

# ATLANTIC CITY — ACT V

By JOHN CLARRICOATS (G6CL), GENERAL SECRETARY

**B**Y now most members will have some knowledge of the final decisions reached at the Atlantic City Conference. Immediately the news became known on September 11 a circular was issued to the Regional and County Representatives as well as to those sections of the technical press interested in Amateur Radio. The effect of this circular was to stop the many rumours which have been "going the rounds" in recent weeks. Unfortunately a new type of rumour started up almost immediately and as a result Headquarters wasted much valuable time in denying that the new bands were operative immediately. We find it difficult to understand why level-headed members should imagine for one moment that an epoch-making international treaty, such as the one which has just been signed, can take effect at once.

To deter any further enquiries we wish to state that the new frequency allocations are unlikely to come into effect until January 1, 1949.

As expected the closing stages of the Conference were hectic in the extreme. Towards the end of August it became increasingly clear that the deadlock which had prevailed in the Working Group dealing with frequency allocations must be broken if the Conference was to finish on September 15.

## The 1.7 and 3.5 Mc/s. Bands

There is little need to enlarge upon what has been reported earlier in regard to the "top-band" other than to record that the U.K. proposal which confers upon European countries the right to allocate 200 kc/s. in that band to amateurs, went through without further opposition. We do not yet know where the new band will be located, but it seems probable that it will fall between 1750 and 1950 kc/s. to permit of doubling into a portion of the 3.5 Mc/s. band.

The 3.5 Mc/s. band is to be extended in Europe by 50 kc/s. This means that the portion between 3635 and 3685 kc/s., which was denied to us under the terms of the Cairo Conference Convention, will be opened up, giving us a clear run from 3.5 to 3.8 Mc/s. The band will, as at present, be shared with other services, but we are confident that this arrangement will be much more satisfactory than the original U.K. proposal that the band should be reduced to 100 kc/s. on an exclusive amateur basis.

## The 7 Mc/s. Band

The "carving-up" of the 7 Mc/s. band went according to plan. Our only comment is that we think the amateurs of Europe deserved better treatment than they received from those nations which persist in flooding the ether with broadcasts that are listened to by mythical audiences. Frankly we doubt whether more than a microscopic proportion of North American and Australasian listeners obtain any real pleasure or entertainment value from 7 Mc/s. broadcasts. As for European audiences we adhere to our previously expressed view that they are not interested in propaganda broadcasts thinly veiled as entertainment.

However, it is no use crying over spilt milk. The diplomats beat us and we must grin and bear it. We shall nevertheless be interested to learn later on how the European broadcasters fare when they begin to pump programmes into those Regions where amateurs will still be using the full 7 Mc/s. band. As far as North America is concerned we cannot help thinking that the tens of thousands of amateurs who use that band will swamp them out.

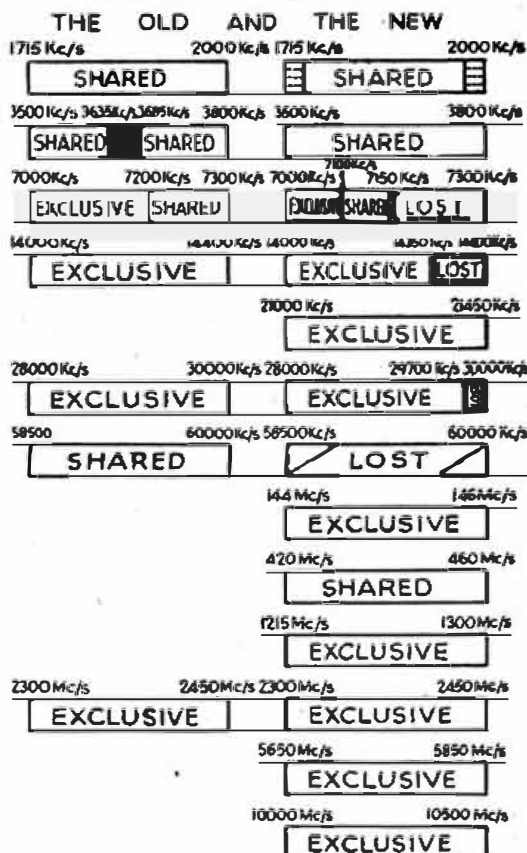
## The 14 Mc/s. Band

For the reason that we regard the loss of 50 kc/s. at the high frequency end of 14 Mc/s. as our most serious reverse, we propose quoting at length from the official report of the 22nd Meeting of Committee 5. It was at that meeting the decision was taken to reduce the width of the band and to permit the U.S.S.R. to operate fixed stations between 14250 and 14350 kc/s.

