were a recognition that the BBC was no longer addressing one great audience but rather a variety of audiences with their own interests. The changes also signalled a break from pre-war Reithian paternalism to the extent that there was no longer any identifiable balance of light and serious material on any channel. With the re-introduction of regional broadcasting, listeners in the regions, such as Scotland, therefore had a choice between their Home Service programmes and the more popular programme material which was broadcast on the Light Programme. Sir William Haley, BBC Director-General, commented on the front cover of the Radio Times about the return to regional broadcasting:

It will be the BBC's aim to make its six regionalised Home Services alert, living things; steadily developing in strength and character, drawing on their native resources and taking the best from elsewhere. The regions will seek the widest development of technique and talent. Their existence should lead to rivalry both of creativeness and of craft, and to the fostering of those national and local cultures which are an enduring part of our heritage and which broadcasting can encourage more powerfully than any other medium.⁵

Listeners who were mainly interested in variety tended to desert the Home Service for the Light Programme. Prior to the introduction of the Third Programme, the BBC considered the nature of this new network and the general programme structure of each of the radio services. In a paper prepared in July 1946 it was stated that the Light and Third programmes were expected to flank the Home Service on either side, the former carrying popular material and the latter covering more serious and cultural material. All three programmes, despite having their individual character, were designed to shade into each other rather than be rigidly stratified (i.e. there were to be differences in approach and treatment of subject matter rather than in range of content). Competition between them rather than central coordination was sought,

⁵Radio Times, 27 July 1945, p.1.

especially as programme teams were obliged to contrast programmes and avoid clashes of similar material. With the imminent arrival of the Third programme, the Director-General commented in this paper on the home programme policy of the BBC:

We hope it will come not only to be a programme of great significance in the life of the country but also one that will give pleasure to a widening audience of all classes and ages to whom the riches it has to offer would otherwise be permanently denied.⁶

On 29 September 1946 the Third Programme was introduced. This network was expected to cater for the best in the arts, literature, classical music and talks. The rigid programme structure of the Home Service utilising fixed time slots, was replaced in the Third Programme by a more flexible arrangement thus allowing programmes to be as long or as short as necessary depending upon the treatment required of different types of subject matter. Listeners were expected to be selective in their choice of programmes on the new network. The Third Programme gave broadcasters greater room for experimentation with different projects but it could be criticised for creating a cultural ghetto because of its concentration on the more demanding programmes in terms of subject matter; and the coverage of the new service was also uneven and poor, particularly in Scotland where coverage was confined to the main cities. The Third Programme had to assume a high level of education in its listeners otherwise it would have duplicated the efforts of the other two networks.⁷ It was also questionable whether the Third Programme could be expected to be of interest to the most intelligent people of all social classes. The policy of associative planning whereby material from the various arts and sciences would be placed together to deepen each listener's understanding of any given subject, reinforced the rather elitist character of the network. In Scotland the percentage of people who listened to the

⁶Board of Governors : Paper G.51/46, 4 July 1946, p.7, BBC WAC R1/3/59.

⁷Dyneley Hussey, "The Third Programme and the Middle-brow", BBC Quarterly Vol.4, No. 3 (Autumn 1949), pp.160-4.

Third Programme was above the U.K. average but less than the number who listened in to the Scottish Home Service.

After the demise of the Scottish local stations in the 1920's there were, prior to 1939, basically two BBC radio services: The national programme which was broadcast throughout the U.K.; and the Scottish regional programme established under the Regional scheme. The latter programme provided near national coverage within Scotland in contrast to the four local Scottish stations which had failed to cover coastal or mountainous areas. On the outbreak of war in September 1939 the Scottish regional service was merged with the U.K. Home Service which consequently contained little Scottish material. Preparations were later made for the type of Scottish radio service which could be developed after the war. Towards the end of 1943 the Saltire Society decided to ascertain the views of its members on the BBC's Scottish output. A questionnaire was issued in June 1944 and the results, plus comment, were published in a pamphlet later that year.⁸ It was argued that there was a need to stimulate Scottish output and for programmes not to be confined to dealing with purely Scottish subjects. The BBC was criticised for relegating Scots to a parochial role within the U.K. Members of the Society wanted the BBC to provide a Scottish perspective on national and international events. The publication of the Society's pamphlet was noted in the monthly report for September 1944 by the BBC's Scottish Regional Director, Melville Dinwiddie. The Scottish Home Service which began broadcasting on 29 July 1945 did increase the volume of Scottish programme output. In his monthly report for July 1945 the Scottish Director noted:

The first reaction of listeners in Scotland have been of general satisfaction. No special reception difficulties have been reported, and in one or two areas improvements on wartime reception have been noted. Listeners have appreciated the increase of Scottish items, and, although the press have given the programmes a mixed reception, and the Saltire Society have indicated that we are on trial and unlikely to meet their demands, the opinions expressed in

⁸Saltire Society, Broadcasting : A Policy for future development in Scotland (Edinburgh : Saltire Society, 1944).

listeners' letters and reports from reliable sources have been encouraging.⁹

The output ranged from news, talks and music (serious and light) through to features and drama, children's, schools and religious programmes. The Scottish region had the opportunity to cover local material and promote indigenous talent, although it was not necessarily the case that the most successful regional programmes were the most local in content. The SHS was integrated with the Home Service and planned as an alternative to the Light and Third programmes. The justification for regional services was that there was a recognisable need for the BBC to be seen to be catering for local life, culture and artistic talent, and that this could not be performed by one basic Home Service. In the preface to a pamphlet published shortly after the inauguration of the Scottish Home Service, Melville Dinwiddie stated that the service would draw upon new talent and seek to reflect the life and character of Scotland.¹⁰ The basic Home Service from London was broadcast to the London region and for a significant proportion of the day to the six regions which included Scotland. Most Scottish material was broadcast during the evenings. The SHS had the option not to take the London programme and therefore substitute its own programmes whenever it wished to do so. There were a few exceptions to this rule such as the news, the transmission of party political broadcasts and ministerial statements. In practice the ability to opt out to transmit Scottish material depended upon the resources available, and the use to which they were put. The spending of additional allowances on importing popular London artists was, for example, unlikely to benefit the production of local programmes. The SHS incorporated some programme material from the Light and Third programmes and so its composition differed from the London Home Service where there was a more rigid separation of material. Unlike England, broadcasters in Scotland were deemed to be less inclined to assume that the minority and majority

⁹Scottish Director, "Monthly Report, Scotland", July 1945, No. 2, BBC WAC R34/748/2.

¹⁰British Broadcasting Corporation, This is the Scottish Home Service (Edinburgh: BBC, 1946), p.2.

audiences constituted separate publics; the Scottish audience was regarded as being more willing to accept a wide choice of programmes. There was also according to George Bruce (BBC Arts Producer 1956–1970) less of a social distance in Scotland between the broadcasters and the public which they served.¹¹

Programme material in the SHS was also made available to the other radio networks. Scottish programmes were sometimes broadcast on the Light and Third programmes or even taken by the Home Service in London and re-broadcast as repeats in Scotland. During 1950–51, Scotland contributed 400 hours of radio programmes for other BBC services, and this included 88 hours for the Light programme and 47 hours for the Third programme.¹² This did, however, only represent a small percentage of the total hours of programmes produced in Scotland (i.e. 1,893 hours of which 1,493 hours were produced primarily for listeners in Scotland). The bulk of programmes broadcast on the SHS were taken from the Home Service and other BBC services: during 1950/51, this represented 4,473 hours. Scotland did nevertheless produce more of her own material than any of the other BBC regions outside London; Scotland was also a significant contributor to the Third Programme in comparison with other regions, but less so with regard to contributions to the Light Programme. Contributions to other radio networks gave prestige to producers in Scotland and released more resources for producing other programmes given that London covered the costs of programmes taken by the radio networks. The Scottish Home Service was more popular in Scotland than the Light Programme whereas in England the reverse situation applied;¹³ also, a larger proportion of listeners in

¹¹Taped Interview with Dr. George Bruce, Edinburgh, 11 April 1988.

¹²British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1950–51 (Cmd. 8347; September 1951), p.32.

¹³British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1952–53 (Cmd. 8928; September 1953), p.26.

Scotland tuned in to the Third programme in comparison with other parts of the country, although reception was limited to areas served by local transmitters, in effect the cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen.

The years 1947–1955 have sometimes been referred to by broadcasters as the golden age of Scottish radio broadcasting. It was a period in which radio broadcasting in Scotland developed to provide a fuller reflection of Scottish life and contributed high quality programmes to the other radio networks, but was not yet subject to intense competition from television broadcasting for audiences and for resources. Many Scottish produced programmes were intended primarily for listeners in Scotland and thus represented genuine alternatives to programmes available on the other networks. Typical programmes included "Arts Review" and "Scottish Life and Letters". There was, however, resistance in Scotland to the use of the words 'opt out' to describe such programme material. Melville Dinwiddie, Scottish Regional Director, stated:

Our job, as I see it, is to select the most suitable items for Scottish listeners, and we are not exercising an option, but operating an agreed policy.¹⁴

Producers such as Robert Kemp, George Bruce and A.P. Lee originated many programmes which were taken by the other networks. Also, with fewer lines of authority in Scotland compared to London, radio producers in Scotland experienced a greater sense of freedom and authority. Their authority derived to a significant extent from their specialist knowledge in specific subjects. For example, George Bruce stated that he was appointed as programme assistant in December 1946 because of his knowledge of Scottish literature. He argued that the high quality of Scottish output up until the mid-1950's derived in part from the BBC's appointment of individuals who had already distinguished themselves in particular fields outwith the BBC.¹⁵ It was a

¹⁴Melville Dinwiddie to Senior Controller, 1 August 1947, BBC WAC R34/731/4.

¹⁵Taped Interview with Dr. George Bruce, Edinburgh, 11 April 1988.

period during which London had great respect for the work of radio producers in Scotland. Scottish staff had freedom to decide how to allocate resources within the given budget. However, by the mid-1950's television began to attract an increasing number of listeners and claim more resources. There was a diminished role for radio broadcasting after 1955, and with the greater influence of television, control passed to London because it had the manpower and technical resources to develop television broadcasting. It was thus the television rather than radio producers who left Scotland to go to London to improve their career prospects and learn new skills. Radio retained its popularity during daytime hours, and in some parts of Scotland it remained the main source of information and entertainment. To counteract the popularity of television, an increasing number of popular items were broadcast on the SHS in the early evening; the SHS also retained a larger proportion of listeners than other regional services despite competition from television. The BBC, however, never regarded the provision of the three radio services and one television service as sacrosanct should audience preferences alter as television coverage spread throughout the country. In a paper prepared in September 1953 on the BBC's ten-year-plan for broadcasting the following point was made:

Sooner or later, however, the time will come, with the growth of television audiences and a corresponding shrinkage of audiences dependent on sound alone, when the BBC may feel free to calculate that its obligations towards its various audiences can be met by a differently proportioned set of programmes in sound only and in sound and vision.¹⁶

The question as to when and whether the BBC could reduce its output to two radio services after it took on the additional responsibility of an extra television channel was posed. In regional terms the questions the BBC had to consider were: (1) whether the future of regional broadcasting should be in radio or television; (2) when and under what conditions television should be regionalised; and (3) the financial implications of such changes.

¹⁶Board of Governors : Paper G.93/53, 30 September 1953, Para. 5, BBC WAC R1/3/104.

By the early 1950's each of the three radio networks had reinforced their individual character thus discouraging listeners to switch between channels. Nevertheless, the BBC in a submission to the Beveridge Committee on Broadcasting stated:

It is important to note that, while each of the three programmes has its individual character, there is no firm line of demarcation dividing them. The programmes shade into each other, the differences between them being much more marked in approach and treatment than in range of content.¹⁷

Although each radio network was expected to concentrate on what it did best, the BBC stressed the interchangeability of items between the three networks. In practice after the inauguration of the Third Programme, fewer people began to listen to serious programmes and instead switched their attention mainly to the Light Programme or to television. This situation was deemed to be attributable to the specialist audience which Third Programme material was aimed at.¹⁸ Sir William Haley, BBC Director-General, in a statement on home programme policy, had envisaged the community as a broadly-based cultural pyramid slowly aspiring upwards. This pyramid was served by the three radio programmes differentiated but broadly overlapping in levels and interest with each programme leading on to the other.¹⁹ The intention was to lead the listener over the years from the good to the better programmes by curiosity and a growth of understanding. Listeners were encouraged to be selective in choosing programmes and so move from the lighter to the more serious material (i.e. from the Light to the Third Programme via the Home Service). Unfortunately Haley was wrong to suppose that listeners would tune into all three radio networks. The audience for the Third Programme remained a minority audience. The Board of Governors

¹⁷Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949. Appendix H. Memoranda Submitted to the Committee (Cmd. 8117; January 1951), p.25.

¹⁸Board of Governors : Minutes, 11 October 1951, No. 206(a), BBC WAC R/1/1/19.

¹⁹Sir William Haley, "Home Programme Policy", 15 March 1948, BBC WAC R34/422/1.

maintained that the Third Programme was making an important contribution to culture and that consequently it had fully justified itself. However, the Board regretted that the numbers listening were not larger and hoped that improvements in reception would increase the listening figure, with the proviso that standards should not be lowered to achieve this aim.²⁰ Five years after the inauguration of the three radio services, the Director-General issued a paper assessing the situation. Internal competition among the services was credited with widening the range of programme output. Central planning to coordinate output would, it was stated, have robbed programmes of their richness and variety by placing weaker items against stronger ones to avoid embarrassing alternatives. The paper went on to state:

It can be claimed that the B.B.C. today, at the end of five years' post-war broadcasting, is far livelier, more all-embracing, more liberal, less exclusive, less bound by idiosyncracies or formulae than it was previously.²¹

The following section focuses on the 1951 Beveridge Report on Broadcasting, and radio programme services in the 1950s.

²⁰Board of Governors : Minutes, 25 October 1951, No. 211, BBC WAC R1/1/19.

²¹Board of Governors : Paper G.84/51, 27 June 1951, p.8, BBC WAC R1/3/92.

5.2 The Beveridge Report on Broadcasting, and Developments in Radio Broadcasting, 1951–1959

The Beveridge Committee of Inquiry was appointed in 1949 to consider various aspects of the domestic broadcasting services and to advise upon the nature of these services after 31 December 1951. This section covers those aspects which relate primarily to radio broadcasting; television development and other related issues are covered in section 4.3. This section begins by considering the submissions of evidence to the Beveridge Committee, and moves on to discuss the recommendations of the committee and the outcome of the publication of its report. It concludes by reviewing developments in radio broadcasting in the 1950's. The committee which was chaired by Lord Beveridge, author of the Social Security Report of 1942, held its first meeting on 24 June 1949. It received a wide range of evidence, both written and oral, on the conduct of the BBC's broadcasting services. The report of the Broadcasting Committee was published on 18 January 1951.

The BBC submitted a memorandum to the committee in September 1949 on the place of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the broadcasting system. Within the BBC's regional scheme these three countries were all designated national regions. With the need to maintain common programme standards the BBC stated that the quality of regional programmes had, subject to available resources, to approximate to those of national programmes. Uniformity in both technical standards and pay and conditions of service throughout the U.K. had to be maintained. However, the BBC said that it was its policy to devolve a large measure of responsibility to the regions to the extent that the regions were responsible both for the choice of material to be included in their own programme schedules and for the allocation of expenditure within

their programme funds.²² The BBC recognised the additional programme responsibilities of the BBC in Scotland in comparison with the English regions. The corporation stated that its policy of devolution provided reasonable scope for the exploitation of the services to meet the special needs of the national regions. In the area of staffing, the BBC stated that although most senior appointments were made from the nationals of each country, it was not the policy of the regions to follow a narrow nationalistic policy in programme terms given that the aim was to provide the best informative, educational, and entertainment programme material regardless of its country of origin. This policy was deemed to be necessary for both practical and programme policy reasons as follows:

It must again be emphasised that no single Region could be regarded as an effective self-contained broadcasting organisation. All the Regions for the purposes of their own Regional programmes draw fully and gratuitously on material included in the programmes organised in London and on those organised in other Regions. This must remain so if listeners are to be given the best programmes.²³

The point which the BBC wished to emphasise was that Scotland, in common with the other regions, could draw upon a fund of common services (i.e. engineering, administration, finance, programmes) far in excess of what they could command on an independent basis. In a submission to the committee, the Labour Party stated that it wished to see the encouragement of more competition between the BBC regions. It favoured the improvement of regional resources to enable the regions to produce more of their own programmes and thus displace more of the network output. The party believed that greater decentralisation of responsibilities to the regions would introduce a more welcome and beneficial competitive element into the BBC's services:

To this end the regions must have a wider measure of control over their own affairs, the right to choose their own staff, a bigger share of their licence income, more studio space of their own, more and better equipment, and a

²²Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949. Appendix H. Memoranda Submitted to the Committee (Cmd. 8117; January 1951), p.156.

²³Ibid., p.158.

greater sense of independence.²⁴

On 21 October 1949 the Saltire Society submitted a paper to the Broadcasting Committee. The Society stated that broadcasting could influence public taste and opinion and that it therefore had the potential to assist the Scottish people to retain and develop their own distinctive culture. To achieve this the Society argued that radio broadcasting should come under effective Scottish control given what it regarded as the inadequacy of the BBC's Scottish Advisory Council with regard to Scottish programmes. So the Saltire Society proposed that a Board of Scottish Governors should be appointed and that they should be given executive powers over Scottish broadcasting.²⁵ It was believed that an autonomous Scottish broadcasting system would be capable of improving programme quality, stimulating technical advance, and increasing staff and accommodation. As regards the function of the proposed Scottish Governors, the Saltire Society stated that they should be resident in Scotland, appointed by a panel representative of Scottish interests with the Secretary of State for Scotland as chairman, and have the power to initiate and control broadcasting policy in Scotland and to appoint staff. The Society also recommended that one Scottish Governor should have the right to sit on the Board of Governors in London and that one member of the Board of Governors should be permitted to sit on the Board of Scottish Governors.

In September 1949 the Scottish National Party (SNP) also submitted evidence to the committee on the conduct of BBC radio broadcasting in Scotland. In its memorandum to the committee the SNP stated categorically at the outset that it wanted the establishment of a separate broadcasting system for Scotland: a system which originated in Scotland, was controlled in Scotland, and which was funded from

²⁴*Ibid.*, p.346.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p.441.

within Scotland. The SNP argued that the BBC was treating Scotland literally as a region rather than as a nation with its own distinctive culture and institutions.²⁶ Furthermore, the SNP referred to the inability of BBC announcers to discriminate between England and Britain when they talked about the "North". The party regarded the BBC as principally English in outlook, London controlled, and offering little opportunity for Scottish views to be heard about events in Scotland or on topics in countries with which Scotland had trading, cultural or friendship links. The SNP wanted more resources to be made available to develop fully Scottish broadcasting, and there was criticism that news about other countries had to be channelled through London thus providing information through a metropolitan prism. The party was critical of both the quality and quantity of radio programmes originating in Scotland. In particular, it was argued that quality could be improved if the BBC paid better fees to attract improved material from Scottish contributors. The poor broadcasting coverage of the BBC's Third Programme in Scotland which was only available to listeners near to the local transmitters in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee was also criticised, although the SNP added that this network was English in outlook because it contained little Scottish material; the party wanted more attention given to Scottish interests in both the Third and Light programmes. As regards the issue of political broadcasting, the SNP wanted equality on the air in Scotland with other major political parties. There were two further points which the party made about broadcasting in Scotland. The style of announcers was a contentious issue because it contributed to the view that the BBC was essentially English in outlook; the SNP wanted Scottish announcers to be allowed to speak in their own accents rather than have to modify these to fit in with BBC preconceptions. Finally, the SNP was anxious to see the publication of a Scottish edition of The Listener which would thus provide more opportunities to publish Scottish talks.

The BBC's Scottish Advisory Council forwarded its views on broadcasting in

²⁶Ibid., p.437.

Scotland in a memorandum in November 1949. The Council noted that any review of broadcasting in relation to Scotland had to take account of the resurgence of Scottish national consciousness. On technical matters, the Council recognised the constraining factors which prevented 100 per cent coverage of all radio programme services in Scotland. This prevented many listeners in Scotland from having the choice of three radio services. The Scottish Home Service provided the best coverage by reaching 95 per cent of the population in Scotland; the Light and Third programmes reached a smaller percentage of the population. The SAC therefore wanted the development of the highest power available under international agreements on medium wavelengths in order to improve broadcasting coverage.²⁷ The Council also pressed for more manpower and equipment for Scotland. In common with the SNP, the Council drew attention to the poor coverage of Scottish talks in The Listener and so proposed the introduction of a Scottish edition of the paper. The Scottish Radio Retailers' Association in its submission of 10 November 1949 highlighted the problems in areas which did not receive good reception of BBC programmes. The Association stated that listeners living in areas which could not receive all BBC services should be charged a smaller licence fee. However, given the changing nature of broadcasting coverage over time, such a scheme would have been administratively too complex and too costly to operate. As regards the conduct and quality of broadcasting output, the Association reflected the views expressed in several other submissions to the committee, namely that broadcasting in Scotland should be Scottish rather than London controlled and thus permit full use to be made of artistic talent within Scotland. On 21 June 1950, Lord Reith submitted a memorandum to the Broadcasting Committee in which he criticised the BBC policy of introducing the Third Programme because he was opposed to the segregation of cultural items on one radio service. As regards regional output he stated:

The Regions have a contribution to make; they should have adequate opportunity to make it. But the criterion should be interest and merit, not vague assessments of what, in quantity, should be justifiable. There is too

²⁷Ibid., p.282.

much regional material at present; the cause of regionalism would positively gain from its reduction.²⁸

This view ran totally counter to that of, for example, the Fabian Research Group which wanted VHF to be used to develop local broadcasting to enable more local material to be produced, particularly as the regional scheme had stifled local programme output.

Having considered the large volume of written and oral evidence given by many individuals and organisations, the Beveridge Committee on broadcasting outlined its recommendations in a report published in January 1951. The Committee considered the issue of devolution of responsibilities to the regions. The report stated that there was a greater degree of closeness among staff and less red tape in the regions because of their smaller organisational structure in comparison with London. Moreover there was a recognition that several submissions of evidence to the committee asked for greater autonomy for Scotland and Wales. The report noted the BBC's view that the national regions were subsidised because revenue received was less than expenditure incurred, and that therefore these regions could not provide a complete programme service comparable to that available from the three radio networks. However, all regions contributed to the cost of shared services, such as the Light and Third programmes, without regard to the extent to which they received good reception of these services or listened in to them. These factors would have reduced the Scottish deficit. Nevertheless, in the absence of an autonomous Scottish broadcasting system the issue focused on how to ensure that the BBC paid full regard to the interests of the national regions. The Broadcasting Committee therefore recommended the creation of broadcasting commissions for the national regions each of which have the power to initiate and decide on a Home Service programme in its region, and that

²⁸Ibid., p.365.

it should have powers in relation to financial matters, accommodation and staff.²⁹ Although the committee accepted that the BBC should have overall responsibility for finance, it was recommended that there should be an increasing allocation of block grants to these Commissions; the BBC would, however, remain ultimately responsible for capital developments. The Chairman of each of these Commissions was expected to sit on the Board of Governors in London and thus in the case of Scotland, bring Scottish problems directly to the highest decision-making level within the BBC. The Broadcasting Committee referred to the proposed change from the advisory nature of the Regional Advisory Councils in the national regions to the executive powers of the proposed Commissions as an attempt to substitute federal harmony for centralising unity in London. No similar changes were proposed for England, but the committee did state that there was a need to make the programme autonomy of the Regional Controllers more substantial.

There were several other matters which the Committee commented upon which can be noted in this section. On financial matters the Committee stated that the BBC had told Parliament and the public very little about its financial operations. The Report stated that the BBC accounts gave little more information than the legal minimum required by the Companies Act of 1948. The Beveridge Committee wished to see the breakdown of the total expenditure by regions or by services. The latter would be required in order to examine an issue such as regional devolution given that the BBC consistently argued that separate broadcasting corporations for Scotland and for Wales were not financially viable.³⁰ The Broadcasting Committee also wanted the results of audience research to be more widely available, such as to Regional Advisory Councils, to enable judgements to be made as to whether the BBC was providing a responsible public service. Furthermore the Committee wanted the BBC to develop

²⁹Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949 (Cmd. 8116; January 1951), p.160.

³⁰Ibid., p.116.

VHF broadcasting to improve coverage of existing services and leave open the possibility of local radio stations, to be authorised with the consent of the PMG to borrow up to £10 million for capital expenditure, and to consider the possibility of printing special editions of The Listener for Scotland and Wales.

On 13th February 1951 the Scottish Advisory Council discussed the Beveridge Report on Broadcasting as it affected Scotland. The Council made four recommendations:³¹ (1) the degree of autonomy exercised by the Regional Controller was deemed to be satisfactory to the extent that any change would result in a less efficient service; (2) the proposed Commission for Scotland should be delayed until more wavelengths, materials and money were available for extending services; (3) no programme alterations should take place that would prevent listeners in Scotland from receiving the basic Home Service as included in the Scottish programme; and (4) that a Scotsman resident in Scotland who had a connection with the BBC in Scotland should sit on the Board of Governors. Other points discussed related to the selection of members of the proposed Commission, its constitutional position, and its powers. There was concern that the appointment of a Commission might lead to the production of too many Scottish programmes thus inducing parochialism. The Committee's report had sought to aim for the fullest degree of devolution consistent with the preservation of the unity of the BBC. However, Sir John Falconer (Chairman of the SAC) stated that he found the General Advisory Council to be concerned about the effect of the Beveridge recommendations on the unity of the BBC.³² The BBC's sound monopoly was to remain but, as noted in chapter 4, competition was to be permitted in television. The publication of the White Paper on 10th July 1951 indicated the government's acceptance of the need to establish Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales and for the BBC to delegate more power to the English Regional

³¹Scottish Advisory Council : Minutes, 13 February 1951, No. 2, BBC WAC R6/188.

³²Scottish Advisory Council : Minutes, 12 June 1951, No. 6, BBC WAC R6/188.

Advisory Councils. This was implemented by the Conservative Government which came to power in October 1951, and the BBC's sound broadcasting monopoly remained intact although the monopoly in television broadcasting was broken. The Broadcasting Council for Scotland which replaced the Scottish Advisory Council in January 1953, was given control over the policy and content of the Scottish Home Service.

In the years following the publication of the Beveridge Report on Broadcasting and before the appointment of a new Committee of Inquiry in 1960, the most significant development in radio broadcasting was the replacement of competition between the radio services by integration because of the increasing counter attraction of television. For many years Scottish radio programmes retained their popularity, and Scottish programme output remained greater than any other region except London. During 1950–51 there were 1,893 hours of radio broadcasting produced in Scotland of which 400 hours was produced for other BBC services;³³ during 1959–60, 1,877 hours of radio programmes were produced in Scotland of which 431 hours were taken by other BBC services.³⁴ Over this period Scotland contributed an increasing number of programme hours to the Light Programme, but a stable number to the Third Programme. However, in comparison with the other regions, the BBC in Scotland tended to be a more significant contributor to the Third Programme than to the Light Programme. The bulk of programmes broadcast on the SHS continued to be taken from London and the other Home Services. For example, in 1950–51 the 1,493 hours of output for listeners in Scotland were supplemented by 4,473 hours taken from other Home Services giving a total Scottish regional output of 5,966 hours. Similarly in 1959–60 the 1,446 hours of output for listeners in Scotland was supplemented by

³³British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1950–51 (Cmd. 8347; September 1951), p.32.

³⁴British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1959–60 (Cmd. 1174; October 1960), p.125.

4,869 hours taken from other Home Services giving a total Scottish regional output of 6,315 hours. The composition of Scottish-originated programmes for listeners in Scotland did undergo changes throughout the 1950s. During 1950–51, 317 hours of serious music were produced in Scotland for Scottish listeners but this figure fell to 238 hours during 1959–60; there was also a significant reduction in hours of output for features and drama from 177 hours during 1950–51 to 56 hours in 1959–60. In contrast to this, the 89 hours of light music produced in Scotland in 1950–51 increased to 224 hours during 1959–60; news output more than doubled from 125 hours in 1950–51 to 260 hours in 1959–60. The pattern built into the programme schedules – for example, serious music and discussions broadcast on Wednesdays, sport and Scottish dance music on Saturdays, religious programmes on Sundays – could not prepare radio in Scotland for competition from television. Although the SHS offered a balanced rather than specialised programme output, the closed hour for television from 6–7 pm. each evening was used for the broadcasting of popular items on the SHS. However, when the closed period was ended and thereafter used for the broadcasting of television programmes, this presented a strong counter attraction in Scotland to the SHS. The BBC continued to provide a wide range of radio programmes which were particularly valued by those listeners who relied upon radio after the arrival of television in Scotland either out of choice or out of necessity.

The adverse effect of television on audience figures for radio programmes during the evening prompted the BBC to propose changes in its network services and re-evaluate the role of the regions in national broadcasting terms. During 1956 a Sound Co-ordinating Committee within the BBC sought to reduce the total volume of radio broadcasting, partly to save money, and partly to develop radio in a stronger direction in the competitive presence of television. London and the regions were expected to pool their resources, as they already did in television, to provide the best possible material for national broadcasting. Integration, according to the Director of Sound Broadcasting, was not meant to imply any reduction of regional autonomy, but merely

greater co-operation between London and the regions.³⁵ In practice co-operation was taken to mean the establishment of a close working relationship between the supply departments in London and programme heads and producers in the regions to end narrow departmentalism. Integration resulted in the production of fewer regional programmes, but a higher percentage of those produced were taken by the radio networks. The BBC rejected any suggestion that London would merely cream off the best regional artistes, writers, producers, and ideas. The days of competition between the sound services which was outlined in section 5.1, was over. With the decline of the radio audience the BBC wished to reduce the frequency of opting-out in the regions. In a policy document issued in April 1957 the Director of Sound Broadcasting stated:

... it is felt strongly that the element of internal competition which is reflected in the present programme organisation should now entirely disappear. The reasons for it were good at the time but they no longer apply. The last vestiges of rivalry and competition between the Programmes should cease. The output of Sound radio should be planned as a whole so as to ensure contrasting choices wherever possible.³⁶

The BBC wished to streamline output in order to reduce expenditure over the period 1957-60 and so be in a stronger position to face any future committee of inquiry and to counter the possibility of commercial radio. On 31 January 1957 the BBC indicated that there would be adjustments in the pattern of the radio services. At a meeting in March the Board of Governors stated that no mention should be made about financial economies in the press statement on the changes due to be issued in April.³⁷ On 8 April 1957 the BBC issued a press statement which indicated that the Third Programme would be cut to three hours each evening; a new network entitled

³⁵Sound Co-ordinating Committee : Minutes, 15 February 1956, p.2, BBC WAC R34/422/2.

³⁶"Sound Broadcasting Future", statement by Director of Sound Broadcasting, 9 April 1957, p.2, BBC WAC R34/422/3.

³⁷Board of Governors : Minutes, 28 March 1957, No. 84(b), BBC WAC R1/1/25.

Network Three would be introduced in October 1957 on the same wavelength as the Third Programme but would operate earlier in the evening outside the hours of the Third Programme; the Light Programme would be extended by two hours each day and its output made 'lighter' in content; and the Home Service would join the Light Programme to form a single programme at some periods during the day thus removing the element of competition between these two programme services, although the Home Service would continue to be the vehicle for regional broadcasting. Network Three was expected to provide specialised programmes for sizeable majorities who had practical interests not catered for on the Light and Home programmes. As regards the existing networks, there was a shift of material between them in order to give each service a consistent character and so provide listeners with a clearer choice of programmes. For example, light music and variety on the Home Service were transferred to the Light Programme, and minority interest subjects on the Home Service went to the new Network Three. The Light Programme, according to the BBC, was to be relieved of the duty consciously to educate and improve the taste of listeners; and the Third Programme was regarded as too elitist.

These changes in radio broadcasting generated external criticism. The changes appeared to represent a cultural retreat in the face of competition from television, particularly commercial television. A Third Programme Defence Society (known from 7 June 1957 as the Sound Broadcasting Society) was formed to press for changes to the BBC's plans. The BBC's changes represented a departure from the Reithian ethos as the following comment on the changes would confirm:

The Corporation wants each listener to make his own choice according to his own taste and mood. The Corporation does not want to force a choice upon him...³⁸

The BBC was thus seeking to cater for the tastes of its audiences without attempting to alter and improve them. Entertainment was no longer to be undervalued or merely

³⁸L. Wellington, "Sound Broadcasting Policy and Practice", June 1957, Para. 7, BBC WAC R34/1113/3.

regarded as a stepping stone to more serious programme material. Nevertheless, the BBC stated that the Third Programme, even its shortened form, comprised almost one-tenth of total transmission time for an audience which was no more than one-hundredth of the total audience.³⁹ The reduction in the amount of money available to BBC radio broadcasting as a whole was felt to a lesser extent in Scotland. In its Annual Report for 1957–58 the BCS commented upon the changes in relation to Scotland:

The revised plans for sound broadcasting in the United Kingdom, introduced last Autumn, aroused comparatively little reaction in Scotland. The Council think that this is because the strong national interest of the Scots in broadcasting is well understood by the BBC and the Council, who took care to maintain unimpaired the main Scottish programme activities.⁴⁰

The changes in the radio services was one of the topics brought to the attention of the Pilkington Committee on Broadcasting which was appointed in 1960 and which is discussed in the following section.

³⁹British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1957–58 (Cmd. 533; September 1958), p.8.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p.27.

5.3 The Pilkington Report of 1962: Inquiry, Analysis and Outcome

The Pilkington Committee of Inquiry was appointed in July 1960 with the task of examining the present broadcasting services and advising on the future pattern of services. Unlike previous committees of inquiry, the Pilkington Committee was the first to examine broadcasting in a period in which television had eclipsed radio broadcasting to become the dominant medium. It highlighted questions about the BBC's radio services which had never been needed to be raised on previous occasions: whether the BBC's sound broadcasting monopoly should remain; how radio services should be planned during a period in which the use of radio services by listeners was changing; and whether localised services should be provided, and if so, by whom. Despite the fall in the number of radio licences purchased and the decline in listening audiences during evening hours, the transistor, the car radio, VHF local radio, and stereophonic broadcasts offered prospects for sustaining the interest of the public in radio broadcasts. An article in The Times published in April 1960 stated:

It may be that as the novelty of television wears off the more discriminating will once again be prepared to consider the choices offered by the Sound services for their evening's entertainment, but there is little evidence that that has begun to happen yet.⁴¹

Radio remained in a stronger position than television to cater for minority interests. Overall, the possibility of local radio (BBC and/or commercial), and changes in the format of the existing BBC radio networks were issues which needed to be considered in any future plans for sound broadcasting. This section considers the main submissions of evidence to the Pilkington Committee, the recommendations of the committee, and the outcome of the publication of the Pilkington Report.

In a memorandum to the Committee the BBC recommended that the National Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales should be given the additional function

⁴¹"Future of Sound Broadcasting – 1 : Will BBC keep its Monopoly?", The Times, 4 April 1960, p.11.

of controlling the policy and content of programmes from local radio stations should any of these stations be opened in Scotland and Wales. The Broadcasting Council for Scotland stated that it was interested in, and had considered establishing, local stations. The Council recommended that the BBC should be authorised to carry out a local broadcasting experiment over a two-year period because this would demonstrate whether there was any public interest in local radio. However, the BCS added that local radio should not develop to the point of financially damaging either the BBC's national service of broadcasting within and for Scotland, or Scotland's contribution to network output.⁴² The Council envisaged local radio as a modest service of local items to supplement the output of the Scottish Home Service. The Sound Broadcasting Society argued that if local radio was authorised then only the BBC and not a commercial system should be allowed to operate it. This view was echoed by the Scottish Trades Union Congress General Council which believed that local radio would provide better opportunities for covering community affairs in Scotland. The Church of Scotland Committee on Church and Nation stated that any local stations should not be operated under a commercial system. As regards network services, the Sound Broadcasting Society regretted what it regarded as the deterioration in the cultural, educational and informative content of BBC radio output which began in 1957 when the Corporation introduced changes to the programme schedules involving an alteration of the balance between 'serious' and 'light' programme material. The Society wanted the BBC to extend the broadcasting hours of the Third Programme. The 1957 changes had been introduced to reduce radio expenditure and take account of alterations in listening habits because of competition from television. In May 1951 the Director of Home Broadcasting had stated that under a system of central planning, "... some of the richness and variety of our present programme offerings would have been eliminated in the attempt to avoid embarrassing

⁴²Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960. Volume 1. Appendix E. Memoranda Submitted to the Committee (Cmnd. 1819; September 1962), p.322.

alternatives by placing weaker programmes against the stronger."⁴³ Yet in 1957 it was central planning which superseded competition between the radio services.

In December 1960 the memorandum by the Scottish National Party (SNP) expressed concern about the status of broadcasting in Scotland. The SNP stated:

If Scotland is not to be submerged in a stream of Anglo-American ideas and culture, it is imperative that a Scottish Broadcasting Corporation be formed to control the services at present provided by the BBC.⁴⁴

The SNP was critical of the level of administrative and financial control exercised over the BBC in Scotland. The Saltire Society stated that the powers of the BCS over the policy and content of the Scottish Home Service were too limited. The Society wanted Scottish broadcasting to have real financial and executive autonomy. It also believed that Scottish radio output under the control of the BCS was too Scottish and provincial in content and thus less likely to be of interest to a non-Scottish audience.⁴⁵ Sir David Milne, Chairman of the BCS, submitted a paper to the Pilkington Committee on BBC financial practice in relation to Scotland. He noted that by the end of the 1950s the number of combined licences overtook the number of sound-only licences thus narrowing the gap between BBC income and expenditure in Scotland given that the income from combined licences was much greater than that from radio licences. He stated that there were differentials in expenditure within Scotland since the BBC spent a larger amount of income per head of population in the Highlands and other remote areas in comparison with the populous central belt. However, there remained gaps in transmitter coverage in Scotland. In its memorandum of January 1960, the Advisory Panel on the Highlands and Islands expressed concern about the extent of social

⁴³Basil Nicolls to Director-General, 23 May 1951, No.2(b), BBC WAC R34/422/1.

⁴⁴Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960. Volume 2. Appendix E. Memoranda Submitted to the Committee (Cmnd. 1819-1; September 1962), p.942.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p.939.

amenities in the Highlands and Islands and drew the Committee's attention to the poor reception of BBC radio output in North-West Scotland, the Western Isles and Shetland.⁴⁶ The panel made the comparison between the indifferent reception of BBC radio in Scotland and the fact that many other parts of the country had access to good radio and television services. By 1962 coverage of the three radio networks on VHF in Scotland was 93 per cent but the remaining 7 per cent comprised many communities in the North-West Highlands and Islands and in the central Highland area.

