



Journal Title: Telecommunication Journal

Journal Issue: vol. 41 (no. 8), 1974

Article Title: World Administrative Maritime Radio Conference

Page number(s): pp. 471-472

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Editor's note:

We publish below a summary of the main results of the Maritime Conference. A detailed article on the Conference is in preparation and will be published later.

World Administrative Maritime Radio Conference

The World Administrative Radio Conference for Maritime Mobile Telecommunications, which opened at the Geneva International Conference Centre on 22 April 1974, finished work on Saturday morning 8 June with the signature of the Final Acts, which are to come into force on 1 January 1976.

For seven weeks some 500 delegates from 104 countries Members of the Union examined some 2200 proposals

for the revision of those parts of the Radio Regulations and Additional Radio Regulations which relate to the maritime mobile service.

The Conference was presided over by Mr. R.M. Billington (United Kingdom). Its Vice-Chairmen were Mr. Yun-chou Liu (People's Republic of China), Mr. Robert E. Lee (United States), Mr. A. Badalov (USSR) and Mr. A. M'Bodji Dione (Senegal).

It was a sequel to the Maritime Conference held in Geneva in 1967 which adopted a recommendation:

"that a World Administrative Radio Conference be convened to establish on the basis of single-sideband operation a new Frequency Allotment Plan for high-frequency radiotelephone coast stations and to amend the associated provisions of the Radio Regulations."

This Plan, which will come into force in accordance with a calendar drawn up by the Conference, will be kept up to date by a procedure also established by the Conference.

The Conference also adopted a large number of measures to ensure the smooth operation of radiocommunications in the maritime mobile service, taking into account the present trends towards an increase in radiotelephone traffic, a decline in manual radiotelegraph traffic and an expansion of radiotelegraph traffic using direct-printing systems.

Selective calling system

The Radio Regulations were revised with respect to the procedure for the international use of selective calling in the maritime mobile service. Selective calling entails the assignment to each ship of its own coded signal, like a telephone number, and equipping it with an automatic receiver which reacts to the transmission of a coded signal from a coast station. A resolution was adopted on the introduction of the digital selective coding system to meet the needs of the maritime mobile service, inviting the CCIR to prepare as soon as possible recommendations on the technical and operational characteristics of a digital selective calling system.

New definitions

The following may be mentioned among the newly defined terms:

— Ship movement service:

"A maritime mobile safety service, other than a port operation service, between coast stations and ship stations, or between ship stations, in which messages are restricted to those relating to the movement of ships. Messages which are of a public correspondence nature shall be excluded from this service."

— On-board communication station:

"A low-powered mobile station in the maritime mobile service intended for use for internal communications on board a ship, or between a ship and its lifeboats and liferafts during lifeboat drills or operations, or for communication within a group of vessels being towed or pushed, as well as for line handling and mooring instructions."

— Ship earth station:

"A mobile earth station in the maritime mobile-satellite service located on board ship." The conditions to be met by this type of station were also regulated.

— Radar beacon (racon):

"In the maritime radionavigation service, a receiver-transmitter device which, when triggered by a surface search radar, automatically returns a distinctive signal which can appear on the display of the triggering radar, providing range, bearing and identification information."

Radiotelegraphy

The bands allocated to the maritime mobile service were rearranged, particularly for wide-band telegraph systems, facsimile, narrow-band systems, direct telegraphy and data transmission. Procedures were defined for narrow-band direct-printing telegraphy in the maritime mobile service.

Radiotelex calls were defined and regulatory provisions were adopted to enable telex subscribers on land to make contact with ships equipped with a telex station.

Personnel

The article of the Radio Regulations on operator's certificates for ship stations was revised. The new denomination of "operators of mobile earth stations in the maritime mobile-satellite service" was introduced and the classes and categories of operator's certificates for ship stations were separated from those of operators on aircraft stations.

Safety and distress

Procedures for distress signals and traffic and alarm, emergency and safety signals were reviewed to increase safety by such new technical means as, for instance, selective calling, which allows for the sending of a special "calling all ships" signal to activate the receiving selectors on board all ships, irrespective of their selective call number.

