

F. C. C. Ready to Authorize A New Color Video System

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 7—The Federal Communications Commission announced plans today to authorize a new compatible color television system that can be received in black and white on

existing sets. Unless major objections are registered with the commission, it was said, the orders can be promulgated by the year's end and the system can be in operation conceivably by mid-1954.

The system, which has won preliminary F. C. C. approval, is the new color plan devised by the National Television System Committee, a technical group representing virtually all segments of the telecasting industry. The committee has been at work on the color television problem for more than three years.

Recently the television industry's technical group asked the F. C. C. to adopt its color standards as the uniform standards for all color casting. In its announcement today the commission noted no opposition to the technical committee's plan had been registered and added that many of the leading set manufacturers had joined in asking approval of the plan.

While the images broadcast under the proposed new system can be received in black and white on existing television sets, trade executives here said, however, that special sets costing from \$800 to

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\$1,000 probably would be necessary to receive the images in color.

They said it might be possible to use adapters to enable present black-and-white sets to take images with color, but they were uncertain whether such adapters would be inexpensive enough to open up a volume market for the attachments.

If the color system given tentative approval today should finally be sanctioned by the commission for commercial use, it would throw out the Columbia Broadcasting System's color television technique, which F. C. C. approved on an exclusive basis in 1950. The C. B. S. system, it was explained, cannot be received either in color or in black and white on existing sets without conversion.

The F. C. C. said it had not received any protests from the Columbia Broadcasting System over the action today. It was added that there was no telling how soon the filing of assents or dissents by interested parties would be completed. Officials said all persons would be given a chance to file opinions of the plan until Sept. 8, and that there would probably arise a number of technical points that would have to be ironed out before the final order could be issued.

Barring any unforeseen contests over the new plan, it was added, the proposal should work its way through the routine leading up to final F. C. C. approval by the end of this year. If the plan should meet stiff opposition from a substantial portion of the television industry, it was said, protracted hearings, conceivably followed by a lengthy litigation in the courts, could delay the matter well into next year.

According to trade opinion here tonight, there was only an outside chance of any bitter opposition to the plan. Officials said that when the first models for the new color television system were put on the market, they probably would cost up to \$1,000 and have pictures measuring fourteen inches diagonally—about the same size as the image shown on the present fourteen-inch black-and-white television set.

They indicated that prices for color television sets would come down as the volume of production was stepped up, but probably would remain 25 to 50 per cent above those for comparably sized black-and-white sets for a considerable time.