

CHAPTER 13

Changes and the ABCB

1954 was a year of changes. I moved from the PMG's Department to the Australian Broadcasting Control Board. Colin Moodie had moved in 1953 to a diplomatic post in London - where he met his wife Hilaire. Then in 1954 he was appointed Ambassador to Burma for three years. Eric Cottrell moved from Broken Hill to Melbourne in 1954, with his wife Maxine and their three young sons, to work with CRA Ltd in their new Collins Street skyscraper - now demolished. Much had happened since we three entered Va3 together at Saints, thirty years before.

Our daughter Chris moved from Hethersett to the PLC senior school in Albert Street, East Melbourne, on the site of the present Dallas Brooks Hall. I used to drive her to school on my way to work, leaving her at the rear gate in Victoria Parade. She had to catch three different trams to come home. Phyll, always interested in any kind of craft work, had been attending classes of instruction on the making of artificial flowers for decorating hats and wearing as sprays. She became very skilled at this, and some of her sprays of violets were so realistic that people would go to smell their scent. In 1954 she won a prize for flowers in the Royal Agricultural Show. Her next interest was to be millinery, in which she displayed the same skill and attention to detail.

As a result of winning a "household hates" competition run by the Adelaide evening "News", Marjorie was invited to contribute a series of humorous articles under the heading "Every Woman's Family". These were to appear weekly, under the nom de plume of "Helen", Marjorie's second name, illustrated by her own black and white sketches. They were based on the humorous side of happenings in her own household. Marjorie and I shared the fortunate knack of being able to see the funny side of most things - including our own minor misfortunes - and the series proved very popular, although the "News" sometimes took three weeks to make up their minds to continue publishing. The pay was very miserly - 15/- per article - but in 1954 Marjorie succeeded in having the series published by the morning "Argus" in Melbourne. The "Argus" were more generous, and the "News" reacted by raising their fee and publishing the articles more regularly.

On March 1st, 1954, Adelaide suffered a minor earthquake, which cracked many houses and caused extensive damage to household possessions. Both mother's and Marjorie's houses sustained cracks, covered by insurance. // Marjorie also had success in publishing a comic strip called "Charlie Cheesecake", designed to encourage children to take care in their daily pursuits and Charlie was the subject of a booklet published as a "child safety production publication", in conjunction with Lloyd A. Wilson. There were also Charlie Cheesecake Christmas cards, and a morning radio "Charlie Cheesecake"

programme run on SAD and regional stations by "Uncle Bob" in association with the National Safety Council.

Charlie, the little cartoon character, was always doing foolish things and suffering the consequences. He became a legend. Then in 1954 Marjorie drew a series of strip stories for the "Sunday Advertiser" children's page illustrating "The Rose and the Ring", by William Makepeace Thackeray. Thackeray is remembered chiefly for his "Vanity Fair", but he was a prolific contributor to the London "Punch" and a writer of short stories.

Marjorie loved to illustrate, and has always been a great admirer of the work of famous illustrators such as Edmund Dulac and Arthur Rackham. She illustrates her letters and is a great communicator of information in sketches.. Her newspaper contributions helped to defray the expenses of a growing family of three children.

In addition to his work with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, George played in the conservatorium Orchestra and in a private string quartet. When we visited Adelaide on holiday I had the pleasure of listening to this quartet playing chamber music in the spirit and environment for which it was originally intended - by a group of enthusiasts in the confines of the home - either at Marjorie and George's home or at the home of another member of the quartet.

I reported to Don McDonald, Director of Technical Services at the ABCB, to take up duty as Engineer,

Television, on June 7th, 1954 - exactly 18 years after coming to work in Melbourne. The ABCB offices were still in the Rialto Building, Collins Street, where I had worked with Jack Donovan on the 1951 report - and in many ways it was a return to my early associations in the PMG's Research Laboratories. I was among engineer friends and colleagues with whom I had worked in the late 1930s and 1940s. Don McDonald I knew well, and Bruce Mair who was now a member of the Board. Then there was Alec McKenzie, who was Assistant Director of Technical Services, Ross Baker, West Hatfield and John Dixon - all ex-PMG engineers. I remember Ross Baker occupied an office at the top of the octagonal tower at the north-east corner of the Rialto. It had a stout wooden column passing through its centre to support the spire above. I called it the "post office".

