

on Wednesday.

Stumbling Block ■ Vincent Wasilewski, National Association of Broadcasters president, summed up the broadcasters' case: The doctrine is regarded as "legally unsupportable and, in operation, impractical," he said. An NAB survey, he noted, "shows that 60% of all station managers stated that their reluctance to take on controversial subjects on their stations was due to difficulties they knew they would encounter under the fairness doctrine."

For his pains, Mr. Wasilewski drew a retort from Frank Orme, executive director, National Association for Better Broadcasting, that charged the NAB president with sketching the plot for a TV children's program called "Super Antenna," whose hero was the head of "a great association of broadcasters."

Mr. Wasilewski attempted no reply to what he termed an ad hominem argument. Hyman H. Goldin, associate professor of communications at Boston University and a former FCC economist, was the first to comment after the Orme-Wasilewski exchange. "The last thing I want to do," he declared, "is launch a personal attack on Mr. Wasilewski."

The first paper Wednesday morning was presented by William G. Harley, president, National Association of Educational Broadcasters. He and Lincoln Furber, public affairs director of non-commercial WETA-TV Washington, assigned to reply to Mr. Harley's paper, were in basic agreement. Both assailed

the prohibition in the Public Broadcasting Act passed last year against editorializing by educational stations.

Chairman Staggers had a reply comment on this proposition. He noted that the educational broadcasters had had ample opportunity to oppose such a provision during hearings before his committee last year before the bill was passed. Mr. Harley replied that they had testified that they didn't plan to editorialize but that being prohibited from doing so was more than they had bargained for. Mr. Staggers observed that without such a section no bill could have emerged from his committee, but agreed that the matter might some day come up for re-examination.

The final session on Wednesday afternoon featured papers by Jay Crouse, president, Radio Television News Directors Association, and news director of WHAS-TV Louisville, Ky., and Louis L. Jaffee, Harvard University law professor. Mr. Crouse's paper was answered by Paul Porter, Washington attorney; Mr. Jaffee's paper by Howard Bell, president, American Advertising Federation.

Other panelists, without formal papers or reply comments, but who participated throughout the sessions, were John R. Corporan, vice president-news, Metromedia TV; Mr. Hyde, and Mr. Goldin. Donald McGannon, chairman, Westinghouse Broadcasting Co., was also slated to appear, but was kept away by a death in his family.

Mr. Crouse cited specific examples

of the fairness doctrine's effect on news coverage. "A form of what might be labeled precensorship has already evolved," he said. As seen by a practicing newsman, he said, "the fairness doctrine is a crippling restraint."

Mr. Porter said that "what bothers me is the critical impreciseness of the standard." But it all boils down to "whom you trust"—the FCC or Dr. Stanton? The best the FCC could do, he concluded, would be to abandon any case-by-case or dossier approach and depend solely on an over-all review at license-renewal time.

Mr. Jaffee concluded that the doctrine doesn't do much good: "At bottom, my doubts reflect the general notion that the fairness doctrine overemphasizes the significance of isolated TV communications." But on balance, he concluded that "the fairness doctrine does have a marginal utility."

Mr. Bell used his reply to Mr. Jaffee as a platform to air aspects of the FCC's extension of the doctrine to product advertising, urging the Congress "to consider enactment of legislation specifically overruling this order of the commission."

Mr. Corporan took the brunt of a subcommittee probe into what guarantees the public would have of hearing all sides in the absence of the doctrine. "Broadcasters," he replied, "have a constituency, just as congressmen have. Listeners are the best judges, exerting pressures on the broadcaster in the marketplace."

THE MEDIA

Bids are made for Golden West

But Gene Autry is adamant as Los Angeles educational group, the Mormon Church, Cox and Capital Cities all talk purchase

Los Angeles educational television interests are making a run for the acquisition of channel 55 KTLA(TV) Los Angeles, and say they are prepared to pay \$25 million for the independent and convert it to noncommercial operation. But Gene Autry's Golden West Broadcasters isn't sure it wants to sell the TV outlet or the four A/M stations it owns, in spite of overtures and conversations with interested entities.

First word of a possible sale of the Golden West properties surfaced last December (BROADCASTING, Dec. 4, 1967), when Mr. Autry stated that there were no current negotiations with Mutual Broadcasting Corp. terminating

months of intermittent conversations initiated by Mutual at a reported figure of \$60 million for KTLA and KMPC Los Angeles; KSFO San Francisco, KEX Portland, Ore., and KVI Seattle. Mr. Autry said at that time that if those responsible for rumors of imminent sales did not desist, legal action would be taken.

Last week the California educational group announced it had not but was prepared to negotiate, for a VHF outlet—presumably channel 5. Unofficially, it was said that it felt it could raise \$25 million through contributions from networks and stations in the area, from the Ford Foundation and from public-spirited citizens.

No serious negotiations are underway, Golden West executives said last week. But, three prospective buyers are eyeing KTLA—Bonneville International (Mormon Church), whose executive board is scheduled to meet Friday (March 15) to make a decision; Capital Cities Broadcasting, and Community Television of Southern California, licensee of noncommercial, educational KCET(TV) Los Angeles on channel 28. Capital Cities reportedly is also interested in KSFO.

Cox Broadcasting has its eye on the four radio stations only, reportedly at about \$25 million.

Golden West is principally owned by Gene Autry; his associates are Robert O. Reynolds, owning nearly 30%, and Loyd C. Sigmon, who recently became executive vice president for financing and planning after relinquishing the general managership of the broadcast properties, holding approximately 4%. Golden West also owns the California