

Sale of majority interest in planned Overmyer Network to syndicate that includes some members now in broadcasting was in negotiation last week. D. H. Overmyer would retain some stock and perhaps board chairmanship if deal goes through, and Oliver Treyz would continue as president. For some time Overmyer has been scouting sources of financing to get network off to solid start (CLOSED CIRCUIT, Feb. 6).

*Overmyer Network last week still hoped to meet April 3 starting date for its first project—nightly broadcast from Las Vegas—though it had informed key affiliates there was outside chance of some postponement. If network does meet target date, it'll make debut when broadcasting business is assembled in one place—Chicago during annual convention of National Association of Broadcasters. There's no doubt delegates would go out of their way to catch first ON broadcast, scheduled to be carried on WGN-TV Chicago.*

### Safe seat

Reappointment of Robert E. Lee for third seven-year term as Republican member of FCC is reported probable in informed administration circles. His present term expires June 30. Inside appraisal is that Mr. Lee has earned reappointment.

### Whom to tax?

"Public television" watchers in Washington expect almost anything to happen when hearings begin before Senate Communications Subcommittee on President Johnson's message proposing exploratory year (story page 23; editorial, page 86). From commercial broadcasters' standpoint, biggest problem will be proposals to tax stations and networks for public-TV support. Chairman John O. Pastore (D-R. I.) himself may open up this area.

*In some quarters it's thought that some set manufacturers, who under Carnegie Commission plan would be called upon to contribute substantial portion of project through excise taxes ranging from 2% to 5%, may be stimulating talk of station-network franchise tax as counter measure. Carnegie Commission threw out broadcaster tax proposal as discriminatory and inequitable, although one member, Reynolds Metals' president, Joseph H. McConnell, former NBC president, supported it to end.*

# CLOSED CIRCUIT

### Lease on life

FCC is expected this week to grant two-year extension of life to remaining vestiges of four-year-old Committee for Full Development of All Channel Television. Units marked for survival are those that have caused controversy in past and are likely to do so again. Three subcommittees, which would be formed into one unit under plan being considered by commission, have endorsed pay television. In addition, Larry Turet, Field Communications Inc., who would be chairman of constituted group, filed petition that resulted in commission rulemaking proposing to require networks to make available to independents programing affiliates don't take.

*One proposal favored by one subcommittee is expected to go to commission once reorganization is complete. This calls for inquiry into whether exclusivity agreements between program suppliers and stations hinder small-market stations from getting programing. Subcommittee feels rules may be needed to deal with the situation.*

### The losers

Motion-picture industry is hearing mounting complaints from small exhibitors about showing of recently produced movies on television. There's particularly bitter feeling about use of terms such as "first-time showing" to convey impression that movies never have been played before. Many exhibitors have reported poorest grosses ever for fall and winter. Slump is blamed on television features. Exhibitors want film studios to impose five-year delay between exhibition of movie in theaters and its release to TV. Chances of their getting what they want are slight.

### Changes at USIA

Howard Chernoff, former West Virginia and West Coast station executive, resigns this week, for health reasons, as right-hand bower to Leonard Marks, director of U. S. Information Agency. He will return to his home in La Jolla, Calif., for treatment, terminating 18 months in Washington. Appointed executive assistant to Mr. Marks is T. Lloyd Wright, 37, with USIA since 1964, director of press and publications branch.

*Lawrence H. (Bud) Rogers, president of Taft Broadcasting Co., is serving as special consultant to USIA and for past two weeks has been in French-speaking Africa surveying both USIA and Voice of America operations. His one-month appointment is in keeping with Mr. Mark's policy of selecting professionals to inspect and report on USIA's worldwide operations.*

### Detail man

FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson is conducting mini-poll of his own to learn something of problems of small stations as distinct from those of large ones. He has contacted owners of half-dozen small operations—men he's met since joining commission in July—asking for information. His ultimate object: improved efficiency of regulation.

*Mr. Johnson is working on hypothesis that commission spends more time on small stations than is necessary. He also says government should take into account, and be responsive to, conditions of stations being regulated. If results of mini-poll seem helpful, he may propose meeting, with broadcasters and academic types participating, to discuss matter further.*

### Casualty

ABC Films Inc., which tooled up with new faces and new programing ideas last year when Hal Golden assumed presidency, is reported to be losing its first top executive under current management. Jack Arbib, executive vice president in charge of domestic sales, is understood to have resigned and will leave about mid-March. Mr. Arbib's plans are not known and ABC Films has not named successor.

### Author

First book on history of CATV is being written, for publication later this year, by Robert D. L'Heureux, who resigned his general counselship of National Community Television Association to enter private practice (BROADCASTING, Feb. 27). Mr. L'Heureux's documentation will contend, contrary to general belief, that first CATV system was established at Mahoney City, Pa., in 1948 by John Walson, now one of top multiple owners in CATV.