

24 HOUR RADIO

Metro

Sounds promising

# Just the job on Radio Redundo

By ANDREW LOUDON

**FIVE JOBLESS steel-workers pooled their redundancy cheques—and won the gamble of their lives yesterday.**

They learned that the IBA has approved their bid for a commercial radio franchise.

Officially, their station will be called Marcher Sound but ex-workmates of the lucky five have already dubbed it Radio Redundo.

It will go on the air in April next year, broadcasting to the jobs 'desert' straddling the North Wales—Cheshire border.

And the five men from Shotton steelworks, who beat two rival groups to the potentially lucrative franchise, intend to make it a 'good news' station.

Their leader, 36-year-old David Jones, said: 'We've had too much gloom and despondency in this area and we want to use this opportunity to lift people and brighten their lives.'

## Stir

'We are a young team, full of enthusiasm, and we hope that our success will stir others in the area into starting new businesses.'

Mr Jones, of Ilwyni Drive, Connah's Quay, Deeside, was a hot mill supervisor at Shotton until he was made redundant, along with 7,000 others, a year ago.

His partners are ex-Shotton technical department manager Gareth



DAVID JONES

Hughes, 30; Kenneth Jones, a 47-year-old fitter; work study technician Brian Hogg, 44, and technical officer Anthony Schubmehl, 28.

They formed a consortium with 36-year-old Harold Martin, a lecturer at the North Wales Institute of Higher Education, who gave them the idea during a business studies course they joined after losing their jobs.

Between them, the six put £50,000 into the project but do not expect any return on their investment for two or three years.

The new station will broadcast from Wrexham and employ about 34 staff.

# REDUNDANT STEELMEN SWITCH STATIONS

A classroom pipe-dream has become a reality for five redundant steelmen who wanted to run their own radio station.

The IBA announced the consortium they set up in just six weeks would be awarded the franchise to run the independent local radio covering Wrexham, Deeside, Chester and Ellesmere Port.

Marcher Sound was set up at the last minute after the men, who lost their jobs at Shotton Steelworks, discussed the idea on a management course at Kelsterton College, Connah's Quay.

They studied ways of setting up a company as part of the course and with advice from lecturers, decided to put their ideas to the test.

They had been widely regarded as outsiders and yesterday's announcement came as a shock to the well-established companies of Radio Offa and Border Sound.

The IBA said they prop-

# IBA PLANS A RIVAL TO BBC RADIO SERVICE

By PETER KNIGHT, Television and Radio Staff

**T**HE Independent Broadcasting Authority has plans for a national commercial radio service aimed at breaking the present BBC monopoly.

It has already told the Government that, given the right circumstances, it would be ready to challenge the BBC's national service currently broadcast on Radios 1 to 4. The IBA's plans were

disclosed last night by Mr John Thompson, the Authority's Director of Radio.

He was giving the first IBA lecture at University College, Cardiff. He said that, in the short term, the IBA did not anticipate changes in the structure of national radio.

"However, the frequencies are allocated internationally to countries and not to particular broadcasting organisations. The BBC has no divine right to retain the sole control of national radio," he said.

"This is the last bastion of their monopoly and, like other sections of the monopoly previously enjoyed by the state charter corporation this can have little or no social, political or philosophical justification. The IBA has made it known to the Government that, in the right circumstances, the Authority might wish to see this final, lingering state broadcasting monopoly challenged," he continued.

## Prudent development

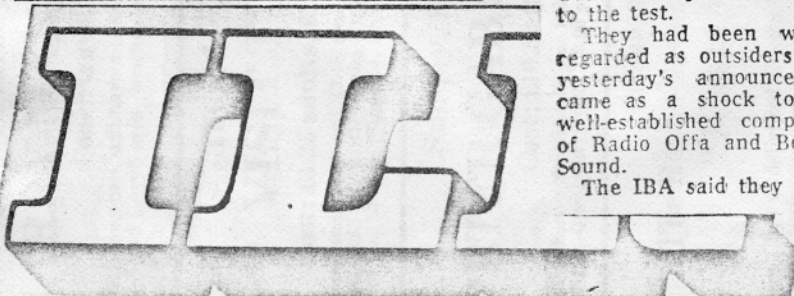
Mr Thompson said that, in the meantime, the priority was the prudent development of independent local radio. This year seven new stations had come on the air and the IBA had plans for a similar number to be launched next year.

The Authority has also asked the Government for permission to carry separate programmes on the medium wave and VHF broadcasts from the local stations. At present, the same programmes go out on both. But Mr Thompson said the intention was to offer the public an extra service by, from time to time, splitting the frequencies.

"We also plan to introduce some associate stations in the smaller areas with these companies working in partnership with a bigger neighbour station," he said.

One of the issues that may have put Marcher Sound ahead is its approach to the problem of servicing a contrasting area in both English and Welsh.

It has come up with a split transmission system so that Welsh programmes could be put out at peak times in Wales.



station to station

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