

R. C. A. WILL SEEK COLOR TV SANCTION

Tells House Group It Will Ask U. S. Approval of Compatible System Within 6 Months.

By **PAUL P. KENNEDY**

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

WASHINGTON, March 24—The Radio Corporation of America expects to ask the Federal Communications Commission for a go-ahead on commercial color television in six months or possibly sooner, a company spokesman told a committee of the House of Representatives today.

There remains only the completion of field tests by the National Television System Committee, with which R. C. A. engineers are working, before the corporation will petition the F. C. C. for the adoption of compatible color television standards.

This was announced this morning by Dr. Elmer W. Engstrom, vice president in charge of the R. C. A. Laboratories Division. He was the first witness in hearings by the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce on the status of color television.

At the opening of the session, Representative Charles A. Wolverton, Republican of New Jersey and committee chairman, made public a letter from H. B. McCoy, acting administrator of the National Production Authority indicating that the agency's restrictions on the manufacture of color television sets probably would be lifted tomorrow.

The committee is investigating charges by Senator Edwin C. Johnson, Democrat of Colorado, that "powerful interests" were blocking color television until the market was saturated with black-and-white sets.

An 'Optimistic' Report

Dr. Engstrom provided what he described as a "very optimistic" report on the feasibility and proximity of color television under a compatible system, as advocated by his organization and others.

Under a compatible system, present receivers could get color broadcasts in black and white without any alteration to the receivers and color receivers could get standard black-and-white broadcasts.

The Columbia Broadcasting System has received F. C. C. approval for a color system that is not compatible. Color receivers under the C. B. S. system would not reproduce black-and-white television without alteration, and a converter would be required to receive in color on a black-and-white set.

Sets Would Cost More

Dr. Engstrom told the committee:

¶Although the first color sets probably would cost 50 per cent more than black-and-white receivers, manufacturers expected to lose money on the first several thousand. Later, prices are expected to be scaled down to about 25 per cent higher than present black-and-white receivers.

¶The market transition from black and white to color, under the compatible system, would be "orderly" and would not be marked by buyer resistance or large-scale discarding of black-and-white sets. A relatively small percentage of the 25,000,000 families with television sets would get color receivers immediately. Most would continue using their present sets until they would normally turn them in.

¶While an attachment could adapt black-and-white receivers for reception in color, it was not likely many users would avail themselves of it.

Opposes 'Incompatible' Sets

Dr. Engstrom was particularly emphatic in his opposition to the manufacture by his company of color receivers for an incompatible system. He was asked by Representative Joseph P. O'Hara, Republican of Minnesota, whether there had been a "sit-down strike" by equipment manufacturers who were opposed to the C. B. S. method.

The witness replied that R. C. A. engineers had from the first held that the C. B. S. method was "unwise" and that it would be a "mistake" to establish an incompatible system.

Dr. Engstrom said "I wouldn't want to invest my money in a set that would not receive black and white."

With permission of the F. C. C. to begin large-scale color television programming, Dr. Engstrom said, there would be no difficulty in placing the programs on the present network facilities.

Frank Stanton, president of the Columbia Broadcasting System, will testify tomorrow morning.