

COLOR VIDEO DELAY DENIED BY RCA AIDE

Engstrom Replies to Charge by FCC Official That Industry Seems to Oppose Change

WASHINGTON, Sept. 30 (UP)—Dr. Elmer W. Engstrom, research director for Radio Corporation of America, said today that his company was just as willing to risk its money on color television as it was on black-and-white video.

He made the statement before the Federal Communications Commission after several commissioners asked whether the industry actually was as interested as it seemed in giving the public color television now.

Freida B. Hennock, only woman member of the body, warned the industry not to "kid" the commission. She urged it to let the commission know in so many words whether the time was right for color television because "I'm not going to take the blame for you people."

Chairman Wayne C. Coy said it appeared that some companies were "willing to take a greater speculative risk on black-and-white than they will take on color." He asked if that included RCA.

"We are willing to take equal risks on both," Dr. Engstrom replied.

Mr. Coy also asked whether the four-to-six-month field test proposed by the commission would be adequate to find out which color telecasting system should be approved.

"If you change that to six months instead of four, I'd say yes," Dr. Engstrom said.

More Channels Also Weighed

In addition to the color issue, the commission is considering giving television forty-two additional channels in the so-called ultra-high frequency range.

Owners of sets who wanted to receive those stations would have to buy new sets or have their present receivers altered since they receive only black-and-white images on the twelve channels in the very high frequency band.

Dr. Engstrom clashed with Miss Hennock after testifying that RCA was ready and willing to demonstrate its new electronic color system, but that it would not explain it to other television set makers.

"I don't know whether you people really want this thing," Miss Hennock said. "The public and the commission have a right to know where you stand."

Dr. Engstrom testified that it would take three or four weeks to tell other manufacturers how to make color television sets.

"I still don't see how a thing already accomplished would take three or four weeks to describe," Commissioner Robert F. Jones said.

Dr. Engstrom said that RCA had only six color receivers ready for its field tests. He added that it was building four others and hoped to start turning sets out at the rate of ten a month in November.

Miss Hennock said that it seemed to her that RCA's preparations for its field tests were a little skimpy, and that she was not sure the industry wanted color at this time.

"We want color very much," the witness assured her. He said that RCA experts were convinced their system was best, but he advised the commissions to test the others before making a decision.

"We will not offer these (RCA) receivers for public sale until the commission has arrived at standards," he said. "We will, however, make sets available to other manufacturers for field tests."

RCA argues that its system would permit present set owners to receive color signals in black-and-white without changing their receivers.