

More Q than A

Justice Department is continuing to collect information in its inquiry into possible antitrust implications of Ted Turner's attempted takeover of CBS. Data Turner originally filed in Hart-Scott-Rodino notification (named after authors of legislation requiring submission of such information) did not answer all of antitrust division's questions. So division has sent second letter to Turner and one to CBS asking number of questions. Inquiry is designed to provide data on which department will decide whether it would attempt to block attempted takeover. Letters, which are not unusual, may not be end of information collection. Antitrust division could seek information about markets involved from others in business. Department is believed to be looking into questions involving national advertising, news and sports programming.

Wait a minute

FCC won't be acting on proposal to narrow purview over licensee character at meeting May 31 after all ("Closed Circuit," May 20). House Telecommunications Subcommittee Chairman Timothy Wirth (D-Colo.) is said to be "extremely concerned" about proposal. Wirth doesn't want commission to turn character inquiries into "rubber stamp" and is particularly concerned about lowering character hurdles when so many major transfers of broadcast properties are pending, aide to Wirth said. Wirth's concerns have been "communicated" to FCC Chairman Mark Fowler's staff.

FCC sources insist postponement is result of lack of consensus among commissioners on precisely what to do.

Bird and box office

Showtime/The Movie Channel is likely to announce plans for its pay-per-view service at National Cable Television Association convention in Las Vegas next week. Service would deliver motion pictures to addressable cable subscribers before or at same time they arrive in home video stores.

In some ways, Showtime/TMC is already in business. For past several weeks it has been programming Qube PPV service for Warner Amex Cable. What's more, it has agreed to supply PPV service to HI-Net, joint venture of Comsat and Holiday Inns that plans to build Ku-band satellite network and beam four-

channel package (Showtime, Showtime-PPV, ESPN and CNN) to Holiday Inns' motels and hotels beginning later this year. Scott Kurnit, former vice president of programming for Warner Amex and now consultant to Showtime/TMC, is expected to head Showtime/TMC PPV venture.

Copyright confab

Senator Charles McC. Mathias (R-Md.) and Representative Bob Kastenmeier (D-Wis.) are considering holding congressional symposium on copyright, tentatively on July 26, 27 and 28, in Annapolis, Md., at Governor Calvert House. Theme of meeting will be on copyright and new technologies.

It isn't over

Congress is taking interest in resignation of Corporation for Public Broadcasting President Ed Pfister (see story, page 39). There is "deep congressional concern" over what's going on at CPB, said one Hill source. House Telecommunications Subcommittee has requested tapes of board meeting where controversy over Moscow trip erupted, and its parent House Energy and Commerce Committee may hold hearing on subject. There is concern on Hill that corporation is "out of control" and that its board has "clear ideological agenda."

Less electioneering

National Association of Broadcasters executive committee will recommend that election for joint board chairmanship, which is normally held on last day of NAB's June board meeting (Friday, June 21 this year), be moved ahead. Election would take place on Tuesday, June 18, to get away from politicking that is likely in three-man race for seat.

Stereo not enough

Belief held by many radio industry executives that quality programming, not stereo, will be AM radio's answer to re-establishing parity with FM is also shared by listeners, according to soon-to-be released Blair Radio study. In AM stereo portion of survey, which sampled over 400 listeners, about 40% of those questioned had heard of AM stereo. In that group, 70% agreed that stereo won't make AM radio any better unless programming is improved. Telephone survey also shows that AM radio continues to

lead FM as source of news and information, but lead is narrowing. Study was conducted by Frank Magid Associates.

Beaver prospects

Among those who have expressed interest in picking up sitcom series, *Still The Beaver*, that Disney Channel said last week it would not renew (see page 10), are superstation WTBS(TV) Atlanta and Showtime. Executives at both services said show's producer, Universal Pay TV Programming, had approached them and that both expressed interest.

Locals favored

FCC is slated to adopt rules establishing eligibility and comparative criteria for instructional television fixed service May 31. Staff proposal is expected to give priority to local educational institutions over national entities but no preference to minorities.

Three to make ready

Blair Entertainment has added new partner—Hubbard Broadcasting—to its *Break the Bank* project and now there's no doubt that *Bank* will be ready for fall premiere in strip syndication. Hubbard joins original partner, Storer Communications, in program venture, with four TV stations from Storer and three from Hubbard in syndication lineup. Production is scheduled to begin in Los Angeles on July 15 on 195 half-hour segments of series, which is set for airing in New York on WCBS-TV and in Los Angeles on KHJ-TV.

So far so good

INN, New York-based television news program serving independents nationally, has adopted new solo-anchor format with Morton Dean. Former CBS anchor and correspondent, Dean, joined Pat Harper as co-anchor of INN and local WPIX(TV) New York prime-time news in January. But Harper left in early April to join WNBC-TV New York. According to INN president John Corporon, subscribing stations have expressed great satisfaction with solo format and have urged that it be retained. "They've told me we've never looked more like a network [news operation] than we do now," said Corporon. In four months since Dean joined network, he said, both national and local news ratings "are up modestly."