

FCC Ready To "Dutch Uncle" All Future Sales of Stations

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10.—Seemingly emboldened by its own forceful language in AVCO-Crosley decidh handed down Thursday (7), Federal Communications Commission is settling down to a really tough policy in all future big-money station transfer proposals. FCC's toughness is going to stick, according to insiders, no matter what course Congress takes on the commission's recommendations to lawmakers in AVCO-Crosley decidh.

Of special significance is the fact that all seven members of FCC, including the four who went along with original grant of Crosley application, are strongly united behind stepped-up procedure which will make it as tough to buy a station as to get an original lien on a frequency. FCC is seemingly determined to proceed on warning expressed in AVCO-Crosley decidh and, by so doing, force Congress to issue a clarified mandate on the issue. FCC doesn't ever want to get itself again in tight spot in which it found itself in handling the AVCO-Crosley case.

Price Blow-Up

One thing FCC is determined to call a halt to is artificial raising of sale prices to eliminate all but buyer specially favored by licensee even though sale to such a buyer might not be in best public interest. Decidh in AVCO-Crosley case stresses that new transfer procedure "will do only half the job that is needed," and commission adds that "a completely effective transfer procedure must not only permit the commission to select the transferee but must also insure that the field of his choice is not unreasonably restricted by permitting sales of stations at artificially high prices." Price in AVCO-Crosley transfer — totaling \$22,000,000 — is generally

viewed here as excessive and almost prohibitive to all except AVCO.

Whether Congress will go along with FCC recommendation for open competition among prospective purchasers of radio stations on basis of qualifications for public service, is matter of serious conjecture here, chiefly because private industry pressure groups are already pooh-poohing the idea on Capitol Hill. FCC's 4-3 decidh allowing transfer of Crosley interests of AVCO (controlled by Victor Emanuel), nevertheless, is regarded as important not only because of its fiercely worded plea for congressional clarification of policy but also because it hints strongly that future attempted big-money grab attempts may not get to first base. The issue, of course, is far from settled, and FCC's powers by commission's own admission are sorely limited.

Suggestions Held Weak

For instance, FCC's recommendation to Congress on the various effects of big business on radio is regarded as not too forceful. Commission merely "suggests" that Congress consider the problem, conceding that "many present licensees" who are holding companies, etc., "have made substantial contributions to the development of broadcasting." Here, FCC points out that any decision must be forthcoming from Congress. Mildness of commission's expression on this particular point isn't going to get much action out of lawmakers, according to some spokesmen on the Hill.

Despite this lapsing into sweetly reasonable tone, the FCC decidh is viewed by industry representatives here as a definite warning against money-tight, one-way transfers in future. FCC proposes procedure which, in effect, opens sale of station to all comers on equal

MBS Preps New-Type Quizzer With Eye to Origination in Chi

CHICAGO, Sept. 10.—Strong possibility that Chicago will become origination point of a big-time Mutual network program was seen here last week when it was learned that MBS, in co-operation with Music Corporation of America and Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, will soon audition for a national sponsor a new-type audience participation quiz program that is being planned for possible eventual airing on the full MBS net. New program, to be titled *Square With the World* will be auditioned here utilizing Chi talent.

If the potential sponsor likes the audition, it will be aired as a sponsored show

terms and conditions. FCC will require owners to advertise terms of proposed sale over 60-day period, during which he must entertain bids from all interested parties. Meanwhile, FCC would issue a public notice, giving price and conditions and inviting bids. At the end of the period, all comers would be considered "on their merits" and in open competition. There would then be 30 days for selected buyer to get together with seller on transaction. However, seller may choose to withdraw offer and look for a new buyer.

Also broadcast activities must be segregated from other interests in future negotiations, in direct contrast with situation in Crosley-AVCO deal, under proposed FCC procedure which now must be subjected to public hearing. In the Crosley case, Chairman Porter and Commissioners Jett, Denny and Will took the position that FCC had no choice but to approve. Minority—Durr, Walker and Wakefield—in dissenting voiced belief that public interest should have called for turn down. Joint dissenting opinion of Durr and Walker stressed that AVCO isn't qualified to run radio stations.

on a five-station test net in Wisconsin and Michigan for 13 weeks. This series will originate here, but will not be aired by WGN, local MBS outlet. According to Ade Hult, Mutual v.-p. if the sponsor likes the test period airings, the program will go to a full net sponsored basis, with Chicago the originating point.

