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Maurice Farquharson interviewed by Frank Gillard, 26 July 1979

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ORAL HISTORY OF THE BBC

Frank Gillard,
Interviews

MAURICE FARQUHARSON

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GILLARD: Tape One of Mr. Maurice Farquharson's contribution to the Oral History of the BBC, and we are recording in Broadcasting House, on the 26th July 1979.

Now, of course, you go right back to Savoy Hill, this was long before you joined the BBC as a member of the staff. Tell us about your Savoy Hill memories?

FARQUHARSON: Well they are very happy memories, Frank. ~~My..~~
Max ~~Stoffle~~ ^{STEPHAN} introduced me to the BBC. He was already a well known figure because of his broadcast lessons in French and he must have given me a letter of introduction, but I can't remember to whom. But anyhow I appear ^{ed} some time in 1928 at the front door of the offices and was received by Mr. Heslop the receptionist, the soul of courtesy in his black coat and pinstriped trousers and stiff collar. And it was so different from the stage door of the theatre, to which I was accustomed, because I was on the stage at that time, that I was overcome with great awe. And ~~th~~ ^{ed} I then I think, met Miss Hewitt. Helen Hewitt looked after the artists bookings for Val Gielgud and continued to do so ~~I think~~ for many many years in Broadcasting House. She was awfully nice, ~~I was very fond of her.~~ And so I got some engagements through her with ~~Hilary~~ ^{Henry} Oscar ^{who} was the first, and then with Howard Rose and Peter Cresswell, and so I began to be familiar with the studio area there, and I remember passing by the open door of a studio and hearing the click of rapiers as in a duel so I thought I must look in and there was Val Gielgud, Head of Drama, no less, practising a sound effect with a colleague and I was deeply impressed. You've got to remember it was a different age and one was entitled to feel awe in those days in the presence of the great. And ~~I~~ th did feel awe in Savoy Hill, there was something about it, it was perhaps the hierarchical nature of the place which made itself felt. But I do think that it was remarkable how in those very early days of broadcasting there should have been this terrific prestige which one was conscious of. It was of course still the magic of the wireless, but it was also Sir John Reith, I think, ~~And~~ th who was already becoming a very well known figure. I didn't become a regular performer for any of those producers th ~~because~~ ^{though} I would have liked to, because I left the stage and took up other work. But I would like to say a word or two about Howard Rose. He was a superb ~~—~~ he had a superb capacity for analysing the text of a play, the script, the

different parts of the script, the sentences, and the shape of the sentences, where the stresses should lie, the intonation, the whole thing, but of course every drama producer is working at ^{that} every time when he produces a play. But ~~Howard Rose, I think, was in my opinion~~ ^I felt that, with all the different options that are open to an actor in saying a sentence, Howard Rose's interpretation was really always the best, it was the correct ^{one} and he insisted on it being adopted. He wouldn't have any ^{deviation} ~~diversion~~ from his interpretation, and I think this did ~~a little bit~~ upset some of the leading actresses sometimes, but generally speaking he got over that and he usually got his own way. Howard was a very remarkable figure and that's why I'm really remembering him in particular because he seemed to me to be a sort of priest of a cult, pursuing an ideal, which was perfection. And I associated this in my mind later with the BBC, Reith's BBC, when I joined it. Because whatever the imperfections of the organisation might be and I expect there were many because it was growing so quickly and there were muddles and that kind of thing, but I always felt that this ideal of the single-minded pursuit of excellence was to be found in every part of it. And Howard Rose ~~rather sort of~~ summed that up for me in my first contact at Savoy Hill.

GILLARD: Of course, every play you did was live I suppose?

FARQUHARSON: It was. ~~I don't know anything about the..~~ Oh yes, it was ~~very~~ rather primitive. The dramatic control panel had not yet been developed and so the crowd scenes and that sort of thing had to be handled with great care and I got to the point with Howard Rose of helping him with the crowd scenes, and there was some talk of a job being created for that sort of purpose ^{an} assistant to the producer in the studio, ^{but} but as far as I was concerned nothing came of it.

GILLARD: But how did you do a crowd scene for goodness sake. Because you had no gramophone records to back you up with people saying rhubarb-rhubarb.

FARQUHARSON: Well, they were there, ~~as far as I remember~~ all in the studio, at the other end of the studio, they were rhubarbing all the time and one had to ~~sort of~~ help the producer by keeping it under control. It was great fun really.

GILLARD: What sort of plays did they do, were they plays specially written for radio, can you remember?

FARQUHARSON: Well there were one or two, but I think ~~really in~~ nearly everything that I did was a stage play. ~~I had the...~~

GILLARD: What was the view of the acting profession about broadcasting as distinct from the theatre?

FARQUHARSON: Well, ~~of course,~~ it was becoming a ~~jolly~~ valuable way of supplementing the income ~~in~~ between jobs, it was already being looked to and that's what Max Stephan said to me, ~~he~~ said, if you are not in work why not try and get some work with the BBC. And if you look at the cast, ~~of, I think..~~ I'm not sure it wasn't the first play I took part in, produced by Henry Oscar, the cast was a highly distinguished one. And it shows I think that they were taking it seriously. I knew quite a number of the people, this was "The Greater Power - a drama for broadcasting" by Francis Mott. So it was written for broadcasting and there were Brember Wills, Edmund Willard, Robert Spate, ^{Speaight,} Arthur Goulet, ^{Goullet,} Win Weaver, Scott Gatty, Horace ^{Sequeira,} ~~Spate~~, Mary O'Farrell, they were all established figures in the theatre, except me. ~~Laughs~~ So it really was becoming an interesting medium for the actor.

GILLARD: Did you get any evidence that people were actually listening ~~to~~ ^{to} it?

FARQUHARSON: Well, you know, that leads one straight into ~~the,~~ one of the major themes that I was interested in when I was in the BBC - what was happening to the audience..

GILLARD: Perhaps we ought to defer it until...

FARQUHARSON: There were the letters ~~of~~ Frank.

GILLARD: I wonder~~ed~~ if people you met said, I heard you in that play?

FARQUHARSON: Oh indeed, you did hear this. I don't know what the number of licences ~~or number of,~~ were at that time, but obviously the audience was growing all the time.

GILLARD: Because everything was improvised in Savoy Hill, it wasn't built for broadcasting, it all had to be adapted, were you much aware of that? [?] Was it a handicap or did you just take it in your stride?

FARQUHARSON: ~~E,~~ No, ~~I mean~~ I thought it was very easy really. The

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microphone was there and you spoke into it. Nothing could be easier.

GILLARD: Well is there anything more to say about your Savoy Hill memories?

FARQUHARSON: Well, I was sorry, ~~not~~ really, ^{not} to get taken on. I would have accepted a job if I'd been offered it. And I enjoyed the work very much, but it didn't happen that way.

GILLARD: But however, in the course of time you came back to the BBC?

FARQUHARSON: Well I never gave up altogether. I remember that I tried more than once to get into the BBC as a member of the staff and I got an interview with Sir Charles Carpendale, as I remember saying at my farewell dinner; I met him and he did offer me a job, as groundsman at Mospur Park. I thought he was an awfully nice chap. But then, later, I had an audition for a vacancy which had been announced for an announcer and I didn't get that one, but I was comforted by the fact that the successful candidate was Freddie Grisewood. And then, again, ~~then~~ I met Gerald Beadle and became friends with him, quite apart from the BBC altogether, and he set himself the task of getting me into the BBC because he knew it was an ambition of mine, and so ultimately I had my interviews with B.E. Nickolls (Benji) and Sir John Reith, and was taken on as a sort of general assistant. It was a special category of staff I think and Cedric Cliff, I remember was another one, who came in from the Civil Service. Not for any ^{particular} vacancy, but because the processes of promotion were not equal to the demand for new staff at a certain level, and so they were taking on one or two people who had had ~~a~~ quite a good job elsewhere, ^{and} who were interested in coming into the BBC, and that's how I did it.

GILLARD: You mean a sort of reservoir?

FARQUHARSON: It was. I was on a sort of reserve and the first thing that happened to me that I was posted on a temporary basis as a personal assistant to the Empire Programme Director, ^{was} who was J. Berrisford Clark. It was a wonderful thing to join the BBC, I thought, ^{at} ~~at that time~~, because it was a time of such rapid expansion and the whole organisation was simply humming with energy and success.

GILLARD: We are talking about the mid-thirties?

FARQUHARSON: You are talking now about exactly the mid-thirties.. the

Spring of 1935. So I went on to join Ber^esford Clark who was to become a lifelong friend.

GILLARD: This was the Empire Service.

FARQUHARSON: This was the Empire Service which had been started by the BBC after an enormous amount of consultation with H.M.G. and various departments, and on its own initiative and its own money from the [£]ten-shilling licence. It really was an act of great faith in the future.

GILLARD: And it was a short-wave service I take it.

FARQUHARSON: It was a short wave service absolutely, and of course there were as far as I know nothing at that time in the way of local relay stations which could relay on a medium wave. The audience was listening on short wave listening receivers I think everywhere.

GILLARD: They weren't too plentiful in those days were they? Short wave sets.

FARQUHARSON: I think they were easy to get as far as I know, but of course the reception in the blackblocks ^{, for example,} of Australia, was pretty noisy. ~~Except~~ I think it was chancy ^h sometimes the message would come through loud and clear almost everywhere.

GILLARD: Was there any evidence that there was an audience for the Empire Service?

FARQUHARSON: Well here again we come back to letters, you see, and letters were more precious to the Empire Service even than they were to the Home Services. And letters there were, very appreciative ones, they loved it.

GILLARD: Was the service on the air right round the clock, or..?

FARQUHARSON: No, ^{in the 24 hours} there were five time zones ^h and ~~I think~~ as far as I remember there were a series of ^{five} two-hour transmissions, something like that.

GILLARD: Of course by this time there were recordings I suppose..

FARQUHARSON: Well the ^{Blattner} phone was beginning, rather clum^hsy.

GILLARD: Did you, in the Empire Service can you remember, make your own programmes or did you draw them from the Home Service?

FARQUHARSON: We didn't draw the programmes from the Home service very much, no. It was very interesting, I think the programmes were home made. The prominent figure down there, when I say 'down there' it was in Broadcasting House, was Cecil Maddon who, of course, was ^e and remained the man for improvising Light Entertainment at short notice. He knew everybody and he could bring them along.

GILLARD: Did the Empire Service put out Newscasts?

FARQUHARSON: Yes it did, it was a most important part of it, and while I was there J.C.S. McGregor, who was a very experienced news editor, was in charge. The announcers I remember well, there ^{were} Joe ^{SHEWEN} Schoen and Basil Gray and Robert Dougall ^(a very handsome young man) ~~there~~ And they were all rather informal, more informal with their short wave listeners than would have been considered appropriate in the Home News. I remember, too, L.W. Hayes being around the place a great deal; of course he came from the Engineering Division and lived on the 6th floor, but he was the sort of genial grand master of knowledge where radio transmissions were concerned and he was watching over this operation all the time. Janet Quigley looked after the letters and she later of course, became well known as the Editor of Woman's Hour and I expect she did those letters jolly well. There was M.M. Dewar, Mungo Dewar, who was our administrator, ~~who I remember as really he seemed almost like...~~ he was a cheery bloke and he reminded me of a real theatrical old timer; "Watch your time zones, Maurice," he said, "and you'll be all right." Of course, at the heart of it all, was J.B. Clark. I was going to part ^{from} with him quite soon but I do remember being glad to be appointed secretary to the Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference of 1952 which was held in London and where he was of course the central figure. And I got ^h onto the same sort of relationship with him there and it put me in mind of the old Empire Service Departmental meetings in 1935 when there was really very little to show but all to gain. And that was the way J.B. ran those ^{early} meetings with that sort of quiet confidence in the future, I remember.

But you were asking me a little earlier, Frank, where this operation took place, it was on the second floor of Broadcasting House, and I shall always remember it because of course although Clark was Empire Programme Director he wasn't the head of the whole show. ^T That was the Director of Foreign and Empire Services, or Empire and Foreign Services, and it was 'And Foreign' because there was already established a Foreign Liaison in the persons of Major Atkinson and Isa Benzie, who ~~really~~ had established an extremely good

liaison with European ^broadcasters in particular, ~~but~~ Graves, ~~of course~~ was ~~always~~ dogged with ill health. ^{He} Graves was the Director of Empire and Foreign Services and he was away on ~~prolonged~~ sickleave when I was there and he hardly appeared, and so it was natural that on my arrival J.B. Clark should put me into his room which was a very grand one, so that although I was a complete newcomer to the BBC I lived in surroundings of considerable grandeur. ^{eur,} This was very funny because ~~foreign~~ ^{and} Empire visitors used to flow in and if J.B. was busy he would decant them on to me and as soon as they entered the room they assumed a very deferential manner and so I had to disillusion them and their manner changed.

I don't think I've got anything more to say about that, except that ~~I felt that~~, I always felt that J.B. Clark would make something out of that Service and of course he lived to see very distinguished figures moving in and out of the Services that were developed. Stephen Tallents, Ivone Kirkpatrick, Ian Jacoby, Harman Grisewood and others ~~I think~~, but he was there all the time, and I felt that by sheer competence and devotion he ultimately reached the summit and was appointed over the whole show. I do believe, as I was very friendly with him always, that there ~~seems as if there~~ might have been the chance of the Director Generalship at one stage; he could have been a possible contender I think. But he didn't want it in any case. He knew his own limitations. ^{And} ~~he~~ had passed his life in sound radio and ~~he~~ wasn't qualified for television.

GILLARD: The Public Relations Division which was set up in 1935, who saw the need for it and why it was necessary, how it all worked out?

FARQUHARSON: I heard of it first, Frank, before I had left the Empire Service. I'd heard that Sir Stephen Tallents ^{who} was at that time Head of Public Relations at the Post Office, ^h was going to come along and do the same job for the BBC, and I was told also that he would want to build up a team and that there was a place in it for me. Well I'd heard about Stephen Tallents in lots of different contexts ~~family enough~~. I think that what really brought him alive in my mind was ^{the} this pamphlet ^{called} "The Projection of Britain", which must have come out in the ~~very~~ early 30's, ~~came into my hands~~. It was a striking affair, that pamphlet, it had a cover by E. McKnight Kauffer; Tallents was always a great employer of good artists when he was at the Empire Marketing Board, and when he was at the BBC too, ~~and~~ ^{it} was written by ~~Stephen~~ Tallents.. I've lost that pamphlet. I'm sure it must have attracted notice at the time, but I've never heard it mentioned. It gave a new look to the whole field of publicity, exhibitions, and the promotion of goods and services generally, all summed up in this phrase ["]public relations.["] It was a new phrase to me, although

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if you read Briggs, his history from the beginning, you find that expression cropping up in relation to things that happened quite early in the BBC.

I was just wondering whether ^{that} ~~it~~ was anachronistic ^{tic} because I don't remember the expression "public relations" until this point, and whether or not Tallents invented the words, ^(it no doubt came from America) he certainly was one of the early promoters of the idea.

Tallents had a large view of the subject, and one could I think say that the basic aim of public relations in his picture, was the spreading of ~~neutral~~ ^{mutual} understanding between providers and recipients of services, based on better information. In one simple sense I think PR means consideration for the customer, and that's a need one has at any time.

Then you were asking, who perceived the need for something stronger in the way of public relations in the BBC? The Board of Governors are said to have been tremendously interested in this and in the appointment of Stephen Tallents.

And I would guess that Reith was keen on it too, in fact I would be surprised really and this is all unknown to me really, if most of the people in the top echelons of the BBC, including the Controller of Programmes Alan Dawnay at that time, and the senior programme people like Val Gielgud, I should have expected them to be in favour of something of that kind for the reason that on the whole the BBC did not get a good press in the 30's in the mid 30's.

Not all the press was unfriendly, but some of it was downright hostile, and some of the regular radio correspondents of the papers, ^{COLLIE} ~~Colin~~ Knox, Garry ^{Allighan} ~~Allegan~~ and others ~~names of that sort~~, didn't lose much opportunity of snipping away. And this I think was rather deeply embedded in the press from the point of view of sheer jealousy in a way, following the early resistance of the press to the BBC broadcasting news, ~~and developing.~~

I think the sheer success of the BBC in the 30's aroused jealousy and made it seem as if the BBC was arrogant. And ~~for~~ I think it's fair to say that during that time the BBC's own press department was not strongly led.

There was one political reason why Reith would have wanted to strengthen the PR side. It was of course because of the Ullwater Committee, that was the first Broadcasting Committee, the first independent committee on the future of broadcasting after 10 years of the Charter, and whose report was expected in the following year. There had been a lot of talk in Parliament about the autocratic rule of the BBC's Director General, and people did talk there of the arrogance of the BBC which didn't seem to take any account of listeners' tastes and preferences. I think he must have thought that it would be a timely move in relation to Ullswater, to show that the BBC had equipped itself with special machinery to try and listen to the public and to learn.

That was one reason why the BBC was beginning before the arrival of Tallents to take an interest in schemes of audience research. It wasn't the only reason. A very basic reason for wanting audience research was the need for the programme departments of the BBC to know more about its audience, ~~to get~~ for guidance. ~~And~~ The lack of a box office ~~for example~~ was a handicap.

I think that those two factors, the need for getting a friendlier relationship with the press and the need to get a good report out of the Ullswater Committee were strong reasons ^{for} ~~of~~ developing public relations.

GILLARD: And Tallents was the obvious expert to bring in.

FARQUHARSON: Well the Board of Governors thought so, and of course ~~he was~~, he had a considerable status ~~in.. by that time.~~ He'd invented the Greetings Telegram!

GILLARD: You didn't have much experience of PR until now?

FARQUHARSON: Well I did actually, because I'd worked for five years with the National Council of Social Service and had conducted a great deal of correspondence with the Societies associated with that Council all over the country, especially in the rural parts of the country. So I was really rather practised ^{for example,} in the art of letter writing.

GILLARD: We all know that, Maurice. All of us who have seen your work. What was to be the range of Tallent's command then, how far did the CPR writ run?

FARQUHARSON: Well Tallents of course, inherited all the sections and departments that had been doing that sort of work, ~~and there were, it was quite a lot.~~ I think that the most interesting thing about the appointment of Tallents was that he was made a Controller from the start, ~~alongside the three existing~~ ^{and} ~~Controllers - Programmes, Engineering, Administration.~~ This was a very novel move for the BBC, which had of course undergone some pretty big internal changes and reorganisations in its short life. It left all the existing parts of the BBC substantially unaltered. You might say that on paper they weren't really much affected. ~~But a~~ ^{and} number of established but subsidiary activities, this is the point I think, publications (of course it's important); publicity; information services, they were separated out and grouped under a new Controller. ~~In~~ the process he created a division which was on the organisation chart on a level of importance with the other three branches. It was certainly giving PR a very great importance to rank it level with ~~the other controller-~~ ^{Programmes, Engineering} ~~and Administration.~~ I think the real point is that with Tallents on the scene, with his stature and status, how could it have been otherwise? I think this new PR system undoubtedly filled a gap, and some very useful work was done both by Tallents and by Ryan who ~~had~~ joined him later.

GILLARD: This is Patrick Ryan.

FARQUHARSON: Patrick Ryan. ^{useful work was done} And ⁱⁿ the division generally, but it didn't have very long to run as it turned out - 5 years - and before its course had been done strains in the organisation undoubtedly had arisen.

GILLARD: What was your own special area of responsibility in the PR Division?

FARQUHARSON: ^h ~~Well~~ ^{rather} ~~rather~~ undefined at first, but I was at any rate given some ^{specific} jobs to do which I liked. I was told for example to take over the GAC - General Advisory Council - which had been created only ~~about~~ some few months before; also the Programme Correspondence ~~Section~~, and I had various meetings which I was asked to sit in at and minute, including the Programme Board which was rather an imposing body. And the Programme Committee which was smaller, ~~but even more imposing.~~ I had a liaison with the Post Office, which was given to me and so I developed that a bit. I think that there were two main gaps which were pretty apparent when Tallents arrived. One was the study of the audience, which I've mentioned, and the other was a central information unit to provide the documentation on matters on which information was needed. And beyond that there was of course going to be a high-level operation - lectures, meetings - ~~to be~~ which Tallents and Patrick Ryan were going to undertake a little bit later on.

GILLARD: Let's.. let me first ask you. Listener research and the Information Unit were brought in as part of your little department?

FARQUHARSON: They were.

GILLARD: So, you really had Listener Research, GAC and various other committees and things to minute.. Programme Correspondence, and you had the Information Unit. I'm going to ask you a bit about each of those because these are fascinating. Let's take the GAC first. How did it compare with the GAC of later days ^{with} of which I am familiar?

FARQUHARSON: Well I think the difference was that it was a very august and not a very useful, practically useful, body. Whereas, as I understand it lately, the Advisory Council ^{has} ~~have~~ taken ^{itself} ~~themselves~~ much more seriously and appointed sub-committees and things of that sort. When I joined, the Council had had one meeting and S.J. de la ^{Lotbinière} ~~Vinière~~ (Lobby) had been appointed then provisionally to act as secretary in addition to his other duties. When I called on him he greeted me with the words

"Well, I'm glad the Council is going to have a proper secretary", and he breathed a huge sigh of relief. I can understand the relief ~~x~~ Lobby had subsisted too long on what J.B. Clark used to call the "red meat of (e.c. red) programmes" to be content with a secretarial job, but for me the prospect was appealing. And one thing that I do appreciate on looking back is that it gave me straight away a personal link with J.C.W. Reith and I could see him in action, because of course he was there.

GILLARD: Did he dominate ..

FARQUHARSON: Yes I think he did. I don't reckon I've got anything new to say really about that great man ~~his~~ his limitations and his foibles, except that he had this magnetism. When he came into a room full of people everything quickened, like a sort of increase in the voltage.

GILLARD: But.. would he be patient with a body like the GAC?

FARQUHARSON: Well he managed to be patient, he'd had great hopes of it and he had appointed all the great and the good in the land and so it was a very august assembly, as Briggs said, people used to say it was rather too much like the House of Lords.

GILLARD: Who was its chairman?

FARQUHARSON: The first chairman was William Temple, who was then Archbishop of York. And.. I think Reith had a partiality for grandure especially in relation to the BBC because he thought nothing was too good for his BBC, you know. But I think really that the great build-up of all these famous people was because Reith had the Ullswater Committee on his hands. He and Ronnie Norman the Chairman, they were doing all they could to get the Committee to understand and produce a good report from the BBC's point of view. ~~Now~~ Reith wanted the Council itself to give evidence to the Ullswater Committee, and it did. And I think that he wanted to have some weighty signatures. The Report as it was sent in, the submission to Ullswater, was signed by William Temple, Lord Beveridge, Margaret Bonfield, Lord ^{Bonfield} ~~Crawford~~, David Lloyd George, Lord MacMillan, Lord Rutherford, Sir Arthur Salter, George Bernard Shaw, Sybil Thorndyke, Lord ^{Tweedsmuir} ~~Pleasur~~, otherwise "John Buchan". You could scarcely go much higher than that. And it was a ~~very~~ good report, I think it must have made a difference. I remember it was prepared by a sub-committee and it was Beveridge who produced the draft, unless I did and then he pulled it about, I can't be sure, but I called on him at the LSE to discuss the paper

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and he gave me a lesson in how to draft memoranda, it was really quite useful. He was very friendly, both then and ten years later when he was ~~hearing~~^{holding} his own famous enquiry.

GILLARD: Oh we should come on to that.

G.A.C.1

FARQUHARSON: Yes, but his mental powers then were not what they'd been on the earlier occasions. No. Well you know you asked about the G.A.C. It was an august assembly but it gradually became less grand. For example if you look at the successive Chairmen, they were according to my memory ~~they were:~~^{Archbishop} William Temple, Lord MacMillan, Lord Halifax, Lord Radcliffe, ~~and only accepted I think he was~~^{after him,} Sir Cyril Radcliffe then, and then Norman Fisher. ~~And Sir Edward Fellows.~~^e Well I mean, Fisher was my suggestion. He was relatively little known ~~really~~ⁿ as a national figure although he must have been known to a tremendous audience of ordinary people, and as an accomplished broadcaster in sound (and television, ~~and~~ that was later of course). ~~As an excellent experienced Chairman he couldn't have been improved on and the council needed that informal touch and a more human approach and did much better,~~^e and Sir Edward Fellows, ~~you see~~^e a former clerk to the House of Commons, ~~also~~ⁿ a very distinguished chap, ~~but~~^e not a national figure. He also was an excellent choice. He devoted a lot of time to it, he worked at it, and he was very much liked. Lord Halifax was really very remote indeed. I believe he only broadcast very rarely and with the utmost reluctance, very different from Baldwin, who was keen to learn, and adept. (I shall never forget the impact on me, who at that time knew very little about the BBC, ~~and wasn't.~~ it was before my first contact with ~~the~~ⁿ with Savoy Hill, I shall never forget the impact of the last sentence of Baldwin's appeal to the miners in 1926, that sad struggle between master and man, he finished by saying 'cannot you trust me to ensure a square deal between man — and man'. And I thought to myself, this BBC is really something.) But ~~Sir~~^{Lord} Halifax did see the importance of the whole thing and he was a great believer in the BBC. I remember a letter he wrote to the Times in the early stages of the Parliamentary struggle about the BBC's monopoly of broadcasting. His total opposition to the commercial lobby expressed in measured phrases and signed, "Halifax." It sounded rather like the distant boom of a gun or the first stroke of Big Ben, you felt that people had to take some notice of it. But of course they didn't. ^{n/n} We were always hard up for a representative of Light Entertainment, we tried to make the thing reasonably representative, and I thought it was a good idea to have George Robey, and his appointment made a wonderful press story. It was good, but I'm ~~afraid~~ⁿ Robey wasn't really a success. He was tickled by his appointment but he was really out of his depth. He used to like sitting next to Lady Reading and whispering jokes in her ear. What sort of jokes I don't know. ^{n/n} One of the most valuable

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members of the GAC undoubtedly in my opinion was Herbert Samuel. He attended assiduously, though he was leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords, and he filed all the GAC papers, of which there were a good many, ~~there was a lot of documentation~~, in his home in Porchester Terrace and he was able to find the one he wanted, and he was always serious and sensible with a sort of rather modulated Asquithian touch of humour, but he landed me in an awkward situation because at a meeting after a reshuffle of the membership, Lord Samuel proposed that ^{as} such a large number of members would be unknown to each other by sight, the ¹ Secretary should announce the name of each speaker as he or she rose to his or her feet. ~~Incidentally~~ He was getting distinctly deaf. Well nobody was more pleased than members of our own Board of Governors who were there, when I managed to perform this feat without mistaking anybody's identity; on the other hand, some members were embarrassed at being barked at the moment they had ² summoned up courage to address their colleagues. Victor Rothschild ~~and~~ (Lord Rothschild) never appeared again. But I was determined that Lord Samuel³ should catch the name⁴, and he did - he was grateful. ^W When he left the council ~~and practiced~~ this disagreeable practice ~~with this~~ was discontinued.