The Pilkington Committee considered all the oral and written evidence gathered, formulated its recommendations on the broadcasting services, and published its report in June 1962. The BBC welcomed the Report and it was agreed that detailed comment should be reserved until after the Government's White Paper had been published.⁴⁷ As regards the network radio services the Committee stated that it had received evidence criticising the segregation of programme material in the networks which, it was believed, had gone too far in separating popular from more demanding programmes. The Committee wanted a greater interchange of material between the Home, Light, and Third/Network Three programmes to enable listeners to be exposed to a wider range of programme material. The Pilkington Report did, however, recognise that because listeners were more selective in their choice of programmes, the BBC could best serve them by providing three services, each of a recognisably different character. The Committee suspected that the BBC's policy had inherent dangers in that segregating programmes into classes might lead to a segregation of listeners into classes, therefore what it sought was some overlapping of majority and

⁴⁶Ibid., p.934.

⁴⁷Board of Governors : Minutes, 27 June 1962, No. 339, BBC WAC R1/1/30.

minority interests in the planning of programmes on all three radio services.⁴⁸ For example, the Committee argued that the BBC had underestimated its audience by transferring some programmes from the Home Service (where they would give pleasure to a large audience) to Network Three where the audience was much smaller. In general, however, the Pilkington Committee endorsed the BBC's radio services, both network and regional. It accepted BBC recommendations about the need to extend the broadcasting hours for the Light Programme, to use the Third Network transmitters to provide a daytime service of music, and to introduce localised services on VHF.

The Pilkington Report envisaged no need for additional national radio services, but local services on VHF were an entirely different matter. The Committee stated that commercial companies who had proposed to engage in local radio broadcasting had not developed their views about the character and composition of the service as much as the BBC had done.⁴⁹ Moreover, it was suggested that commercial local radio would serve the interests of advertisers rather than the public interest. Relying upon BBC evidence that there was sufficient local material to sustain a service of BBC local radio, the Committee stated:

We are, however, satisfied that the evidence of available local material justifies a sustained and broadly-based trial, in the expectation that an extensive pattern of local stations might follow.⁵⁰

The Pilkington Report stated that only a public corporation should be responsible for developing a service of local radio covering as many communities as possible, but that this development should not delay the completion of VHF coverage of the BBC's existing three radio services. The Committee stated that commercial television

⁴⁸Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960 (Cmnd. 1753; June 1962), p.25.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p.232.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p.225.

companies which had been unable to realise the purposes of broadcasting were unlikely to fare much better with local radio. Furthermore, BBC local stations could rely upon the three radio networks for sustaining material and thus in theory provide a larger reservoir of programme material and at a cheaper cost than a commercial system could achieve. Overall the Committee believed that only the BBC could provide a satisfactory local radio service to small communities unable to sustain a commercial service. The Committee summed up its views on local broadcasting by stating:

Accordingly, we recommend that one service, and one only, of local sound broadcasting be planned; that it be provided by the BBC and financed from licence revenue; and that the frequencies available be so deployed as to enable it to be provided for the largest possible number of distinctive communities.⁵¹

The issue of local radio broadcasting, the closed-circuit BBC experiments in the early 1960s, and the establishment of local stations on an experimental basis in the late 1960s are discussed in the following section.

The submissions of evidence to the Pilkington Committee about the conduct of the Scottish Home Service did not indicate any significant dissatisfaction about the quality of the service provided. Where there was criticism it related more to constitutional issues affecting broadcasting in Scotland. The Committee noted that there was criticism of the way in which the BBC's General Advisory Council selected members of the Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales, both of which had control over the policy and content of their Home Service radio programmes. The Pilkington Committee stated that in Scotland it was considered unsatisfactory that the members of the GAC panel who chose the members of the BCS were not Scots living in Scotland. It was noted that since the BCS contained individuals who were representative of the Scottish people and active in the life of Scotland, the same

⁵¹Ibid., p.232.

principle should apply to members of the GAC panel.⁵² The recommendation that the Broadcasting Council should exercise control over television output within and for Scotland is discussed fully in sections 2.2 and 4.6. The Pilkington Report also recommended that the requirement that three members of the Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and for Wales should be selected as being representative of local authorities in each of these two countries should no longer be imposed.

The publication of the Pilkington Report was followed shortly afterwards on 4 July 1962 by the Government's White Paper on broadcasting. The Government accepted that the GAC should contain individuals who were active in the life of Scotland and Wales given that the Council had duties with regard to the selection of members of the Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales; it also accepted that there should no longer be any requirement that some member of these Councils should be selected as being representative of local authorities. As regards radio broadcasting in general, the Government agreed that no additional national radio broadcasting services were needed, but that the BBC should be authorised to extend broadcasting hours in the Light Programme and the Third Programme/Network Three.⁵³ As regards local radio, the Government exercised caution, and so although the Pilkington Committee had recommended that an experimental service of local broadcasting should begin, the Government nevertheless stated that because of the extra demand on resources and the lack of evidence of public demand for local radio, no such local radio experiment should be authorised.⁵⁴ A further White Paper issued in December 1962, which covered the more contentious aspects of broadcasting

⁵²Ibid., pp.134–5.

⁵³Broadcasting : Memorandum on the Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960 (Cmd. 1770; July 1962), pp.3–4.

⁵⁴Ibid., p.10.

development raised by the Pilkington Committee, again emphasised that local radio broadcasting should not command a high priority in the allocation of resources, but that the possibility of localised services would be reviewed at a later date.⁵⁵ The issue of local radio is discussed in the following section.

⁵⁵Broadcasting : Further Memorandum on the Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960 (Cmd. 1893; December 1962), p.10.

5.4 BBC Local Radio Broadcasting : the 1960s Experiments

BBC radio began in the 1920s on a local basis because the transmitters which were used (i.e. low-power medium wave) had limited geographical coverage. With the advent of high-power transmitters capable of extending broadcasting coverage on a simultaneous basis quickly throughout the country, the BBC began to close down its local stations and introduce a Regional Scheme in 1929. The new high-power stations soon began to provide a national broadcasting service and a regional broadcasting service in Scotland. It was only in the 1950s that the development of VHF made it possible realistically to consider opening genuine local stations catering for identifiable community interests and distinguishable from regional or area broadcasting services. This section focuses on the background to the BBC's plans for operating local radio services. It covers the period from the closed-circuit experiments in the early 1960s through to the establishment of BBC local radio stations in and after 1967, and how these developments can be viewed in relation to the provision of existing radio broadcasting services in Scotland.

During the 1950s radio suffered to some extent because of the popularity of television, but radio was soon to benefit from technical developments such as VHF which improved the quality of reception and made local radio a possibility, the widespread use of transistors, and the introduction of stereo broadcasts. In Scotland, coverage of the Scottish Home Service was improved when VHF transmitters at Kirk O'Shotts opened on 30 November 1957. Furthermore, the BBC sought to take advantage of the smaller coverage area of VHF stations in Scotland to vary SHS transmissions in some areas as a means of introducing local programmes. This was found to be possible in the north but not central Scotland because the Kirk O'Shotts transmitters were high power and so could not be used to fragment the SHS. In 1958 the BBC began to think realistically about using VHF for local broadcasting, and in January 1960 the Board of Governors decided that the BBC should move

experimentally into the field of local broadcasting.⁵⁶ The BBC's Director-General agreed to produce a plan for such a limited experiment in local radio. So by the early 1960s when the Pilkington Committee was considering the future of broadcasting, the BBC was gathering information about the viability of introducing local stations. There was no evidence of public demand for local radio but arguably public demand could not be gauged accurately until local radio services were actually provided. The BBC's twin aims for local stations were that they should serve local communities and also enrich the national networks. They were also viewed as a means of decelerating the decline in radio audiences because of television, and of stemming the possible introduction of local commercial radio. Local radio, unlike regional radio or area broadcasting, would be able to serve discrete communities with programmes of local interest; it would represent an improvement on area broadcasting because local stations would not operate on an opt-out basis from the radio networks. Given that there was a limit to the amount of opting-out from the Home service that the public thought was desirable, local stations offered the prospect of an increase in the number of local interest programmes without depriving listeners of access to nationally networked programmes. At the start of the decade in which local radio was introduced, in the second of a two-part study on the future of broadcasting, The Times noted:

The ideal of local broadcasting has an obvious appeal. One sees it in a visionary sort of way as a cherished local institution, propagating an intelligent interest in local affairs, watering the roots of local culture, a nursery of local talent, an audible counterpart to the local newspaper. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that it would be accepted by the listening public in this spirit.⁵⁷

These were, however, early days. In its Annual Report for 1959-60, the BBC was anxious to stress the merits of VHF for providing a foundation to develop local broadcasting:

⁵⁶Board of Governors : Minutes, 14 January 1960, No.28, BBC WAC R1/1/28.

⁵⁷"Future of Sound Broadcasting - 2 : What Chance for Local Stations", The Times, 5 April 1960, p.13.

The Corporation believes that there is great value in the idea of a local service of news and other programmes for self-contained communities, set in the framework of the BBC's national and regional programmes.⁵⁸

At this stage there was no mention of replacing regional with local stations. What was envisaged was a tripartite division of radio services. This arrangement was only modified in 1970 with the dismantling of the regional structure in England.

In May 1960 the BBC approached the Government for permission to operate local radio services but the Postmaster-General told the BBC Chairman that such stations would not be authorised pending the outcome of the Pilkington Inquiry into the future of broadcasting.⁵⁹ As noted below, the BBC subsequently resorted to closed-circuit experiments, some of which took place in Scotland. The BBC outlined its plans for local radio services in a memorandum to the Pilkington Committee in February 1961 in which it envisaged the provision of local radio for self-contained identifiable communities to complement network radio. The BBC's plan involved the building of 80-90 stations in a mixture of urban areas, small towns, and larger geographical areas where identifiable communities could be found. These stations would use VHF channels in Band II rather than the congested medium waveband. The BBC began its own series of closed-circuit local radio experiments in thirteen areas, beginning in 1961, in order to ascertain whether a sufficient number of hours of quality programmes could be sustained over a period of time and also to explore the techniques involved in local radio. The results were recorded on tape and not broadcast to the public, hence it was not possible to ascertain the views of listeners with regard to programme content. The first local experiment took place at Bristol on 22 March 1961. Further experiments were conducted in chronological order in the following areas; Portsmouth, Norwich, Hull, Dundee, Poole, the Potteries, Swansea,

⁵⁸British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1959-60 (Cmnd. 1174; October 1960), p.30.

⁵⁹632 H.C. Deb. Ser. 5, Cols. 406-7 (14 December 1960).

Wrexham, Durham, London, Dumfries and Reading. Two of these local radio experiments were thus held in Scotland at Dundee in 1961 with Harry Hogan in charge, and at Dumfries in March 1962 with John Gray; the Scottish experiments lasted one week.

In his address to the Programme Board towards the end of 1961, the Controller of BBC Scotland stated that the Radio Dundee experiment had shown that BBC Scotland had the skills required to operate local broadcasting.⁶⁰ The BBC wished to operate local services itself rather than leave this task to commercial competitors. The Dumfries experiment which lasted from 20 to 23 March 1962 provided an opportunity to study the technical and staffing implications of local broadcasting. What was not considered was the potential grievance likely to develop in rural districts denied access to local stations given that these stations were likely to be sited initially in urban areas. Frank Gillard, the pioneer of BBC local radio, believed that any scheme of local broadcasting should be prepared to include small towns and rural areas which might serve several communities (i.e. a form of area as well as local broadcasting).⁶¹ Area services operating on an opt-out basis from the networks would provide more local services for rural areas, but unlike local radio stations, they would consequently have a smaller output of purely local programme material. There was, however, likely to be insufficient funds to cover both area and local broadcasting. Moreover, regions would have had to assume responsibility for supervising a more complex structure of broadcasting services (i.e. local, area, and regional). Nevertheless, after studying the results of the local radio experiments the BBC concluded:

These exercises confirmed the Corporation's belief that a community of reasonable size and cohesion would be able to provide sufficient programme material to sustain as much as four or five hours a day of local programme

⁶⁰Scottish Programme Board : Minutes, 18 December 1961, No.359, BBC WAC T16/108/7.

⁶¹Frank Gillard, "The Pattern of Regional, Area and Local Broadcasting", 21 August 1961, p.5, BBC WAC R34/731/6.

output of good quality.⁶²

The experiments enabled the BBC to assess to some extent the demands of local stations on manpower, premises, technical equipment and programme costs.

The BBC sought to justify why it should be permitted to operate local radio. The Corporation stated that unlike commercial stations its own stations would be more financially viable because they could draw upon sustaining material from the BBC networks. Each station would also be free from control by commercial interests, such as advertisers and the local press. BBC stations were expected to conform to the public service standards characteristic of the network services. The BBC's public service ethic, its programme and technical resources, and its commitment to providing a wide range of high quality programmes, was contrasted with commercial companies whose profit motive would lead to an undue emphasis on entertainment and consequently a narrower range of programme output. The BBC argued that a commercial service would not be financially viable and if it was then it could only do so at the expense of the quality and variety of programmes produced, or by serving larger catchment areas than the proposed BBC local stations. The possibility of a networking arrangement which would circumvent the genuine local character of stations operating on a commercial basis was one of the negative aspects of commercial local radio which Hugh Greene, BBC Director-General, emphasised when he stated:

... commercial television, which was supposed to be decentralised, has become a highly integrated network and the economic pressures which have brought this about would also tend to operate, at any rate in the long run, in the field of sound.⁶³

However, even BBC local stations could not be expected to originate all their own

⁶²British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1961-62 (Cmd. 1839; October 1962), p.24.

⁶³Hugh Carleton Greene, The BBC as a Public Service (London : BBC, 1960), p.7.

programme material and so they would have to rely upon network programmes.

Indeed Gillard noted:

It is one of the great strengths of the BBC's position that it would not have to fill every hour of the day with locally originated material on its local stations.⁶⁴

The publication of the Pilkington Report in June 1962 appeared to bring the prospect of BBC local radio that much closer because the Committee recommended that the BBC should be permitted to establish local stations on a trial basis. The Government decided to defer judgement on the introduction of local radio stations, much to the disappointment of the BBC.⁶⁵ Almost four years later on 4 March 1966 the BBC published a pamphlet entitled, "Local Radio in the Public Interest : the BBC's Plan".⁶⁶ The BBC offered to launch up to nine local radio stations in a pilot scheme without involving any increase in the licence fee, nor relying upon any income from advertising. It was stated that the service provided would not be parochial because it would merely represent one service within a comprehensive and balanced system of broadcasting covering local, regional, national and international affairs. The BBC stated that freedom from detailed central control would be granted to each local station and that a Local Advisory Council would provide the link between each station and the community which it served. The aim was to make listeners regard each station as their own station rather than merely the BBC station in their town. Local radio was brought a stage closer to reality in December 1966 with the publication of the Government White Paper on Broadcasting.

On 22 December 1966 the White Paper on Broadcasting gave approval for the

⁶⁴Frank Gillard, "A New Dimension of Radio : Local Broadcasting", The Listener Vol. 67, No. 1716 (15 February 1962), p.299.

⁶⁵Board of Governors : Minutes, 5 July 1962, No. 349, BBC WAC R1/1/30.

⁶⁶British Broadcasting Corporation, Local Radio in the Public Interest : the BBC's Plan (London: BBC, 1966).

BBC to begin a local radio experiment in nine areas on VHF and in cooperation with local interests.⁶⁷ There was no authorisation for any extensive local radio development. This experiment was to be reviewed by the PMG after its completion in two years and then a decision was to be made about the future of local radio. The White Paper ruled out the possibility of any commercial local stations funded by advertising. Each BBC local station would be funded locally and provided with a Local Broadcasting Council appointed by the PMG in consultation with the BBC. The purpose of the local radio experiment was to determine whether sufficient financial support would be forthcoming which would justify the extension of local radio to other areas, and whether there was sufficient programme material to sustain a genuine local service. Local authorities used money from investments rather than from the rates to help fund local stations and these contributions for all stations totalled £350,000 in the period to 31 March 1969; the balance of operating expenditure (£450,000) which represented about 56 per cent of total operating expenditure was underwritten by the BBC in order to give some degree of security to programme staff as regards forward planning; the BBC also covered the capital costs (£300,000) and did not charge local stations for any programmes which they supplied to them.⁶⁸ The Government stated that the decision to allow the BBC to conduct the local radio experiment did not imply any commitment on behalf of the Government that the BBC should eventually provide a permanent local radio service should one be authorised after the experiment was completed.⁶⁹ On 27 January 1967 the BBC held a conference of local authorities who were interested in having local stations in their communities. The BBC subsequently received over twenty applications from local authorities who wished to participate in

⁶⁷Broadcasting (Cmnd. 3169; December 1966), p.9.

⁶⁸Third Report from the Estimates Committee : British Broadcasting Corporation (H.C. 387; 23 July 1969), p.xxvi.

⁶⁹Broadcasting (Cmnd. 3169; December 1966), p.9.

the local radio experiment. No local authority in Scotland was prepared to provide financial contributions for such a service. Stations were selected over a 3–4 month period and were expected to provide a nursery slope for new broadcasters.

On 8 November 1967 the first of the BBC's experimental VHF local radio stations, Radio Leicester, went on the air. Seven further local stations were opened, all of them located in England: Radio Sheffield opened on 15 November 1967; Radio Merseyside on 22 November 1967; Radio Nottingham on 31 January 1968; Radio Brighton on 14 February; Radio Stoke-on-Trent on 14 March; Radio Leeds on 24 June; and Radio Durham on 3 July. BBC Scotland supported the development of national rather than local radio within Scotland. Andrew Stewart, Controller of BBC Scotland, stated that he was not in favour of local radio experiments in Scotland. He believed that local radio would have been more appropriate had it been introduced in the immediate post-war period when there could have been a single Scottish radio service with local stations opting out at different times of the day. He argued that local radio was of less relevance in the 1960s due to the growing influence of television.⁷⁰ However, genuine local stations needed to be much more than merely opt-outs from an existing Scottish radio service. Furthermore, as John Gray (Chief Assistant, BBC Scotland) pointed out, the reluctance of Scottish management to generate enthusiasm about local radio may have been because of fear of surrendering some degree of power to autonomous local stations if it was decided that these stations should only be responsible to Frank Gillard (Director of Sound Broadcasting) in London⁷¹. Local stations would also have had to reflect accurately the social and cultural mix of the areas which they served and this was contrary to the Reithian mixed programming philosophy favoured by BBC Scotland. The BBC believed that it already served homogeneous communities in the national regions with the regional

⁷⁰Taped Interview with Andrew Stewart, Glasgow, 28 April 1988.

⁷¹Taped Interview with John Gray, Edinburgh, 5 April 1988.

Home Services and so local radio appeared to be more relevant in England. A BBC pamphlet stated:

Basic to the concept of BBC local radio was that each station should reflect the characteristics of its own neighbourhood. It should not seek to conform to some general programme pattern.⁷²

In the experimental local stations which were established, the Station Managers had editorial charge of their stations and were subject to central control only in general policy matters. They were allocated a programme allowance, although London set the level of this allowance. The local stations were not answerable to any Regional Controller; the Station Manager decided when to broadcast local programmes, what material to use, how many hours to broadcast, and when to take material from any of the radio networks. Each station was advised by a Local Radio Council broadly representative of the local community. The members of these Councils were initially appointed by the PMG and later by the BBC when the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications relinquished his right to make such appointments. The BBC retained editorial responsibility for programme output but Local Councils could offer advice on programmes. In particular, the Chairman of each Council discussed progress with senior staff in London on a regular basis.

In July 1968 when all eight BBC experimental stations were broadcasting, the PMG was asked in the House of Commons what consideration the Government was giving to the development of local radio stations in Scotland. Mr John Stonehouse (PMG) stated that plans for further BBC local stations beyond the eight which were initially authorised would need to await the review of the local radio experiment due in 1969. He added that he had not received any further proposals from local authorities in Scotland regarding the establishment of any such station in Scotland.⁷³

⁷²British Broadcasting Corporation, This is Local Radio : the BBC experiment at work (London: BBC, 1969), p.4.

⁷³769 H.C. Deb. Ser. 5, Cols. 957–8 (25 July 1968).

On 10 March 1969 the Estimates Committee reviewed BBC local radio, and the PMG was preparing to announce the Government's intentions as regards the future of local stations. On 14 August 1969 the Government stated that the BBC would be allowed to operate up to forty stations and hoped that some of these would be located outside England. In November the BBC was authorised to establish twelve stations in addition to the existing eight stations. These were to be financed totally from licence income rather than partly dependent upon local contributions towards operating expenditure as the experimental stations had been. However, within a year the planned forty stations were frozen because on 5 August 1970 the new Conservative Government set a ceiling on the existing twenty BBC stations which had covered 70 per cent of the population of England. The Government was committed in principle to introducing commercial stations. In these circumstances no BBC local stations were located in Scotland. The BCS suggested that in Scotland what was needed was a limited form of local broadcasting based on the major Scottish cities, a local service for the Highlands and Islands, and a stronger Scottish opt-out service on Radio 4, the introduction of which is discussed in section 5.5. On 2 September 1972 the BBC local stations in England were allowed to operate on medium wave rather than merely on VHF. It enabled them to reach larger audiences and compete with the incoming commercial stations, but it resulted in the English regions losing their opt-out programmes on medium wave; Scotland did not lose its medium frequency channels and so had access to these and to VHF. By the early 1970s BBC local radio was entering a new phase of development due to the advent of the ILR stations and this is discussed in section 5.7. The following section focuses on changes to network services.

5.5 Offshore Pirate Radio Broadcasting and its influence on BBC Programme Policy, 1964–1967

During a period in which the BBC was engaged in examining the possibilities and prospects of local radio services, the nature of the network services also came under scrutiny because of the presence of offshore pirate radio broadcasting. In March 1964 the first of several offshore pirate radio stations began broadcasting and these broadcasts highlighted programme deficiencies in existing BBC radio programmes. The first pirate radio station, Radio Caroline, began transmitting on 28 March 1964 off Felixstowe. It was followed on 23 December 1964 by Radio London and on 23 September 1965 by Radio 390. Scotland had its own pirate station aptly named Radio Scotland which went on the air on 31 December 1965. These stations created a demand for continuous pop music among young people and forced the BBC to take a more radical look at its own programme output. This section begins by outlining the changes in BBC programme policy to accommodate both competition from television and the need for more popular music; it discusses the arrival of pirate radio in the Scottish context and the passage of legislation which outlawed pirate radio in August 1967; and it concludes by focusing on the significance of the restructuring of the BBC radio networks in September 1967, one month after the demise of offshore pirate radio.

Since 1963 the BBC had taken some tentative steps to respond to shifts in the popularity of radio in relation to both television and the increasing popularity of pop music. In July 1963 the BBC established a popular music department responsible for all pop music. It also sought to extend the Light Programme by starting this programme earlier at 5.30 a.m. and closing down at 2.00 a.m., although the Musicians' Union was initially concerned about allowing the BBC to increase the number of hours of gramophone records. These extensions to the Light Programme in order to increase the output of light music had been sanctioned by the Government in July

1962 immediately following the publication of the Pilkington Report on Broadcasting.⁷⁴ It was not until June 1964 that the BBC was able to conclude a satisfactory 'needletime' agreement with Phonographic Performance Limited which allowed for an increase in the number of hours for which gramophone records could be broadcast, from 28 in the 280 hour radio week, to 75 in the increased weekly output of 374 hours.⁷⁵ This increase in programme output was shared between the Light Programme and the Third Network. The Light Programme began an hour earlier on weekdays and closed down two hours later, (i.e. at 2.00 a.m.); a new service called the Music Programme was introduced on the Third Network from 7.00 a.m. – 6.30 p.m. on most days of the week. The BBC thus increased the output of light and popular music on the Light Programme partly by increasing broadcasting hours and partly also by moving some speech programmes to the Home Service. However, the increase in the amount of time devoted to pop music within the overall total allocated for entertainment music did not satisfy the desire for more pop music from a significant section of listeners, mainly younger people who had access to transistors. The BBC indicated the constraints on catering adequately for these listeners who wished to listen mainly to pop music:

... large as it is, the "pop" audience is only a minority of the Light Programme's total audience, and if too great a quota of "pop" music were provided, the total amount of listening to the Programme would certainly decline.⁷⁶

The pirate radio stations responded to this desire for more continuous pop music which the BBC did not satisfy. The popularity of the pirate stations may also have been, as the BBC had argued, a reflection of the illegality of their operations because

⁷⁴Broadcasting : Memorandum on the Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960 (Cmnd. 1770; July 1962), p.4.

⁷⁵British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1964–65 (Cmnd. 2823; November 1965), p.30.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p.31.

they infringed copyright regulations. The popularity of the stations also highlighted the need to find a method of satisfactorily catering for changes in public taste. Although the pirate stations did not achieve national coverage, they did capture part of the audience for the Light Programme especially at times when this programme did not broadcast pop music. The BBC could not increase needletime (i.e. time spent playing gramophone records) because the Musicians' Union were still concerned that this would deprive live musicians of additional employment opportunities. In its Annual Report for 1964–65 the BBC stated:

Within the agreed limits for the BBC's use of gramophone records the BBC has done much in its extended programmes to meet the demand for continuous music, especially of the pop music so much favoured by the young, which the pirate radios concentrate almost exclusively on meeting.⁷⁷

This did not apparently satisfy some sections of the listening audience who now began to tune in to the increasing number of pirate stations which began broadcasting off the British coastline.

In 1964 plans were prepared for a pirate radio station to operate off the Scottish coast. The idea for such a pirate station, later known as pirate Radio Scotland, came from Mr. Tommy Shields a public relations officer with STV. In 1963 Shields left STV, and on 14 October of the following year he formed City and County Commercial Radio (Scotland) Ltd. He hoped that if the Conservative Party won the 1964 General Election then they would introduce legislation permitting the establishment of commercial radio stations. However, the Labour Party won the election and so it was likely that if local radio was permitted then this task would be entrusted to the BBC. The commercial success and popularity of the other pirate radio stations did, however, give encouragement to those individuals who hoped for commercial radio in Scotland. An offshore station was unlikely to be as convenient to operate as a land-based station but Shields hoped that his efforts would place him in a strong position to operate such a station should commercial local radio be authorised by a future

⁷⁷Ibid., p.17.

Conservative Government. Plans were therefore prepared for opening a pirate radio station in Scotland towards the end of 1965. A 1904 Clyde-built 485 ton converted lightship, the 'Comet', was acquired and converted in Dublin in order to transmit the station's broadcasts. The ship was provided with a 170 foot aerial and two transmitters and generators and had the words 'Radio Scotland' painted along her 100 foot length. The station was to be manned on a shift basis by five or six disc jockeys as well as engineers; operating expenditure was derived from advertising. It was just before midnight on 31 December 1965 that pirate Radio Scotland began transmissions on 242 metres on the medium waveband serving Scotland and northern England. The station initially broadcast from the Firth of Forth and subsequently from the Firth of Clyde where it could reach a larger number of listeners in the west of Scotland and so increase advertising revenue.

With the growing popularity of offshore pirate radio broadcasts the Government had to respond to end these broadcasts. During the 1964 General Election neither major political party had made pirate radio an election issue for fear of losing votes, but in 1966 the Labour Party was returned to power with an increased majority and so was in a stronger position to counter pirate radio. Scottish Conservative backbenchers were critical of any attempt to ban pirate stations particularly if no alternative commercial stations were provided. In Scotland it was left to the Light Programme rather than the Scottish Home Service to provide programmes for those listeners who were inclined to tune in to the pirate broadcasts. An article in The Economist commented upon the broad implications of the ability of pirate stations to capture a significant proportion of the local audience and stated:

The best argument for abolishing the pirates and allowing legitimate commercial radio stations is that they might provide the right sort of lively innovation in local news and features that has eluded the Corporation's own men in the provinces up to now.⁷⁸

The issue became party political because Conservative MPs criticised the Labour

⁷⁸"Rescuing the BBC", Economist Vol. 214, No. 6343 (20 March 1965), p.1245.

Government for devoting more attention to seeking to outlaw pirate radio than in meeting the demand for continuous pop music by permitting legitimate land-based commercial stations. The BBC argued that there were constraints on its ability to offer a service comparable to that provided by the pirate stations. In its Annual Report for 1965–66 the BBC stated:

Although willing to do so, the BBC has not been free to provide such a service on its legally allocated frequencies since it has to use its three networks to serve the community as a whole. It must also conform to the requirement of the law of copyright and respect the legitimate desire of musicians to protect their own future by insisting that there must be no unrestricted use of records on the air.⁷⁹

The Government pressed ahead with its plans to outlaw pirate radio, and on 29 July 1966 the Marine etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Bill was published which sought to make pirate broadcasting illegal both inside and outside British territorial waters. In July 1967 the PMG announced in the House of Commons that the bill to outlaw pirate stations was awaiting royal assent and would become law on 15 August 1967. The Act was passed and came into effect on that day.⁸⁰ The Act made it unlawful for any broadcast to be made from a ship while in U.K. or external waters or for anyone to assist in the making of such a broadcast whether by supplying a ship with any equipment or goods.

With the passage of the Act the final broadcast from the pirate station Radio Scotland took place on 14 August 1967. The Scottish Home Service could not fill the gap left by pirate radio because radio in Scotland did not in general cater for Scottish pop music. BBC Scotland believed that those listeners who were interested in continuous pop music would be adequately catered for by the new popular music programme being planned by the BBC to operate as a network service. This new

⁷⁹British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1965–66 (Cmnd. 3122; November 1966), p.12.

⁸⁰Marine, etc., Broadcasting (Offences) Act 1967 (c.41).

programme had been authorised by the Government in its White Paper of December 1966 at the time when legislation was being introduced to end pirate radio.⁸¹ Given that the new popular music programme would not be regionalised there was consequently little Scottish input to the programme. The introduction of the new programme and the restructuring of the networks took effect from 30 September 1967.⁸² In the absence of an additional wavelength the changes involved the splitting of the Light Programme at certain times of the day to create two networks: Radio 1 on 247 metres on the medium waveband (i.e. the wavelength formerly used by the Light Programme) to provide popular music to many areas of the country from sixteen medium wave transmitters; and Radio 2 on 1500 metres long wave and on VHF to provide the more traditional programmes which had previously been broadcast on the Light Programme. The medium wave channel was allocated to Radio 1 because Radio 2 on long wave was reinforced by VHF transmissions, both of which had achieved almost complete population coverage. The BBC stated that coverage of Radio 1 would be greater and more uniformly spread than that provided by the pirate radio stations even with its single wavelength in the medium waveband. Radio 1 was to be the new service but without the rather mid-Atlantic style used by pirate radio; Radio 2 achieved better geographical coverage, and sound fidelity was superior because of the use of VHF. The BBC sought to separate Radios 1 and 2 as much as possible during peak listening daytime hours within financial and needletime restrictions.

With the introduction of the new networks on 30 September 1967 there was a change from names to numbers in identifying the networks. Four networks (Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4) replaced the three former networks (Light Programme, Network Three, and the Home Service). Radios 1 and 2 increased the output of the previous Light

⁸¹Broadcasting (Cmnd. 3169; December 1966), p.7.

⁸²Radio Times, 28 September 1967, p.12.

Programme by up to 40 per cent; the Third Network was designated Radio 3, although the Third Programme and Music Programme broadcast on Radio 3 retained their separate identities; and the Home Service which included the Scottish opt-out programmes was renamed Radio 4. The coverage of Radio 1 was expected to reach 80 per cent by day, but much less during the hours of darkness when interference from continental stations on medium wave would be audible; coverage of Radio 2 was about 95 per cent on medium wave and 99 per cent on VHF; the coverage of the other two services remained unchanged. Unfortunately the absence of Radio 2 on medium wave prevented many people in Scotland from receiving this network on long wave from the Droitwich transmitter; two low-power stations were subsequently opened in Edinburgh and Glasgow in December 1967 to improve reception of Radio 2.

A central question to consider is the extent to which the changes compensated for the demise of pirate radio. Frank Gillard, Director of BBC Radio, argued that the BBC was not claiming that Radio 1 would be a replacement for pirate radio because the BBC would have to observe needletime restrictions and so less than one-third of the music output from Radio 1 could come from records, the remainder being provided by session musicians.⁸³ The restrictions on needletime and technical constraints hindered the separation of Radios 1 and 2. The BBC sought greater credibility with the new network by employing some of the better-known disc jockeys who had previously worked on the pirate stations. However, the changes appeared to some observers as marking something less than a genuine revolution in BBC attitudes to more popular tastes in music. It could be argued that Radio 1 represented only a postponed rationalisation of the Light Programme in the sense that if changes in programme policy on the Light Programme had taken place much sooner then the change brought about by the introduction of Radio 1 would not have appeared so

⁸³Frank Gillard, "More Music", The Listener Vol. 78, No. 2003 (17 August 1967), p.194.

momentous.⁸⁴ The novelty of Radio 1 could be taken as an indication of the extent to which the Light Programme had lost touch with many younger listeners, although the BBC had often emphasised the technical and needletime constraints which prevented it from catering more fully for pop music. As a public service the BBC justified the need to cater for all tastes, including those who preferred more popular music, and could point out that this network served a larger audience at a lower operating cost than any of the other networks. Ultimately the universality of the licence fee provided the theoretical justification for the provision by the BBC of comprehensive radio services catering for all tastes, including popular tastes. It simply took that much longer than expected to bring this to fruition.

⁸⁴Benedict Nightingale, "The Phoney Revolution". New Society Vol.10, No. 262 (5 October 1967), p.458.

5.6 The BBC's Plan for Network Radio and Non-Metropolitan
Broadcasting, 1968-1970

In November 1968 a policy study group composed of senior BBC executives and advisers from McKinsey, the management consultants, was formed in order to examine the future of network radio and regional broadcasting. The outcome of the study was considered by the Board of Management and Board of Governors and in July 1969 the BBC published a pamphlet in which it outlined its plans for changes in the radio networks and the reorganisation of non-metropolitan broadcasting. Sixty thousand copies of this pamphlet were printed and it was widely distributed and discussed. The nature of the proposals had implications for Scotland, although not to the same extent as English regional broadcasting. Those proposals likely to affect broadcasting in Scotland included: the BBC's desire to disband the Scottish Symphony Orchestra; the development of local radio and the phasing out of regional radio in England, highlighting the need to review the provision of more localised services in Scotland; and the restructuring of the radio networks. The nature of the BBC's proposals, the controversy which they generated, and the introduction of the new network structure in radio in April 1970 are all discussed in this section.

The background to the BBC's proposals for changes in radio broadcasting stemmed from the need to make financial economies and to plan the nature of the programme services provided to enable them to meet the changing tastes and needs of the audience which it served. The delay in achieving a £6 licence fee (which was only granted on 1 January 1969), combined with a static income from the radio licence and higher costs in other areas such as national insurance contributions and Post Office charges for collecting licence fees, left the BBC with a deficit of over £3 million by 31 March 1969. The BBC therefore sought to look for economies in radio and

determine what type of radio services should be planned for the 1970s. Local radio was to be exempt from these economies because the intention was to allocate additional funds to develop local radio services. The BBC study was therefore designed to review the nature of the other radio services and their financial implications. The proposals which were formulated were outlined in a pamphlet published in July 1969.⁸⁵

In a foreword to this pamphlet Lord Hill, BBC Chairman, stated that BBC radio had to adapt to meet changing tastes and needs. The pamphlet outlined what it took those changing tastes and needs to be, and what the implications were for public service broadcasting. The evening audience for radio had been falling for many years due to the attraction of television. BBC radio therefore had to place much greater emphasis on the daytime programmes because few listeners appeared to use radio as a means of entertainment during the evenings. Indeed even during daytime hours radio was regarded less as a medium for family entertainment and more as a provider of background music. The proposals which the BBC began to outline challenged the traditional Reithian idea of mixed programming whereby listeners would be exposed to a wide range of programmes and so enlarge their cultural horizons. Instead the Corporation was convinced that the public wanted more predictable and specialised networks involving segmented programming because these networks could be tailored to cater for different audiences. According to the BBC, listeners were now tending to select stations rather than programmes.

By 1969 Radios 1 and 2, which attracted the largest percentage of the listening audience, had been operating in tandem for some periods during the day for just over a year because of the lack of resources to separate both networks (i.e. to separate pop from light music). The BBC wanted to continue Radio 1 as an all-pop network

⁸⁵British Broadcasting Corporation, Broadcasting in the Seventies : the BBC's Plan for Network Radio and non-Metropolitan Broadcasting (London : BBC, 1969).

and convert Radio 2 to a separate mainly light music network. To achieve this clearer separation of these two networks it was necessary to extend needletime on Radio 1 and transfer speech programmes from Radio 2 to Radio 4. During the period in which the BBC was seeking to reduce overall costs it was predictable that attention would focus on Radios 3 and 4, the two most expensive networks. Radio 3 generated higher costs per programme hour than any of the other networks yet it continued to attract the smallest audience because of the specialised nature of much of its output. Audience research figures indicated that the Third Programme attracted larger audiences when individual programmes were repeated on Radio 4. This suggested that the Music/Third Programme labels deterred many people from tuning into this network. The proposed solution was to abandon the separate labels of Music Programme and Third Programme in order to include all music and arts programmes under the single heading of Radio 3. Documentaries previously broadcast on the Third Programme were to be transferred to Radio 4 in line with the policy of transforming the latter into a mainly speech network with a few entertainment programmes. So although Radios 1 and 2 would provide news summaries, only Radio 4 would provide a longer and more detailed news analysis. More controversially the BBC wanted all educational programmes (schools and Open University) to be broadcast only on Radio 4 VHF and thereby separate them from Radio 4 on medium wave to avoid costly duplication of services. This proposal was likely to present problems for those people without access to VHF receivers or VHF radio (mainly in the North and North-West of Scotland). The BBC expected that during those hours when educational programmes were not broadcast on VHF then Radio 4 general programmes could be broadcast on these higher frequencies. The transfer of schools programmes to Radio 4 VHF took place in September 1973. All these proposed changes represented an attempt to introduce greater specialisation into the networks. This generic pattern would thus make it possible to distinguish more easily between the networks: Radio 1 concentrating on pop music with hourly news summaries; Radio 2 focusing mainly on light music with hourly news summaries but merged with Radio 1 during the evening; Radio 3 as a provider of classical music, drama, the arts, serious discussions

and literature; and Radio 4 as primarily a speech network covering news, current affairs, plays, discussions, documentaries and some light entertainment.⁸⁶ The BBC argued that choice of programmes was being preserved, and that choice between programmes was being made more convenient for listeners by the streamlining of the radio networks. However, upon closer inspection the technical and financial aspects of these changes and their implications for programme output generated controversy.

Radio 1 as a national service could not be provided on VHF using high-power stations because of the lack of frequencies; VHF on low power was available but this was suitable only for local stations not for Radio 1 which required national coverage. Radio 2 operated on long wave and VHF. There was some disappointment that Radio 1 could not be allocated its own VHF wavelength. The BBC also wished to develop local radio on VHF with some support on medium wave, although the Corporation argued that local radio was not an addition to existing radio services but rather an element in a reorganised radio structure. But this proposal caused concern that the replacement of local stations for existing regional services would be detrimental to those areas in England which lost their regional services but were not allocated a local radio station. However, it was the proposals for changes in Radios 3 and 4 which aroused most controversy within, and to some extent, outwith the BBC. The proposal to move educational programmes on Radio 4 to VHF would mean that medium wave coverage on Radio 4 would need to be improved and this would be achieved by ending regional and area opt-outs on Radio 4 in England. The BBC argued that this would be compensated for by the establishment of more local radio stations.⁸⁷ Even more controversial was the proposal to reallocate the medium waves on Radio 3 to benefit the other networks and the local stations; this would leave Radio 3 only on VHF – a proposal later withdrawn in the face of public opposition. The proposal was

⁸⁶Ibid., p.13.

