

Cox, Johnson polling 59 Oklahoma stations

UNOFFICIAL LETTER ASKS ABOUT NEWS, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FCC Commissioners Kenneth A. Cox and Nicholas Johnson on Friday (April 12) initiated study of how selected group of Oklahoma radio and television stations are serving their public, particularly in area of news and public affairs programming (CLOSED CIRCUIT, April 8, BROADCASTING, March 18).

Survey is part of what Commissioner Cox says is effort to get colleagues to take license-renewal process "more seriously." Oklahoma stations' licenses are due for renewal by June 1

Project includes letters to ABC, CBS, and NBC. Commissioners asked them to list news and public affairs programs they carried since Dec. 1, 1967, and to report on record of their Oklahoma television affiliates in clearing for them.

In addition, commissioners are making analysis of information already filed by stations in their license-renewal applications. They have indicated interest in stations' policies on commercials, programming, and staffing.

Letters went to licensees of all 13 TV stations in state, including three educational stations, and to 28 AM's and 18 FM's.

Commissioners Cox and Johnson have frequently been at odds with colleagues on renewal matters, generally on question of whether stations proposing relatively small amounts of news and public affairs should be queried further or their applications designated for hearing.

Commissioner Cox feels that information that staff is now instructed to provide is inadequate. He said last week that he and Commissioner Johnson hope to develop picture of state of service in Oklahoma, then will prepare memorandum for commission on kind of license-renewal procedures they feel are indicated.

Don't Have to Reply ■ Commission officials noted that survey is independent project of two commissioners, and not official action. Consequently, there is no legal obligation on part of stations to respond.

There was also question as to whether law requiring Bureau of Budget to pass on questionnaires issued by federal agency to more than 10 individuals applies to commissioners' letters. In view of Bureau's continuing review of agencies' activities, it seemed that com-

missioners' letters could trigger Budget inquiry into whether spirit of law is being violated.

Letters to stations referred to report of President's commission on civil disorders, and asked what programming had been presented to deal with problems on race relations discussed in report. President's commission referred to media's "failure" to report adequately on race relations and ghetto conditions,

ETV's to be Negro voice?

Methods to get educational TV stations to become the voice of "black community" were explored in top-level government, industry and ETV meeting in Washington Friday (April 12) (see page 29). Suggestions, which ranged from shows starring local Negro talent, programs on black community problems and African culture, employment services and legal aid, will be presented to four-hour ETV workshop in New York Sunday (April 21).

and to bring Negroes in journalism.

Commissioners asked stations whether they are considering changes in news and programming policy bearing on those issues, particularly as they relate to local minority groups.

Letters also asked how many representatives of minority groups stations employ, and in what positions.

Both radio and television stations were also asked to list five "most important local problems or issues" in their communities in 1967, and to state "specifically and in detail," programming they carried to deal with them.

Letters to radio stations contained two additional questions on programming. Both request information on programs that are neither sports nor entertainment. One deals specifically with recorded programs.

Bass Bros. get KAUZ-TV on 4-to-3 FCC vote

Bass Brothers Enterprises got its fifth TV station Friday (April 12) when FCC announced approval of \$3.1 mil-

lion purchase of KAUZ-TV Wichita Falls, Tex.

KAUZ-TV was bought from Paul Harron, who owns WKTV(TV) Utica, N. Y., and recently bought WMTW-FM-TV Poland Spring-Portland, Me., from entertainer Jack Paar for \$5 million. Mr. Harron bought channel 6 Wichita Falls station from Sydney A. Grayson group in 1963 for \$2.36 million.

Bass group, with Perry R. Bass as president, already owns KFDA-TV Amarillo, Tex.; and its two satellites, KFDW-TV Clovis, N. M., and KFDO-TV Sayre, Okla. All are VHF. Group bought KCST (TV) San Diego (ch. 39) last year for \$1.1 million.

Commission approval was on 4 to 3 vote, with Commissioners Kenneth A. Cox, Nicholas Johnson and Robert T. Bartley dissenting. Latter said in statement: "... This is clearly a classic example of the continued concentration of control of this medium into fewer and fewer hands."

Time's first newspaper purchase falls through

Plans for Time Inc.'s acquisition of *Newark Evening News* have been "terminated because the principals were unable to conclude a final purchase agreement," officials of both companies announced Friday (April 12).

Deal would have paid Evening News Publishing Co. owners, Edward W. and Richard B. Scudder, about 325,000 shares of Time Inc. stock, valued at slightly more than \$29 million when plan was announced two months ago, and Time also would have assumed \$5 million mortgage (BROADCASTING, Feb. 19).

New York Stock Exchange was not open Friday but Time Inc. stock closed Thursday at 100%, which would put value of 325,000 shares close to \$32.8 million—appreciation of more than \$3.6 million since acquisition plan was announced.

Scudder's ownership of WVNJ-AM-FM Newark was never involved in deal.

Termination was announced in brief joint statement by Scudder Brothers and Time Inc. President James A. Linen. Spokesman noted acquisition had always been contingent on reaching final agreement and said failure to reach one was sole cause of breakdown. They said it was not related to reports of Justice Department investigation or to contingency on favorable tax rulings.

Acquisition would have marked Time