I think its quite interesting that the first subject to be debated by the council, this was at its second meeting, after the one that Lobby looked after, ^{was} birth control. Which of course was looked upon as a very dangerous subject in those days, 1935, very different. Our paper had been submitted to the Board of Governors a little earlier by Admiral Sir Charles Cappendale, no less, who was now deputy Director General, and he had taken a forward looking view about birth control. I think the Board's minute on that subject has a certain historical interest and I'd like to quote it in full, I think I may do so at this distance of time:

13th October '35

"Resolved that the GAC be informed at their next meeting that the Governors after careful consideration, although aware that objections have been, and would be made, were disposed to permit reference to birth control in series of talks where the subject was relevant, provided however, that the speaker made it clear that the subject was a controversial one."

~~So~~ ^I It was rather a bold move, but of course couched in extremely cautious terms. ↗

So, the Council was asked to express its view on this, and with a certain amount of reluctance it did. The record isn't available as a matter of fact, but according to my recollection the council endorsed that minute, Recording its own view that nothing explanatory of ^{methods} ~~matters~~ of birth control should be allowed.

u/p Even at this early stage, I believe that)

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But Reith was ~~very~~ disappointed, he didn't feel that the Council was going to be very much use after all.

u/p But as time went on there was a considerable range of subjects which did ^{come} before the Council. And they ranged over a wide field, television, ^{(not} listener research, conditions of service in the BBC, music policy, group listening; ^{this last} that was a very topical subject because this great movement which was idealistic and valuable had run into difficulties. There was a reluctance ^{on the part of the BBC} to devote quite so much prime time to ~~a~~ series of talks which were intended primarily for groups of people listening under a leader and engaging in discussion afterwards, which was the educational object, and which was nurtured by BBC education officers up and down the country, ~~some~~ of ~~it~~. I remember George Gibson for example, they were first rate people and they were recruiting group-leaders and in fact holding courses for the group-leaders, because it turned on the group-leader, the local chap who could run a meeting of that kind. But it was difficult ~~to~~, in spite of the fact that they had very carefully selected speakers like John Hilton and others who were masters of the technique of talks broadcasting, ^{make the talks} it was difficult to ~~get~~ them really intelligible to the general run of people who came to those meetings. ^{those} All the time the call was to ~~make the~~ ~~make~~ them simpler. And of course a great deal was done to do that. But the time came when the BBC did decide that they would have to curtail the thing, it wasn't prepared to go on, I think, financing it forever, it thought it was one of ~~these~~ educational activities that ought to be taken over. William Temple, who I think was Chairman of the Central Committee for Group Listening, and Reith came into collision. ^{u/p} I remember it distinctly. [↑]

Temple said he must see Reith, and so he came to Broadcasting House and I went down to meet him at the entrance and took him up to Reith's office, and Reith asked me to stay there. And William Temple sat on a rather upright chair with his arms folded and waited for Reith to start, and Reith was waiting for William Temple to start. And nothing happened at all, and my recollection is that I started it, saying something or other to get the ball rolling because they were so unwilling to speak to each other. I think William Temple was just about to resign his ~~chairmanship~~ ^(e.c) of the Central Council, and so some compromise was made. And the BBC had carried on that ~~thing~~ ^{scheme} for a long time, ~~but it did in the end~~, It probably served a very useful purpose. ^{while it lasted.}

GILLARD: What other topics did the GAC take?

FARQUHARSON: Well they had the usual sort of thing you'd expect. Empire Broadcasting came up, ~~Educational Broadcasting~~, Talks Policy and so on.

BBC Publications came in for a review..

GILLARD: Much the same as today, really

FARQUHARSON: I dare say. ~~I dare say.~~

HYTCH /
NICOLLS /
Of course the BBC publications were awfully good. I said something rather derogatory about the press relations section, although I should perhaps add that John ^{Hy Tch} Heights was really a very ~~very~~ experienced operator, but he wasn't in the top job there. The BBC's Publications had greatly benefited I think by the fact that B. ~~E.~~ ^{Nichols} had at one time been in charge of the BBC's publications and of course with his great ^{brain} ~~reign~~ he had taken the trouble to learn about typography, lay-out and the technical side of the publications and those so-called supplementary publications, the pamphlets and catalogues and programmes and things of that sort, were very stylish I think, and Benjie Nichols could always recognise a good job of design when he saw one.

GILLARD: These were days, I remember, when the BBC never put on an opera without publishing the libretto.

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FARQUHARSON: Exactly. It was all done in a very grand way, and there were great pamphlets like "The Artist in the Witness Box" which had beautiful colour reproductions the whole way through, marvellous pamphlet which I've got now. And of course the weeklies. ^{"World"} ~~where~~ ^{Radio} was coming to an end, I can't remember when it ceased..

GILLARD: On the outbreak of war.

FARQUHARSON: .. was that it? Well that happened..

GILLARD: Tell us about World Radio?

FARQUHARSON: I don't know much about it..

GILLARD: Nobody's mentioned much.. What sort of a magazine was it?

FARQUHARSON: Well it was for the fan, you know, who wanted to understand about the technical side and all about foreign programmes and so on, I can't remember it awfully clearly, and I can't even remember the name of the man, although I can see him in my mind's eye, who ran it. I expect not everybody realised that the BBC did run three weekly publications Radio Times, ^{The} Listener, and World Radio. The Radio Times was in tremendous

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 shape during those years, I remember, before the war, with Maurice Gorham as its editor, and its circulation was going up fantastically, in spite of the fact that it was really, in a way, ~~had~~ serious, had quite a lot of serious stuff in it; you could read it. And of course the Listener had survived the initial violent reaction of the Publishing worldⁿ to the BBC publishing a literary weekly, as it was called, although of course its main function was to reproduce the talks. It was to come into trouble later with the editor getting into his law suit over the Talking Mongoose, but the paper didn't suffer. And later, of course, with Alan Thomas it was ~~it~~ went on very successfully.

GILLARD: This is a diversion from the General Advisory Council, we'd better get back to the GAC.

FARQUHARSON: Well what I wanted to tell you about the GAC was that from my point of view it was particularly interesting because they decided quite rightly that they would have one main topic for discussion every time, although they did have a question time, a sort of Question Hour which was used by members, they asked questions and the answers were given, that was good. Otherwise it was one main topic. And sometimes a member contributed a paper, but usually the BBC prepared a full paper and the top BBC people concerned with the subject attended the meeting. Well the preparation of all these papers had to be done of course in collaboration with the Departments concerned. And sometimes it seemed to me, because it was my job to produce these papers, that a department didn't really know what its policy was. Well that was really a delusion because they did know, but they hadn't put it into words. I was often asked, I remember, "Do you really think, Maurice, that this Council does any good at all." And I remember answering more than once, "well don't you think its been useful to get this paper written, so that you can really understand what you are doing?" And of course some of those papers ~~they~~ were useful, they could be quoted from.

u/h There was one difficulty, it seemed to me, in the way of running a council of that kind. ~~It~~ It naturally expected to be taken into the confidence of the BBC about important decisions before they were adopted, when they were perhaps decisions which were contemplated by the Board of Governors, for example. ~~The~~ The council was very annoyed when the BBC decided in the 50's, I can't remember the year, to curtail the hours of the Third Programme. ↑

Do you remember that? ↑

↑ Virtually without consulting the council in advance, ~~it was a farce, they didn't consult the Council I think until it had got into the papers.~~

Well, one felt the Council was really right in a way. But how, really, do you take a body of about 40 people meeting four times a year into your confidence on an issue which, you know, would run into very great difficulties

if there was a leakage, a premature leakage to the press. A messy situation would arise. We never got over that, but I think its possible that it ^{may} ~~might~~ have been got over more lately when they may have some routine of consulting the Chairman or a small committee ^{on} an occasion like that. But ~~that~~ ^{was} the real difficulty at that time.

By the time I left the BBC the Council was much less a consultative assembly, much more a businesslike discussion group.

It always had a value. A PR value even if its usefulness as a source of positive guidance to the BBC was ~~really~~ limited, inevitably limited.

Over the years there was a host of first-rate people who gave a lot of time ~~to~~ serving on one or the other of the BBC's advisory bodies, I think you'd agree.

But I personally think it was a wrong limitation of the BBC's independence to ~~fasten~~ ^{make} an advisory council ^{compulsory} ~~round its neck~~ under the ^{BBC's} Charter.

I think the explanation is that the Government was determined to reject Beveridges' crazy idea of a public representation service within the organization ~~at the BBC~~. It would have been a sort of running sore in the body politic, so that we were spared that, but they did fasten something compulsorily on the BBC, which the BBC had already initiated on its own. And the same thing, of course, applied to the ITA later on.

GILLARD: Could I just, before we leave Councils Committees and that sort of thing, you fascinated me by talking about the Control Board and the Control Committee. What were these bodies then?

FARQUHARSON: Oh yes, the ^{Programme} Control Board was really a very lighthearted affair in a way. It consisted of all the Programme Heads ~~on the Programme side~~, with Gerald Beadle there as the Administrative chap ~~(Programme Administration)~~ and it was presided over by the Controller of Programmes, who ~~at~~ that time was Graves. ~~I think~~ ^{he} had an assistant Controller Roger Eckersley, and he had an Assistant Controller Gladstone Murray, who was in charge of all the information side, in other words Gladstone Murray was the Tallents of the day before Tallents arrived, subsequently he went to Canada of course, as you know. And there was a lot of banter, and really a sort of act often arose between Gielgud and Maschwitz, I remember, Maschwitz was by that time Head of Light Entertainment and Variety, and they used to pull each others' leg in a very witty way which pleased everybody enormously.

GILLARD: What was the function of this meeting?

FARQUHARSON: It was really a divisional meeting.

GILLARD: I mean did they review programmes?

FARQUHARSON: Yes. And they also.. Oh the Director of Programme Planning of course, in those days was there. That was Wellington, but also of course at one time it was Siepmann that was later on. I don't think Godfrey Adams came, he did a great deal of the Programme Planning.

GILLARD: He was number two to Wellington.

FARQUHARSON: Yes he was, ^{an} excellent, ~~marvellous~~ chap. I don't think there was an enormous amount of ⁿ business, Frank, it was just a sort of liaison thing. There were these liaison meetings weren't there? The general liaison meeting that the DG had with people up from the regions. Well there was no agenda really, except just a statement by the DG and then questions. And I remember that Hugh Greene on becoming Director of Administration where he had the most disparate and diverse heads of department under him at that time, he held a divisional meeting, which hadn't been held before. I suppose because it was felt really that there was nothing to talk about really. And Hugh Greene made us all feel ~~really~~ that we belonged to something and he told us of the main course of events affecting the BBC during the last month and of the decisions that had been taken at a high level. It was highly interesting and I think we greatly benefited from that.. the Programme Board was really the same thing.

GILLARD: What was the Control Committee then?

FARQUHARSON: The Programme Committee. ~~I can remember clearly I think what the members of the Committee were, though I feel very forgetful about really the business that went on.~~ Graves as Controller Programmes was in the Chair with his two Assistant Controllers. ~~The~~ Wellington, Director of Programme Planning, and ~~the ..~~ and Gerald Beadle who had the money. I'm not sure there wasn't a regional representative, at any rate at certain times, because the liaison with the regions varied, didn't it? At one time there was a Director of Regional Relations, Siepmann had that job when he gave up being Director of Talks, and he was I think in that capacity at this Programme Committee. But I do remember one very strange thing which I somehow feel can't have happened before or since in the history of the BBC. Beadle put a very strange question to the Committee, it arose out of the fact that the BBC's income was rising very rapidly with the dramatic expansion of licences - listening licences - and the question the Gerald Beadle was concerned about was: What would the Committee prefer, would it prefer to have a bit of a bang, a bit of a spree over a limited period with its programme expenditure or would it like to go up a gentle ascent, and I remember this being debated

and it struck me that it was very palmy.

GILLARD: I wonder what they decided?

FARQUHARSON: That as far as I remember, they were, ~~Graves was a man in~~ favour of gradualism.

GILLARD: Caution.

FARQUHARSON: Caution and gradualism.

GILLARD: There are two names you've mentioned, I wonder whether you've anything to say about them. One is Siepmann. What are your memories of Siepmann?

FARQUHARSON: Well I admired Siepmann very much for his intellect really, and his very quick mind ^{and} reactions. Our relations were a little bit funny when we first met in the BBC because one of the first things that Gerald Beadle had done to get me into the BBC was to regard me as a potential Talks Assistant and to introduce me to Siepmann with whom I had an interview and it didn't go very well. And I'm not surprised because I don't really think I would at all have made a good Talks Producer. Those were the days of Lionel Fielden and I remember that Siepmann was really asking me questions ~~rather because, you know~~ with a slant on Lionel Fielden as much as to say ²³ "How there's Lionel Fielden. Do you think you could do anything of that sort?" Well of course I couldn't. And at the end of the interview, when I asked him ~~what the result of the interview,~~ whether there was any prospects ²⁴ for me, he said to me, not on the basis of this interview. And we parted. Well fair enough, I didn't disagree with that at all. But on the other hand it made Siepmann a little uncomfortable I think. But anyhow we got over that.

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I can't really say about Siepmann.. I don't know that he was a very pragmatic man, and as a ²⁵ Planning chap I would have thought that Lindsey was much better.

GILLARD: Something obviously went wrong with his career because he left, ²⁶ didn't he, in the middle of it?

FARQUHARSON: Yes, because there was an awful lot of publicity about various things. He'd got in Bernard Shaw hadn't he, and that very very beautiful film star whose name escapes me at the moment, to debate a report of some committee of the House of Commons, on Divorce Law I think, and it was considered really to have been too frivolous. But yes, he did get into trouble

a bit, but I don't know about it.

GILLARD: The other name I wanted to ask you about was Roger Eckersley?

FARQUHARSON: Well Roger Eckersley was another word for charm. And his great value at the beginning of the BBC was that he had friends everywhere. He was very different from his brother, his brother was ~~very~~ very witty man indeed, Roger was just awfully sweet and kind. The funny story about Roger that is told is, that when the King, King George the Fifth and Queen Mary, and the two little Princesses were due to come on a visit to Broadcasting House there were of course great meetings to cover every single detail, every step that would be taken inside the building, and one of the first decisions made was that Roger should look after Queen Mary when it came to tea-time. And this was what happened. And.. Roger got into difficulties he was seen to be blenching and Queen Mary wasn't looking as if she was amused and he was extricated in fact and was in a terrible state, and said "What happened, what went wrong?" And one of his friends said, "Well you see Roger I don't know whether you know but you called Queen Mary 'My Dear' three times in the first half minute. ~~CHUCKLES..~~ Roger was really an absolutely sweet fellow, but he got a bit lost and he told me that he was upset because he'd run across Reith in the corridor and Reith had said, "Hello Roger you still here?" Of course he had such a close connection with the BBC with Tim following, and now I think there's another, isn't there another.. Eckersley.

GILLARD: Roger had a kind of declining career because he was quite important ..

FARQUHARSON: ^{really} Oh he was.. let me see now.. I'm not quite sure, but I think he was at the peak of the output side of the BBC.

GILLARD: Yes he was, and then he went down and finished up ⁱⁿ as this post you were referring to, Director of Regional Relations.

~~FARQUHARSON: You are talking about Roger Eckersley.. I don't think~~

GILLARD: Yes he did, ~~He~~ ^{He} used to drive around the country..

~~FARQUHARSON: Oh I see, get him out of the way, give him something to do.~~

~~GILLARD: All week long drive around the country in his car from~~

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one regional station to another. Lovely job I should think.

FARQUHARSON: Yes well I was very conscious of the fact during that Programme Committee that Graves had on either side of him two people ~~it~~ had ~~someone on either side~~ who didn't really know what they were supposed to be doing, ~~really~~. Gladstone Murray had by that time had all his work taken over by Tallents, and he had some rather vague duties to perform.

GILLARD: And Roger was the other one?

FARQUHARSON: And Roger was the other one.

GILLARD: ~~Gladstone Murray and Roger Eckersley.~~
Well now lets talk about some other aspect of your 1935 responsibilities, shall we take Audience Research?

FARQUHARSON: There was no formal

GILLARD: No formal, no organised Audience Research then until now, until '35?

FARQUHARSON: That's true. And there was a strong current running in favour of doing more and Val Gielgud took a leading part in this, ~~no he was absolutely,~~ ~~He~~ raised it over and over again at Programme Board that he was in the dark. It would make a lot of difference to him in planning his output if he knew what sort of audiences, the size of the audiences, ~~and on~~ opposed to that there was also quite a strong current which was against setting up any kind of elaborate machinery. It was thought that it was not only impracticable but undesirable, and that ^{opinion} existed. Well of course Tallents took that in hand because he had very strong convictions on the subject. There ~~was~~ ^{were} various tentative things done, Christopher Salmon was appointed to go round the country and make a sort of survey, and he did do that. But ~~as you can imagine a survey of one man going round the country~~ ^{real} it was not actually ^{very} useful. ~~But~~ Tallents supplied the motivation. Well I remember that Patrick Ryan ~~who~~ also realised that this was not something to be done by ~~Christopher Salmon however cle...~~ ^{any one man on his own;} very ~~intelligent chap;~~ it had to be properly rigged ~~by~~ and undertaken by ^{Silvey} professional statistician chaps. ~~And~~ Patrick Ryan got hold of Robert ~~Silvey~~ from the London Press Exchange, and Patrick and I interviewed him together. And it was quite obvious that he was heaven-sent for it, really. He struck one as being a chap of great integrity which of course is basically necessary; ~~you can't cook these things~~ its got to be absolutely honest throughout, he

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was modest and he had a sense of humour and he had a great professional competence, and he made a brilliant success of Listener Research and became the foremost authority really in the United Kingdom I think, and he had an international reputation. So that was a success story, and you might almost say it was a gain for the Public Relations Division ~~because it had been..~~ ^{because} Tallents had overridden all this business about only making sort of amateur enquiries.

Of course the long term effects on Broadcasting of audience research is a matter of quite a lot of interest and I think that it is a matter for argument. But you know really of course the final word is ^{that} it was inevitable. One simply had to know these facts about the audience, and only systematic enquiry could yield them so the elaborate machinery did come in, it wasn't all that elaborate but still I mean from the beginning it had its machinery and if the BBC hadn't done it it would still have been done, it was really lucky for us, for everyone, that the job fell into the right hands from the start.

GILLARD: Yes, one can't imagine a broadcasting service now without it. Well now then you also had Programme Correspondence. Mind you, you inherited that, it was there from early days wasn't it?

FARQUHARSON: You are quite right. Well, you know, letters was the only thing the BBC had, and so they were regarded as important from Reith downwards and its always interesting to me that the man who started the section and ran it, answered the letters, was Ralph Wade, who was called in ~~by the BBC~~ by Reith at the very first stages of the BBC just ~~simply~~ to be his right hand man as an administrator and organiser. And he was a famous if slightly ^{commercial} ~~confidential~~ figure in the BBC, because he controlled the money for the the internal administration, the ^{sealing} ~~coiling~~ wax really, and the scissors and paste and everything else, you had to take it, he had to say yes. But he was a very good chap and its interesting really that when it was first started under Ralph Wade it was grouped on the Organisation Chart with Talks and Religion under the Director of Programmes. C.R. Wade was on the scene, a brother. And he wrote (I'm not quite sure in what form) he said ^{"I} letters were answered with punctilious care" it sounds as if he were doing an article for the Handbook or something, I don't know. 'Even though a listener maybe almost illiterate and very vituperative he has probably many friends and far more may depend on the nature of our reply than may appear on the surface!' Sound words. I think I ought also to quote R.W.P. ^{Cockburn} ~~Coburn~~ who was the head of ^{the} Programme Correspondence Section when I arrived. Asa quotes him as follows: " I don't believe that correspondence is valueless and it should be disregarded with impunity, or it is written mainly by cranks", this was in 1935. I was very interested in

the programme writing, in the letter writing operation, it was very much up my street I felt, but of course, in fact it was a sinecure for me as long as ~~Bobby Coburn~~ ^{Cockburn} was there. He was absolutely right for it, ^a very sensible chap and it was rather curious wasn't it that after a distinguished career in the BBC.. he went away to the war and came back without a foot you remember, after that he rose to the top of the administration side of the External Services, and when he retired he became secretary to the new Programme Complaints Commission. In a way he came back to PCS in a new ^{guise,} ~~LAUGHTER~~ you know.. ^{so to speak.}

GILLIARD: Coming full circle.

FARQUHARSON: Coming full circle in a way, yes. Well, Bobby was a valuable chap wherever he was.

GILLIARD: Did the Section sort of categorise the letters. Did it circulate..

FARQUHARSON: It analysed the letters very carefully and put it into a weekly summary which had a big circulation ^{inside the BBC} and I think that weekly summary of programme correspondence went on for as long as I can remember I just don't know when it stopped if it ever did, because it was always wanted. Even after Audience Research was started, people wanted to have individual comments and they liked seeing this, and they'd call for the letters sometimes. So, Frank, everybody really agreed that listeners' correspondence ought to be taken seriously, there was no disposition to disregard it. ~~And the weekly resumé of analysing the contents of the letters had a wide circulation inside the BBC.~~ But I don't think anybody ever thought that the letters could be representative of the public opinion. It was individual comments from people whose motives one really could never be quite.. some people write, don't they, and some people don't write..

GILLIARD: Necessarily very subjective.

FARQUHARSON: Yes ~~absolutely.~~ But the great thing was to handle it well from a public relations point of view, and I was always very interested in the personnel in this section. Rather a remarkable figure whom I found there with ^{ch} Coburn was J.G. Broadbent, one of the very first announcers. He was an older man now and more than a little eccentric. I think his output was low if only because he wished to do full justice to every topic raised in these letters. Coburn ^{ck} had to be on the watch to prevent him from slipping off to the British Museum to look up the facts. ^{u/h} Well, ^{ck} Coburn himself was a

great believer in public relations and I remember that after he'd left us, we met, I'm not sure what he was doing at the time, whether he'd left the Army yet. We met in the canteen at Broadcasting House and he expressed his dissatisfaction because of the discontinuance of so much of the public relations work after Tallents had departed. He was right really. It was the same thing ~~really~~ almost as ^{with} the Board of Governors, you remember that at the beginning of the War ~~at first~~ ^h it was thought that we needn't have any Governors at all, and then after that it was reduced to two, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, and then before you knew where you were there were complaints and ^{the} usual life went on and they restored the whole Board. And ~~I think too that~~ ^{the} in the general field of the old public relations division steps were taken later on to build up again. But on a lighter note, Coburn wrote a highly amusing article about the Programme Correspondence Section in one of the earliest editions of Ariel and the article was entitled 'My Public Relations', and he quoted some of the rather far-out comments of some of his correspondents.

One of the outstanding heads of this section was ^{seen Haacke} Kathline Hackey, a girl who'd joined the BBC as a copy typist in the ~~Duty Room~~ ^{Duty Room} ~~we'll come on to the Duty room later on~~ who was soon to be transferred to be a letter writer in PCS. I think perhaps she served under two heads, both of them were men, before she became the head of the section herself, and she remained so all through the rest of my time at the BBC, and I think long after. Her staff tended to be a gay crowd, they became more numerous after we started a programme index; that programme index was something which was tremendously valuable, ~~it was~~. it proved its usefulness over and over again. ^{this of} When criticisms were made that the BBC never did that, never talked about the Colonies or never broadcast ^{music} by a certain composer and so on, at the drop of a hat ^{we} could get a long list of broadcasts on those.. which you know, refuted the criticism and in that way was very very helpful. ~~That was run by a very splendid girl, Miss Grieves, I think, she came from the Registry which of course was full of expert indexers and she was followed by another registry clerk I think Margaret Hobbs, on that programme index.~~ ^{Some of the} ^{Dainty} And other names of the letter writers which stay in my mind are Elizabeth Denty, who became almost a pin-up girl for the forces.. the request programme, the Forces Favourites. It was a good name. Clara De Groot, Mercy ^{MacKenzie} McKinsey, Katy ^{Romer} Roma. ~~There were a lot of..~~ ^A And later on Betty Kit^eat. Memorable names to me.

GILLARD: How did these girls know what to say in reply to..?

FARQUHARSON: Well this raises a very interesting point, ~~and because~~ I was going to tell you that we did get into trouble of course. The output was really enormous I mean there really were hundreds and hundreds of these letters on the desk all the time coming in day by day, and sometimes inept

replies were sent. Not in ^{great} ~~enormous~~ number I think.. I think it was ~~so~~ good really, but sometimes a mistake would lead to a very indignant complaint about the way the thing had been handled and that ^{might} ~~would~~ be addressed to the Director ~~General~~ or the Chairman even and that's ~~what happened, had~~ happened one day when I got a summons to the office of Director General Haley. ^{what had} ~~He~~ ^{had} had a complaint about PCS and he asked me what I did to supervise the work and give guidance on how these letters should be dealt with and it was really a ~~stroke~~ ^{stroke} of luck that I was able to pull out of my pocket my general directive on the subject which ran I think to a page ~~and~~ ^{or two} a ~~half~~ of foolscap, pointing out pitfalls to be avoided and the sort of general tenor, the kind of impression that should be given of the BBC in these replies. Haley read it through and handed it back. "All right," he muttered dryly. ^{"A"} That was the end of the interview.

