

RECORD 29 NEW TV GRANTS PUTS FCC AT END OF "A" AND "B" PRIORITIES

In its wholesale authorizations last week, the Commission pushed the post-thaw total grants to 310 stations and approved the first share-time operation in a single market. Some 650 bids face 285 hearings in 225 cities.

TELEVISION milestones were rolled one on top of the other by FCC last week as the Commission:

- Approved an all time record of 29 new TV station permits.
- Pushed processing of eligible uncontested applications completely through both the Group A and Group B city priority lists—in general, culminating the "temporary processing procedure."
- Granted the first share-time TV operations in a single market—Rochester, N. Y., Ch. 10, to be shared by WVET and WHEC there.
- Extended the total of post-thaw new-station grants to 310 and total authorized TV stations to 418.

In its eagerness to "clear the decks" of eligible uncontested applications, the Commission announced grants on Thursday of only channel assignments to 17 of the applicants and was expected Friday to fill in specifications as to power and antenna height. The other 12 grantees were informed not only of their channels but also details as to power and antenna height.

Grants in the Group A list extended to No. 790—Hendersonville, N. C. (1950 population 6,103), where WHKP received uhf Ch. 27. Group B grants extended to the very end, San Francisco, city No. 212 in Group B-5, where Lawrence A. Harvey received uhf Ch. 20.

Informed Commission sources indicated that, aside from the pending contested applications, there are only about 40 uncontested bids remaining on the entire temporary processing lists. It was noted, however, that none of these could be included in last week's record-breaking actions because additional information is required as to financing, corporate organization or similar qualifications.

Will Prevent 'Block' Bids

Industry observers pointed out a subsidiary effect of the processing line "mop up" was to prevent potential last-minute competitive—or possible—"block"—applications from being filed just before the Commission acted on the eligible bids. It was noted that more than once in past weeks, just before FCC was to act on an eligible application, a mutually-exclusive bid was filed a few days previous to the Commission meeting day.

The completion of processing through the Group A (cities without service) and Group B (cities with service) city priority lists does not mean the temporary processing procedure is completely out of use, one FCC spokesman said, although its chief general purpose of expediting the handling of applications in an orderly manner may be considered virtually terminated. He explained that the priority system will continue in effect for the consideration of those few remaining uncontested bids as well as the bare handful of new bids filed each week.

Similarly, the processing lists will continue as a priority guide in the issuing of McFarland letters to put on notice the mutually exclusive applicants heretofore "passed over" during "temporary speed-up" plan initiated last Oct. 15, the FCC spokesman acknowledged. Again, he said, the lists would determine the order in

which contested applicants would be designated for formal hearing following their informal notification according to the McFarland procedure.

New TV applications are being filed at the FCC at a rate of less than a half-dozen a week, although the amendment of applications on file continues at a lively pace. There have been some 1,100 bids filed since April 14, 1952, the date on which the Commission issued its Sixth Report and Order lifting the 3½-year TV freeze and finalizing the TV reallocation plan. This plan allocated channels for more than 2,000 stations in nearly 1,300 communities.

418 TV Stations Authorized

With last week's grants, the post-thaw total of 310 authorizations includes permits for 102 vhf and 194 uhf commercial stations and 2 vhf and 12 uhf noncommercial, educational stations. When the freeze was lifted last April, 108 vhf commercial stations were authorized and operating. Operating stations now total 129 vhf and 18 uhf outlets.

Nearly 650 of the remaining pending applications are slated for some 285 comparative hearings in about 225 cities. All are contested bids. These estimates are based in part upon a special TV hearing-status study compiled by B•T as of Tuesday (see feature story page 86) and the latest list of passed-over contested applications issued by the Commission on Thursday. The new passed-over list contained 60 applications for 25 channels in 23 cities.

Here is the record-breaking roster of last week's 29 grants:

Columbus, Ga. (City priority Group A-2, No. 42)—Television Columbus (Martin Theatres and WDAK), granted construction permit for uhf Ch. 28; effective radiated power and antenna height above average terrain not specified.

Marion, Ind. (Group A-2, No. 165)—Chronicle Pub. Co. (WMRI-FM), granted uhf Ch. 29, ERP 19 kw visual and 10.2 kw aural, antenna 360 ft.

Panama City, Fla. (Group A-2, No. 198)—J. D. Manly (contractor at Leesburg, Fla.), granted vhf Ch. 7, ERP 10.5 kw visual and 5.4 kw aural, antenna 340 ft.

Missoula, Mont. (Group A-2, No. 229)—Mosby's Inc. (KGVO), granted vhf Ch. 13, ERP 11 kw visual and 5.6 kw aural, antenna minus 690 ft.

Chambersburg, Pa. (Group A-2, No. 313)—

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Mrs. Ike's TV Habit

HOW do Presidents' wives spend the evening?

Mrs. Dwight D. Eisenhower, holding her first radio-press conference last Wednesday, said she generally looked at television until 10 or 10:30 p. m. before retiring.

The First Lady said she frequently was interested in progress of legislation in Congress and followed developments by TV. There is a minimum of "shop talk" in the official family during non-working hours, she said.