⁸⁷Ibid.

controversial because those listeners without VHF receivers would be deprived of receiving Radio 3 which they had been able to receive on medium wave. Indeed the loss of the medium wave from Radio 3 and part of VHF from Radio 4 appeared to outweigh any gains. The BBC regarded those gains as comprising the greater separation of Radios 1 and 2, more specialised output on Radios 3 and 4, improved medium wave coverage on Radios 1 and 4, a separate VHF channel for educational broadcasts, and proposals to extend the number of local radio stations up to forty to cover 90 per cent of the population in England.

The restructuring of the radio networks represented one major element in BBC policy. The other major element consisted of the BBC's plans for reorganising regional broadcasting in England. This, together with the BBC's plans to disband the Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the influence of the proposed changes in network radio on broadcasting in Scotland, will now be discussed. A reorganisation of regional broadcasting was long overdue as BBC Chairman Lord Hill admitted.⁸⁸ The BBC envisaged the future of non-network services in the provision of local rather than regional services. This implied that regional opt-outs from Radio 4 in England would cease as local radio stations were developed and were able to supply more local programme material than the regional opt-out services. The position of the national regions, such as Scotland, differed from the situation in England. The BBC believed that the three national regions served homogeneous communities whereas the three English regions (North, Midlands, South and West) could not be regarded as serving any definable communities given the size of the regions and the arbitrary nature of their boundaries, the latter of which was governed by the range of the transmitters. In order to bring the English regional structure more in line with current needs and aspirations, the BBC wished to replace the three large regions with eight smaller geographical regions. In parallel with the extension of local radio services, the location

⁸⁸Lord Hill of Luton, Into the 'Seventies : some aspects of broadcasting in the next decade (London : BBC, 1969), p.10. .

of the 8 regions and the television operations based in them are discussed in section 4.8. The proposed changes in radio were an attempt to move from a three-tier structure comprising the network, regions, and areas (within regions), to the two-tier structure comprising the network and local broadcasting. In practice, the Conservative Government's decision in 1970 to limit the number of local radio stations to twenty obliged the BBC to maintain some regional radio presence on VHF in areas not yet served by local stations. Within the regions, staff feared that the replacement of the large regions by smaller ones would reduce the influence of the English regions in London in comparison with the national regions, such as Scotland, and also threaten job prospects. The BBC, however, created the new post of Controller of English Regions, of equal status to that of the Scottish Controller,⁸⁹ based at Pebble Mill in Birmingham. The task of the new Controller was to supervise the output from the eight stations and act as a link with central management in London.

One aspect of the changes which was of immediate relevance to Scotland was the proposal to disband the Scottish Symphony Orchestra (SSO) as part of an overall reduction of musicians employed in the BBC's 'house' orchestras. In order to reduce expenditure the BBC wished to make greater use of recorded music and reduce its reliance upon live orchestral music. The BBC confirmed to the Estimates Committee in 1969 that McKinseys were asked as part of their overall study of the BBC to look at the position of the BBC orchestras.⁹⁰ When the proposals for network radio were published in July 1969 the BBC stated that in order to economise on the employment of orchestral musicians it could no longer continue to fund the SSO. As a result of external criticism and governmental pressure this proposal was later withdrawn; the BCS had, however, not sought to resist BBC attempts to disband the SSO. In its

⁸⁹BBC Handbook 1970 (London : BBC, 1970), p.192.

⁹⁰Estimates Committee Sub-Committee D. Minutes of Evidence Monday, 17 March, 1969 : British Broadcasting Corporation (H.C. 93-vii; 17 March 1969), p.108.

Annual Report for 1969–70 the Council stated:

... faced with a general BBC need to economise on the employment of orchestral musicians, the Council felt it could not dispute the BBC's proposal that it could no longer continue to finance the Scottish Symphony Orchestra; fully recognising that this decision would be disastrous for the musical life of Scotland but nevertheless seeing that step as the least injurious to broadcasting in Scotland open to it.⁹¹

As regards the replacement of regional radio programmes in England by local radio stations, the BCS stated that these changes would not be immediately applicable to Scotland because the Council believed that Scotland should continue to be provided by a national Scottish output. The reorganisation of the regional structure in England did not alter the BBC's attitude that Scotland should primarily continue to be regarded as a single unit in broadcasting terms. The possibility of developing local radio stations in Scotland did not alter this basic premise, but the changes taking place in England highlighted the issue of introducing some form of localised broadcasting in Scotland, not necessarily analogous to the English local stations, alongside the BBC's national radio service for Scottish listeners. The changes in the radio networks also had an impact on BBC radio in Scotland. The changes made it more difficult for Radio 4 Scotland to attract a large audience because unlike the 1950's when many people listened to the Scottish Home Service, the bulk of the audience now tended to listen to Radios 1 and 2. As a primarily speech network, Radio 4 could not command the same audience levels as the other two networks. The only method of increasing the audience for BBC radio in Scotland was to extend the opt-outs on Radio 4 to include Radio 2 also. The creation of network production centres in England and the greater reliance upon stranded programming in network radio also made it increasingly difficult for Scottish producers to contribute individual programmes of merit for network transmission.

In general the BBC's network radio changes were designed to readjust the

⁹¹British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1969–70 (Cmd. 4520; November 1970), p.127.

services available to cater for the preferences of listeners, to attract a larger audience to radio, and to introduce a more rational use of resources. The move away from the Reithian idea of mixed programming in the direction of more rationally planned specialised networks was reminiscent of a Haleyite reform, discussed in section 5.1, but without Haley's intentions. Haley's cultural pyramid was abandoned. The BBC accepted that listeners would mainly listen to one or two networks thus in theory they were exposed to a narrower range of programme material. The BBC appeared to be prepared to abandon balanced programming on any single channel. In an article in the New Statesman Tim Fell unfavourably reviewed the changes and argued that the type of radio which would emerge from the BBC's plan would be commercial radio without the advertising.⁹² This was symptomatic of the deep concern both within and outwith the BBC about various aspects of the BBC's proposals. For example, radio appeared to be moving away from its role as a cultural medium to one as a provider of news and music. Furthermore, criticism arose not simply because of the nature of the proposals but also because of the lack of adequate consultation on the issues before the BBC's plans were published. This view was echoed in an article by John Maddox, a member of the BBC's General Advisory Council.⁹³ The GAC and other advisory bodies did have an opportunity to outline their response to the BBC's proposals but at a stage regarded as too late to modify these proposals if a negative reaction from its advisory bodies became evident. Regional staff in England were concerned about the plans to end regional radio, particularly because the Pilkington recommendations in 1962 envisaged local radio as a service additional to, rather than as a substitute for, regional services. Anyhow, on 16 October 1969 the BBC announced that its proposals, modified to some extent, were eventually to be implemented. On 14 February 1970, six weeks before the proposals were due to take

⁹²Tim Fell, "The Emasculation of Radio", New Statesman Vol. 78, No. 2022 (12 December 1969), p.871.

⁹³John Maddox, "A strategy for Broadcasting", The Listener Vol. 82, No. 2124 (11 December 1969), pp.809-11.

effect, a letter was published in The Times signed by 134 members of London radio programme staff who were critical of the BBC's plans. They stated that their duty to the public must override the BBC ruling that members of staff should not communicate directly to the press. They added that they wanted the public to be aware of the nature and extent of their opposition to the BBC plans and commented:

What we object to is the abandonment of creative, mixed planning in favour of a schematic division into categories on all four programmes; and, above all, the refusal to devote a large, well-defined area of broadcasting time to a service of the arts and sciences.⁹⁴

The response of the BBC was swift. Ian Trethowan, Managing Director of BBC Radio, wrote to each of the signatories to the letter and pointed out that they had broken their contractual obligations by expressing their views publicly. He added that the proposed changes would proceed as planned from 4 April 1970. The full text of Trethowan's letter was printed on the front page of The Times.⁹⁵

On 4 April 1970 the new network structure in radio was introduced. Each network was now more clearly identifiable with regard to purpose and content. The BBC had argued throughout the long debate on these controversial proposals that they were based on a recognition that listeners were already more selective in their choice of programmes and that the changes would not lead to a reduction in cultural standards. The Corporation stated that it would continue to adhere to its public service function to provide balanced programming, but now this would take place across the networks rather than within any individual network. The BBC summed up its plans as follows:

The purpose of the BBC's plans, as outlined in "Broadcasting in the Seventies", has been twofold: to adapt services to a changing world to meet changing tastes and needs, and to make it possible for BBC Radio to live within its prospective income in the five years 1969-74. The first objective

⁹⁴"Policy on Radio broadcasts : Opposition from staff", The Times, 14 February 1970, p.9.

⁹⁵The Times, 19 February 1970, p.1.

is well on the way to being achieved; the second is more problematical.⁹⁶

Never before in recent history had any BBC proposal given rise to such controversy, particularly at the start of a decade in which the BBC would, for the first time in its fifty-year history, lose its radio broadcasting monopoly.

⁹⁶British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1969-70 (Cmd. 4520; November 1970), p.9.

5.7 The Advent of Independent Local Radio, and BBC Community Radio in Scotland, 1971–1977

The discussion of mainly network radio services in the previous section is replaced by focusing on local broadcasting in this section. This takes the form of the arrival of commercial local radio and the BBC's response to it, and the development in Scotland of localised radio services in the form of community radio which operated on an opt-out and sub-opt-out basis from the BBC's national Scottish radio service. The topics examined in this section are noted as follows: the background to the introduction of Independent Local Radio (ILR) with the passage of the Sound Broadcasting Act in 1972; the BBC's response to the prospect of commercial local radio and the end of the Corporation's sound broadcasting monopoly; BBC Scotland's views on competition from the ILR station in Scotland; the changes in programme schedules on the Radio 4 Scottish opt-out service mainly attributable to the presence of the first ILR station in Scotland in December 1973; and the development of localised radio services in Scotland by the BBC in and after 1976, known as community radio.

In 1962 the Pilkington Committee supported the BBC's plans for local broadcasting but the Government at the time deferred the idea of introducing local radio. It was not until December 1966 that the White Paper on Broadcasting authorised the BBC to conduct a local radio experiment in cooperation with local interests. There was no provision made for commercial local radio. It was only with the advent of a Conservative Government in June 1970 that the possibility of a commercial system drew that much nearer. This was confirmed on 29 March 1971 with the publication of a White Paper outlining plans for the introduction of several commercial local radio stations. There was no organised pressure group which campaigned in favour of commercial stations and so this differed from the early 1950s

when the pressure group element was present prior to the introduction of commercial television. The era of pirate radio did, however, to some extent provide increased support for the provision of legal commercial radio. The commercial viability of local stations depended upon technical factors and not simply the nature of programme content and the catchment area served. It seemed that commercial stations would have to operate on medium wave and not just on VHF in order to reach a larger audience. There was also the question as to whether sufficient advertising revenue could be generated at the local level, and whether the relationship between commercial stations and local newspapers could create a local monopoly of news. Many of the arguments both for and against both systems (i.e. BBC and commercial) mirrored some of the arguments which were used in the early 1950s during the debates on the merits of introducing commercial television. However, the BBC monopoly in radio was of a different nature to the television monopoly given that in radio the BBC already offered a choice of networks with some degree of inbuilt competition. The BBC could also claim that local radio should be funded from the licence fee because, unlike a commercial service, people living in remote areas would be able to receive a local service subsidised by those living in more densely populated areas. Potential commercial operators were aware that they would not be allowed to ignore needletime restrictions or disregard copyright laws in order to reduce operating costs as the pirate radio stations had done. The Government was aware that although there was a need to ensure minimum programme standards and a satisfactory output of locally-originated material, commercial operators had to be given an opportunity to generate reasonable profits. It appeared that local commercial stations would have to opt for mixed programming which was at variance with the results of audience research which indicated that listeners preferred more specialised networks.⁹⁷ The nature of programme content was significant, particularly at a time when the BBC was introducing more specialised radio networks which could be expected together with BBC local radio stations to compete to some extent with any

⁹⁷"Will Radio really be commercial?", Economist Vol. 236, No. 6631 (26 September 1970), p.68.

commercial local radio stations.

In their 1970 election manifesto the Conservative Party promised to introduce commercial local radio under the supervision of a controlling authority. With the prospect of commercial stations the BBC began to express its own reaction to the demise of the sound broadcasting monopoly. In January 1971 Ian Trethowan, Managing Director of BBC Radio, stated that the Corporation was not fighting to defend its monopoly in radio. What was deemed to be of concern was the precise nature of the Government's plans for local radio: were these stations to supplement or to replace BBC radio; and would competition provide listeners with a wider choice of programmes?⁹⁸ The BBC's view was that its existing services which were planned in conjunction with each other did provide reasonable choice for listeners; and that if BBC local stations were closed down then the Corporation would need to maintain some regional radio presence outwith London in order to provide additional material to sustain the expanded news and current affairs output of the networks. The BBC believed that not only were local stations a counter to metropolitanism, but also that there was room for additional VHF stations to enable the BBC and commercial stations to coexist. If only commercial stations were permitted to operate then this would represent a monopoly at the local level. Those who worked for BBC radio may have felt under threat not only from the prospect of commercial stations but also by the abolition of the radio-only licence in February 1971, the existence of which had provided a visible case for adequate funding for radio.⁹⁹

On 29 March 1971 the Government issued its White Paper outlining plans for an alternative service of radio broadcasting at the local level. The Government stated

⁹⁸Ian Trethowan, "BBC Radio by the Head of it, Ian Trethowan", The Listener Vol. 85, No. 2180 (7 January 1971), p.3.

⁹⁹"Local Radio : A principle is at stake", Economist Vol. 237, No. 6644 (26 December 1970), p.16.

that competition in television had been beneficial and was accompanied with little support for any return to the monopoly, hence there was no reason to object to a competitive source of programmes in radio broadcasting: "the case which is now largely accepted for competition in television is no less strong in radio."¹⁰⁰ The Government argued that it was offering an extended choice of public service broadcasting: it would be a public service because the system would be under the supervision of an Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) which would be responsible for appointing programme companies, providing facilities for the transmission of programmes, supervising programme standards, and controlling the amount and nature of advertising. The ITA's organisation was deemed to be suitable for the supervision of local radio hence it was renamed the IBA and given control over Independent Television and Radio. The BBC was allowed to retain its twenty local stations in England, and in Scotland the Scottish opt-outs from Radio 4 were to continue. The Government's plan for commercial local radio envisaged a network of up to sixty stations throughout the U.K. Furthermore, having taken account of the limited audience for BBC local radio on VHF, the Government agreed that the medium waveband would also be used to support BBC and commercial stations in order to make programmes available to a larger number of people.¹⁰¹ It was possible to do this only by closing English regional programmes on Radio 4 thus releasing additional frequencies. Moreover, because of the need to share frequencies and consequently limit the power of the transmitters, the service areas of the local stations on medium wave, especially during the hours of darkness, were likely to be much smaller than VHF areas. The White Paper did not specify where the stations would be sited, but they were expected to serve recognisable communities and would seek to combine popular programming with an attempt to stimulate greater public awareness of local affairs. Their main source of competition was envisaged as coming from BBC Radios

¹⁰⁰An Alternative Service of Radio Broadcasting (Cmnd. 4636; March 1971), p.5.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, p.7.

1 and 2. The Independent Local Radio (ILR) stations were to derive their income from spot advertising, each company was to be appointed using a system of three-year rolling contract periods, and they were to pay a rental to the IBA to cover transmission costs. In an article in The Listener in March 1972, Frank Gillard, the pioneer of BBC local radio, did not believe that the commercial radio stations would be able to generate the same profits as the commercial television stations except perhaps in the larger urban areas. He argued that only by relying upon extensive use of gramophone records would commercial stations be able to exist financially in competition with the BBC's radio services. In an amusing play on words he stated: "Get yourself a microphone, an amiable ape and a pile of pop discs, and you are in business".¹⁰² On 12 June 1972 the Sound Broadcasting Act which made provision for commercial local radio was passed.¹⁰³ The Act stipulated that no contractor was to be permitted to provide both television and radio services for any area. The IBA was to appoint local advisory committees for all areas in which there would be local stations and each station was expected to reflect the tastes and interests of the people which it served. The IBA was authorised to provide television and local radio broadcasting services until 31 July 1976. It seemed likely at the time that Scotland might be able to support four or five commercial stations. To take account of all these changes an Act was passed on 23 May 1973 to consolidate the Television Act of 1964 and the Sound Broadcasting Act of 1972.¹⁰⁴

BBC local stations did not plan any major programme changes in advance of the arrival of ILR stations because it was expected that these stations would compete

¹⁰²Frank Gillard, "The Coming of Commercial Radio", The Listener Vol. 87, No. 2241 (9 March 1972), p.294.

¹⁰³Sound Broadcasting Act 1972 (c.31).

¹⁰⁴Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 1973 (c.19).

mainly with BBC Radios 1 and 2 rather than with BBC local radio. However, in November 1972 Hugh Pierce, General Manager of BBC Local Radio, stated that BBC local stations would have to engage in competition with commercial stations at least to some extent:

When commercial radio comes, we must ensure that our popular programmes are as popular as the other fellow's. But our job must be to remain loyal to our original concept of public service local radio, and we shall continue to carry those programmes for minorities which, though highly appreciated by a few, would break an adman's heart.¹⁰⁵

The IBA began the process of awarding the first five franchises to large urban areas, one of which was located in Glasgow. The ILR stations by now seemed likely to compete directly with BBC Radio 1 which could not be regionalised. In Scotland there was no BBC local radio station to offer competition to ILR stations and neither was the Scottish opt-out service on Radio 4 likely to be a principal competitor to commercial stations. In September 1972 Alasdair Milne, Controller of BBC Scotland, stated that when ILR did arrive in Scotland the BBC would be in a disadvantageous position in competitive terms because of, (1) the absence of BBC local radio in Scotland, and (2) the intention of the Government to sanction the creation of sixty commercial stations to compete with only twenty BBC local stations, all of them located in England.¹⁰⁶ Milne's view was echoed by that of the BCS who stated in their Annual Report for 1971-72:

The Council did not feel that the present structure of Radio 4 Scotland, committed as it is to serving the whole nation, could reasonably be regarded as fair competition for commercial radio established on a localised basis.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵Hugh Pierce, "Participatory radio is already here", The Listener Vol. 88, No. 2275 (2 November 1972), p.584.

¹⁰⁶"BBC's 'Arm tied' in competition with Local Radio", Glasgow Herald, 20 September 1972, p.11.

¹⁰⁷British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1971-72 (Cmd. 5111: October 1972), p.109.

In March 1973 the IBA announced that the contract for the Glasgow area had been awarded to Radio Clyde. Radio Clyde was the first Scottish station and Britain's third ILR station; the first ILR station, London Broadcasting Company, opened on 8 October 1973. Radio Clyde was expected to employ up to seventy staff and serve a potential audience of 1.9 million people in the West of Scotland. The station began transmissions on 31 December 1973 and within a short period of time it made inroads into the listening figures for BBC radio. Radio Clyde's popularity was partly attributable to its attempt to study the character and needs of the listeners which it served, and partly because of the novelty of commercial radio. The new station sought to reflect Glasgow and West of Scotland culture which the BBC in Scotland found difficult to achieve with only an opt-out service from Radio 4 which was expected to serve the whole of Scotland. The arrival of commercial radio thus led to changes in BBC Scotland's radio schedules even although BBC Scotland's Controller, Robert Coulter, did not envisage the BBC as being in direct competition with ILR. From 1 January 1974 BBC Radio 4 programmes in Scotland on 371m medium wave and on VHF became known as Radio Scotland in the Radio Times.¹⁰⁸ The new BBC Radio Scotland remained an opt-out service from Radio 4 but there were programme changes designed to reflect a more distinctive Scottish flavour. From New Year's day 1974 the BBC introduced an hourly Scottish news bulletin entitled, "News from Scotland"; there was also a new two-hour current affairs programme, "Good Morning Scotland" which was broadcast every morning from the Glasgow studios. These and other changes were aimed at increasing the volume of Scottish material which was broadcast and to re-schedule minority interest programmes away from peak listening times; they were also an attempt to cater for the competitive presence of Radio Clyde and the increasing salience of Scottish economic and political issues in the country. Competition from Radio Clyde acted as a stimulus to Scottish radio broadcasting in terms of techniques, such as the use of production teams rather than single producers by BBC Scotland, in programme content as noted above, and in terms of the provision

¹⁰⁸Radio Times, 20/27 December 1973, p.83.

of localised BBC radio services in Scotland.

BBC Scotland's emphasis on its national role in radio broadcasting in Scotland needed to be complemented by the provision of local radio services particularly with the presence of ILR stations opening throughout the country and the success of BBC local radio in England. Referring to the arrival of ILR in Scotland the BCS stated:

In the competitive context, the Council has consistently emphasised the 'BBC in Scotland' with its four generic networks plus BBC Scotland's role as a national service for the whole country. At the same time we cannot ignore local needs and loyalties and the community radio success elsewhere.¹⁰⁹

The BBC in Scotland regarded its principal aim in the early 1970s to build up Radio Scotland as a network service throughout Scotland before considering the development of local radio services. In November 1974 the Crawford Committee on Broadcasting Coverage stated that the first objective of radio in Scotland should be to meet national requirements and only then consider the possibility of local stations. Given the presence of ILR, the Committee wanted BBC local broadcasting to be extended to Scotland when the financial resources and frequencies made this feasible.¹¹⁰ The Crawford Committee wanted first consideration in these circumstances to be given by the BBC to small population centres rather than to duplicate areas served by commercial local radio. The type of local broadcasting which the BBC planned for Scotland consisted of a number of community radio stations. These stations differed from BBC local radio in England because they operated as an opt-service. In Scotland the BBC community stations operated on an opt-out not opt-in basis from Radio Scotland. In England the BBC local stations had their own transmission resources and air-time and with a self sustaining output of 6-8 hours each day they were opt-in rather than opt-out services. The Scottish community

¹⁰⁹BBC Handbook 1975 (London : BBC, 1974), p.109.

¹¹⁰Report of the Committee on Broadcasting Coverage. Chairman : Sir Stewart Crawford (Cmnd. 5774; November 1974), p.63.

stations therefore had to take most of their programme material from Radio Scotland and opt-out for only limited periods each day. Both in 1962 and in 1976 BBC Scotland did not favour the establishment of self sustaining local radio stations in Scotland. If a local station had been established in 1967 at the time when the first experimental BBC local stations were introduced in England, then the decisions in 1976 about local services in Scotland might have been qualitatively different.

On 25 March 1976 Radio Highland, the first community radio station, began broadcasting on VHF. This station which was based in Inverness served a bilingual population, to some extent in that 25 per cent were Gaelic speakers. Radio Highland operated on an opt-out basis from Radio Scotland. The first programme broadcast on the new station was "The Morning Report" which reviewed events in the North of Scotland.¹¹¹ From 17 May 1976 Radio Highland also broadcast "Studio Two", a half-hour lunchtime programme. The station also broadcast some Gaelic schools programmes. By 1978 the output of Gaelic and English programmes from the station was over ten hours a week. Another station, Radio Aberdeen, began broadcasting on 19 April 1976. The station broadcast two opt-out programmes on VHF from Radio Scotland, "Bon Accord", a lunchtime programme, and "Northern News Desk", a half-hour evening programme. The news on the latter programme was followed by a varied format on other days of the week as follows: local culture on Mondays, current affairs on Tuesdays, clubs on Wednesdays, agriculture on Thursdays, and sport on Fridays. By 1978 Radio Aberdeen was broadcasting over five hours a week. Radios Highland and Aberdeen were followed in 1977 by the opening of the two-man community stations, Orkney and Shetland. Radios Orkney and Shetland began broadcasting on 9 May 1977 and both produced about 2½ hours of programmes each week on VHF. Radio Orkney broadcast programmes as on Radio Aberdeen but opted-out in the morning for the "Morning Magazine" which covered news of people and events in Orkney. Radio Shetland used the Shetland VHF transmitters and

¹¹¹Radio Times, 20-26 March 1976, p.57.

broadcast as on Radio Orkney except for an evening programme "Good Evening Shetland" covering local news and music. Radios Orkney and Shetland were unique within the BBC because they were each staffed only by two producers who also presented the programmes. Alastair Hetherington, Controller of BBC Scotland, stated that central management in London, unlike BBC Scotland, was initially more sceptical about the viability of these stations.¹¹² Ian Trethowan, Director-General, was willing to provide some funds if the remaining financial resources could be found within the BBC Scotland budget. These stations at least did not require resident engineering, administrative and secretarial staff. Howard Firth was appointed Manager of Radio Orkney, and Jonathan Wills who worked for the Shetland Times became Manager of Radio Shetland. The type of topics which could be covered by these stations included the impact of North Sea Oil developments, pressures on traditional crofting, fishing and knitwear industries, and political devolution. The next development was the opening of Radio nan Eilean (Radio of the Isles), a small bilingual station which was opened in Stornoway on 5 October 1979 and opted-out from Radio Highland to broadcast a morning and an evening programme to people living in the outer Hebrides, part of Skye, and the western coast of Sutherland and Wester Ross. Further BBC community radio stations were opened during the 1980s.

¹¹²Taped Interview with Professor Alastair Hetherington, Stirling, 7 April 1988.

5.8 The Annan Report of 1977 : Inquiry, Analysis and Outcome

In May 1970 John Stonehouse, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, announced that there would be a new inquiry into broadcasting to be chaired by Lord Annan. Labour lost the General Election of June 1970 and so the formation of this committee lapsed. The Committee was only appointed in 1974 after Labour returned to power. The BBC's Charter and Licence and Agreement were extended from July 1976 to July 1979 in order to leave adequate time for the completion of the Committee's work, the publication of its report, and the implementation of any legislation. The Annan Committee was the first major inquiry to examine the operation of competitive local radio services. The Committee set itself three objectives: (1) to preserve British broadcasting as a public service; (2) to plan a new structure for broadcasting capable of meeting changes over the following fifteen years; and (3) to retain the editorial independence of the BBC and the IBA free from political pressure or interest groups yet ensure the public accountability of the broadcasters. This section outlines the submissions of evidence to the Committee with regard to broadcasting in Scotland, the recommendations of the Annan Committee on the pattern of broadcasting services which should be provided, and the outcome of the publication of the Annan Report in terms of Government policy on the future direction of broadcasting.

In a memorandum submitted by the Broadcasting Council for Scotland to the Annan Committee, the Council stated that in radio it wanted Scotland to provide its own coherent programme services without depriving listeners of the opportunity to hear U.K. services. This implied the provision of a full Radio Scotland service on VHF and medium wave which would not merely be an opt-out service from Radio 4. In remoter areas the BCS wanted the development of several community stations. The Council

stated:

The development of community radio, especially in towns outside the central belt, is urgently desirable. This latter would be of particular value in furthering community identity in Northern regions suffering the social disruption of rapid industrial development.¹¹³

Community radio on VHF as an opt-out service from Radio Scotland would develop from the periphery inwards rather than from the centre to the periphery as was the norm with broadcasting services. The BCS attached great importance to the development of community radio as a means of serving the many small scattered communities throughout Scotland. Drawing the distinction between existing BBC local radio stations and the small community stations proposed for Scotland, the Council went on to state:

A development of community radio rather than urban local radio has unlimited potential as a medium of communication and as a resource for personal and group development.¹¹⁴

The Council welcomed the preparations for a radio station based in Inverness which was designed to provide Gaelic as well as English language programmes to people in the Highlands and Islands and to contribute material on oil-related developments to the Scottish and U.K. networks. However, the BCS also hoped that Oban and Stornoway would be centres of Gaelic broadcasting. Furthermore the Council drew attention to the need to expand the Edinburgh studios, and to extend radio services to all communities of more than 500 people, particularly as many of the latter communities were geographically isolated and lacked the amenities taken for granted in urban areas. In particular, in parts of Scotland listeners had to rely on VHF transmissions for their radio service and were therefore denied the general programmes available on long wave and medium wave. The percentage coverage figures for broadcasting services in the U.K. gave a misleading impression of the

¹¹³Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Memorandum to the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting, c. June 1975, p.4, SRO COM.1/101.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p.5.

situation in Scotland where many people living in remote areas experienced either poor or no reception of some programme services. The Scottish National Party (SNP) wanted Scottish services to continue to be provided through Radio 4 and later extended to Radio 2, but also supported the establishment of localised radio services in Scotland in the Highlands and in the Borders and at a later stage in Shetland and the Western Isles.¹¹⁵ The party wanted at least four hours of Gaelic radio broadcasting each day in the Highland area, and one hour broadcast on national radio. The SNP also wanted future local stations to be provided in the remote areas where the need for such a service was deemed to be much greater than in more populous areas. The party supported the need to improve VHF radio coverage in Scotland.

In its submission to the Annan Committee, An Comunn (the Highland Association) criticised the BBC for its decision in 1974 to confine most Gaelic programmes to VHF because, (1) listeners in areas which could not receive VHF were denied Gaelic broadcasts, and (2) people in VHF reception areas were forced to purchase VHF receivers if they wished to obtain such broadcasts. The Association also noted with dismay the more favourable recommendations of the Crawford Committee on Broadcasting Coverage with regard to Welsh broadcasting in comparison with Gaelic broadcasting.¹¹⁶ An Comunn doubted the commitment to Gaelic community radio despite the BBC's plans for a local station in Inverness; what was hoped for was community radio providing a comprehensive range of programmes to all Gaelic-speaking areas and broadcasting initially for at least four hours each day. An Comunn did not believe that the station planned for Inverness would fulfil this requirement because Gaelic output would represent only one aspect of the station's programme activities, the programme output would be minimal, and it would not serve

¹¹⁵Scottish National Party: Evidence for the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting, n.d. pp.7-8, SRO COM.1/623.

¹¹⁶Report of the Committee on Broadcasting Coverage. Chairman: Sir Stewart Crawford (Cmnd. 5774; November 1974), pp.41, 54.

all Gaelic-speaking areas.¹¹⁷ Furthermore the Association stated that it was confident that demand existed for increased Gaelic radio output for Gaelic speakers resident outside the traditional Gaelic areas. BBC staff in Aberdeen expressed disappointment that Scotland had been denied any BBC local radio, and in particular supported the establishment of a separate Gaelic radio service for the Highlands and Islands. These developments were viewed as meriting a higher priority than a Scottish presence on Radio 2. At some stage it was hoped that provision could be made for small two-man stations for the scattered communities in the Highlands and Islands which could also provide material for the BBC's national services. The paper submitted by BBC staff in Aberdeen also highlighted the need to extend stereo transmissions to the North of Scotland. The Scottish Trades Union Congress regretted that it was commercial rather than BBC local radio which had been developed in Scotland; the Scottish Arts Council also thought that it was regrettable that the BBC had not opened any local radio stations in Scotland.¹¹⁸ On the general theme of the autonomy of broadcasting in Scotland, the Scottish Arts Council concluded its submission of evidence to the Annan Committee by stating:

While we are conscious of the benefits which partaking in a truly British broadcasting service – both as consumers and as producers – could bring, we believe it would accord better with the consensus of opinion in Scotland if more power to take decisions, and more resources to make them effective, were given to people in Scotland. Not out of a narrow sense of nationalism or even separatism, but simply because it is neither necessary nor desirable that so many decisions about broadcasting should be taken, directly or indirectly, in London 400 miles away.¹¹⁹

A BBC submission which summarised the development of its programme services from 1962 when the Pilkington Committee examined broadcasting, up until 1974 when the

¹¹⁷An Comunn Gaidhealach : Submission to the Annan Committee into the Future of Broadcasting, 27 December 1974, p.3, SRO COM.1/184.

¹¹⁸Scottish Arts Council : Submission to the Annan Committee on Broadcasting, 21 January 1975, p.3, SRO COM.1/620.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p.9.

Annan Committee was appointed, referred to the absence of local radio stations in Scotland but stated:

It is, however, open to question whether the most desirable form of localised Radio broadcasting in Scotland would very closely resemble the stations in operation in England. With few exceptions, the population of Scotland is not concentrated in urban centres and is, in the Highlands and Islands, scattered over very large distances.¹²⁰

In Scotland radio development took the form of increasing the Scottish output and Scottish identity of the opt-out service on Radio 4, combined with plans to develop community and area radio on an opt-out basis from Radio Scotland.

The Annan Report on the future of broadcasting was published in March 1977. The Report stated that the BBC should continue to operate four national radio networks but that efforts should be made to encourage listeners to switch between radio channels by the use of methods such as cross-trailing the programmes on alternative networks. This was deemed to be of importance given the presence of generic radio broadcasting with its specialised networks. The Annan Committee believed that local radio was useful because it checked the tendency for national radio to become dominated by London and the three large English network production centres. However, given the differences between local radio and network broadcasting, the Committee argued that the former should come under the control of a Local Broadcasting Authority (LBA) and not remain under the control of the BBC and the IBA. In these circumstances the IBA would require to be renamed the Regional Television Authority. The proposed LBA would be funded by rentals from local radio stations and be expected to give high priority to the opening of local stations in areas such as the Highlands and Islands. The LBA would award franchises to those organisations which appeared most likely to provide the kind of service which was best suited to what the people in these areas, stated they needed. The Annan Committee argued that if local radio continued to remain the responsibility of the BBC

¹²⁰BBC, "A Summary of Development 1962-1974", n.d., Para. 57, SRO COM.1/87.

or the IBA then it was likely to develop only in the shadow of the network services and in their image whereas local stations needed to reflect the image of the communities which they served.¹²¹

With regard to the provision of broadcasting services in the BBC's national regions, the Committee recommended that urgent attention should be given to filling gaps in VHF radio coverage in Scotland.¹²² Scotland could set the priorities in terms of extending BBC services within Scotland but decisions on the overall planning of frequencies would continue to be taken centrally in London. As regards radio programme output, the Annan Committee wanted the BBC Controller in Scotland to be given greater flexibility over the scheduling in Scotland of radio programmes produced specifically for listeners in Scotland;¹²³ it also wanted Radio Scotland to increase its programme output both for the Scottish audience and for other network radio services. With the Annan Committee proposing that local radio, both BBC and ILR, should be the responsibility of a new authority (i.e. the LBA), it followed that the Annan Report recommended that the BBC should not provide community radio services in Scotland.¹²⁴ The Committee did, however, state that the BBC should continue to operate a community radio station at Inverness until radio services there could be provided by the proposed LBA. It was also recommended that the LBA should establish a committee in Scotland to advise on the arrangements for the provision of Scottish local radio services. On the issue of Gaelic broadcasting, the

¹²¹Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting. Chairman : Lord Annan (Cmd. 6753; March 1977), p.207.

¹²²Ibid., p.404.

¹²³Ibid., p.406.

¹²⁴Ibid., p.410.

Annan Committee recommended that responsibility for providing programmes in Gaelic to the Gaelic-speaking areas should be shared between Grampian Television and the proposed LBA; the BBC would, however, continue to be responsible for providing some Gaelic programmes on radio throughout Scotland.

The BBC Board of Governors held a special meeting on 24 March 1977 to discuss initial impressions of the Annan Report. The BBC accepted that its national role should not be purely metropolitan in character and that therefore there was a need to strengthen regional and local broadcasting, hence there was concern about the Report's proposal that local radio should be placed under a Local Broadcasting Authority. In its Annual Report for 1976-77 the BBC stated:

In our view the Committee's proposal for local broadcasting would not make possible the kind of community service which we in the BBC have provided, and to which the Committee itself has paid tribute. The proposed LBA's primary commercial base would of necessity reflect that base and give a different kind of service. It would eventually result in a reduced choice for the listener.¹²⁵

To emphasise the importance of preserving localised services, the BBC stated that there was no essential difference of principle between spending licence money on Radio 3 for minorities of taste and spending it on local radio's geographical minorities. The BBC wished to extend local radio in England and community radio in Scotland and so was against the proposal of the Annan Committee to place control of localised broadcasting under an LBA. The BCS also wanted the BBC to retain control over local radio development. Furthermore it agreed with the Annan Committee about the need to expand output on Radio Scotland and for improvements in VHF radio coverage, especially in the North and West of Scotland.

In July 1978 the Government published its White Paper on broadcasting. The Government stated that it wished to encourage the extension of local radio but did not agree with the Annan Committee's proposal that control over local radio should be

¹²⁵BBC Handbook 1978 (London : BBC, 1977), p.3.

taken away from the BBC and IBA and given to a separate authority, the LBA.¹²⁶ The Government was anxious for as many areas of the country as possible to have access to local radio and agreed with the Annan Committee that the opening of local stations in Scotland should therefore be given a high priority within the general expansion of local radio.¹²⁷ The BCS welcomed support for community radio development under BBC control. The next major radio development occurred in November 1978 with the start of BBC Radio Scotland as a separate programme service. This is discussed in the following section.

¹²⁶Broadcasting (Cmnd. 7294; July 1978), p.15.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, p.26.

5.9 BBC Radio Scotland : Formation, Programme Policy and Development, 1978–1980

The reallocation of wavelengths after the Geneva Conference of October 1975 made it possible to launch Radio Scotland as a separate radio service on 23 November 1978. On that day the BBC changed the frequencies of many radio transmitters. Radio 4 on the MF band moved to LF and Radio 2 moved from LF to the MF band; Radios 1 and 3 continued on the MF band and the VHF services remained unchanged. Radio Scotland took over from the previous Scottish opt-out service on Radio 4 and broadcast on 371 metres medium wave. It now had the task of competing with the four U.K. radio networks as well as commercial radio. For several years Radio Scotland had opted out of Radio 4 and so was unable to develop its own identity, but now there was an opportunity to plan a separate Scottish radio service. This section which concludes the discussion of BBC radio broadcasting in the post-war period, examines the BBC's plans for the start of Radio Scotland, the type of service which it was expected to provide, the problems which emerged over programme policy after the new service had begun, and the efforts which were subsequently made to improve audience figures.

With the change in wavelengths Scotland did not have to carry the U.K. service of Radio 4 and so it was possible to plan a Scottish alternative to the mainly London-based programme output. After the changes, Radio 4 became a purely U.K. network in Scotland on long wave without any regional opt-outs. The changes offered the possibility of developing a richer programming base in Scotland which might help to stem the drift of talented staff to London and even encourage some staff to return to Scotland. The BCS commented in its annual report for 1976–77 on the projected nature of the new channel:

It is felt that Radio Scotland must be the authoritative voice for news, current

affairs and sport in Scotland, and must reflect all aspects of Scottish life in politics, religion and the arts. It must spread its wings to cover serious Scottish interests and minority groups who would otherwise not be catered for. At the same time the new channel must broaden its base and offer a programme with mass appeal and a recognised Scottish flavour, which can at certain times of the day hold its own with the popular music channels and to a certain extent with commercial radio.¹²⁸

This was a very ambitious set of criteria for the new station, and as will be seen, was responsible for the problems which emerged after the new service had begun.