GILLARD: Funny. Yes very funny.

FARQUHARSON: But of course we couldn't have dictated replies to every letter, that was really impossible, and so... we tried to avoid the stereotyped letter. If there was ^{a big} ~~an enormous~~ row, a Collin Knox row so to speak, which brought in a ^{shoal} ~~shoal~~ of letters, we sometimes did write out a reasoned reply and reproduce it and send it out. But more often than not, if you really read the letter from the listener, no stereotyped reply ever really seemed quite to fit and we found that with, for example, the printed postcards that we used we finished up I think by having at least a couple of dozen versions of this printed postcard and the idea was to study the letter ~~rather~~ ^{the points} carefully to see what was really, nothing more annoying than to write to the BBC and get an answer which is ~~slightly~~ off the point even if its only ~~very~~ slightly off the point.

I carried out my threat to Kathline ^{see Haacke} ~~Haacke~~ ^{section} with whom I was great friends that I would go and attach myself to her for a couple of days or so as a letter-writer, and at one stage I was able to do that, and I enjoyed it, ~~very much~~. I don't think I had a very high productivity actually, took a lot of time over it, it was very interesting.

GILLARD: Well now can I ask you something about this Information Unit because that is something which has not survived, or its changed its form if it has?

FARQUHARSON: Oh well its developed you see, ~~yes indeed it have~~. This is one of the two gaps that I think were left from the pre-Tallents era, really, this need for a group of only two or three people, ~~really~~ in the first instance anyhow, to look after the documentation of whatever it was on which information was needed and to minute the meetings, especially at a high

level meetings. And for this purpose in the first place I remember Oliver Whitley, who was joining the BBC for the first time and Michael Reynolds (who was the brother of a rather famous cartoonist) who I think was already some where in the BBC, were both attached to me and we burrowed away with this job of documentation. We produced a new kind of BBC handbook to take the place of a rather grand affair which had been produced year by year. Patrick Ryan took a great interest in that and he said "Look here, you get right down to earth and tell the reader information, facts about the BBC" and we produced a large number of these handbooks quite happily, nobody objected until much later when Kenneth Adam was, long after Tallents had left, was appointed Head of Publicity after having had other jobs of course in the BBC.

And then I thought well look with Kenneth Adams there he was obviously a first class performer ^{man and it seemed wrong} that we should be ^{doing} preparing this little ^{piece of publicity work and} book and so we passed it over to him, and I expect he did it much better.

And then we used to produce the annual report to Parliament, ^{draft of the} that was an awful bore. That was the sort of thing, ^a but it was really embryo of secretariat ^{in embryo} that we later built up and I had a fairly clear idea of how I really saw this unit, and it seemed to me that the only way in which it could be used really well ^{for example,} for example when there was a broadcasting enquiry going on or when there was a big debate in Parliament or anything that called for a special effort was that it should operate at the top level. There was no thought of it at the time. The Board of Governors met and they had what, I think was called officially a ^{to the Board} Clerk who was the Director General's Private Secretary.

And although of course the top executive weekly meeting of the BBC varied a good deal down the years from Control Board and I don't know what else it was called, but ultimately it was called "Board of Management". That too was serviced from the DG's office. Well, I didn't raise this but one day

Graves, who was then Deputy Director General (that was after Carpendale had retired), ^{centre} he said to me you know what we really need is a little small staff at the ^{documentation} center to undertake this sort of things and make the arrangements for celebrations, for example, important banquets and dinners and perhaps deal with visitors to some extent and so forth. And we said no more and of course

when Tallents left Graves didn't forget, ^{at that time (and)} and the Public Relations Division was dismantled, there never was ever again, as far as I know, any unit of the BBC's organisation that bore the title Public Relations. It disappeared.

And I was then left without a controller which was fine. I mean, I was responsible to the Deputy Director General, ^{which} suited me admirably and I liked Graves very much indeed. And so he, I remember I was on leave ^{He} when Tallents left because he wrote... Graves wrote me a long letter saying that they'd decided to set up this secretariat which in fact was exactly what we'd been doing but under a new name, and I was rather glad for... Oh I haven't come to that point yet have I..

Anyway it was called the Secretariat. But it did not include access to those top level meetings. Well, ^{these} it was. The people concerned were very happy

Reynolds s.a/

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u/h

with the existing arrangements,

GILLARD: Which meant the top meetings were serviced by the DG's office.

FARQUHARSON: Yes. Well it was a handicap really, in a way because or at any rate put it the other way. If one were able to attend such meetings it gave one the most wonderful background of knowledge of what was going on. ~~This information unit was elevated to some stage.. I think it was in 1941~~ under a reorganisation when it was decided to bring in to the public relations division, not 1941.. it can't have been so.. 38... '37 I think. Malcolm Frost who had, who was in charge of overseas Press Section, was brought over to this part of Public Relations Division and Tallents, who loved making organisation charts called it the Overseas Intelligence Department, and for neatness-sake I'm sure and no other, my little affairs were called The Home Intelligence Department. Home and Overseas.. Well it was all right in relation to overseas but standing on its own Home Intelligence Department was an unintelligible, Colin Knox asked in the Daily Mail, what does the Director of Home Intelligence do? Which was a fair question I think.

GILLARD: We are going to pick up the story at the point of the dissolution of the public relations division in 1940. And I'm going to ask now Mr. Farquharson why the division was dissolved.

FARQUHARSON: Firstly, Stephen Tallents left it ~~of course~~ to become Controller of the Overseas Services ~~in wartime~~ and secondly because in general the idea was at that time that public relations in wartime were not so important. Then later on that view was modified and various steps were taken including the reconstitution of the Board of Governors. Which was a form of public relations in a sense. But that was the occasion at any rate of the dissolution and from then onwards no public relations division was ever started again and indeed no part of the BBC, no Unit or department, ever went under the name of public relations ~~which disappeared from usage.~~ as far as I know.

GILLARD: And what would you say then. It was a 5 year experiment in a way, what were the gains and losses if any, I don't suppose there were any losses?

FARQUHARSON: It was... I think its fair to call it an experiment simply because it didn't last very long and was never repeated. So you can call it an unsuccessful experiment in a sense although in reckoning up the gains and losses I think that there were great gains in making the BBC very very much more conscious of the need to cultivate relations with outside bodies,

to work with ^{item} in a friendly way, and indeed ^{with} the general public. Can I say that in coming into Broadcasting House for this interview today the first thing that I saw was a poster which was entitled 'Your BBC - Public Meetings throughout the country'. Well that's public relations, and it went a jolly sight further than anything we ever did when I was connected with public relations. ^{we} ^{perhaps} ^a ~~it~~ did leave the permanent mark in that way.

GILLARD: So the BBC to that extent has learnt from its mistakes then? Or from this experience

FARQUHARSON: I think it did. And there were specific gains, I mean there was the successful launching of listener research, which people had been talking about but which was actually carried out and was a ~~great~~ success. I think that another ~~rather practical~~ ^{gain} ~~came~~ as a result of ~~this~~ ^{the PR} experiment was that it succeeded to some extent in breaking down what I saw as ~~the~~ ^a tendency on the part of ~~the BBC~~ ^{BBC people} to ~~go~~ ^{be} on the defensive against criticism. I tend to agree with Lord Simon, ^{as} quoted by Briggs, that the BBC did not welcome criticism. I think that's really to a large extent true and it seemed to me that this rather defensive ["] on guard ["] position had been particularly apparent in day to day contact ^{with} ~~between the BBC and~~ other bodies with whom ~~it~~ ^{the BBC} had a working relationship, the radio industry, the press, ~~the~~ government departments, the artists unions, the attitude changed a great deal in relation ^{to} the artists unions, for example, ^{when} where Martin Turnell introduced a note of friendly understanding and revealed his point of view for the first time in history I think, really. Well I can only speak really of my personal experience, I found ~~the~~ ^{out} Post Office contacts ~~with whom I was expected to work~~ were a little bit reserved ~~and~~ a little bit quiet. I had to do with the people at St. Martins LeGrand who ~~had to deal with~~ Parliamentary questions ~~and~~ Parliamentary debates, and I did succeed in making friends, ^{with} first with Napier, Private Secretary to the Post Master General ~~a very nice chap~~, I got onto a working relationship with that rather solemn man H.G.G. Welsh, who ~~was~~ ^{had been} Secretary ^{to} of the Ullswater Committee, ~~and who had reverted after that~~ and he didn't seem to be particularly friendly but he was in fact ready to become so. (He later became controller of ~~the~~ HMSO) ~~the Stationery Office~~. I always remember he was rather stout and when you rang him there was a very long pause and then an audible sigh and finally it came out - ["] ³ ~~Welsh speaking~~ ["]. Then there was Parsons, who was Secretary to the Beveridge committee ~~who followed him~~, I couldn't say enough in praise of that admirable chap. I would like to remember the names of others of my opposite numbers including one lady whose name I simply cannot recall, and the last of course was Douglas Lawrence who was Secretary ^{to} of the Pilkington Committee. During the War I remember a friendly liaison with Bernard Sendall, private secretary to the

the Ministry ^{er} of Information, and subsequently Deputy Director General in the ITA, and Alan Hodge, ^{his} number two. During these years we'd established a regular drill, the object of which was to arrive at a satisfactory draft statement or reply to a question, ^{to be given by} by the Minister, based on ~~the~~ information supplied by the BBC. Of course I had the help of key people in ~~the~~ various BBC departments, ~~and~~. Our more forthcoming attitude to the Post Office did pay off in the end in rather a spectacular way because, coming down to Pilkington times when a new charter and licence had to be written in the wake of the Pilkington Report and the Government's White Paper, the Post Office proposed that a joint BBC/PO working party should be set up under the ^{l.c.1} chairmanship of the Post Office Solicitor to prepare new drafts of these documents - The Charter and the Licence. It seemed almost unimaginable that the BBC should be asked to help in writing its own constitutional documents. Of course nothing ~~was~~ really more reasonable, but I do think that at an earlier stage that idea would have been laughed at. The job wasn't altogether easy, but it was a completely harmonious operation and, as a result, a lot of verbage ⁱ was eliminated from these ~~documents~~ ⁿ and shorter and simpler ^{versions} documents were ultimately adopted. The people who really mattered on the BBC side of the working party were the ^{Legal Adviser} Edgar Robbins, and the ^{Pawley} Head of Engineering Information Edward Pawley. ~~I would like to in this..~~ ~~take this useful opportunity of paying~~ ^{I must pay} tribute to those two friends, who I really think were heaven-sent in their respective jobs, Pawley and Robbins.

GILLARD: This was a very handsome payoff as it were for the good relations you had developed with the Post Office.

FARQUHARSON: ~~It~~ ~~is~~ not me, no, certainly not.. ~~I mean these chaps..~~
~~As soon as we got a team of people..~~ ~~J.G.L. Francis the Chief Acc.. well of~~
~~course Lockheed before him was a wonderful figure.~~ No, there were a lot of people in the BBC on whom you could always rely to give you the information you wanted. ^{Another key figure of the first importance was the Controller, Finnan, J.G.L. Francis, and, of course, Thomas}

GILLARD: Yes that's fine.. ^{Lockhead before him.}

FARQUHARSON: I was ~~was~~ ^{the} nitwit..

GILLARD: No, no..

FARQUHARSON: I knew where to go for the information.

GILLARD: You were not the nitwit, you were the conduit..

FARQUHARSON: The conduit.. LAUGHS..

GILLARD: Isn't that a fair statement. I mean all this information was in the BBC but previously there had not been that essential bridge between the BBC and the Post Office by which it could be conveyed.

FARQUHARSON: ^{It may be} ~~I do think~~ that is a fair thing to say..

GILLARD: And you built the bridge.

FARQUHARSON: ^{It a gain} ~~And that was again~~ for the public relations experiment, I think. ~~I mean, I think~~ The BBC was an extraordinary place. The ~~talented~~ talented people all around and such a variety of types and talents, I did have a real admiration for the Producers I met, some of them were more famous than their masters in the hierarchy if you remember, real names outside - public names. But ~~I, in general,~~ I'm bound to say I found in the 30's, which is what we are talking about, that they weren't really amenable to criticism. There was a certain current of self-satisfaction flowing around, ~~because,~~ I think because the BBC had been so extraordinarily successful and really it was a tip-top organisation with first class people in it, but they were impatient of criticism. Oh, there were exceptions, of course there were. I mean take Archie Harding for example, who was programme Director in the North of England at that time (subsequently he became chief instructor in the BBC Staff Training Department), he was much too wise a man ~~to ever~~ to ever get upset by criticism from outside the BBC, though he could easily get upset with things that went on inside the BBC which he thought might be wrong from the point of view of the North Region. And he was capable of voicing his feelings very strongly and successfully too. And of course talking about Archie Harding, in the PR division we did keep in very close contact with the Regional Publicity Officers, I think of Richard Longland in the West for example, (he became the BBC Liaison Officer with the BEF in the early stages of the War), And Morris, it wasn't Cedric Morris, it was...

GILLARD: Where was he located?

FARQUHARSON: In the ~~M~~Midlands..

GILLARD: Dennis.

FARQUHARSON: Dennis Morris, stupid of me to forget that, but Dennis Morris, who became the Head of the Light Programme. Well these were wonderful chaps to work with. I think really that the ~~R~~Regions were in general better at public relations, than the BBC in London. And from the Regional

Controller downwards they were more closely in touch with their public. I think PR has to be more highly organised in a big organisation, I mean that's really why the need for a system of Public Relations arises, otherwise every man in the organisation ought to be a PR man in a sense; we tried to get that notion adopted. ~~Later on you see what was one of the weaknesses of the PR Division as I shall say in a moment, because I'm talking now of one of the success of the PR which I think was in a way breaking down a certain sort of defensiveness in attitude that a good lot of people in the BBC had.~~

You see the PR people ^{usually} had to deal with ~~the~~ criticisms from outside ^{usually} and their doctrine was that criticism ought to be taken seriously.

I did sympathise with the people on the programme side ^{the producers} particularly ^{being} a complete layman in that direction I kept on thinking how depressing, ^{or} disheartening ^{the silence} after a broadcast programme was over must be to a chap who had ^{really} been ^{working very hard} sweating himself to get a successful result. ^{And} then of course the fan mail would be perhaps a little bit of a solace and the ^{catchless} criticism would really be infuriating. I was ^{conscious} of that. But I think that the PR people could be a real help in those circumstances.

GILLARD: Did you yourself meet these critics, these ~~catchless~~ critics, did you ever have critics lunches or..

FARQUHARSON: Yes we did, and often I was asked to arrange a meeting between the ~~catchless~~ critic and the programme producer and it was a bit sticky. But still it was worthwhile I think we made some progress that way.

The same sort of thing happened with the press. Because there was ^a ~~an~~ awful lot of vitriolic stuff in some of the papers, a good head of publicity was a ^{prime} ~~proud~~ requisite and that was ~~rather~~ missing, during the PR division period, although John ^{Hutch} ~~Heights~~ was ^a ~~an~~ awfully good chap, but he wasn't the head of the department. ^{For} ~~all~~ that ~~is~~ the publicity department had to await the arrival of Kenneth Adam in 1941 which was after the Public Relations Division had finished. I think that in the ~~PR~~ period much depended on Tallents and Ryan, they both of them were very ~~very~~ strong players in all press relations. And I think that their work did bear fruit when the Ullswater findings came out because the press was unanimous in praising the BBC over that, it was the unanimity of the press that was remarkable ^{on that occasion}. Only the Spectator had a sour note, the Spectators comment was 'there is no need to praise again the virtues of the BBC they are too well known, but is not the note of self-satisfaction not a little too strong'. Well, did they by any chance have in mind the notorious ["] ~~Observations~~ of the BBC Board of Governors on the Report of the Broadcasting Committee ["] I don't know whether you remember that document, I always thought it was a grave error..

GILLARD: ... was it?

Ullswater
 FARQUHARSON: Well what happened was that the BBC got copies of ^{The} ~~this~~ report quite a long time before it was published and certainly a long time before any Member of Parliament had a sight of it and of course it was bound to come before Parliament, so the time was used by Reith to prepare observations as he called ^{them} ~~it~~ by the Board of Governors on all those points on which the BBC's wishes had not been precisely carried out. Of course, it was obvious that the report as a whole was ~~very~~ favourable to the BBC. After 10 years the Charter and ~~licence~~ ^{lic} were going to be renewed, many ~~many~~ of the BBC's recommendations had been adopted but there were some on which they had not been adopted and on these points a memorandum was prepared and passed by the Board of Governors and issued on behalf of the Board of Governors half an hour after the publication of the Ullswater report itself. And was delivered to Members of Parliament. This did not go down well with ^{some} Members of Parliament and they really thought it was a bit hot that they got this report together with a carefully considered memorandum from the Board of Governors pointing out ~~the~~ ^{its} weaknesses of ~~the report~~. However I thought that that was rather a piece of effrontery quite frankly, it really was a little bit, so to speak, lending colour to the idea the BBC ^{of} ~~is~~ ^{as a} rather arrogant sort of ~~touchy~~ body.

GILLARD: Now I can quite see that you had a very difficult job to sell this arrogant.. organisation to the public at large during these years 1935 to 1940, but you didn't do too badly after all. It was however during this period and I want to deal with this point before we go onto the final dissolution of the unit and the dispersal of people, it was during this period that you had to cover what was surely one of the great, what Churchill would call Climactorix of the BBC history, namely the resignation of Lord Reith, of Sir John Reith and the appointment of his successor. Did this create a great public interest, a furore, did you have difficulty in handling the PR of that?

FARQUHARSON: ~~Well~~ ^{My} belief is that that was specifically handled by Patrick Ryan, who flew over to Belfast the moment he knew of the appointment to interview Ogilvie and he gave some ~~advice~~ ^{advice} to Ogilvie. He was a very very good public relations man and he was a brilliant fellow, Patrick.

GILLARD: He was more a journalist..?

FARQUHARSON: He was a journalist, that was why he was so ~~frightfully~~ good in Fleet Street relations. He and Tallents got away with it without having a very strong publicity department of professionals below and behind them.

And I think that they got away with the Ogilvie appointment very well.

GILLARD: But the Reith resignation, did that take people by surprise, it must have been quite a sensational story?

FARQUHARSON: Well Frank, I suppose it was. I can't remember quite. Of course it was..

GILLARD: Were you shaken by it yourself?

FARQUHARSON: Oh very much so, Oh I was. I can't say I was ~~very~~ fond of Reith because I didn't know him well enough, but I did see him pretty frequently, he was always very friendly and kind as far as I was concerned and we never had great matters to discuss only minor matters of things he was concerned with in relation to the General Advisory Council and so forth. But..

GILLARD: There was great speculation about who was going to succeed, I remember myself.

FARQUHARSON: Oh indeed yes. Well of course there ~~was~~ ^{were} Tallents and Graves. But there were all sorts of people, lots of people.. but Tallents and Graves, and whereas Tallents wanted the job I'm not at all sure that Graves did. ~~Graves was a terribly..~~ I liked Tallents, ~~very much indeed a queer..~~ rather a strange man Tallents, not everybody's cup of tea perhaps. ~~But Graves was a very nice man~~ not what you'd call a progressive chap exactly, rather keen on maintaining the establishment you know, unchanged. Getting on with the job. But he could take decisions, he wouldn't have been bad. And Tallents too would have been better than the man who was appointed.

GILLARD: I just thought that this was probably the big BBC story of the age and you people had to cope with it.

FARQUHARSON: It was perhaps so, but it didn't come my way.

GILLARD: So lets move on..

FARQUHARSON: ~~Patrick was..~~ Patrick Ryan was very very active at that stage and he did, I'm sure he did a one man job on it.

GILLARD: Let's wind up then the dissolution of your ~~devotion~~ ^{division}, by simply, let me ask you what happened to Tallents. He faded from the BBC

scene quite shortly didn't he?

FARQUHARSON: He came unstuck.. I can't quite remember the sequence of events, ~~was it Ivone Kirkpatrick who followed him?~~
~~He had to go.~~ I don't know who was determined to get rid of him, but he had to go. There was no doubt about it. And he had to go before Ogilvie; Ogilvie outlasted him but not very long. I think the Board of Governors, and possibly Bracken, had lost confidence in him. I think, Frank, that the memory of Tallents as ~~Minister, Director General~~ of the Ministry of Information Designate, which he was at the time of Munich, had left him with rather a bad mark in.. where shall we say.. in the corridors of power. It was a bit of a shambles that exercise, I was there, and I didn't think that Tallents showed ^{at} his best. But they weren't going to have him.

GILLARD: How could he have been Director General designate of the MOI when he was Director of Public Relations in the BBC?

FARQUHARSON: Well you may well ask that because he was appointed Director General Designate of the Ministry quite a time before Munich and was devoting a lot of time to this and for a while Ogilvie was quite reconciled to the idea of his doing both jobs at once. After all Patrick Ryan was there. But there did come a time in fact when Ogilvie said, look you must stop doing your BBC work, it's got to be one thing or the other. And shortly after that there was the Munich crisis, we ~~all~~ moved down to Whitehall and sat in various rooms with vastly elevated ceilings above us in one of those buildings in Whitehall, Tony Rendall and I shared a room and we were bored stiff I think really.

GILLARD: What were you doing down there?

FARQUHARSON: We were on Tallents' staff. Tallents was wanting to preserve a public relations aspect to the work of the Ministry of Information.

GILLARD: But using BBC staff people?

FARQUHARSON: Yes. And for example he wanted to create a General Advisory Council to the Ministry. Well others on the staff of this provisional Ministry of Information down there didn't care ~~a blow~~ about all that, ^{there} they were ~~much~~ more matter-of-fact things to get on with, and they were impatient of Tallents in that respect. I think Tallents was conscious of a good deal of ill-feeling in Whitehall after that episode was over and I thought, and I think Patrick Ryan felt too, that he made a mistake at that

point because what he needed to do was to wander round talking to all these people, to say what did they think, how did they think the exercise had gone, discussing it, having a.. you know.. a yarn about it. And that would have gone down much better than what he did do which was to retire to his room and write the most enormous report on the whole thing. Which nobody paid any attention to..

GILLARD: You don't think he was trying to make the BBC a department of government.

FARQUHARSON: Oh no, no, no, I'm sure not..

GILLARD: It bears that appearance doesn't it?

FARQUHARSON: Oh yes it does, I see what you mean, because he took me and Rendall you mean.. and that sort of thing. Oh no I think that he was going to draw his staff from everywhere he could and he knew me and.. Rendall was you know a chap to have. And he thought we'd come in useful somewhere. Well I was certainly designed to run the Advisory Council if it came into being, it never did. Well, and soon after that it was clear that his appointment was ended.

GILLARD: He never took it up really..

FARQUHARSON: Never took it up, only at Munich which was a sort of dummy run. And I think it left a great mark on Tallents. In a way it I think made him all the more keen to play a big part in the BBC which he'd now come back to. He'd never left his office really, you know.. But that was the point really, Graves was not appointed which was what Reith wanted..

GILLARD: As DG?

FARQUHARSON: As DG. Neither was Tallents, although Tallents would have liked it. So Tallents reverted to being Controller Public Relations and after a while did the overseas job..

GILLARD: Controller Overseas..

FARQUHARSON: Controller Overseas with J.B. Clark still there but in a subsidiary capacity still in a way you see..

GILLARD: That was very tough on JB

FARQUHARSON: Well it was, but JB didn't, you know.. he was a good scout. He was a good Boy Scout ..

GILLARD: The same thing happened to him when Jacob came in.

FARQUHARSON: Of course, but he went on. At last he became Controller European Services and ultimately Controller of the External Services. When he was appointed Controller of the European Services, ~~I don't know quite what he took,~~ but he let it be known that he would be ~~very~~ glad to hear from any BBC people who were drawn to joining him. ~~And~~ ^{My} fortunes were not very prosperous at that time, it was in the early days of ~~Director General~~ Haley's Director Generalship, and so I rang him up and but it didn't come to anything although we had a pleasant chat. So then the doom was impending for both Tallents and Ogilvie, they had to go. And behind all this was Allan Powell the Chairman who had lost confidence in Ogilvie.

GILLARD: Let's though first hear your final assessment of Tallents.

FARQUHARSON: Yes. Tallents went on to the Ministry of Town and Country Planning in St. James's Square and I visited him there, ~~he didn't seem to have an awful lot to do and I thought it was a little bit sad.~~ ^{rather} But he, I think it was altogether.. well.. ^{Life} was sad for him at the BBC really, Lady Tallents said so, his time at the BBC was an unhappy one, and when we said goodbye, when he left the CPR's job, he referred to the fun that we'd had at the beginning when he really did enjoy it for a while, but not afterwards. He was a very interesting chap, ~~he~~ ^{like} like most of us I suppose he was ^a ~~an~~ absolute mass of contradictions. Was he shy? ~~Yes/~~ No. Was he modest? Yes/No. He was certainly a gallant fellow, he came out of the War with a wounded knee you know, he always limped a bit.

GILLARD: First World War.

FARQUHARSON: First World War, and so he was warned about this and told to take care, and he decided that he would take a walk round the coast of Cornwall which he did, and by the time he came back he reckoned he'd got that knee right again. He did the whole walk round the coast of Cornwall. He was rather an austere man, he liked simple meals, like the kind of meals that you get at Swan and Edgar where we lunched sometimes, ~~the Ladies Restaurant.~~ And his house, lovely ancient house down on the River Dart was inclined to be cold, it wasn't properly warmed up, he didn't seem to mind. There's a story that Patrick Ryan.. have I got time for this story? ~~on this reel?~~ Patrick Ryan stayed the night, couldn't get warm in bed so he dragged

the carpet over him, ^{then} got up, ^{or} found his way along the passages of this ancient house to get to his overcoat, opened the door into what he took to be the cloak room and ^{fell} into the river. Tallents was a countryman at heart, he did his thirty minutes of mowing ^{with his scythe} in the growing season before breakfast and was in time for the train to London. He had his grove of ^{willow-bats} willow-bats which he was ~~very~~ proud of and later, after he had ^{finally} retired he had his weekly column - ^a countryman's column in the Sunday Times.