The Report of the Royal Commission on Television, presented to the Governor General on May 5th, 1954, recommended inter alia that -

Television should be introduced on a gradual basis. National TV stations should be established first in Sydney and Melbourne and in other capital cities as finance became available. The National TV authority should be the ABC. Commercial TV licences should be issued for 2 stations in Sydney and 2 in Melbourne. Expansion of commercial TV services to other areas should be allowed as soon as evidence showed that satisfactory services could be provided. Public hearings should be held by the ABCB before commercial TV licences were granted or revoked.

After due consideration of this Report by Cabinet, the Postmaster General announced on September 10th that the Government had reaffirmed its decision to proceed

with the introduction of television "within the limits of practical considerations", and that it had accepted the broad conclusions of the Royal Commission. The PMG's Department would call tenders immediately for equipment for the National TV stations in Sydney and Melbourne, and the ABCB would hear applications for commercial TV station licences in the same two cities - the hearings to be open to the public.

It seemed that the third attempt to introduce television in Australia was to succeed! Although the ABC would be responsible for the National TV programmes and for the equipment and staff at National TV studios, the PMG's Department would be responsible for procuring transmitters, towers, transmitter buildings, studio-to-transmitter links, and for supervising their installation by contractors. The Department would also operate and maintain all National TV transmitters.

The ABC invited Alphonse Duimet, General Manager of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, to come to Australia and advise them - with the knowledge and experience of TV development in Canada.

The ABCB had purchased a Pye TV studio camera chain for experimental work. With the knowledge that their responsibility for National TV programmes was now assured, the ABC desired to demonstrate this feather-in-the-cap to the public and help stimulate an appetite for TV. They asked if they could use the ABCB camera to

produce a series of TV demonstrations at the annual Spring Show of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, commencing on September 23rd at the Ascot Vale Showgrounds. Max Hooper, Chief Engineer of radio 3DB, had staged a TV demonstration at the 1953 show using the RMTC TV camera, and he was to repeat this in 1954. The ABC did not want to be left out of TV demonstrations.

Bruce Mair and Don McDonald came down to the RMTC Radio School during Education Week in August to see the evening production of "Window on the World". They asked me to collaborate with the ABC in producing the Showground demonstration and in arranging the technical facilities.

The ABCB camera was to be set up in the RASV Administrative building at ground floor level, with the control equipment in an adjoining room. Large plate glass windows faced outwards, and also inwards towards public passageways. Picture monitors were to be placed above the inside windows where they would be shaded from sunlight. John Dixon was to be in charge of the technical equipment.

The ABC desired to feature the personalities of their radio Children's Session, a puppet show, musical items and interviews conducted by their radio personalities. At this stage ABC personnel had not participated in the RMTC TV Studio Technique classes, and I was horrified to find that they intended merely to have

