



NPA COLOR BAN

May Be Relaxed For Limited Manufacture

POSSIBILITY of a compromise regulation that would relax the ban on manufacture of colorcasting equipment in certain instances was held out by the government last week.

Despite published reports that a new order (M 90) would thaw the production freeze, it was understood that the prohibition would be retained on manufacture of color TV equipment which would preclude mass production in the industry.

The question was posed at a Thursday news conference held by Henry H. Fowler, National Production Authority administrator, and Manly Fleischmann, Defense Production Administrator. Mr. Fowler said an amended order would be issued in perhaps a week.

It was understood that the compromise goes farther than NPA's avowed intention to maintain the ban but permit manufacture of equipment for certain color TV theatre and department store uses. It would leave the door open for manufacturers to apply for authority to turn out equipment if it could be shown that there would be no conflict with defense contracts, no drain on engineers and if they used their current black-and-white TV materials allocations.

"Any relief would be much more apparent than real, however," an NPA official told BROADCASTING • TELECASTING. "It would not open the door to authorization but merely tell the manufacturer the combination to the safe. He would still have to hold the lucky number."

The "lucky number" appeared to be the three above-mentioned criteria, according to the NPA official.

If the order is approved by Mr. Fowler and screened by NPA's Clearance Committee for adoption, it could mean in effect that DPA-NPA is steering a course away from actual banning of the end product. In any event, it was emphasized, there will be no greater allocations of materials, with the result that the ban would, in effect, be retained indirectly.

The NPA official also noted that, without actual color TV broadcasting, mass production of colorcasting receivers and related equipment (adapters, converters, etc.) and scarcity of materials, "the relief would be academic."

Mr. Fowler, in response to a

newsman's query, said the order is bound to "give some relief." Mr. Fleischmann added that there would be relief "with the passing of time if nothing else." Mr. Fowler indicated that he has not reached a decision whether to press the order into effect.

"We are trying to determine how we can relax the ban without endangering the military electronics program," Mr. Fowler told newsmen, referring to a desire to avert a situation where engineers would be pulled off military contracts.

NPA has been mulling the color TV issue the past three months since the second government-industry conference called by NPA to clarify the intent of M 90 [B•T, Feb. 11, et seq.]. It has been frankly acknowledged that NPA had studied the possibility of exempting color TV theatre applications at the insistence of the Theatre Owners of America, the Motion Picture Assn. of America and National Exhibitors Theatre Television Committee.

The issue is of paramount in-

terest to 20th-Century Fox Film Corp. which, deferring to MPAA and TOA on the legal front, proposes to press its Eidophor projection theatre TV system into action.

Exemption for manufacture of closed circuit equipment used by department stores on an experimental basis also has been under study.

Mr. Fowler has indicated in the past that, whatever action the government takes, no additional materials will be made available to manufacturers for color production, and that the technical shortage remains acute.

Another question that has been raised by industry—particularly by Paramount Pictures Corp. on behalf of Chromatic Television Labs., which proposes to make the Lawrence tri-color TV tube—is whether materials may be used to produce a receiver capable of receiving both color and monochrome TV. NPA promised to clarify that, too.

In the cases of both Eidophor and Lawrence, officials have pointed out that no great quantities of ma-

terials would be needed to launch production of necessary equipment. It is this factor which touches intimately on charges that the government has, in effect, banned the end product rather than permitting manufacturers to use available allocations as they choose. The materials picture isn't likely to change substantially during 1952.

Unrest on the labor-management front has virtually dissipated any hope of the government decontrolling vital materials by year's end. These problems apparently will complicate Mr. Fowler's task as he takes over the reins of DPA June 1—subject to Senate approval.

Mr. Fowler was nominated by President Truman last Wednesday to head up DPA and will retain his post as National Production Authority administrator. He succeeds Mr. Fleischmann, who resigns to return to private law practice in Buffalo, and will report to acting Defense Chief John Steelman.

This action highlighted a week of government developments on
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KOTV(TV) SALE

CONTROLLING interest in KOTV (TV) Tulsa has been sold by George E. Cameron Jr. and John B. Hill to Texas oilman J. D. Wrather Jr. Sum for the 85% interest owned by Messrs. Cameron and Hill was announced as in excess of \$2 million. Helen Alvarez, general manager of the station, retains her 15% interest in the licensee corporation and is expected to continue in her present position.

Sale of KOTV brings to two the number of TV stations purchased in the month since the April 14 FCC Sixth Order and Report ending the TV freeze. A fortnight ago, an announcement was made of the sale of KPHO-AM-TV Phoenix to Meredith Publishing Co. for \$1.5 million [B•T, May 5].

Although in preparation before the freeze-lifting, application for FCC approval of the transfer of KOB-AM-TV Albuquerque to Time Inc. and former FCC Chairman Wayne Coy for \$600,000 [B•T, April 28] was filed after the Sixth Report and Order was issued.

All three sales were of TV out-

lets in one-station markets and all are in the Southwest.

Although Mr. Wrather makes his business headquarters in Dallas; he makes his home in West Los Angeles, Calif. In his late thirties, he is married to movie actress Bonita Granville. He has produced some independent motion pictures.

Associated with Mr. Wrather in the purchase of KOTV is his mother, Mrs. Mazie Wrather. It is believed that Mr. Wrather has his eye on TV in other cities, either through purchase or grant.

Application for FCC approval is expected to be filed in the next week or two.

Separate TV Company

It is understood that the interests of Mr. Wrather and his mother will be incorporated in a separate television company which will be the parent company of the licensee of KOTV, Cameron Television Inc.

KOTV began operation Nov. 30, 1949. It operates on Channel 6, with 16.6 kw visual power, from a 450-ft. antenna atop the National

Wrather Buying 85%

Bank of Tulsa Bldg. Antenna is 490 ft. above average terrain. It is affiliated with ABC, CBS and NBC on a non-interconnected basis. Tulsa is due to be interconnected July 1 when the AT&T throws a microwave relay link into the city from Oklahoma City. Station charges \$500 for one-time Class A hour period.

Cost of constructing the Tulsa TV station was \$265,988.34, according to the figures submitted in its license application. Major portion of this cost was for studio equipment, \$102,958.85, with the transmitter costing \$89,506.72 and the antenna system, \$29,802.77. As of June 30, 1951, KOTV was reported to have a net worth of \$463,368.12. Its net profit at that date for the fiscal year was reported as \$82,604.35.

Mr. Cameron, also an oilman, is 70% stockholder of KOTV and is president of the licensee. Mr. Hill owns 15% of the station and is secretary-treasurer as well as commercial manager.