Easy Way To Pay Bills

Square With the World is in itself something new in quiz type, audition-participation program. Backbone of the idea is the plan to have question-answering participants win awards that will be payments of bills they have to pay. Thus the *Square With the World* title. Whereas other audience participation shows give away dough that is just a little added cash to the participants, this is expected to have a higher human interest factor because participants will have a chance to get their bills paid, an endeavor that is close to the lives of most of the American populace.

Plan of the show is to have participants first present bills for \$10 before receiving first questions. If they answer the first question, they will be able to present a bill for \$20, then if they go on from there, they can present a bill for \$30. All amounts won will be accumulative, with gags and interest-increasing gimmicks to be introduced thruout.

"Electric Hour" To Resume From Disney Studio Sans Mob

HOLLYWOOD, Sept. 10.—When Nelson Eddy returns to *The Electric Hour* September 16 the CBS program will be moved from Columbia Square to be aired from the sound stage at Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, Calif. There will be no studio audience. Reason for the switch is acute studio space shortage at CBS here, as reported recently in *The Billboard*.

CARL GEORGE, WGAR'S OWN WAR CORRESPONDENT, COMPLETES AN UNUSUAL PACIFIC MISSION

● "Been meeting some pretty important people," said Carl George in one of his early broadcasts from the Philippines. And that was the purpose of his mission . . . to visit Ohio's fighting men in the Pacific . . . the most important people in the world to those who waited back in the Buckeye state.

Daily, for almost six months, WGAR aired the broadcasts of its own war correspondent from the far reaches of the world. Listeners heard Carl George describe how Ohio's fighting 37th Division dug out Japs on Luzon, how hometown lads helped rebuild the island fortresses of Guam and Saipan. Unexpectedly, they went along with him on the Borneo invasion of Brunei Bay, caught the real-life sound effects of a major naval bombardment in one of the most thrilling broadcasts of the war. Then, from blood-stained Okinawa came other broadcasts telling how Ohioans were knocking at the very front door of the enemy. And V-J Day found WGAR's intrepid war correspondent in Chungking, reporting the reaction to the end of the war from the land where it began 14 long years ago.

It was a mission that included many stops and many personalities, planned to lessen the distance between home and the war for the Joneses, the Browns and the Smiths of Ohio . . . the "pretty important people" whose interests will always come first with their friendly station.

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RADIO'S XXV ANNIVERSARY



Handling of U. S. Messages Problem Now, Chi RMC Says

CHICAGO, Sept. 10.—Officers of the Chicago Radio Management Club, which thru the war has been the body primarily responsible for co-operation with governmental bureaus that resulted in an efficient flow of government messages to radio stations, agencies and nets here, last week stated that they were plenty puzzled as to how to carry on channeling of government messages now that the OWI has been disbanded. Harlow Robert, club president, stated that as yet he hadn't worked out any plan that could be offered to the club to evolve a system of channeling that would take the place of the OWI.

But, he stressed, something will have to be done here and in other cities if a state of confusion is not to come about, with various governmental agencies asking separately for radio time, necessitating stations and nets dealing with many departments instead of just one, as during the days of OWI. Before, working with the co-operation of the OWI, the club members were able to keep things rolling smoothly here.

If the Chi radio group was to carry on by itself and take over channeling of government messages for radio stations, agencies, etc., in this area, it would mean the club would have to hire a full-time employee, and Roberts stated, this would not be economically possible. It was pointed out that flow of material from governmental bureaus is expected to maintain a high level of volume in the post-war era.

NAB, AAAA Tapped

Roberts and other RMC members stated that much of the responsibility of working out a plan for an organization to take the place of the domestic OWI radio division rests with the NAB and the AAAA. They all stressed the need for co-ordination and stated that if there were not some co-ordinating body there would be a great deal of overlapping, with various bureaus sending out messages of different content but dealing with the same subject and attempting to win the same objective.

One RMC member put it squarely in

the lap of the NAB, and stated the org had to do a service for the radio industry. Of course, he added, whether or not the NAB will do something concrete or whether it will, as it has done many times in the past, merely appoint another investigating committee remains to be seen.

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