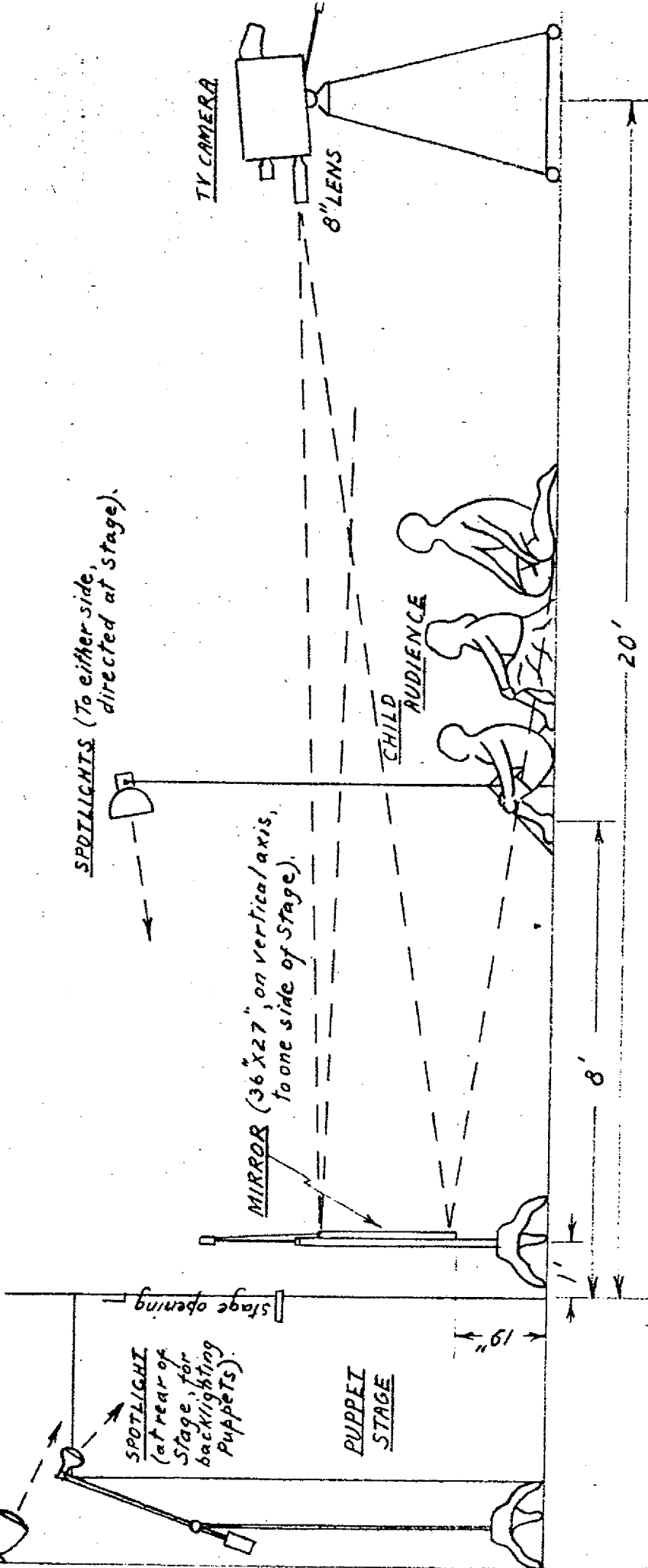
the TV camera trained on these performers without any camera rehearsal or briefing in the niceties of TV presentation. I pointed out that what the public saw in these demonstrations would be regarded as a sample of future National TV service - and without proper preparation and rehearsal of camera and talent movements it would compare very unfavourably with the more experienced demonstration to be staged by 3DB and the RMTC crew. I had great difficulty in convincing the ABC that this was so, and that judicious panning of the TV camera, with a variety of long-shot and close-up views of appropriately briefed performers was desirable to avoid monotony of presentation and confusion in production.

A rehearsal was arranged, with some reluctance - probably because of the increased time for which talent had to be paid. On September 21st this demonstrated the value of such rehearsal. As we had only one camera, lens changes had to be made during a fade to black - and 2", 4" and 8" lenses were used to give a range of shots. Headset intercom was provided between the director and the camera control operator, the cameraman, the floorman and a prop assistant. Fixed microphones and spotlights were used.

The ABC provided the floorman and assistant and a dolly pusher for the camera. The PMG provided two technicians - Leo Fowler and Bob Forster, who had attended the RMTC classes - as cameraman and audio operator. John Dixon operated the camera control unit.

Y.

SPOTLIGHT
(To one side of stage,
directed at children).



SPOTLIGHTS (To either side,
directed at stage).

MIRROR (36" X 27", on vertical axis,
to one side of stage).

TV CAMERA

8" LENS

CHILD
AUDIENCE

8'

20'

TV DEMONSTRATION AT
MELB. ROYAL SHOW - 1954.
PUPPET SHOW ARRANGEMENT;

Ken Watts of the ABC was to share the duties of director with me.

