

F.C.C. Sets Hearing for Stations Asking Duplication-Rule Waiver

By VAL ADAMS

The Federal Communications Commission will give formal consideration this week to requests from radio broadcasters seeking exemption from a proposed rule that their FM stations must cease duplicating AM programs by 50 per cent. There is now no restriction.

About 200 FM (frequency-modulation) stations under dual ownership with AM (amplitude-modulation) stations would be affected. More than half have applied to the F.C.C. for a waiver, including the Columbia Broadcasting System and the National Broadcasting Company. Local stations seeking a waiver include WOR and WQXR.

Many requests have been on file with the F.C.C. for months. A spokesman for the commission said yesterday that consideration of the requests is on the agenda of a meeting scheduled for Wednesday.

The proposed rule was adopted by the commission in July, 1964. It said that the owner of an AM station in a city with a population of more than 100,000 could not duplicate more than 50 per cent of programming on his FM affiliate. It was the opinion of the F. C. C. that the rule would halt a waste of air channels by forbidding many shows to be broadcast simultaneously on two outlets. This should result in a great diversity of programming, the agency believed.

The rule was to become effective Aug. 15. But this was postponed to Oct. 15 and then to Dec. 31. It is likely that even if the F. C. C. denies the waivers, it will give the stations more time to comply.

The first station here to act according to the proposed di-

rective was WNEW-FM, which recently began separate programming from WNEW-AM. The FM station broadcasts its own programs from 8 P.M. to 5:30 A.M. during the week and almost full time weekends. The news programs are the same on AM and FM.

John V. B. Sullivan, president of the radio division of Metromedia, Inc., which owns WNEW, said the station had spent about \$30,000 for FM stereophonic equipment. WNEW-FM is presenting a different type of popular music from WNEW-AM. Mr. Sullivan said the FM station was broadcasting for persons 25 to 45 years old, while WNEW-AM programmed for much younger listeners.

The five other FM stations owned by Metromedia are also presenting unduplicated programs, Mr. Sullivan said. Cost for new equipment for all stations was about \$125,000, he added. Metromedia has set up a sales staff to sell time to advertisers who buy FM only.

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Foundation to Honor Radio

The second annual Major awards to FM radio stations will be presented at a dinner Thursday evening in the Engineers' Club at 32 West 40th Street. The awards are named for the late Maj. Edwin H. Armstrong, who invented the static-free, high-fidelity system of FM.

Awards issued through the Armstrong Memorial Research Foundation will be in four categories—music, news, education and public or community service. Awards are open only to FM stations that present programs 50 per cent of the time that are separate from those of an AM affiliate.

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