

Govt's radio policy called irresponsible

CANBERRA, Monday. — The Federal Government was attacked today for rushing through its broadcasting policies without sufficient planning.

Two speakers at a Canberra convention criticised the Government severely for taking political consideration into account in making policy decisions, and for aimless, changeable, expedient, and irresponsible administration of broadcasting.

They were the president of the Federation of Australian Commercial

Broadcasters, Mr D. Craig, and the chairman of the federation's Government relations committee, Sir Lincoln Hynes, speaking at the federation's forty-fifth annual convention.

Sir Lincoln said the industry had never experienced a year "so chaotic, so confused and confusing, or so menacing to our survival."

"Never has there been a time when the administration of broadcasting has been so aimless, so changeable, so expedient and so irresponsible."

He blamed this on the lack of a single authority to govern broadcasting.

"The total absence of co-ordination between all those involved — the

Broadcasting Control Board, the Department of the Media, the Government, the ABC, the Minister and the industry — has set back by years the sensible development and expansion of broadcasting," he said.

Each body involved had tried to "push their own particular barrows — usually in different directions."

He cited attempts by the Government to increase the powers of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board, and a proliferation of radio stations apparently without thought to the consequences.

The board amendments were unsuccessful. On the other point, he es-

timated that about 50 new radio stations would be set up soon.

The federation was concerned about the "ad hoc" way in which broadcasting services had expanded.

"We do not necessarily object to increases in the number of broadcasting stations, but we are entitled to object to the manner in which licences have been handed out in many instances."

Sir Lincoln also criticised the February decision of the Terrigal ALP conference not to grant FM (frequency modulation) radio licences to commercial interests.

A body of opinion within the ALP regretted the decision, he said.

Mr Craig said Government policy was to expand the ABC, introduce FM, expand commercial services, set up educational and foreign language stations, and make special provision for minority groups.

"We endorse the Government's desire to provide new and additional radio services to satisfy unfulfilled community needs.

"However, we deplore the failure of the Government to recognise the contribution that commercial broadcasters are already making, and the failure to explore the extent to which existing commercial broadcasters could meet at least some of these needs."

Use of powders, drink, drugs reaches 'epidemic proportions'

The use of alcohol, tobacco and analgesics has reached epidemic proportions, the chairman of the State Health Commission, Dr R. G. McEwin, told the NSW Joint Parliamentary Committee on Drugs yesterday.

He said he regarded this as a far greater health problem than the use of marijuana.

As an example, he said that the misuse of anal-

The committee, chaired by Mr A. E. Viney (Lib. Wakehurst), met for its first formal session yesterday after being established by the Premier, Mr Lewis, on August 7.

It is to report to Parliament on the effects of prohibited drugs, their use in NSW, and to make recommendations about possible changes in the drug laws.

Asked if he was satisfied with these duties, Dr McEwin said it would be

mittee had been instructed.

The committee was told that a huge proportion of convicted hard-drug users returned to drugs the moment they were released from prison.

Mrs Ingrid Reynolds, a research sociologist with the Health Commission, said that a prison sentence seemed no deterrent to the hard-drug user.

She was referring to uses of opiates, including heroin, opium, morphine and codeine.

Opiate addicts were mostly early school leavers from the lower socio-economic groups.

"Because they are unskilled, they usually feel they have nothing but a bleak life ahead of them, and turn to drugs as a solace," Mrs Reynolds said.

"It is comparatively rare for people who have stayed right through school and who have some definite goal in life to become addicted,

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