Afternoon and evening demonstrations were given on nine days from September 23rd to October 2nd. I directed the first two sessions, and briefed Ken Watts - after which we alternated. The demonstrations attracted considerable public interest, because most people had never seen a TV screen before. Black and white pictures - as in most cinema films of the day - were completely acceptable.

The artists included Harold Badger, Graeme Bell, Geoff Brooke, Doug Channell, Bruce George, Charles Peckover, Leonard Teale, Russ Tyson, Pam Corrigan, Norma Ferris, Shirley Radford, Roma Rainsford, Mamie Reid, Sue Ricketts and the Parker Sisters - all appearing on a TV screen for the first time. Ron White, my compere in "Window on the World", was the only one with TV experience.

In the afternoon shows, children were brought into the studio room and seated on the floor before the puppet stage. To provide long-shots of the child audience, I used a 36"x27" mirror hung on a vertical stand beside the puppet stage, so that it could be rotated slightly on a vertical axis. With the camera shooting at the reflection of the children in this mirror, a slight rotation gave the effect of panning over the audience in long-shot. Mothers outside were entranced to see their

offspring on a TV screen. Unselfconscious children are the most delightful subjects for television, as modern makers of commercials know full well. However these Royal Show demonstrations were really no more than radio with pictures. No attempt was made to exploit the techniques of live TV production as was practised in "Window on the world" and "Great Expectations" at the RMTG. But the public was not critical. At that stage any picture on a TV screen was a novelty and attracted attention - especially when it was an image of a personality simultaneously seen in the flesh, only a few feet away.

One of my first assignments in the ABCB was to explore the scope and capacity of existing film laboratories in Sydney and Melbourne, in relation to their possible use in future television operations. Between August 1954 and May 1955, I visited the Sydney laboratories of:-

Associated Film Printers
Commonwealth/Filmcraft Laboratories Pty Ltd
Automatic Film Laboratories Pty Ltd
Kinelab Pty Ltd
Supreme Sound systems

and the Melbourne laboratories of:-

Herschell's Films Pty Ltd
Department of Interior Films Division
Adams Film Service
Cine Service Pty Ltd

One of these handled 35mm film only. All dealt with 16mm film and some handled both gauges. Facilities covered negative, positive and reversal processing and varied between laboratories. Much of the film handled

was newsreel and documentary material, and they produced a great quantity of positive release prints from imported duplicate negatives - to avoid the high duty on imported release prints. The increasing proportion of feature films in colour had decreased processing of 35mm film in Australia, because they were not then equipped for 35mm colour processing. The capacity for processing 16mm film was considerably greater than the demand, and evenly distributed between Sydney and Melbourne. I concluded that the existing capacity should be adequate for the estimated initial demands of TV stations in Melbourne and Sydney, in addition to existing demands for other services, working no more than one shift.

It was recognised that TV would require new standards for film density and gamma, but the laboratories were all prepared to comply with such requirements.

I had the pleasure of getting to know Phil Budden of Commonwealth/Filmcraft Labs, Geoff King of Kinelab, and Roy Driver of Herschells Films, with whom I was to have many dealings in future years.

I analysed the TV equipment requirements of the proposed National Studios in Sydney and Melbourne in relation to the programme production practice considered desirable for initial operation. This analysis was used by the PMG's Department as the basis for a draft schedule inviting tenders for studio and OB equipment for these

stations. Vern Kenna of the PMG's Radio Section discussed the draft with Alec McKenzie and me on November 1st. Although it had been decided that the ABC would be responsible for the national TV studios, there was as yet no ABC technical organisation or staff in existence - the technical side of radio being looked after by the PMG's Department. The procedure of calling tenders for equipment took time and expertise, and could not wait on the creation of ABC technical staff for TV. Therefore the PMG's Department, in collaboration with the ABCB, accepted the responsibility of preparing and issuing the necessary tender schedule.

It is as well, at this point, to emphasise the difference between the ABC and the ABCB. Some people had the misconception that the ABCB was the Board controlling the ABC. It had nothing to do with the ABC. The Australian Broadcasting Control Board (ABCB) was established to plan the provision of broadcasting and television stations, to establish standards for their technical equipment and operation and to determine the location, power and operating frequency of transmitters. It had the responsibility of seeing that adequate and comprehensive programmes were provided by commercial broadcasters, to whom it awarded licences, but it had no analogous authority over the ABC whatever.

