

March 10, 1943

The Federal Communications Commission at its meeting yesterday rejected a proposal that standard broadcast stations be permitted to cease operation for the duration of the war and retain their licenses. While making no change of its existing general policy permitting temporary suspensions to enable stations to meet and overcome current emergencies, the Commission expressed the belief that the door should not be opened for any general suspension of radio broadcast operations during the war period.

In announcing the decision, James Lawrence Fly, Chairman of the Commission, drew attention to the fact that the adoption of a policy permitting suspension generally would probably result in the elimination of radio broadcasting in many areas where the need for public service is the greatest. He pointed out that the indefinite suspension of broadcast operations might jeopardize this country's interest in the radio frequencies as provided in the North American Regional Broadcasting Agreement. Mr. Fly also said that various steps have already been taken to alleviate the difficulties of the smaller stations. For example, it is provided that stations may operate as little as six hours per day.

While the Commission declined to give the broadcasters who may be forced to suspend, any preferred claims to use of the frequencies after the war, it was observed that broadcasters who have rendered an effective public service in the past and were forced to close down because of circumstances beyond their control would have certain natural advantages over other applicants at a later time when operations may become feasible. It was pointed out that presumably the business organizations and the broadcasting properties would remain intact even though actual operations are suspended. This would

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enable the owners of the stations to move promptly to ask for the assignment of frequencies and the resumption of operations at the end of the war.

It was also pointed out that the Commission will continue its policy of permitting temporary suspensions for short periods in order to alleviate emergency conditions. In other words, the operator may ask for a temporary suspension when he can show the necessity of closing down for a brief spell. He would be required to present a feasible plan for the alleviation of the difficulties and the return of the station to the air at an early date.

The policy approved by the Commission follows:

Insofar as relief may be needed by standard broadcast station licensees from difficulties of operation incident to the war, no general policy will be adopted, but the Commission will continue to consider on an individual basis requests for permission to temporarily suspend operations for short periods while efforts are being made to work out a means of resuming operations on a permanent basis.

Applications of the Astoria Broadcasting Company (KAST), Astoria, Oregon, and of The Petersburg Newspaper Corporation (WPID), Petersburg, Virginia, for authority to suspend operations for the duration of the war were denied (See Broadcast Report No. 415 for details).