The new Radio Scotland service was expected to be unitary in character in the sense that it would provide a single service for the whole of Scotland yet still be capable of drawing upon material from the developing community and area radio stations. Radio Scotland was therefore not based on the generic principle used by the U.K. radio networks. The BCS argued that a single channel serving the whole nation was the best means of serving and reflecting the new mood of national consciousness within Scotland as well as facilitating the most economical use of resources.¹²⁹ The new channel was expected to be more popular in content than the previous opt-out service on Radio 4. Up until then BBC Scotland had not catered in radio for Scottish popular culture, but the increase in broadcasting hours on the new service made this feasible to some extent. Popular culture was confined to Radios 1 and 2 which were planned in London and which inevitably focused on a U.K. rather than a distinctively Scottish popular culture. To cover both traditional and popular Scottish culture, what was required were six not five radio services (i.e. Radios 1-4, Radio Scotland, and local stations), but this was too costly to provide. Scotland had to decide whether to develop Radio Scotland as a national service or develop local radio; it chose the former option. The advent of Radio Scotland as a self-contained

¹²⁸BBC Handbook 1978 (London : BBC, 1977), p.115.

¹²⁹Ibid.

Scottish radio service in 1978 was an attempt to resolve this dilemma.¹³⁰ However, it failed to a significant extent and so BBC Scotland had to abandon any attempt to provide a strong output of popular culture of interest to Scottish people and therefore revert to the more traditional Radio 4 format. It highlighted the need to re-examine the role of radio in Scotland: should radio be national or primarily local?; should it focus on cultural unity or cultural diversity? and should it concentrate primarily on Scottish matters and perhaps be criticised for being too provincial, or should it provide a Scottish perspective on U.K. and international events without listeners having to tune in to Radio 4 U.K., as Neal Ascherson argued in an article in The Scotsman.¹³¹ It highlighted the question as to whether Radio Scotland should be a mixed service or a core service with the choice of developing local stations. Nevertheless, a link can be established between the formation of Radio Scotland and mini-devolution within the BBC. Indeed as Alastair Hetherington (Controller of BBC Scotland) confirmed, Radio Scotland was part of the general expansion of programme services, and partly also needed because of the expectation that there might be a Scottish Assembly.¹³² The need for a comprehensive radio service for Scotland had been agreed in principle before the end of 1976.

Various preparations were initiated before the start of Radio Scotland. A new radio studio was provided in Edinburgh where the headquarters of the new service was to be based. In September 1977 the BBC announced that John Pickles was to be the new Head of Radio Scotland. The BBC planned to almost double the radio output in Scotland when Radio 4 and Radio Scotland separated thus bringing the 50

¹³⁰Taped Interview with John Gray, Edinburgh, 5 April 1988.

¹³¹Neal Ascherson, "Radio Scotland : a frosted window on the world", Scotsman, 22 November 1978, p.13.

¹³²Taped Interview with Professor Alastair Hetherington, Stirling, 7 April 1988.

hours of output up to 80 a week with further increases planned by the early 1980s.¹³³ This increase in programme output was required if Radio Scotland was to operate as a genuinely separate radio channel in contrast to the previous Radio 4 opt-out service. Listeners would have a greater choice of programmes since Radio 4 programmes would continue to be available in Scotland together with the expected increased output from Radio Scotland. BBC Scotland expected to spend more than £750,000 annually in operating the new service. London agreed to increase BBC Scotland's budget to meet the additional expenditure, mainly consisting of staff costs. The search for additional staff began in January 1978; thirty additional production staff were recruited and trained, most of whom were based in Edinburgh; and the news and current affairs teams were moved to Edinburgh.

On 23 November 1978 the changeover in the wavelengths took place and the new Radio Scotland service began. Radio Scotland broadcast on medium wave, and Radio 4 was available on long wave, the latter of which was subject to interference. This prompted complaints from listeners who experienced interference on Radio 4. However, there was little prospect of introducing Radio 4 on VHF because Scotland only had three VHF wavelengths (i.e. Radios 1/2, 3, and Radio Scotland). With the changes, programmes such as "The Archers" and "Women's Hour" were now broadcast only on Radio 4 U.K. and not on Radio Scotland. The output of Scottish material increased with the arrival of new programmes such as "Tom Ferrie" (mid-morning music), "The Gerry Davis Show" (music and chat in the afternoons), "Rhythm and News" (news, music and interviews in the late afternoon), "The Tartan Terror Show" (with Gerry McKenzie), and "Night Beat" (late night music with Ken Bruce).¹³⁴ Two weeks after the start of the new service, John Pickles (Head of Radio Scotland), emphasised the basis on which the station was expected to operate:

¹³³BBC Handbook 1979 (London : BBC, 1979), p.175.

¹³⁴Radio Times, 18-24 November 1978, p.61.

It was the very conception of Radio 4, with its U.K. mantle, which allowed Radio Scotland its own frequency and determined its programme policy. We have never suggested that Radio Scotland has the resources to replace Radio 4 and we have planned our schedules to provide something different – something which we believe fills a gap between the 4 U.K. Networks on the one hand, and the much more localised broadcasting provided by our own stations in Aberdeen, Inverness, Orkney and Shetland and the ILR stations, Clyde and Forth, on the other.¹³⁵

The problem for Radio Scotland, which soon became evident, was that it fell into this gap and lost its way.

Within a short period of time the new service began to act as a magnet for criticism. The original programme policy eventually had to be modified because of public criticism and a decline in audience figures. Radio Scotland's share of the audience was particularly low in the West of Scotland where Radio Clyde offered strong competition to all radio networks.¹³⁶ Programme planners at Radio Scotland were concerned that their premier service covering the whole of Scotland was of interest only to a minority of listeners. Indeed Radio Scotland had reached a larger audience when it was merely an opt-out service on Radio 4. The problem with Radio Scotland was that it sought to place itself between Radio 1/ILR output and Radio 4 output and so failed to achieve a coherent mix of programmes. It faced the dilemma of trying to be popular in order to attract listeners, but not too popular for fear of alienating the traditional Radio 4 opt-out listeners. It could not appeal to Radio 4 Scotland listeners and those listeners who normally preferred Radios 1 and 2 or the ILR stations. BBC policy, particularly since the introduction of the new network radio structure in April 1970, had been to place emphasis on specialised radio networks. However, with only one wavelength Radio Scotland had to provide a balanced programme output for all listeners in Scotland and seek to serve both majority and minority interests. It was the use of mixed rather than streamed programming which

¹³⁵John Pickles, "Radio Scotland : a declaration of faith", Scotsman, 8 December 1978, p.14.

¹³⁶Ian Mowatt, "Why Radio Scotland needs major surgery", Scotsman, 16 June 1979, p.8.

hindered Radio Scotland in cultivating audience identification. The faulty programme mix caused those listeners who preferred a Scottish version of Radio 4 to be dissatisfied; likewise, popular music was already catered for on Radio 1 and the ILR stations. The BBC's overall financial problems also forced Radio Scotland to carry an increasing number of programmes taken from Radio 4. Nevertheless, the BBC in Scotland had increased its hours of programme output for listeners in Scotland from 3,175¹³⁷ during 1977–78 before the new service began, to 6,723 hours in 1979–80.¹³⁸ The number of hours of output contributed to other radio networks did, however, fall during this period from 365 hours in 1977–78 to 240 hours in 1979–80.

In 1979 BBC Scotland's new Controller Pat Ramsay had to decide what changes at Radio Scotland were required in order to increase audience levels to a respectable level (at least greater than Radio 4, the channel from which it separated in November 1978) and to impress a clearer stamp of identity on the station. Ramsay wanted to create a more distinctive and distinguished network and to achieve this he wished to place greater emphasis on news and current affairs programmes. An editorial in the Glasgow Herald stated:

Minority interest programmes could have considerable appeal and Radio Scotland, fulfilling both a national and local role, is the right vehicle for this. There is enough going on throughout Scotland to provide material for a lively station and if the BBC recognises this it will find that there is far less need to pad out programmes with nondescript music.¹³⁹

Based on the outcome of a special audience research survey and an internal report, the main points in Pat Ramsay's plan which were endorsed by the BCS and outlined

¹³⁷BBC Handbook 1979 (London : BBC, 1979), p.106.

¹³⁸BBC Annual Report and Handbook 1981 (London : BBC, 1980), p.109.

¹³⁹"Problem station", Glasgow Herald, 13 September 1979, p.6.

in September 1979¹⁴⁰ were: (1) given that Radio Scotland was a national network operating in addition to the four U.K. networks (i.e. Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4), Radios 1 and 2 should be left to provide the main competition with commercial radio since this was not a task which Radio Scotland should seek to accomplish; (2) the major element in Radio Scotland's output should consist of high quality news and current affairs programmes which would reinforce the station's identity, and encourage listeners to turn to the station for Scottish, U.K. and international news; (3) more emphasis should be given to talks and less to 'blether, pop and triviality', hence speech and music would be more clearly defined within any programme; (4) a greater focus on Scottish music, country music, light classical music and folk music at the expense of pop music; (5) there was to be greater attention placed on the scheduling of programmes and programme content, both of which had been identified as the source of so many criticisms; and (6) there was a recognition of the need to transmit specialised programmes which would generate interest among minority audiences. The direction in which these changes pointed was a less populist and more traditional Radio 4 format for Radio Scotland. BBC Scotland sought within a single service to place programmes into three or four separate categories during the day and associate these with well-known presenters and thus appeal to different audiences at different times of the day. This would gain the advantages of streamed programming within the overall framework of mixed programming on one wavelength (i.e. Radio Scotland would assume the guise of three or four separate stations during the day).

Within two years Radio Scotland began to recover from the earlier criticism of its programmes and begin to implement the new guidelines. The BCS stated that Radio Scotland had learned to avoid the more drastic gear changes of style that had originally formed the basis of much of the criticism of the station's programme

¹⁴⁰Patrick Ramsay, "Radio Scotland : the second blueprint", Scotsman, 15 September 1979, p.8.

output.¹⁴¹ Improvements took place at a time when the BBC as a whole was experiencing pressure on financial resources. BBC Scotland did not originally want Radio Scotland to be a Scottish version of Radio 4 yet it moved in this direction after the programme changes were implemented. From 1–5 December 1980 just two years after the launch of Radio Scotland, the station combined with BBC Scotland television to pioneer radiovision (i.e. the simultaneous broadcasting on radio and television of the radio programme, "Good Morning Scotland") to mark fifty years of broadcasting from the BBC's Queen Street studios in Edinburgh.¹⁴² This was the first time that cameras had been brought into a morning news programme on radio, and the BBC centrally took note of this development in order to gauge public response to breakfast television, which was introduced just over two years later. By the close of 1980, Radio Scotland had escaped from the turbulent phase of its early development and now looked forward to consolidate the changes which subsequently had been introduced.

The following chapter draws upon background material provided in previous chapters, but focuses on three key themes in BBC broadcasting in Scotland: Scottish images in broadcasting output and the BBC's dual programme responsibility in Scotland; centralisation; and regional devolution. Scottish developments are placed within the wider U.K. context because of the interrelationship between both, particularly as the BBC in Scotland represents only one of the BBC's regions, albeit a national region. The timescale covered by the chapter is 1922–1979, although the primary emphasis is on the post-war period.

¹⁴¹BBC Annual Report and Handbook 1981 (London : BBC, 1980), p.78.

¹⁴²Radio Times, 29 November–5 December 1980, p.55.

CHAPTER 6

SCOTTISH PROGRAMME POLICY, CENTRALISM AND REGIONAL DEVOLUTION

6.1 Scottish Images in Broadcasting: BBC Scotland's Dual Programme Responsibility

The topics discussed in previous chapters – the early history of the BBC, the organisational structure and financial basis of Scottish broadcasting, the development of the transmitter network, and radio and television programme policy governing the provision of programme services – provide the background to the thematic approach adopted in this chapter, which considers three distinct but related aspects of BBC radio and television broadcasting in Scotland. The first section focuses on the images of Scotland which were projected in programme output and the transmitting mechanisms available, such as regional opt-outs and networking, for projecting those images. This section then concludes the examination of images in broadcasting by examining programme policy in three distinct subject areas of direct relevance to broadcasting in Scotland: political broadcasting; schools broadcasting; and Gaelic broadcasting. The final two sections of Chapter 6 concentrate on the implications for Scottish broadcasting of the centralised nature of the BBC and the attempts in the post-war period up to 1980 to introduce various measures of regional devolution.

In Scotland there are social, economic, cultural and geographical divisions, although much greater differences exist between Scotland and the rest of the U.K. than within Scotland (i.e. Lowlands and Highlands). Despite the absence of an obvious linguistic basis to nationalism in Scotland – since Gaelic is a minority language and culture and mainly confined to the North and West – Scottish institutions

have helped to define the distinctiveness of Scotland. These range from the law, central and local government, the church and the educational system, the Scottish press and the existence of bodies such as the Scottish Arts Council. The BBC is thus a relatively recent institution in comparison with older Scottish institutions; it is also part of a U.K. institution. At the political level there has always been in Scotland criticism in varying degrees about remote control from London. Scotland is more remote from London than any English region; thus Scottish people regard themselves as at a distance from the key decision-making centres. This has conditioned attitudes towards decision-making within the BBC though not necessarily in other branches of the media such as the Scottish press. For many years a high proportion of Sunday newspapers purchased in Scotland have been in fact written and printed in Scotland. Even many Scottish daily newspapers have been chosen in preference to English newspapers. Interestingly, Scottish people have consistently preferred Scottish newspapers as a source of information whereas in broadcasting terms they tended to prefer network rather than Scottish programme output. The public tended to turn to the press for news of local or Scottish events, but preferred broadcasting for information on U.K. matters of interest. This trend has been somewhat less evident in recent years partly because of the reduction in the number of newspapers produced in Scotland, partly because of the increasing number of Scottish features in non-Scottish-based newspapers, and also partly because of the improvement in both the quality and quantity of broadcasting output on Scottish themes.

A crucial point which has to be borne in mind when making comparisons between broadcasting and the press is that whereas the BBC in Scotland segregated Scottish news in separate bulletins, Scottish newspapers placed Scottish items of interest in close proximity to items of both national and International importance. This difference in the method of presenting material helps to explain firstly why BBC Scottish-originated output was regarded as parochial whereas newspaper items escaped much of this criticism; and secondly why the public tended to prefer broadcasting rather than the Scottish press for the dissemination of information of

national and International importance. The close proximity of items of Scottish interest in BBC bulletins tended to imply that the Corporation regarded anything Scottish as of merely regional or peripheral interest, particularly when Scottish items of general interest had to be relegated to the Scottish bulletins. A paper by the Broadcasting Council for Scotland commented on this theme as follows:

As the reason for the relegation of major items of Scottish news to the separate Scottish bulletin is known to be their exclusion from the main bulletins prepared by the BBC in London, the critics regard the BBC's handling of news as an example of a more general complaint that London headquarters of nationalised concerns look on Scotland as a 'region' rather than a country with an intense national consciousness.¹

A solution in which Scottish items were placed among, and in relation to, both national and international items of interest has not been found easy to achieve in practice.

In Scotland the BBC has the status of a 'national region'. It is a region because BBC Scotland represents only part of a unitary BBC covering the whole of the U.K; it is a national region because it serves a nation thus distinguishing it from one of the BBC's English regions. According to the BBC, Scotland was in broadcasting terms both a nation and a region. The Corporation regarded the words 'region' and 'regional' as a convenience for denoting broadcasting outwith the London area. In 1938 in a letter to the Scottish National Party about broadcasting in Scotland, the Controller (Public Relations) offered the following comments on the use of the term 'region' in BBC terminology:

May I explain the we regard the term 'Region' as one of administrative convenience, and we do not think that listeners generally share your view that it carries a deprecatory connotation, or that the use of it by the BBC implies a failure to recognise the special claims of Scotland as a nation.²

¹Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Paper BCS/4/54, 18 February 1954, Para.2, BBC WAC R6/8/1.

²Controller (Public Relations) to the Scottish National Party, 6 January 1938, BBC WAC R13/369/2.

At any rate the BBC referred to programmes as 'Scottish' and not 'Scottish regional'; In its Annual Reports the BBC argued that the normal use of the term 'region' was not strictly applicable to the regions of national status (i.e Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). Nevertheless the use of the term did generate some degree of irritation. In 1946 the Saltire Society stated that the BBC was treating Scotland as a provincial centre and added:

The term 'Regional' should be dropped entirely so far as Scotland is concerned. Strictly speaking it should only apply to the English provinces. Scotland is a nation containing at least five 'Regions' in the proper sense of the term, and its use to describe the whole of Scotland causes both annoyance and confusion.³

There is evidence that, several years earlier, the BBC's staff in Scotland were concerned that the Corporation was regarded as a wholly English institution, thus undermining its status in Scottish society. In 1936 the Scottish Regional Director sent a memorandum to the Director-General regarding the need for the BBC to avoid the use of the term 'English' when 'British' was meant.⁴ It appears that Scottish sensitivity on this subject was not wholly catered for because just over four years later another memorandum stated that a reminder was to be issued to programme staff on the same issue.⁵ Scottish-originated output was expected to cater mainly for Scottish interests, but there was always the danger that an excessive or distorted image of Scotland would lead to criticism that Scottish output was too parochial and not related to events in the world beyond the Scottish border. The fact that much of the earlier Scottish output, particularly on television, was confined to Scottish affairs and

³Saltire Society, Broadcasting : Recommendations of the Saltire Society's Broadcasting Committee, together with comments on the White Paper, and the Reports of listening groups on Scottish Broadcast Programmes, January-March 1946 (Edinburgh : Saltire Society, 1946), p.8.

⁴Melville Dinwiddie to Director-General, 1 May 1936, BBC WAC R34/731/2.

⁵M.G. Farquharson to Mr. E. Davies, 20 July 1940, BBC WAC R34/731/3.

broadcast as opt-outs in off-peak times tended to reinforce the belief that broadcasting in Scotland was too parochial. The arrival of ITV companies in Scotland failed to some extent to offer the BBC in Scotland adequate competition in terms of the generation of new programme ideas and programme formats. The BBC unlike ITV was however expected to provide national rather than regional/local coverage of events within Scotland; it was also expected to contribute material to the network. It thus had a dual programme responsibility.

The BBC in Scotland in common with the other national regions, but unlike the English regions, had a more explicit dual programme responsibility. All BBC Regions produced material for both local and network transmission but had deeper obligations towards the communities which they served than towards the BBC centrally.⁶ With the development of regional television facilities in the late 1950s the BCS supported the policy of increasing the number of Scottish programmes which replaced network programmes for viewers in Scotland:

The prime need here is to correct the inescapable predominance of English and Metropolitan interests in the single service so far allowed to the BBC. This is confirmed by the large growing audience which the BBC's Scottish programmes attract in Scotland. The Council considers essential a continuing development in this direction.⁷

However, television Network Controllers were cautious about the volume of opt-outs permitted in the regions. Gerald Beadle, the BBC's Director of Television Broadcasting, argued as follows:

Regional fragmentation comes to be regarded as a right of way, which is hotly defended on grounds of local policy. It could become an inflexible strait-jacket for

⁶Hywel Davies, "The Role of the Regions in British Broadcasting", in BBC Lunchtime Lectures, third series, 13 January 1965 (London : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1965), p.7.

⁷British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1958-59 (Cmd. 834; September 1959), p.29.

the U.K. Network.⁸

In a paper dated 15 March 1960 the Board of Governors also took the view that in television the main function of Scotland, in common with other BBC regions, should be as a contributor to the U.K. network rather than as an opt-out centre. The fear was that increased opting out would lead to greater fragmentation of the network and a diminution of contributions to that network. This view was expressed in the following terms:

The Board feels it is necessary to continue to stress the value to the country of the network. Anything that would tend towards weakening the network would tend to weaken the BBC's contribution to British television. The special position of Scotland and that of Wales within the United Kingdom are fully recognised. On the other hand, Scotland and Wales are both valuable sources of network material. There is the danger, if Scottish and Welsh contributions to the network, and those from other parts of the Kingdom, should be weakened, that the BBC's Television Service might become unduly Metropolitan in character.⁹

The BCS during this period was seeking parity of responsibility for control over television output within and for Scotland to that which it already exercised with regard to radio output. This was achieved in 1962 but the BBC centrally continued to stress that with the greater variety of radio services in comparison with the single television network, the emphasis in Scotland's dual programme responsibility could not be identical for both radio and television (i.e radio should provide programmes for Scottish listeners, whereas in television Scotland was expected to place greater emphasis on contributions to the network and much less on opt-out programmes). In radio, BBC Scotland had much greater flexibility in providing items calculated to be of special interest to people in Scotland, and this remained so even after the arrival of BBC-2 in Scotland in July 1966, because the BBC's second television channel was not

⁸Gerald Beadle to Director-General, 21 January 1960, p.2, BBC WAC T16/233/4.

⁹"Control of Television in Scotland and Wales", observations by the Board of Governors, 15 March 1960, Para.12, BBC WAC T16/233/4.

designed to cater for regional opt-outs. Indeed BBC-2 was designed in part to facilitate regional contributions to the network since this had been difficult to achieve in practice with only one television network. In general the BBC television networks were never fragmented to the same extent as the sound services.

Scottish listeners were catered for by the wide range of output from the Scottish Home Service, later referred to as Radio 4 Scotland with the change in the networks in 1967, and as Radio Scotland from November 1978 after the changes in wavelengths. This output was supplemented by the Light and Third Programmes up to September 1967 and Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4 thereafter. However, in television, Scottish programmes could only be provided instead of, rather than in addition to, any network programme. This often irritated those viewers in Scotland who preferred network output. There appeared to be less objection to opting-out in television when all BBC Regions opted-out together such as in the "Nationwide" news and magazine programme. The BBC sought to avoid clashes of popular network programmes with regional programmes, but where this was unavoidable the network output was on some occasions repeated at another time. The BBC's dual programme responsibility in Scotland did lead to criticism that the output was either too Scottish, or alternatively that it contained an insufficient proportion of Scottish material. In both radio and television, Scotland had the option of opting-out from the main networks to provide programmes likely to be of interest to a Scottish audience; but equally it was a duty of the BBC to bring Scottish items to a U.K. audience, in order to prevent insularity and parochialism from permeating Scottish output, and also to give opportunities to Scottish-based producers consistently to aim to produce material to network standards. Most producers welcomed the opportunity to display the product of their skills to a wider listening and viewing public. It was also a means of maintaining a strong production base in Scotland by preventing an imbalance occurring between the numbers of staff leaving Scotland to seek wider experience in London and the English regions and those with greater professional experience who returned to Scotland. As discussed in Chapter 2, there were also financial incentives involved in getting material

networked in that the costs of programmes which were taken by the networks were covered by the BBC centrally. Problems arose over the balance between Scottish and network programmes transmitted in Scotland, and in the ability of BBC Scotland to get material networked, the latter of which was dependent upon the content and the quality of the programmes offered.

Problems regarding the volume of Scottish material which was broadcast both within Scotland and to a wider network audience is connected in part with the image of Scotland projected by the BBC in its programme output. The BBC in Scotland and the Scottish ITV companies for many years presented a particular image of Scotland both for Scottish and for U.K. consumption.¹⁰ These images which tended to consist of rural settings, tartanry or the violent image of Glasgow presented restricted representations of Scotland. For many years there was an absence of images of contemporary Scotland in, for example, television plays. Certainly in the early years the BBC did have to build programmes around the stars of the theatre and the music hall. Scottish broadcasting nevertheless placed a heavy reliance upon traditional themes which reinforced the parochial quality of Scottish output. The term parochialism implied that programme material was too local in nature and second-rate in quality. Scottish country dancing, Gaelic culture, the traditional heavy industries in the west of Scotland, and the more traditional sectors in the north of Scotland such as fishing and agriculture, all formed the basis of some of the Scottish images in broadcasting. Regional variations in culture and lifestyle were less accurately portrayed. It seemed that Scottish national culture was reflected in too many hackneyed symbols and this was not restricted to BBC programme output. STV also focused on an image of Scotland which concentrated on a static past thus ignoring contemporary issues or future possibilities. In BBC Scotland's drama output dramatisations of classic literature took precedence over contemporary literature.

¹⁰John Caughie, "Scottish Television : What Would it look like?", in Scotch Reels : Scotland in Cinema and Television, ed. Colin McArthur (London : British Film Institute, 1982), pp.112-22.

There was also an imbalance in the hours of output of various programme areas within the BBC Scottish Home Service (SHS). Hours of output for variety and dance music during the 1950s were consistently less than for serious music. During 1954–55 240 hours of serious music were broadcast in comparison with 28 hours of variety.¹¹ Ten years later only 23 hours of light entertainment had been broadcast during 1964–65 whereas the output of serious music had risen to 328 hours.¹² The figures had gradually increased during the intervening years, although it should also be noted that the natural home for light entertainment was the Light Programme. BBC radio in Scotland did not cater for Scottish popular culture; the task of doing so was taken up by the pirate radio stations in the mid-1960s and subsequently by BBC Radio One. However, Radio One operated as a U.K network thus failing adequately to represent Scottish popular culture. The tendency for broadcasting in Scotland to avoid adequate treatment of contemporary issues has on several occasions prompted critical comment. John Gray, a former Chief Assistant of the BBC in Scotland, made the following comment on the relationship between, and influence of, broadcasting on culture in Scotland:

In more than 50 years broadcasting in Scotland has done little or nothing to evolve a distinctly Scottish broadcasting identity, rather it has consistently looked backwards.¹³

This tendency to look backwards, combined with the use of marked Scottish dialects, sometimes made programmes less acceptable for U.K transmission than they would

¹¹British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1954–55 (Cmd. 9533; July 1955), p.96.

¹²British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1964–65 (Cmd. 2823; November 1965), p.148.

¹³John Gray, "Broadcasting and Scottish Culture", in A Companion to Scottish Culture, ed. David Daiches (London : Edward Arnold, 1981), p.42.

otherwise have been and reinforced their parochial quality. Dr Robert McIntyre, former President of the Scottish National Party (1958–1980), was critical of the BBC's choice of Scottish accents which tended, he believed, to present a very unfavourable image of Scottish people to the rest of the U.K. but equally he recalled criticising Melville Dinwiddie (Controller, BBC Scotland) about the use of English accents in Scottish programmes.¹⁴

The critical comment on the image of Scotland which the BBC projected to the rest of the U.K. was accompanied by criticism over the quality and quantity of Scottish programme output, particularly on television. Programmes were regarded as either too dull, too parochial, or too trivial in comparison with network output. During the 1960's, Scottish news and current affairs did not engage sufficiently in investigative reporting or conduct adequate background research on contemporary issues. Programmes such as "Current Account" did bring about some improvement but there still remained criticism that too few Scottish programmes were seen outside Scotland.¹⁵ The BBC in Scotland introduced new identification announcements on radio and redesigned symbols on television in order to impress the identity of BBC Scotland on listeners and viewers. The introduction of the network programme "Nationwide" in 1969 also enabled Scotland to contribute regional items of interest to the national network in the early evening three nights a week. However, what Alasdair Milne the new Controller of BBC Scotland (1968–1972) sought to achieve was to concentrate resources on high quality productions likely to be more acceptable to the network. This would enable the BBC in Scotland to play a fuller role in U.K broadcasting output without sacrificing Scottish identity. Acceptance of material for network transmission had to be based on quality since there was no quota system in which London guaranteed to take a proportion of Scottish programme output. By the early 1970s there was certainly a

¹⁴Taped Interview with Dr. Robert McIntyre, Stirling, 7 April 1988.

¹⁵J.G. Kellas, "Rating Scotland's Television", Scottish International (August 1971), p.17.

need to develop programme policy because of the imminent arrival of commercial local radio, pressure for devolution, and the need to reflect in programme output the resurgence of Scottish national identity as well as political and economic change in Scotland. But it also involved the need to produce material which was not necessarily always Scottish in content. On this theme Alastair Hetherington (Controller, BBC Scotland), in a paper prepared for the Annan Committee on Broadcasting stated:

In thinking of network output, Scotland needs to emerge from being type-cast as always producing "Scottish" programmes. That tends to perpetuate parochialism, and it cuts off our writers and producers from mainstream British and European work. They shouldn't have to go to London to secure international reputations.¹⁶

Also, Scotland had always been a country with international links but this had never been evident from broadcasting output. It could, however, also be argued that the term parochialism could be ascribed to London where artistes and production staff came into frequent contact with each other yet often knew little of regional/non-metropolitan culture. However, when the Annan Committee published its Report on Broadcasting in March 1977 it was the problem of the image of Scotland which BBC television presented to the network audience which was referred to when the Committee stated:

Something is wrong with the image of Scotland which television projects to the rest of the United Kingdom. The national culture is reflected too much by hackneyed symbols, and too little importance is given to the new opportunities and hopes, the shifts in pattern of industry and occupations, as well as the dour problems and grim realities of life in some parts of Scotland today.¹⁷

On this basis it seemed that little had changed since television arrived in Scotland a quarter of a century previously.

¹⁶Alastair Hetherington : Note for Committee on the Future of Broadcasting, 20 March 1976, p.6 (of Annexe), SRO COM.1/323.

¹⁷Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting. Chairman : Lord Annan (Cmnd. 6753; March 1977), p.409.

This section concludes the examination of Scottish images in broadcasting by examining programme policy in three subject areas of direct concern to Scotland: Political broadcasting, schools broadcasting, and Gaelic broadcasting. The BBC sought to respond in varying degrees to the different balance of political forces and political issues in Scotland. In 1949 the Scottish Advisory Council noted in a paper prepared for the Beveridge Committee on Broadcasting that Scottish political affairs should have separate treatment via special party political series on the Scottish Home Service.¹⁸ It was at the General Election of 1935 that the Scottish National Party (SNP) first applied for permission to participate in pre-election broadcasts but then, and as at subsequent General Elections, no broadcasts were allowed because the SNP did not contest a sufficient number of constituencies. In 1935 the number of constituencies which had to be contested was twenty but this was raised to fifty in 1949. The problem for many years was that arrangements for broadcasts were made according to the number of candidates put forward by political parties in the United Kingdom as a whole rather than by reference to Scotland alone. Not surprisingly this worked to the disadvantage of a small party such as the SNP which might contest a large percentage of constituencies within Scotland but which would represent only a small percentage when viewed in relation to constituencies throughout the U.K. The BBC thus came under continual pressure from the SNP to respond to nationalist sentiment. In 1955 the SNP sent a protest to the Postmaster-General, Charles Hill, criticising the regulations which governed the allocation of time for party political broadcasts. The SNP wanted any political party which contested all the Scottish parliamentary seats to be given the same facilities to reach Scottish electors as those given to the U.K. parties. At a meeting in the House of Commons on 21 July 1958 Lord Balfour (BBC National Governor for Scotland) was critical that nationalists were denied party political broadcasts.¹⁹ The meeting was arranged to ask the political

¹⁸Scottish Advisory Council : Paper No. SAC/8/49, Para.4, BBC WAC R6/188.

¹⁹"Party Political Broadcasts", 21 July 1958, p.2, SRO ED.29/5.

parties to consider withdrawing the prescription of July 1955 which prevented a separate series of party political broadcasts for Scotland and Wales. Criticism of the existing arrangements surfaced again in 1962 when two party political broadcasts timed to precede local government elections in England were transmitted in Scotland. The results of the Scottish local elections had been announced a week earlier yet under the PMG's direction of 1955 these broadcasts had to be transmitted throughout the U.K. The BCS therefore stated that the transmission of the English election results was an imposition on Scottish listeners and viewers.²⁰ Just over a year later the SNP was allocated an allowance of five minutes on radio and on television based on votes cast for the party at the 1964 General Election.

The PMG's prescription which forbade separate party political broadcasts in Scotland and Wales was withdrawn on 1 June 1965. On 29 September the SNP made its first party political broadcast. Thereafter Scottish political broadcasting served to emphasise the identity of the Scottish political system. However, apart from party political broadcasts, the SNP subsequently complained about the poor coverage of party speeches. Andrew Stewart (Controller, BBC Scotland) nevertheless argued that better coverage would have been possible if the SNP had appointed a publicity officer because the BBC needed direct contacts with the political parties to enable speeches to be instantly quoted and inserted into news bulletins.²¹ In 1969 the SNP appointed Douglas Crawford to the newly-created post of Director of Communications to facilitate liaison with the media in Scotland. During the 1970s the allocation of time awarded to the SNP for party political and party election broadcasts rose significantly due to the spectacular increase in the number of votes cast for the party at General Elections. The party was awarded two ten-minute election broadcasts on both television and

²⁰British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1962-63 (Cmd. 2160; October 1963), P.106.

²¹Taped Interview with Andrew Stewart, Glasgow, 28 April 1988.

Radio 4 Scotland in October 1974 based on votes cast for the SNP at the February 1974 General Election. At the October 1974 General Election the SNP won 11 seats and took 30 per cent of the Scottish vote to become the second largest party in Scotland. In doing so the SNP was guaranteed an enhanced allocation of time for party political broadcasts during the following and subsequent years totalling 30 minutes on television and 25 minutes on radio. After the Devolution Referendum and the General Election of 1979, the lower level of interest in nationalist politics was reflected in radio and television programme output.

Schools broadcasting was another subject area in which it was expected that the BBC had an effective role to play, not least in reflecting the more distinctive aspects of Scottish education. As early as 1929 a Scottish Sub-Council of the Central Council for School Broadcasting was formed. In 1936 this Sub-Council became known as the Scottish Council for School Broadcasting, and since 1947 the BBC has been advised in Scotland by the School Broadcasting Council for Scotland. The Council was responsible for designating areas of the curriculum where broadcasting could contribute useful material, for defining the scope and purpose of schools series, and for reviewing the effectiveness of schools output.²² The Council kept in touch with schools, colleges, and the Scottish Education Department, and also appointed some members to the School Broadcasting Council for the United Kingdom and its programme sub-committees in order to ensure that U.K. policy took account of the needs of Scotland. The Council's programme sub-committees sought to ensure that an adequate provision of programmes was made to meet the special needs of Scottish schools, such as the separate Scottish examination system, curriculum, and different school terms. The recommendations of these sub-committees were considered by the executive committee of the School Broadcasting Council for Scotland prior to discussion with the BBC about the provision of specific schools series. The BBC had final responsibility for editing scripts and producing the broadcasts.

²²Scottish Advisory Council : Paper No. SAC/5/49, n.d., BBC WAC R4/1/10/6

Radio broadcasts in the Scottish Home Service were widely used in Scottish schools before the arrival of schools television broadcasts. Listening figures were greater in primary schools because, unlike secondary schools, there were fewer timetable problems and pressure from examinations. The main priority in Scottish schools output was to cover history, geography, language, and traditions. By the mid-1950s six weekly radio broadcasts for schools were originated in Scotland. On 24 September 1957 the BBC began an experimental series of school television broadcasts.²³ By that time over 80 per cent of schools had access to a radio, but much fewer had access to television. The School Broadcasting Council was thereafter anxious to make greater use of television in Scottish education to take account of the cultural needs of Scottish schoolchildren who had access to U.K. schools programme output. After the changes in the Scottish Examination system in 1962, programmes were more closely linked to schools curricula. By 1964 the number of television programmes broadcast to Scottish schools had increased to twenty; 36 per cent of schools in Scotland were equipped to receive these programmes, double the U.K. percentage. Throughout the 1960s an increasing number of schools began to equip themselves with radio and television receivers and tape recorders to record radio programmes at times which suited school timetables. It was only during the 1970s that increasing use was made of video cassette equipment to record television broadcasts. In general, educational broadcasting was of particular value in Scotland, not least because with many small schools in isolated and scattered rural communities, it helped to keep pupils and teachers in touch with new ideas as well as covering the needs of the Gaelic community.

This section concludes the examination of Scottish images in broadcasting by providing an overview of how the BBC in Scotland sought with mixed success to reflect the interests of the Gaelic community which was mainly located in the Western

²³British Broadcasting Corporation : Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1957-58 (Cmd. 533; September 1958), p.30.

sea-board, north-west Scotland, the Western Isles, and a substantial minority in the Glasgow area. Nationalists declared an interest in Gaelic broadcasting because, as they argued, language is an important criteria in distinguishing a nation. The Gaels believed that there was a role for broadcasting in helping to sustain Gaelic language and culture. There was, however, a stronger linguistic basis to national sentiment in Wales compared to Scotland, and in any case there was, outwith the Gaelic-speaking areas, no 'Scottish' language, only Scottish dialects. Nevertheless, the BBC in Scotland came under increasing pressure to improve the volume of Gaelic output. In the late 1950s at the request of the BCS, the BBC's Audience Research Department carried out a survey of Gaelic-speaking areas in order to ascertain the extent to which Gaelic programmes were being listened to. Listening levels were found to be high, and listener preferences were taken into account in programme planning such as in the broadcast of Gaelic news on a weekly rather than monthly basis. Although programme changes did follow from this study, the BBC view has always been that with conflicting demands on airtime it was difficult fully to meet the demands of the Gaelic community. The Gaels tended to be treated as a minority group in broadcasting terms akin to the minorities who preferred, for example, classical music, yet Gaeldom contained within its ranks several minorities and could not be equated with a random number of individuals linked by interest in any specialist subject. The principal centres of broadcasting lay outwith Gaelic-speaking areas, but there was also criticism that the BBC in Glasgow produced a stereotyped image of the Gael by relying too much on the advice of expatriate Gaels who lived in Glasgow.²⁴

The BBC attracted most of the criticism for its policy towards Gaelic broadcasts simply because the main obligation to provide broadcasts for the Gaelic community has always rested with the BBC. The early Gaelic output was confined to radio, but on 7 March 1962 the BBC transmitted the first fifteen-minute Gaelic television

²⁴Martin MacDonald, "Gaelic and the Media", New Edinburgh Review 33 (1976), 30.

programme entitled "Music of the Gael".²⁵ However, reception in Gaelic-speaking areas was poor and the programme was introduced in English rather than in Gaelic. These programmes existed as one method by which Gaelic people could be brought in closer touch with their literary and musical traditions, although there was criticism that Gaelic output was too dull in presentation and lacking in artistic imagination.²⁶ More fundamental than this, Gaels were concerned that with a monopoly of English language programmes on all radio and television channels, there would be an anglicisation of Gaels. The Gaels wanted the BBC to pay full regard to its Charter obligations which stated that the Corporation should cover the distinctive culture, language, interests and tastes of the people of Scotland. Not surprisingly, An Comunn (The Highland Association) was therefore disappointed that the 1974 Crawford Report on Broadcasting Coverage stated that given the size of the Gaelic population, no substantial increase in Gaelic television programmes was possible for financial reasons, yet the Committee was prepared to recommend that a fourth television channel should make provision for separate Welsh language programmes.²⁷ The Committee suggested that radio, a less expensive medium, should make the main provision for Gaelic. An Comunn wanted four hours of Gaelic each day on television, a community radio service for Gaelic-speaking areas, and a significant increase in Gaelic output on Radio Scotland. The opening of Radio Highland as a bilingual opt-out station from Radio Scotland in 1976 did increase Gaelic output as did the other VHF community stations which were opened; it was technically and financially more difficult to provide a sustained Gaelic service on television.

²⁵Radio Times, 1 March 1962, p.37.

²⁶Derick S. Thomson, "Gaelic Scotland", in Whither Scotland?, ed. Duncan Glen (London : Victor Gollancz, 1971), p.148.

²⁷Report of the Committee on Broadcasting Coverage. Chairman : Sir Stewart Crawford (Cmnd. 5774; November 1974), p.36.

