

The toughest test of all-news format

WINS TAKES THE PLUNGE TODAY IN NATION'S BIGGEST MARKET

New York's first and the nation's third all-news radio station begins operation at 6 a.m. today (April 19), when Westinghouse Broadcasting's WINS New York converts to news on a full-time, round-the-clock basis.

A three-day dry run was started last Thursday to test and perfect a format designed to offer news from the wire services, WINS newsmen, Westinghouse news bureaus, mobile units and beeper phones in endless succession.

Anchor men will broadcast in half-hour shifts, presenting news reports and calling in correspondents. Officials said emphasis would be on continually updated on-the-scene reports and actuality recordings in order to minimize repetition of news copy and keep listeners involved in new stories as they develop.

News summaries and reports on sports, finance, amusements, weather, time and traffic are to be given frequently, they said, with exact frequency in some cases to be determined by the time of day.

Beeper telephones and three radio-equipped mobile units will be employed to feed live and taped reports from the five New York boroughs and the bordering sections of Westchester county, Long Island, New Jersey and Connecticut that make up the metropolitan area.

Regular and specialized wire services of the AP and UPI are to be used along with Westinghouse news bureaus in Washington and elsewhere in this country and abroad in covering national and international events, authorities reported.

A major staff build-up and expansion of news facilities have been under way since Westinghouse announced a month ago its plan to go all-news (BROADCASTING, March 22). WINS officials reported last week the station now has a staff of more than 40 people "totally involved with news" (BROADCASTING, April 12).

Only other all-news stations serving U. S. audiences are WNUS-AM-FM Chicago and XTRA Tijuana, Mexico (see story below).

The WINS operation will be run by Joel Chaseman, general manager; Kenneth Reed, director of programs and operations, and Stan Brooks, news director. News editors are Jack Smee, Henry Schnaue, Jim McGiffert, and Ed McCarthy. (WINS now has on its news staff 24 members who formerly were news directors of broadcast stations.)

"Featured newsmen" on the staff include among others the following who will serve as studio anchor men as

well as on-the-scene reporters: WINS veterans Charles Scott King, Paul Parker, Lew Fisher, Tuck Stadler, Stan Bernard, Brad Phillips, Paul Sherman and Stan Burns; newly added Jim Gordon, Charles Edwards, Henry J. Marcotte, Herb Humphries, Phil Lenhart, Doug Edelson, Brad Sherman, Allen Shaw, Mike McClellan and Bob Callan. The additional staff were recruited from networks and stations in New York and elsewhere.

During the rehearsal days last week, the reporting was fed into tapes which were played back for analyses and critique.



Most active location in the WINS New York all-news operation is the working newsroom. Keeping astride the pace of the news are (L to R) Herb Humphries, featured newsmen; Kenneth Reed, director of programs and operations; Stan Brooks, news director; Paul Parker, featured newsmen; Jack Smee, senior news editor; Henry Marcotte, featured newsmen; Hank Schnaue, a news editor, and Charles Scott King, featured newsmen. Featured newsmen are in the role of anchor men in the WINS operation.

McLendon wary of WINS test

Advises station to stick to hard news, be monotonous; cites own experiences

The secret of success for an all-news radio station is to be just that and nothing more—all news, hard news, all the time. The station also had better have money to get it through some early losses that may be "electrifying."

That is the conviction of Gordon

B. McLendon, president of the McLendon stations, who has been intimately identified with the only all-news stations serving U. S. audiences until today (April 19), when Westinghouse Broadcasting's WINS New York converts (see preceding story).

"Don't try to do the all-news format too well," Mr. McLendon advises. "To the extent that an all-news station is monotonous, it will succeed. To the extent that it is not, it will fail."

What he means is that efforts to enliven the programing with "features" and "actualities"—and anything else but a steady diet of news, news, news—

may very well prove fatal.

"The all-news station," in his view, "is a service, like the telephone time and weather services. The listener tunes in for one reason alone, to get the news whenever he wants it. If he tunes and finds a book report or some other feature, his faith is badly shaken."

The Differences ■ Mr. McLendon's views thus conflict with those of Westinghouse and WINS, which plan to include features and a sizeable volume of "actualities," with no rigid program formats. Mr. McLendon says he is concerned about the WINS plans. If they don't work he is afraid the effect on New York's timebuying community will hurt his own all-news interests.

These are the McLendon group's WNUS Chicago, which has been all-news since last September, and WNUS-