

sets. These outlets come into being usually when the FCC agrees, as it did in the Rochester and Johnstown cases, to open new channels on the VHF band by permitting substandard spacing. While educational broadcasters are pleased with the long-range prospects of ample space on the UHF band, they feel that FCC policies require them to enlist their limited resources in the FCC's program of breaking the UHF circle.

The goal of expanded UHF broadcasting is being pursued by the FCC in a number of ways, including a proposed program of "de-intermixture," which is intended to bring all-UHF broadcasting to communities where UHF is now broadcast, usually at a great disadvantage, in competition with VHF. In addition, the FCC has asked Congress to require manufacturers to equip new sets for UHF, a proposal that has received little congressional support, while the "de-intermixture" proposal has stirred protests from various congressmen and from at least one complete state delegation.

Congressmen from rural districts find VHF, with its generally longer range, useful for reaching their rural constituents and are concerned about how long it would be before UHF facilities would be available for this purpose. Some of the protesters are not well informed about the problem and have not looked into the availability of answers, but, finding the present arrangement satisfactory, are reluctant to change. In addition, the existing VHF stations in areas where the band is filled are not receptive to moving to a band that would have room for competition.

Underlying the court challenge to FCC's inhospitality to educational TV's growth on the VHF band is the fact that educational TV is successful on most of its active outlets (the bulk of these are VHF) and that its prospects for increased financial support are now greatly heightened by widespread revulsion toward what comes over the commercial channels.

Operating as a "fourth network," some 50 educational TV stations, supported largely by private grants, contributions, and state aid, are affiliated through the National Educational Television and Radio Center. By swapping films, tapes and pooling resources, they have maintained a high level of public service and have frequently presented distinguished fare. This "fourth net-

work," if it could expand to additional channels that reach the public, could fulfill Walter Lippmann's suggestion that the answer to the ills of TV "is to devise a way by which one network can be run as a public service with its criterion not what will be most popular but what is good."

A bill to provide each state with Federal assistance for the construction and improvement of educational TV facilities has been approved by the Senate each year for the past three years. While it has been cleared by committee it has never come to a vote in the House but its prospects for next year are considered bright. This, too, has provided pressure for removing FCC obstacles to VHF channels for educational TV.

The maintenance of the obstacles cannot to any substantial extent be blamed on the commercial TV industry, for, if nothing else, when the question arises of who is to get a new community outlet, commercial or noncommercial interests, the existing commercial stations are not displeased to see it go to an organization that will not compete for advertising. One of the major networks, for example, came out strongly at House hearings for federal aid to educational TV.

The principal source of the obstacles blocking educational TV's expansion on the VHF band is in the extreme conservatism of the present majority of FCC commissioners, who are firmly tied to inflexible notions on the issue of public versus private operations on the airways. With the absence of substantial congressional interest in the future of educational television, the FCC's present majority casts doubt on the accuracy of Chairman Newton Minow's forecast that "... if there is not a nationwide educational television system in this country, it will not be the fault of the FCC."

The plaintiffs in the two court actions, pleased by Minow's support but doubtful of his prophecy, are seeking a way around the FCC.—D.S.G.

### Salt-free Water

The President will shortly sign a bill providing long-term authorization for a saline water conversion program. Both House and Senate have passed bills authorizing \$10 million a year for this

project, about 6 times as much annually as is now being spent. Even at \$10 million a year, the program is relatively small as major federal research and development programs go, but it has attracted a good deal of attention. An economical method of converting sea water to fresh water would be immensely useful for this country, which faces a water shortage in the decades ahead, and would revolutionize the economies of a good many countries which have always faced chronic water shortages. The most efficient plants now available can process salt water at a cost of about \$1 per thousand gallons, but this is still 3 times too much for drinking water, and nearly 10 times too much for irrigation water. Kennedy has drawn attention to the project in several speeches, and he sent a message to Congress requesting the expanded program.

### Foreign Aid Appropriations

The House Appropriations Committee demonstrated last week that Administration leaders had been unduly optimistic when they assumed that the newly passed foreign aid bill would impose upon the committee a moral obligation to reduce its traditional antagonism to foreign aid spending.

Even before the bill had passed both houses, an appropriations subcommittee headed by Rep. Otto E. Passman, of Louisiana, had made substantial cuts in the accompanying money bill. In backing up Passman, who is openly hostile to foreign aid, the full committee illustrated once again why the Administration wanted long-term foreign aid and the financing of this aid through Treasury borrowing. The basis of the Administration's argument for this method was fear that the Appropriations Committee would behave in just the fashion that it did.

The reductions voted by the committee, which sent despair and astonishment through the Administration, consisted of \$896 million from the \$4.2 billion foreign aid bill, plus refusal to permit the Administration to use \$96 million carried over from the last fiscal year.

In the annual melodrama of foreign aid appropriations, the script calls for a great deal of this to be restored on the floor of the House, but just how much will be restored is, of course, never certain; nor is this system conducive to the long-range planning which