

F.C.C. Rules Color TV Can Go on Air at Once

By **VAL ADAMS**

Color television was given an unrestricted go-ahead yesterday when the Federal Communications Commission told networks and stations they might transmit color programs at any time.

On Thursday the commission approved a new color system that can be received on existing black and white sets. Under the rules, however, no commercial program can be transmitted until thirty days after the order is published in the Federal Register, the Government bulletin.

But the only requirement now, the commission said yesterday in waiving the waiting period, is that networks notify the F. C. C. in advance of the color telecasts.

The National Broadcasting Company will present three color telecasts within the next two weeks. They include "Amahl and the Night Visitors," the Gian-Carlo

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Menotti opera, tomorrow from 5 to 6 P. M., and "Season's Greetings," a special holiday show, on Tuesday from 8 to 9 P. M.

"Dragnet," a regular Thursday evening series, will be presented in color next Thursday at 9 o'clock. The program filmed a special Christmas story in color some weeks ago in the hope that the Commission would approve color in time for holiday presentation.

The Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif., will be televised in color by N. B. C. on Jan. 1. The network said it was considering other remote pick-ups for color programs including the Friday evening boxing bouts at Madison Square Garden, the Mardi Gras in New Orleans, the Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington and skiing events at various winter resorts.

The Columbia Broadcasting System announced that it would add two new color programs "during the first quarter of 1954." In recent weeks the network has been transmitting an experimental color program each Friday from 5:30 to 6 P. M., which will continue. The quality of the C. B. S. color picture was improved yesterday over that of previous weeks.

The R. K. O. Eighty-first Street Theatre on Broadway was leased yesterday by C. B. S. for conversion to color program productions. J. L. Van Volkenburg, president of C. B. S. television, said alterations would require about four months. The theatre will cease its movie operations after Monday night.

The coming year is viewed by the television industry as an experimental period for color television. Although the color programs that go on the air can be seen in black and white by any set

owner, not many will be able to see them in color. The total volume of color sets to roll from the production line in 1954 has been estimated from "a trickle" to perhaps a hundred thousand.

Benjamin Abrams, president of the Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corporation, said that the total production for the entire industry during the year "may not exceed 50,000, which is equivalent to not more than one set per dealer for all of 1954."

Mr. Abrams thought the commission's color decision would result immediately in increased sales of seventeen and twenty-one inch black and white sets at \$150 and \$200, as compared with a twelve or fourteen inch color receiver initially priced from \$700 to \$1,000.

Dr. Allen B. Du Mont, president of the Allen B. Du Mont Laboratories, Inc., said that his company would introduce "a large screen" color TV receiver in 1954, although not in quantity. The Admiral Corporation said it had set a goal of 30,000 receivers during the year.

The color standards approved by the F. C. C. were developed by the National Television System Committee, an all-industry group. The standards replace a method developed by C. B. S. and approved three years ago by the F. C. C.