

FCC asks about VHF 'stockpiling'

The FCC is "concerned about recent reports of 'stockpiling'" of VHF-only television receivers before the fast approaching April 30 cutoff date for legal shipment of such sets in interstate commerce. Seeking more information, the commission last week wrote to 19 receiver manufacturers asking if there is "a factual basis" for the stockpiling report such as was revealed in "BROADCASTING magazine" (CLOSED CIRCUIT, Jan. 27).

The commission said that, if true, the stockpiling is "entirely inconsistent with the basic representations made to the commission of an orderly transition by the industry during the period December 1963 through April 1964 to the 1965 all-channel models." The commission reminded manufacturers that after passage of the all-channel receiver law, representatives from the Electronic Industries Association assured the commission that the set makers would "do everything possible to achieve the purpose of the law. . . ." The agency said that it determined April 30, 1964, as the cutoff date to give distributors and dealers "a considerable amount of time to dispose of 1964 sets."

The commission added that at the time it set the April 30 deadline it

expected the manufacturing industry to do everything possible to carry out the new law. "Most important, we stressed our understanding that there would be an orderly change-over," the commission wrote.

The FCC said it feels the industry "will appreciate the commission's concern and the desirability of its evaluating what action might be appropriate to deal with a practice which is obviously inconsistent with the public interest and congressional policy" as well as the industry's best interest. "In this connection, we also call your attention to our support of legislation to give relief from the federal excise tax on all-channel TV sets," the commission said.

The commission's letter was addressed to: Admiral Corp.; Curtis Mathes Manufacturing Co.; Emerson Radio & Phonograph Corp.; General Electric Co.; The Magnavox Co.; Motorola Inc.; Olympic Radio & Television Division, Lear Siegler Inc.; Packard Bell Electronics Corp.; Philco Corp.; RCA; Satchell Carlson Inc.; Sylvania Electric Products Inc.; Symphonic Radio & Electronic Corp.; Trav-ler Industries Inc.; Warwick Electronics Inc.; Wells-Gardner Electronics Corp.; Westinghouse Electric Corp.; Zenith Radio Corp., and Muntz TV Inc.

would not object to the station moving its transmitter to another location in the county. As a result, the commission suspended the oral argument to give KATV time to amend its application to indicate the new location.

But the commission's action last week, in dismissing the application for the transmitter move, caught KATV counsel and principals by surprise. KATV had not yet received the hoped-for FAA clearance. And the brief order made no mention of the bad-faith charges or of the examiner's findings. It merely

said KATV could file again when ready to proceed.

Did the order mean the charges against the applicant were washed out? Would the applicant be starting afresh when it filed a new application?

No Official Line ■ There was no official commission position on these questions. But most officials queried expressed the view that the charges were still outstanding. "The charges in the record and the hearing examiner's findings can't be ignored," said one official.

One way KATV could find out its sta-

tus with the commission is to file for a move to Redfield. If there are no objections—and Pine Bluff officials had indicated they would not object—the commission might grant the move without a hearing, said one staff member. This would wipe out the charges.

On the other hand, he noted, the commission's Broadcast Bureau might raise a question about the examiner's initial decision. And this could lead to a new hearing, he added.

Meanwhile another application in which KATV is interested is being held up pending a disposition of the Pine Bluff matter. This involves a request by KTUL-TV Tulsa, Okla. to change the location of its transmitter. Both KATV and KTUL-TV are controlled by Griffin-Leake Stations, and the commission is delaying a decision on Tulsa until the Pine Bluff case is settled.

Griffin-Leake also owns KWTV(TV) Oklahoma City. James C. Leake controls WSTE(TV) Fajardo, P. R.

House bill would remove excise tax on TV sets

Prospective buyers of television receivers would find all-channel sets cost about the same as VHF models if Congress were to enact a bill offered last week to remove the 10% excise tax from the all-channel variety.

Representative James A. Burke (D-Mass.), a member of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee, introduced legislation Wednesday (Jan. 29) that would exempt all-channel sets from the federal excise tax that presently applies to all new TV sets.

Representative Burke said his bill, HR 9792, was a logical step for the Congress to take as a follow-up to a 1962 law that will prohibit the interstate shipment of any new TV receivers not equipped to receive both VHF and UHF signals.

Bills to exempt various products from federal excise taxes have been introduced without success for several years, but last week Representative Wilbur D. Mills (D-Ark.), Ways and Means chairman, announced his committee would conduct hearings on excise levies later this year.

Teleprompter completes sale of three divisions

The Teleprompter Corp., New York, reported last week that it has completed the sale of three operating divisions to Defiance Industries—a transaction that is expected to return more than \$1.5 million to Teleprompter. Irving B. Kahn, president of Teleprompter, said the long-awaited sale will enable the firm to concentrate its corporate attention on community antenna television

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