6.2 BBC Scotland and the Historical Legacy of Centralised Broadcasting

This section focuses on the centralised nature of the BBC and the extent to which this has inhibited the devolving of responsibility to the regions. It considers various aspects of centralisation in the period up until about 1975 and examines the various attempts at regional devolution throughout this period. The final section of this chapter discusses the greater efforts made during the latter half of the 1970s to devolve more responsibility to the BBC in Scotland.

John Reith, the BBC's first Director-General, favoured central control of broadcasting for reasons of efficiency and the maintenance of high programme standards. His belief in central control pre-dated the re-constitution of the British Broadcasting Company into a public corporation on 1 January 1927. Reith did not believe that central control would automatically stifle programme initiatives in the local stations on which broadcasting was initially founded.²⁸ The existence of the BBC as a monopoly public service broadcasting organisation was acceptable to the Post Office because it was administratively more easy to supervise. The monopoly was defended by the BBC because it guaranteed higher programme standards, served the interests of minorities and majorities among the listening public, upheld public service ideals, was economically efficient, and enabled the transmitter network to be planned to serve rural and sparsely populated areas and not just the main centres of population. There is little doubt that the monopoly both encouraged and justified centralisation. In the absence of governmental intervention in the BBC's day-to-day administration or programme-making, the Corporation had latitude in deciding how much central control would be retained in London and how much control would be delegated to the regions. Broadcasting which began on a localised basis and which included the establishment of local stations at Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dundee did not

²⁸J.C.W. Reith, Broadcast Over Britain (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1924), p.72.

remain local. The policy of centralisation and the advent of the regional scheme which became operational in Scotland in 1932 resulted in the closure of the local stations and their substitution by a Scottish Regional Programme. Certainly the regional scheme, as noted in Chapter 1, extended radio services to cover parts of Scotland which had previously been denied any broadcasting service, but it was unable to cater adequately for regional cultural diversity within Scotland and also led to the predominance of metropolitan interests at the expense of local or regional interests. Regions were not expected to embark on programmes which could be better produced in London.²⁹ London had access to the best talent and facilities thus leaving the regions such as Scotland to concentrate on more traditional material within the constraints of available manpower and financial and technical resources. These inbuilt constraints on the free exchange of material between the national and the regional programmes, and the concern over the policy of centralisation, surfaced in the 1936 Report by the BBC's Director of Regional Relations. This Report, which drew attention to the lack of facilities in the regions and the inability of regional staff to specialise to the same extent as their counterparts in London, also stated that centralisation represented a short-sighted policy because the regions could exist as a useful reservoir of programme material.³⁰ The autonomy of the Scottish region did however remain limited within an essentially centralised broadcasting organisation. Indeed even the Reithian public service ethos tended to become associated with metropolitan rather than regional or local culture.

Scottish regional radio which closed during the war years was revitalised after the war with the introduction of the Scottish Home Service on 29 July 1945. However, many of the questions about the implications of central control which became evident in the inter-war years had to be addressed in the post-war period.

²⁹Control Board: Minutes, 14 January 1930, No.8, BBC WAC R3/3/6.

³⁰"Report on Regions", January 1936, p.2, BBC WAC R34/845.

Was the BBC, for example, prepared to treat Scotland as a nation of regions rather than a region of the U.K; and was the BBC prepared to concede more autonomy to the national regions given that there was no intention to create a separate broadcasting corporation for Scotland?. In 1945 the Saltire Society reconstituted its Broadcasting Committee to examine the nature of the Scottish regional programme service. The principal recommendations of this inquiry which was published in the following year were that there should be a Scottish Board of Governors with oversight of Scottish broadcasting, that these governors should have the power to initiate and control broadcasting policy in Scotland and to appoint staff, and that one member should have the right to sit on the BBC's Board of Governors in London and vice versa. At the root of all these proposals was the concern that effective control over broadcasting in Scotland had to reside in Scotland. The proposal for a Scottish Board of Governors did not come to fruition but the government did recommend in the 1946 White Paper that the BBC should appoint Regional Advisory Councils in order to advise the Corporation on matters affecting regional programme policy.³¹ Although this was noted in the White Paper under the heading 'Regional Devolution', these councils, which included the Scottish Advisory Council, were by definition purely advisory bodies and thus had no executive control over programme policy. It was not until the publication of the Beveridge Report on Broadcasting in 1951 that it was proposed that Broadcasting Councils or Commissions should be established with executive powers. However, the Beveridge Committee's proposal that these Councils should be established in the BBC's national regions was not warmly welcomed by the BBC for fear that they might undermine the unity of the Corporation by generating internal tensions between the national regions and the BBC centrally.³² Nevertheless, the Government accepted the views of the Beveridge Committee about the need for further devolution of powers and for the creation of Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and

³¹Broadcasting Policy (Cmd. 6852; July 1946), p.6.

³²"The Regional Commissions", 15 February 1951, p.1, BBC WAC R4/1/18.

Wales as a means to this end, but the Government also agreed that the BBC centrally must have overall responsibility for finance and capital development.³³ In the latter two crucial areas the councils only had advisory powers.

It appeared that the formation of the Broadcasting Councils was an attempt to lessen the impact of the centralised nature of the BBC within the national regions. However, it must be noted that the Royal Charter of July 1952 stated that each National Broadcasting Council was to be subject to:

(b) such reservations and directions as may appear to the Corporation to be necessary from time to time for reasons of finance or in the interest of due co-ordination and coherent administration of the operations and affairs of the Corporation.³⁴

Also, the Broadcasting Council for Scotland which first met in January 1953 was confined for a decade to controlling only the policy and content of the Scottish Home Service; only in 1962 were such powers extended to cover television output within and for Scotland. The BCS only acted in an advisory capacity with regard to other BBC programmes broadcast in Scotland such as the network transmissions. The Broadcasting Councils have often been regarded as a counterbalancing force to centralism within the BBC. In December 1965 Lord Normanbrook (BBC Chairman) noted in a BBC lunchtime lecture:

The existence of these National Councils is a recognition of the rights of national minorities, and provides a valuable safeguard against the tendency towards centralisation which is natural to any large-scale organisation.³⁵

³³Broadcasting : Memorandum on the Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949 (Cmd. 8291; July 1951), p.7.

³⁴Broadcasting : Copy of a New Charter of Incorporation granted to the British Broadcasting Corporation (Cmd. 8605; July 1952), p.11.

³⁵Lord Normanbrook, "The Functions of the BBC's Governors", in BBC Lunchtime Lectures, fourth series, 15 December 1965 (London : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1965), p.7.

The existence of the BCS also appeared to give more influence for Scotland in comparison with the English regions at Board of Governors level, but the effectiveness of the Council was dependent upon the personality of the National Governor, whether members were united or divided on any issue, the flow of information from Scottish Management to the Council, and the knowledge of Council members on broadcasting in Scotland.

The centralised nature of the BBC during the 1950s was evident in the spread of television to the regions. To facilitate the rapid expansion of television throughout the country, the BBC decided to concentrate on providing studios and equipment in London before developing facilities in the regions. The arrival of television in Scotland in March 1952 was therefore not accompanied by the provision of television studios (i.e studio programmes were taken from London). This led to a concentration of television production facilities in London and so, with the development of television, control over programme policy was retained in London. Regional contributions to television output were thus confined for several years to outside broadcasts. So March 1952 marked the arrival of television in Scotland from England rather than the arrival of Scottish television. Inevitably Scottish services appeared deficient in certain respects when compared to the highly organised and concentrated resources in London serving over 50 million people. The disparity in resources between London and the regions stemmed from the need to make the most efficient and economical use of resources in the more costly medium of television and also to be near the available pool of artistic talent. In England the disparities in resources between London and the regions were partially narrowed when these regions began to specialise in specific types of programme output. Bristol, for example, concentrated on developing coverage of natural history, and this formed the nucleus of one of the English Network Production Centres which were established in the late 1960s. However, the BBC's dual programme responsibility in Scotland resulted in less specialisation in programme output, fewer opportunities to network material and recover the cost of items taken by the network, and less concentration of programme

resources. Perhaps it can be argued that many of the criticisms about broadcasting resources in Scotland are unfair to the extent that people tended to make direct comparisons between Scottish and London production facilities rather than make comparisons with European countries of similar size to Scotland. The BBC anyhow justified the centralisation of broadcasting resources because it enabled the Corporation to pool engineering and programme skills in order to provide the best programmes to the widest audience in the shortest period of time within the resources available. These resources were dependent upon the level of the licence fee set by government and any restrictions imposed by government on BBC capital development. Sir George Barnes, BBC Director of Television, sought to justify the centralisation of television resources. In a letter to The Times he stated:

Broadcasting has always been criticised for the way in which London dominates programmes. Centralisation, however, is the nature of broadcasting because every message transmitted goes straight from the centre to the circumference without being filtered down through pulpit, Parliament, the lecturer or the schoolroom. Its essentially Metropolitan character is heightened by the resources needed to mount television programmes which are only to be found in large centres of population.³⁶

The arrival of Independent Television (ITV) in 1955 with its federal structure contrasted with the more centralised organisation of the BBC. The ITV system split the country up into geographical units with three programme companies operating in Scotland by 1961, whereas the BBC essentially provided a U.K core service with regional opt-outs, one of which covered Scotland as a whole. This argument retains its validity despite the development of networking within ITV which prevented free competition in the supply of programmes between programme companies. The BBC and the ITV companies were however monopoly suppliers of television programmes because even the ITV companies were monopoly suppliers in the areas which they served, since there was only one programme company in each ITV region. Nevertheless although it was duopoly rather than diversity which replaced the BBC

³⁶Sir George Barnes, "Twenty Years of the BBC", The Times, 4 October 1956, p.11.

monopoly when the ITV network was developed by 1961, the arrival of ITV companies did represent a greater decentralisation of production facilities in Scotland in comparison with the BBC in Scotland. Unlike the BBC, three of the four ITV network companies operated outside London. The presence of ITV companies also prompted BBC regions to press for more fragmentation of the network, a trend resisted by Network Controllers in London. In Scotland these trends, together with the increased popularity of television at the expense of the Scottish Home Service, prompted the BCS to press for parity of responsibility over television output. The Board of Governors was concerned that devolving responsibility to the BCS for television output should not be taken to represent any willingness to expand the provision of television output in Scotland. Nevertheless in 1962 the Pilkington Committee recommended that the BCS should be given parity of responsibility for both radio and television output in Scotland.³⁷ This was subsequently accepted by the government in its White Paper of July 1962 (Cmnd. 1770). London did however retain control over the allocation of resources and so influenced the extent to which Scotland could opt-out from the television network to provide programmes primarily for viewers in Scotland. Anyhow, with only one television network the BBC in Scotland could never provide a Scottish television service equivalent to the Scottish Home Service on radio. There is one further point which can be noted about the influence of ITV on centralisation within the BBC. The BBC could argue that competition with ITV which had increased costs could be more easily dealt with by centralising television production facilities. The lower costs involved in radio broadcasting, the diversity of services, and the absence of competition from a commercial competitor, increased the likelihood that the BBC would consider using radio as a vehicle for decentralising programme production as in the establishment of local stations.

Since the advent of the regional scheme in 1929 wavelength restrictions were used as the justification for the BBC's inability to introduce localised radio services.

³⁷Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960 (Cmnd. 1753; June 1962), p.140.

However, the use of VHF opened up the possibility of introducing local stations by overcoming the historic wavelength restrictions. In February 1955 Frank Gillard, a fervent supporter of local broadcasting within the BBC, prepared a paper on how he envisaged regional broadcasting could be extended in order to cater for local cultures and thus indirectly benefit national culture. Gillard commented:

Since a healthy national culture is based on healthy regional cultures, broadcasting which is one of the greatest instruments of our day for the nourishment of culture must accept some responsibility for the whole plant from the roots up.³⁸

The BBC did conduct closed-circuit local radio experiments in both Scotland and England in the early 1960s, followed during and after 1967 with the establishment of several local radio stations, none of which were based in Scotland. These stations under the control of Station Managers were given a reasonable degree of independence from London but within the programme allowance determined by London. They were also subject to central control in general policy matters. Each station was served by a Local Radio Council which had advisory rather than executive powers. Nevertheless, the BBC was anxious for listeners to regard each local station as their own station and not merely the BBC station in their neighbourhood. Scotland continued to be served by the opt-out service (i.e. to transmit separate programmes in Scotland) from Radio 4 serving Scotland as a whole until the establishment of community stations during and after 1976 operating on an opt-out or sub opt-out basis from Radio Scotland. All these attempts at diversification of programme services represented diversity through unity, not diversity through fragmentation. In other words the BBC argued that the strength of its programme services lay in unity – a unity which gave strength to resist incursions on editorial independence. The BBC sought to meet regional needs yet retain its unitary character. The BBC did not wish to be subdivided into independent units or establish separate broadcasting corporations in

³⁸Frank Gillard, "An Extension of Regional Broadcasting", 28 February 1955, p.1., BBC WAC R34/731/5.

the national regions. The latter anyhow presupposed that Scotland would be able to generate sufficient income with which to fund not only programme services but also the higher than average cost of extending the transmitter network in Scotland. In practice the radio and television transmitter networks had to be planned centrally for technical reasons, but the consequence of this was that remote areas of Scotland received a less satisfactory service than more populated areas. Only a positive commitment to allocate more substantial resources to broadcasting coverage in remote areas, together with closer links between transmitter development and Government Regional Development Policy, would have enabled many of the disparities in broadcasting coverage both within Scotland and between Scotland and the rest of the U.K. to be reduced. The technical constraints on the devolving of responsibility for broadcasting to bodies in the BBC's national regions was emphasised by the Annan Committee on the Future of Broadcasting.³⁹

From the late 1960s the BBC was faced with the twin pressures of the need to centralise resources yet also devolve a greater measure of power and responsibility to the regions. The increasing financial pressures facing the Corporation and the outcome of the McKinsey study during 1968–69 prompted the need for the BBC centrally to exercise tighter financial control and increase managerial control. It also led, as noted in section 2.4, to greater use of stranded programming which made it increasingly difficult for Scotland to contribute material to the network, particularly where control over the programme planning of series resided outwith Scotland. During a period of inflation and with a licence fee which did not adequately cover rising costs – costs which were a legacy of the rapid expansion in BBC radio and particularly television services during the 1960s – there was greater pressure to economise on the use and deployment of resources. The latter was dependent upon BBC management having access to better information on the use of resources in departments. The

³⁹Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting. Chairman : Lord Annan (Cmnd. 6753; March 1977), p.405.

changes therefore involved greater central control. It was only a recognition of the political dimension regarding the need to decentralise managerial authority which ensured a commitment by the Board of Governors to work for regional devolution. The Board of Management were less enthusiastic about devolving power. Management believed in the retention of the 'one BBC' concept whereas the Board of Governors were more inclined to believe that it was politically sensible to take devolution seriously and thus deflect external pressure for the creation of a separate Scottish Broadcasting Corporation or a BBC Scotland under the direct control of a future Scottish Assembly. As the Beveridge Report on Broadcasting had highlighted almost twenty years earlier, there was a need to seek greater devolution without eroding the unity of the BBC as an organisation. It was the task of the National Governors to reconcile their collective responsibility for U.K. matters in broadcasting, with the autonomous rights delegated to the National Broadcasting Councils of whom they were chairmen. They thus sought greater autonomy for the national regions within the existing structure and thus stressed the adverse implications of complete autonomy on matters such as transmitter development, programme planning and production, administration, financial resources, staff movement, and conditions of employment within the BBC. The BBC thus had to demonstrate a commitment to the vitality of regional broadcasting. In evidence to the Estimates Committee in March 1969, Huw Wheldon (Managing Director of BBC Television), stated that the BBC wished to promote regional development;

We do want to push, if possible, the notion of regional re-development a stage further – who knows how it will go, but it needs to be pushed a stage further and developed a little from what it has been.⁴⁰

This depended upon devoting greater resources to subdividing the English regions, in particular to enable them to serve smaller communities than the areas which they

⁴⁰Estimates Committee Sub-Committee D. Minutes of Evidence Monday, 17 March, 1969 : British Broadcasting Corporation (H.C. 93-vii; 17 March 1969), p.105.

did cover which had been based on engineering considerations (i.e the coverage area of earlier transmitters).

During the early 1970s, there was a renewal of nationalist sentiment in Scotland, and concern about the growth in the size and complexity of the BBC and the ability to manage it under the existing organisational structure. These factors together with a belief that despite the existence and extended functions of the BCS there was too much central control from London, increased pressures for a greater devolution of powers to Scotland. What was envisaged with devolution was a delegation of powers not merely the transference of functions. In a pamphlet published in 1972, Charles Curran (BBC Director-General) outlined a defence of the unitary nature of the BBC.⁴¹ Yet the BBC had to be truly seen to represent the sum of its parts rather than merely London with regional outposts. It was the task of Sir Michael Swann who became Chairman of the BBC in January 1973 to consider how to retain the unity of the BBC, avoid undue centralisation, devolve reasonable powers, and redeploy resources to the regions. There were likely to be technical and financial limits to devolution; therefore Scotland had to aim for a workable solution within these constraints. In its Annual Report for 1973-74 the BCS stated:

... the totality of a National Region now evolving in the Scottish context would appear to justify maximum autonomy in the deployment of assured and developing resources.⁴²

The BCS wished to offer greater programme opportunities to retain high calibre staff and thereby counter the centripetal pull of London and ensure adequate coverage of the rapid social, economic, and political developments taking place in Scotland during this period, both for Scottish and for network consumption. Indeed in a BBC

⁴¹C.J. Curran, Breaking up the BBC? (London : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972).

⁴²BBC Handbook 1975 (London : BBC, 1974), p.110.

lunchtime lecture on regional broadcasting, Owen Edwards noted:

Within the United Kingdom the effectiveness with which nation shall speak unto nation depends on the extent to which nation can adequately discharge its prime function and its privilege of properly speaking unto itself.⁴³

This was more difficult to achieve in television than in radio for technical and financial reasons. Nevertheless, the Crawford Committee on Broadcasting Coverage in its report published in November 1974 stated that measures should be taken to develop regional variations in television in order to counter centralism and to reflect both national and regional identities. The Committee stated that because BBC Scotland served a large community, a case could be made for sub-dividing this community similar to that achieved with commercial television:

... we think that in Scotland, where they are making provision for some decentralisation of programme making, the BBC should when they have the resources to do so introduce an element of regional diversification in the transmission of programmes on a sub-opt-out basis.⁴⁴

The Committee was thinking in terms of sub-opt-outs in the North of Scotland. It was also thought desirable that there should be regional programme variations on BBC-2. Some regions already had the technical capability to opt-out on BBC-2 when communication links were not needed for opt-outs on BBC-1. There was no capability for opting-out on BBC-1 and BBC-2. The Crawford Committee therefore suggested that funds should be forthcoming to enable these additional links to be provided in Scotland and the other national regions for simultaneous opting-out on both BBC television networks when funds became available. ITV, according to the Committee, were catering more fully for regional needs than did the BBC. The

⁴³Owen Edwards, "Nation – or a Region?", in BBC Lunchtime Lectures, eleventh series, 14 December 1976 (London : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1976), p.40.

⁴⁴Report of the Committee on Broadcasting Coverage. Chairman : Sir Stewart Crawford (Cmd. 5774; November 1974), p.29.

Crawford Committee welcomed the BBC's trend towards regionalism in England but added that the same development should also occur within Scotland.⁴⁵ Likewise in radio the Committee favoured the establishment of BBC local stations in Scotland but in less populated areas in contrast to the Independent Local Radio (ILR) stations which served urban areas. Several community stations, but not local stations based on the English model, were subsequently opened in Inverness, Aberdeen, Orkney, Shetland and Stornoway, between 1976 and 1979. It was an attempt to reverse the trend whereby the BBC's regional policies had been regarded as taking second place to the needs of the metropolis.⁴⁶

In its Annual Report for 1975–76 the BBC argued that not only would an increase in the share of resources for the regions involve additional responsibility for decisions about the use of such resources, but also stated that there was room for debate about which areas of responsibility should be devolved. The Corporation commented:

As long as the BBC remains a unified organisation, however, there will remain the problem of the point at which the lines have to be drawn between central and devolved decision-making.⁴⁷

There already existed greater autonomy with regard to the production and scheduling of programmes within the resources available to BBC Scotland, but transmitter development remained under the overall control of Engineering Division in London which had the task of co-ordinating the extension of broadcasting services. There needed to be some relaxation of administrative and financial control from London. The

⁴⁵Ibid., p.36.

⁴⁶E.G. Wedell, Broadcasting and Public Policy (London : Michael Joseph, 1968), p.305.

⁴⁷BBC Handbook 1977 (London : BBC, 1976), p.17.

BBC was to remain a National institution but plans for regional devolution now had to be translated into practical policy proposals.

6.3 BBC Scotland and Regional Devolution

By 1975 there was broad agreement within the BBC that there was a need to devolve more responsibility to the regions. What was not so easily agreed upon was the extent of regional devolution and the implications this would have for BBC broadcasting as a whole. This section considers the practical steps which were taken in and after 1975 to bring about devolution against the background of wider political devolution; the differing expectations within the BBC regarding how much power would be devolved; plans for development of BBC Scotland services; the conflicts between BBC Scotland and London over the extent and progress of regional devolution; and finally the outcome of these conflicts.

In November 1975 the Labour Government published its White Paper on devolution to Scotland and Wales (Cmnd. 6348). Political pressures and the renewed sense of Scottish national identity put pressure upon the government to plan for the devolution of power. It was an attempt to meet the legitimate needs of Scotland and Wales but also to preserve the unity of the U.K. The White Paper stated that the unity of the U.K. did not necessarily entail uniform treatment for all its constituent parts. The government rejected separation for Scotland and Wales yet wished to preserve the separate identity and cultural traditions and institutions of these two countries. The government stated:

The need is to achieve balance – to reconcile unity and diversity in a stronger and better system, offering more achievement and satisfaction to the parts while improving the efficiency and stability of the whole.⁴⁸

In its plans to devolve greater power to the national regions, the BBC was thinking along similar lines. The parallel with political devolution in the wider context was that

⁴⁸Our Changing Democracy : Devolution to Scotland and Wales (Cmnd. 6348; November 1975), p.5.

the BBC sought to devolve greater power out of necessity rather than out of desire and to do so in a manner which would not undermine the unity of the Corporation. This ruled out the possibility of creating a separate Scottish Broadcasting Corporation. The White Paper stated that it would not be possible to decide whether broadcasting should be a devolved matter until after the Annan Committee on Broadcasting, appointed in 1974, had published their report.⁴⁹ During this period the Annan Committee received several submissions urging the need for greater decentralisation. In June 1975 BBC staff in Aberdeen sent a paper to the Annan Committee arguing the need for greater devolution based on four factors: (1) the trend within Britain towards decentralisation and devolution; (2) the desire of political parties in Scotland to see the establishment of an Assembly in Edinburgh; (3) the movement of economic power and industrial investment from west central Scotland to the north-east because of North Sea Oil developments; and (4) the creation of new social pressures causing threats to indigenous cultural traditions, combined with the reassertion of local identities.⁵⁰ What was envisaged was a redeployment of staff and resources to Aberdeen. There was criticism of the centralisation of administration and the lack of access to decision makers and a belief that the BCS had failed to grasp the views of staff or appreciate the problems of broadcasting in Scotland. Favourable comment was made on the federalist structure of ITV in Scotland, and it was hoped that some examination would be made of the problem of network scheduling and its influence on regional output. For example, whereas oil developments were reflected in network news, there was deemed to be less opportunity to examine the issues raised in local programmes for local audiences. James Kemp, former BBC Scottish Editor of News and Current Affairs, in a submission to the Annan Committee, was also critical of centralisation within the BBC. He believed that the BBC centrally had been able to

⁴⁹Ibid., p.32.

⁵⁰Submission from BBC staff in Aberdeen to the Annan Committee on the Future of Broadcasting, 30 June 1975, p.1, SRO COM.1/88.

retain so much power due to the weakness of the BCS. Other submissions such as that from the Association of Broadcasting Staff, supported the maximum possible decentralisation of programme-making within given financial and constitutional limitations.⁵¹ These were the themes and issues which were debated. The task of assisting London Management to steer through plans for devolution resided with the newly-appointed Controller of BBC Scotland, Alastair Hetherington.

In 1975 Alastair Hetherington, former editor of the Guardian was appointed Controller of BBC Scotland to succeed Robert Coulter. Sir Michael Swann, BBC Chairman, was aware that Hetherington wished to return to Scotland and he was in favour of him becoming the new Controller. Central management believed that there were compelling reasons for appointing someone outside the BBC to take charge of the BBC's operations in Scotland. It was envisaged that Alastair Hetherington would be more likely to be effective in supporting and implementing a policy of devolution – or mini-devolution as Charles Curran, the Director General, referred to it – and in strengthening BBC Scotland output both within Scotland and to the rest of the U.K. It was expected that Hetherington's background as editor of the Guardian would provide him with the experience to deal with changes in a rapidly changing political climate. Given that devolution for BBC Scotland was likely to be a highly political issue, especially with the expectation of a Scottish Assembly, there was some degree of fear within the BBC that with political devolution, control of BBC Scotland might pass to the Assembly. The Board of Governors and the BCS wanted a strong independent person of standing who would be able to put Scotland on the U.K. broadcasting map and develop it without allowing it to come under political control from any future Scottish Assembly. Alastair Hetherington thus sought to implement mini-devolution to demonstrate that Scottish needs could be met within the existing

⁵¹Association of Broadcasting Staff : Submission to the Annan Committee on Broadcasting, N.d., Para.22, SRO COM.1/22.

system.⁵²

The appointment of a new Controller was significant at a crucial period in the history of the BBC in Scotland since the appointment was viewed as a recognition of the increasing importance which the BBC placed on affairs in Scotland. Increasing devolution of power and responsibilities to the BBC in Scotland appeared to be a safer option than adhering to the status quo which would only have increased pressure for an independent BBC Scotland. Much depended upon the type and speed at which change would take place. In a memorandum to the Annan Committee the BCS commented on these changes:

We warmly commend the need for greater devolution and we welcome the BBC's statement at the time of the appointment of the new Controller, Scotland, who is to take up his post in January 1976, that it intends to pursue a policy of giving greater autonomy to Scotland.⁵³

The Council believed that the national Controllers should be allowed to play a part in the formulation of policy for the BBC as a whole. Furthermore, it wanted BBC Scotland to have direct control over a greater proportion of expenditure in the light of political devolution, to be able to retain key executives and programme-makers, and to produce programmes that would adequately reflect Scottish life and culture both for the audience in Scotland and for the wider network audience. Overall the Council believed that the Scottish influence should be more strongly represented at the highest levels of BBC management no doubt to forestall pressure for more radical reforms.

⁵²Alastair Hetherington : Note for Committee on the Future of Broadcasting, 20 March 1976, p.1, SRO COM.1/323.

⁵³Broadcasting Council for Scotland : Memorandum to the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting, c. June 1975, Para.17, SRO COM.1/101.

Alastair Hetherington left the Guardian in September 1975 and took up his appointment as Controller of BBC Scotland in January 1976. He knew that he had the support of the Board of Governors to increase the degree of autonomy of BBC Scotland as well as to introduce improvements in both the quantity and quality of Scottish programme output. The intention was to expand BBC operations in Scotland, but all factors were to be subject to continuous negotiation and so there was uncertainty as to precisely what Scotland would be offered. Sir Michael Swann and the Governors wished to give Scotland more independence than any other region, but Alastair Hetherington may have mistakenly believed that he would have as much freedom as the editor of the Guardian, the post which he previously held. But BBC Scotland represented only one part of the BBC as a whole and so ultimate control remained with the BBC centrally in London. There were therefore limitations on the degree of freedom exercised by the Scottish Controller. Also, increasing financial pressure on the BBC at the national level increased the difficulty of allocating sufficient resources to develop Scottish broadcasting. Alastair Hetherington stated that Charles Curran (BBC Director-General) supported the line of the Governors that more power should be devolved to BBC Scotland, but that when he joined the BBC he found that the Board of Management was not agreed on this policy and that there were strong opponents of any idea to devolve administrative and programme-making control to Scotland, or to allocate more funds to Scotland.⁵⁴ For example, Ian Trethowan (Managing Director, Television, and subsequently Director-General) was deemed to be more sympathetic than Alasdair Milne (Director of Programmes, Television, and subsequently Managing Director, Television). Within BBC Scotland Hetherington stated that there was support for decentralisation from programme makers but resistance from some administrators who disliked change. This was understandable to the extent that programme makers would benefit from the expansion of programme services whereas administrators would suffer from attempts to streamline administration and shift more resources into programme production. He believed that senior staff in Scotland

⁵⁴Taped interview with Professor Alastair Hetherington, Stirling, 7 April 1988.

supported his plans although he underestimated the degree of resistance from within the Board of Management to the shifting of more resources to BBC Scotland.

Alastair Hetherington's plans for the development of BBC Scotland services fell into four broad areas: (1) the need to gain greater freedom from London, both administratively and financially, without breaking up the BBC into national or regional units; (2) to secure a larger volume of Scottish-originated material on the networks; (3) to improve broadcasting coverage in Scotland; and (4) to introduce several community stations and develop national radio in Scotland. In practical terms the first task involved the need to retain close ties with the BBC centrally yet reduce the number of occasions on which Scotland would have to consult London in areas such as staff appointments and capital expenditure. Hetherington wanted all functions of staff administration (i.e. appointments, salaries, grading, personnel matters) to be devolved except for the most senior staff. The Scottish Controller did have the right of veto over appointments and so London could not impose staff on a reluctant Scottish management, but the right of veto was reciprocal since London could veto the appointment of Scottish staff who wished to work in London. The Scottish Controller did however wish to retain freedom of movement for staff between Scotland and other parts of the U.K. With regard to the streamlining of administration in Scotland, the Scottish Controller wished to make arrangements for the early retirement of a number of administrative staff in order to save costs and shift more resources into programme production, but this was resisted by London. He also wanted decision-making on minor items of capital expenditure to be devolved to Scotland thus eliminating the cumbersome negotiating machinery with the Television Development Committee and the Radio Planning Group which considered expenditure on capital projects. Scotland either had to have its own capital budget or have delegated authority for minor items involving capital expenditure. As regards operating expenditure there was a need to obtain more resources to develop and enrich Scottish programme output and get more material networked in order to recover costs. Funds released in this way could then be used to produce more Scottish programmes and lessen dependence upon network

output. The Scottish Controller was critical of BBC Scotland's large contribution towards shared costs. More than this it was believed that if Scotland had been allowed to control its own finances then quicker solutions to problems could have been found given the complexity of dealing with various administrative departments in London. In an article in the New Statesman, Alastair Hetherington argued that BBC Scotland wanted devolution within the BBC for efficiency rather than for political reasons – the aim was to encourage broadcasters to cut down bureaucratic red tape.⁵⁵ He believed that Scotland would be less separatist if it was seen to enjoy better opportunities within the U.K, particularly since informal contacts between Scotland and London were not achieving the desired objectives.

The second broad aim which was pursued was the need to secure a greater proportion of Scottish material on the networks. The intention was to double Scottish-originated television network output from 1:60 to 1:30 within twelve months because, as the BCS remarked, one television programme in 140 (or one hour in 60) contributed to the network was an inadequate representation for Scotland which held one-tenth of the population of the U.K. and significant economic potential.⁵⁶ The BCS went on to state:

Scotland wishes to give as well as to take, and the maintenance of Scotland within the British Broadcasting service demands an influence upon, and a participation in, the network commensurate with its importance as a contributor to national strength and national unity as exemplified in the abiding virtues of its traditions and its people.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Alastair Hetherington, "Scotland and the BBC", New Statesman Vol.93, No. 2412 (10 June 1977), p.774.

⁵⁶BBC Handbook 1977 (London : BBC, 1976), pp.104–5.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p.105.

The Scottish Controller wanted Scotland to become a major network production centre as well as fostering local talent because this would stem the drain of staff southwards and prevent Scottish output from being too inward-looking. Professor Alan Thompson, BBC National Governor for Scotland (1976–1979), accepted that Scotland was not as successful in getting material networked as he would have liked.⁵⁸ Given the growing importance of devolution and North Sea Oil issues within news and current affairs, BBC Scotland also needed to be capable of reflecting these developments and the awakened sense of national identity both to a Scottish and to a network audience. As noted in section 2.1, three special correspondents were recruited to cover Scottish politics, economics, and offshore energy. BBC Scotland sought the resources, both manpower and technical, to cover the increasing number of Scottish items of interest to a U.K. audience.

The third broad aim of BBC Scotland's development programme concerned the desirability of improving broadcasting coverage. Scottish broadcasting coverage was poor in comparison with other parts of the U.K. because of a variety of technical, economic and geographical factors as indicated in Chapter 3. Decisions on transmitter coverage were co-ordinated centrally by the BBC's Engineering Division and governments had ultimate responsibility for wavelengths and the income which the BBC received to fund its capital projects. Scotland gave London advice on transmitter development but had no control over the planning of the networks; in return Scotland benefited by having access to the services of central engineering staff. However, Scotland hoped that the gaps in transmitter coverage, particularly UHF television, which were highlighted in 1974 in the Report of the Committee on Broadcasting Coverage, would be given priority by the BBC. The Crawford Committee had recommended that broadcasting services should be extended to all communities over 500 people for social, cultural and economic reasons. BBC Scotland hoped for a speedy extension of services to these often remote and scattered communities under

⁵⁸Taped interview with Professor Alan Thompson, Edinburgh, 6 May 1988.

what became known as Phase II of the UHF plan for transmitter development.

The fourth broadly-based aim of BBC Scotland was to develop community radio and expand national radio. Plans for a community radio station in Inverness were already in the pipeline before Alastair Hetherington was appointed as Controller. Radio Highland in Inverness was opened in March 1976 and between then and October 1979 further area/community radio stations were opened at Aberdeen, Orkney, Shetland and Stornoway. Scotland also sought to expand the output of the Radio Scotland opt-out service on Radio 4 by also broadcasting material on Radio 2. The ultimate aim was to enable Radio Scotland to stand independently in full competition with other networks. This came to fruition in November 1978 when Radio Scotland became a self-contained service after the changes in wavelengths made this technically possible. The BBC also wished to compete more effectively with the commercial local stations in Scotland but there were technical problems in introducing a Scottish element to Radio 1; the task of catering for more popular music was left to Radio Scotland.

The progress of regional devolution began to come under close scrutiny. The BCS wanted Scotland to play a more distinct role in shaping developments within British broadcasting. In referring to its submission to the Annan Committee, the BCS noted in its Annual Report for 1975–76:

The Council's submission has brought about an awakened and sympathetic interest in the affairs of BBC Scotland at the highest levels of BBC Management.⁵⁹

There was some concern within BBC Scotland with what was regarded as slow progress towards regional devolution, particularly with uncertainty about the relationship between the BBC in Scotland and any future Scottish Assembly. A typical comment about this relationship and its implications for broadcasting in Scotland was provided by the Church of Scotland Committee on Church and Nation in a submission to the

⁵⁹BBC Handbook 1977 (London : BBC, 1976), p.104.

Annan Committee:

If broadcasting in Scotland is to be the responsibility of a Minister in the Scottish Assembly, then it would seem to follow that control of expenditure should be exercised in Scotland, and that the Controller of the BBC in Scotland should be of equivalent rank to his opposite number in England.⁶⁰

However, BBC Scotland sought progress with regional devolution within the BBC structure but it became obvious to some staff in BBC Scotland that within the first nine months of Alastair Hetherington's appointment as Controller, there were severe constraints on his ability to do all he set out to achieve. The course of developments may have taken a different direction if political devolution had materialised at an early stage; it did not and a series of disagreements with London followed which were made public.

During 1977 the Board of Governors reaffirmed the view that within certain limits required for the co-ordination of matters such as technical development, programme quality, and conditions of employment, the intention was to give Scotland a steadily increasing measure of authority to run its own affairs. There was no intention of encouraging Scotland to move in a separatist direction, hence the use of the term 'mini-devolution'. As noted in section 2.1, the new post of Head of Finance was created and more flexibility was promised for the Scottish Controller regarding the authorisation of capital expenditure. However, concern over the rate of progress towards devolution prompted the BBC to make the following statement in its Annual Report for 1976-77:

In the Regions it has been our policy during the year to encourage greater devolution without sacrificing the advantages of corporate unity in certain fields (e.g the grading system, in order to ensure fairness, and engineering equipment standards, to ensure consistency and efficiency of operation throughout the Corporation). In Scotland our policy has sometimes been misunderstood and regarded as an English attempt to put a brake on what is seen there as an inexorably advancing vehicle of constitutional change. This is not our policy. Nor do we believe that the interests of viewers and listeners in the United Kingdom or

⁶⁰Church of Scotland Committee on Church and Nation, "Submission to the Annan Commission on Broadcasting", N.d. Para.9, SRO COM.1/167.

its constituent parts would be best served by separate National broadcasting organisations. Diversity of devolved functions within a sensible constitutional unity is our aim.⁶¹

The BCS believed that it was important that political events should be anticipated by BBC measures of financial and administrative devolution.⁶² Although Scotland was represented at Board of Governors level, the National Governor for Scotland had to balance his responsibility for broadcasting in Scotland with responsibility for U.K. broadcasting. Professor Alan Thompson, who was National Governor from 1976 to 1979, stated that he did not encounter any anti-Scottish bias at Board level and that it was the centralised nature of the BBC rather than personal factors which militated against Scotland.⁶³ Alastair Hetherington was however inclined to place more emphasis on the personality factor within the Board of Management rather than merely on the centralised structure in explaining slow progress towards devolution.⁶⁴

Conflict between Scotland and London reached a more intense level in September 1978 when Alastair Hetherington criticised the continual rejection by television Network Controllers of Scottish-originated material.⁶⁵ By this time the Government had published its White Paper in which it agreed with the Annan Committee that a greater degree of autonomy should be given to the National

⁶¹BBC Handbook 1978 (London : BBC, 1977), p.5.

⁶²*Ibid.*, p.113.

⁶³Taped Interview with Professor Alan Thompson, Edinburgh, 6 May 1988.

⁶⁴Taped interview with Professor Alastair Hetherington, Stirling, 7 April 1988.

⁶⁵Chris Mullinger, "London Scorn Angers Scots BBC Chief", Scotsman, 7 September 1978, p.1.

Broadcasting Councils.⁶⁶ Scotland sought a reasonable proportion of network contributions – but no quota of programme material – in order to stimulate local production and maintain high professional standards. After disagreements with London, the Scottish Controller clarified statements made earlier to the press by stating that some programmes had been rejected by London on grounds of quality. It was believed that London was setting very stringent standards regarding the acceptance of material for networking. This, together with criticism that London was interfering too much in the new Radio Scotland developments, was mentioned at the press conference in Edinburgh on 6 September 1978, held to discuss the reactions of the BCS to the White Paper on Broadcasting. In its Annual Report for 1977–78 the BCS had stated that it believed that subjectivity had influenced the decisions taken by the BBC centrally regarding the networking of Scottish material. The Council therefore wanted the bases of acceptance or rejection of material to be made more specific.⁶⁷ There was no desire for the acceptance of material to be based on any Goschen formula of 11/80ths because a quota system would merely have lowered the status of Scottish productions. The Annual Report also referred to the slow progress of regional devolution within the BBC, although this reflected the difficulty in convincing officials in London responsible for allocating expenditure, about the non-financial aspects of devolution such as the mood and expectations of the people in Scotland. In November 1978 during this period of uneasy relations with London, the BCS appointed Professor Sir Robert Grieve a former Chairman of the Highlands and Islands Development Board as Vice-Chairman in order to strengthen links both with the BBC centrally and with Scottish management and to emphasise that they were seeking to safeguard the interests of Scottish broadcasting without threatening the unity of the BBC.

