



THE WEEK'S RECEIPTS: \$26 MILLION

- Bearish sales spurt sees 11 stations in the marketplace
- WDAF-AM-TV goes on block, looks for buyer with \$10 million
- Worth mention: \$6 million in Birmingham, \$4 million in L. A.

RADIO-TV station sales reached a crescendo last week, involving 11 properties and \$26 million.

Leading the spurt in major sales was the "for sale" sign on the *Kansas City Star's* WDAF-AM-TV Kansas City for a figure of more than \$10 million. Others: the WBRC-AM-TV Birmingham sale to Hulburt Taft Jr.'s Radio Cincinnati Inc. for \$6,350,000; the KCOP (TV) Los Angeles agreement in principle to sell to Kenyon Brown-Bing Crosby group for \$4 million; the WDBO-AM-TV Orlando, Fla., sale to William S. Cherry Jr. and associates for \$3 million; sale of WTVD (TV) Durham, N. C., to Lowell Thomas and group for \$1,625,000, and the sale of 80% of WAPA-TV San Juan, P. R., to WTOB-AM-TV Winston-Salem, N. C., interest for \$360,000.

Also involved in sales last week: WJHP Jacksonville, Fla.; WPEO Peoria, Ill.; WONN Lakeland, Fla.; WTRL Bradenton, Fla.; and KCLN Clinton, Iowa.

WDAF-AM-TV: \$10 MILLION

ANOTHER possible "record" stations sale—WDAF-AM-TV, pioneer stations owned by the *Kansas City Star*—loomed last week with the disclosure that the stations are "available." While no mention was made either of the prospective purchaser or of the amount, B•T ascertained that the stations would be sold under proper conditions and that the price being talked is in "excess of \$10 million."

H. Dean Fitzer, managing director of the stations, contacted by B•T in Kansas City, confirmed the report that "preliminary conversations" are underway and said overtures have been made for the station properties—both NBC outlets. He indicated that under appropriate conditions, the station ownership, made up of executives and employes of the *Kansas City Star Co.*, would be disposed to sell.

Ch. 4 WDAF-TV is one of the pioneers in the Midwest, having begun operation Oct. 16, 1949, and WDAF, operating on 610 kc with 5 kw, was among the first dozen stations in the country, having begun operation in 1922.

There was no official explanation for the availability of the *Kansas City Star* stations. The *Star Co.*, however, is embroiled in anti-

trust litigation which began in 1953 when the government filed civil and criminal complaints, charging monopoly and attempted monopoly of news and advertising in the greater Kansas City area. In February 1955, a federal jury found the *Star Co.* guilty. This decision was affirmed by an appeals court last January. The *Star* has until May 12 to petition the U. S. Supreme Court for review.

In its charges, the Justice Dept. alleged that the *Star Co.* acted to suppress competition involving competitive media and engaged in tie-ins with its radio and tv properties. There were also charges of purported forced combination rates for advertising and circulation. The *Kansas City Star Co.* owns that city's only two newspapers, the *Star* and the *Times*.

Among the requests for relief by the government was the divorcement of the *Star Co.*'s radio-tv properties from the newspapers, and of the *Star* from the *Times*.

Both WDAF and WDAF-TV received their last regular license renewals on Feb. 1, 1953. Since 1956, according to FCC records, both stations have been authorized to operate without regular licenses pending the outcome of the antitrust litigation.

WBRC-AM-TV: \$6 MILLION

PURCHASE of WBRC-AM-TV Birmingham from Storer Broadcasting Co. by Radio Cincinnati Inc. (WKRC-AM-TV Cincinnati—*Cincinnati Times-Star*) for \$6 million [B•T, April 1] was announced last week by Hulburt Taft Jr., president of Radio Cincinnati, Inc.

Sale of the Birmingham stations, subject to usual FCC approval was necessary for Storer to consummate its \$5.6 million pur-

chase of ch. 12 WPFH (TV) Wilmington, Del., and WIBG-AM-FM Philadelphia from Paul F. Harron and group, approved by the FCC two weeks ago [B•T, April 1]. Storer already owns the limit of seven am and seven tv stations, in Detroit, Toledo, Miami, Cleveland, Atlanta, Wheeling, Portland, Ore., as well as Birmingham.

WBRC is a 5 kw station operating on 960 kc; WBRC-TV operates with maximum power on ch. 8. Both are affiliated with CBS.

Mr. Taft stated that in addition to the \$6 million sales price, a fee of \$350,000 would be paid to Storer over a five-year period in return for a guarantee not to compete in the Birmingham area in broadcasting, advertising and entertainment fields, nor to solicit the present staff for employment elsewhere.

The WBRC stations will make the fourth broadcast property in which Radio Cincinnati has an interest. In addition to the WKRC outlets, the Taft organization also owns WTVN-AM-TV Columbus, Ohio, and has a 30% interest in WBIR-AM-TV Knoxville, Tenn. Radio Cincinnati bought ch. 6 WTVM (TV) from Edward Lamb for \$1.5 million.

WBRC-TV is one of two commercial outlets in Birmingham. The other station, ch. 13 WABT (TV), is owned by the Newhouse newspaper interest (*Birmingham News*). Also operating is educational station WBIQ (TV) on ch. 10. A permit is outstanding for ch. 42 WBMG (TV).

Storer bought the Birmingham properties from Eloise Hanna and others in 1953 for \$2.4 million.

Financing for the Birmingham purchase was arranged through four banks, including the First National Bank and the Fifth Third

NARTB CONVENTION PREVIEW

What will go on, where to find it

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