I never found Stephen more likeable and more companionable than when he ^{had} retired from his work. Whenever I ran across him at our club we would lunch together in the light luncheon room, that was the kind of lunch I told you he liked. I do feel that Tallents ^{had} did have much to offer ~~to~~, on the central BBC issues of his time, on the future of Television for ~~example~~ and other issues of that sort, and I'm not altogether sure that Asa doesn't do less than justice to him, though ~~rather~~ unwittingly, in that. He and Ryan were admirable in their relations with Fleet Street, which after all was the central point really in the case ^{for} of a strong PR at the BBC. He gave remarkable lectures and he worked up the lectures activity in general. His lectures were full of interesting facts which no-one had thought of assembling before. For example, he was determined to work out, this was in the very early days of the television service, before the war, ~~when it was closed down~~, what he wanted to do was to work out a description of the technical chain of processes which led to the appearance of the image on the screen, in terms which the ordinary man could understand. This was the kind of thing he greatly delighted in, trying to get some highly complex subject down in simple terms. That was going to be lecture material, but whether it was ever used as such I don't really know because I never heard that he had overcome the difficulty of reaching a solution which the engineers would really endorse. Everytime he tried they didn't think it was quite right. I think there were Governors who never ~~really~~ lost their faith in Tallents, because it was they who had appointed him, you know, in the first instance, it was their appointment. But it was pretty clear to me that Reith had done so at a fairly early stage, ^{and} then there was, as I said before, almost the worst thing that I think happened to him was his appointment, ~~his~~ ^{which never} ~~is~~ the Ministry of Information ~~appointment~~ never came off.

^{whi33-kid} He was at his best at the beginning, and when he ~~said goodbye he referred back to the fun that we'd had at the start.~~ It was a tragedy really that Tallents' career which was so ~~sort of~~ ³ ~~2~~ wiz-kid successful in the early stages right after the first World War onwards, flagged afterwards. With hindsight one ~~really~~ could say that he never ought to have been appointed to a job at the BBC which was not actually the top job which he coveted and stood a chance of getting, but was too near the top to make for a really effective ⁿ public relations ^o operation. I've often asked myself what he would have done as

Director General, and my answer would be that he would have been better than Ogilvie because he could take decisions, not so good as Haley, Jacob, or Greene, not really by a long way.

I think that at least the DG job would have brought out the best in him, one doesn't quite know how he would have performed but he knew about large organisations and I think he would have done better than was expected. Whereas of course, the tragedy of Ogilvie was that he did worse than was expected because, you know, a good man in a job that's too big for him is liable to be led into decisions or lack of decisions that really ~~didn't~~ *don't* redound to his credit at all.

GILLARD: Now just let's have, go back for a moment to the BBC after Reith. Was there much change?

FARQUHARSON: BACKGROUND CHAT...

GILLARD: Well we are going to resume because I put in a question there a little prematurely and Mr Farquharson is going to say a little bit more about the lessons which were learnt.

FARQUHARSON: Well I think that ~~there were~~ ^{the first} valuable lessons ~~learnt.~~ ^{and} I mean ~~first of all~~ ^{was that} Public Relations ^{is} important. You can't safely neglect them and it does need quite a lot of skilled ^{and} experienced staff up and down the country. ~~Fleet Street Chaps~~ ^{the} the right sort of attitude. But, I think the next point is that it is far from being the BBC's front men who are known to be the people who answer the questions, answer the criticisms, in general the man ~~executively~~ ⁱⁿ in charge of a particular activity should answer for it publicly if you can so arrange it.

GILLARD: Isn't this a different talent you are asking of a man, I mean...

FARQUHARSON: With the advise of public relations staff who can .. like people who are good like Grisewood, who can say look here what I advise is ~~this you can say this, something like this if you agree and help him along.~~ ^{they try to} Much better if ~~you can~~ ^{you can} stand aside and not take ~~the~~ ^{too much of} the limelight. ~~It~~ ^{PR staff} oughtn't to be too prominent. ~~That was the trouble with the great Public Relations Division, I think, it was too prominent in the BBC, as you could almost have foretold really by looking at the position. I think that the key man in a public relations operations should be a departmental figure, no higher than that, he should be the man in charge of the publicity or press relations department. Everybody knows that he's concerned with publicity because of the~~ ^{organisational}

But it is

title, and everybody knows that although he's a senior official and important to the BBC, he's not one of the top people deciding policy, he's the natural official spokesman. Although of course at times the DG will be the official spokesman. But normally ~~he's~~ ^{the Head of Publicity is} the right sort of level for that. And ~~then~~ ^{he} should be supported from above by at least one really senior man, ^{and} someone who is at the top and who is keen on, concerned ~~with~~ ^{about,} public relations, though preferably not under that title, and who is close to the DG. And, of course, it is an advantage if the DG himself is PR minded as not all Directors General are. ~~I don't think Jacob was. I thought he was an admiral Director General except that I don't think he was, he didn't really like appearing before the public and wasn't gifted that way.~~ Well ~~it so happens,~~ ^{Yh} It sounds as if I've come to those conclusions in a sort of vacuum but in fact as it happens I ~~think,~~ consider that really all ~~those~~ conditions were actually fulfilled under Hugh Greene when the time came. He had his Chief Assistant who was the top senior official to whom everybody in the Corporation could go and ask advise about a particular difficulty affecting the public or some public issue. There was ~~The Secretary,~~ ^{with some kind of news in PR,} well he was a neutral figure and then there was the Head of Publicity whom everybody knew was the key sort of spokesman chap, and under Hugh Greene we had that as a group, ~~and the three or four of us because the Head of Secretariat~~ ^{plus} ~~came in too for information purposes,~~ ^{who was then +00.} We had this group meeting under Harman Grisewood once a week and discussed the projects which ~~the Head of Publicity~~ ^{the Head of Publicity} was cooking up, and Harman told us about things that we wanted to know about and, I believe that that, you see that's not a division at all, ~~its just a publicity department with guidance from an informed group, and that I think is about as much as you really need.~~ ^{at The centre of the BBC. But an important part of Hugh Greene's organisation was that directly related activities, including the whole of the Publications operation, were ^{all} grouped under Harman Grisewood, the Chief Assistant to the D.G.}

GILLARD:

That really is the lesson of the experiment.

FARQUHARSON:

That I think was the lesson.

GILLARD:

Well now, can I ask you then about the BBC after Reith.

Was there much change and..

and is it possible even to evaluate it.

FARQUHARSON:

Well that's the question. ~~When I thought of it Frank, I thought to myself anything I would say would sound dreadfully platitudinous really because everybody knows of course that Reith's BBC didn't survive in that form. I mean it changed like everything else changed, its a long time by now.~~ ^{did come} And ^A great change ^{came} over the BBC after Reith. I think it was a slow process and I don't think it was very visible till quite a long time

after the War was over with all the consequences of the War which was bound to change social conditions and change everything. But I do think that in those post-war years the BBC was all the while being led inexorably away from its first ideal which I have, as you know from what I have said, ^{have taken it} I ~~took that~~ to be the singleminded pursuit of excellence. Not a particularly popular notion in a way today. And towards a much more realistic and responsive attitude to public desires and preferences. So the image changed. The BBC became less a part of the establishment, it was never really quite perhaps a part of the establishment ~~quite~~, it was rather an eccentric part of the establishment. But it was establishment all the same in the public mind. And I think it became something a bit more like a mirror of the community. I think we wanted to be considered as us and not as them. This was really something that was I think affected very much by the competition, competition instead of monopoly changed the situation. I think that the public relations attitude, the public relations effort also had that effect, it was designed that way. Audience research too. But they were all inevitable I think, the Reith image could not have continued; it was a different world. ~~I think~~. I don't think that the BBC has ever abandoned its search for excellence. Going after a perfect result, I feel there is that still there. I don't say the BBC has lost its identity, ~~it hasn't~~, but it has changed. And I think the change has been part gain and part loss.

GILLARD: Yes, right. Now let's go on to your wartime years. The PR division had been wound up and now you were what? Director Secretariat I think. That was your next position?

FARQUHARSON: Yes that's right.

GILLARD: You had lost Tallents, who was your controller now?

FARQUHARSON: Graves. The division was dismantled and my Secretariat such as it was, it was only a small unit, was left and it was made responsible to Graves. Well that was quite all right from my point of view.

GILLARD: Graves was not yet DG, he was Deputy DG.

FARQUHARSON: At the time he was Deputy DG.

GILLARD: Deputy to Ogilvie.

FARQUHARSON: That's right.

GILLARD: What did you think of Graves?

FARQUHARSON: Well Graves was certainly capable of taking decisions. He wasn't.. I mean, Reith thought he was perfect, but he was very conscious of his own limitations. He used to refer to the fact that the trouble about him was he'd never been to a University. He was a prisoner of War and taught himself Russian. He was all right, he had quite a brain and he was a good chap. I don't think he would have been quite up to being DG myself.

GILLARD: Now.. So you had Ogilvie as DG, now let's have a chapter on Ogilvie for goodness sake. What did you think of Ogilvie?

FARQUHARSON: I think that Ogilvie's appointment as Director General would have been highly surprising at any time, but that they should have appointed a Don from Belfast, or anywhere, as Director General of the BBC in the immediate pre-War period is quite astonishing and I never could understand it. Whether H.A.L. Fisher, who was a member of the Board of Government ^{or not} who was, I think, thought to have pressed the appointment of a fellow academic, I don't know. [But at any time an academic is not really what the BBC wants as a publisher of information and news and entertainment, at all, as I think you were saying to me when we were talking about this just now.] A really good journalist would be so much more natural an idea. But of course the Board of Governors was thinking about the cultural heritage that was being left behind by Reith and so that's how it was. He was totally unfit to be a DG and a Wartime DG at that. ^{Ogilvie} He did have a jolly good mind there's no doubt about that and he also had a lot of influential friends in London, that is true. But he really didn't know what he had taken on. It was too much for him and of course he .. all this business of being just an ordinary member of the staff like everybody else and taking his meals in the canteen and standing in the queue with a face that was going green with fatigue and sickness I think really (he wasn't strong) was just a pantomime really, it was quite absurd. I hate to speak ill of him because he really was a very nice man and he played the piano with his one hand and, you couldn't have a nicer chap really. The only trouble is that I feel that when you get a weak man in relation to the job he's got, trying to do a job which is many sizes too large for him, he falls below his own level, and he finds himself doing things which are really.. not worthy of him. I can't believe, that, for example, that a man with the capacity to take decisions would have handled that crisis as it arose at Caversham, you know, in the Monitoring Service, when he had to go down ~~there~~ and try and settle some real division ~~you know~~ down there.. I can't think that anybody who had been at all a strong man would have handled it in such a way as to lose entirely Dick Marriot, for example, and Oliver Whitley from the BBC altogether, so that

they felt they had no option but to go off, one of them into the Navy and the other into the Air Force.

That was something which I think must have been repugnant to Ogilvie himself, ^{he} must have felt very bad about it. So that it was really inevitable that the time came when the Board of Governors lost their confidence in him, particularly.. well Allan Powell of course, with Millis was the relic of the Board of Governors at that time and Allan Powell made up his mind about it. And really one can only be very sorry.

GILLARD: What was the relationship between Ogilvie and Graves. Did it work?

FARQUHARSON: Oh no, Graves was very frustrated. Yes. Graves was frustrated in any case at that time because he'd come to the conclusion that one of the basic parts of the BBC's organisation dating from 1933 was wrong and was imprisoning them all. This was the great reorganisation in which Reith placed so much hope, in which the programme side was separated organically from all administration in order to free ~~the~~ creative staff from business worries. So that every unit in the BBC had inside itself an administrative officer or whatever rank it would be, responsible not to that department but way back to the controller of Administration, and of course it never worked out the way it was intended because whatever you did it was inevitable the programme people were involved in business. How can you ~~do~~ run a programme department without getting involved in artists' fees and goodness knows what in the way of business? Now Graves was caught up in that he felt it was, it ought to be changed and that made him rather unhappy at the time I think. But it was left to a later regime to alter that. That was altered in 1942 I suppose it was.

GILLARD: What an enormous tribute it is, when you come to think of it, to the strength, the real inner strength of the BBC that at such a crucial time as the first year or two of World War Two, you know the hinge of history as it were, that it was afflicted by this terrible weakness at the top and yet not only survived but this was the period when the BBC covered itself with glory.

FARQUHARSON: Well I think that is ~~absolutely~~ true, Frank, except that it didn't cover itself with glory exactly in the early part of the War I don't think really. I mean it was there and it continued and one does feel that about the BBC, that if you were to take away the Board of Governors .. and nearly everybody else, in fact it would still go on because of the

~~you know~~ the strength of the whole, of the staff. ~~And, of course, you see~~
~~with this frightful financial chaos~~ ~~Lockhead~~ ~~the Finance chap~~ who was not
 Finance Controller, he was really, ~~he was~~ a departmental head in the
 Administration division under ~~Controller Administration~~, until a little bit
 later when he was given a responsibility of his own direct to the Director
 General.

GILLARD: What were the functions of Secretariat at this time?

~~Survey~~ FARQUHARSON: Well they remained unchanged, I think, except that one
 little point was that ~~the~~ Silkey went over to the ~~Programmes Division~~ at
 that point, when the name of the unit became the Secretariat. And I
 understood it absolutely and was in favour of it because his view was that
 in a job like that where his sole purpose was to provide information for the
 programme people and give them to that extent guidance which they could take
 or not, it would be a very good idea for him to be himself a member of that
 lot. So he went off with my blessing. The funny part of that story is
 that of course later on he again became rather ill-placed in the organisation
 because of the development of television. So there ~~was~~ ^{seemed to be} no alternative
 solution to that but that he should return to the fold in the Secretariat
 which he did, so that was it, we were all very happy.

GILLARD: Well you lost him but you created a new department there?

~~or two additions were made to its existing functions. There was~~
 FARQUHARSON: ~~Yes, well this was very~~ ^{The creation of the News Information Service, for example.} I found this most interesting.

News 1
 The Overseas people at 200 Oxford Street, ~~or~~ ^{and} in the country also, and the
 European people at Bush House were developing ~~News~~ ^{News} services that really were
 very important and extensive, a tremendous number of hours of news broadcasting
 of course, and they were doing it without a press cuttings library, and it
 was absurd. Because you really need to have the relevant press cuttings
 at your hand at every hour of the day really when things crop up you want to
 have the cuttings of the earlier stories so that you can recap.
 So there was talk about how to solve this problem, well of course, we had here
 in the BBC a ~~News~~ ^{News} Librarian who was very distinguished in his way. He's
 mentioned in Briggs as having been appointed to the ~~Home~~ ^{Home} News to set up a
 news library in 1933 and ~~incidentally~~ there he was and when a bomb fell on
 Broadcasting House and blew things all over the place, Batchelor, A.V.
 Batchelor, earlier of the Times newspaper, was discovered by the ~~Police~~ ^{Police} to
 be wandering around the streets picking up pieces of paper in an old suit
 looking very shabby. So they were sort of nabbing him. But he explained
 himself. He was collecting up the press cuttings.

GILLARD: Really, he couldn't afford to lose them.

FARQUHARSON: Well he didn't collect many but he was determined to collect what he could. He was really admirable at the job. But it was a sad story this one, I felt very sad about it. Because what I said to R.T. Clark, who was the Homes News Editor ^{was then} the Overseas ^{& European} people must have these services, they can't have Batchelor all to themselves, ^{each} either of them, but they ought to have a third of him and what we need is a news information service that will serve the Home News, the Overseas News and the European News. And I think the logic of that really was overwhelming although R.T. Clark didn't like losing his own news library, but he did and he yielded it up and so Batchelor then proceeded to pick out the best people he had to be head of the sections which were built up and it was really well done and turned out ~~very well in the end.~~ But, I'm afraid, we had to part with Batchelor because ~~he~~, we had a disagreement with him over salary, it was very sad. I mean looking back on it now I do feel bad because it doesn't seem to me that he was opening his mouth all that wide in face of present-day values. But in those days it was something that the staff people wouldn't stand for and which I thought was really excessive in relation to other jobs and so he went. So that was that.

But at any rate he had done a very good job and ^{for} the News Information Service I managed to get a chap from Fleet Street to carry us on over the War, and at the end of the War Batchelor's number two who was a young man in the first instance, too young really to be appointed, Roger Curtis, an excellent chap, ~~he~~ then was able to take over that job and ran it for a long time very successfully.

Another thing that happened in '41 ~~as far as I'm..~~, I'm almost sure I'm right, was the creation of this famous Duty Room, and the origin of that was that the Prime Minister rang up the BBC in the middle of the night, he wanted to speak to the Director General, ~~he~~ He couldn't speak to the Director General because nobody knew where the Director General was on the PBX, ^{Well} who is there I can speak to ^{to} says ~~the~~ ^{Mr. Churchill} Prime Minister. This was all done personally by him, he didn't get somebody else to do it. So he was put on to a little sort of information bureau of the monitoring service, a small unit on the fifth floor or sixth floor, who didn't know anything ~~about anything~~, that he wanted to know and he was so irritated that the story went that he flung the telephone receiver away from him with such force that it broke away from its moorings altogether and next morning there was a ~~frightful~~ row. And so something had to be done to provide a sort of glow ^{worm} service in Wartime so that when anybody, when the PM, rang up there would be a responsible voice at the other end of the telephone. And I do remember it was interesting because who was this voice to be? And the ~~Control Board, or whatever it was~~ ^{called in those days}, they thought out a whole list of valuable, excellent people like A.R.A. Rendall, Lobby, all sorts.. ^{of} busy men with heavy responsibilities, and so I passed a little note along the table to Dick Howgill

who was Director of ~~the~~ Administration, I think, at that time. And I said would you like us to take this over and my chaps and I will sit in a room in Broadcasting House in deck chairs taking it in turns until I am able to staff that room permanently with a Duty Officer.

~~Dick~~ Howgill was ~~absolutely~~ delighted and said yes for ^{god's} God's sake do it. Splendid. So they gave us the Echo Room ~~Three~~, I remember, in the basement. The Engineers' Echo Room ~~Three~~, and we made it into a duty room and we installed the Secretary of my local Squash Racquets court in Hampstead, who was an admirable chap, he was the best of the lot, Baxter, Ralph Baxter. And James Forty came down from the North Region and between them they provided a service which not only answered questions on the telephone but which of course was immediately fastened upon as a marvellous place on which all sorts of things could be planted because they were awake all night, or at any rate they had a telephone at their bedside and then of course it became a sort of haven of refuge for ~~talks~~ speakers and others who were given a drink after they had had their broadcast.

GILLARD: A sort of Green Room.

FARQUHARSON: Yes it became a sort of Green Room, ^{amongst other things:} ~~And it was all really very gay.~~

GILLARD: What really happened then, to sum it all up, what really happened to public relations after Tallents departure?

FARQUHARSON: It ceased to exist, Frank, as an organised entity. And of course the routine work in the different departments went on, publicity and so on, press relations. I think on the outbreak of War people really ^{thought they} had more important things ~~they thought~~ than public relations to worry about. And yet the need for public relations did become very apparent at that time, because there was a lot of public misunderstanding of what the BBC was up to, not surprisingly. It seemed they were behaving in a strange way when in fact they were not behaving in a strange way but a necessary way because of the limitations on the job ⁱⁿ ~~because of~~ Wartime. And I think it was a part of this, as a result of this general feeling about public relations that the full Board of Governors of seven members, which had been suspended at the beginning of the War so that there was only the Chairman and the Vice Chairman left, they were reconstituted largely I think because of some Parliamentary pressure. So that early in 1941 we had the full Board of Governors again as in peacetime. But before that I remember that both Sir Allan Powell and Millis the Vice Chairman, with Ogilvie as Director General, had been trying to find ways of enlightening the public a bit about the facts and limitations of wartime broadcasting, and there was a lot of

talk about getting a pamphlet, a popularly written pamphlet that would go on the bookstalls, which happened. A pamphlet was written by a lady whose name I've unfortunately forgotten, called ~~Broadcasting~~.. called "The BBC At War". And that was very good. And also Tom Beechcroft wrote a very good pamphlet called "Calling All Nations" which had quite a wide publicity. And then we brought out the Handbook as usual dealing with the year '41, and that again was ~~very~~ good and explanatory as to what the problems were. It was a difficult one to write though, as a matter of fact, because there had been some traumatic changes in the BBC but it was quite well done I think. But although various other initiatives were taken, no steps were taken to fill the void left by the departure of these two rather important figures Tallents and Ryan. There wasn't any thought at the time of keeping alive the idea of co-ordinating information and publicity activities even on a properly modest scale. And I ask myself now, altogether with hindsight, whether an opportunity wasn't missed there because I do think that public .. a certain amount. a public relations system in my opinion a modest one, is a very necessary concomitant really of an operation like the BBC's. Anyhow, what did happen was the arrival late in '41 of Kenneth Adam as Head of Publicity. And of course that went a long way towards meeting this void. In fact it was meeting a void that had existed in my opinion, ever since I joined the BBC in 1935, that's to say that for the first time in all those years the BBC had a really first rate professional to look after the publicity side of the work. And that made a lot of difference. But even then there was a lack of what I call the sort of essence of PR, which is that there should be ~~a~~ ^{an} sort of all over look at the publicity operation and the information services, and that is what really spells ^{good} public relations, I think ~~out~~. I visualise a weekly meeting, such as never took place during these years, on a departmental scale where the people who were responsible for the pamphlets and what we used to call supplementary publications and for the day to day press relations job and the various developments that were going on inside the Secretariat in the way of doing the Handbook and various things that they did, could have been talked about under a chairman. I think that was lacking.

GILLARD: Were all the Advisory Councils suspended?

FARQUHARSON: No they weren't. The General Advisory Council was suspended and I think there's always been a bit of a question-mark over that. But I do think that in Wartime it would have been difficult to make good use of a General Advisory Council. ~~But then~~. I noticed the other day that the Advisory Committees that were kept going in ~~the~~ Wartime were the Appeals Committee for the weeks good cause and other charitable purposes,

The Central Committee For Group Listening, which I think was a jolly good thing really to keep that going in Wartime, The Music Advisory Committee, CRAC - so-called - Central Religious Advisory Committee, Central Council for School Broadcasting. And the Scottish Council for School Broadcasting. And the chairmen of all the various regional bodies linked up with these Central Committees, used to come to the Central Meetings. So there was really quite a lot of advisory committee work going on.

GILLARD: You would agree wouldn't you that feedback from the audiences, what the Americans call input from the audience is a very important part of Public Relations as such?

FARQUHARSON: I certainly do, and I think that the committees and even the Council were jolly useful in that way. Supplied a lot of useful information. Anyhow, the fact of Kenneth Adams' appointment, though important, didn't really fill the bill entirely. It was shown in rather an interesting way and rather a surprising way by the intervention of Sir Richard Maconochie in this field at that time. He had ceased to be the Director of Talks and he'd been elevated to be Assistant Controller (Home). The Controller (Home) at that time in this rather bewildering series of changes that took place in the high command of the BBC was Patrick Ryan. He was the Supremo for the Home Side.

GILLARD: What did Home mean?

FARQUHARSON: Well it meant ~~to~~ opposite ^{to} of Overseas, you know, that's all. Maconochie had been spending his nights on duty in the compilation of a Policy Book. It was ^{an} ~~the most~~ interesting affair. It was really a sort of case book, almost a sort of lawyers' case book in which Maconochie had traced out all the controversial statements and correspondence ~~ce~~ that surrounded a particular issue, as for example when the U-boat commander was invited to.. you know the German U-boat commander, there was a big thing about that, a sort of cause célèbre.

GILLARD: Tell us more about that?

FARQUHARSON: Well I can't I've forgotten it.

GILLARD: But he was invited to broadcast you mean?

FARQUHARSON: Yes he was and then all sorts of people objected strongly and the question was whether the Government, whether the BBC would give in to

Government pressure or not. And in the end whether you'd call it giving in to Government pressure, in the end I think the broadcast did not take place. That is my belief but really my memory is hazy about it.

GILLARD: That kind of argument still goes on today.

FARQUHARSON: ^{Yes} ~~Of course it is, it always will go on, absolutely.~~
~~And when the BBC finally decides it does so on its own responsibility you know and doesn't wait for an order.~~

Well this was an ~~extremely~~ interesting book, it was ^{marked} highly "Confidential" which seemed rather a pity, I suppose it was because there were rather high level exchanges of papers on subjects, but it was a useful guide for Talks Producers and it was a useful guide to people like me, too, in answering correspondence. I found it a jolly good effort. Well it appeared that Maconochie had developed a great interest in this sort of thing and wanted to concern himself with these kind of issues which were raised from time to time in the press or in Parliament about the BBC, and which involved criticism of the BBC. And he'd been talking to Graves about this, Graves was Deputy Director General at that time. And he had asked Graves whether he couldn't take this sort of duty upon himself and then asked if he could call on me for assistance, and Graves put this to me and I said of course I would do what I could. Well, Maconochie's role in public relations I found ~~extremely~~ interesting, because as a Director of Talks before the war I think he must have been, I think he was among the severest critics of Tallents' public relations system. I spoke about that earlier and it is perfectly true that there was a good deal of concern amongst programme people at the extent to which the public relations side were intervening and to a certain extent Graves was really responsible for this, because there is no doubt that he did defer to the Controller of Public Relations a great deal about projects that were under debate as to whether or not it would be a good thing to go ahead with something that looked as if it might have some danger attaching to it. And it did rile people like Charles Siepmann and Wellington and well, generally, the programme heads, that Graves instead of taking a decision and leaving it to Tallents to wash the thing up afterwards if there was trouble which is what he was there for, would try and avoid trouble by getting Tallents in and really in a way leaving Tallents in a position of arbiter, which seemed to be quite wrong really. Well I felt, ^{quite} ~~really~~ at times that Graves was not perhaps ~~quite~~ acting independently enough at that time..