It was agreed that TV tenderers should supply their information in duplicate, for the PMG's Department and the ABCB, and that the schedule should refer to the

Australian Television Standards published by the ABCB. These standards for a 625 line 50 field system, originally published in 1950, were modified to provide for RF channels 7Mc/s wide with other minor modifications to bring them into conformity with the 625 line standard recommended by the CCIR.

Although the FCC had adopted colour standards developed by the American NTSC in December 1953, the ABCB decided that Australian TV should begin in monochrome. It was considered that the considerably greater cost of colour TV receivers would hamper the development of Australian TV services.

Tenders for equipment for the National TV stations in Sydney and Melbourne were invited on November 25th, 1954, and closed on April 14th, 1955. They were examined by the PMG's Department and the ABCB, and AWA tenders were accepted for the bulk of the equipment.

Applications for commercial TV licences in Sydney and Melbourne were invited on October 19th, 1954, to be received by January 1st, 1955. Public inquiries were held by the ABCB in Melbourne in January, and in Sydney in February.

In conjunction with the PMG's Department, the ABCB had to nominate RF channels for TV transmitters. The Royal Commission had recommended development in the VHF spectrum (30 to 300 Mc/s), and the ABCB developed a

frequency assignment plan for 10 available channels each
7 Mc/s wide.

Channels 1 and 2 available from January 1st, 1956.
Channel 3 confined to inland country areas.
Channels 4 and 5 available from July 1st, 1963.
Channels 6 to 10 available immediately.

The plan provided for four stations in all State
capitals and two stations in all populated areas with
towns of more than 5000 people outside capital cities.

The ABCB 7th Report stated -

"there are good grounds for accepting the view that
four stations should be sufficient to provide a
great variety of television programmes even for the
large populations of Sydney and Melbourne for a very
long time."

In addition the ABCB reserved fifty 7 Mc/s channels
for TV in the UHF band (300 to 3000 Mc/s) and said -

"Although UHF techniques will undoubtedly develop in
the course of time as equipment problems are
overcome, it seems certain that it will not be as
economical to serve an area with UHF as with VHF
stations.

and

"The Board appreciates that if unforeseen
developments prove that more channels must be
provided for television stations than are available
or can be secured in the VHF band, it will be
necessary to use UHF channels."

In America the FCC had already found it necessary to
allocate UHF channels to TV because of the rapidly
growing demand for more stations.

The ABCB were anxious to ensure that competent
personnel would be available to operate the technical
equipment at Australian commercial TV stations, and that
such persons could be suitably qualified by examination.

Accordingly a conference was held at the Board's offices in January 1955 to examine the problem. Mr R.G. Osborne, who had taken over as Chairman in 1951 when Mr Fanning retired, chaired the conference with representatives of the PMG's Department and the Technical Colleges in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart. Don McDonald, Alec McKenzie and I attended and a representative of the Marconi School of Wireless. As a result, a syllabus was drawn up for the Television Operators Certificate of Proficiency, which came to be known as the "Television Op's" Certificate or TVOCP.

My most responsible job at the ABCB was the preparation of the - "Provisional Standards for the Technical Equipment and Operation of Television Stations".

Under the Broadcasting Act the ABCB was directed "to ensure that the technical equipment and operation of television stations are in accordance with such standards and practices as the Board considers to be appropriate." The provisional Standards were "to indicate generally the equipment and mode of operation of such stations which will be approved by the Board." They were intended for the guidance of the PMG's Department, the ABC technical personnel, and the licencees of commercial television stations.

These Standards quoted the basic standards determined by the Board for transmitted signals and went

on to specify the Board's requirements regarding technical quality of equipment and components, provision of spares and testing facilities, overall performance of vision and sound equipment and technical staff qualifications.

