

2 Television Manufacturers Sue To Halt C. B. S. Color Broadcasts

Television manufacturers took two positive steps yesterday to upset the Federal Communications Commission's order approving the Columbia Broadcasting System color method.

The Radio Corporation of America and the Pilot Radio Corporation filed separate court suits seeking to prevent the commission order from becoming effective. Columbia color broadcasts have been authorized to start Nov. 20.

Both companies charged that the decision of the commission was arbitrary, capricious and contrary to the public interest. They asked temporary restraining orders pending trial for permanent injunctions.

R. C. A. alleged in its suit that the commission relied in large measure on the advice of one of its staff engineers who had invented a device usable only with the C. B. S. system and had applied for a patent on it. The corporation asserted that the engineer, who was not identified by name in the suit, "forsook any

financial interest in his device" but that his "professional prestige and reputation" were at stake.

The complaint said the engineer was "in charge of the commission's laboratory which tested the various color systems." The chief of the laboratory division of the F. C. C. is E. W. Chapin.

From Washington came an indication that the color controversy might go before Congress. Representative Robert Crosser, Democrat of Ohio and chairman of the House Interstate Commerce Committee, said he would present the issue to his committee when Congress reconvenes Nov. 27, according to The United Press. The committee has jurisdiction over the F. C. C.

"I'm not saying what disposition will be made," Mr. Crosser said. "The members may want to hold hearings and they may not. That's a decision for them."

The television committee of the

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Radio - Television Manufacturers Association announced that it would initiate an educational program designed to clear up public confusion over the color dispute. The individual manufacturers will contribute a total of \$1,000,000 for this program, it was learned.

The manufacturers association said present black-and-white sets could be bought with confidence. Introduction of Columbia's color would be very slow, they added, declaring that "in the relatively near future" it might be replaced by a completely electronic color television system.

The manufacturers association also was granted radio time by Columbia to reply to a talk made over the network last Sunday night by Frank Stanton, president of the chain. Mr. Stanton had urged set buyers to purchase only from manufacturers who promised to build adapters and converters.

The Radio Corporation of America suit, which was filed in United States District Court in Chicago, charged that the commission's order permitting Columbia to use its color system "will result in irreparable injury and damage" to the public, to broadcasters, manufacturers and distributors. The public has invested an estimated two billion dollars in television receivers, it was said.

R. C. A., which sought unsuccessfully to have its own color system adopted by the commission, referred to the incompatibility of the Columbia method, pointing out that existing sets could not receive C. B. S. color broadcasts in black-and-white without an adapter.

The complaint added that "R. C. A. has an inventory and has contracted for the purchase of parts and components for such black-and-white receivers in the aggregate amount of \$55,000,000."

The manufacturing industry was notified by R. C. A. that it plans to show the latest improvements in its own color system in a series of demonstrations in Washington beginning Dec. 5. A color converter for the R. C. A. system also will be demonstrated.

The Pilot Radio Corporation's suit, filed in United States District Court in Brooklyn, charged that "the commission has no power to regulate or control the manufacture of television receivers." This referred to the F. C. C.'s announcement on Sept. 1 that unless manufacturers agreed to equip their sets with bracket standards, thus allowing for reception in either black-and-white or C. B. S. color, it planned to give final approval to the C. B. S. system.

Pilot said that the C. B. S. sys-

tem approved by the commission "is substantially the same system which had been disapproved by the commission in its report dated March 18, 1947."

Since the commission's color order was issued last week, Pilot said, both the manufacturer and its dealers had received a large number of cancellations from customers who previously had ordered black-and-white receivers.

Meantime, a new self-contained plug-in color attachment for existing black-and-white sets was announced on a Columbia television news program last night by S. W. Gross, president of the Tele-tone Radio Corporation. The device is a small, compact cabinet containing its own picture tube and can be attached to any size set, Mr. Gross said. The unit will be on the market by Jan. 1, he added, at a "moderately low" price.