GILLARD: It really got to the lengths then did it of Programme Projects being abandoned?

FARQUHARSON: Oh yes one programme project was abandoned when Tallents was called in to give his opinion and he said "No, I'm quite clear that it would be quite wrong and it was abandoned. Now that made an impression which wasn't satisfactory, and it was all part of that, what I spoke about I think in our last session when I felt that the public relations system should be advisory.

GILLARD: It was a tail wagging a dog.

FARQUHARSON: It was a bit. I mean I'm not saying it was happening all the time but it happened enough to make the programme people a bit jealous of their rights.

GILLARD: So one can understand Maconochie as head of the Talks Department..?

FARQUHARSON: But Maconochie had a particular reason to dislike public relations systems because it began to be said, and Tallents rather supported this idea, that if you wanted a memorandum on something or the other for semi-public purposes like the General Advisory Council or something of the sort, only the public relations people could do it. He used to say "Now let's have a proper public relations memorandum." Well all that sort of thing was you know very annoying to people who were perfectly capable of .. And the time came when it was decided that the General Advisory Council should have a discussion about Talks policy and Richard Maconochie as Head of Talks was asked to provide a memorandum which came to me as Secretary of that body, and I looked at it and I didn't think that it was the right shape and form really for this purpose, this particular purpose, and I altered it. And took it back to Maconochie to discuss it with him and he said to me, "Look, I don't object to what you've done, but it's not my memorandum any more. And let it be clearly understood that I'm not responsible for it." And that was reasonable. And I remember really looking back on it with a certain amount of shame because I thought ^{in retrospect} it was really most frightfully arrogant. ..

GILLARD: You mean on your part?

FARQUHARSON: On my part. I do think that the Director of Talks ought to be allowed to address his own memorandum to a Council of that sort but, ^{as} he was overruled and the papers ^{it} I had altered went before the Council anonymously as a BBC paper. Well I mean no great harm was done but that was the sort of thing I think that set people like Maconochie against the

Public Relations Division. I hope it won't seem as though I'm kicking into my own goal. Because I was keen on ^APublic Relations and a great deal of very valuable work was done, but I always feel that it ought to have taken a bit more of a back seat.

Well, anyhow, here was Maconochie coming back into the field, and he had some interesting ideas. For example, he always used to say, ~~look here~~ ^{up} public relations isn't a matter for a public relations department, or a public relations division, its everybody's business, everybody ought to be a public relations officer in a certain sense. And that was a very interesting and valuable notion and I think we had a lot to learn from it.

And I think myself that that sort of notion was more fully understood in the regional organisations, you know everybody had a bit of responsibility in the public relations field, than it was in London.

I think something useful might have come out of the ^{is} collaboration ~~between~~ ~~Sir Richard Maconochie and myself~~, but the arrangement faded out in fact and that was because of his appointment, I think this is what happened, as Controller (Home) in the place of Ryan, ^{who} had flitted in characteristic fashion into yet another rôle and this time he, ^{became,} I think, ~~it was~~ Controller News Co-ordination. So that Maconochie was really otherwise engaged and our little arrangement didn't really come to anything. ~~Which was a pity,~~ ~~I think.~~ But Ryan, you know, was a news man at ^{heart} and he liked flying off to the scene of the action, anything better than a seat at the desk. In fact I don't really remember Patrick Ryan sitting at a desk much.

If he was in his office he was ^{often} lying on the floor, and that was how he conducted his conversations, highly informal, very loveable man.

Maconochie had a joking complaint against Ryan as his boss because he said that he had every possible help and support from Ryan except that he could never find him. He was never there. And it was shortly after that that he wasn't there and Maconochie was there in his place.

Well I don't think there's very much more to say on that, you know, because Kenneth Adams was succeeded as Head of Publicity by Douglas ^{Richie}, the Colonel Britain. ^{Another very} good choice. But that was much later, ^{it} after the war had come to an end, ^{must} have been after the war was over. And it was of course cut short by ^{Richie's} tragic illness and early death, and after that as far as I can recollect there was a rather leaderless interregnum for the Publicity Department for quite a long time until the arrival on the scene of Hugh ^{Carlton} Greene, first as Director of Administration under Jacob, and ~~somewhat~~ ^{later} later as Director General himself. And then the way began to be prepared for Pilkington and a new style of ^{Public} Relations was introduced. Which I should like to talk about a little bit later.

GILLARD: Fine. Let's leave that topic there. But I want to ask you one question, since you mentioned Ryan and you mentioned News

Co-ordination, now this is not a public relations question.

But if one reads the history of the BBC, Briggs particularly, but other things too, there is a sort of suggestion that Ryan on the Home side and Kirkpatrick on the Overseas side, were as it were the commissars of the Ministry of Information imposed upon the BBC to keep it in order, and that Ryan was called News Co-ordination, not News but News co-ordination, but his job was to ensure that the BBC took the proper line, the Ministry of Information's line in particularly in its news and information broadcasts. Can you comment on that at all?

FARQUHARSON: Yes I think it's perfectly true. It was always understood that whereas the Governors were to have their full responsibilities for maintaining standards and the independence of the BBC in general matters, on questions affecting the War effort the Governors were going to follow the requirements of the Ministry of Information, and Ryan's appointment and Kirkpatrick's appointment ^{were} ~~was~~ a convenient way of ensuring that the Minister had the last word on anything affecting the war effort, which was a rather wide and vague definition, but which worked I think very well really in practice because these chaps were sensible. I think. I can't imagine anybody more sensible in interpreting that kind of rather delicate balance than Ryan. Kirkpatrick was an accomplished diplomat and so forth, I know less about him. But it certainly was true that that's what Ryan was there for. And in a way it clipped the wings of Ogilvie as Director General. It really meant in a way that Ryan, well it meant that Ryan's word in the matter of news went.

GILLARD: News and Policy as far as wartime matters were concerned?

FARQUHARSON: Yes indeed.

GILLARD: I remember because I was in News Division at this time, that Ryan used to first of all in his day, to go to the Ministry of Information, that was his first port of call, and he obviously received his briefing there for the day. He then came back and at 12 noon sharp in his office held a meeting which I often attended of the senior people concerned with news, news talks, talks generally and so forth, at which he handed out the instructions.

FARQUHARSON: I can quite believe that. But that was much better than the Ministry sending an emissary to your news room and laying down the law. It was the BBC's own man who went to the Ministry and got the enlightenment on what the Government's policy was, and what was happening. And brought it back with him, brought it home. And I thought that was

rather a sensible British arrangement.

GILLARD: He gave the impression anyhow, Ryan did, of being a BBC man first and a Ministry man second.

FARQUHARSON: Absolutely true, that's how he regarded himself.

GILLARD: But there were occasions and I can think of one in particular, quite a trivial occasion but it was symptomatic, where he had to put his other hat on and he issued an instruction to me which astonished me because it conflicted with what I had been told to do by the BBC mandarins.

FARQUHARSON: Really. Well that was Ryan I suppose in his official capacity as.. well he was called Advisor, he was called Home Advisor in the first place you know. Can't remember who his counterpart was on the overseas side.

GILLARD: It wasn't Kirk.. not Kirk?

FARQUHARSON: Kirk arrived later. And that was the.. the whole thing was quite ostensibly a question of having a ministry advisor at the hand of the BBC controllers, and it was slightly altered in this rather important way I think, that was abandoned that was no longer a Ministry advisor, there was a BBC man who was in fact the chap who had to keep in touch with the Ministry of Information so that we didn't go wrong.

GILLARD: The instance, perhaps I ought very briefly to tell you what the instance was, where Ryan overrode as it were. The instance was a broadcast by the Minister of Fuel and Power at which he was to announce fuel rationing in the middle of the War, and he had been allotted five minutes, and I was to look after him. And when he came his script was much longer than five minutes, it was clearly something like ten minutes, and I had to explain to him that I had only five minutes for him. And he said regardless of that he was going to speak for ten minutes. I then called James Langham who was the official in charge, this was on a Sunday, James Langham was in charge of the output that day, he was the planner in charge of it all. Langham flatly refused to give me more than five minutes, he said five minutes had been allocated for this man and five minutes it is and you must tell him to cut his script, and I said he won't. And Langham said then he will be faded out. And I thought well this will cause trouble. So I called my boss who was Ryan and Ryan was at the Garrick Club which was where he could be found at any time I may tell you, and if Richard Maconochie

didn't know where to find him he must never have known about the Garrick. Ryan was at the Garrick, and Ryan said immediately without the slightest question at all, this Minister must have the full run of time that he wants no matter what the complications to succeeding programmes might be. And I said, well Sir, would you mind calling James Langham and telling him that because he won't take it from me. And he will fade the Minister unless he gets instructions. So Ryan rather grumpily ^{said,} thought, I ought to be able to cope with this situation, rather grumpily ^h undertook to call Langham and Langham had to cow-tow, Langham had to give way. Well Maurice thank you very much..

FARQUHARSON: Very interesting story.

GILLARD: I'm glad you raised it because I don't think anybody else has been able to put it as clearly as you have for us. I was interested you said that one of the publications you were able to bring out in Wartime when it was extremely difficult to bring out publications anyway, was the BBC handbook. Was that regarded as a sort of priority publication in the BBC?

FARQUHARSON: I suppose it was. It certainly was continued throughout. It had been started.. we started on the particular format of the so-called Handbook, I think in 1937, or possibly 1938. Previously to that there had always been a yearly publication under one or other of these titles, Year Book, or Annual or whatever it might be, in rather different formats. But this one seemed to have a long life, this kind of Handbook that we produced and.. I was looking at the Handbook for 1942 which I've got in my possession because it had this ~~very~~ difficult task of explaining the.. ~~in harmless but reasonably.. you know a reliable way, what happened when you see~~ during this year in which Tallents had left, and Ogilvie had left, and these changes had taken place, and I did feel when I looked at it again that it was really rather good, a sort of model I think of what such books should be in its design and layout, very good illustrations. Informative contents. Two or three interesting articles by contributors. Mainly done by James Thornton who was my number two at that time. And I remember getting an approving signal for this particular issue from Benjie Nichols who we regarded rather as the acknowledged arbiter on such matters. ~~I think that as soon as Kenneth Adam arrived, I thought well look he really should be doing this and I passed it over to him and it was much better.~~ And so it went on and I had in my possession only one other book, the one for 1957 which is a good deal later, which Kenneth Adams people produced. And the format was quite unchanged but I rather treasure this particular issue because it contains an article on the Constitutional History of the

/l.c.

BBC, which seemed to meet with general approval. You know, every handbook tried to say something about ^{"What is the BBC?"} ~~what sort of an animal is it constitutionally~~, and I think I managed to get it right this time because it was rather adopted as a sort of standard thing, and I learnt that it was being ^{handed round} ~~widely circulated~~ in the telecommunications department of the Post Office, who were ~~very~~ glad to have a clear explanation of what the BBC's constitutional position really was. That's rather a digression.

GILLARD: Yes, but its an example of case history isn't it, because I'm sure it was useful down the years afterwards.

FARQUHARSON: I think it was, yes.

GILLARD: Now tell us about the Chairman Powell, and the Vice Chairman Millis and what sort of special interest did they pursue?

FARQUHARSON: Well one interest about them was that between them I think, ~~the~~ both of them.. I think Millis had the longest period of service as a Governor of any Governor all down the years, and Powell was not very short of that. They were there a long time. Powell was ^{an} ~~a~~ very interesting man, ^{to me I think} ~~to me I think~~. I mean you might say well surely he wasn't a very interesting man.

GILLARD: I must say I never thought he was at all.

FARQUHARSON: He was rather, you might say, perhaps you might say he was a commonplace type, and he was by no means an intellectual, but he was ~~very~~ shrewd, and he was a skillful operator, you know, in the corridors of power. And he was a stayer. He told me.. I was in touch with him in the early days before Haley arrived and he told me it hadn't been a happy time for him as Chairman of the BBC and he would have liked to be quit of it. And I was rather surprised because it seemed to me that he was doing very well, and I think he must have been happier, ~~of course you know~~ the Tallents and Ogilvie crises must have been painful to him, but when he had Foot and Graves ~~and then after that Haley~~ I think he must have been happier. Although his team of Governors, when the Board was reconstituted, was very high powered. J.J. Mallon, Lady Violet Bonham-Carter, Harold Nicholson, Arthur Mann ^{he} was a powerful critic. Must have kept him on his toes you know. But he did a big job for the BBC in my opinion, in the War. I ceased really to see the reconstituted Board of ~~the~~ Governors, I never saw anybody after Sir William Haley's arrival, except occasionally Powell who ~~me~~ I'd established a relationship with. But that was Powell and Millis.

Well, Millis of course was just a thoroughly loyal chap who rode along with Powell. I don't know very much about him, he was a quiet chap.

GILLARD: Then in 1941 they introduced some sort of reorganisation?

FARQUHARSON: Oh yes, that was quite an interesting reorganisation. I'm not quite sure whether the really important thing that happened then was part of this reorganisation or not, but I'm referring now to the fact that Thomas Lockhead, an old servant of the BBC and ~~a~~ Chief Accountant, was given control. He was made into a Finance Controller with his own Finance Division instead of being responsible to the Controller of Administration, and that was really one of the most important things in getting the finances of the BBC right.

GILLARD: They'd been wrong had they?

FARQUHARSON: They'd been wrong under Ogilvie. That was ~~very~~ important but I'm not quite sure whether it was part of that reorganisation, it may have been something done on its own, I expect it was.

The reorganisation, which really affected me a little bit, was simply due to the dispersal of the BBC's London Departments all over the place, Bristol and Bedford and so on, because of the War and it became impossible for one man to fill the functions of the Director of Office Administration, which was what Ralph Wade was called. That great man Wade, who was such a controversial figure. And, well, that department was abolished, and ~~then~~ it was followed by the setting up of "area administrations" as they were called to cover these new dispersed centres of activity. And, as part of the package, the Library, the Reference Library, under Miss Milnes and the Registry and Post Room under Miss Mills, came over to me. I mean it was just a matter of convenience but it was ~~very~~ welcome I think to both these people because ^{Miss} Milnes running the library had never felt that she was in a very congenial framework in this office administration organisation, and Miss Mills was really having such a ghastly time being .. her mighty collection being moved ~~from~~ one part of the country to the other because of wartime moves, that she quite liked the idea of having somebody who would pay her some attention and try and give her some help. And I was delighted to have these two services because I was interested in them. ~~They were very much up my street.~~

And so I welcomed it. Incidentally, while we are on that subject I ought to have said that when Tallents went and the public relations division came to an end Robert Silvey came along to me and said you know we've been very happy together but I want to leave you, and join Nicolls' division, so that the people for whom I'm working will be my colleagues and I shan't be coming in

Nicolls'

from outside the thing. Psychologically it will be better for me. I said, quite all right, fine. But it was ~~very~~ interesting because of course he later found himself in the predicament after the War was over that he was in the ~~Home programme~~, the sound Radio side of the BBC and having to concern himself with television programmes, so he got himself into the same fix, and he came back to me and he said look things have changed and I think I'd really be better situated if I was in a sort of neutral position in the middle, so may I please come back. And of course that was fine.

GILLARD: Wartime of course must have been extraordinarily difficult for working in the BBC, you've mentioned the problems of dispersal but there must have been many other problems too that you had to cope with?

FARQUHARSON: Yes. The ~~main trouble of course was~~ the constant trouble was the question of accommodating these various services. Because this department of mine had grown in numbers it was really quite a population with a lot of people involved in the registry, ~~clocks~~ and in the other things too. And the great problem was to find accommodation for them. That was really the main wartime difficulty, ^{otherwise,} ~~because~~ the difficulties that ~~I met were~~ personally weighed on me were really mainly the sort of difficulties that could have arisen in peacetime just as well. Because when all is said, I had a cushy job in Wartime. I mean working my department in the BBC, I was very conscious of that. And where the shoe rubbed was on this notion of the Secretariat, the little small Secretariat that Graves had created rather as a brainchild of his own. That was difficult, and I thought I would tell the story briefly because its not without interest possibly, and it throws a little bit of light on some of the main protagonists.

Graves, for his part, had visualised the creation of a small secretariat for the BBC, much earlier on. It was at the time before the war when I was acting as secretary for his Programme Committee and ~~his~~ also his larger Programme Board. And he told me that his idea was that there should be a group of two or three people who would have access to the available sources of information and who would be used by the Director General and others to service internal meetings, prepare documentation, make arrangements for formal occasions like dinners, banquets, conferences, advisory bodies and so forth, at which the Chairman or the Director General would probably be the host. A sort of very modest Headquarters staff. That was the gist of what Graves told me he would like to happen one day, and I told him that that was ~~very~~ ~~much~~ close to my heart, it was just what I liked the idea of.

Of course the hub of what Graves was talking about wasn't clearly understood. ~~It~~ it was really whether the idea would extend to the top of the organisation which was the Board of Governors, or whether it would stop short of that.

The question was, would the Board want to have a secretary, or would they prefer to continue with the help of what was officially described as the Clerk to the Board. ~~The Clerk was~~ ^{By} longstanding arrangement ~~really~~ amounting to a tradition really, ~~that~~ the senior Private Secretary to the Director General ~~should~~ ^{was} be the Clerk and at the same time Secretary to the Chairman. Kay Fuller, Miss Fuller, occupied this position when the Secretariat was formed. She was a charming pleasant person who subsequently became a Talks Producer in the Overseas Services. And she was succeeded by Dorothy Singer, who was an extremely able person. And I felt at the time that it wouldn't be in the least surprising if the Board was very content with that arrangement and not wishing for any change. But nevertheless when Graves became joint director with Foot, I was rather wondering whether they had raised this idea, either with the Chairman or with the Board, I don't know, I rather doubt it. The fact is that Graves told me on the very day I think that the arrangement was announced that there wasn't going to be any change in the ~~existing~~ ^{existing} arrangements as far as the Board of Governors was concerned.

Well, it was important, it was disappointing to me. It had the effect ~~in~~ ~~practice~~ of putting off the achievement of a private ambition for another fifteen years for me, ~~because~~, that is to say until after Sir William Haley's arrival and after his departure. ^{it was} And only at that much later stage, as Secretary to the Corporation, which was what my designation finally was, that I personally was able to feel a sort of security and confidence in my relations with the management.

~~I'd like to explain that.~~

The fact is, if in an organisation you've got a Secretariat, so-called, you are entitled to assume that they know what's going on. Everybody makes that assumption and you have to try and live up to it. And in a very curious way you don't function so happily or so easily if you are excluded from the main policy making, authoritative council of the BBC, which is the Board of Governors.

When Graves made this old ^{with} ~~Public Relations Department~~ into a Secretariat it brought us nearer the center ^{of} of things, which is what he intended, but it didn't put us ^{at} the centre. We were referred to if anything rather more than before, but it was a disadvantage not to have that sort of background knowledge of what was brewing, what was going on. When Sir William Haley became Director General, soon after, fairly soon after, ⁽ because the joint Director Generalship lasted, what, a year and a bit ^{?)} ^{it} was clear that he didn't have any use for ^{the} Secretariat at all. I don't think he made any bones about it, he didn't believe in it, he wasn't used to it.

He read all the files himself. And dictated memoranda for the Board that were really brilliant. To judge from the papers that came my way they were first rate, and I remember reading an article by Barbara Ward who was one of

the members of the Board at that time, being quite lyrical about the sort of stream of enlightenment that Haley provided for his Governors. Well how could I complain about that? Certainly not, I couldn't really. But there was a rub. You see the fact is that Haley couldn't in fact write everything himself, that was the basic fallacy I think of his attitude, which was an attitude which was not shared by his successor Sir Ian Jacob. The longer, more tedious chores, and various chores that had to be done like the Annual Report for Parliament, the White Paper sort of thing, that had to be left to the Secretariat, it couldn't be done in the DG's outer office. Well that was all right, but I do remember that when Sir William said at a meeting at which I was present that it would be left to Nancy Thomas to prepare the paper that was required for the next meeting or whatever it was, I didn't like that. I really felt it wasn't really playing the game. Because the Secretariat was there. ↗

But Nancy Thomas was another girl in the Director General's outer office —
very charming, very bright, ^{with a} future in Television.)

u/h I'm sure that Sir William did look ahead as far as the second of those periodic enquiries into the future of Broadcasting was concerned, it was only looming, you know, a year or two ahead. And he must have realised that that was going to put a burden in the way of documentation on the BBC that could not be handled in the Director General's office. Well, what he thought about that I don't know.

But of course all that side of things was my own private difficulty really, shared a ~~little~~ bit by James Thornton ~~who~~ as long as he remained with me but he was soon to leave me for the Army, and of course ~~Whitley~~, Oliver Whitley ⁱⁿ and Michael Reynolds had been caught up in other jobs long since. So that was all rather a sort of private trouble of mine.

The ~~great~~ merciful thing ^{for} to me was that I had a department of my own and there ~~they~~ were always, as I thought, useful things to do. And you know I suppose it wasn't frightfully important but ~~there~~ ^{they} were ~~sort of~~ supporting services for the BBC and they played their part. Miss Milne, the famous librarian who was entirely unqualified, no qualifications as a librarian, who had started a collection of books for Sir John Reith which probably included Who's Who and Whitaker's Almanack and the Bible.

GILLARD: And Crockford's..

FARQUHARSON: And Crockford's Clerical Directory, you know, and some more like that Bradshaw's Railway Guide. She had built up a really first class library which was regarded as such by highly professional practitioners and she was at that time doing the same thing in the way of a branch library for the Overseas and European Services. Very much needed, and she had already

then, in her own mind, begun to work out the kind of library that she would want to have after the war for Television. A slightly different job. So that was interesting.

And then this newly created News Information Service which was getting the European and Overseas Divisions supplied with proper news library, ^{senior,} they were being established. And ^a the central ~~and~~ new cuttings collection was built up for lending, lending out. Because of course the ~~news~~ press cuttings that were used in the ~~News~~ ^N room were never allowed outside the ~~News~~ ^N room, so that there was this ~~out~~ central big collection of cuttings which were sent out on little green strings on any subject to any department of the BBC, and that was really very much used; the Features Department for example were voracious users of this lending system. ^{w/h} And then the Registry. That was really a great headache because the poor things were being bombed out of Regents Park and put into Egton House and then Egton House was wanted for the ~~News~~, ^N so they had to go across the road to the ground floor of the Langham, taking all these vast collections of files and indexes with them. It was really a great problem. I was interested in that very much and I was also interested in the Post room, you know, the humble job of collecting and delivering the mail inside the BBC, especially when everybody was changing their offices madly from one place to another. This was carried on under the supervision of a man who became a ~~very~~ great friend of mine, Hawkins the Post ^R Room Supervisor, who had been a Regimental ^a Sergeant-Major in the Grenadier Guards. He ~~had~~, ^{he} relied exclusively almost on boys and girls as his messengers at that time and they weren't all of them very intelligent but he was a wonderful manager. You know, this great figure, used to the rigours of the parade ground, dealing gently, as he did, with these children and getting the best out of them. It was only very rarely that he raised his voice, but when he did you could hear a pin drop afterwards. Walter Hawkins was a very fine fellow and I think he had a special friendship for Douglas Clark, D.H. Clark, you'll remember, and me, because we had also served in his regiment. And until old age crept up on him he was very proud of being a member of Her Majesty's Bodyguard of the Yeomen of the Guard. And he played a big part and I collaborated with him over the various difficulties that occurred, ~~with people,~~ ^S with some of these boys and girls they got into mischief and we had to deal with that. These various sections of my department of course did really for the greater part of the time nevertheless run themselves. I mean they were all run by very competent people. And they were well served by competent junior assistants too. I always found in my experience that the BBC could rely on the most efficient and loyal service on the part of the senior clerks all around and the senior secretaries. It's extraordinarily fortunate in that way. So I was left with time on my hands after all, and I remember at that time

that I devoted myself to cultivating our relations with the officials of the Palace of Westminster.

Well of course the BBC was very well known ^{then} because of E.R. Thomson.

Teddy Thomson, Parliamentary Correspondent, who was a big figure in the Press Gallery, being there so much, and also Archie Gordon who was in charge of the "Week In Westminster." I was friendly with both ~~these chaps~~ ^{them} and I soon realised when I went down to the House what a fine reputation they enjoyed in both Houses of Parliament. ^{u/h} But we were wretchedly short at

that time of facilities in the House in both these Chambers.

For other members of the staff ~~they were~~ ^{needed to be} looked after ~~these two~~ ^{too}.

I remember for example that Princess Indira, who became rather a familiar figure in my life at that time because she was doing a regular report on the British Parliamentary proceedings for listeners in India and she had no permanent place in the House at all, everything had to be arranged ad hoc through one of the members. And there were others in the same predicament. Well, I discovered that the received doctrine which obtained in the Sergeant ~~at Arms~~ office was "one newspaper, one place." And the BBC forsooth was really being looked upon as one newspaper, and I had quite a task to convince the Sergeant ^{at Arms} that the BBC really was equal to more than ~~both~~ ^{the} fingers of both hands as far as that was concerned in relation to the newspapers.

I became ~~very~~ friendly with the Deputy Sergeant ^{at Arms} who was really the man to get hold of. General Hughes turned out to be a ~~very~~ great friend of the BBC. I remember asking him out to lunch with J.C.S. MacGregor of the News Division, and we made a lot of progress in getting him on our side.

And the solution to our difficulty was found outside the Press Gallery.

I remember that in the first place anyhow General Hughes got us the free, the exclusive use of five seats in a row in the Gallery facing the Speaker, they were allocated to the holders of BBC passes, and then arrangements were made of course at Broadcasting House for the places to be shared out day by day according to who needed to go. And that was very useful. It was also useful to me personally because I got the use of one of these places without any sort of trouble of trying to get in touch with members and that kind of thing, when anything affecting the BBC was coming up for debate.