The Standards laid down the Board's requirements for transmitter sites, masts and radiating systems, transmitter buildings and equipment and for links between studios and transmitter. For studios they gave requirements for location, construction, acoustic treatment, ventilation and air conditioning. Minimum requirements for numbers of studios, control rooms, camera chains, synchronising generators, microphones, disc replay facilities and microphone booms, were stipulated for capital city studios, with desirable minimum studio proportions. Requirements were given for control room equipment, production lighting, film scanning facilities and film editing and storage. Capital city stations were required to have at least one outside broadcast unit with three camera chains, microphones, control equipment and a radio relay link.

Emergency power plant was stipulated. The general purpose of these Standards was to ensure that Australian TV stations would be capable of providing transmissions in accordance with technical standards determined by the Board with a level of technical production that could be compared with good engineering practice in established TV studios in Britain and the USA. They were based on the

information gathered in my 1951 overseas trip and drafted in cooperation with Alec McKenzie - particularly in relation to transmitter equipment.

Details of all transmitter and studio buildings were to be submitted to the Board for approval before implementation of plans to provide them. The draft standards were completed in February 1955 and published in June. They remained as provisional standards until re-issued in a revised and amplified form in February 1958.

The Board conducted periodic examinations for the TVOCP and issued certificates to successful candidates. Courses for these exams were conducted at RMTC by Max Albiston.

When I began work at the ABCB I realised that the job was administrative in nature and that its relationship to future TV stations would be confined to regulatory functions, tests and inspections. While it provided an important introduction to the establishment of television services - which experience had shown I would not have found in the PMG's Department - my ideas extended further than that. My ambition had always been to play an active part in the actual setting up of Australian television.

With my background of experience, my Radio Section association with the ABC, and my participation in the

1951 overseas TV investigations, I not unnaturally hoped to play a significant part in the establishment of the National TV service. The Government was committed to the establishment of commercial TV services also, but that was a field I had not even considered at this stage..

The Herald and Weekly Times Ltd intended to apply for a commercial TV licence in Melbourne, and in November 1954 they brought Mr James C. Hanrahan, General Manager of TV station WEWS, Cleveland, Ohio, to assist in the preparation of their application. Mr Hanrahan was also Vice-President of the TV stations operated by the Scripps-Howard Newspapers in the USA, with which the Herald and Weekly Times had some affiliation. I attended a very interesting lecture given by Mr Hanrahan at the Sheraton Hotel in Spring Street on "Television in America", and subsequently my old friend Max Hooper of 3DB asked if I would like to meet Mr Hanrahan for a more detailed discussion of the subject.

And so it was that on November 17th I had lunch with Max Hooper, James Hanrahan and Keith Cairns, who had been Chief of Staff at the "Sun News-Pictorial" and was then assistant to the General Manager of the "Sun", Mr Bert Pacini. Keith had been sent overseas by his company to study TV developments.

I did not realise it at the time, but at that luncheon I was being given the "once-over", and on December 13th I was again invited to lunch with Bert

Pacini, Keith Cairns and Max Hooper at Molino's Restaurant in Spring Street. They asked me whether I would be interested in the position of Chief Television Engineer with them in the event of their being successful with their application for a commercial licence.

I said I would think about it. Leaving the Commonwealth Public Service would be a serious step in my career. Mr Pacini asked if I would give him a summary of my qualifications and experience.

I had been in the Commonwealth Public Service for 25 years. I was a permanent officer and had been contributing to the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme since 1930. This entitled me to a superannuation of 1200 pounds per annum on retirement at 65 - or earlier if retired through invalidity - and half this amount to my widow in the event of my decease. Promotion to a higher position in the Service would increase this superannuation accordingly, and the annual payment was indexed to cost-of-living adjustments.

Under the Superannuation Act, the Commonwealth contributed 20/- for each 8/- paid into the fund by an employee - but an employee who resigned would be paid no more than the total of his own contributions, without interest or any additions. In my case this would have amounted to only 700 pounds.

Leaving the Commonwealth Public Service, then, would mean loss of these considerable superannuation benefits

and a venture into the unknown world of private enterprise - without the security provided by the Public Service, but with the risks attendant to the establishment of a new enterprise in a field as yet untried in Australia. I was now 43 years of age. If this job in commercial television did not succeed - or if I had to retire through ill health - I knew it might be difficult for me to find comparable employment elsewhere. I had the welfare of my family to consider.