In opening the meeting the Chairman (Col. A. H. Read of the U.K., successor to Col. Sir Stanley Angwin) recalled that two distinct proposals emerged from previous discussions, namely one for allocating 400 kc/s. exclusively to amateurs and the other for allocating 300 kc/s. to amateurs and 100 kc/s. to the fixed service. He added that all delegates had recognised the desirability of allocating this band on a world-wide basis.

The delegate of the UNITED STATES said that the position taken by his country on this question was too well known to need repeating. Countries which had opposed allocating 400 kc/s. to the amateur service had based their opposition on the needs of the fixed service. While recognizing the needs of that service, which were as acute in the United States as in other countries, it did not seem that the slight percentage increase that the fixed service would obtain in this part of the spectrum would justify such a serious loss to the amateurs. The majority of countries had supported 400 kc/s. for amateurs at the previous meeting when this question was studied, and he hoped that in this case, as in many others, the minority would join the majority in allocating 400 kc/s. to the amateur service on a world-wide basis.

VENEZUELA reminded the Committee that Sub-Committee 5A, in its final report had unanimously accepted the allocation of 400 kc/s. to the amateur service between 14000 and 14400 kc/s., and Venezuela still supported this proposal.



Amateur Allocations for the European Region as agreed at the Conference

The delegate of the U.S.S.R. said that either of the two alternatives would be acceptable to his country provided that in either case the U.S.S.R. had the use of 150 kc/s. between 14000 and 14400 kc/s. for the fixed service so that if 400 kc/s. were allocated to amateurs the U.S.S.R. would share 150 kc/s. between the fixed and amateur services, while if amateurs were allocated 300 kc/s. the U.S.S.R. would share 50 kc/s. in this way.

CANADA appreciated that it might be essential for the U.S.S.R. to share part of the band allocated to amateurs, but earnestly hoped that such sharing would not be contemplated by other countries. He considered that the allocation of 400 kc/s. to amateurs, with 150 kc/s. shared in the U.S.S.R. with the fixed service, was the most generally satisfactory solution.

FRANCE challenged the statement made by the United States regarding the majority which at an earlier meeting had expressed support for an allocation of 400 kc/s. to the amateur service. If attention were confined in effect to the European region there was, on the contrary, a very strong majority in favour of 300 kc/s.; a regional allocation might therefore be a solution but this was clearly undesirable. The countries of the world falling into two broadly equal divisions—those wishing to allocate 400 kc/s. to the amateurs and those wishing to allocate only 300 kc/s.—it seemed that a reasonable compromise would be to allocate 350 kc/s. to the amateur service. Looking at the question from the point of view of amateur solidarity, European amateurs would be very grateful to those of the United States if an increase of 50 kc/s. in the band available to the former resulted from the latter accepting a 50 kc/s. reduction of the band to which they had access. The delegate reminded the meeting that the Chairman of the Conference had said that no country could expect to see its requirements completely satisfied and that compromises were necessary in the case of every service.

The UNITED KINGDOM said that the fundamental problem was that of trying to meet the requirements of the fixed and maritime mobile services between 8 and 17 Mc/s. Several countries had arrived at the conclusion that the needs of the fixed service were such as to necessitate some reduction of the amateur allocations being made in favour of the fixed service, and the Working Group, although they had not been able to arrive at a solution to the problem, had been led to the same conclusion. Already many countries had rightly paid tribute to the services rendered by amateurs, but it must not be assumed from this that the width of the bands at present allocated to them must not be altered. Every service must accept changes at one Conference or the other and the Committee had already applied this principle in allocating 450 kc/s. to the amateurs at 21 Mc/s. On the same principle they ought to revise the 14 Mc/s. band. The United Kingdom had already said that she could accept any allocation between 300 and 400 kc/s. on which unanimous agreement could be reached—it was now clear that unanimous agreement on 400 kc/s. could not be obtained. At the same time it was necessary to have in mind the need for finding the best solution for the amateurs as a whole and to avoid favouring the amateurs in one part of the world at the expense of those in another part. It would therefore be better to come to agreement on a world-wide allocation of 350 kc/s. than to allocate 400 kc/s. in one part of the world and 300 kc/s. in the other. The United Kingdom was strongly in favour of allocating 350 kc/s. to the amateur service, and 50 kc/s. for the fixed service, on a world-wide basis. At the same time she would not object to the proposal made by the U.S.S.R. since that country, by reason of its vast size, might need a special solution.