At a later stage General Hughes got for me a pass for the Member's Lobby which was considered to be a valuable privilege and I did use it for quite a time as a means of contacting members, because you were entitled to go up to a Member in that Lobby and buttonhole him and say look I want to ask you about this. When Members wrote to the BBC, you know, we used to make a good reply if we could and I used to take the reply down in the hope of meeting the Member and talking it over. And if he asked a Parliamentary ~~Question~~ ^Q on the ~~subject~~ ^a ~~you know~~ ^{one} which one felt ~~it~~ could be elucidated a bit if ~~you really~~ got alongside him, ^T that's what I used to try and do.

needed

I think it was useful up to a point but I did find ~~it was most terribly~~
~~time consuming, really~~ it was so time consuming that it became a bit
 impractical. When I mentioned it to Sir Alexander Cadogan he said ["]Really
 can you afford the time for that, he knew all about it. And I really couldn't.
 And I learnt at exactly that point that there was somebody newly arrived in
 the BBC's news organisation with a special interest in Parliamentary affairs
 who really needed just exactly that ~~Lobby~~, Member's Lobby ~~pass~~. So I
 willingly relinquished it. And the person in question was Ian Trethowan.
~~And~~ ^(W) when I met him only about eighteen months ago from now and reminded him
 of that he said he often thought what a ~~very~~ valuable thing it was for him to
 have that facility. I was very pleased.)

GILLARD: It means back tracking a little bit, but I'd like us
 now to have a sequence if we could about Directors General, because there
 was really a rather unusual period in which they seemed to come and go with
 some rapidity and you watched them all. It was of course bad luck on the
 BBC that it had to enter into the enormous crisis of a War the dimensions of
 World War Two with a newly arrived Director General who didn't really know
 his way round and was untried and untested.

FARQUHARSON: That was so. Ogilvie had huge responsibilities, when
 you take into account all the vicissitudes of policy and attitude for which
 the Government past almost week by week towards the BBC during those rather
 traumatic early months. And also of course there needed to be an almost
 total reshaping of the BBC's domestic Home Services and an enormous expansion
 of the External Services. ["] Triple ~~E~~ Expansion ["] was a concept that was launched
 within the BBC at an early stage. And it became a sort of watchword.
 It ran into difficulties because of the lack of supply of equipment.
 But all these problems weighed on him and he wasn't equal to them.
~~I'm afraid.~~ I did have opportunities for ~~seeing~~, of seeing for myself that
 there were decisions that really needed to be taken that he simply couldn't
 take. I've tried to imagine sometimes what would have happened if any of
 Ogilvie's three important successors Haley, Jacob or Greene had been ~~in~~ charge
 at that time. And I can't help thinking that any one of these three would
 have had the capacity and the will to get things right that were undoubtedly
 wrong, at that time. It was a sad story. ~~But~~ ^T the immediate reason for
 Ogilvie's departure was simply that Sir Allan Powell had lost confidence in
 his ability. ~~And I know that Millis was, thought exactly the same.~~
 And ~~finally~~ early in '41 the newly appointed members of the reconstituted
 Board, who hadn't had a great deal of experience to go on, nevertheless with
 a good deal of pain and anguish ~~they~~ came to the same conclusion. ~~And~~ ^T they
 unanimously supported Powell in that decision which Powell conveyed to Ogilvie.

of programme output, and they managed it that way.

I think it was an extremely good regime to suit the time. And the fact is that it would have been difficult to think of a single person whom the Board could have appointed.

Graves and Tallents had both been favourite candidates for the Reith succession and they were still available. But Graves who was ~~by far~~ the stronger candidate of the two was in poor health unfortunately, because he was a fine man and he had a good judgement about people and projects. And he could take decisions though he was modest, too modest really about his intellectual attainments and he seemed sometimes to show a weakness because of that. But he was good at that job, one of the people who could be expected to grow with the job as distinct from Ogilvie whose tragedy was that he ~~was~~ somehow diminished by the BBC, it was too big.

Graves could I think myself have possibly justified the confidence that Reith had in him from the start. But if that had been so, and if his health had held up he would certainly have been seen eventually to be a very conservative figure in ^a the changing world and of course it wasn't on because his health, he was ailing. g

Tallents had a modern outlook. And he was imaginative. But he was fussy. ~~He~~ was meticulous. I'm afraid I didn't think that he appeared to advantage as Director General designate of the Ministry of Information during that trial run at Munich time when Tony Rendall and myself were attached to his staff. He was fumbling a bit at that time really and of course he wasn't confirmed in that appointment. Tallents was in a way a hidden person. Living in a world of his own. Though at the same time he was an ambitious man in the world of affairs. I think I did say earlier, he really was a mass of contradictions. ~~But he was in my ..~~ I found him ~~to be a very~~ charming companion.

GILLARD: But not Director General timber?

FARQUHARSON: Not, I think. He ^{would} ~~might~~ have been better than Ogilvie but that's all I can say. So what were the possibilities, you see Jacob wasn't on the scene, and the only practical alternative I suppose was B.E. ^{Nichols} ~~Nichols~~. And he could have been Chief Editor. The outstanding BBC man, greatly loyal to the Corporation and greatly loyal to all the good BBC men within it, ~~he always talked about he's a good BBC man.~~ He wasn't so good with the outer world really, the outside world. He was a bit quirky, not very strong in savoir faire, so I think he was out of it.

Sir Richard Maconochie could have been thought of I think, but of course he was too old by that time.

So that I think that Graves with his long experience in Charge of Programmes

and Foot with his proved capacity for administration were really the ideal pair to run the BBC, if pair there had to be. And the Board would not have been happy with Foot alone.

As it was, you know, Foot was free during that time to carry out what I'd call the great ^{re}organisation of 1942. That was when the old ^AAdministration Division which Reith ~~I think~~ had ~~really~~ conceived, dating from 1933, was abolished and each separate establishment in the BBC, everything that was designated as an "establishment" was made responsible for managing its own affairs. ^L Within overall limits set ~~you know~~ by central regulation, including finance and staff administration, conditions of service, all those sort of things. But it was a liberating decision, everybody, in every part of the BBC I think felt that it had been ^a long overdue change. I expect this has been described by others. ^{u/h} The Secretariat became a separate establishment and we had our own administrative assistant. I enjoyed the annual interviews that the Head of Establishment was supposed to give, and ~~I did in fact enjoy those interviews~~ and I carried them out where all senior staff were concerned down to the first grade of clerical AW I think it was called at that time, the grade of clerical assistant, and saw everyone of them once a year.

^{u/h} This reorganisation ~~did all help~~ to put the BBC back again on its feet.

I think the BBC began to be itself again from this point and as I said before I think that the independent position of Thomas Lockhead as Controller Finance was a most important item in the whole picture. ~~Which resulted in Foot being trusted by the Administrative information and the Government in general because I think the BBC had been a Cabinet item from time to time and I think that this made an enormous amount of difference at a time when the Treasury and the Government in particular were being tempted into taking a closer interest into the BBC than was at all healthy.~~

Several times I heard Foot describe how he and Graves were working together on the basis of friendship and I really believe this was ~~quite entirely~~ genuine. Graves' ill health brought the partnership to an end and I suppose it's really rather useless to speculate as to how long it would have lasted otherwise. I suppose in the nature of things a duality of that kind had to be in a way temporary.

GILLARD: And with two very special people, wouldn't you say?

FARQUHARSON: And with two people admirably suited to work together.

GILLARD: So then ^FFoot at last did become the supreme head.

FARQUHARSON: He did. It didn't last very long but it seemed to me that Foot was quite confident about carrying on alone. ^CCuriously enough the

And that was really that.

~~And so Ogilvie had to go.~~

GILLARD: Was it a shock to the staff or everybody or was it expected?

FARQUHARSON: I don't really know quite the answer to that question. I mean it was obviously expected at a high level that it couldn't go on. ~~And all sorts of things had happened which I didn't expect to go into really~~ but there was the awful trouble at Woodnorton with the Monitoring Service a sort of internal crisis in their affairs which resulted in Ogilvie's intervention and the resignations of Richard Marriott and Oliver Whitley. Two people who were universally respected and admired, and I think it was ~~felt then that something was wrong in the handling of that.~~ There were ~~other~~ difficulties, and there was of course the appointment of Gerald Beadle to be Director of Administration to come up and try and retrieve things. Which could, I suppose, possibly have been a sort of threat to Ogilvie's position, though it didn't seem to be at the time. Much more deadly of course to Ogilvie was the appointment of Foot, Robert Foot. Suggested by Bracken and appointed by the BBC as advisor on Wartime Organisation. That appointment was intended to last three months. But I think it really became apparent to all concerned that with the help of the key people in the BBC, that's to say very largely Gerald Beadle and Thomas Lockhead, Foot had got the key to the situation and he would be able to put the BBC's finances and administration onto a sound footing. And he wasn't going to go after the three months. Gerald Beadle thereupon ~~of course~~ ^{returned} retired I think quite happily to the West Country which he always very much loved.

GILLARD: And so when Ogilvie went, Foot just naturally took over.

FARQUHARSON: ~~No~~ I think what happened when Ogilvie went was the appointment of the joint Directors General. I don't think Foot was ever appointed by himself at any time. He was appointed joint Director General with Sir Cecil Graves.

GILLARD: And how did they split it up then?

FARQUHARSON: Well I think they split it up jolly well. I mean it was obvious really that Foot wouldn't make any claims to being competent to edit or make editorial decisions about programme output in the BBC, it simply wasn't his country. He was a very experienced administrator, ~~business administrator~~ and Graves had all the background for remote control

single occasions which stands out in my memory about Foot was when he appeared without notice at a parade of our Home Guard Company in Portland Place, and he asked ^{Geo} Jeffrey Strobe who was in command, if he ^Sould address the parade. He wanted to tell us of Mussolini's fall and resignation, the news of which had reached him. And he spoke of this as if it ^{were} was the real turning point in the War. Well considering what rather wearisome times we did have in the Home Guard on the whole, one way or another, I think it was really imaginative and very kind of him to think of making that announcement in the way he did. I saw quite a lot of Foot at the time he was Director General and I was trying to help him as Secretary to his Working Party, he set up a Working Party for planning broadcasting after the war, and I was engaged on this when Haley arrived on the scene as Editor-in-Chief. I think ~~it was inevitable~~, don't you, that after Graves' departure ~~that~~ some sort of appointment as that was inevitable. Simply because it was generally accepted that Foot couldn't be expected to exercise control, editorial judgements, on that side of the work.

^{W/h} Haley. There might have been other possibilities, but Haley was appointed and he quickly took a dominating position. You know as it happened I was ~~in~~ with Foot in his room after a meeting of one of these Post-war Working Parties ^{meetings} had taken place, had finished, when Haley was shown into Foot's room. I remember ^{how} that Foot jumped to his feet in his impulsive way and with his rather gangling gait he advanced to meet Haley, so as to give him a cordial welcome. He ^usaid, "I'm so glad to see you Haley," he ^usaid, "and it gives me an opportunity of introducing to you.. and then he spoke in terms of hyperbole about the extent of my usefulness to himself. And by implication, I suppose, to any Director General. Well, it was kindly meant, ~~that was~~, but I knew that it was ~~very~~ ill judged because I was watching Haley's rather cold face and it froze. I got the message at once, Haley wouldn't be needing ^{any} such help. Well, the conversation went on; I was still there in the room and Foot started talking about the meeting of the Working Party on Post-War Broadcasting, and Haley dismissed it as being quite wrong, he didn't agree with it. Those were the sort of questions to be settled by the Director General and his immediate advisors, that was what he was saying. Well, the Working Party was disbanded, ~~and~~ it never met again, and I realised from that moment that we had a strong Director General waiting in the wings.

GILLARD: And he didn't have to wait very long.

FARQUHARSON: And he didn't have to wait very long, you are ~~quite~~ right. Yes.

GILLARD: W s Foot's departure a matter of concern?

FARQUHARSON: Yes it was. Well, Asa in his history says it was greeted with surprise, he says it came as a ~~high~~ a bigger surprise for the Governors than Graves' resignation. Somehow I couldn't feel surprised. Foot did say that he regarded this job in coal, the mining association job..

GILLARD: That was what he was going to

FARQUHARSON: That was what he was going to and he had a sense of mission about it. That's what he said to me when he was saying goodbye. He said, you see all we have in this country is coal (of course we hadn't got North Sea Oil at that time). And I think he was genuine about it. And yet I cannot think that the Foot/Haley partnership would have lasted very long.

GILLARD: No. So there we are Haley is now Director General

FARQUHARSON: Haley was now Director General, and I haven't really a great deal to say about him except that I will say at once that I did have a profound admiration for Haley as Director General, his completely authoritative grasp of the whole broadcasting situation and its problems and purposes ~~always~~ ^{as} admired his speeches. I admired such of his public lectures ~~that~~ ^{as} appeared in print, which they did some of them, and I especially admired his speeches at the periodic General Liaison Meetings at which all the senior staff throughout the organisation ~~was~~ ^{were} assembled, ~~if~~ ^{as} you remember, in the Council Chamber. And I think that he had us all where he wanted. ~~you know he seemed~~ ^{to have} had a complete confidence in himself. And one felt that he allowed himself, as very few people nowadays, ~~or at any rate at that time,~~ would or could do, to speak eloquently; he wasn't inhibited in that way, he really let himself go, and one felt that he really did have the future of the BBC at heart. And I don't mean to say that his speeches were all rhetorical. His accounts of what had happened since the last meeting and what he hoped would happen in the immediate future were unvarnished and informative. All in all I think that he was a really impressive figure as Director General. Of course all great men have their weaknesses, but I don't propose to enlarge on that.

GILLARD: It sounds as if you admired him as a Director General but not so much as a man.

FARQUHARSON: No, I couldn't stand him really. I mean I don't think he had any use for me either really, we were uneasy always.

GILLARD: And he didn't want a Secretariat?

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FARQUHARSON: He didn't want a secretariat, no. I don't think he made any bones about that, ~~I felt he didn't~~. Because when eventually he said goodbye to me I confess I found it a bit embarrassing because I couldn't help feeling that he really was apologising to me for having rather left me out of things, you know. He said, well you know I have to do things my own way. And that's the way it was, I could see the point. And of course it is true that whereas I was in very low water in the early years of Haley's Director Generalship, he did express appreciation later on. I remember getting messages from him. I got a very cordial message after we'd had this enormous beano at the Savoy Hotel on the 21st Anniversary, in the middle of the War mind you '43, wasn't it? yes. And that was in my hands. You know, to organise. It was quite a job really because I suppose.. I have a sort of feeling there were about 500 people in that room and they all had to be placed somewhere where they would have a pleasant time with suitable companions.

GILLARD: And they were all big people..?

FARQUHARSON: No they were.. really there were some people from outside you know, people like Harold Nicholson, Oh he was a Governor of course, but no.. I'm sorry, I think I'm wrong about that, ~~I think it~~ was a purely BBC gathering, wasn't it. It was addressed by Allan Powell who made a very good speech and there were Heads of Departments and key people, 500 of them. And it was really a very good show, and I got a lot of congratulations from Haley on that, and from the Chairman, too. So I began to feel that he was ^{some what} more friendly disposed from that moment onwards.

GILLARD: But although you weren't close to the DG and he didn't want a Secretariat you still found plenty to do didn't you. What was your title at the time?

FARQUHARSON: Well you know Haley had his own reorganisation, every Director General ^{is} ~~was~~ entitled to one reorganisation! And I could never remember quite what that reorganisation was. But one thing it certainly was; we all had our designations altered. The people who had been Controllers became Directors, and the people who had been called Directors became Heads, I think that was roughly it. So I think I must have been Head of the Secretariat.

GILLARD: And as such you found plenty to do I suppose?

FARQUHARSON: Well as such I never felt I was doing as much as I would

have liked to have done, but I was really acting as a Departmental Head as I explained and I did find quite a lot to do, ^{though} it wasn't a very exciting time for me. But still.

You know, Frank, a little bit earlier I allowed myself a small digression on the subject of the BBC handbooks or year books, and just now I mentioned Sir William Haley's public lectures, some of which were republished as pamphlets. I feel that the BBC has really been, I really do think it has been very fruitful in publishing philosophical studies of the art of broadcasting, or special subjects and their relationship to broadcasting. And I ~~don't~~ think this was ~~more~~, ~~this never was~~ more true than in Haley's time. I've got a small selection of such things and it includes three really splendid lectures 'The Responsibilities of Broadcasting' which was a Louis Fry Memorial Lecture; 'The Central Problem of Broadcasting' that was written for a group of the university of Chicago; 'Moral Values in Broadcasting' for the British Council of Churches, all by Haley. And then again it went on you know. Because later on we have things in the same vein 'The Broadcasters Responsibility', the same thing really by Hugh Carlton Greene in a speech in Washington; and, 'The BBC in Adult Education' which he gave to a Conference of the Institute of Adult Education; and another one 'BBC News and Current Affairs' which I kept because I thought it was so awfully good, by Donald Edwards, in the BBC Lunctime Lectures series which I think was one of the brilliant ideas of George Campey. And then you see there were the BBC ~~Quarterlies~~, devoted to the same kind of material, which was founded, was it not, by Sir William Haley, I think it was his idea. I think that the capacity of the BBC to offer moral and philosophical and political ideas to which it tried to ^{give} expression in its work immensely influenced the Pilkington Committee when they came to make their enquiry into Broadcasting. I think it gave the BBC a sort of stature or status which they had thought much of, that's why I thought I'd make a little digression about it.

GILLARD: Yes, well worth it yes.

Well how would you sum up the general condition of the BBC at this particular juncture. The sort of arrival of Haley.. at the end of the War?

FARQUHARSON: Well, yes it wasn't one of the great factors, of course, during the remaining years of the War when Haley was Director General I think the national war effort had really got into its stride and the BBC had got into its stride and to the extent that broadcasting was part of the means of prosecuting the war they were well supplied, you know it didn't arise. But after the war there were these frightful shortages which seemed to go on and on endlessly.

GILLARD: Shortages of what?

FARQUHARSON: Well of equipment, supplies. Of course the public was on short commons in any case, both during the war and after with rationing and so forth. But the difficulty of getting television transmitters of course was one of them. And of course, you remember how there were fuel shortages and so on, and any form of conspicuous consumption do you remember ~~it~~ was ~~regarded as~~ distinctly frowned upon. And you know Haley was very conscious of the national interest when it came to that sort of thing and I think he got into a habit of saving.

run on / I think Haley was rather like Gilpin's wife, he had a frugal mind.

When he was asked at a General Liaison meeting whether the development of television could not be stepped up Haley's answer as I remember it was:

"Television must take its place in the national queue. Yes, but was there perhaps ^{an} unconscious bias in Haley's mind, in favour of sound radio as against TV." Certainly his first priority after the war was to re-establish the sound services to their fullest extent. I don't think he was very frugal about that. I don't know, in certain respects he may have been.

GILLARD: He was very lavish over the Third Programme.

FARQUHARSON: Certainly. Well, it was right, ~~I think up to a point~~ But was his heart wholly behind the idea of ^ere-establishing television as soon as it could ~~possibly~~ be done, as a matter of ^{urgency}? I remember Lord Llewellyn, a member of the General Advisory Council, making the shortest GAC speech on record. When he got up and spoke one single sentence "The BBC is not doing enough to speed up the development of television" then he sat down. I can't remember exactly when that was said but you can guess about when it would have been said.

GILLARD: Yes, '46/47

FARQUHARSON: Something like that.

GILLARD: You said that every Director General was entitled to his reorganisation, I think Haley had more than one actually, because of course when he first came in whenever it was, '43, he made all sorts of adjustments and changed titles and all the rest of it, but there was this whacking reorganisation in 1947 when he introduced the Board of Management system.

FARQUHARSON: That's true.

GILLARD: What did you think of it?

FARQUHARSON: Well it was really logical, it was another.. it was the Control Board or whatever it had been; always the BBC had had a meeting of the top executive people whatever their designations were and this was a committee consisting of the Director-General and the Directors. And they met every Monday, ~~I can't..~~ ^{and} one point that interests me ~~which I can't remember~~ because it has a bearing on this favourite subject of mine - public relations - ~~there's one point~~ the Board of Management which met at 12 o'clock in the morning used to have ^{"Public Relations"} or some similar equivalent heading as the first item on the agenda and they sometimes continued this until lunch, and then went on with the whole of the rest of the business in the afternoon. Now did Haley institute this, or did Jacob institute it. I wasn't there so I simply can't remember. But I think undoubtedly the Board of Management was ~~a good idea~~. It continued under Jacob, it continued under Greene always really much in the same form. Although I think perhaps the idea of a Chief Assistant to the Director General cropped up under Greene didn't it for the first time and of course he was a member of the Board of Management. Who would ~~the~~ Board of Management consist of..

GILLARD: The Chief Assistant occurred long before Greene. Haley created the Chief Assistant.. and.. but he was for a long time, of course there was the DSW post and that became Chief Assistant.. Haley created the DSW, and then that became the chief assistant at the end of Haley's regime when Harman was brought over. But do I understand then that you did not minute and service the Board of Management when it was created in 1947?

FARQUHARSON: At no time. Until Jacob arrived.

GILLARD: Yes.. Well now. Could we.. So that we don't forget it I just want you to say a word about the Glossary Project.

FARQUHARSON: Oh yes, that was one of the most enjoyable jobs I ever had in the BBC. And the ~~funny~~ joke of it is that it was a small committee appointed by I don't know who, I really think it must have been self-appointed, I can't think how it came into being. It consisted of ~~myself~~ as Chairman with Archie Harding who was then Chief Instructor, ~~so it must have been during that period,~~ ~~I suppose it was before the War.~~ Edward Pauley, ^{the} ~~and yet I don't, Edward Pauley was head of the Engineering Information side of things at that time.~~ ^{lexicographer} And James Thornton, who worked with me of course in the Secretariat and who happened to be a ~~born~~ ^{lexicographer} (mixocographer) and a rather well-known indexer. And we got together in our spare time so to speak,

l.c.1

Senior

engineer

in wartime,

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~~Whenever~~ whenever we could manage to get together, ~~we got together~~, and we made a glossary - a dictionary.

GILLARD: A glossary of what?

FARQUHARSON: Broadcasting terms, which were sound radio terms you see,

GILLARD: Such a thing was not available elsewhere?

FARQUHARSON: No. There were I believe one or two glossaries about but they weren't much good I think. This one was rather high class, I mean we wrangled long over the precise wording, as you can imagine, to get the definition of the word down to its bare bones, to be absolutely accurate. Funnily enough my finger opened the page of this little book which I've got here and it alights on one definition which we had enormous fun over and which I seem to remember was mentioned by some writer on the subject. It was the definition of the term : Ether. And the definition was "a hypothetical, non-material medium filling all space, existence of which is postulated for the theoretical purposes in relation to the propagation of electro-magnetic waves." And we thought it was rather like a poem.

GILLARD: Certainly very very smart. It's interesting that nobody talks about the ether nowadays.

FARQUHARSON: No they don't.. the ether has exploded.

~~LAUGHTER...~~

GILLARD: Did it have wide circulation?

FARQUHARSON: Well it did. It was widely circulated in the BBC and I think that although it may not have been of very much practical use it did serve as a sort of standard, and if there started to be some sort of sloppy use as there often did, you know, in internal memoranda and announcements of that sort of thing the Glossary Committee would take it up and say look here you know you are using the thing in the wrong sense. And we sent it to the Library of Congress, I remember, and we were very pleased when they acknowledged it with gratitude and sent us a copy of their index card for the catalogue. Well.. That was received very well, and we tried after the war, I suppose it must have been, to carry on the work so as to cover television terms, and I

hardly/

do confess, although I never admitted it, I was really seriously in trouble over that because I ^{could hardly} understand a word of what Ian Atkins who was the Television ^{programmes} man on the Committee, what he was saying. So I was really not so well fitted to act as Chairman and keep the discussion on the right lines, ~~and~~, but I ploughed on and we did ^a an awful lot of work. But when I left the BBC it was still unfinished ^{or had been carried on with} and I think it was carried on with Richard Pendlebury as Secretary for ^{some} a time, ~~I think so..~~ but eventually we never completed I'm afraid ~~I~~ it was a ~~terribly~~ difficult task.

GILLARD: Yes, and changing all the time of course.

had Jones

FARQUHARSON: Changing all the time.. ^{Richard} what we did, what was done, I was told by ^{was} Edward that they sent ~~the whole thing~~ along to the British Standards Institution, who wrote ~~back~~ to say that it was extremely useful. ~~So I hope it was.~~

GILLARD: Sad to think the BBC hasn't the comprehensive Glossary ; still, you did your best.

FARQUHARSON: Well I was awfully pleased because although it seemed to me that it was very difficult to account exactly for the existence of this committee, once we'd got the Glossary and got it printed, quite well, nicely printed, and circulated I felt able to go to my boss at the time, ~~I suppose it must have been Norman Boss~~ ^{it was Sir Norman Bottomley} and say look these chaps have toiled long and usually out of hours to get this thing out and do you think that a bonus would be appropriate, and he said certainly its a case where I think a bonus would be highly appropriate. So I was ~~very~~ pleased about that.

Sir Norman Bottomley

GILLARD: Good, I hope you had one too.

Well now I want to lead you on to two enormous milestones in the BBC's history. Namely these committees of enquiry the Beveridge one and subsequently the Pilkington, and these things of course cast their shadows beofre them and.. when did the BBC begin thinking about the fact that a committee of enquiry was bound to happen in some fairly early stage after the end of the war?

FARQUHARSON: ~~Oh I think it became known fairly soon.~~ I really can't say. I can't remember, when the thing began to be .. March 1948.. a decision was taken about, but earlier than that ^{some with some} there had been rather, I think, rather long discussions about it, ^{when before I came into the picture, probably} and in particular about what should be done to ~~arrange for the written evidence of the BBC which was bound to be needed~~ ^{One question which had to be settled was as to how the BBC's written evidence should be prepared.} to be prepared, inside the BBC.

that Jack Francis was a member of the Working Party I think it was.

GILLARD: Lockheed was...

FARQUHARSON: Lockheed, well I don't think he was named as a member of the working party but of course, obviously he would be ^{the} a natural point of reference. It was all common-sense, Frank.

GILLARD: You co-ordinated all this?

