

Lombardo finds lots of fair-weather friends

Everyone talks about the weather and now pressure is building up to get the FCC to do something about it. A freshet of protests inundated the agency last week, ranging from stormy to balmy, after a telegram from bandleader Guy Lombardo to Chairman Minow which complained that dramatic embellishments on inclement weather reports by New York weathercasters had dampened business at an outdoor show Mr. Lombardo runs at Jones Beach, L. I. (BROADCASTING, Aug. 14).

More than a dozen comments and protests were received last week at the FCC Complaints & Compliance Division and the barometer was still rising. A division staffer said he feels the FCC's jurisdiction in the matter is very limited unless the plaintiffs can prove that weather broadcasts have been deliberately falsified or broadcast with the motive of hurting the businesses that are protesting.

Repeaters ■ Resort operators from New Jersey and New Hampshire strongly backed Mr. Lombardo's position. The Jerseyites cited radio comments such as "The sun may dry the beach, but now it looks like the Everglades swamps" and "If you're going on the boardwalk, you'd better take a coat." The New Englanders accused some radio stations of running gloomy early-morning predictions throughout the day, despite official weather bureau revisions predicting good weather. The latter problem might be settled, the FCC suggested, if stations give the time the forecast was made when broadcasting it.

Several business interests and Chambers of Commerce wrote their congressmen to complain of weather-

casts. The letters were forwarded to the commission.

Two private weather-predicting firms added to the tumult. One, taking a swipe at "the high degree of error" in U.S. Weather Bureau reports, said it is asking the Dept. of Commerce to investigate radio-tv weathercasts. Another told the FCC it thinks the problem is "worth more than passing notice."

Back to Normalcy ■ Thomas C. Orr, vice president of the Ask Mr. Foster Travel Service, wired Chairman Minow, urging that "tv weather forecasts be tempered before they arouse more tempers." He said programs originally intended to be a public service have degenerated into "vehicles for fashion models, would-be actresses and even cartoonists." He asked that the country be "allowed to return to normal" and vacationers be allowed to take their chances with the weather.

The *Auto Laundry News*, Detroit trade publication for the car-washing industry, said that broadcast weather reports seemed always to err on the gloomy side. If forecasters predict rain, people don't have their automobiles washed. The *News* pointed out.

Embroidery ■ Robert Moses, president of the Long Island State Park Commission, wired complaints to the FCC announcing that he has requested all New York City stations to avoid "dramatic and fanciful embellishments and interpretations added to factual reports."

WPIX (TV) New York, to calm Mr. Lombardo's wounded feelings, invited him to conduct the weekend weathercasts last weekend. Which he did.

thinks are of major importance.

In another matter, the conferees agreed that functions could be delegated or withdrawn by a majority of those commissioners holding office, as provided in the House bill. The Senate version would have permitted these actions by a majority of the commissioners present and voting.

The legislation, which now goes back to Senate and House for final approval, was introduced as a substitute for the President's FCC-reorganization plan, which the House killed, largely on the ground it would give the chairman too much power (BROADCASTING, June 19).

The respective Senate and House bills which followed closely recommendations submitted by the FCC, were introduced by Sen. John O. Pastore (D-R.I.), chairman of the Senate Com-

munications Subcommittee, and Rep. Oren Harris (D-Ark.), chairman of the House Commerce Committee. They also headed the conference committee on the bill.

Government briefs...

Set for hearing ■ The Securities & Exchange Commission last week, at the request of Broadcast International Inc., New York, set for hearing the agency's suspension of 60,000 shares of common stock offered by BI to the public June 2, 1961 (BROADCASTING, April 10, July 10). The SEC suspended the offering June 29 on charges that the prospectus made false and misleading representations as to the clients and officers of the company and the use of proceeds.

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