EGYPT, BELGIUM, INDIA, NORWAY, CUBA, SWITZERLAND, AUSTRALIA, ITALY, SWEDEN, THE NETHERLANDS and DENMARK indicated that while they preferred their initial proposals they were ready to support the proposal advanced by France and the United Kingdom if in that way unanimous agreement could be reached.

CHINA and NEW ZEALAND supported 400 kc/s. The latter country considered the arrangement for sharing this band (as proposed by the U.S.S.R.) to be most unsatisfactory. The amateurs of New Zealand would wish to communicate not only with those of China, the United States and Canada but also with those of all the European countries. The delegate appealed, therefore, to the U.S.S.R. to envisage exclusive world-wide allocation of the band allocated to amateurs.

The delegate of the U.S.S.R. said that the amateurs of the U.S.S.R. would have wishes similar to those of the New Zealand amateurs. They would, moreover, be able to satisfy those wishes since the U.S.S.R. was prepared to allocate 400 kc/s. to the amateurs. The fact that part of the band would be shared with the fixed service did not mean that the amateurs would not be able to use the whole of the band. The U.S.S.R. would use care in choosing the frequencies allocated to the fixed service. New Zealand, and other countries, should therefore feel no anxiety on this question.

The UNITED STATES pointed out that 34 countries had expressed their views at the earlier meeting. On the present occasion many of them had not yet spoken and it must not, therefore, be assumed that there was a majority in favour of the compromise proposal.

NETHERLAND INDIES, PHILIPPINES, the UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA, ECUADOR, the FRENCH COLONIES, PORTUGAL, PERU and the UKRAINE indicated their willingness to accept the compromise of 350 kc/s. in the interests of unanimous agreement. The Ukraine emphasised how great were the needs of the fixed service in that country, which had been ravaged by the war and where, at present, radio was the only means of communication. Bearing in mind the progress that had been made in radio technique, the loss to the amateurs in this part of the spectrum, whose characteristics had now been

thoroughly studied, was very slight and was, moreover, compensated for by an increase in other parts of the spectrum. The Ukraine pressed, as Poland had done earlier, for the allocation of 350 kc/s. to the amateurs, with a special note to cover the requirements of the U.S.S.R. and the Ukraine.

VENEZUELA pointed out that, with the reservation made by the U.S.S.R., only 250 kc/s. would be allocated exclusively to the amateurs. The delegate asked how the U.S.S.R. proposed to allocate frequencies in this band to the fixed service so as not to interfere with the amateurs.

The U.S.S.R. recalled that when the discussion started the U.S.S.R. had pressed for 200 kc/s. for amateurs and 200 kc/s. for the fixed service. However, they had now agreed to accept, reluctantly, an increase of the band for amateurs up to a maximum of 400 kc/s. on condition that the U.S.S.R. be allowed to use part of the band for the fixed service as well, because of their special geographical difficulties. By carefully selecting the frequency appropriate to the time of day and the distance to be covered, and using directional aerials, satisfactory sharing could be assured. The delegate asked all the other countries to extend the same sympathy to the U.S.S.R., as regards this difficult problem, as a number of countries had already shown.

CANADA asked: (a) whether the U.S.S.R. would agree to accept a power limitation; (b) whether the U.S.S.R. would agree to operate their fixed services on a non-interference basis.

The delegate of the U.S.S.R. said that he could appreciate the difficulties and uncertainties of those countries which were in favour of allocating 400 kc/s. to amateurs but were nearly ready to accept 350 kc/s. He had already expressed the U.S.S.R.'s readiness to take the necessary technical steps to minimize the possibility of interference. *The U.S.S.R. would carry out their responsibilities in this connection and he thought that if his statement were recorded in the present report, that would constitute a sufficient guarantee.* (The italics are ours.—Ed.)