* * *

The Conference also adopted a certain number of resolutions and recommendations relating to:

- use of the single-sideband technique in the radiotelephone bands of the maritime mobile service between 4 000 and 23 000 kHz;
- spacing of frequencies allocated to the maritime mobile service in the band 156-174 MHz;
- unauthorized use of frequencies in the bands allocated to the maritime mobile service (especially by high-powered broadcasting stations);
- technical co-operation with the developing countries in the matter of maritime telecommunications;
- use of low-powered radiolocation stations in the bands between 1 605 and 2 850 kHz;
- use of fixed-frequency radiodetermination beacons;
- distress, emergency and safety traffic;
- temporary provisions on technical and operational aspects of the maritime mobile-satellite service;
- studies of the interconnection of maritime mobile radiocommunication systems with the international telephone and telegraph networks;
- future use and characteristics of emergency position-indicating radiobeacons.

XIIIth Plenary Assembly of the CCIR

The XIIIth Plenary Assembly of the International Radio Consultative Committee opened on 15 July 1974 in the International Conference Centre, Geneva.

The final meetings of the 13 Study Groups for which the CCIR is responsible, and which prepared the technical documents submitted for the approval of the Plenary Assembly, were held between 5 February and 20 March 1974. An important part of the work of the Plenary Assembly is the examination and approval of these documents. In addition, the Plenary Assembly will be called upon to elect a new Director of the CCIR, the present incumbent, Mr. J.W. Herbstreit (United States) having reached the end of his term of office.

During the four years since the XIIth Plenary Assembly, which took place at New Delhi from 21 January to 11 February 1970, considerable progress has been made in most fields of radiocommunication, especially in the domain of satellite communications. An entirely new field of activity is the application of communication satellites to sound broadcasting and television, with special reference to the educational needs of the developing countries. To this end, considerable work has been done within the terms of reference of CCIR Study Groups 4 (Fixed service using satellites), 5 (Propagation in non-ionized media), 6 (Ionospheric propagation), 10 (Broadcasting service (sound)) and 11 (Broadcasting service (television)). Developments in mobile communications have also resulted in considerable activity within Study Group 8 (Mobile services). The problem of coexistence between terrestrial radio-relay systems and communication-satellite systems using the same frequency bands has been actively pursued in Study Groups 4 and 9 (Fixed service using radio-relay systems). The results of all these studies will be discussed during the Plenary Assembly with a view to their adoption as formal documents of the CCIR and their inclusion in the printed volumes of the XIIIth Plenary Assembly.

Meeting of CCITT Study Group I



Mr. S.R.V. Paramor

The first meeting of CCITT Study Group I (Telegraph operation and tariffs) during the current plenary period was held in Geneva 25-29 March 1974 under the Chairmanship of Mr. S. R. V. Paramor (United Kingdom Post Office), assisted by the Vice-Chairman, Mr. A. Schwall (Federal Republic of Germany).

Mr. M. Mili, Secretary-General of the ITU, who attended the opening of the meeting, congratulated the Study Group on its work during the previous plenary period in preparation for the World Administrative Telegraph and Telephone Conference (WATTC), Geneva 1973. He referred to the work which would have to be done as a result of Resolutions Nos. 1 and 3 of the WATTC concerning Instructions for the international public telegram service and the international telex service respectively and wished the Study Group every success in this work. Mr. R. Croze, Director of the CCITT, welcomed the delegates and explained the new procedure which had been introduced for "delayed contributions". He also referred to the decisions of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (Malaga-Torremolinos, 1973) with regard to the general principle that each Study Group should hold only two meetings, including the final meeting, between Plenary Assemblies.

The World Administrative Telegraph and Telephone Conference (Geneva 1973) adopted, with some amendments, the revised Telegraph Regulations prepared by Study Group I and decided that these Regulations should be complemented by Instructions for the public telegram and telex services on similar lines to the Instructions for the international telephone service. So far as the public telegram