

CBK marks 30 years of service to Western Canada

THIS WEEK, radio station, CBK, the CBC's pioneer station in the West, marks 30 years of service to the people of Saskatchewan. The anniversary day, July 29, will include special programming, featuring voice clips from CBC pioneers, interviews and messages of congratulation.

CBK's transmitter at Watrous went on the air in 1939, with World War II in the offing and amidst preparations for the largest national coverage of the CBC's history to that date—the Royal Tour of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (now the Queen Mother). Events in Winnipeg, Regina and Calgary were covered and broadcast by the tiny CBK staff of ten, headed by Roy D. Cahoon, then engineer-in-charge and now the CBC's Chief Engineer in Montreal.

The official opening took place in the basement of the United Church at Watrous. Greetings on the inaugural program 30 years ago were expressed by the late C. D. Howe, then Minister of Transport, the late L. W. Brockington, then Chairman of the CBC Board of Governors, the Director-General of the BBC, the President of CBS and the Premiers of the three prairie provinces.

The station's early history was one of austere and strenuous war-time service. The staff battled constantly to keep the station on the air in spite of problems of short supply of equipment and stringent security regulations. The transmitter tower was under armed guard night and day and no one was allowed to even photograph it. So powerful was CBK's signal that fears were expressed that enemy aircraft might follow it

in on Canadian targets. As a result CBK's maximum power of 50,000 watts was reduced to 1,000 but after one day of such operation, the prairie people decided their radio service was more vital than mere safety and the top power was resumed.

Some of the finest moments in radio history were logged on CBK. It was on CBK that prairie listeners heard King George VI's famous speech at Christmas, 1939 and the immortal words of Winston Churchill, which stirred the world. And with great sighs of relief, CBK listeners heard King George VI on VE Day in 1945 declare, "We have come to the end of our tribulation."

The times changed, but CBK's task of providing network radio services to all of Saskatchewan continued. Two studios had been built into CBK's transmitter building in 1939 to take care of network failures or special local announcements but it was not until October, 1954 that the Saskatchewan operation was actually completed with the official opening of the main studios in Regina under the management of R. H. Roberts, now retired.

With the addition of the studios, CBK's staff increased to 32 (26 in Regina and 6 at Watrous). Mr. A. E. Parr is now manager. However the same transmitter the engineers installed in 1939 still serves the prairies, and remains one of the world's most powerful and far-reaching radio stations.

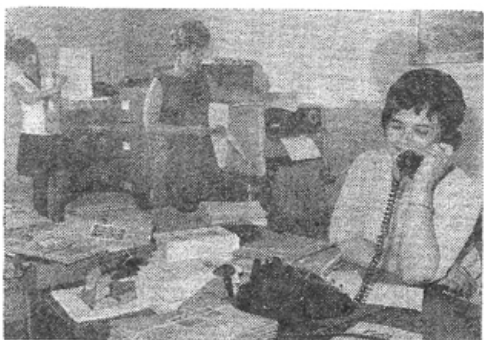
CBK has been very much a part of the history and development of the province of Saskatchewan for the past 30 years and will continue to be in the years that lie ahead. □



At the CBC's pioneer Western radio station, CBK Saskatoon, announcer-operator Bryce Eckstein (earphones) broadcasts afternoon show, *Tempo*, with producer Dan Hansen.



Technician Jim Goldie, announcer-operator Jim Taves and operator Ralph Goodale check out details in the station's maintenance shop.



Stenographer Vel Clerk and secretaries Jennifer Schick and Eileen Hannon.



Staff members at the Watrous transmitter are (left to right) technician Stan Walberg, technician H. K. Vidal, caretaker W. E. S. (Stan) Stacey, technician A. D. Squires, technician O. J. McIntosh, and supervising technician Wayne Bjorndahl.

Mr. Alfred E. Parr, station manager of CBK. He's a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan with degrees in Arts and Education. After teaching high school, he joined the CBC in 1948.



The original staff at CBK included (front row, left to right) Roy D. Cahoon, engineer-in-charge, R. L. Punchon, Pat Henderson, Sam Haggerty and W. W. Grant. Back row: C. F. Patterson, Lawrence Marshall, Al Sheffield and Paul Johnson. Missing is Roy Murdock, caretaker.

