

coverage will not be permitted and that pool arrangements must be worked out if more than one group wants to film the proceedings.

A proposal to move the hearings up one day—to Monday, Jan. 22—was considered by the FCC but rejected. The present date represents a two-week postponement from the originally planned start of Jan. 9.

FCC to consider 3-year holding rule

A special FCC meeting has been scheduled for this Thursday (Jan. 4) to consider final action on a new rule requiring the original grantee or purchaser of a station to hold the property for minimum of three years except under certain conditions (CLOSED CIRCUIT, Dec. 4, 1961).

Rulemaking has been outstanding for over a year and has met almost unanimous opposition of the industry. Despite this, a majority of commissioners (comments were first invited on a 5-2 vote) favor some restrictions on station sales but there is a lack of agreement on what form they should take.

The Broadcast Bureau has recommended that rules be tightened somewhat from those proposed in December 1960. The bureau would not allow sales because of death of key personnel and lack of operating capital. The staff also favors a much closer scrutiny of sales by multiple owners even when the outlet involved has been owned for more than three years.

One view, at the commission level, is that a sale should be allowed when a station is held less than three years but that owners should be prohibited from selling or buying additional properties for a like period.

Craney endorses FCC microwave action

The FCC's apparent decision in the Carter Mountain Transmission Corp. microwave case was hailed by a former Montana broadcaster, who said it was too bad it wasn't made five years ago.

E. B. Craney, former veteran Montana broadcaster, observed that if the decision had been made five years ago, there would have been eight more tv stations operating in Montana, doubling the number now on the air.

The commission last month instructed its staff to draw up an order denying the application of the microwave company to carry tv signals from Billings, Casper-Cheyenne and Idaho Falls to community antenna systems in Riverton, Lander and Thermopolis, Wyoming (BROADCASTING, Dec. 18, 1961).

If the commission had taken the

position it took last month five years ago, Mr. Craney pointed out, there would have been operating stations in Kalispell, Havre, Lewistown, Miles City and Livingston, and second stations in Missoula, Butte and Helena.

In his Dec. 24 letter to Montana broadcasters, Mr. Craney said about 16,000 Montanans pay \$950,000 a year to see Salt Lake City and Spokane tv signals. Another 12,000 are expected to become catv subscribers in 1962, he estimated, "raising the total year end Montana cable take to better than \$1,650,000."

Mr. Craney, who was a vigorous opponent of catv when he operated the Z Net stations, called the FCC's tentative decision an encouraging sign for Montana broadcasters. He added that the commission should study the use of boosters and translators to extend tv coverage to rural areas.

A new voice cries for programming reforms

Rep. Frank Thompson Jr. (D-N.J.), one of the latest, and sharpest, congressional critics of television, says broadcasters should either quit programming "junk" or forfeit their licenses.

In a newsletter to his constituents the congressman said he knows there is "great demand for much of the junk" on television. But the air-waves belong to the nation, not the broadcasters, he said.

"Those companies, in my opinion, should be compelled to improve their public service programs or to forfeit their licenses," he added. "Deodorant sales might drop a bit if a ballet or symphony were shown instead of a murder, but I think that the real owners of the air, the people, have even more right to profit than do the manufacturers."

Rep. Thompson's remarks were, it appeared, designed in part as support of FCC Chairman Newton N. Minow's "vast wasteland" description of television, and rebuttal to the defense of television voiced on Dec. 7 by CBS President Frank Stanton and NBC Chairman Robert Sarnoff (BROADCASTING, Dec. 11, 1961).

Decide For Yourself ■ Rep. Thompson said the "top executives of the major broadcasting companies" answered Mr. Minow by stating, "in effect, 'We're great, good and perfect. Minow is dead wrong.'" The congressman advised his readers to watch television and decide for themselves who is correct.

"Someday," he declared, "it might occur to the tv executives that a few hours of the best live performances each week might be good for their public relations, their souls, perhaps, and even their pocketbooks."

Rep. Thompson, chairman of a

House education subcommittee that is looking into the economic plight of performing artists, began his attack on television during hearings in San Francisco on Dec. 8.

He said then that the industry is greedy for profit and is paying too little attention to good drama and music. He felt that television could do more for its audience, and musicians, by recording "the great orchestras." (AT DEADLINE, Dec. 11).

KOMA says violations not willful, repeated

KOMA Oklahoma City, while agreeing it may have violated portions of the FCC's technical rules (which it said were possibly ambiguous), claimed there was nothing "willful or repeated" in the violations and said it should not have to forfeit \$10,000 (BROADCASTING, Nov. 27, 1961).

The FCC's notice that it intended to fine the station cited KOMA operations between midnight and 4 a.m. with its daytime facilities and charges that KOMA operated beyond its authorized 50 kw at various monitoring points. The station responded that its nighttime operation without directional antenna was due to a misinterpretation of FCC rules. It said this operation had been logged by KOMA in its 1956 application for renewal of license, that the FCC had reviewed this application and still renewed the license. KOMA offered this as proof that the rule was open to "more than one reasonable interpretation." KOMA claimed that the incident harmed no one and that no other station complained of interference. KOMA further said that it complied with the rule as soon as the FCC brought it to the station's attention, and that it "proceeded diligently to permanently correct the defects so that field intensity strength at monitoring points could be maintained within license values."

The station said that, since its offenses were not willful, nor of evil purpose, no fine should be imposed. It said that should the FCC reject its pleading in mitigation, the most that would be justified would be "a nominal sanction."

Engineering statements attached to the KOMA pleading explained that gas and oil installations in the Oklahoma territory surrounding the station made it difficult to establish correct power levels at the monitoring points but that Storz Broadcasting Co., licensee of KOMA, was working with the engineers to overcome the technical problems.

KOMA operates on 1520 kc (Class I-B clear channel) with 50 kw, unlimited, directional antenna at night. Todd Storz is principal owner.