FARQUHARSON: Well, I wrote.. I collected a lot of material from the heads of departments, that was the regular way I always used to go about it. Something is wanted for Beveridge and will you please supply a draft covering your aspect of it. And they did. And then after that I perhaps ^{wrote} as many as a dozen contributions into a single paper. Edited it and rewrote it. That was the way it was done. And then I always used to take it back again to the people from whom it came and said is this right? And then they said well it is right but we'll just alter one or two things and that's how it was produced for the Board of Management. And they had it and looked ^{at} it, you know, and made alterations, ~~sometimes I think~~, Oh certainly they did, and it went to the Board. And alterations were put forward then.

GILLARD: And to whom did you work as a Director in those days then?

Somebody spoke for you..

FARQUHARSON: Oh yes of course, wait a second. Had we come into Bottomley's day by that time? ^{Yes?} Well he was my ~~Boss~~ ^{Sir Norman} Bottomley was my ~~boss~~ ^{Director}.

GILLARD: And how did you get on with him ?

FARQUHARSON: Excellently. I ~~couldn't stand him~~ ^{didn't take to him} at first because he was so formal and so dry, and so correct, you know, I felt I was in the presence of an Air Chief Marshall and I'd better get my hair cut. But that was all illusory. He was the kindest man as soon as you understood him and as soon as you got onto terms with him. You couldn't have a better man, and of course he never interfered with that sort of thing, I mean it was my job and he left it to me. He, of course, would come in on a consideration of it as a member of the Board of Management.

GILLARD: Well now there were a great many papers in the end,

I'm sure, that you prepared for the Beveridge Committee, but how did it begin, what was the..?

FARQUHARSON: Well what the Board of Management asked us to do, was to give them a general survey of the Broadcasting Service, which was intended as a sort of opening shot. We called it BBC 1. And it really involved going round to everybody and asking them for a bit. And getting it, sometimes you got something ~~jolly~~ good, sometimes it wasn't so good. But anyhow, it had to be pulled together into one document. And when it came before the Board of Management, they thought it was quite good.

GILLARD: Even Haley?

FARQUHARSON: Yes. Yes, ^{very} I was awfully pleased at that. He really began.. I think he you know.. it was rather successful from that point of view.

GILLARD: And you submitted it then did you, to the Post Office..

FARQUHARSON: Then it went on to the Board.. everything went before the Board of Governors, they looked at it all, as they did with Pilkington. Everything they looked at. And then it went to Parsons at the Post Office, Secretary of the Broadcasting Committee, who quite liked it.

GILLARD: Now we call it the Beveridge Committee, and indeed it was, but he wasn't the first Chairman was he?

FARQUHARSON: No, that's quite true, Cyril Radcliffe was appointed and accepted, and then withdrew because he was appointed ^{to be a Law} Lord of Appeal. It was rather a blow because not only was ^{did he have a} Cyril Radcliffe a real, had a steely intelligence ^{but he} and would have produced a really ^{taut} document. ^{The} final report would have been something that impinged in a way that this unwieldy great Beveridge report didn't. But, also, Radcliffe was ^a absolutely confirmed believer in the monopoly of the BBC, ⁱⁿ Public Service Broadcasting ^h he, and ^A also he had a horror of the idea of peoples' homes being ~~a market~~, made into a market place by any form of commercial television. ^{l.e.1} So that he was ~~a sort of..~~ ^H He would have been good from our point of view distinctly. So it was rather a disappointment, it was a great disappointment in fact. ^{l.e.1}

GILLARD: But however, Beveridge was his successor. What did the BBC think of Beveridge?

FARQUHARSON: Well they were very mixed in their views. Mary Summerfield was saying that she thought he was a woolly pear. And ~~she~~ ^{she} had something there. ~~You know, because~~ ^{The} Beveridge of the Beveridge Report on Broadcasting was rather a different figure from the Beveridge of the famous wartime Beveridge report which largely shaped our post-war world, didn't it? ~~society~~. A considerable time had passed.

So that it was rather a mixed view, because some people thought that it would be very good because they had great admiration for Beveridge.

GILLIARD: What about the members of the Committee was there any view about them, did you have any view about them?

FARQUHARSON: Well no not much. Because Beveridge really was, really, very much the Committee, and.. the others didn't really count for an awful lot. Lady Megan was lively of course.

GILLIARD: Lady Megan Lloyd-George.

FARQUHARSON: Lady Megan Lloyd-George was lively, always. Mary Stocks was lively always. I don't think they had a great look-in when it actually came to the thing. There was Oakshott, he was ~~a~~ ^e Headmaster of Winchester School, wasn't he, and became the Head of an Oxford College. - Very quiet. ~~Ok~~ ^{, who} Stediford subsequently became a Governor - very quiet. Lord Elgin, who was a ^{was} member of the GAC, he's an old friend but he was not very articulate. Selwyn Lloyd, of course, was the dark horse because he had ^{the} a reputation of being a coming politician, ~~really~~, an up-and-coming Conservative politician. ~~Of course~~ ^{he} was a KC. And everybody I think felt quite interested in what sort of attitude he would take. Do you want me to go on about Selwyn Lloyd?

GILLIARD: We'll come to him in a minute, certainly I'm going to ask you to tell your story of Selwyn Lloyd. Just for the moment you are looking through the committee for us. Let's go back then to Beveridge himself. Because he made enormous demands on you didn't he?

FARQUHARSON: Well they flowed in like anything these enquiries for further information through Parsons always. I loved it, it was great fun. Because Parsons was such a loveable man and such a wonderful secretary for that committee, and we, you know, used to work together to a common end and every time he asked for something we'd have a joke about it and get on with it.

GILLARD: What sort of things would Beveridge..request from you?

FARQUHARSON: Honestly I can't really remember. I mean.. there must have been endless papers on every kind of subject, I'm sure controversial broadcasting and ..

GILLARD: You would write a paper than would you, in response to the demand of Beveridge, or the Committee?

FARQUHARSON: Well just very occasionally I felt able to handle an enquiry strictly myself, or in collaboration perhaps with a chosen figure somewhere or other that I thought would help. But more often than not it was really a question of editing other people's contributions. Everybody contributed by the time the thing was finished.

GILLARD: Yes. Did you find yourself then the focal point the fulcrum as it were of the relationship between the BBC and the Beveridge Committee.

FARQUHARSON: Oh I was. Except I suppose in-so-far-as there was any direct communication between any of our Governors or Director General and so on, but I doubt if there was you know because I don't think that they would think it appropriate ~~you know~~ to start talking in that way. So I think it really was a channel between Parsons and myself really. Of course, after the thing had got going one of the later needs that arose, because there was talk about the monopoly, was a paper on the BBC'S attitude towards the idea of some form of competition in broadcasting. And this is where Haley got down to it himself. And I must say this that although I really as ever admired Haley's handling of the Beveridge Committee ~~profoundly admired it~~, on this particular point I didn't really think so well of what he did. He wrote a long memorandum ~~on~~ "Competition in Broadcasting"; he leaned heavily on Lord Halifax's phrase about Gresham's Law in relation to broadcasting but all I would say is that I do feel it was too long. That's one criticism, I very seldom had anything on which I felt I could criticise his performance, ~~but I think it would have been..~~ He consulted only Barnes, I think, about it. And when it finally appeared and was printed I did feel that it wasn't really quite as good as a shorter paper would have been.

GILLARD: But most of the papers you put together and some of them you actually wrote.

FARQUHARSON: Certainly.

GILLARD: The individual members of the committee, some of those you mentioned just now, of course they poked their noses in here and there, didn't they? You had to organise special little visits for them to television, to regions and that sort of thing, or was all that done..

FARQUHARSON: Yes.. no that was done. But.. I can't remeber that it was done very extensively but yet it must have done. I get.. I'm afraid at this point of my life I get muddled between Beveridge and Pilkington to some extent, and I remember that the visits that we arranged for the Pilkington Committee were extensive, all over the place.

GILLARD: Yes, we'll come to them in a minute.
Let me ask you then about one memory that you have vividly I know, of the Beveridge, and that is Selwyn?

FARQUHARSON: Well yes, this was a most interesting one..

GILLARD: Who of course in the end produced a minority *report*.

FARQUHARSON: Of course, you see, he really, he had it his own way in the long run he got what he wanted. With his minority report signed by one member, himself.
The interesting thing about him was he maintained *an* unyielding silence in the actual sessions of the hearings, until one day I got a telephone call from him in which he said he'd like to see something of the BBC. So I said ~~at once~~ we'd be delighted. But how much time was he prepared to spend? He said, any amount of time you like. I said, a whole day? Yes, he said, I'll devote a whole day to it. So I said, well you've only got to name the day and we'll arrange it. So he did, and I'd either arranged for him to come from Eccleston Square, I took charge of him from the word go. I'm not sure that I didn't travel myself with him, perhaps I didn't. All I do remember was that we did have a little conversation at the outset and he then pronounced his view that the BBC was too powerful, you know, so he stated his position at the outset. But, he added an interesting postscript to that, he said, there's another thing, ~~he said~~, I'm very interested yes I suppose lots and lots of your chaps there at the BBC wear beards. So I said, it never occurred to me, but I should guess that the incidence of beards in the BBC *was* is probably about equivalent to the average incidence of beards in the country as a whole. I remembered that D.G. Bridson I think had a beard, Val Gielgud had a beard at one time, various very

respectable members of the Corporation wore beards at one time or another then perhaps shaved them off, you know. So we had a joke about it a bit. And we then proceeded to go round Broadcasting House talking to various people, whom I had warned in advance. Including Lindsey Wellington who was very good with Selwyn. Then we had lunch and I'm not really quite sure what arrangements I made for lunch, but we gave him lunch and then I took him up to AP, and introduced him to people there, and he spent the afternoon at Alexandra Palace. Then we I suppose had a drink with them sometime after tea up there, and I took him to my club for dinner. ~~And we dined.~~ After dinner I took him to Bush House, and we spent the whole of the evening at Bush House, I think up to ten, half past ten something like that. And it wasn't until ~~we~~ Selwyn Lloyd had been led into one of the studios to hear a news bulletin going out in Bulgarian or whatever it was you see, in a small studio and there was a studio attendant there, a young man, he had a beard. It was the first time we'd seen a beard the whole day, and Selwyn looked triumphant. It was so funny. But I did say to him at dinner I think, I said, well you've seen quite a lot of the BBC what do you make of it? And he said, well I get the impression of a very efficient organisation and I don't mind telling you that that in my opinion ^{that} makes it all the more dangerous. Because he thought the BBC had too much power and therefore it wouldn't have been so bad if there ^{had} been inefficient. Curious attitude.

GILLARD: He'd made up his mind before the thing..

FARQUHARSON: Absolutely, yes.

GILLARD: I'm going to leave it there and ~~you~~ ^{we} are going to lunch now and we'll come back and resume afterwards.

Is it possible for you to give us any sort of picture of the enquiry the Beveridge Enquiry in session. I mean where did they meet can you remember?

FARQUHARSON: I wish I could remember exactly where they did meet.. Somewhere down near the Westminster area.. I don't know I get it muddled up as I told you with Pilkington. But anyhow its what happened inside the meeting that interests you isn't it. What I remember about that is ~~a~~ very decided, ~~I mean.. you know~~ Beveridge was enthroned, I don't know how it happened but I'm quite sure I'm right. He was up there..

GILLARD: He was elevated.

FARQUHARSON: He was elevated. And the other people were round about at his feet.

GILLARD: Like a Magistrates Court?

FARQUHARSON: He absolutely loved that. And Haley was in the middle of the row opposite, and we were clustered round him, including Lord Simon of Wythenshaw^e

GILLARD: The Chairman.

FARQUHARSON: Yes. And we had with us of course anybody who was particularly interested in what was going on in the afternoon.

GILLARD: Were these question and answer sessions, or would Haley, for example, be allowed to address?

FARQUHARSON: Haley would be allowed to address. One of the most impressive moments of the whole thing was the last session of all when Beveridge said, perhaps Sir William Haley would like to take the opportunity of addressing the committee at this final session. And you know it was really, I don't say it was Haley's finest hour, but he did really speak very movingly indeed. As I said before he wasn't afraid of being eloquent. It was very interesting. Normally it was question and answer.

GILLARD: And was Beveridge predominant in the thing?

FARQUHARSON: Absolutely predominant. I honestly can't remember in my minds eye seeing any member of the committee intervening, though they must have done. Megan, Lady Megan Lloyd George couldn't sit through all those endless meetings without giving tongue, I'm sure she did. And Mary Stocks too. But I cannot remember it.

GILLARD: Let's take this business about Beveridge's principle preoccupations as they showed themselves during the enquiry, what do you think they turned out to be?

FARQUHARSON: Well, Frank, of course he was interested in the monopoly and in television but it seems to me thinking back over it that his chief concern was the question as to not whether there should be a monopoly but how the monopoly could be protected from abuse. How could the freedom of

everybody be safeguarded. The phrase on his lips I think more than once ~~was~~ *quis custodit custodes* - - Who will look after the Custodian. ~~And from that,~~ there was a lot of talk about that, ~~all the time.~~ How to prevent the BBC from abusing its own power and privilege, and from that there emerged in the end as you will remember a proposal that there should be a public representation service within the BBC to protect the interests of the public. This was to be an ^{integral} ~~integral~~ part of the BBC as far as I remember it was to be under some controller or other official who would be ^{at} the top rank, and whose sole concern would be to take up points where one might think that the public's interest had been abused and fight the case inside the BBC, and try and rectify the matter.

The craziest proposition really, for anybody I think who has been concerned with a great public corporation and the running of it. A sort of devils' advocate of very great power and plenty of staff to document grievances, complaints. Well of course we are all aware that people are interested in the question as to how complaints to the BBC can be heard, and of course we've now got the Complaints Commission, well that at any rate consists only of three people, with one Bobby Cockburn to look after it, so that's not so bad and it's outside the BBC anyhow. But to have such a sore, a running sore in the body-politic as these people would have been well really its ridiculous. And that I think really reflected his lack of understanding.

GILLARD: I've heard it said that he brought in a whole lot of rather personal grudges and complaints during the course of the enquiry that he was dissatisfied about the fact that he himself didn't get on the air in some circumstances.

FARQUHARSON: Oh yes that's quite true. It was really very egotistical. That point is taken up by Asa in his ^{Volume IV} ~~four~~, yes. It was Wordsworth of course, the Wordsworth Centenary celebrations, where he hadn't been used although he felt he was a recognised world authority on Wordsworth. He couldn't get over it. And if I may just ^e ~~for~~stall what I think you might have been going on to, Frank, I believe that he even brought Wordsworth again, this ~~awful~~ King Charles' head of his, into his interview with Sir Ian Jacob. Sir Ian Jacob was there in his capacity as Controller of the Overseas services. Well of course the Overseas Services weren't within the terms of reference of the Beveridge committee but nevertheless Lord Beveridge said that they were part of the BBC and he proposed to take an interest in it. Well that was all right, nobody objected, and the BBC willingly agreed and Sir Ian Jacob came down to meet the Committee. Where he was subjected to what I thought were the most provoking questions, and it was really an example of the way in which Beveridge's private personality which was all kindness and benevolence contrasted with his

lie
 public attitude which was cantankerous. He wanted to find some chink well I suppose that's legitimate he wanted to find some chink in the BBC's armour. He was probing, that's part of the game of course, but Sir Ian Jacob didn't like being probed very much, he didn't mind it but he was, you know, not going to ~~lay~~^{lie} down under too much provocation, and I could see he was getting a bit hot under the collar although he did do very well he didn't allow that to appear really, and he answered the questions that were put to him which were always put in a negative fashion - "Don't you think Sir Ian, that the great danger about this or that is that the BBC should do this or that", this was the approach all the time. It went on and on. Really rather a waste of time. I only ~~really~~ mention it because it led to a good laugh in the end when we all packed up in the Chairman's car to leave ~~back~~ for Broadcasting House, except for Sir Ian who was bound for Bush House and travelled separately and as we were about to drive off he put his head through the window and I think that Haley said to him, well how do you think it went, or something you see. Jacobs comment was ~~simply~~ very simple, "Silly old man," he said, and Haley I think ~~slightly~~ demurred and ~~said~~ well you must admit he's got the most extraordinary brain the way you raise a point and he refers back to the right page in such and such a document and he's able to refer that to another reference in another part of the evidence, it's fantastic. "Silly old man," says Ian again. And we drove off. But that was just of course a little digression.

GILLARD: It sounds as if this business of presenting the BBC's case was a full time job for you, was it?

FARQUHARSON: Oh no it wasn't really. It took up a lot of time, yes it was large, it was.. there were gaps you see. I mean at times it was a full time job, several days you might find you were totally occupied with this thing. But on the other hand then there'd be a pause and there wouldn't be another meeting you see or something like that and there was perhaps a bit of a gap in the request for documents and so forth, and then I was free to deal with other matters.

GILLARD: Were you well supported inside the BBC?

FARQUHARSON: Admirably. I mean I don't need to tell you the sort of.. when the BBC feels that something important is going on really the response is fabulous. If you wanted anything there were no lengths to which people wouldn't go. All the way through I mean the publications people for example if you said look here we've got this thing and its awfully urgent really we ought to have it printed and in the hands of the Committee.

Well they'd go to any lengths to get it done. And so it was all the way round.

GILLARD: And did the BBC allow its own staff to give evidence to the committee if they wanted to.?

FARQUHARSON: Yes it did. Now I'm afraid my memory doesn't serve me, but of course at least one member of the staff did give evidence and who he was I don't remember but it was agreed that if a member of the staff wished to give evidence to the committee, this is my recollection, there was no objection to him doing so. I think so but I can't be absolutely certain of that it may have been some condition that he wasn't, he was to just give his personal opinion as such, or something like that.

GILLARD: It was a long drawn out exercise from beginning to end. How long did the enquiry last, a year or more?

FARQUHARSON: Well it must have lasted a whole year in one sense, I mean from start to finish it lasted a year I'm sure. How long the sessions lasted of the hearings of evidence I think was probably less than that I'm afraid I can't quite remember. It was a long drawn out thing.

GILLARD: And then, can you summarise the report for us?

FARQUHARSON: No I don't think I can really.

GILLARD: No, well you've mentioned one important thing.

FARQUHARSON: Yes of course, this was the nub wasn't it, that the Committee with one dissension member came to the conclusion that the BBC should continue to be the sole authority for broadcasting in the United Kingdom. There was .. and that there should be no advertising. There was a minority report on that question of advertising and I think Beveridge himself with Lady Megan Lloyd George if I remember and perhaps one or two other members, did think that under certain controls and safeguards the use of advertisements for raising funds for broadcasting would not be inappropriate. Of course the BBC from first to last, and I think I'm right in saying from the beginning and ever since have seen the use of advertisements in its own programmes as ultimately fatal to its own public service tradition and usefulness.

GILLARD: The report is one thing, but the way the Government receives it is quite another. How.. it was a Labour Government wasn't it

still. And they didn't take action on it for a time.

FARQUHARSON: No that was a great trouble. I think myself if one can venture a criticism of Asa Briggs' monumental, authoritative work which I find is absolutely indispensable, his 'History of Broadcasting', I think he underplays the reality of the resistance to the idea of what was in fact this pressure group as the Princeton Professor called it, if you remember, the pressure group, to the idea of commercial broadcasting. I think he feels that it was all very well, of course, Lord Halifax and Sir Cyril Radcliffe and many other good men and true hated the idea of commercial broadcasting, but whatever they might say or do the general movement of the times, the social changes ~~and .. would have brought the,~~ would have broken the BBC's monopoly in any case. But in fact of course it was a close shave, I mean if it hadn't been for this or that the Labour Government would most certainly have endorsed the recommendation that the BBC should remain the sole broadcasting authority. Herbert Morrison of course was the Minister chiefly concerned with matters of high policy connected with broadcasting, he was Lord President of the Council if I remember rightly. It was his job and he was absolutely firm on that. The situation was bedeviled by the Beveridge report which was so long and wearisome and it contained all these points about protecting the public interests against a tyrannical monopoly. ~~He,~~ The Committee had recommended the appointment, the setting up of National Broadcasting Councils for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. And the great question was how these should be appointed. .. The Government was prepared to accept, ~~these,~~ the Labour Government would have accepted that, but there was this questions of how they should be appointed and in the first White Paper on the subject the idea was that they should be appointed ~~I think as far as I remember it,~~ by Local Authorities. And everybody rose in revolt against this and wouldn't have it. I say everybody. And that was put on one side. And so the whole question of trying to find another some elaborate method it was finally arrived at as to how these councils should be constituted, who would appoint the members, and it was left ~~in some way~~ to a sub-committee of the General Advisory Council I think. Sir John Anderson.. or Lord ~~Anderson, Sir John Anderson~~ ^{Waverley} perhaps as he was then, became involved in it and he took it in his stride. I remember discussing with him what help we could give the Scottish Director and so on, and the Welsh Director would be willing to help him with lists of names and that sort of thing. He took it all very much in his stride and said Oh you leave it to me, I'll see it's done in accordance with the Charter, ~~as it was eventually drawn up,~~ That all took time and meanwhile Bevin was ill, ceased to be Foreign Secretary and swapped with Morrison. And Bevin didn't know a thing about how to deal with this Beveridge report and there was further delay, nothing was

decided, the General Election and a Conservative Government came in. Without it having reached any conclusion on the Beveridge report. Well of course subsequently what they had before them was a very well done, well argued minority report by Selwyn Lloyd who was their own colleague and ultimately, in spite of really a lot of resistance which again I think Briggs underestimates, and a lot of debates in Parliament including interventions by Lord Reith of course, some of them ill judged. I well remember when Lord Reith moved a motion himself to .. I think it arose out of the pressure group book of the..

GILLARD: Professor Wilson.

FARQUHARSON: At which he made the most agonised appeal to the House of Lords, and it was really very sad and rather a tragic appearance, I thought. His principle target was Lord Woolton, and I think probably Lord Reith knew exactly which target he should aim for; Lord Woolton had been very influential on the side of the commercial broadcast television lobby. And Reith made a most appropriate remark and Woolton took to himself no doubt rightly, and Woolton rose and asked if he could take it that that remark was directed at himself. And poor Reith whose face was distorted really with misery over the whole of this situation, shouted at him, "Let him that the cap fits wear it." Sat down again. I'm afraid he didn't really do his cause any good that day and the whole series of debates wound on and of course the result in the end was that there was a White Paper in which the Government announced its intention sooner or later to introduce an element of competition, and that was it really, although they made no proposals at that stage. That is all thoroughly described in Asa Briggs' History, except as I say that I don't feel that he quite took account of the real possibility, likelihood in fact, that the BBC's Charter would have been renewed for a further ten years or more. Which might have made a most interesting difference in what followed. Whatever may be said about the movement of public opinion ultimately being against the BBC remaining as the sole authority. One cannot tell what would have happened.

GILLARD: Of course this was a watershed in a big way in the BBC's history because not only was there the Beveridge report and the Government decisions which followed it which brought in the competition, but also this was the time when Haley decided to quit the BBC?

FARQUHARSON: That is so, yes. And in a way one didn't feel altogether surprised. Haley had committed himself so deeply and so eloquently really, and passionately, the real conviction to the cause of the BBC's public service role as the sole broadcasting authority that when

it was lost it didn't really come as a surprise that he should decide that somebody else had better get on with it. [↑]

And face the practical implications of the competition.

GILLARD: And of course in any case he was much attracted by the post he was going to.

FARQUHARSON: I expect so.

GILLARD: Now, so can you tell us anything about the wire-pulling the intrigue that undoubtedly went on as to the succession to Haley?

FARQUHARSON: Well I'm afraid I can't, no. I don't think I really know about that. Barnes was Haley's favourite son of course, that's clear. Nichols told me that he had at some earlier stage said quite frankly to Jacob^h, of course you're the man who must succeed Haley when he goes. ^(Nichols) He recognised that Jacob was the chap. Which was very interesting I think because of course Nichols in his way was ambitious, he loved being Acting Director General and he was very annoyed at something or other, I think it was something to do with the length^h the period or something of his holding that post, there was a struggle in the Board apparently about that, but I'm afraid I don't know the details of that. But can one really be surprised that it was Jacob who was appointed with the background of the experience that he'd had. In the War Cabinet and then in the BBC already, sitting at the Board of Management for ~~many~~ several years, having the whole thing at his fingertips, and being the man he was, it was unthinkable to my mind that anybody else on the scene could have competed with him.

GILLARD: So what were the differences that you felt when Jacob came in and replaced Haley, it made a big difference to your life I think?

FARQUHARSON: Oh it changed my.. it brought the sun out. Jacob knew as well as anybody, better than anybody probably, what a Secretariat was for. And he thought in those terms. And I thought he was awfully good really in adopting the line that Nichols would have taken, that here was the Unit - established, this is the BBC, it's called a Secretariat ^{and} if we are going to have this and make it effective, well then the people who are there will be the ones to do it. There was no question about it, there wasn't any question about trying to get somebody else a bit more.. I don't know. So.. well I'd always admired Jacob but when he became Director General I took to him very much.

GILLARD: And he had to conduct this battle between the growing

commercial interests and the BBC?

FARQUHARSON: Yes, and he approached it like a military commander. And, of course, the obvious thing that appeared at once was that he was prepared to spend the money and to spend it where it was wanted - on television programmes, that's where the money went. On the programmes. The programme allowance, ^{that was} they were what was bumped up. No doubt other things were too, but there was no doubt about it that he was absolutely determined to put up a fight to see the BBC made a good show.

GILLARD: What did you feel about the Board of Management at this time, were you now..?

FARQUHARSON: Well a very short time elapsed before Jacobs said to me, ~~look~~ "Come along to the Board of Management and sit in there, do our minutes for us and the agenda and act as Secretary, which of course was exactly what I wanted and liked. And I must say one thing and that was that Jacob was unique in my experience (you see, because I am a sort of Secretary person, I mean that is what I do) and he was the only Chairman of a meeting who said, "Do the minutes and circulate them, I don't want to see them." And who never questioned them when they had been circulated ever. I think that was. Well you know, I looked upon it as a bit of a military operation too because I was absolutely determined to take those minutes and get them circulated within the shortest possible time and the fact that I didn't have to send them down to the DG's office, he might be busy all day, not look at them until the evening or something or until the next day, you know, and then the whole thing.. you know what it is with meetings if you are going to have minutes for goodness sake lets get them quickly so we know what they are. So that was quite a challenge.

