CANDIDATES' COMPLAINTS

FCC to Act

PROMPT action on the complaints of Sens. Robert A. Taft (R-Ohio) and Estes Kefauver (D-Tenn.) that radio-TV networks refused them time equivalent to that given Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was promoted by the FCC last week. At week's end, the Commission was awaiting comments on the complaints from ABC, CBS and NBC. Some observers thought the Commission might act this week.

Both Senators Taft and Kefauver held that radio-TV coverage of the General's Abilene speech and subsequent news conference was of a political nature and that they should have similar facilities afforded them in accordance with the mandate of Sec. 315 of the Communications Act. Section 315 provides that if licensees permit the use of their facilities to one candidate, they must provide equal time to all other candidates.

First refusal of time was made by CBS which denied requests for facilities equal to that given Gen. Eisenhowe by answering that it considered the Abilene address a "news event and not a political speech" and therefore did not feel that equal time provision applied.

A similar CBS answer to Sen. Kefauver, who had requested 80 minutes of AM-TV time immediately following the General's talk, prompted Gen. Sullivan, Mr. Kefauver's campaign manager, to say, "It is inconceivable how anyone at CBS could be so politically naive as to assume that this is a fact." Mr. Sullivan denounced radio-TV coverage of the General's "first political speech" as "a product of high-priced hustlers . . . dreamed up in the pursuit of monopoly" broadcasting time for one Republican candidate.

ABC, reportedly asked by Sen. Taft for broadcast time Friday, was understood to have given a negative answers on the grounds that "All we are doing for Gen. Eisenhowe is what previously we have done for you and other candidates." The network pointed out that it had given free AM-TV coverage to the Senator's talk in Detroit Oct. 15, prior to its adopting in January a policy of charging political candidates commercial fees, and noted that Gen. Eisenhowe had not had "available to him comparaable ABC radio and television time."

The network also pointed out that it had not granted the General's request for television time, since it would have required line charges not incurred by its Detroit coverage of the Taft talk.

A request to ABC from Sen. Kefauver was understood to have been answered similarly.

NBC denied time to Sen. Taft earlier in the week on the basis that the General's homecoming was of national interest and could be handled by local legislation news coverage, and spokesmen explained that NBC coverage of Gen. Eisenhowe's activity was only in proportion to that offered other candidates. The network was still overseas. The network further explained that it did not consider Sen. Kefauver, a Democratic candidate, in direct competition with the General for the Republican nomination.

First Political Speech

WQXR New York, station of the New York Times, carried its first speech by a political candidate for the President's race on air when it broadcast the Abilene speech Wednesday, and acceded to Sen. Taft's request for equivalent air time. The station will broadcast a talk he is scheduled to give before the National Republican Club in New York from 1:30-2 p.m. EDT Thursday.

Radio-TV coverage by major networks and many local stations was almost constant as Gen. Eisenhowe progressed through his Pentagon press conference Tuesday, his Abilene speech Wednesday (Continued on page 36)

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