

Promise to pay

Highly respected Stanford Research Institute of Menlo Park, Calif., has issued bullish report on pay TV, will this week conduct private symposium on subject for clients in New York. SRI report, distributed to clients and withheld from publication, is said to conclude that odds favor establishment of pay TV as major communications force by 1970's—at inevitable dislocation of present TV system. New York symposium, which representatives of some 60 major companies in communications, entertainment and advertising are expected to attend, will be held at Barclay hotel Thursday and Friday.

More letters

License renewals of nine Pennsylvania TV stations—possibly as many as 12—will most likely be deferred because of local-live programing questions raised by FCC staff. And some commissioners are showing signs of annoyance. They feel letters of inquiry sent by staff weren't warranted. Some stations were said to have shown substantial amount of local-live programing. But staff sent letters because of questions about distribution of such programing—that is, amount done in prime time.

It's believed most—if not all—of stations involved will be renewed after they reply to staff letters, which are identical to those sent previously to stations in New England and New York (BROADCASTING, May 27; CLOSED CIRCUIT, June 3). But some commissioners feel that, in view of limited personnel, staff could more profitably use its time in reducing growing backlog of pending cases rather than in what they consider "nitpicking." Stations involved, reportedly, are WICU-TV and WSEE(TV), both Erie; WHP-TV and WTPA(TV), both Harrisburg; WJAC-TV Johnstown; WIIC(TV) Pittsburgh; WDAU-TV Scranton; WBRE-TV Wilkes-Barre and WSBA-TV York.

Drop-in reargument

FCC will hear oral argument on controversial VHF drop-in case Sept. 19. Action, taken at meeting Thursday, will be announced this week. Oral argument has been requested by number of petitioners opposed to FCC order denying short-spaced drop-ins for seven two-VHF-station markets. Commission voted for it at urging of Commissioner Lee Loevinger, who, as commission's newest member, represents swing vote that could reverse 4-3 decision against drop-ins. He joined commission last month, after case was decided, and wants oppor-

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tunity to hear and question parties before he participates in vote on reconsideration.

Commission also took another unannounced action in drop-in case last week—reversing itself on decision to require ch. 5 KOCO-TV move-in from Enid, Okla., to Oklahoma City to be at standard mileage separation from KSFA-TV Fort Smith, Ark. KOCO-TV convinced commission that, if required to observe standard separations, its technical problems would be such that its signal over Oklahoma City wouldn't be as effective as it is now. Commission then agreed to KOCO-TV's request to locate transmitter at Oklahoma City antenna farm, with Commissioner Lee, ardent UHF advocate, dissenting and Commissioner Cox absent.

Boice leaves WEMP

Hugh K. Boice Jr., for past 17 years vice president and general manager of WEMP Milwaukee, has sold his minority stock interest (8%) in Milwaukee Broadcasting Co., which also owns KWK St. Louis (whose license has been revoked by FCC [see page 89]), and has resigned from company. He hasn't announced his plans, but they're expected to be in station operations. Andrew M. Spheeris, president of MBC and its principal officer, is assuming WEMP general managership. Arthur Wirtz, Chicago property owner and owner of Chicago Black Hawks hockey team, last May acquired 44% interest in MBC. Differences as to operating policies, it's understood, resulted in Mr. Boice's decision.

Power in pay project

Principal participants in project to build California pay TV system that would feature Giants and Dodgers baseball as program core may now be identified: They're Reuben H. Donnelley Corp., giant printing-direct mail-research combine, and Lear Siegler Inc., manufacturer of electronics equipment ranging from simple radios to sophisticated missile gear. In project in subsidiary role is Matthew Fox, whose Skiatron of America once held franchise for San Francisco Giants games on pay TV (BROADCASTING, July 22).

Bargain branches

Broadcast Time Sales, radio station representative, may have figured way to build up list of branch sales offices without expense normally attached to expansion of that kind. It's about to announce system of regional fran-

chises covering 15 or so advertising centers. Franchise holders will have equity in franchise itself and also in parent BTS company. BTS will continue to operate its own sales offices in New York and Chicago.

Governors for Pastore

Thirty-two state governors as of last Friday had endorsed Senator Pastore's bill (S 252) to eliminate application of equal time provisions of Section 315 to candidates for Presidency, Vice Presidency, U. S. Senate and House and state governorships. It was expected that list might grow to at least 36 in next few days because of oral commitments. Small minority of governors either supported exemptions to cover only presidential and vice presidential elections or some variations thereof, but efforts will be made to convince them of merits of Pastore measure.

New kind of freeze?

All is not joy in FM field now that FCC has come out with table of allocations (see page 100-A). In some broadcast and engineering circles, commission's "go, no-go" system has been ridiculed. "It's more a 'no-go, no-go' system," one engineer said Friday after studying allocations. There's no room for growth in many important markets, he said, using Spartanburg, S. C., with one channel, and Danville, Va., with no channels, as illustrations.

Rigged resolution?

Aura of mystery still surrounds last month's action of National Council of Churches in urging stricter government controls on television and radio. One reliable source ascribes responsibility for pronouncement to staff member of council who had become disenchanted with commercial broadcasting—and particularly with networks—because of his separation from network employ. There were indications last week that council may reconsider its action (BROADCASTING, July 22).

Tall in Texas

Wired pay TV promoter—Home Entertainment Co. of America—may have landed a live one. There's talk of deal for wired system in major Texas city with backing of Texas oil and banking interests. HECA, which holds franchise for pay TV system in Santa Monica, Calif., has had problems in public stock offering intended to finance that installation. Two weeks ago it severed relations with brokerage house handling stock issue.