The delegate of the UNITED STATES said that his country could not consider accepting the compromise proposal unless it was absolutely certain that agreement could not be reached on the basis of 400 kc/s. for the amateur service. He recognised the validity of the remarks made by the United Kingdom regarding the usefulness of the 14 Mc/s. band to amateurs for long-distance communications, and he fully agreed that the amateur allocation must be made on a world-wide basis. Regarding the statement made by the U.S.S.R. as to the sharing of 100 kc/s. in the U.S.S.R. between the amateur and fixed services, he assumed that the frequencies assigned to the fixed service would be used solely for internal domestic communications, since it was clear that other countries would be unable to participate in fixed service transmissions from the U.S.S.R. on these frequencies. (The italics are ours.—Ed.)

He was now compelled, although very reluctantly, to agree that the majority were prepared to accept a world-wide allocation of 350 kc/s. and 50 kc/s. to the amateur and fixed services respectively, with a note permitting the U.S.S.R. to share 100 of the 350 kc/s. allocated to amateurs between the amateur service and U.S.S.R. fixed services. In the light of this majority opinion the United States was now prepared seriously to consider this compromise solution on the condition (a) that it was accepted unanimously and (b) that the facilities for sharing in the U.S.S.R. were not extended to other countries, since the amateur allocation would then no longer be exclusive but extensively shared and this would be entirely unacceptable to the United States.

CHINA said that she would bow to the inevitable and reluctantly accept the compromise solution.

The delegate of the UNITED KINGDOM said that he had assumed that the proposed sharing of part of the amateur band in the U.S.S.R. was to provide for internal services. The undertaking given by the U.S.S.R. was extremely valuable and he wished to express the United Kingdom's gratitude for this undertaking and also for the helpful attitude the U.S.S.R. had shown in the discussion leading to a solution of the problem. Thanks were also due to the United States for the magnificent gesture they had just made.

CANADA asked for confirmation that the band shared in the U.S.S.R. between the amateur and fixed services would be 14250-14350 kc/s. The CHAIRMAN replied that he understood that to be the position.

That then is the official story, which makes it clear, for all to see, why we have lost 50 kc/s. in our most valuable DX band and why 100 kc/s. of the remaining portion will be shared in the U.S.S.R. between the amateur and fixed services.

## The 21 and 28 Mc/s. Bands

The decision to allocate to amateurs 450 kc/s. on a world-wide exclusive basis between 21 and 21.45 Mc/s. will be warmly welcomed but we should not lose sight of the fact that in making this gesture the Conference also approved the reduction of the width of the 28-30 Mc/s. band by 300 kc/s. We recognise of course that the amateurs of North America have been restricted to the band 28-29.7 Mc/s. ever since licences were re-issued after the war. The loss of those last 300 kc/s. may not be regarded as very serious although we believe that many European amateurs will be sorry to see their one remaining interference-free DX channel taken away.

## The V.H.F.'s

The position in regard to the 5 metre band remains unchanged except that it can now be stated officially that European amateurs are not provided for in this part of the spectrum. Our hope lies with the G.P.O., who have agreed to explore the possibilities of amateurs using certain frequencies around 60 Mc/s. on a non-interference basis.

The decision to allocate a band around 2 metres will be welcomed by all who are interested in V.H.F. technique. Already distances up to nearly 600 miles have been covered within the U.S. (where the band is open to amateurs) so there should be plenty of scope over here for those who are doubtful about the future of 5 metre work.

Nothing much is known in amateur circles about the behaviour of waves in the decimetric and centimetric ranges, but with four new bands shortly to become available we are confident that much fresh ground will be broken.

In describing the bands above 150 Mc/s. we believe that it will be advisable to adopt the metric notation. We suggest therefore that the following nomenclature be used :

420- 460 Mc/s.	..	70 cms.
1,215- 1,300 "	..	25 "
2,300- 2,450 "	..	13 "
5,650- 5,850 "	..	50 mms.
10,000-10,500 "	..	30 "

It is a little unfortunate that harmonic relationship has not been preserved at this part of the spectrum, but a perusal of the allocation table shows that certain frequencies in the 2 metre band will triple into the 70 cms. band whilst certain frequencies in that band will triple into the 25 cms band.

## Band Planning

Now that our fate has been settled for the next few years we can again turn to a consideration of band planning problems. We do not doubt that many members have ideas on the subject, but we would sound the warning that, as far as the DX bands are concerned, no system of band planning will be successful unless world-wide agreement is reached. With that thought in mind we are strongly of the opinion that the I.A.R.U. Societies should consider the many viewpoints which are held both in this country and abroad, and if necessary a conference should be held for this purpose.