Improvement groups plan national meet

The outlook for a 1967 national congress of groups interested in the “rights and responsibilities of the public in commercial broadcasting” is bright. The only unsettled question is where and when.

The 21 organizations (representing labor, education, business, religious and government groups) that participated in a preliminary organizational meeting in Washington earlier this month (Broadcasting, Dec. 5) have indicated an interest in creating a congress. But it may take until February before a formal association is created, the date and location set.

Frank Orme, executive vice president of the National Association for Better Broadcasting, one of the originators of the congress plan, said the 21 groups “kind of put a curb on me on what they wanted me to talk about” regarding the congress.

James V. Bennett, president of NABB, was elected chairman of the congress’s organization committee, and Mr. Orme was elected executive secretary.

Mr. Orme said the congress “is an operating entity now and it will proceed.” He said there has been “no antagonism from anyone in the [broadcasting] industry, and there is no antagonism from anyone in this group toward anyone in the industry. This is the nice thing about this. It’s going to work on a high level of cooperation and I’m sure there will be many other organizations that will come in.”

In his “tentative outline” for the congress, Mr. Orme saw it as examining and defining “the unfulfilled needs of the public” in commercial broadcasting and in formulating and activating “specific projects designed to accomplish changes that are necessary to the public interest.”

The outline said the need for the congress is “self-apparent” since “the failures (in a number of respects) of commercial broadcasters to provide a service compatible with public interests are widely known and generally recognized by mass-communications scholars and by most leaders in education, religion, mental and physical health, law and juvenile welfare.”

Additionally, the congress “will generate a united influence that will affect the policies and actions of Congress, congressional agencies and the broadcasting industry.”

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BROADCASTING, December 19, 1966