⁶⁶Broadcasting (Cmnd. 7294; July 1978), p.23.

⁶⁷BBC Handbook 1979 (London : BBC, 1979), p.91.

The conflict with London reached a climax in December 1978 when the Board of Management took a dim view of a briefing which the Scottish Controller gave to the BCS about the lack of funds for radio development in Scotland. The Board disliked the fact that their decisions were being questioned and then disagreements were being communicated to the BCS. Professor Alan Thompson, Chairman of the BCS, stated that the Council was broadly in agreement with Alastair Hetherington's views although there were differences of emphasis in the goals sought.⁶⁸ The upshot of the disagreements with London was that Alastair Hetherington had to vacate the post of Controller and the BCS was consulted about who should fill the vacancy. Pat Ramsay, who was born in England but of Scots ancestry, was chosen as the new Controller of BBC Scotland. He took up his duties on 9 May 1979. Ramsay had served for many years within the BBC and thus knew its procedures. He had many contacts within the Corporation and had previously been Controller, Programme Services, Television. This was a safe appointment because Ramsay adopted a more moderate approach to the management of BBC Scotland suited to his own background and temperament. His immediate task was to stabilise the relationship between BBC Scotland and central management in London and deal with the problems of programme policy on Radio Scotland (discussed in Chapter 5) and the increasing financial pressures which affected the BBC as a whole. Also, with the failure of the Referendum of 1979 to produce a decisive vote in favour of establishing a Scottish Assembly, the progress of mini-devolution within the BBC was adversely affected. As John Kerr stated:

The fate of mini-devolution in the BBC has been much the same as that of attempts to devolve in the wider context from Westminster to a Scottish Assembly in Edinburgh.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Taped Interview with Professor Alan Thompson, Edinburgh, 6 May 1988.

⁶⁹John Kerr, "The Media and Nationalism", in Headlines : The Media in Scotland, ed. David Hutchison (Edinburgh : EUSPB, 1978), p.100.

Indeed in the absence of political devolution there was, according to Professor Alan Thompson, a drop in temperature over the issue of devolution within the Board of Governors. He argued that the Scottish dimension of devolving power flowed in more strongly at the Board of Governors level than at the Board of Management level because the Governors were in a stronger position than management to take note of, and to appreciate, the broader public and political issues over devolution. A decisive pro-devolution vote would have brought about intense political pressure behind BBC Scotland for greater autonomy, but no plans ever existed for creating a separate Scottish BBC.

The following, and final, chapter briefly looks at the controversy generated in 1980 over BBC Scotland's response to the financial pressures affecting the BBC as a whole, and the implications of the longer-term competitive challenges from new broadcasting services which faced BBC public service broadcasting in Scotland in 1980. The final chapter, unlike previous chapters, is not subdivided into sections.

CHAPTER 7

BBC SCOTLAND AND THE CHALLENGES FACING PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING IN 1980

This chapter, which concludes the examination of BBC public service broadcasting in Scotland, focuses on the financial and competitive challenges which the BBC faced in 1980. During 1979–80 there was a shift of emphasis from concern about regional devolution, discussed in chapter 6, to concern about the implications of the financial pressures facing the BBC as a whole, which had an impact within Scotland. The financial pressures were of immediate concern but in the long term the challenges facing the BBC centred on the prospect of greater competition from a fourth television channel and from cable and satellite services. This chapter begins by examining the financial pressures which led the BBC in Scotland to recommend the withdrawal of funding from schools broadcasting and the disbanding of the Scottish Symphony Orchestra. It then considers what prospects a fourth television channel were deemed to hold for broadcasting in Scotland, and concludes by briefly considering the implications of competition from cable and satellite services for broadcasting in Scotland.

The financial pressures facing the BBC as a whole were evident before the start of the 1980s. On 25 November 1978 the level of the colour licence fee increased from £21 to £25 and for monochrome from £9 to £10. The BBC had hoped for a colour licence fee of about £30 in order to take account of increased costs mainly attributable to inflation. The Corporation began the introduction to its Annual Report for 1978–79 by stating:

For the BBC, the financial year 1978–79 ended in conditions of much uncertainty. The revision of the licence fee proved, as we had feared, inadequate to stem the

erosion of inflation, and the maintenance of our programmes at their existing levels saw us going steadily deeper into deficit.¹

During 1979–80 financial pressures increased thus placing constraints on the ability of the BBC to provide a full range of national, regional and local programme services. On 24 November 1979 the colour licence was increased to £34 and the monochrome licence to £12 and these figures were not expected by the government to be increased for two years. The figures were below the BBC's estimate of the income which it needed to sustain a full public service broadcasting operation. The BBC therefore ended the financial year as at 31 March 1980 with another deficit and so had to divert part of its income to pay interest charges on money borrowed rather than use this money on programmes. In these circumstances the Corporation planned major economies. The rapid increase in the number of colour licences purchased during the 1970's had cushioned the impact of rising costs, but by 1980 increases in the number of these licences was tailoring off. With economies expected in the BBC as a whole, Scotland was expected to make its own contribution to these savings.

On 7 December 1979, shortly after the licence fee settlement had been announced, the BBC's Director of Finance indicated in broad terms to the BCS the implications of what was regarded as an insufficient licence fee, on the funding of programme services. The BBC estimated that overall it would have to save about £132 million over two years, £40 million from existing services and £92 million from new items of budgeted expenditure. Scotland was expected to contribute £2.6 million over two years (i.e. 6.5 per cent) towards the £40 million cut in existing services throughout the BBC as a whole.² This

¹BBC Handbook 1980 (London : BBC, 1980), p.1.

²Committee on Scottish Affairs : The BBC Cuts in Scotland. Minutes of evidence Wednesday 2 April 1980 (H.C. 539; 2 April 1980), p.13.

represented a larger figure than BBC Scotland's percentage share of the total budget which was 4.2 per cent as at 30 September 1979. BBC Scotland's share of these cuts represented 7 per cent of its operating budget. This budget as at 31 March 1980 was £15.2 million, of which £5.8 million was attributable to radio and £9.6 million attributable to television. These savings therefore totalled over £1 million for each of the two years and they were not to be spread across the whole range of BBC services in Scotland. The infrastructure needed to make programmes, such as studios and equipment, were to be subject to only limited cuts in expenditure; most of the planned reductions in expenditure were expected to affect schools broadcasting and the Scottish Symphony Orchestra (SSO) together with economies in staff costs and other incidental expenses such as travel costs. The most controversial aspects of the proposed economies related to schools broadcasting and the SSO which together represented a significant element in the cuts in the operating budget.

On 28th February 1980 BBC Scotland announced that it was proposing to withdraw funding from radio and television schools programmes in Scotland and phase this over a two-year period. The intention was to reduce both the programme allowance and programme staff by 25 per cent in the 1980-81 budget which the BBC expected would only result in a reduction of 5 per cent in schools radio output and 15 per cent in television output because of the greater use of repeat programmes. In the following financial year the BBC was planning to withdraw the remaining 75 per cent in schools broadcasting. The BBC wanted the Scottish Education Department publicly to fund schools programmes but on 25 March the Scottish Office informed the BBC that it would not be willing to provide financial support for schools programmes. The BBC estimated that this financial support would represent £350,000 each year; the Corporation stated that it would continue to provide the infrastructure for making programmes which represented over £800,000 and that what it did not wish to fund were the staff costs and the programme allowance. The BBC's proposal to withdraw from schools broadcasting in

Scotland provoked controversy. The Chairman of the School Broadcasting Council for Scotland wrote to the Board of Governors expressing the total opposition of the Council to BBC Scotland's proposed withdrawal of commitment to schools broadcasting. He stated:

We are aware that this is currently not general BBC policy, since a reaffirmation of commitment is contained in the Director-General's letter to staff of 26 February 1980. We cannot accept that BBC Scotland should withdraw unilaterally from a commitment and a provision which has been part of the BBC's public service function for more than 50 years and which has earned a world-wide reputation.³

The Council believed that network schools broadcasting from London would be unable to provide for the needs of Scottish pupils. Furthermore, it stated that BBC Scotland's plans represented a denial of its Charter obligations. The School Broadcasting Council for Scotland stated that BBC Scotland's proposals represented a harsher discrimination against education than any proposed elsewhere in the BBC, and that economies should have been spread more evenly across programme services rather than concentrated in a few areas such as schools broadcasting. The Council also regretted that it had not been consulted over the proposals. The cuts in radio and television schools programme allowances represented 11 per cent of total cuts, and the cuts in staff costs for schools broadcasts represented 15 per cent.⁴ Both therefore represented a disproportionate share of the proposed economies, particularly since staff and programme costs of over £300,000 represented only two per cent of BBC Scotland's operating expenditure of just over £15 million. The School Broadcasting Council also emphasised that although Scottish schools programme output represented a small percentage of total schools output, greater use was made of Scottish schools programmes. For example, although Scottish produced schools programmes for Radio represented only 16 per cent of all radio

³Ibid, p.64.

⁴Ibid., p.9.

output available to secondary schools, its use by Scottish schools was about 31 per cent. Similarly, 9 per cent of schools television programmes for primary schools were produced by BBC Scotland, but they represented 21 per cent of total viewing time. In a memorandum to the Committee on Scottish Affairs, the Scottish Arts Council stated:

We are concerned not only about the loss of opportunities for professional writers and actors, but also because the service is highly valued by schools throughout Scotland, because it reflects a vitality, breadth and independence of outlook which is refreshing in Scottish education, and because the programmes contain specifically Scottish material which promotes a better understanding of Scotland's cultural heritage and language.⁵

The Association of Broadcasting Staff argued that it was dangerous for the BBC to rely on external funding to support schools broadcasts in Scotland thus implying that this would unduly influence the content of programmes. The BBC's Educational Department did eventually maintain its output for schools, but there were cutbacks and development in other areas, such as in the opening of further community radio stations, was halted. The controversy over BBC Scotland's plans for schools broadcasts was also reflected in its proposal to disband the Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

BBC Scotland proposed as part of its contribution to overall BBC economies, to disband the SSO. The cost of the SSO was about £600,000 annually. However, although BBC Scotland's orchestras represented only 5.5 per cent of annual operating costs, the disbandment of the SSO represented 38 per cent of the total economies planned by BBC Scotland.⁶ The SSO thus appeared to represent an easy target for making valuable savings without seriously disrupting other operational activities. The Scottish Music Advisory Committee stated that the burden of economies within BBC Scotland should

⁵Ibid., p.47.

⁶Ibid., p.9.

have been spread more evenly. However, BBC Scotland did not regard its attachment to the house orchestras as sacrosanct and therefore felt no special obligation to guarantee security of employment for musicians at the expense of other creative staff. Furthermore, it argued that the demand for work by the SSO would fall because Radio 3 was reducing its own musical output as its own contribution to the BBC economies, and that BBC Scotland would continue to fund the Scottish Radio Orchestra. BBC Scotland referred to a passage in the Annan Report on Broadcasting to lend support to its policy that it need not necessarily feel obliged to fund its orchestras in times of financial stringency. In a section covering broadcasters as patrons of the arts the Report stated:

The BBC must feel able to make cuts where it judges they will least affect its programmes, not simply in places where they cannot affect musicians. Secondly, even if the BBC is able to maintain or increase its present expenditure on musicians, we do not consider the BBC should necessarily be tied to the existing orchestral structures.⁷

The Committee went on to state that it did not wish to see a national orchestra in Scotland or Wales abandoned although it did want to see the rigid demarcation abolished between the BBC's orchestras and those orchestras assisted by the Arts Council. In other words it believed that if the government wished to maintain all the BBC orchestras then it should be prepared to provide extra finance to the Arts Council for the upkeep of these orchestras if necessary. The Scottish Arts Council stated that given the underfunding of its existing orchestras and the unwillingness of government to increase its grant to the Council, it could not take on the responsibility for funding the SSO. The BBC's plan to disband five of its orchestras throughout the U.K. generated intense concern within and outwith the BBC. BBC Scotland received many letters complaining about the proposal to disband the SSO. These plans were subsequently adjusted and

⁷Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting. Chairman: Lord Annan (Cmnd. 6753; March 1977), p.333.

the SSO was maintained, but reduced in size, and so the proportion of the cuts borne by Scotland was reduced. This ensured that Scotland did not have to accept so disproportionate a share of the financial cuts in comparison with the BBC's other national regions. BBC Scotland concluded its memorandum (on the BBC cuts in Scotland) to the House of Commons Committee on Scottish Affairs by stating:

We regret the circumstances that have made economies necessary but we believe that, by making cuts in the way decided, we can preserve the scarce programme making skills and structures necessary to meet the needs of the Scottish audience as a whole.⁸

In an article in the Scotsman, Pat Ramsay (Controller of BBC Scotland) argued that the BBC had to be free to make economies where they would least affect programmes, hence the original justification for disbanding the SSO. He maintained that for some time the BBC had been providing a first class service for a second class charge thus implying that if the public wished to continue to receive a first class service then the BBC would have to be adequately funded.⁹ In addition to the financial pressures, the BBC was also faced with the prospect of greater competition from an expansion in commercial local radio, the introduction of a fourth television channel and the possibility of cable and satellite services.

The most immediate challenge facing the BBC in 1980 was the prospect of a fourth television channel. The proposed structure for the fourth television network appeared to offer Scottish-based independent producers an opportunity to cover topics which BBC Scotland could not adequately cover within the resources available, particularly during a

⁸Committee on Scottish Affairs : The BBC Cuts in Scotland. Minutes of Evidence Wednesday 2 April 1980 (H.C. 539; 2 April 1980), p.5.

⁹Patrick Ramsay, "Programme for Survival", Scotsman, 8 March 1980, p.9.

period when the BBC was planning economies in its programme services. The new channel was expected to guarantee access for the first time to independent producers and so provide an opportunity for more regional programmes to be networked. Jeremy Isaacs, who became the first Chief Executive of the fourth channel, wrote in 1979 that he expected the primary task of a fourth channel to be to extend viewer choice, to cater for minority interests, and to act as an encouragement to independent production. He did not think that it should simply compete with, or be complementary to, the existing ITV channel.¹⁰ The IBA did not want the new channel to engage in competitive advertising with ITV because this would force the fourth channel to aim at maximising the audience for its programmes. It therefore appeared that the IBA would have to cushion the new channel from financial pressures which might otherwise thwart its mandate to encourage innovation in programme content, a mandate incorporated in section 3 of the Broadcasting Act 1980.¹¹ The fourth channel appeared to offer opportunities for the transmission of Scottish items which might not ordinarily have been broadcast on BBC Scotland or the Scottish ITV companies, even although the new channel was to be a national rather than a regional service of broadcasting. In addition to the prospect of a fourth channel there was also the prospect in the longer term of cable and satellite services.

Cable and satellite services both offered the technical means of providing a wider choice of programmes. It seemed likely that satellite services would pose a greater threat to the BBC in Scotland than cable services because the cost of providing cable outwith urban areas would be prohibitive. Indeed a report published in 1980 recognised that despite technical changes emerging since the publication of the Annan Report three years

¹⁰Jeremy Isaacs, "Television in the Eighties", The Listener Vol.102, No. 2627 (6 September 1979), pp.298-300.

¹¹Broadcasting Act 1980 (c.64).

earlier which suggested the likelihood of a faster development of cable services, these would be located in urban not rural areas.¹² In contrast to cable, programmes beamed by satellite would be instantly available to all viewers who possessed the appropriate aerials, rather than be gradually extended throughout the country. Unlike BBC transmitter development, satellite services would ensure that Scotland would not be under-provided in comparison with other parts of the U.K. as had occurred with the gradual extension of the BBC networks. With Direct Broadcasting by Satellite (DBS), programmes would be beamed using super high frequencies (SHF) from a geostationary satellite into those homes which were equipped with a rooftop dish aerial. In comparison with terrestrial broadcasting systems, such as that provided by the BBC, DBS was likely to be able to offer uniformity of signal strength in Scotland because the satellite signals were less affected by mountainous terrain, or distance. The technical benefits of DBS were, however, accompanied by drawbacks in the area of programme content. The coverage of DBS services was not guaranteed to coincide with national frontiers given that the satellite beam would cover a wide geographical area. So not only was there less likelihood of providing a national service for viewers in Scotland, there was no possibility of regionalising these services within Scotland, a factor noted in the 1977 Annan Report on Broadcasting.¹³ At a more general level, the BBC was concerned that the new technological developments, such as DBS, would by widening the number of channels available, thus also fragment the television audience and so undermine the licence fee system upon which the BBC's income depended.

¹²Statistics, Technological Developments and Cable Television (Cmnd. 7855; March 1980), p.15.

¹³Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting. Chairman : Lord Annan (Cmnd. 6753; March 1977), p.384.

Public service broadcasting had undergone immense changes in the post-war period. The regulated monopoly had been replaced by regulated competition in television in 1955 and in radio in 1973 so that by 1980 the BBC was only one broadcasting organisation and it no longer addressed a single national audience. BBC Scotland, as one of the BBC's national regions, was not immune from the various changes affecting the BBC as a whole over this period and therefore neither could it distance itself from the financial economies sought in 1980 or from the competitive challenges of new broadcasting services. The BCS was, as the Royal Charter stated, subject to such reservations and directions as appeared to the BBC to be necessary from time to time for reasons of finance. It was, however, BBC Scotland's chosen response (endorsed by the BCS) to the immediate financial problems where it sought disproportionate economies with regard to schools broadcasting and the SSO, which put into question its adherence to its charter obligations to pay full regard to the distinctive culture, language, interests and tastes of the people of Scotland. These obligations appeared to some extent to have been abandoned because of the decisions made in 1980 about how the economies should be achieved. Throughout the 1980s despite the abandonment of the major project to replace BH Edinburgh with new purpose-built premises, expansion within BBC Scotland did take place in both programme output, such as in contributions to breakfast television which began in 1983 and in Gaelic broadcasting, and also in programme services where additional community radio stations, such as Radio Solway in Dumfries and Radio Tweed in Selkirk, were opened.

CONCLUSION

The history and development of BBC public service broadcasting in Scotland is the history of one of the BBC's regions, albeit a national region, and thus has to be viewed in relation to developments in broadcasting within the wider U.K. context. The development of BBC broadcasting in Scotland took place within an essentially centralised broadcasting organisation of which it represented a constituent element.

One of the major themes throughout all the chapters has been the growth of the BBC in Scotland: growth in terms of organisational structure (chapter 2), the geographical extension of broadcasting services throughout Scotland (chapter 3), and the range, quality, and volume of programme services provided (chapters 4, 5 and 6). Another principal theme has been that of the influence of centralisation on the operation of BBC Scotland and on the nature of the programme services provided. The centralised nature of the BBC has been considered at various points in terms of the BBC's organisational structure, the decision-making process, the allocation of financial resources, transmitter development, and the provision of television and radio programme services. This theme was discussed more fully in chapter 6 which considered BBC Scotland's dual programme responsibility and the constraining factors which inhibited the devolving of greater responsibilities to the regions. A third salient theme has been the influence of competing services, such as ITV and ILR, on BBC programme policy and consequently on the nature of the programmes provided by the BBC in Scotland. Comparisons have also been drawn between the different organisational structure of the BBC and these competing services, and the implications of the differing broadcasting structures for the type of programme services provided has also been emphasised. In this context comparisons have also been drawn between the BBC's English regional structure and the regional structure in Scotland

and how this has influenced the networking of programme material and regional opt-outs. The three major themes which therefore emerged from this study of the BBC in Scotland were: growth, centralisation, and competition.

The background to the main period covered by this study of the BBC in Scotland was outlined in chapter 1 where it was indicated that John Reith, the BBC's first Director-General, had an immense influence on the BBC during the formative years of broadcasting and helped to mould the Corporation into an established institution operating under unified control as a public service serving most parts of the country. Indeed after the reconstitution of the commercially-founded British Broadcasting Company in the private sector, into a Corporation operating in the public sector in 1927, the BBC was to operate as a public service in both constitutional structure and in programme output. The centralised nature of the BBC was the product of several factors, not least the need to operate on an efficient basis within available technical and financial resources and to sustain high programme standards throughout the U.K., thus investing broadcasting with a social purpose. Given that successive governments did not exercise control over day-to-day administration or programme matters within the BBC, it was thus left to the Corporation to decide on the balance between central control and the devolving of responsibilities to the regions. The unity of the BBC did not, however, entail uniform treatment of all its constituent parts; this is indicated by the different status and power devolved to the national regions, such as Scotland, in comparison with the English regions. This special treatment did not prevent criticism in Scotland, both within and outwith the BBC, of remote control from London. BBC Scotland remained part of the BBC and therefore has always been designated as a region; it was regarded as a national region because of its special programme responsibilities with regard to the listening and viewing audience in Scotland. The central question was really the extent to which Scotland was treated more as a region than as a nation in broadcasting terms. In crucial matters such as the allocation of expenditure for operating purposes and capital development or for the transmitter development programme, Scotland was essentially

regarded as a region; in programme matters, such as the ability to decide on a separate Scottish programme schedule in radio, the BBC in Scotland had greater flexibility to serve national needs, but within the resources made available by the BBC centrally. The closure of the local stations which had operated in Scotland during the 1920s, and their replacement by a Scottish regional service in the 1930s, brought a wider choice of programmes and better reception to a greater number of listeners in Scotland but it reinforced the belief that Scotland was regarded by the BBC as a single region rather than as a nation of regions. Furthermore, the policy of centralisation appeared to convert Scotland into a regional outpost. In 1936 the Report by the Director of Regional Relations examined the extent to which the policy of centralisation had inhibited programme development in the regions. Regions were not expected to duplicate material which could be produced to higher standards in London and broadcast on the National Programme. This, together with the lack of manpower and facilities, appeared to leave Scotland to concentrate on only the most parochial of subject matter. Scottish regional broadcasting was subsequently suspended during the war years, and so the most significant changes did not materialise until after 1945.

In the post-war period there was a more rapid development of programme services and this was accompanied by greater complexity of the BBC's organisational structure at both central and regional levels, and by changes in the relationship between Scotland and the BBC centrally. As noted in Chapter 2, with the arrival of television and growth in the radio and television services provided, new posts and departments were created within BBC Scotland. Furthermore, new bodies were created with advisory and executive powers over the conduct of broadcasting services provided in Scotland. The Scottish Advisory Council, a purely advisory body which was formed in 1947, was superseded in 1953 by the Broadcasting Council for Scotland which was invested with executive powers to control the policy and content of initially radio, and later television, programmes within and for Scotland. The Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales, whose formation was recommended by the Beveridge Committee on Broadcasting in 1951, were not overwhelmingly welcomed by

the BBC Board of Governors who feared that these Councils would pursue a policy of expansion and would undermine the unity of the BBC. The introduction of these Councils represented an attempt to permit the maximum degree of devolution consistent with the maintenance of overall central control by the BBC. Indeed the powers of the Councils were subject to any reservations and directions which the BBC centrally deemed were necessary from time to time for financial reasons or to maintain a coherent administrative structure. Moreover, successive National Governors have had to reconcile their collective responsibility as members of the Board of Governors for U.K. matters in broadcasting, with the autonomous rights delegated to the Broadcasting Councils of whom they were Chairmen. The BCS could act as a useful intermediary with London when Scotland lobbied for more resources, but the usefulness of the Council in safeguarding Scottish interests was dependent on many factors such as the willingness of Council members to use the power at their disposal, the personality of the National Governor and his/her personal contacts with the BBC Chairman, and the unity of the BCS on various issues. In practice the BCS was not consistently successful in safeguarding Scottish interests. The provision of programme services in Scotland was, however, principally dependent upon the financial resources made available by the BBC centrally. According to BBC accounting methods, BBC Scotland has consistently operated at a deficit and thus had to be subsidised by London and some of the other regions. Scotland was not unique in this respect because most regions operated at a deficit in the period 1950–1980. Scotland's contribution towards shared costs appeared large, but the BBC centrally did argue that it funded the higher than average cost of extending the transmitter networks in Scotland. Scotland could generate more resources by recovering the cost of programmes contributed to the radio and television networks, but network Controllers had the power to decide whether or not to accept Scottish–originated material for U.K. transmission. In practice Scotland appeared to be more successful in getting radio than television programmes taken by the networks. This was mainly attributable to the lack of specialised television facilities in Scotland in the early years, and competition from the large English network production centres to get material networked in the

later years. Overall, the BBC maintained that an independent Scottish Broadcasting Corporation could not have existed solely on licence income generated within Scotland and in any case it was not so certain that the audience would have preferred a greater volume of Scottish-originated material to replace popular network programmes.

The ability to receive programmes in Scotland was dependent upon the extension of the transmitter networks. In general, technical developments tended to be introduced in London and then extended to the regions. In the absence of any obligation to provide 100 per cent broadcasting coverage, the BBC sought to bring programmes to the largest number of communities possible in the shortest period of time within variable technical and financial resources. Priority was given where possible to the provision of services within the four nations and thereafter according to density of population. Technical factors determined that it was more costly to serve scattered and remote communities in mountainous areas, many of which were located in Scotland. Indeed, as noted in chapter 3, the cost of providing UHF television transmitters to remote areas increased in inverse proportion to the number of people served: thus the law of diminishing returns began to operate. Moreover, transmitter development was never governed to any significant extent by social and cultural factors such as the need to sustain cultural traditions, to provide entertainment and educational programmes to compensate for a lack of leisure facilities, to attract labour and tourism, or to halt depopulation. In 1974 the Crawford Committee did however draw the attention of broadcasters to the social aspects of broadcasting coverage. Nevertheless the lack of radio and television services in some parts of the Highlands and Islands was not allowed to hold back the provision of new services, such as BBC-2, to other parts of the country which already had access to a choice of programme services. Decisions about the planning of the transmitter networks were coordinated by Engineering Division in London for practical reasons. By 1980 the BBC's VHF radio and UHF television services covered most areas of Scotland but there were a few remaining pockets of non-reception.

The analysis of the provision of television and radio programme services in Scotland has had to be considered in relation to the provision of programme services by the BBC as a whole as well as the influence of competitive services such as ITV and ILR. These factors determined the nature of the programme services provided in Scotland. Television which was restarted in the London area in 1946 was extended to the regions in December 1949, reaching Scotland in March 1952. However, with no television studio facilities and the need to confine Scottish programmes for some time to outside broadcasts, this landmark represented the arrival of television from England to Scotland and not strictly speaking the arrival of Scottish television. For many years Scotland also had to rely on production teams from England to cover Scottish items of interest to a network audience. This reliance on so-called hosted programming diminished during the 1970s when Scottish production teams originated more of their own material under their own control. Unlike radio, BBC television provided a national service within Scotland because television could not be regionalised with existing resources. The arrival of ITV in 1955 with its federal structure, which in subsequent years divided the country into geographical units as new programme companies were awarded franchises, can be contrasted with the BBC which essentially provided a U.K. service with regional opt-outs. Only one programme company was appointed in each ITV region, and the networking arrangements made many programmes local in origin rather than necessarily in appeal. However, most network material was, unlike the BBC, not produced in London because there were several ITV network companies, not all of which operated from London. Furthermore, the establishment of three small companies in Scotland enabled ITV to cater more fully than the BBC for regional audiences within Scotland; it also persuaded BBC Scotland to review its provision of Scottish programme output and seek, in common with other BBC regions, to persuade London – who were unhappy about fragmentation of the network – to agree to more opt-out programmes. As regards the networking of local material, there were physical constraints in achieving this with only one network in existence. The arrival of BBC-2 appeared to offer the prospect of broadcasting more regional material, but BBC-2 was never planned as a regionalised channel. In the

period up until 1980 most television programmes transmitted in Scotland were taken from the networks: thus Scottish output represented a small percentage of total programme output. Moreover, the limited resources available within BBC Scotland, together with its dual programme responsibility, prevented it from competing on a stronger basis with London and the specialised English network production centres to get material accepted for network transmission.

In radio, the resumption of regional broadcasting in 1945 and the consequent introduction of the Scottish Home Service increased the volume of Scottish material. The popularity of the SHS in comparison with the other sound networks, and the ability of Scottish producers to export programme material to the other networks, particularly the Third Programme, resulted in greater attention being given by the early 1960s to the possible development of localised services to cater for more identifiable communities and so complement national radio in Scotland. However, BBC Scotland was not in favour of the provision of local stations. The BCS argued that Scotland already served more homogeneous communities than the English regions, and so it believed that there was less need for local radio and a greater need to develop national radio within Scotland. It was the success of BBC local radio in England since 1967 and the arrival of Independent Local Radio in Scotland in 1973 which emphasised the need for BBC Scotland to review the provision of its radio output and consider how best to supplement national radio with localised broadcasting adapted to meet the needs of local communities in Scotland. By the mid-1970s plans had been prepared for a community radio station in Inverness, Radio Highland. This was one of five community stations which were opened by 1980, all of which differed from BBC local radio in England because they operated as opt-out services from the national service, namely Radio Scotland. In 1978 Radio Scotland itself became a separate programme service operating on its own wavelength rather than as an opt-out service from Radio 4. Radio 4 moved from medium wave to long wave but long wave failed to cover the whole of Scotland; and Radio 4 was not available on VHF throughout Scotland. However, as noted in chapter 5, the problems which

accompanied programme policy in the new service emphasised the need to review the role of radio in Scotland, particularly in the absence of BBC local radio stations on the English model, and because of the nature of the competition provided by the BBC's specialised radio networks and the ILR stations. The first question which had to be addressed was whether radio in Scotland should be primarily local or national in character: BBC Scotland opted for national radio with some provision of localised services to meet specific needs such as in Orkney, Shetland, and Western Isles. A second question was whether radio should seek to bolster Scottish national identity or reflect cultural diversity within Scotland: Scotland sought the former since this was consistent with the resurgence of national consciousness throughout the 1970s, but the diversity of cultural traditions within Scotland was not ignored. A third and final question was what balance should be aimed for in programme output with regard to the broadcasting of Scottish and U.K. material: Scotland did not seek to broadcast too much Scottish material for fear of alienating listeners who preferred network output, yet it had to remain sufficiently Scottish in order to justify its existence as an alternative to Radio 4.

During the 1970s there was greater pressure on the BBC to devolve more power to the regions. The BBC had to be seen to represent the sum of its parts rather than merely London with regional outposts. The Board of Governors believed that it was politically sensible to support devolution within the BBC and so lessen pressure for more radical changes. The enrichment of broadcasting both within Scotland and throughout the U.K. was dependent upon the BBC providing adequate scope for the development of broadcasting in Scotland, including greater latitude over decisions affecting the conduct of Scottish programme services. The progress of mini-devolution within the BBC was hindered to some extent after the failure of wider political devolution to materialise in 1979, combined with increasing financial pressures facing the Corporation as a whole by the beginning of the 1980s. By 1980 BBC Scotland remained part of a centralised broadcasting organisation but since the 1950s it had undergone significant growth in its organisational structure, in the geographical

coverage of its transmissions, and in the range of programme services which it provided for the varied listening and viewing audience in Scotland. During the 1980s BBC Scotland services experienced modest expansion such as in contributions towards Breakfast Television and network output and in the further development of community radio.

APPENDIX 1

A CHRONOLOGY OF BROADCASTING, 1922–1980

1922

- 18 October British Broadcasting Company formed.
- 1 November The first Broadcast Receiving Licence issued.
- 14 November Broadcasting began from London (2LO).
- 14 December John Reith appointed as General Manager of the British Broadcasting Company.
- 15 December British Broadcasting Company registered.

1923

- 18 January Licence to broadcast granted by the Postmaster-General to the BBC (Cmd.1822).
- 6 March Glasgow main station (5SC) opened.
- 24 April Sykes Committee on Broadcasting appointed.
- 23 August Sykes Report on Broadcasting (Cmd. 1951). Report published on 1 October 1923.
- 10 October Aberdeen main station (2BD) opened.
- 14 November John Reith appointed as Managing Director of the British Broadcasting Company.

1924

- 1 May Edinburgh relay station (2EH) opened.
- 12 November Dundee relay station (2DE) opened.

1925

- 20 July Crawford Committee on Broadcasting appointed.
27 July Daventry high power station opened.

1926

- 2 March Crawford Report on Broadcasting (Cmd.2599). Report published on 5 March.
31 December British Broadcasting Company dissolved.

1927

- 1 January British Broadcasting Corporation constituted under Royal Charter; Sir John Reith appointed as Director-General, and Earl of Clarendon as first BBC Chairman.
4 January First meeting of the BBC Board of Governors.

1929

- 1 October BBC Regional Scheme began.

1930

- 29 November Broadcasting House at Queen Street, Edinburgh, opened.

1932

- 12 June Westerglen high power regional transmitter in Scotland opened; Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee local stations closed.

1934

- 14 May Selsdon Television Committee appointed.

1935

- 14 January Selsdon Report on Television (Cmd. 4793). Report published on 31 January.
- 20 February First meeting of the BBC's General Advisory Council.
- 17 April Ullswater Committee on Broadcasting appointed.
- 31 December Ullswater Report on Broadcasting (Cmd. 5091). Report published on 16 March 1936.

1936

- 1 October BBC established a Listener Research Department.
- 12 October Burghead transmitting station serving North-East Scotland opened.
- 2 November BBC began the first regular public television service in the world.

1937

- 1 January BBC's second Royal Charter.
- 4 February Marconi-EMI system adopted for television transmissions.

1938

- 30 June Sir John Reith resigned as Director-General of the BBC.
- 9 September Aberdeen main station (2BD) closed.
- 1 October Frederick Ogilvie succeeded Reith as Director-General.
- 18 November Broadcasting House at Queen Margaret Drive, Glasgow, opened.
- 9 December Broadcasting House at Beechgrove, Aberdeen opened.

1939

- 1 September BBC television service closed.
- 3 September The Home Service replaced national and regional radio programmes.

1940

7 January The Home Service was supplemented by a Forces Programme.

1942

27 January R.W. Foot and Sir Cecil Graves became joint Directors-General.

1943

6 September Sir Cecil Graves resigned as Director-General; R.W. Foot now sole Director-General.

1944

31 March William Haley became BBC Director-General.

29 December Hankey Television Committee Report 1943. Report published on 8 March 1945.

1945

29 July Restart of Regional broadcasting; the introduction of the Scottish Home Service and the Light Programme.

1946

1 June Introduction of a £2 combined (radio and television) licence; sound-only licence increased to £1.

7 June BBC television restarted (on 405 lines) in the London area.

2 July Government White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmd. 6852).

29 September BBC Third Programme began.

1947

- 1 January Scottish and Welsh Regional Advisory Councils formed; BBC's third Royal Charter.
- 9 June Lord Simon of Wythenshawe became BBC Chairman.
- 29 September School Broadcasting Council for Scotland formed.

1949

- 21 June Beveridge Committee on Broadcasting appointed.

1950

- 15 March Copenhagen Plan governing the allocation of wavelengths.
- 15 December Beveridge Report on Broadcasting (Cmd.8116). Report published on 18 January 1951.

1951

- 10 July Government White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmd.8291).

1952

- 14 March Kirk O'Shotts transmitter opened, thus bringing BBC television to Scotland.
- 16 May Government White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmd.8550).
- 1 July BBC's fourth Royal Charter.
- 1 August Sir Alexander Cadogan became BBC Chairman; Lord Clydesmuir appointed as first BBC National Governor for Scotland.
- 25 November Last meeting of the Scottish Advisory Council.
- 1 December Sir Ian Jacob became BBC Director-General.

1953

- 1 January BBC Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales established.
- 8 May First Report of the Television Advisory Committee, 1952.
- 18 June National Television Council formed.
- 2 July Popular Television Association formed.
- 13 November Government White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmd.9005).
- 16 December Second Report of the Television Advisory Committee, 1952.

1954

- 30 July Television Act 1954.
- 14 December Redmoss temporary television station near Aberdeen brought into service.

1955

- 1 January Tom Johnston became BBC National Governor for Scotland.
- 2 May First VHF radio station brought into service at Wrotham.
- 22 September Start of ITV Transmissions, in the London area.
- 10 October Colour television test transmissions began by the BBC.
- 12 October Meldrum permanent television station replaced the temporary Redmoss transmitter near Aberdeen.

1956

- 1 July Lord Balfour became BBC National Governor for Scotland.

1957

- 8 April BBC announced changes in radio network programmes.
- 8 July Andrew Stewart became Controller, BBC Scotland.
- 16 August Rosemarkie television station opened.
- 30 August BBC introduced a Scottish television news bulletin for viewers in Scotland.
- 31 August Start of STV transmissions in Central Scotland.
- 30 September Start of BBC Network Three.
- 30 November Kirk O'Shotts VHF radio transmitters brought into service.
- 1 December Sir Arthur fforde became BBC Chairman.

1958

- 13–14 January BBC began stereophonic test transmissions.
- 12 October Rosemarkie VHF radio station opened.
- 22 December Orkney temporary television and VHF radio stations opened.

1959

- 20 January BBC television outside broadcast base at East Kilbride opened.
- 22 December Orkney permanent VHF radio station opened.

1960

- 1 January Hugh Carleton Greene became BBC Director-General.
- 2 May Orkney permanent television station opened.
- 17 May Report of the Television Advisory Committee 1960.
- 13 July Pilkington Committee on Broadcasting appointed.
- 30 November Sir David Milne became BBC National Governor for Scotland.

1961

- 22 March First BBC local radio experiment, at Bristol.
- 1 September Border Television began transmissions.
- 30 September Grampian Television began transmissions.

1962

- 7 March First BBC Gaelic television programme.
- 20–23 March BBC Scotland local radio experiment at Dumfries.
- 1 June Pilkington Report on Broadcasting (Cmnd. 1753). Report published on 27 June.
- 4 July Government White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmnd.1770).
- 17 December Fort William Television and VHF radio relay station opened.
- 18 December Government White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmnd.1893).

1963

- 6 March BBC celebrated 40 years of broadcasting in Scotland.
- 22 June Oban television and VHF radio station opened.
- 31 July Television Act 1963.

1964

- 17 February Studio A at BH Glasgow equipped for dual standard operation brought into service.
- 26 February Sir James Duff became BBC Chairman.
- 25 March Television Act 1964.
- 28 March Radio Caroline, the first offshore pirate radio station, began broadcasting.
- 15 April Shetland television and VHF radio relay station opened.
- 20 April BBC-2 began, in the London area.
- 14 May Lord Normanbrook became BBC Chairman.
- 30 July BBC's fifth Royal Charter.
- 30 August BBC introduced the Music Programme on the Third Network.

1965

- 26 April Melvaig BBC-1 and temporary VHF radio station opened.
- 27 September Sandale television transmitter brought into service.
- 29 September First party political broadcast on radio and television by the SNP.
- 30 November Lady Baird became BBC National Governor for Scotland.
- 31 December Pirate station Radio Scotland began broadcasting.

