

TECHNOLOGY

To what extent has the Commission endeavored to improve the technology of radio or television broadcasting? We all know the answer. It has done next to nothing. It has made itself a servant of the Goliaths of the communications industry. If those Goliaths, for their own purposes, want to make modifications and adjustments, they can generally count on the Commission to go along. If technological innovation is not in their selfish interest, then there will be no innovation or improvement in the public interest because the Commission fails to fulfill its role as the public's David.

Stations merchandise goods so that their owners can merchandise their stations. Does this utilization of the public airwaves serve the public interest? I believe most Americans agree that the public interest requires more than profits alone. I require public service as well.

To what extent has this Commission attempted to improve the content and the form of programs? The modern miracle of broadcasting can give us so much. It need not provide the same bland emptiness hour after hour, day after day, week after week. But the Commission has not promoted the public interest by requiring diversity of program content or by encouraging those persons who profit from the use of this public property to invest a reasonable portion of their resources into adequate diverse public service programming. As a matter of fact, the Congress is soon expected to give its final approval to the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, to remedy the Commission's inaction.

Does the Commission honestly believe that promoting a new form of private fee use of the public domain serves the public interest? I do not.

PROTECTING THE PUBLIC INTEREST

The most important responsibility that the Commission has to the American public is, in the words of the Communications Act of 1934, to act "as public convenience, interest or necessity requires." To what extent has this watchdog of the public interest exercised its responsibility to protect the public?

The airwaves and the radio spectrum are public property—they are part of the national domain—they are a natural resource belonging to everyone in America. The Commission is charged with regulating this precious resource in the public interest. The FCC regularly permits the purchase and sale and resale of what is the public domain by entrepreneurs whose only interest is to maximize profit. Examples are legion. All too often we see reports of another major financial coup by broadcast-station-merchants acting with the implicit or explicit approval of the Commission. This is no different than if the National Park Service leased a public park to a private businessman for a dollar a year and permitted that businessman to sell and resell the right to exploit the park to the highest bidder. Any government official would find it impossible to justify such action. Yet this is exactly what station owners do and the Commission has taken no effective steps to discourage or terminate this misuse of public property.

Shouldn't the Commission spend more of its time and energy reviewing the damaging impact such misuse has upon our national economy?

HOUSECLEANING

This year once again the term *ex parte* has been injected into an FCC proceeding. The Commission should have learned by now that Congress means what it says when it forbids *ex parte* proceedings in adjudicatory matters.

In short, has this agency acted guard to the public interest? Has it embarked upon studies which would enable it to recommend legislation to insure that the public gets an even break from the healthy commercial exploitation of the airwaves? Has it acted to assist public safety by fair allocation of the airwaves? Has it acted to prevent the same bland programming by every station on the air?

WHY SUBSCRIPTION TV?

The Commission has not resolved these problems, instead, it has spent untold time and effort pasting together a new communications horror—so-called subscription television. Once again, unhealthy exploitation is taking precedence over the people's interest in high quality non-fee programming. Fifteen years have been devoted to this project with scarcely a thought given to whether there is a need for it. Instead of exercising its statutory responsibility to regulate the