

A Closer Look

By Ernest Kreiling

HOLLYWOOD — "The day is coming when the broadcaster who aspires to stature and influence in his community will have to see, hear and speak about evil." This is the admonition of Newton Minow, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, to radio and TV stations to make fuller use of their right to editorialize.

Likewise LeRoy Collins, president of the National Assn. of Broadcasters, has urged stations to editorialize, and to avoid the "wishy-washy... innocuous pieces of cat-purring." Still only a small percentage of stations, probably fewer than one-third, do speak out on important issues of the day.

To editorialize doesn't mean to weave personal or station opinion into news and public affairs programs, but to clearly identify a program segment as a station editorial and to have it delivered by a station executive, not a newsmen.

UNLIKE newspapers, however, broadcasting stations do not have the privilege of presenting only one side of such issues. By right of their use of public airwaves under a federally granted license, broadcasters have "the affirmative duty generally to encourage and implement the broadcast of all sides of controversial public issues."

This fairness doctrine unquestionably limits many on-the-air editorials to such volatile issues as opposing smog, sin and the San Francisco Giants. On the other hand some stations are doing an increasingly vigorous job of expressing thoughtful opinions

Part of Huge Contract in Local Plant

More than \$1,300,000 in new Aerospace contracts have been awarded to the three defense products divisions of Aeronca Manufacturing Corp., it was announced yesterday.

John A. Lawler, Aeronca's president, said the individual contracts vary greatly in the dollar value and requirements, indicating Aeronca's greatly diversified capabilities. The new awards include design, research, development and production efforts in many fields, including antennas, missiles, component parts for high speed aircraft, as well as study contracts for accelerated space programs.

OF THE MORE than a million dollar total, \$613,000 has been awarded to the Aerospace Division at Baltimore. One-half of this Division's awards pertain to production of military items called for by the recent step-up in the Department of Defense's limited war capability. The balance of nearly \$290,000 includes work on component parts for advanced communication equipment, or servo-mechanism for missiles, and on rocket motor cases.

An award of over \$310,000 for the design and production of 28-ft. transportable antennas has been won by the Middletown, Ohio, Division with the engineering work to start immediately, Lawler reported.

In Torrance, the Aeronca Division has been awarded a contract to fabricate 150-gallon tanks for the Norair F-5A and B. Lawler said production had already started on the tanks, as has work on inspar ribs for commercial airplanes. The latter is also being produced in California. The two contracts exceed \$380,000, it was reported.

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air editorials early in the year. The other five stations apparently have no plans to use their right to take editorial positions on public issues.

In the last 18 months, KNXT, a CBS owned and operated station, has aired 14 editorials on subjects ranging from sales tax slippage to hillside fires, to ballot propositions. Once an editorial is prepared and an air time is set, KNXT seeks out all known or suspected opposition to the position to be taken by the station. These op-

posing forces are notified of the time of the editorial to afford them an opportunity to see it aired. When disagreeing interests asks for an opportunity to present their position, equitable air time is arranged. Of the 14 editorials aired by KNXT only three opportunities for rebuttal have been accepted.

KNX Radio, also CBS owned and operated, recently pioneered a new dimension in editorializing. Before the last

general election KNX bought an ad in a metropolitan newspaper to list the station's recommendations on all but one of the state and county ballot propositions to support its editorials and to help answer requests from the public for its recommendations.

The National Assn. of Broadcasters reported that, "Almost without exception, stations which have editorialized competently, vigorously and fairly have found that the opposition and difficulties encountered

were far less serious than anticipated and that their efforts were well-rewarded in terms of increased acceptance and stature in the community."

It must be conceded that on-the-air editorials can be a sticky business for radio and TV stations. Still it's noteworthy that while broadcasters lustily defend their "Freedom of press" under the provisions of the First Amendment to the Constitution, they don't more broadly exercise one aspect of that freedom.

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