1966

- 3 March BBC granted permission by the PMG to introduce colour on BBC-2 using the PAL system.
- 4 March BBC pamphlet published detailing plans for local radio.
- 28 March Melvaig permanent VHF radio relay station opened.
- 9 July BBC-2 arrived in Central Scotland from the Blackhill transmitter.
- 30 July BBC began regular stereo broadcasts in the Music and Third Programmes from Wrotham.
- 19 December Kingussie television and VHF radio station, and Girvan television relay station brought into service.
- 22 December Government White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmnd.3169).

1967

- 15 February Government agreed to duplication of 625-lines UHF on BBC-1 and ITV and for colour to be introduced on this line standard.
- 8 May Lochgilphead BBC-1 relay station opened.
- 1 July BBC-2 began regular colour transmissions (not in Scotland).
- 3 July Ayr BBC-1 relay station opened.
- 29 July Durris BBC-2 station opened.
- 14 August Pirate station Radio Scotland ceased broadcasting.
- 15 August Marine etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Act 1967 became law.
- 1 September Lord Hill became BBC Chairman.
- 30 September Start of BBC Radio 1; other network services renamed Radios 2, 3 and 4.

1967 – continued

- 30 October Blackhill and Durriss stations radiated BBC-2 colour programmes in Scotland.
- 8 November BBC Radio Leicester, the first experimental local radio station began broadcasting.
- 2 December BBC-2 colour transmissions extended into a full service.

1968

- 1 January Supplementary licence fee of £5 introduced for colour television.
- 23 June Alasdair Milne became Controller, BBC Scotland.

1969

- 1 April Charles Curran became BBC Director-General.
- 10 July BBC pamphlet 'Broadcasting in the Seventies' published outlining plans for network radio and non-metropolitan broadcasting.
- 28 July Angus BBC-2 station opened.
- 14 August Government authorised the BBC to develop local radio on a permanent basis.
- 1 October Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications took over responsibility for broadcasting from the Post Office.
- 27 October Craigmally BBC-2 station opened.
- 15 November Colour television extended to BBC-1 and ITV.
- 13 December Colour television extended to BBC-1 and ITV in Scotland.
- 29 December New television studio at BH Edinburgh opened.

1970

- 4 April New BBC network radio structure introduced.
- 11 July Rosemarkie BBC-2 colour transmissions began.

1971

- 1 February Radio-only licence abolished.
- 29 March Government White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmnd.4636).
- 1 May Lady Avonside became BBC National Governor for Scotland.
- 16 June Lord Reith, first Director-General of the BBC, died.
- 7 August Craigkelly BBC-1 colour transmissions began.
- 2 October Angus BBC-1 colour transmissions began.

1972

- 12 June Sound Broadcasting Act 1972.
- 2 September Changes in the BBC's medium frequency radio services.
- 1 November BBC's 50th anniversary exhibition opened.
- 30 November Report of the Television Advisory Committee 1972.

1973

- 1 January Sir Michael Swann became BBC Chairman; Robert Coulter became Controller, BBC Scotland.
- 5-10 March BBC exhibition at BH Glasgow to mark fifty years of broadcasting in Scotland.
- 23 May Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 1973.
- 25 May Membership of Crawford Committee on Broadcasting Coverage announced.
- 8 October London Broadcasting Company (LBC), Britain's first ILR station, began broadcasting.
- 31 December Radio Clyde, Scotland's first ILR station, began broadcasting.

1974

- 1 January BBC Radio 4 Scotland renamed Radio Scotland.
- 10 April Annan Committee on Broadcasting appointed.
- 17 April Home Office took over responsibility for broadcasting from the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications.

1974 – continued

- 23 May Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 1974.
- 3 September Crawford Report on Broadcasting Coverage (Cmnd.5774). Report published on 21 November.

1975

- 22 January Radio Forth, Edinburgh ILR station, began broadcasting.

1976

- 1 January Alastair Hetherington became Controller, BBC Scotland.
- 25 March BBC Radio Highland in Inverness began broadcasting.
- 19 April BBC Radio Aberdeen began broadcasting.
- 1 May Professor Alan Thompson became BBC National Governor for Scotland.

1977

- 24 February Annan Report on Broadcasting (Cmnd.6753). Report published on 24 March.
- 9 May BBC Radio Orkney and Radio Shetland began broadcasting.
- 1 October Ian Trethowan became BBC Director-General.

1978

- 14 July Radio and television studio in Dundee opened.
- 26 July Government White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmnd. 7294).
- 31 July Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 1978.
- 23 November BBC Radio Scotland as a separate programme service began broadcasting; frequency changes affecting Radio Networks introduced.

1979

- 9 May Patrick Ramsay became Controller, BBC Scotland.
- 5 October BBC Radio nan Eilean in Stornoway began broadcasting.
- 20 October Roger Young became BBC National Governor for Scotland.

1980

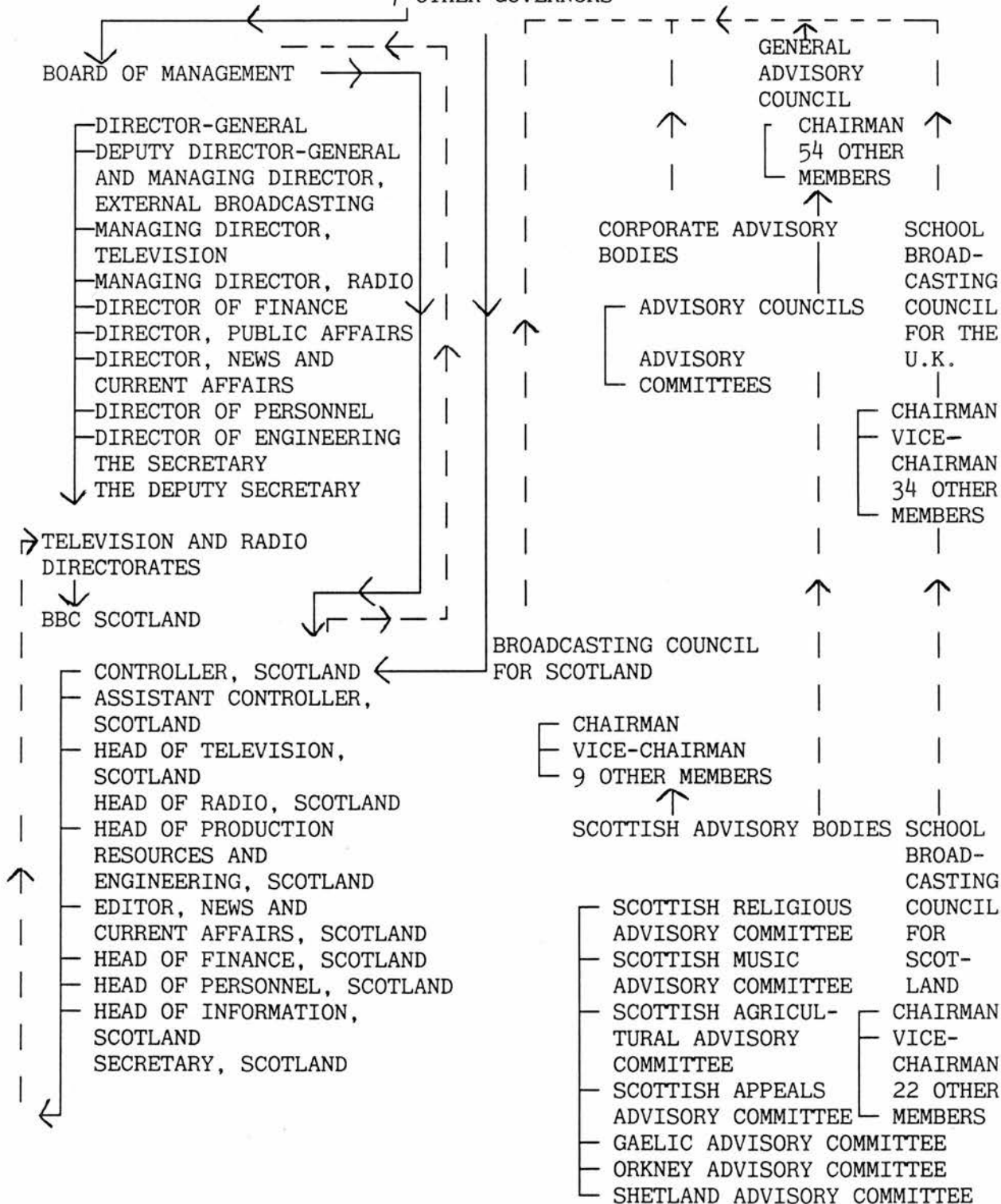
- 28 February BBC Scotland announced plans for financial economies.
- 1 August George Howard became BBC Chairman.
- 13 November Broadcasting Act 1980.
- 30 November BBC Scotland pioneered radiovision (the forerunner of Breakfast television) to celebrate 50 years of broadcasting from BH Edinburgh.

APPENDIX 2.1

BBC ORGANISATIONAL LINKS, 1980

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

CHAIRMAN
 VICE-CHAIRMAN
 NATIONAL GOVERNOR FOR SCOTLAND
 NATIONAL GOVERNOR FOR WALES
 NATIONAL GOVERNOR FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
 7 OTHER GOVERNORS



APPENDIX 2.1 - continued

Source: BBC Annual Report and Handbook 1981.
(London : BBC, 1980), pp.xi, xii, 76, 199-205.

BBC Staff List, October 1980, p.59.

NOTE: No comprehensive diagram exists which indicates key officials and structures within the BBC at the central and Scottish levels and the relationship between them. The above diagram has therefore been specially constructed on the basis of information contained in the BBC's Annual Report for 1979-80 and BBC Staff List for October 1980.

APPENDIX 2.2

BBC SCOTLAND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE, 1950

GLASGOW

|

CONTROLLER, SCOTLAND
and
SENIOR MANAGEMENT



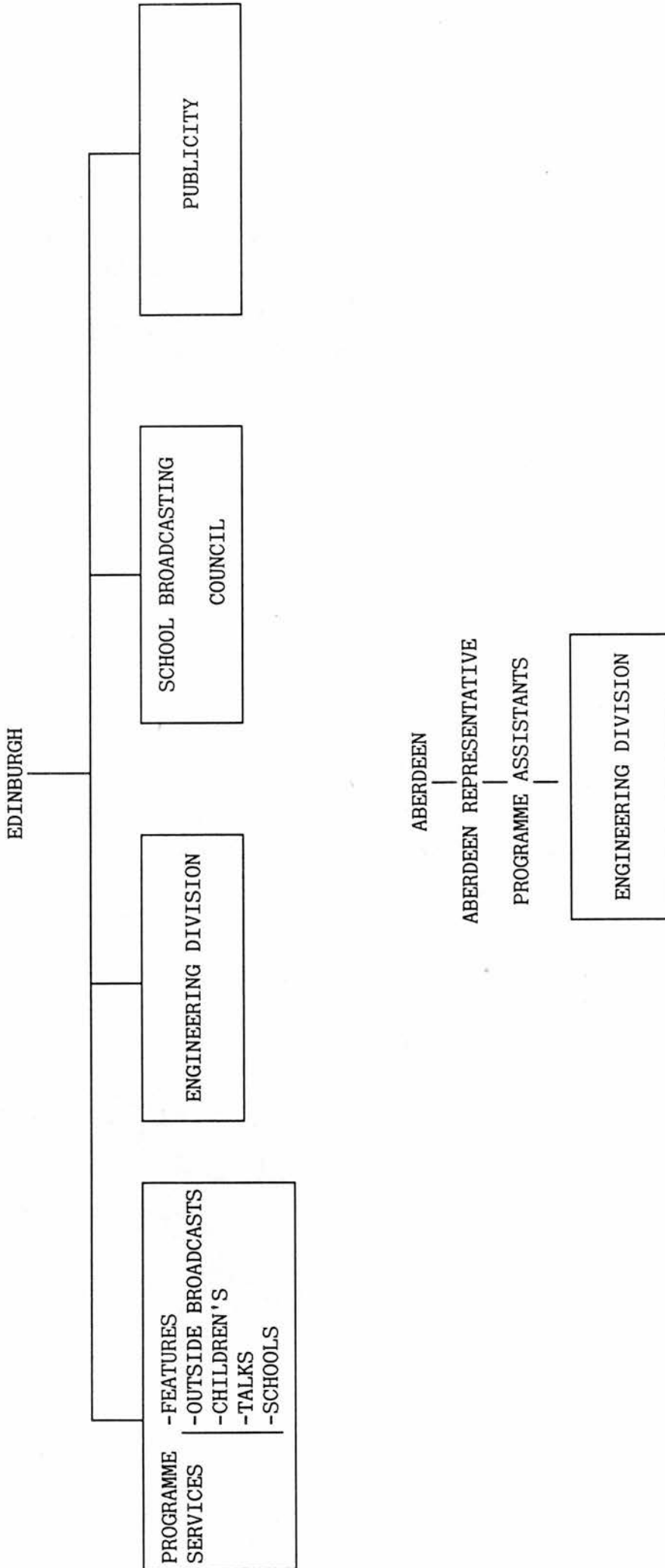
PROGRAMME SERVICES

- MUSIC
- DRAMA
- FEATURES
- GAELIC
- VARIETY
- CHILDREN'S
- NEWS
- OUTSIDE BROADCASTS
- TALKS
- RELIGION

ENGINEERING DIVISION

SCHOOL BROADCASTING
COUNCIL

APPENDIX 2.2 - continued



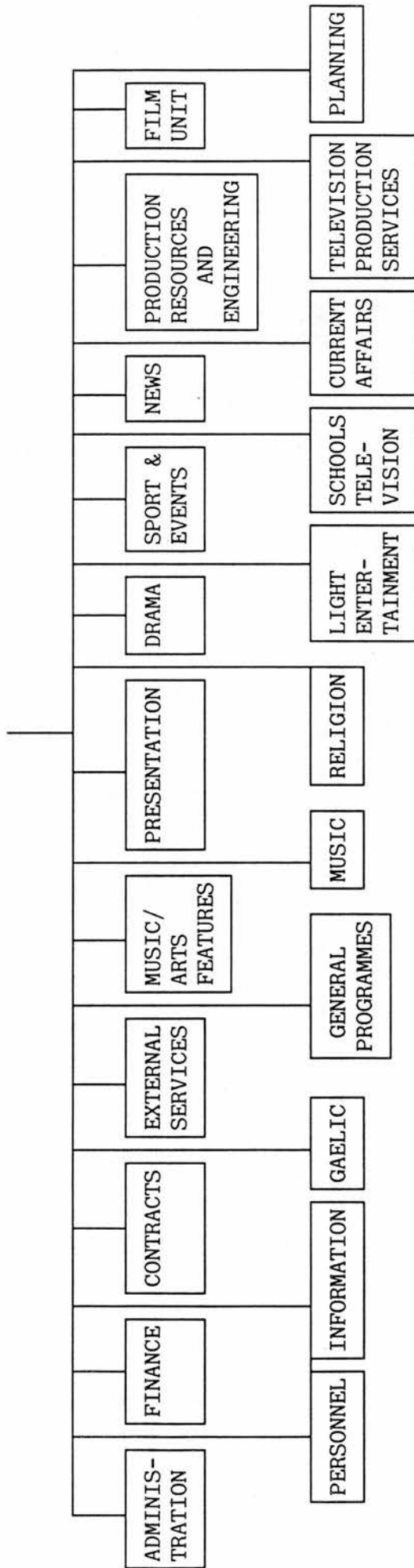
Source: BBC Staff List, October 1950, pp.25-7.

APPENDIX 2.3

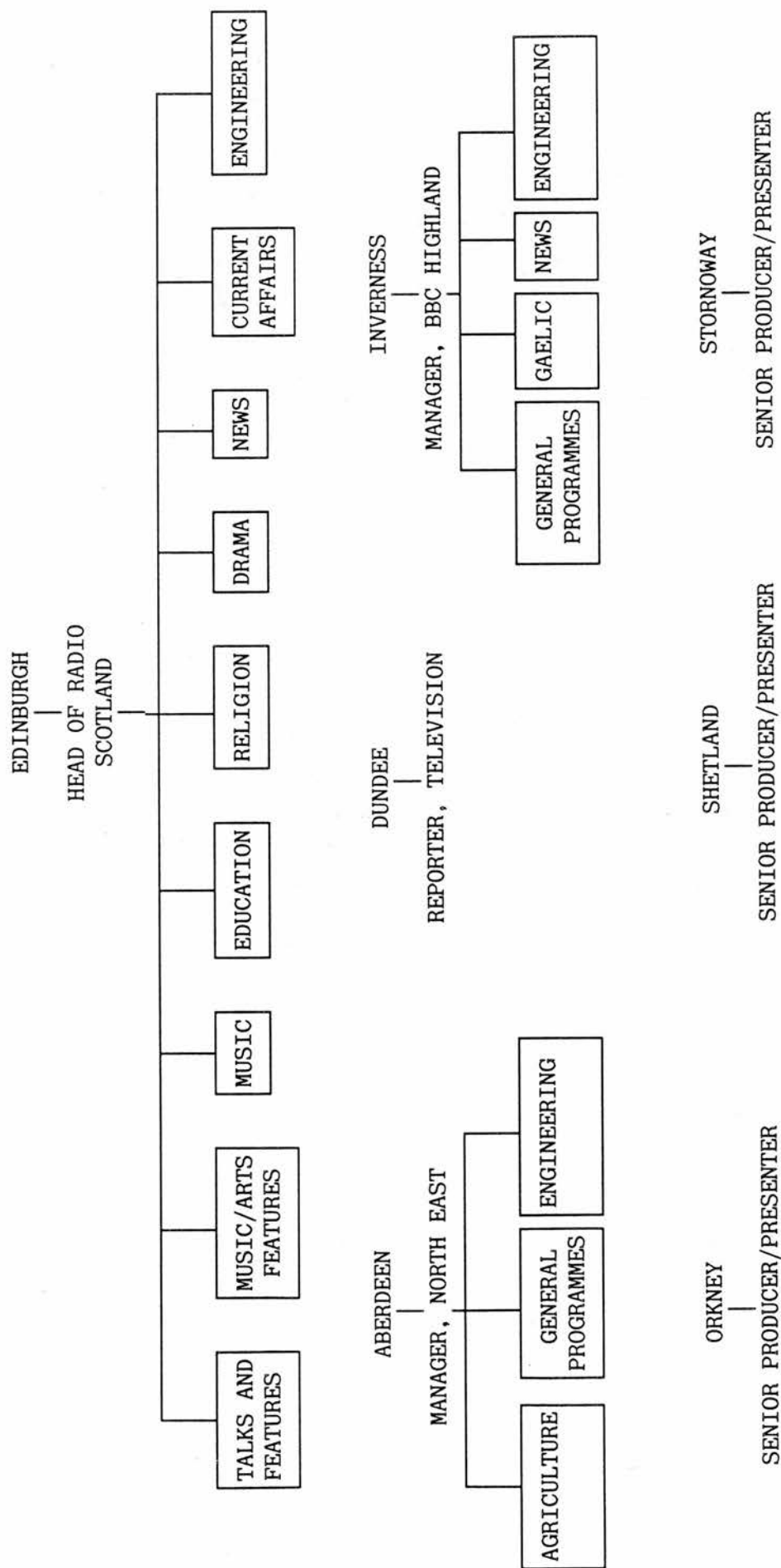
BBC SCOTLAND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE, 1980

GLASGOW

CONTROLLER, SCOTLAND
and
SENIOR MANAGEMENT



APPENDIX 2.3 - continued



Source: BBC Staff List, October 1980, pp.59-63.

APPENDIX 2.4

BBC STAFF NUMBERS : UNITED KINGDOM, 1950-1980

Year ended 31 March	Full-time Staff	Part-time Staff	Total Staff	Increase or decrease compared to previous year	Percentage Change over previous year
1950	11,245	603	11,848	314	2.7
1951	11,804	609	12,413	565	4.8
1952	11,912	612	12,524	111	0.9
1953	11,686	591	12,277	-247	-2.0
1954	12,202	632	12,834	557	4.5
1955	12,863	661	13,524	690	5.4
1956	13,810	709	14,519	995	7.4
1957	14,473	769	15,242	723	5.0
1958	14,641	831	15,472	230	1.5
1959	15,236	872	16,108	636	4.1
1960	15,886	1,003	16,889	781	4.8
1961	16,375	1,140	17,515	626	3.7
1962	17,125	887	18,012	497	2.8
1963	17,930	1,010	18,940	928	5.2
1964	19,722	1,114	20,836	1,896	10.0
1965	20,944	1,184	22,128	1,292	6.2
1966	21,539	1,219	22,758	630	2.8
1967	21,653	1,245	22,898	140	0.6
1968	21,680	1,253	22,933	35	0.2
1969	22,493	1,260	23,753	820	3.6
1970	22,641	1,213	23,854	101	0.4
1971	23,671	1,090	24,761	907	3.8
1972	23,863	994	24,857	96	0.4
1973	23,865	1,017	24,882	25	0.1
1974	23,897	1,234	25,131	249	1.0
1975	24,779	1,301	26,080	949	3.8
1976	24,683	1,280	25,963	-117	-0.4
1977	24,453	1,266	25,719	-244	-0.9
1978	24,583	1,305	25,888	169	0.7
1979	25,283	1,350	26,633	745	2.9
1980	26,875	1,098	27,973	1,340	5.0

Source: British Broadcasting Corporation, Annual Report and Accounts 1949-50 to 1979-80.

APPENDIX 2.5

BBC STAFF NUMBERS : SCOTLAND, 1971-1980

Year ended 31 March	Total Staff	Increase/Decrease Compared to Previous Year	Percentage Change over Previous Year
1971	859	*	*
1972	883	24	2.8
1973	875	-8	-0.9
1974	883	8	0.9
1975	937	54	6.1
1976	973	36	3.8
1977	1,011	38	3.9
1978	1,089	78	7.7
1979	1,161	72	6.6
1980	1,204	43	3.7

Source: Ian Phillips (BBC Director of Finance) to author, 15 May, 1989.

Notes: 1. Figures for years prior to 1971 were not available from the BBC. Figures for 31 March 1948 to 31 March 1952 were published in the BBC's Annual Report and Accounts for 1951-52 (Cmd. 8660). The latter gave the following staff numbers in Scotland as at 31 March : 191 (1948); 196 (1949); 197 (1950); 212 (1951); and 214 (1952). BBC staff lists until about 1966 also included details on staffing levels.

2. * Figures not available.

APPENDIX 2.6 - continued

'53	'54	'55	'56	'57	'58	'59	'60	'61	'62	'63	'64	'65	'66	'67	'68	'69	'70	'71	'72	'73	'74	'75	'76	'77	'78	'79	'80
																				Prof. T.A. Dunn							
																				A.H. Kitson							
																				Rev. James D. Ross							
																				Mrs Astrid Huggins							
																				Major Allan Cameron							
																				Prof. Sir Robert Grieve							
																				Farquhar MacIntosh							
																				James Young							
																				Mrs Catherine Carmichael							
																				Colin Carnie							
																				Prof. Alan Thompson (Chairman)							
																				James Milne							

APPENDIX 2.6 - continued

Source: BBC Annual Reports and Accounts 1952-53 to 1979-80.

NOTES: 1. Members of the Broadcasting Council for Scotland are given as at 31 March each year.

2. The exact periods during which successive BBC National Governors for Scotland chaired the Broadcasting Council are given as follows: Lord Clydesmuir (1 August 1952-31 October 1954); Thomas Johnston (1 January 1955-29 June 1956); Earl of Balfour (1 July 1956-26 October 1960); Sir David Milne (30 November 1960-29 November 1965); Lady Baird (30 November 1965-29 November 1970); Lady Avonside (1 May 1971-30 April 1976); Professor Alan Thompson (1 May 1976-October 1979); and Dr. Roger Young (20 October 1979-31 July 1984).

3. Roy Thomson became the first Vice-Chairman of the Council in January 1980.

APPENDIX 2.7

BBC SCOTLAND : SENIOR STAFF, 1952-1980

Apr '52	Oct '53	Oct '54	Oct '55	May '56	May '57	Nov '58	Nov '59	May '60	Dec '61	Jun '62	Jun '63	Dec '64	Jun '65	Jun '66	Dec '67	Jun '68	Feb '69	Jun '70	Jun '71	Jun '72	Dec '73	Aug '74	Oct '75	Oct '76	Oct '77	Apr '78	Oct '79	Oct '80	
		Melville Dinwiddie (Controller, Scotland)																											
		R.G.T. Gildard (Head of Scottish Programmes/ Head of Programmes, Scotland)																											
		P.F. Dunbar (Scottish Executive/Administrative Officer, Scotland)																											
		F.W. Endicott (Regional Studio Engineer, Scotland/Scottish Engineer)																											
		Andrew Stewart (Controller, Scotland)																											
		J.A.G. Mitchell (Scottish Engineer/ Head of Engineering, Scotland)																											
		J.B. Millar (Head of Programmes, Scotland)																											
		J.A.C. Knott (Head of Administration, Scotland)																											
		Alasdair Milne (Controller, Scotland)																											
		A.M. Brown (Head of Administration, Scotland/ Head of Administration and Development Services, Scotland)																											

APPENDIX 2.7 - continued

Apr '52	Oct '53	Oct '54	Oct '55	May '56	May '57	Nov '58	Nov '59	May '60	Dec '61	Jun '62	Jun '63	Dec '64	Jun '65	Jun '66	Dec '67	Jun '68	Feb '69	Jun '70	Jun '71	Jun '72	Dec '73	Aug '74	Oct '75	Oct '76	Oct '77	Apr '78	Oct '79	Oct '80	
																						J.J. Jarvie (Head of Production Resources and Engineering, Scotland)							
																						E. Benn (Head of Production Resources and Engineering, Scotland)							

APPENDIX 2.7 - continued

Source: BBC Staff Lists, October 1950-October 1980.

NOTES: 1. The dates provided at the head of each column relate to the dates of the relevant BBC staff lists. The staff listed are those who were in office on those dates.

2. Melville Dinwiddie who had been the BBC's Scottish Regional Director since 1933, retired as Controller of the BBC in Scotland in July 1957. Subsequent Controllers, Scotland were as follows: Andrew Stewart (8 July 1957-23 June 1968); Alasdair Milne (23 June 1968-31 December 1972); Robert Coulter (1 January 1973-31 December 1975); Alastair Hetherington (1 January 1976-December 1978); and Pat Ramsay (9 May 1979-April 1983).

3. The titles of some senior posts have altered during the period 1952-1980 and these changes are indicated in the chart.

4. This list of senior staff is confined to four key posts: the Controller, and the Heads of Programmes, Administration and Engineering. The number of senior posts increased during the 1970s reflecting the growth in the number of staff and complexity of the organisational structure. Nevertheless, only the four key posts noted above which have remained in existence throughout the three decades covered in the chart are listed in this appendix.

APPENDIX 3.1

BROADCAST RECEIVING LICENCES : UNITED KINGDOM, 1950-1980

Year ended 31 March	Radio	Radio and Television combined		Total
		Monochrome	Colour	
1950	11,875,566	343,882	-	12,219,448
1951	11,605,086	763,941	-	12,369,027
1952	11,304,246	1,449,260	-	12,753,506
1953	10,749,779	2,142,452	-	12,892,231
1954	10,187,901	3,248,892	-	13,436,793
1955	9,476,730	4,503,766	-	13,980,496
1956	8,521,958	5,739,593	-	14,261,551
1957	7,558,843	6,966,256	-	14,525,099
1958	6,556,347	8,090,003	-	14,646,350
1959	5,480,991	9,255,422	-	14,736,413
1960	4,535,258	10,469,753	-	15,005,011
1961	3,908,984	11,267,741	-	15,176,725
1962	3,538,507	11,833,712	-	15,372,219
1963	3,256,185	12,442,806	-	15,698,991
1964	2,999,348	12,885,331	-	15,884,679
1965	2,793,558	13,253,045	-	16,046,603
1966	2,611,066	13,567,090	-	16,178,156
1967	2,505,934	14,267,271	-	16,773,205
1968	2,557,314	15,068,079	20,428	17,645,821
1969	2,463,872	15,396,642	99,419	17,959,933
1970	2,301,191	15,609,131	273,397	18,183,719
1971	-	15,333,221	609,969	15,943,190
1972	-	15,023,691	1,634,760	16,658,451
1973	-	13,792,623	3,331,996	17,124,619
1974	-	11,766,424	5,558,146	17,324,570
1975	-	10,120,493	7,580,322	17,700,815
1976	-	9,148,732	8,639,252	17,787,984
1977	-	8,098,386	9,957,672	18,056,058
1978	-	7,099,726	11,049,192	18,148,918
1979	-	6,249,716	12,131,445	18,381,161
1980	-	5,383,125	12,901,740	18,284,865

Source: British Broadcasting Corporation, Annual Report and Accounts 1953-54 to 1979-80.

Notes: 1. Radio-only licences were abolished on 1 February 1971. Combined radio and television licences were also abolished on 1 February 1971. Thereafter only television licences were issued.

2. Because of industrial action within the Post Office, the licences in force at 31 March 1971 and 31 March 1979 do not reflect the true licensing position at those dates.

APPENDIX 3.2

BROADCAST RECEIVING LICENCES : SCOTLAND, 1950-1980

Year ended 31 March	Radio	Radio and Television combined		Total
		Monochrome	Colour	
1950	1,120,956	12	-	1,120,968
1951	1,119,058	209	-	1,119,267
1952	1,139,927	41,699	-	1,181,626
1953	1,123,583	62,444	-	1,186,027
1954	1,096,079	144,273	-	1,240,352
1955	1,015,709	244,020	-	1,259,729
1956	945,293	348,152	-	1,293,445
1957	842,960	478,432	-	1,321,392
1958	703,475	600,227	-	1,303,702
1959	579,014	750,891	-	1,329,905
1960	462,088	903,111	-	1,365,199
1961	383,379	1,007,716	-	1,391,095
1962	332,583	1,078,247	-	1,410,830
1963	296,340	1,138,270	-	1,434,610
1964	264,923	1,182,176	-	1,447,099
1965	235,183	1,224,696	-	1,459,879
1966	214,799	1,253,122	-	1,467,921
1967	199,300	1,298,500	-	1,497,800
1968	196,468	1,350,056	1,399	1,547,923
1969	183,858	1,376,842	6,104	1,566,804
1970	168,482	1,409,259	13,998	1,591,739
1971	-	1,411,117	35,167	1,446,284
1972	-	1,395,779	95,799	1,491,578
1973	-	1,308,037	221,799	1,529,836
1974	-	1,143,686	433,771	1,577,457
1975	-	961,450	637,046	1,598,496
1976	-	842,602	747,379	1,589,981
1977	-	709,951	915,917	1,625,868
1978	-	599,721	1,030,058	1,629,779
1979	-	509,970	1,136,576	1,646,546
1980	-	434,825	1,206,415	1,641,240

Source: BBC Annual Report and Accounts 1950-1951 to 1965-66 (for licence figures 1950-1952, and 1954-1966).

Post Office (for licence figures 1953).

Scottish Abstract of Statistics No.3/1973, table 140, p.141 (for licence figures 1967).

Post Office/National Television Licence Records Office (for licence figures 1968-1980).

APPENDIX 3.2 - continued

Notes: 1. Figures for 1950, 1951 and 1952 are as at 31 December; all other figures are as at 31 March. Figures for 1967 are rounded figures because information on the precise number of licences was not available.

2. Radio-only licences were abolished on 1 February 1971. Combined radio and television licences were also abolished on 1 February 1971. Thereafter only television licences were issued.

3. Because of industrial action within the Post Office, the licences in force at 31 March 1971 and 31 March 1979 do not reflect the true licensing position at those dates.

APPENDIX 3.3

BROADCAST RECEIVING LICENCE FEES, 1922-1980

	Radio	Radio and Television combined	
		Monochrome	Colour
1 November 1922	10s	-	-
1 June 1946	£1.00	£2.00	-
1 June 1954	"	£3.00	-
(1) 1 August 1957	"	£4.00	-
(2) 1 October 1963	"	£4.00	-
1 August 1965	£1.5s	£5.00	-
(3) 1 January 1968	"	£5.00	£10.00
1 January 1969	"	£6.00	£11.00
(4) 1 February 1971	-	£6.00	£11.00
1 July 1971	-	£7.00	£12.00
(5) 1 April 1975	-	£8.00	£18.00
29 July 1977	-	£9.00	£21.00
25 November 1978	-	£10.00	£25.00
24 November 1979	-	£12.00	£34.00

Source: BBC Annual Report and Handbook 1981 (London : BBC, 1980), p.106.

Notes: 1. On 1 August 1957 a £1 excise duty was added to the £3 combined licence fee but this duty was not paid to the BBC.

2. On 1 October 1963 the £1 excise duty was abolished and so the full £4 combined licence fee was paid to the BBC.

3. A supplementary fee of £5 for colour television receivers was introduced on 1 January 1968.

4. The Radio-only licence fee was abolished on 1 February 1971. Combined radio and television licences were also abolished on 1 February 1971. Thereafter only television licences were issued.

5. The supplementary fee for colour television receivers was increased to £10 on 1 April 1975, to £12 on 29 July 1977, to £15 on 25 November 1978 and to £22 on 24 November 1979.

APPENDIX 3.4

BBC REGIONS : ANALYSIS OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE, 1951-1980

	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>ENGLAND</u>					
1.Total income	9,023	8,623	11,058	12,494	17,989
2.Total radio expenditure ...	5,842	6,444	6,434	7,242	7,767
3.Total television expenditure	-	-	3,057	3,432	4,180
4.Capital expenditure	2,363	1,199	1,400	1,641	3,715
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	8,205	7,643	10,891	12,315	15,662
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	818	980	167	179	2,327
<u>SCOTLAND</u>					
1.Total income	941	891	1,049	1,181	1,576
2.Total radio expenditure ...	1,025	1,145	1,124	1,105	1,151
3.Total television expenditure	-	-	252	306	511
4.Capital expenditure	247	124	82	127	331
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	1,272	1,269	1,458	1,538	1,993
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-331	-378	-409	-357	-417
<u>WALES</u>					
1.Total income	512	483	576	669	972
2.Total radio expenditure ...	628	722	699	687	731
3.Total television expenditure	-	-	83	181	274
4.Capital expenditure	134	67	52	80	202
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	762	789	834	948	1,207
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-250	-306	-258	-279	-235
<u>NORTHERN IRELAND</u>					
1.Total income	175	167	185	211	268
2.Total radio expenditure ...	366	440	426	353	370
3.Total television expenditure	-	-	9	73	78
4.Capital expenditure	46	23	10	19	57
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	412	463	445	445	505
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-237	-296	-260	-234	-237
<u>ALL BBC REGIONS</u>					
1.Total income	13,118 ¹	13,512 ¹	12,868	14,555	20,805
2.Total expenditure	13,118 ¹	13,512 ¹	13,628	15,246	19,367
3.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-2)	-	-	-760	-691	1,438

APPENDIX 3.4 - continued

	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>ENGLAND</u>					
1.Total income	19,435	21,568	22,472	24,378	27,427
2.Total radio expenditure ...	8,457	8,973	9,128	8,739	9,101
3.Total television expenditure	5,948	7,620	9,254	11,381	12,784
4.Capital expenditure	4,689	3,213	3,787	3,392	3,675
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	19,094	19,806	22,169	23,512	25,560
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	341	1,762	303	866	1,867
<u>SCOTLAND</u>					
1.Total income	1,729	2,001	2,129	2,425	2,846
2.Total radio expenditure ...	1,274	1,325	1,410	1,359	1,421
3.Total television expenditure	647	855	874	1,440	1,691
4.Capital expenditure	376	276	339	329	378
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	2,297	2,456	2,623	3,128	3,490
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-568	-455	-494	-703	-644
<u>WALES</u>					
1.Total income	1,055	1,168	1,245	1,392	1,589
2.Total radio expenditure ...	798	844	859	906	902
3.Total television expenditure	363	509	667	885	1,002
4.Capital expenditure	249	171	207	193	213
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	1,410	1,524	1,733	1,984	2,117
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-355	-356	-488	-592	-528
<u>NORTHERN IRELAND</u>					
1.Total income	291	339	373	420	514
2.Total radio expenditure ...	402	428	459	438	478
3.Total television expenditure	75	112	174	283	339
4.Capital expenditure	56	42	54	52	63
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	533	582	687	773	880
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-242	-243	-314	-353	-366
<u>ALL BBC REGIONS</u>					
1.Total income	22,510	25,076	26,219	28,615	32,376
2.Total expenditure	23,334	24,368	27,212	29,397	32,047
3.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-2)	-824	708	-993	-782	329

APPENDIX 3.4 - continued

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>ENGLAND</u>					
1.Total income	29,053	31,870	32,830	40,774	45,684
2.Total radio expenditure ...	9,709	10,444	11,275	11,592	12,483
3.Total television expenditure	14,406	16,139	18,178	21,757	28,520
4.Capital expenditure	3,303	3,511	3,567	7,563	8,009
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	27,418	30,094	33,020	40,912	49,012
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	1,635	1,776	-190	-138	-3,328
<u>SCOTLAND</u>					
1.Total income	3,097	3,439	3,543	4,394	4,950
2.Total radio expenditure ...	1,490	1,571	1,694	1,805	1,916
3.Total television expenditure	1,929	2,161	2,541	3,018	3,795
4.Capital expenditure	352	379	386	817	868
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	3,771	4,111	4,621	5,640	6,579
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-674	-672	-1,078	-1,246	-1,629
<u>WALES</u>					
1.Total income	1,689	1,853	1,892	2,360	2,607
2.Total radio expenditure ...	932	1,022	1,068	1,110	1,212
3.Total television expenditure	1,163	1,345	1,519	2,096	2,637
4.Capital expenditure	193	204	207	440	457
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	2,288	2,571	2,794	3,646	4,306
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-599	-718	-902	-1,286	-1,699
<u>NORTHERN IRELAND</u>					
1.Total income	556	627	685	860	962
2.Total radio expenditure ...	482	514	540	569	611
3.Total television expenditure	449	513	587	701	896
4.Capital expenditure	61	69	73	156	171
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	992	1,096	1,200	1,426	1,678
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-436	-469	-515	-566	-716
<u>ALL BBC REGIONS</u>					
1.Total income	34,395	37,789	38,950	48,388	54,203
2.Total expenditure	34,469	37,872	41,635	51,624	61,575
3.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-74	-83	-2,685	-3,236	-7,372