For reasons such as these, resignations from the Commonwealth Service, to take up positions in private enterprise, were very uncommon. In the field of engineering you could count them on the fingers on one hand. Sam Jones (later Sir Samuel) had left to join Standard Telephones and Cables Pty Ltd. Reg Boyle, with whom I worked in the Radio Section, had left to become Chief Engineer of a Sydney radio station (and subsequently returned to the Department, disillusioned).

In December I had traded my blue Vanguard car for a grey Hillman Minx, and I drove Phyll and Chris to Adelaide to spend Christmas with our families - with my mind full of problems. I resumed duty with the ABCB on January 4th.

The Herald and Weekly Times Ltd had lodged their application for a commercial TV licence in Melbourne on the last day of 1954.

On January 5th the position of Director of Technical Services (Television) in the ABC was advertised. This was the opportunity I had been waiting for. A position in the ABC would preserve my Commonwealth Superannuation entitlements, but it would mean moving my family to Sydney. Our daughter Chris was in her 14th year, at a critical stage in her schooling, and such a move would cause some disruption. There were advantages in remaining in Melbourne.

Keith Cairns rang me on January 6th, enquiring about the data requested by Mr Pacini. I decided it would be as well to have two irons in the fire, so I prepared an application for the ABC position and a summary of qualifications and experience for Mr Pacini - and lodged them both on January 14th. Five days later I had a further discussion with Mr Pacini and Keith Cairns, in which I explained my problem regarding superannuation.

Then I began to examine the alternatives in more detail. I had a discussion with Bruce Mair, the only engineer member of the ABCB Board, whose judgement I respected. I told him of the approach by Mr Pacini and showed him a draft letter setting out conditions under which I might be prepared to negotiate a contract with the Herald and Weekly Times. Bruce said HWT had the reputation of being a good employer. I told him I had also applied for the ABC position, and he said he believed Mr Chippindall would support my application. Bruce consulted Mr Osborne, who agreed that one month's

notice would be appropriate if I decided to leave the Service.

Applications for the ABC job had closed on January 17th. I rang Charles Moses to ask if an estimate was possible on the date of decision on this position. He estimated the 8th or 9th of February. I told him of the commercial TV offer and promised to advise him at once if I took any definite step regarding that.

Then I interviewed Mr Sanders of the AMP Society on the question of additional life insurance and had a comprehensive medical examination by Dr A.E. Coates, on the recommendation of Ted Stewart. Dr Coates had a reputation for wonderful work on injured troops in the war zone during World War II. He pronounced me fit.

On January 26th I wrote to Mr Pacini outlining a basis of superannuation which I considered would be appropriate to the suggested position, in association with a three year contract. These matters were discussed in detail in early February, without any commitment on either side.

Applicants for the ABC job were interviewed at the ABC offices at Majella in St Kilda Road on February 8th, by the full board of ABC Commissioners. I was followed by four other candidates.

Then passed ten weeks, with no decision by the ABC. Discreet enquiries failed to indicate any likely date for a decision. In the meantime, I had reached the conclusion that if no ABC decision had been made by the time that commercial licences were granted, then I would accept the position of Chief Engineer with the Herald and Weekly Times Ltd if they were granted a television licence. In discussions with Mr Pacini they had agreed to a three year contract with the right of renewal by both sides, four weeks annual leave, a salary greater than that of the ABC position and superannuation arrangements which - though inferior to those of the Commonwealth Service - were a reasonable compromise and quite generous for private enterprise. I had complete confidence in my ability to do justice to the task of establishing a commercial TV station and operating it as efficiently as I had seen commercial stations operated in the USA. If I took this step I proposed to take out an insurance policy for a considerable amount on my own life, maturing at the retiring age of 65.

On Monday April 18th the Postmaster General announced that the Government had decided to grant commercial TV licences to applicants recommended by the ABCB, subject to the fulfilment of a number of conditions - which included the observance of "such standards in regard to the technical equipment and operation of the station as the Board determines."

