

## 'INTERESTS' FOUND DELAYING COLOR TV

Senator Johnson Tells Tobey It Is Ready but the Industry Pushes Black-and-White

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WASHINGTON, March 8—Senator Edwin C. Johnson, Democrat of Colorado, charged tonight that "powerful interests" were holding back color television from the public, because they were more interested, for the present, in selling black-and-white receiving sets.

The former chairman of the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee commented caustically on the status of color television in a letter to his successor, Senator Charles W. Tobey, Republican of New Hampshire, who has been pressing for a Congressional inquiry.

Senator Johnson said color television was ready for public use, but that "every conceivable legal maneuver and technical roadblock" had been used to keep it from the public.

"Powerful interests may like to forget about progress in the art of television until the market for black-and-white television sets has been exhausted in these United States," Mr. Johnson wrote to Mr. Tobey and added: "but you are not afraid of powerful interests."

[The Columbia Broadcasting System said last night that the Federal Government was responsible for the delay in putting color television receivers on the market. The network said that soon after commercial color television broadcasting had been approved by the Government in 1951, the National Production Authority had issued an order preventing further manufacturing of color receivers.

[N. P. A. modified the order in 1952, C. B. S. said, but not enough to enable substantial manufacture of color sets. Although no color receivers were put on the market in 1952, the network said, much progress was made in research.]

### Manufacturers Accused

Mr. Johnson's letter did not specify the "powerful interests" but, when interviewed by telephone tonight, he explained that he had been referring to "manufacturers of black-and-white television sets, some of whom have been very active in delaying the production of color sets." He declined to name "any manufacturer in particular."

He said he urgently supported Senator Tobey's plans to investigate the matter and to explore particularly reports from the industry that a color tube had been developed that would retail for \$60 when placed in mass production. This stood in contrast, he said, to the \$450 to \$500 cost of some of the first black-and-white tubes.

Senator Tobey recently obtained Senate approval for a study of the status of color television, and has asked the Federal Communication Commission for all the information it had available. He said tonight he would look over the commission's information before planning a formal investigation involving hearings.

### Five Questions Asked

As a member of Mr. Tobey's committee, Senator Johnson urged that the F. C. C., radio and television networks and manufacturers be called in to answer these questions:

"Why isn't it [color] here? Is this delay in manufacturing color television receivers deliberate? Are the standards adopted by the commission unsound? If so, in what manner? Have new standards been developed? If so, why are they not submitted to the F. C. C.?"

The introduction of color into the television industry has been a matter of controversy for several years. Two years ago, the Columbia Broadcasting System, over opposition from the Radio Corporation of America and others, won the commission's approval for a color method and began development and broadcasts on a small scale.

Real progress, however, was

held up during a legal fight that went to the Supreme Court, which decided in favor of the F. C. C. ruling.

Activity in the direction of color sets was later suspended by a Government ruling that "froze" set construction because of the defense emergency. This order has now been relaxed, leaving the industry free to pick up experimentation and development.

The controversy within the industry has been whether to go ahead with a system that would handle color only, such as that initially approved by the commission, or one that was "compatible" to both color and black-and-white.

Since the Government "freeze" has been lifted considerable work has gone forward to develop a "compatible" system, which would not render black-and-white sets in current use obsolete, even though they could not receive color.

Senator Johnson said a number of manufacturers now claimed development of sets that could handle both color and black-and-white. He said he wanted to know why the public should not have the

"full benefit" of improvements in the "art of communications."

### 'Compatibility' Believed Near

Arthur V. Loughren, vice chairman of the National Television Systems Committee, created some three years ago to determine the best possible "compatible" color television—one that would not render obsolete millions of black and white sets now in use—said yesterday he believed this "highly desirable objective has now been attained."

He announced that field tests would begin March 18, but that three or four months of actual trial would be needed before the real answer would be known. The committee, Mr. Loughren pointed out, now comprises more than 100 experts from more than twenty of the country's television manufacturers.

"The committee, representing the whole industry, has been working strongly toward the desirable end of not only compatibility but good color, which color television will have to be if it is to become a successful service for the American

public, and endure a long time," he declared.

He pointed out also that the Federal Communications Commission in the fall of 1950 had outlined what any new color TV system had to comprise before it could be brought before the Federal body for consideration and adoption, and said his commission had been "working steadily toward the goal ever since, and we now believe we have it."

Mr. Loughren summarized the F. C. C.'s technical requirements as mainly a workable plan, technically sound and field tested, representative apparatus and all new technical details and plans to be placed in the commission's hands, "satisfactory color delineation," and coordination of the over-all plan into the existing allocation of channels.

Represented on his commission are the Radio Corporation of America, General Electric, Philco, Columbia Broadcasting System, DuMont, Sylvania, Zenith, Admiral, Motorola, Crosley, Hazeltine, Bendix, Westinghouse, Emerson and others.