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Socio & Radio etc

Para 2 Summer SMITH

Para 2 H. H. HEATH

RADIO STATION TO DISPUTED ISLE

Swan Island in Caribbean,
Claimed by Honduras and
U. S., Will Get Outlet

By RICHARD F. SHEPARD

A new commercial radio station that is scheduled to start operating soon from a tiny Caribbean island, may cause some diplomatic static between the United States and Honduras.

The station, which plans to broadcast nothing of greater international import than waltzes, Latin-American music and commercials, is situated on Swan Island, about 110 miles off the Honduran coast.

The sovereignty of Swan Island is disputed by various parties. However, all parties agree that the confusion exists only in the press. The private owner of the island has no doubt that it belongs to the United States. The Honduran Ambassador in Washington has no doubt that it belongs to his country.

The island became a news item recently when United States census-takers landed to count the twenty-eight persons living on the three square miles of earth, which is really broken up into two islands and a bump of coral. In a letter to The New York Times, the Ambassador, Dr. Celeo Davila, explained that Swan Island was a part of Honduras.

Sumner Smith, whose family owns Swan, said yesterday from Boston in a telephone interview that it was American property. He leased the land for the radio station to the Gibraltar Steamship Corporation of 437 Fifth Avenue. To compound the confusion, Gibraltar is not in the shipping business but is a holding company here that apparently derives its name from its having owned a ship a number of years ago.

Manager Says It's American

Horton H. Heath, commercial manager of the station for Gibraltar, said yesterday that his understanding was that Swan was United States territory.

His concern has bought a fifty-kilowatt station that had been used on Swan for a government weather reporting service. He said that the commercial station would add twelve to fifteen people to the island's population.

Broadcasting only at night on a standard broadcasting frequency yet to be arranged, the station will "pretty well" cover Central America, Yucatan in Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, northern Colombia and northwestern Venezuela, Mr. Heath said.

Programming in English and Spanish will formally begin on June 1, although testing will start next week, he said. However, the company's lawyers still are studying the problem of getting a broadcast license, he added. If the station is a United States possession, presumably a license would have to be granted by the Federal Communications Commission. The F. C. C. has received no application, an F. C. C. spokesman said yesterday.

Similarly, as Honduran territory, that nation would have to authorize the broadcasts. Dr. Davila said yesterday that he did not know of any application, but that one would have to go through channels in Tegucigalpa.

As for Mr. Heath, he said that he was most interested at the moment in persuading advertisers that for selling the Caribbean nothing would beat a commercial between recorded Swan songs.