

## NBC's Timothy puts some rumors to rest

**Network president denies that planned one-hour news would be split into two separate programable parts**

NBC-TV has no plan either to divide its projected one-hour *NBC Nightly News* into two separately programable half-hours or to load most of its own commercials into one half-hour and most of the affiliates' into the other, NBC-TV President Raymond Timothy said last week.

Timothy was speaking in response to speculation by outside observers that NBC would do both of those things. The theory was that NBC, needing to maintain a *Nightly News* presence in some markets where opposition to the one-hour news is running high, would format the program so that holdout affiliates could take only the first half-hour and would put most of the affiliates' commercial inventory into the second half-hour as an inducement to the holdouts to pick up the second period later on ("Closed Circuit," Sept. 28).

Timothy said NBC had never considered

concentrating its own commercials in one half-hour and the affiliates' in the other. "In no way," he said, "would the affiliates sit still for loading their inventory in one half-hour."

He said NBC officials had "looked at" the possibility of formatting the program into clearly separate periods but found it not feasible. "It would be a problem from the news production point of view," he said. "The news department would have to produce two half-hours."

As another example, he also noted that for affiliates wishing to clear only the second half-hour, it would be necessary to recap the first half-hour's highlights at the start of the second.

"We have always contemplated one hour of news," he said.

As for affiliate reaction to the proposed lengthening of the newscast (BROADCASTING, Sept. 21, 28), Timothy said it was "mixed." "Most people are for it," he said, "but not everybody."

The plan, targeted to go into effect in September 1982, has been under attack, particularly from some major group station owners, but others, including some major station operators, have endorsed it (BROADCASTING, Sept. 28).

## Turner details new services

**He will aim for broadcast stations with new CNN 2**

If the broadcast networks are going to get involved in cable, well then, Ted Turner is going to broaden his involvement in broadcasting. That was the gist of his words to an invited audience from the New York advertising community at a luncheon for 700 that Turner gave at the New York Hilton. With ABC set to get involved in cable news (with partner Group

W) Turner is "hoping to get some ABC affiliates to pre-empt the network news" and instead pick up a feed of Cable News Network 2.

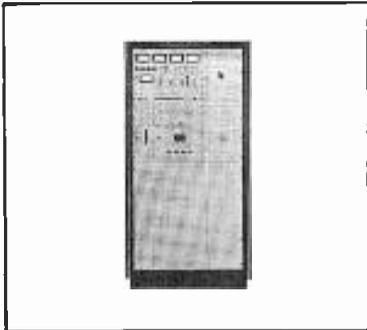
Turner's New York appearance was well timed—just the day before, a major advertising agency, Ted Bates, announced that it has been advising its clients to put 5% of their network prime time budgets into Turner's superstation, WTBS Atlanta (BROADCASTING, Sept. 28).

Detailing some of the expansion plans he announced at last month's CTAM meeting in Boston (BROADCASTING, Aug. 31), Turner said his CNN 2 schedule will be made up of half-hour blocks until 7 p.m., then switch to an hour format until 11 p.m. Turner will barter that basic cable feed "on a limited basis" to broadcast stations as well, and he will use the audio portion of the feed as the basis for a radio news service that will be sold to stations. (The latter, Turner noted, requires some "ironing out" of arrangements CNN has with AP and UPI, which happen to have their own radio news services.)

Start date for CNN 2 will be Jan. 1: "We could start now." But he has already lost enough money for this year, Turner joked. The total expenditure for the news expansions won't be that great, Turner insisted, because "gathering the news is the big trick," and CNN is already doing that. Rolling that material over into a short form for CNN 2 will only require the additions of "some tape machines, cart machines for the commercials, some anchors and some editors" Turner said.

Turner maintained that his satellite-fed CNN 2, if used by a broadcast station, would "totally preclude the need for a network newscast." And he claimed it would be more timely than current network feeds, particularly for West Coast affiliates, unless the networks make their news anchors "stay until 10 o'clock to do another feed." Noting the generous

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## News Beat

**Anchor attraction.** Most important factor prompting viewer to watch particular local television newscast is station personality or personalities, according to study commissioned by N-I-W-S, news service of Telepictures Corp., New York. Other factors causing selection of one newscast over another, study shows, are format of program and its content. Since content of many news programs is similar, particular feature may be deciding consideration, study indicates. Other conclusions from study, conducted by independent research firm of U.S. Information Services, Santa Ana, Calif. are: Viewers need to know how major national stories will affect them and their communities; many viewers want longer local newscasts; Viewers' strongest concerns are money and health, and many viewers are more likely to watch multipart news features and reports.

**Adoption.** National Association of Secretaries of State has adopted resolution calling for major broadcasters to join with association to investigate effect exit polling has on elections. Gentry Crowell, association president, proposed if broadcasters and association found exit polling affected elections, they should try to solve problem together.