APPENDIX 3.4 - continued

	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>ENGLAND</u>					
1.Total income	55,167	61,320	64,078	69,132	80,400
2.Total radio expenditure ...	13,233	13,905	15,070	16,242	16,941
3.Total television expenditure	30,590	34,051	37,657	43,215	47,548
4.Capital expenditure	5,713	5,654	9,324	9,430	9,440
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	49,536	53,610	62,051	68,887	73,929
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	5,631	7,710	2,027	245	6,471
<u>SCOTLAND</u>					
1.Total income	5,989	6,551	6,722	7,182	8,369
2.Total radio expenditure ...	1,991	2,074	2,187	2,307	2,395
3.Total television expenditure	4,076	4,557	5,156	5,778	6,234
4.Capital expenditure	611	606	982	986	986
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	6,678	7,237	8,325	9,071	9,615
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-689	-686	-1,603	-1,889	-1,246
<u>WALES</u>					
1.Total income	3,169	3,453	3,589	3,827	4,425
2.Total radio expenditure ...	1,264	1,319	1,429	1,504	1,588
3.Total television expenditure	2,860	3,066	3,360	3,725	4,077
4.Capital expenditure	335	320	525	525	521
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	4,459	4,705	5,314	5,754	6,186
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-1,290	-1,252	-1,725	-1,927	-1,761
<u>NORTHERN IRELAND</u>					
1.Total income	1,171	1,324	1,415	1,546	1,789
2.Total radio expenditure ...	658	678	708	749	783
3.Total television expenditure	970	1,095	1,289	1,471	1,588
4.Capital expenditure	134	122	204	210	209
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	1,762	1,895	2,201	2,430	2,580
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-591	-571	-786	-884	-791
<u>ALL BBC REGIONS</u>					
1.Total income	65,496	72,648	75,804	81,687	94,983
2.Total expenditure	62,435	67,447	77,891	86,142	92,310
3.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-2)	3,061	5,201	-2,087	-4,455	2,673

APPENDIX 3.4 - continued

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>ENGLAND</u>					
1.Total income	83,352	96,943	108,166	117,091	124,879
2.Total radio expenditure ...	19,614	22,161	24,680	26,956	32,870
3.Total television expenditure	53,716	57,566	63,511	69,889	85,694
4.Capital expenditure	9,925	8,806	9,872	13,819	12,258
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	83,255	88,533	98,063	110,664	130,822
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	97	8,410	10,103	6,427	-5,943
<u>SCOTLAND</u>					
1.Total income	8,653	9,913	10,946	12,146	13,034
2.Total radio expenditure ...	2,549	2,991	3,096	3,563	4,399
3.Total television expenditure	7,277	7,793	8,217	9,221	11,742
4.Capital expenditure	1,030	900	999	1,432	1,279
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	10,856	11,684	12,312	14,216	17,420
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-2,203	-1,771	-1,366	-2,070	-4,386
<u>WALES</u>					
1.Total income	4,590	5,344	5,889	6,493	6,979
2.Total radio expenditure ...	1,663	1,916	2,090	2,308	2,829
3.Total television expenditure	4,629	5,033	5,926	6,582	8,123
4.Capital expenditure	547	485	537	765	685
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	6,839	7,434	8,553	9,655	11,637
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-2,249	-2,090	-2,664	-3,162	-4,658
<u>NORTHERN IRELAND</u>					
1.Total income	1,838	1,967	2,182	2,238	2,387
2.Total radio expenditure ...	831	838	961	1,106	1,362
3.Total television expenditure	1,898	1,928	2,486	2,699	3,349
4.Capital expenditure	220	179	199	264	234
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	2,949	2,945	3,646	4,069	4,945
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-1,111	-978	-1,464	-1,831	-2,558
<u>ALL BBC REGIONS</u>					
1.Total income	98,433	114,167	127,183	137,968	147,279
2.Total expenditure	103,899	110,596	122,574	138,604	164,824
3.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-2)	-5,466	3,571	4,609	-636	-17,545

APPENDIX 3.4 - continued

	1976				
	£000				
<u>ENGLAND</u>					
1.Total income	182,582				
2.Total radio expenditure ...	41,595				
3.Total television expenditure	105,049				
4.Capital expenditure	15,178				
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	161,822				
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	20,760				
<u>SCOTLAND</u>					
1.Total income	18,893				
2.Total radio expenditure ...	5,535				
3.Total television expenditure	13,662				
4.Capital expenditure	1,568				
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	20,765				
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-1,872				
<u>WALES</u>					
1.Total income	9,961				
2.Total radio expenditure ...	3,570				
3.Total television expenditure	9,439				
4.Capital expenditure	826				
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	13,835				
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-3,874				
<u>NORTHERN IRELAND</u>					
1.Total income	3,000				
2.Total radio expenditure ...	1,718				
3.Total television expenditure	3,679				
4.Capital expenditure	250				
5.Total expenditure (2+3+4)	5,647				
6.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-5)	-2,647				
<u>ALL BBC REGIONS</u>					
1.Total income	214,436				
2.Total expenditure	202,069				
3.Surplus or deficit (-) (1-2)	12,367				

APPENDIX 3.4 - continued

	1977	1978	1979	1980
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<u>ENGLAND</u>				
1.Net licence income	192.3	221.6	264.4	334.7
2.Total expenditure	16.6	18.6	22.0	28.1
3.Resources left to pay for capital investment, network programmes and use of central services	175.7	203.0	242.4	306.6
4.If all licensed households contributed equally to these services the amount required would be	162.4	187.7	222.9	279.9
5.Surplus or deficit (-) (3-4)	13.3	15.3	19.5	26.7
<u>SCOTLAND</u>				
1.Net licence income	20.7	23.9	28.6	35.4
2.Total expenditure	7.6	9.6	11.4	15.9
3.Resources left to pay for capital investment, network programmes and use of central services	13.1	14.3	17.2	19.5
4.If all licensed households contributed equally to these services the amount required would be	17.3	19.9	23.6	28.9
5.Surplus or deficit (-) (3-4)	-4.2	-5.6	-6.4	-9.4
<u>WALES</u>				
1.Net licence income	10.8	12.5	14.9	18.8
2.Total expenditure	7.3	7.6	10.7	12.9
3.Resources left to pay for capital investment, network programmes and use of central services	3.5	4.9	4.2	5.9
4.If all licensed households contributed equally to these services the amount required would be	9.1	10.6	12.5	16.2
5.Surplus or deficit (-) (3-4)	-5.6	-5.7	-8.3	-10.3
<u>NORTHERN IRELAND</u>				
1.Net licence income	3.2	3.8	4.4	5.8
2.Total expenditure	3.7	4.3	5.2	7.4
3.Resources left to pay for capital investment, network programmes and use of central services	-0.5	-0.5	-0.8	-1.6
4.If all licensed households contributed equally to these services the amount required would be	3.0	3.5	4.0	5.4
5.Surplus or deficit (-) (3-4)	-3.5	-4.0	-4.8	-7.0

APPENDIX 3.4 - continued

Source: BBC Annual Reports and Accounts 1950-51 to 1979-80.

NOTES: 1. Television income and expenditure (operating and capital) was detailed separately in the BBC Annual Accounts for the years 1950-51 and 1951-52, and therefore not attributed to any region. The figures for 1950-51 were: television total income (£2,467), television operating expenditure (£1,719) and television capital expenditure (£748). The figures for 1951-52 were: television total income (£3,348), television operating expenditure (£2,329) and television capital expenditure (£1,019). These figures are expressed in £000, as in the table. The figures for total income and total expenditure for all BBC regions for 1950-51 and 1951-52 therefore includes the figures stated above.

2. The figures for England comprise London and the BBC's English regions. Figures for the National regions are, as noted, detailed separately in the table.

GENERAL NOTES: The format used in the BBC's Annual Accounts for detailing income and expenditure at the regional level, has varied over the years. The format used in the table above has been designed in order to incorporate all the key variables and present these in a consistent format to enable comparisons to be made from year to year. A modification to the format has had to be applied for the years 1976-77 to 1979-80 because the BBC's accounts were simplified to a degree which did not permit such direct comparisons with earlier financial years to be made. Ian Phillips, BBC Director of Finance, stated that the changes made in the presentation of statement 6 of the annual accounts in and after 1976-77 were, "... intended to provide a simplified and clearer expression of the regional imbalance between the source of funds and the appropriate sharing of costs in relation to the services available. There were no basic changes in the accounting principles used in sharing costs between the regions although some of the underlying analysis was also simplified." (Letter to author, 15 May 1989).

APPENDIX 3.5

BBC SCOTLAND : ANALYSIS OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE, 1951-1980

	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>INCOME</u>					
1.Receivable from the Postmaster-General/Minister	867	804	969	1,074	1,450
2.Other net income	74	87	80	107	126
3.Total income (1+2)	941	891	1,049	1,181	1,576
<u>OPERATING EXPENDITURE : RADIO</u>					
4.Gross expenditure in Scotland	-1	-1	529	579	601
5.Deduct cost of programmes contributed to the networks	-1	-1	53	58	59
6.Radio expenditure (4-5) ...	629	712	476	521	542
7.Scotland's share of network programmes and other costs	396	433	648	584	609
8.Total radio expenditure (6+7)	1,025	1,145	1,124	1,105	1,151
<u>OPERATING EXPENDITURE: TELEVISION</u>					
9.Gross expenditure in Scotland	-	-	191	215	352
10.Deduct cost of programmes contributed to the networks	-	-	26	58	65
11.Television expenditure (9-10)	-	-	165	157	287
12.Scotland's share of network programmes and other costs	-	-	87	149	224
13.Total television expenditure (11+12)	-	-	252	306	511
14.Total operating expenditure (8+13)	1,025	1,145	1,376	1,411	1,662
15.Capital expenditure	247	124	82	127	331
16.Total expenditure (14+15)	1,272	1,269	1,458	1,538	1,993
17.Surplus or deficit (-) (3-16)	-331	-378	-409	-357	-417

APPENDIX 3.5 - continued

	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>INCOME</u>					
1.Receivable from the Postmaster-General/Minister	1,639	1,905	2,055	2,327	2,761
2.Other net income	90	96	74	98	85
3.Total income (1+2)	1,729	2,001	2,129	2,425	2,846
<u>OPERATING EXPENDITURE : RADIO</u>					
4.Gross expenditure in Scotland	675	699	789	733	764
5.Deduct cost of programmes contributed to the networks	71	101	98	72	76
6.Radio expenditure (4-5) ...	604	598	691	661	688
7.Scotland's share of network programmes and other costs	670	727	719	698	733
8.Total radio expenditure (6+7)	1,274	1,325	1,410	1,359	1,421
<u>OPERATING EXPENDITURE: TELEVISION</u>					
9.Gross expenditure in Scotland	351	365	419	555	650
10.Deduct cost of programmes contributed to the networks	70	73	74	63	68
11.Television expenditure (9-10)	281	292	345	492	582
12.Scotland's share of network programmes and other costs	366	563	529	948	1,109
13.Total television expenditure (11+12)	647	855	874	1,440	1,691
14.Total operating expenditure (8+13)	1,921	2,180	2,284	2,799	3,112
15.Capital expenditure ...	376	276	339	329	378
16.Total expenditure (14+15)	2,297	2,456	2,623	3,128	3,490
17.Surplus or deficit (-) (3-16)	-568	-455	-494	-703	-644

APPENDIX 3.5 - continued

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>INCOME</u>					
1.Receivable from the Postmaster-General/Minister	3,028	3,356	3,472	4,281	4,848
2.Other net income	69	83	71	113	102
3.Total income (1+2)	3,097	3,439	3,543	4,394	4,950
<u>OPERATING EXPENDITURE : RADIO</u>					
4.Gross expenditure in Scotland	767	805	862	950	1,004
5.Deduct cost of programmes contributed to the networks	70	84	81	99	129
6.Radio expenditure (4-5) ...	697	721	781	851	875
7.Scotland's share of network programmes and other costs	793	850	913	954	1,041
8.Total radio expenditure (6+7)	1,490	1,571	1,694	1,805	1,916
<u>OPERATING EXPENDITURE: TELEVISION</u>					
9.Gross expenditure in Scotland	720	786	966	1,143	1,246
10.Deduct cost of programmes contributed to the networks	63	84	87	89	146
11.Television expenditure (9-10)	657	702	879	1,054	1,100
12.Scotland's share of network programmes and other costs	1,272	1,459	1,662	1,964	2,695
13.Total television expenditure (11+12)	1,929	2,161	2,541	3,018	3,795
14.Total operating expenditure (8+13)	3,419	3,732	4,235	4,823	5,711
15.Capital expenditure ...	352	379	386	817	868
16.Total expenditure (14+15)	3,771	4,111	4,621	5,640	6,579
17.Surplus or deficit (-) (3-16)	-674	-672	-1,078	-1,246	-1,629

APPENDIX 3.5 - continued

	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
		£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>INCOME</u>					
1.Receivable from the Postmaster-General/Minister	5,910	6,481	6,654	7,135	8,314
2.Other net income	79	70	68	47	55
3.Total income (1+2)	5,989	6,551	6,722	7,182	8,369
<u>OPERATING EXPENDITURE : RADIO</u>					
4.Gross expenditure in Scotland	1,019	1,056	1,107	1,219	1,251
5.Deduct cost of programmes contributed to the networks	145	126	132	173	174
6.Radio expenditure (4-5) ...	874	930	975	1,046	1,077
7.Scotland's share of network programmes and other costs	1,117	1,144	1,212	1,261	1,318
8.Total radio expenditure (6+7)	1,991	2,074	2,187	2,307	2,395
<u>OPERATING EXPENDITURE:TELEVISION</u>					
9.Gross expenditure in Scotland	1,358	1,555	1,878	2,032	2,082
10.Deduct cost of programmes contributed to the networks	138	132	129	146	112
11.Television expenditure (9-10)	1,220	1,423	1,749	1,886	1,970
12.Scotland's share of network programmes and other costs	2,856	3,134	3,407	3,892	4,264
13.Total television expenditure (11+12)	4,076	4,557	5,156	5,778	6,234
14.Total operating expenditure (8+13)	6,067	6,631	7,343	8,085	8,629
15.Capital expenditure ...	611	606	982	986	986
16.Total expenditure (14+15)	6,678	7,237	8,325	9,071	9,615
17.Surplus or deficit (-) (3-16)	-689	-686	-1,603	-1,889	-1,246

APPENDIX 3.5 - continued

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>INCOME</u>					
1.Receivable from the Postmaster-General/Minister	8,408	9,836	10,870	12,088	12,980
2.Other net income	245	77	76	58	54
3.Total income (1+2)	8,653	9,913	10,946	12,146	13,034
<u>OPERATING EXPENDITURE : RADIO</u>					
4.Gross expenditure in Scotland	1,299	1,468	1,312	1,519	1,862
5.Deduct cost of programmes contributed to the networks	309	319	451	489	476
6.Radio expenditure (4-5) ...	990	1,149	861	1,030	1,386
7.Scotland's share of network programmes and other costs	1,559	1,842	2,235	2,533	3,013
8.Total radio expenditure (6+7)	2,549	2,991	3,096	3,563	4,399
<u>OPERATING EXPENDITURE:TELEVISION</u>					
9.Gross expenditure in Scotland	2,561	2,811	3,095	3,558	4,220
10.Deduct cost of programmes contributed to the networks	251	216	1,384	1,547	1,338
11.Television expenditure (9-10)	2,310	2,595	1,711	2,011	2,882
12.Scotland's share of network programmes and other costs	4,967	5,198	6,506	7,210	8,860
13.Total television expenditure (11+12)	7,277	7,793	8,217	9,221	11,742
14.Total operating expenditure (8+13)	9,826	10,784	11,313	12,784	16,141
15.Capital expenditure ...	1,030	900	999	1,432	1,279
16.Total expenditure (14+15)	10,856	11,684	12,312	14,216	17,420
17.Surplus or deficit (-) (3-16)	-2,203	-1,771	-1,366	-2,070	-4,386

APPENDIX 3.5 - continued

	1976				
	£000				
<u>INCOME</u>					
1.Receivable from the Postmaster- General/Minister	18,773				
2.Other net income	120				
3.Total income (1+2)	18,893				
<u>OPERATING EXPENDITURE : RADIO</u>					
4.Gross expenditure in Scotland	2,466				
5.Deduct cost of programmes contributed to the networks	675				
6.Radio expenditure (4-5) ...	1,791				
7.Scotland's share of network programmes and other costs	3,744				
8.Total radio expenditure (6+7)	5,535				
<u>OPERATING EXPENDITURE:TELEVISION</u>					
9.Gross expenditure in Scotland	4,834				
10.Deduct cost of programmes contributed to the networks	1,979				
11.Television expenditure (9-10)	2,855				
12.Scotland's share of network programmes and other costs	10,807				
13.Total television expenditure (11+12)	13,662				
14.Total operating expenditure (8+13)	19,197				
15.Capital expenditure ...	1,568				
16.Total expenditure (14+15)	20,765				
17.Surplus or deficit (-) (3-16)	-1,872				

APPENDIX 3.5 - continued

	1977	1978	1979	1980
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<u>INCOME</u>				
1.Net licence income	20.7	23.9	28.6	35.4
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>				
2.The production of Scottish-based programmes for audiences in Scotland	5.8	7.7	9.3	12.9
3.Transmission and distribution costs	1.8	1.9	2.1	3.0
4.Total expenditure (2+3)	7.6	9.6	11.4	15.9
5.Resources left to pay for capital investment, network programmes and the use of central service departments (1-4)	13.1	14.3	17.2	19.5
6.If all licensed households contributed equally to these services the amount required would be	17.3	19.9	23.6	28.9
7.Surplus or deficit (-) (5-6)	-4.2	-5.6	-6.4	-9.4

APPENDIX 3.5 - continued

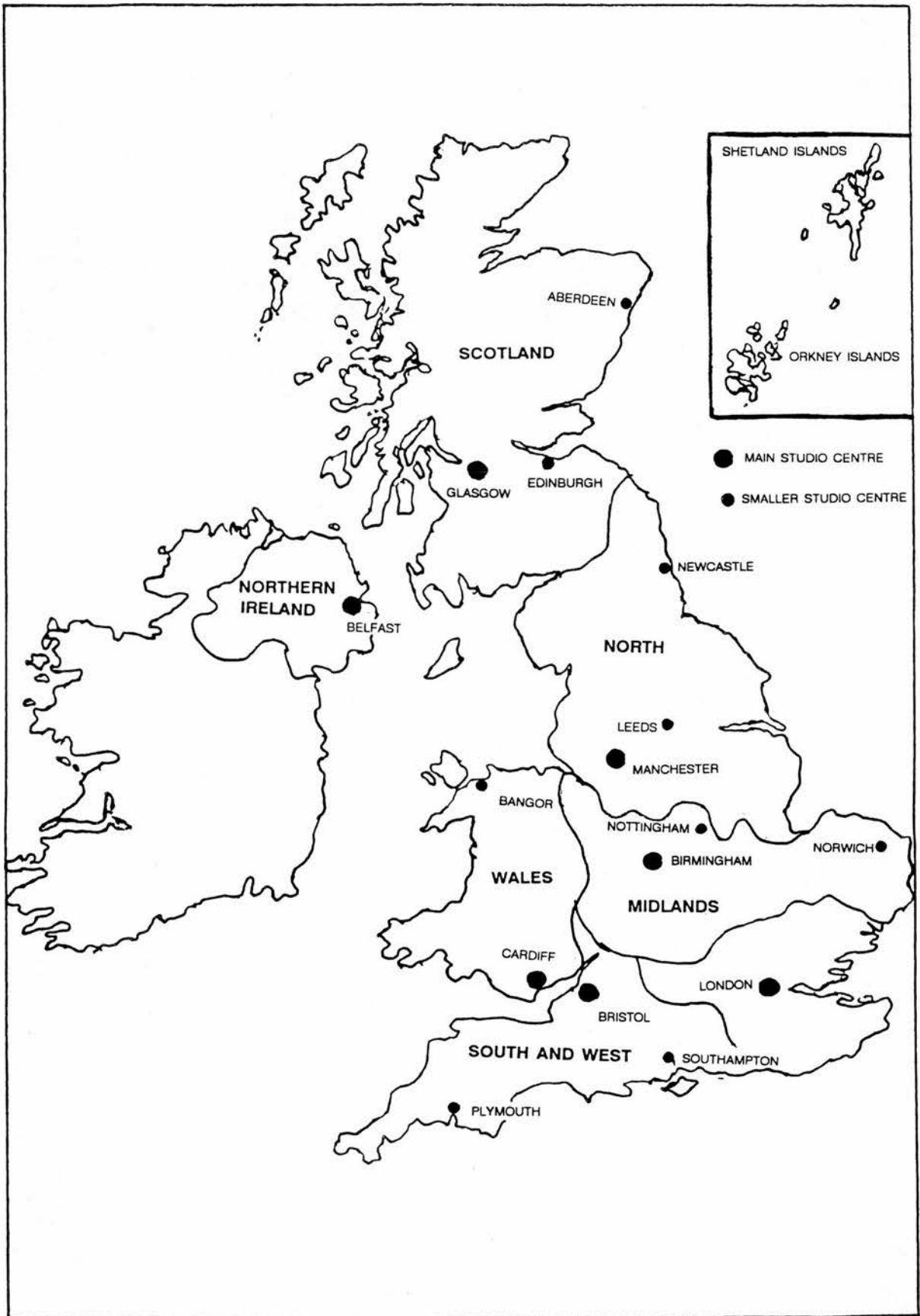
Source: BBC Annual Reports and Accounts 1950-51 to 1979-80.

NOTES: 1. Figures are not provided for items 4 and 5 in the table relating to radio operating expenditure during 1950-51 and 1951-52.

GENERAL NOTES: The format used in the BBC's Annual Accounts for detailing income and expenditure at the regional level, has varied over the years. The format used in the table above has been designed in order to incorporate all the key variables and present these in a consistent format to enable comparisons to be made from year to year. A modification to the format has had to be applied for the years 1976-77 to 1979-80 because the BBC's accounts were simplified to a degree which did not permit such direct comparisons with earlier financial years to be made. Ian Phillips, BBC Director of Finance, stated that the changes made in the presentation of statement 6 of the annual accounts in and after 1976-77 were, "... intended to provide a simplified and clearer expression of the regional imbalance between the source of funds and the appropriate sharing of costs in relation to the services available. There were no basic changes in the accounting principles used in sharing costs between the regions although some of the underlying analysis was also simplified". (Letter to author, 15 May 1989).

APPENDIX 4.1

BBC REGIONAL BOUNDARIES AND STUDIO CENTRES, PRE-APRIL 1970

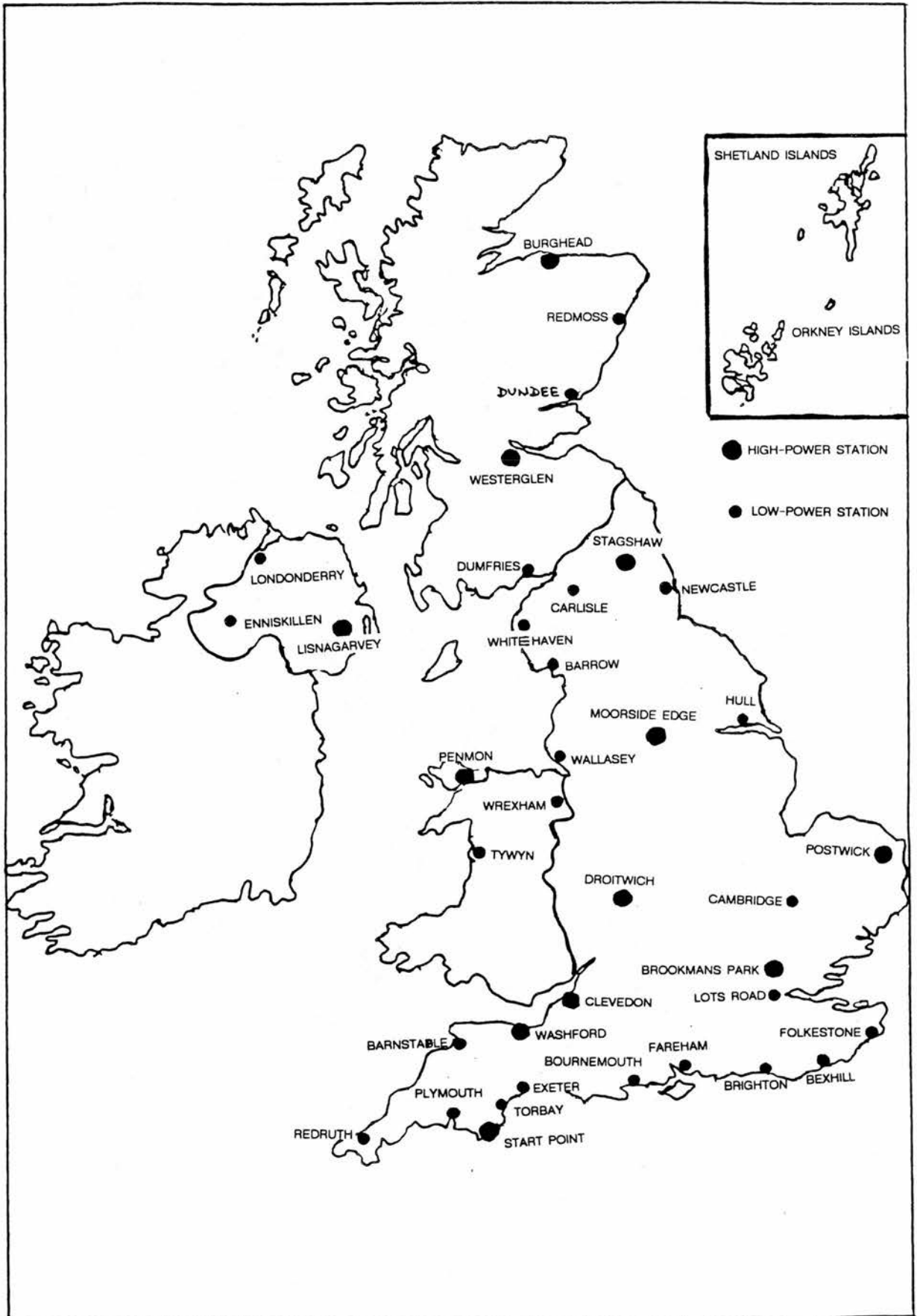


APPENDIX 4.2

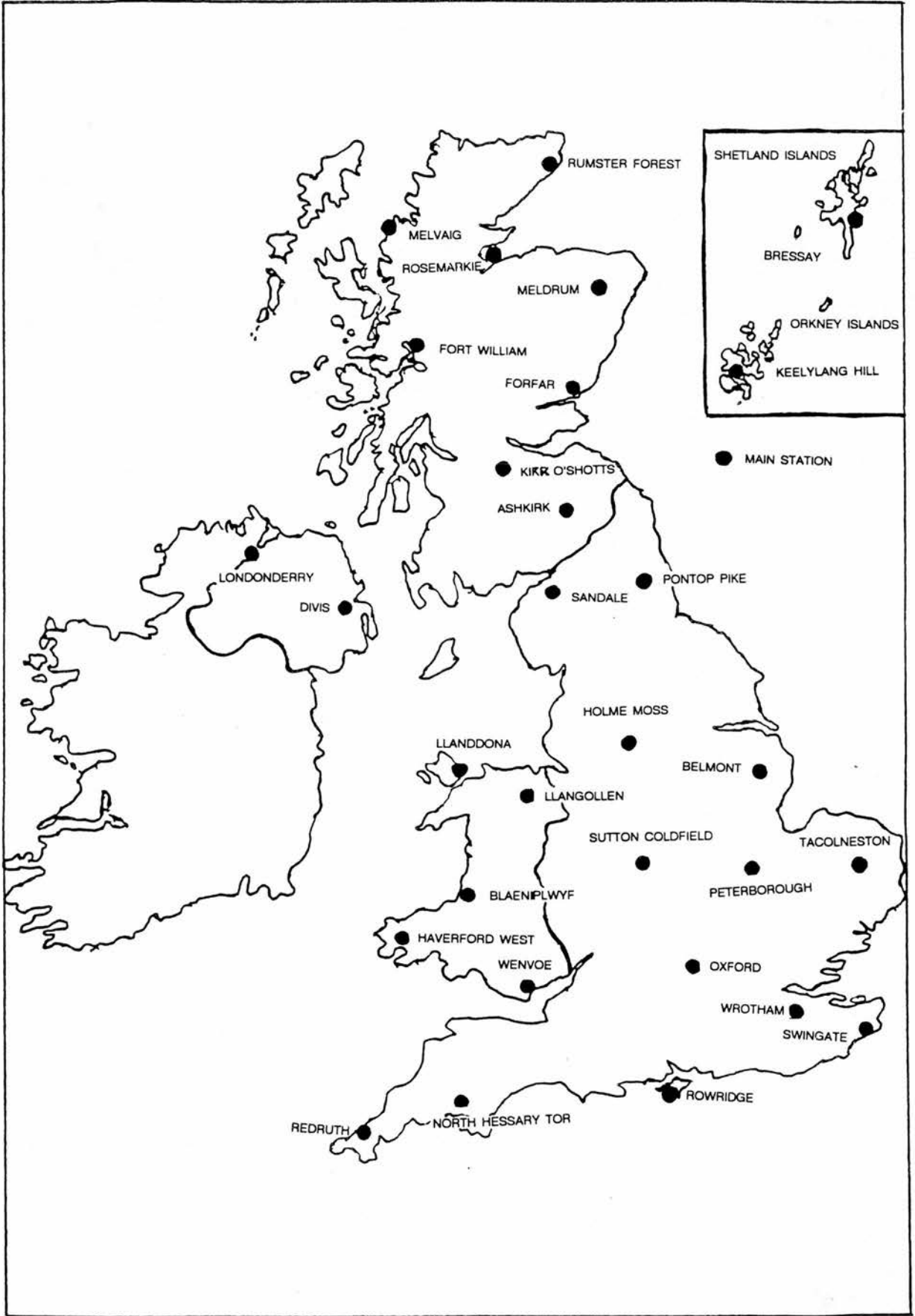
BBC REGIONAL BOUNDARIES AND STUDIO CENTRES, POST-APRIL 1970



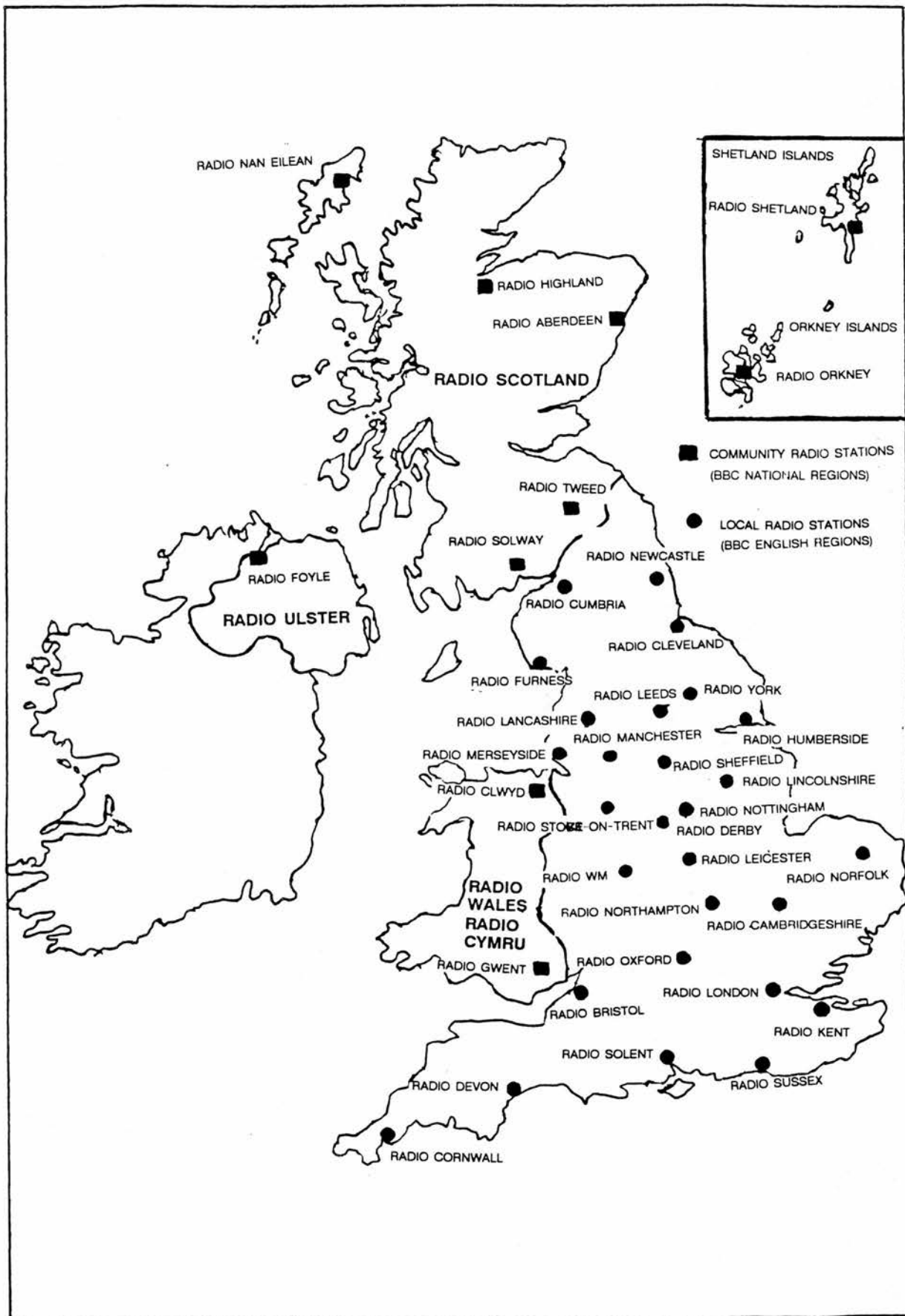
LONG WAVE AND MEDIUM WAVE RADIO TRANSMITTING STATIONS



VHF RADIO TRANSMITTING STATIONS



BBC SCOTTISH COMMUNITY RADIO AND ENGLISH LOCAL RADIO SERVICES



APPENDIX 5.1

BBC SCOTTISH PROGRAMMES : ANALYSIS OF RADIO BROADCASTING OUTPUT, 1951-1980

Year Ended 31 March	Scottish Opt-out Programmes (1)	Programmes taken from other Networks (2)	Network Contributions				Total Network Contributions (7)	Total Scottish Programmes (8)
			Light/Radios 1/2 (3)	Third/Radio 3 (4)	Home/Radio 4 (5)	External Services (6)		
1951	1,493	4,473	88	47	12	253	400	1,893
1952	1,488	4,475	89	58	13	201	361	1,849
1953	1,445	4,525	100	52	14	210	376	1,821
1954	1,490	4,501	114	42	13	198	367	1,857
1955	1,556	4,577	108	51	8	183	350	1,906
1956	1,503	4,565	117	50	14	209	390	1,893
1957	1,436	4,627	105	50	9	215	379	1,815
1958	1,397	4,665	87	48	10	185	330	1,727
1959	1,411	4,722	90	34	7	207	338	1,749
1960	1,446	4,869	138	48	2	243	431	1,877
1961	1,427	4,763	130	66	-	193	389	1,816
1962	1,484	4,725	98	56	-	203	357	1,841
1963	1,511	4,730	111	60	-	193	364	1,875
1964	1,513	4,755	98	56	3	213	370	1,883
1965	1,596	4,866	92	62	11	109	274	1,870
1966	1,597	4,786	136	152	2	107	397	1,994
1967	1,633	4,745	131	143	-	99	373	2,006
1968	1,567	4,829	137	147	-	115	399	1,966
1969	1,574	4,809	146	150	-	132	428	2,002
1970	1,611	4,897	153	175	-	129	457	2,068
1971	1,618	4,786	189	188	-	90	467	2,085
1972	1,600	4,750	129	173	-	88	390	1,990
1973	1,683	-	173	162	67	-	402	2,085
1974	1,750	-	129	201	46	-	376	2,126
1975	2,035	-	92	231	52	-	375	2,410
1976	2,064	-	72	197	48	-	317	2,381
1977	2,539	-	96	130	17	-	243	2,782
1978	3,175	-	146	167	52	-	365	3,540
1979	4,449	-	51	203	59	-	313	4,762
1980	6,723	-	31	176	33	-	240	6,693

APPENDIX 5.1 - continued

Source: BBC Annual Reports and Accounts 1950-51 to 1979-80.

NOTES: 1. Figures given in the table represent hours of programme output.

2. The Scottish opt-out programmes (Column 1) are programmes broadcast only for listeners in Scotland.

3. Figures for hours of programme output taken from other radio networks (Column 2) were not available in and after 1972-73.

4. Scottish contributions to Radio 1 were small and so these have been included in the total for Radio 2 (formerly the BBC Light Programme). Similarly, figures for the Third Programme and the individual components of Network Three (later known as Radio 3) are grouped together in Column 4.

5. Total hours of output of Scottish programmes (Column 8) comprises Scottish opt-out programmes (Column 1) and total contributions from Scotland to the radio networks (Column 7).

APPENDIX 5.2

BBC SCOTTISH PROGRAMMES : ANALYSIS OF TELEVISION BROADCASTING OUTPUT,
1953-1980

Year Ended 31 March	Scottish Opt-Out Programmes (1)	Programmes taken from other Networks (2)	Network Contributions		Total Network Contributions (5)	Total Scottish Programmes (6)
			BBC-1 (3)	BBC-2 (4)		
1953	-	1,902	28	-	28	28
1954	8	2,031	24	-	24	32
1955	5	2,236	42	-	42	47
1956	11	2,516	58	-	58	69
1957	25	2,647	52	-	52	77
1958	60	2,875	57	-	57	117
1959	148	2,959	61	-	61	209
1960	188	2,991	65	-	65	253
1961	208	3,060	55	-	55	263
1962	193	3,171	64	-	64	257
1963	253	3,154	66	-	66	319
1964	277	3,336	62	-	62	339
1965	359	3,484	4	4	122	481
1966	396	3,582	"	"	107	503
1967	442	3,707	"	"	91	533
1968	444	5,900	"	"	80	524
1969	417	6,110	"	"	77	494
1970	472	6,266	"	"	62	534
1971	422	6,081	"	"	125	547
1972	459	6,541	"	"	63	522
1973	420	-	61	51	112	532
1974	417	-	89	29	118	535
1975	429	-	63	41	104	533
1976	397	-	87	54	141	538
1977	435	-	60	35	95	530
1978	450	-	74	54	128	578
1979	416	-	76	27	103	519
1980	508	-	64	58	122	630

APPENDIX 5.2 - continued

Source: BBC Annual Reports and Accounts 1952-53 to 1979-80.

NOTES: 1. Figures given in the table represent hours of programme output.

2. The Scottish opt-out programmes (Column 1) are programmes broadcast only for viewers in Scotland.

3. Figures for hours of programme output taken from the television networks (Column 2) were not available in and after 1972-73.

4. The BBC did not provide a breakdown of Scottish contributions to both television networks until 1972-73; BBC-2 did not begin broadcasting until April 1964.

5. Total hours of output of Scottish programmes (Column 6) comprises Scottish opt-out programmes (Column 1) and total contributions from Scotland to the television networks (Column 5).

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This bibliography is subdivided into 8 sections representing different types of primary and secondary source material. Groups 1–4 can be classed as primary sources; groups 5–8 contain material which are not always readily classifiable as either primary or secondary sources. Some sections are subdivided for clarity. For example, official publications are divided into four subsections comprising parliamentary papers, non-parliamentary papers, parliamentary debates and public general Acts. The eight broad groups of source material are listed below:

1. Manuscripts and Archival material.
2. Interviews.
3. Official publications.
4. Reference Sources.
5. Books.
6. Pamphlets.
7. Journal and periodical articles.
8. Newspaper articles.

1. MANUSCRIPTS AND ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

(A) BBC Written Archives Centre, Cavensham Park READING, RG4 8TZ.

File No.

File Title

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