GILLARD: Were you at the same time introduced into the Board circles.

FARQUHARSON: No. ~~no~~.

GILLARD: When did that come.?

FARQUHARSON: That happened in '57. I think that the promulgation there was a promulgation which I think is mentioned in your scenario, Frank, of '58 there was a sort of promulgation..

GILLARD: We'll take it presently.
Because people listening to this won't see the scenario. So we'll take that later. I just want to ask you something else now. You were now attending Board of Management, the Board of Management was composed of The Chairman, that's the Director General; then you had the Director of External - J.B. Clark.; You had the Director of Home Sound Broadcasting.

FARQUHARSON: Lindsey.. Wellington.

GILLARD: Director of Television.

FARQUHARSON: Barnes.

GILLARD: Barnes. You had the Chief Assistant to the DG

FARQUHARSON: Yes, Harman wasn't it.. already. He was the first one

GILLARD: And you had .. the DA

FARQUHARSON: That was Bottomley. That's it. *Plus the Director of Engineering.*

GILLARD: Now what did you think of those people? How did they work together as a team? Who was strong out of that lot, who was weak?

FARQUHARSON: I think that Jacob got the best out of them, I mean I think that they worked jolly well under his Chairmanship which was very crisp, and lighthearted too you know. *Jake* had a good laugh now and then. It wasn't too solemn, but it was very businesslike.

~~I had a..~~ I always was fascinated watching Jacob because I remember the Board of Management.. I sat on his right, and at some other meetings that we had I sat on his left. And I realised that Jacob had two profiles. This happens, and looked at from one side Jacob was the soldier, you know the general, slightly beligerent, looked at from the other side he looked like a Fellow of All Souls, which he could have been you know, because he had a very good brain. He could have been a Don. And this was the different sides of Jacob. But well I think it was a reasonably harmonious gathering..

GILLARD: Which of the Directors did you work to now?
Harman?

FARQUHARSON: No..

GILLARD: You worked direct to the DG then?

Then you must have worked to Bottomley.

byells /

FARQUHARSON: I did, I worked to Bottomley, of course I did, I can't think why I was hesitating. I worked to Bottomley and Bottomley understood as one of his successors, whom we'll come to perhaps, didn't, that I had two masters from that moment onwards. You know what I mean, as far as the Board of Management was concerned I was not responsible to Bottomley, of course I wasn't, I was responsible to Jacob. But on the matter of rations and organisation and anything of that sort I was responsible to Bottomley and that was extremely enjoyable. Miss ~~Grilles~~ was very kind in giving me access to Bottomley at any moment and we got on ~~extremely~~ well. You see it was a good committee really, that one, I think. Because J.B. Clark was a very sensible committee chap and of course Bottomley was. And it was Lindsey who was in charge of the Home Sound Broadcasting at that time wasn't he, yes.. Jacob was supporting Barnes on the television thing very very strongly indeed and nobody questioned that, ~~I mean there wasn't any question about it.~~ The whole point was to build up the front.

GILLARD: Then a little later the Board of Management composition changed to some extent when Hugh Greene came in and Tahu Hole came in. What difference did this make?

FARQUHARSON: Well of course the first appointment that Hugh Greene came to from Bush House was Director of Administration, wasn't it. And that was a very remarkable thing because then I saw Hugh Greene as a potential DG straight away. He did what no other Director of Administration up to that moment, I think, had ever done and that was to institute a Directorial meeting which was a very bold thing to do really, because his kingdom consisted of such disparate members, you know, concerned with every kind of finance and administration, personnel, secretariat, publicity, so on. But he, nevertheless, said well we are going to have a meeting of the heads of departments once a month. And we went to it and we were ~~absolutely~~ enthralled because he gave us off the cuff without any notes or anything, he gave us an account of what had happened during the previous month to the BBC, he had a most marvellous grasp of that, I mean he looked at it from the point of view of the outside world, the press, how things were developing you know and this was enthralling and we all admired him very much.

GILLARD: Yes..

FARQUHARSON: Then of course the most awful thing happened because

these chaps were always changing hats weren't they, and Hugh Greene became a Director.. what was he called, News and Current Affairs, that's right. And Jacob told me that he would be succeeded as Director of Administration by Tah^u Hole, who was the head of the News at that time. And that opened a short, mercifully short period which was rather miserable to me because I simply could not get used to it. Hole had a very special idea about administr^eing, ~~and how people~~, the line of responsibility and so forth. Basically, Hole was a ~~very~~ kindly man, a really warmhearted man, and I'm sure he felt very warm towards me, but he was really a cold fish in action. And I remember the very first meeting I had with him, I went across to Egton House where his Headquarters was ~~and I, you know~~ to introduce myself, He asked me.. I rang him up or he rang me up. And we met, and he then told me his philosophy, he said that in the News ~~from~~ ^{Division} the organisation of which he was the head, his ambition was to get to a point at which you could take any bit of the organisation, by which he meant any person in the organisation any part of the organisation, and drop it on the pavement and it would ring true. This was his expression. In-so-far as I could understand it, I thought it was terrible, because it was so rigid. And of course as applied to my job where I was by that time I think Secretary to the Board and I was called the Secretary and I was Secretary to the Board of Management, and I had the departmental responsibilities, divisional responsibilities, I had at least three bosses, how could I ring true if he dropped me on the pavement? And we never really got round this. And it was a source of distress to me, and I think even to him possibly. We couldn't really ~~very well~~ work ~~at~~ it. He was quite different ^{from} ~~to~~ Bottomley.

GILLARD: You finally reached the summit of your ambitions, so to speak, in the BBC I think in 1958, isn't that true?

Jake | FARQUHARSON: Well yes partly, in 1957 really. Because it was in '57 that Jacob, Director General, had asked me to look after the Board of Governors. The situation had eased and made it possible. Movements in his own outer office, the departure of Dorothy Singer, ~~to be~~ ^{Jake} I think to look after her home and family, ~~really~~, opened the door and so ~~Jac~~ ^{Jake} pushed me in. And from then onwards I acted as Secretary ^{to} for the Board, and I fitted into that very happily I think and made friends with the Governors and they appeared to become ~~quite~~ comfortable with their arrangement, so that was exactly what I had always wanted. Then, some time in the next year, '58 I think it was, ~~that~~ ^{Jake} Greene ~~again~~ decided on joining the publicity department to my existing establishment so as to create a Secretary's ^D Division and that was what it was called. It was only after that had been done and we were getting along very happily on that basis when Greene was called away to look

after Current Affairs. And Hole was put into his place as DA. And that was the rather short period when I was somewhat unhappy. It didn't last very long because at the end of '59, that is to say in 1960 I suppose, Jacob left and Greene became Director General. And when that happened again Greene made adjustments, well the first thing that happened was that Tahu Hole left the Corporation. And in his place, much to my joy, Greene appointed a Chief Assistant in the person of Harman Grisewood to take over our Secretary ^{is Division} ~~position~~, together with ~~I think~~ all the publications ~~department~~, including the commercial side as well ^{The} ~~the~~ whole publications outfit. As far as I remember that was the extent of Harman Grisewood's administration while he acted as Chief Assistant to Director General. So that I no longer fell within the scope of the Director of Administration, who I suppose, then was Arkell, wasn't he, That's right, following the departure of Hole. That was how things turned out and they couldn't have turned out more happily for me, and and I don't know whether this is the time to say anything about.. Harman Grisewood's part..

GILLARD: Yes I think it is.

FARQUHARSON: Of course he was behind us in the whole of the Pilkington Enquiry because he became the head of the, in all but name, of the BBC Public Relations, and it was important that there was no name. I always thought that was one of the great secrets that he had this neutral title of being really the Director General's right hand man, and that was it. And he was in fact in charge of the public relations. So that when the question of public relations came up at Board of Management or the Board of Governors Harman Grisewood was there and when we discussed the Pilkington progress the campaign, also, ~~as far as I remember~~ Harman was there. So that the Board reviewed the progress on the Pilkington front.

GILLARD: You got on well with Harman.?

FARQUHARSON: Oh yes, that's a mild way of putting it really. It was a wonderful time for me, and I think that everybody in Harman's sphere felt the same and it was at that time that with, I'm sure, with Hugh Greene's approval Harman instituted this weekly public relations group meeting, which consisted of him, myself, The Head of Publicity, and the Head of the Secretariat. Just to consider Public Relations matters. This is the sort of meeting which I'd always thought of where you got the information side of the BBC and the publicity side comparing notes round the table. Of course Campey was really in a way the key man it was he who was, you know, ~~he publically was~~ the BBC's publicity figure ~~of the~~ ~~the~~

~~in a way~~ the official spokesman of the BBC more often than not. And his appointment had not been achieved without some difficulty, because when I took over the publicity department they had been really I might say virtually leaderless for quite a time. That's rather a reflection on the man who was running it, he wasn't really built for the job he was a news man and he went to New York, luckily he got an appointment as the BBC's representative in New York, from our point of view, and left that place vacant and the question was who should we have. So of course we advertised the job and we got all sorts of interesting candidates, but the outstanding candidate was clearly George Campey who was acting as publicity officer for the Television service. I'm sure they parted with him with the greatest possible regret ~~because~~ ^{he} was a poacher turned gamekeeper. He'd been a very successful Radio Correspondent, what was it..

GILLARD: Evening Standard.

FARQUHARSON: And I felt absolutely certain that he would really be the very man that was wanted as Head of Publicity. And Campey was not only full of ordinary expertise in dealing with the press correspondents, giving them facilities, helping them, but also he was a man of ideas. He thought up this BBC Newsletter which of course came in enormously valuable in the Pilkington era where he printed, very well, on four pages a folder, BBC News letter. He printed the facts about what had swum into the news as an issue and always quoting in full any official statement of policy that had emerged from it from the BBC, together with other bits and pieces of information which was always ~~frightfully~~ well done. And this was always circulated to Members of Parliament, every member of Parliament got a copy. This ~~was~~ all emerged from this little group. And what I liked about it was that the man who had responsibility for arranging Press Conferences and things of that sort, the head man really on the publicity side was the head of a department and he could approach the Controllers concerned in a sort of advisory capacity, advise them as to how they should deal with the press, not tell them, you know, ~~this~~ ^{was} my idea of public relations, really, ~~it was~~ .. worked ~~frightfully~~ well.

In fact you know I always used to think that the apogee of this particular period of public relations work was reached when a Member of Parliament rose to take part in a debate about ~~broadcasting~~, I think it was quite an important debate, we knew it was coming and this man got up and under his arm there was a copy of the BBC handbook, ~~cropping up again~~. You could tell from the colour of the cover what it was that he was grasping, and he began a great eulogy of the BBC and he said that this was based on a study that he had made of facts and figures of the BBC's operation and in fact he said

it was a splendid achievement, there was nothing wrong with the BBC except its wretched public relations. And he waved the Handbook in the air, which had been sent by prearrangement to reach Members of Parliament in time for them to look at before the debate took place. A perfect example of public relations at work. That we thought was awfully funny. That was what happened there.. Then..

GILLARD: We really come onto Pilkington actually, I think now don't we.

Well now, so this is your second enquiry..

FARQUHARSON: Without.. before we actually leave that subject let me interrupt you Frank, I do think one ought to say that Harman had a great gift you know in getting alongside people who could be useful to the BBC. One of his triumphs I always used to think was that he ~~became~~, got onto the most friendly relations with Freddie Warren who was the head of the Government Chief Whips office in Downing Street, a frightfully useful liaison that helped us a great deal in knowing what was going to happen. And it was a great inspiration really to have him at the head of all this public relations work.

GILLARD: It always strikes me as a strange quality in a man like Harman whose essentially an aesthete and an intellectual and a man of deep cultural interests and that sort of thing, that he should in fact have been so very effective in this slightly crude and rather blatant world of publicity and public relations.

FARQUHARSON: That is true and I see the point exactly Frank, but the fact is you see that he was the Chief Assistant to the Director General that was what he was, that was his official position, Campey was the publicity man, doing the rough and tumble. Harman was the head of this informal group, that met together to discuss plans and project and to listen to what Campey was proposing to do etc. But Harman had a great gift for the sort of cloak and dagger side of the thing. He had his wicked side to him.

GILLARD: (Jesuitical?)

FARQUHARSON: Well I don't know you could call it that ~~for all I know~~ but he loved really getting the low-down on things you know and pursuing .. we had this great operation of getting an expert to pick up all the relationships and inter-relationships of the world of commercial television

you know, the extent to which they were covering all sort of activities not remotely connected with broadcasting, got the whole thing put into a dossier, Harman was in his element over this. He also immensely enjoyed the party manners... ~~no~~ the "Pressure Group" book and he cultivated Professor Wilson and had talks with him. That side of the thing was more in consonance with the gifts which ~~were~~^{you} ascribed to him rightly. I don't think he minded it. I think he really quite liked it. Harman quite liked affairs you know, he was very hard put to it over ~~the~~ Suez time when Jacob was in Australia and Bottomley, ~~I suppose, was really~~ acting Director General, ~~or~~^{was} handling this ~~whole~~ matter. But Harman was the ~~real~~ the political aide on all that, and I think Harman really thoroughly enjoyed ~~it~~^{it} having to do, to ring up Gaitskell, and arrange about the Party Political Broadcasts you know, which were highly contentious and controversial, so that although he was a Third Programme man, he was something else as well.

GILLARD: Yes. So we come on to Pilkington then. Did you... you already knew how to prepare for an enquiry of this kind, did you make any changes in approaching Pilkington? Over and above what you'd done for Beveridge.

FARQUHARSON: No, we did the same thing and in this I did have ~~really~~ awfully useful help in producing the first fact ^{ual} volume which was essentially, I forget what it was called, but it was essentially again a sort of general survey of the ~~Broadcasting Service~~; during the last ten years what had happened. The changes that had taken place and so forth. And that was done by James Thornton. I think it was about the last thing he did ~~really~~ before he left the BBC to go and look after the United Kingdom side of the Gulbenkian Foundations work; he left the BBC. But he was awfully, he really did work very hard at this documentation. He looked after the passing of the things to the press, the checking, the reading the proofs, checking the references and cross references and the footnotes. And he drafted this first cannon shot. He made fairly heavy weather of it and he produced one draft which wasn't at all good, he wrote in a rather fanciful way and I said he must kill all that and make it a very plain unvarnished tale which he did and he finally did produce something which was very good as that ~~first~~^{or} BBC One.

GILLARD: What did you think of Sir Harry?

FARQUHARSON: Well I thought he was marvellous really. Of course he also took an extremely prominent role.

GILLARD: Compare for us Sir Harry Pilkington Chairman of this

Enquiry with Lord Beveridge, Chairman of the previous one?

FARQUHARSON: There were some similarities in that Sir Harry took upon himself the great part of the burden of putting questions to these witnesses, but he was not elevated on a throne, he sat on the same level as Professor Hoggart and Joyce Grenfell and the others, and it was obvious that the members of his committee felt no constraint at all about butting in if they wanted to because Sir Harry is really quite an informal sort of character. But nevertheless it was he who did remorselessly question us about everything. And one felt that he was a very remarkable chap with a very good intellectual grasp. The BBC witnesses at first a little took me back because I remembered Haley, who as I've said more than once had rather a gift for eloquence ~~you see~~, and we had Hugh Greene and Arthur ~~Ford~~ ^{fforde} sitting together and they were the BBC for the purposes of this enquiry, one or two other people came into it, Kenneth Adam I think and one or two more, but..

GILLARD: I came in too on Local Radio..

FARQUHARSON: Local ~~R~~ Radio,, quite right. But you would agree that they were on particular points and indeed I ought to have remembered that. Frank Gillard was one of the witnesses. Now Hugh Greene of course is a very free and easy sort of chap when he's talking in public, casual. ~~A~~ ^{fforde} ~~th~~ur ~~is~~ in involuted, convoluted and not always easy to follow. And they neither of them took any kind of high ideal ~~kind of~~ ^{that} view of the situation, but I rapidly came to the conclusion that ~~was~~ ^{that} much the best, much the best, they were most effective, because they weren't overdoing it. And I'm sure that with a man like Pilkington and the others this was what was ~~absolutely~~ wanted. So I don't know that I've got anything else to say, it was quite..

GILLARD: What were the outstanding issues this time round?

FARQUHARSON Well all the ones that always crop up, I think. I'm sure I'm missing something here, Frank, but I can't analyse the contents of the debate exactly. It covered a very wide field which went over the whole aspects of Broadcasting all of them and I remember that ~~fforde~~ ^{fforde} was very forthright on one point which was on the question of religious broadcasting and I thought it was very salutary and very useful indeed that he praised the opposition in their religious broadcasting work, and of course privately I think, I remember after it was all over Hugh Greene and I were talking and we agreed it would have been a great advantage if

Granada Pilkington in his report could have found something, for example, the Granada output of plays at the earlier stages, to praise instead of rather condemning them wholesale because they were conducting this commercial operation on lines which they didn't approve of. Because it might have mitigated this cry in the newspapers of the BBC being painted whiter than white. But of course the Pilkington report was so much more valuable a document than the Beveridge report as so much more full of wisdom. For example, the chapter on the whole question of giving the public what it wants, which I always understood emanated largely from Richard Hoggart, settled that question once and for all, you know what I mean, the whole business giving the public what it wants, they analysed this and very thoroughly and altogether it was a very good operation.

GILLARD: You dealt there mainly with Douglas Lawrence I imagine?

FARQUHARSON: I dealt really wholly with Douglas Lawrence I think of the Post Office, we got along very well, very friendly man, But he wasn't of the calibre of his predecessor at all, Parsons ~~is~~ was a bigger man. I don't know who wrote the Pilkington report, it would be very interesting to know, I don't believe that Lawrence wrote a great deal of it I just ~~don't~~ ^{don't} know.

GILLARD: The outcome of it was very favourable

FARQUHARSON: Well of course frightfully favourable. The second channel of course was the great thing, I mean that was really what it was all about in a way and we got it. So this was due to Pilkington.

GILLARD: And colour. And local radio.
All those things.

FARQUHARSON: Quite, quite so.. ~~al conceded..~~ admirable results.

GILLARD: Well now I know that you would like to say something about the Governors.

FARQUHARSON: Oh yes I would, because it gives me an opportunity of going back just a little bit to the days of Ian Jacob as Director General because it was he who brought me into the Board of Governors and I was there for three years with him ~~and we started off on the Chairmanship of~~ ^{under the chairmanship of} Alexander Cadogan and it gives me really an opportunity of saying how very much I admired Jacob, I think Jacob really made an enormous contribution

to the BBC at a crucial time. He was a wonderful Director General ^{or} ~~really~~. There were some points ^{as} ~~at~~ which he wasn't happy as ⁱⁿ others; when it came to curtailing the Third Programme I thought he made a little bit of a mess of that because I don't think he really quite understood, he didn't quite know the language for that little episode .. you know they shortened the hours of the Third Programme very unpopular in certain quarters of course naturally. But he was always straightforward. When he spoke you could understand what he was meaning and what he said and what he said he meant. This was the same as Bottomley, ~~and it was really because I never could understand what Hole was saying that I really felt unhappy and I think other people say Hole never really knew what he~~ ..

~~GILLARD:~~ Hole.

~~FARQUHARSON:~~ ~~yes, couldn't understand what he was saying really, what he was getting at.~~ Now as for the Board itself I found the fortnightly meetings really very enjoyable, I called them the fortnightly feast of wit and wisdom. Philip Morris, for example, who was Vice Chairman over a large part of the time had an infinite wit, was very amusing especially in his ~~asides~~ to me, because we sat next to each other. And Arthur ~~Ford~~ ^{Ford} also had a curious way of handling meetings but really ~~enormously~~ effective in the sense that he carried the Board with him, he wasn't going to override anybody. If there was, if the Board couldn't agree, then ~~we~~ ^{he} postponed the issue and brought it up again and then perhaps the Board did agree. There was the famous occasion when two members of the Board were absolutely against a proposal that had the support of the other members and which had the support of the DG and ~~the whole of the BBC staff~~, two members opposed it and ~~Ford~~ ^{Ford} came to the conclusion he never counted heads, we never had a vote, but he said ^TTwo out of seven is too many, the whole thing was put back for a later stage ^Wwhen one of the Governors in question had left the Board it came up again, one of the Governors who opposed the proposal was still there and still opposed it, but was alone, and Ford said to himself ^OOne is not enough." And so therefore the proposal was accepted. This was quite a delay but it meant that the Board at any rate was unanimous or virtually unanimous.

GILLARD: This was the issue of the BBC Broadcasting the odds..

FARQUHARSON: The odds. Harry Middleton had come along to demonstrate what he was proposing to do. We had a demonstration on the loud speaker in the Board room. Yes. That's true. I didn't say so myself because I wanted to make a principle of not really speaking about the actual matters

that were decided at the Board.

GILLARD: I only did so because one of your predecessors..

FARQUHARSON: Well you can.. its absurd really but.. I feel rather sensitive about that, ~~his~~. But no I was absolutely fascinated by the Board meetings, Arthur ~~Ford~~ ^{Ford} began to be hampered by illhealth but it didn't stop him from embarking on a great study which he had very much at heart which was eventually realised in the form of a pamphlet called 'What Is Broadcasting About?' Do you remember that, and this was circulated widely amongst senior staff in the BBC. It took him pain and anguish to write and he was good enough to ask me to help him with it and to discuss it and we did, and it was written from a Christian ~~standpoint~~ ^{standpoint}, but of course it was addressed, perhaps even primarily, to people on the other side of the line and it had a great deal of profound thought in it. But I think ~~most~~ ^{many} people really felt that they really didn't feel much the wiser when they'd read it. But I always thought there was a great deal of ~~meat~~ ^{wisdom} in it. That was his farewell gift to the BBC.

James Duff, was ^{acting} Chairman for a short time, Vice Chairman, Vice Chancellor of Durham University. And I had a great admiration for him.

The Governors that I made friends with were Bob Lusty, and Richie ~~Mackie~~ ^{McKee}.

But I was particularly friendly ^{also} with others, Gerald - Gerry - ~~Cook~~ ^{Coke}, Rachel ~~A~~ Jones the Welsh Governor who didn't talk Welsh. Lord Halsbury, and so on they were really, Sir Edward Benthall, Sir David Milne - very shrewd Scottish ~~civil servant~~ ^{civil servant}. They all had great qualities.

And they supported Hugh Greene consistently and obviously admired him.

At the same time there's no doubt that they were able to exert their influence effectively when they felt that the occasion demanded it, ~~Even~~ ^{the view} when they were against the Director General. And that I think is my evidence in support of the view that the Board of Governors at the BBC ~~do~~ ^{did} in fact exert their responsibilities, they did in my experience.

Briefing Sir Arthur ~~Ford~~ ^{Ford} as a Chairman was a fascinating experience. ^{with} ~~He~~ used the brief, he relied on the brief. He said he couldn't do without the brief. But what came out in the end appeared to bear no resemblance to the brief whatever. It would have been very difficult really to brief ~~Ford~~ ^{Ford} in his own idiom and style, what you gave him had to be transformed into his own ^{special} ~~peculiar~~ way of putting things, and that was really a very interesting exercise.

So I look back on my days with the Board of Governors with the greatest satisfaction and happiness.

GILLARD: And what about your days in the BBC as a whole?

FARQUHARSON: Again the same. I mean one had ~~terribly~~ unhappy times as everybody earning their living is bound to do, but I always felt that the BBC was the most exciting organisation, and most important too. And ~~as~~ ^{an exceptionally} ~~frantically~~ good employer, that was my own personal experience and so I look back on it in that way.

I also look back to the time when I was with the BBC and I felt that I was reasonably efficient. ~~Ever~~ ^{Ever} since I left the BBC I have realised that I am totally inefficient and the secret of it is that I no longer have a BBC secretary, or any secretary for that matter, but a BBC secretary particularly because the senior BBC secretaries were, I think you will agree, there were some extraordinarily good people there. I mean, I think of Mary Rush, Peggy ^{Fildes} ~~Steel~~, Marjorie ^{Cawtell} Cordell, Eileen Gregory my last and probably my ~~best~~ most capable secretary all round, who subsequently became secretary to the Chairman of course. These people really played such a big part in my life because they made me feel that I was really quite a businesslike person.

GILLARD: And you obviously feel that the present Secretariat position which is largely the position that you established and which you then left as your legacy to the BBC, is the correct and proper Secretariat service that a Corporation of this kind should have.

FARQUHARSON: Well I don't know about the present set-up. All I know about the BBC in the last 16 years since I've ~~been~~ retired has been gleaned really from parties that I've been to, to retiring friends, and those sort of things, and one chats a bit. But I feel myself very out of touch.

GILLARD: Well lets take it then that the Secretariat as it was when you ..

FARQUHARSON: I thought that the Secretariat ^{y's} ~~ice~~ Division was quite useful and that it did fulfil a valuable public relations purpose which is what I was really chiefly interested in, in my BBC career. And I also thought that it really was very very valuable to the Secretariat to have this link to the Board of Governors and the Board of Management. As long as one justified it by helping them and producing minutes for them that they found helpful and helped them in other ways, then I think that that arrangement also was beneficial.

GILLARD: Is it possible for the Secretariat to be too powerful?

FARQUHARSON: Oh it could be I suppose, but only if the DG didn't

known what he was up to ^ssurely, I think, I mean he'd have to stamp on that wouldn't he?

GILLARD: Well I can't think of any more questions I want to ask you.

FARQUHARSON: Well thank you, Frank..

GILLARD: I think we've had a most illuminating...

FARQUHARSON: I don't think so..

GILLARD Oh yes indeed.

FARQUHARSON: I found it most enjoyable to talk with you.

GILLARD: Well that's fine and I've certainly loved it.
So thank you very much Maurice Farquharson.

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