Licences were to be granted for five years (from the date by which certain conditions were satisfied) in Sydney to - Amalgamated Television Services Pty Ltd and Television Corporation Ltd (a company to be formed)

and in Melbourne to - General Television Corporation Ltd and a company to be formed by The Herald and Weekly Times Ltd.

Next day I was invited to lunch with Bert Pacini and Keith Cairns, who then took me to the Herald Building in Flinders Street to meet the Managing Director, Mr J.F. Williams, who ruled the company with a rod of iron and was feared by all. Keith Cairns lived in great awe of JFW, and presented me with some trepidation. I was wearing my old school tie, and when I entered his office JFW exclaimed - "Ah! - St Peters!" He had associates on his staff and on the allied staff of the Adelaide Advertiser who were "Old Saints". The interview was quite cordial, and Keith said when we left the holy sanctum "It was a good job you were wearing that tie!"

The terms of the three year contract, previously hammered out with Bert Pacini, were confirmed. The time had come for my second critical decision in 28 years. The ABC had made no decision, so I agreed to accept the position with The Herald and Weekly Times. A bird in the hand was worth two in the bush!

Returning to the ABCB, I gave notice to Mr Osborne of my intention to resign from the Commonwealth Public Service.

The die was cast. My future depended on my performance from now on. Phyll was a little dubious about the wisdom of my decision, but she accepted it philosophically. I hoped she would never have cause to regret it.

Next morning Keith Cairns handed me a typewritten proposal and we visited the South Melbourne property intended for conversion to television studios at the corner of Wells and Dorcas Streets - shades of my visit to St Lukes in 1936 and to Byer Industries in 1953! On April 21st I lodged a formal notice of resignation and replied to the HWT accepting their proposal.

I spent the next fortnight completing tasks in hand at the ABCB and ceased duty there on Friday May 6th. Don McDonald presented me with a cocktail shaker, tray and set of glasses at a farewell gathering. I had few regrets. The prospect of being able to shape my own future, though challenging, was very attractive. Because of the statutory responsibility of the ABCB for the control of commercial TV broadcasting I knew that I would maintain contact with many of the engineers in the Board whom I had known since I first came to Melbourne.

Leaving the Public Service, I had to resign from the POA. I attended my last meeting of the Executive Council on May 3rd, when I received congratulations and a parting gift of my first electric razor. I said I regretted leaving the POA where I learnt the importance of team work.

The Herald published an announcement with photos of the first three appointments to its television undertaking on May 18th - Keith Cairns as Manager, myself as Chief Engineer and Lyle Lloyd as assistant Chief Engineer. Two days later I had a most heartening reaction from the members of Rostrum Club No.4, when I entered the room to a round of applause.

Although I ceased duty with the ABCB on May 6th, my resignation from the Service did not take effect until June 25th, when I received a refund of 734 pounds for my 25.5 years contributions to the Superannuation Fund - without interest! I used it to pay off the mortgage on our house, together with my pay in lieu of furlough not taken. So whatever the future held for me, we owned our own house. We had a roof over our heads. I took out that large insurance policy with the AMP, maturing at the age of 65.

I began duties with the HWT on Monday May 9th, 1955. Mine was the first appointment as Chief Television Engineer in Australia. During the next few months Chief

Free and Lloyd Hadfield were also working independently with EMI.

Back in Australia, Lyle Lloyd joined radio 3DB Melbourne, Carl Wilhelm joined the PMG Research Laboratories, and Colin Stockbridge, Les Free and Lloyd Hadfield went to the Long Range Weapons Establishment at Salisbury, South Australia.

When TV preparations began in 1955, Lyle Lloyd joined me at HWT, Lloyd Hadfield and Colin Stockbridge joined the ABC, and Les Free joined John Briton at Television Corporation, Sydney. Dave Pritchard had obtained TV experience with Marconi's at Chelmsford in England. Murray Stevenson's assistant was to be Mervyn Davies who had TV experience with both EMI and Marconi's in England.

It was an impressive army of acquired experience in television techniques. In playing my part in the establishment of Australian television services I was to be in good company!