

In Brief

Allbritton Communications Co., Washington, signed "letter of understanding" last week to acquire KATV(TV) Little Rock, Ark., and KTUL-TV Tulsa, Okla., from Leake TV Inc. for price in excess of \$80 million. Addition of two ABC affiliates will increase number of VHF stations owned by Allbritton to five, maximum allowed by FCC. James C. Leake, principal owner of Leake TV, retains 80% interest in WSTE(TV) Fajardo, P.R. Commenting on deal, Allbritton Chairman Joe L. Allbritton said: "KATV, in the capital city of Arkansas, and KTUL-TV, in Oklahoma's principal city of commerce, represent important sun-belt markets whose potential for growth still lies ahead." Allbritton acquired most valuable broadcast property—WJLA-TV Washington—in one of better deals of 1970's. He purchased station along with co-located AM-FM combination and *The Washington Star* for \$28.5 million and spun off radio stations and now-defunct *Star* for \$36 million. Allbritton also owns WCIV-TV Charleston, S.C.; WSET-TV Lynchburg, Va., newspapers and control of Riggs National Bank, Washington.

NBC, CBS and ABC officials said Friday they were trying to block plan of Canadian Satellite Communications Inc. (Cancom) to pick up U.S. network TV programing without payment or permission and sell it via satellite to Canadian subscription TV operators. Cancom, which currently offers package of four Canadian TV and eight radio signals, wants to create U.S. program package by picking up, off air, signals of Detroit affiliates of ABC, CBS, NBC and PBS. It reportedly expects to sell package to Canadian STV operators for \$2.80 per subscriber per month. NBC, CBS and ABC authorities said they have told Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, which is considering Cancom's application and has set hearing Nov. 23, that Cancom obviously doesn't plan to pay for or seek permission to use U.S. programing and that its proposed service would therefore be inequitable, unfair, illegal and contrary to Inter-American Radiocommunications convention of

1937. CRTTC should not approve it, networks argue, unless Cancom is required to get appropriate authorizations from copyright owners and broadcasters.

FCC last week authorized Metromedia Inc. to buy five major radio common carriers for about \$148.5 million. Acquisition will make Metromedia, which previously had no FCC interest, largest radio paging company in nation, serving about 175,000 pagers. Companies Metromedia has been authorized to buy include Beep Communication Systems Inc., New York, \$95 million; Radiofone Corp., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., \$55 million; Zip-Call Inc., Boston, \$29.5 million; Rogers Radio Communication Service Inc., Chicago, \$21.5 million, and ICS Communications and its wholly owned subsidiary, Chalfont Communications, Anaheim, Calif., \$32.5 million. Metromedia has entered into agreement to buy Radio Broadcasting Corp. Philadelphia-based RCC serving about 25,000 pagers (BROADCASTING, Oct. 4). That agreement is expected to be submitted for FCC approval shortly.

Warner Communications Chairman Steven J. Ross was accused last week of setting up secret fund within his company containing \$170,000 obtained in bribes from organized crime. Accusation, made in New York Federal District Court by prosecutor Nathaniel H. Akerman, implicated Ross for first time in three-year-old investigation of organized crime's control of now-defunct Westchester Premier Theater. Defendant in case, Solomon Weiss, resigned as assistant treasurer of Warner last year after indictment for fraud and racketeering connection with theater. Although court documents indicate investigation of Ross is under way, spokesman for company said no charges have been filed against executive.

Hubbard Broadcasting Inc. has gone to Supreme Court in continuing effort to acquire Class I-A status on clear channel 7.



Celebrants. The 50th anniversary of the BBC External Services is being celebrated in the U.S. by the Museum of Broadcasting in New York, which last Monday (Nov. 1) launched a two-week salute to that organization by mounting a luncheon seminar on the subject of international broadcasting and following up with an evening reception that attracted a number of broadcast notables from both sides of the Atlantic. **Left:** Douglas Muggeridge, managing director of the External Services, in conversation with former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (with them: Robert M. Batscha, president of the Museum of Broadcasting). **Right:** (l to r) Batscha; Kenneth Y. Tomlinson, director designate of the Voice of America; Edward N. Ney, chairman of Young & Rubicam (and member of the oversight committee for the VOA); Frank Shakespeare, president of RKO General and chairman of Radio Free Europe; Betty Zimmerman, director of Radio Canada International; Peter Fraenkel, controller, BBC European Services, and Muggeridge. The day's most spirited speaker was Shakespeare, who made an impassioned appeal for media support of international broadcasting operations and who engaged reporters from CBS and the *New York Times* in debate over alleged media bias in covering activities of RFE and Radio Liberty and similar organizations.