

munications Corp. (BROADCASTING, Feb. 14).

That deal, which has not yet been filed at the commission, would have Gulf acquiring Rahall's WLCY-TV Largo, WLCY(AM) St. Petersburg and WLCY-FM Tampa, all Florida; WKAP(AM) Allentown, Pa.; WWNR(AM) Beckley, W.Va.; and WNDE(AM)-WFHQ(FM) Indianapolis. Rahall stockholders would receive one share of Gulf preferred for each share of their Rahall common stock plus an annual dividend of \$1.20 for each Gulf share for eight years. With Rahall having 1,254,688 shares outstanding and Gulf shares having a liquidating value of \$30 each, the transaction amounts to \$37,640,640.

To comply with the commission's rules that prohibit acquisition of co-located AM-FM-TV combinations, Gulf will spin off WLCY-AM-FM to Harte-Hanks for \$6.5 million. Gulf will retain the Largo television station, which is in the Tampa-St. Petersburg market. Harte-Hanks, in turn, will sell WLCY-FM to another buyer, as yet undisclosed, to avoid duopoly with Southern's WRBQ(FM) Tampa, which it will be acquiring.

Blackburn & Co. and Goldman Sachs & Co. assisted in the negotiations.

Operation Prime Time sets three new shows

Like 'Testimony,' they're adaptations of popular novels

Spurred on by the ratings success of their first venture, *Testimony of Two Men*, Operation Prime Time and MCA-TV are proceeding with three more TV adaptations: John Jakes's "The Bastard" and "The Rebels" and Martin Gosch's and Richard Hammer's "The Last Testimony of Lucky Luciano."

Each project—scheduled for 1978 airplay in May, July and November or December, respectively—will consist of two two-hour episodes. Production costs for each hour are projected at \$750,000, with about \$600,000 of that raised by the stations involved, according to Al Masini, Telerep president and OPT leader. *Testimony*, a six-hour miniseries (BROADCASTING, May 16), was said to have cost over-all about \$600,000 per hour, with stations contributing about \$470,000, he added.

Should the adaptations of Mr. Jakes's best-sellers earn public approval, other of his works should follow. OPT and MCA-TV have options on four other Jakes novels and two currently being written. All eight novels trace a family through 200 years of American history. The Luciano programs cover the gangster's life from the 1900's until his death in 1962.

Within the three upcoming projects, national sales for a certain amount of advertising time are being considered. However, Mr. Masini said no commitments have been made and stations are being queried on the possibility.

Testimony, carried last May by 73 net-

work affiliates and 22 independents, received a special Nielsen average rating of 16, MCA-TV said. The company president, Lou Friedland, said that "original OPT stations are joining [in on the new enterprises] enthusiastically."

Mr. Masini explained that included among those committed thus far are stations representing all but two or three of the top-25 markets.

MPAA out to stop WTCG-type spread via cable, satellite

Movie producers seek FCC rule that would examine phenomenon of 'super station' and determine whether it violates commission's policy to foster localism in TV

To the Motion Picture Association of America, the "super station," whose programming is carried on cable systems to communities throughout the country, has become a reality. And the FCC, MPAA feels, should move swiftly to meet the threat to the commission's policy of "localism" that the super station represents.

The super station is not one of the country's major outlets, in MPAA's view, but WTCG(TV) Atlanta, "a relatively small UHF station." And it is made super by satellite technology and the station's eagerness to use it to disseminate its programming nationally.

MPAA notes that 465 cable systems in 27 states are authorized to carry WTCG programming to more than 850,000 subscribers and that another 207 systems with more than 370,000 customers have applied for the same authority. Most of the systems involved are served or will be by Southern Satellite Systems, a resale common carrier which is headed by WTCG's owner, Ted Turner, and which uses RCA hardware.

MPAA raised the specter of "super station" last week in a petition in which it urged the FCC to determine whether "the development of cable super stations using satellite delivery systems is in the public interest or whether 'appropriate corrective measures' should be taken."

MPAA is concerned about the programs licensed to MPAA member companies. The widespread exposure the satellite transmission will give MPAA members' programming will, MPAA feels, diminish its value to stations throughout the country.

Cable systems will begin making copyright payments in January. But MPAA estimates that producers will derive only \$10 million from those payments in the first year, and that will not be enough to offset losses, according to MPAA counsel Fritz E. Attaway. Furthermore, he said, the producers are concerned about "loss of control" of their product as a result of nationwide transmission. They would have no voice in where or when their pictures are played, he said.

But the public interest issue raised in

the petition is the commission's policy of localism. MPAA said the development of "super stations" runs counter to that policy.

"Satellite delivery systems can be expected to result in the importation of national super stations with super expensive programming made possible by a national advertising base against which many local stations will not be able to compete," MPAA said. "Moreover," it added, "the national character of a super station, which permits it to cut deeply into the local audiences of distant stations, will also discourage the super station from catering to the needs of its own local audience."

MPAA is concerned not only about the 672 cable systems that have or are seeking authority to carry WTCG programming. Its petition noted that SSS has applied for authority to expand its service to Puerto Rico, Alaska and Canada. (MPAA last week petitioned the commission to deny all three of the applications.) It also noted that the signal of WYAH-TV Portsmouth, Va., is authorized for cable carriage by satellite and that United Video Inc. has applied for permission to transmit the signal of WGN-TV Chicago to cable systems by satellite.

MPAA recalled that the commission two years ago repealed its "leapfrogging" restrictions on the importation by cable systems of distant television signals at least in part on the ground that the microwave costs involved would inhibit systems from importing such signals.

But, MPAA said, satellites provide the technological answer to expensive microwave costs. And it added that the commission was aware two years ago that the use of satellites "to transmit television signals to cable systems might soon be a realistic possibility." The commission said that if it finds that "super stations" are being created and are posing a danger to the public, "appropriate corrective measures will be taken."

The time for that action is now, MPAA feels.

D.C. groups throw monkey wrench into biggest TV sale

Although they originally were satisfied with Allbritton plans when he purchased Star properties, they now say he didn't live up to promises

The warm and friendly relationship with citizen groups with which Houston banker Joe L. Allbritton began his career in the communications business in Washington has turned cold. Three local groups and the National Black Media Coalition on Thursday petitioned the FCC to deny the application for the \$100-million sale of WJLA-TV (formerly WMAL-TV) Washington to Combined Communications Corp.

The principal reason for the petition: Mr. Allbritton's alleged failure to honor