

Hot Air and LVT

by CLAYTON C. BAUER

TRADING in radio and television stations was brisk in 1966. Government controls and the money market were tighter. But for 1967 brokers see no decrease in the number or value of stations changing hands, barring a general economic collapse.

In 1966 the stations changing hands were: radio, 367; radio-TV, 11; and TV only, 31.

While fewer stations were traded, their values were up. TV has not hurt radio. The \$76,633,762 in radio sales topped any other year's total by a comfortable margin.

Just how valuable the air waves are may be gathered by some representative sales figures.

Top price was the \$9.7 million paid by General Electric for WSIX-AM-FM-TV.

Next highest price went for KFWB, \$9.1 million, the buyer being Westinghouse, the pioneer broadcaster.

FM, the fidelity system used in broadcasting classical music, came into its own in 1967. Bonneville International group paid \$850,000 for WRFM. Bonneville International is actually the Mormon Church. Bonneville also acquired KMBC-AM-FM Kansas City, Missouri, for \$2.2 million. Religion has become big business.

"Broadcasting," the magazine of the industry, foresees a climb in station sales and dollar volume for 1967 if the Vietnam war doesn't flare, if the economy holds its present level.

When money grew tight last year, buyers dwindled, possibly by half. Sell-

ers had used to get cash in full for their properties. So they refused to sell on terms. They withdrew their properties from the market. When money stayed tight the serious sellers boosted their prices in order to command more of it.

Station brokers are bullish for 1967. They see the liveliest profit possibilities in "secondary" markets in areas like Denver, Little Rock, San Jose, St. Petersburg, and Wichita. None of these markets are frozen into "dynasties." Hence, with their great growth potentials, they possess strong speculative appeal, corresponding to the speculation in land.

Indeed, these air waves are part of our natural resources which, in the science of political economy, it grouped under the term, "land." Land, as here used, embraces earth, water, and air.

Under maritime law the waters of the Grand Banks have produced codfish eagerly sought by the fishermen of Canada, the U. S., and Portugal, among others. The demand for this seafood has raised waterfront values in New York, Boston, Halifax and Portuguese ports. Henry George has shown how wrong it is such socially-created values should line the pockets of private landowners.

Air waves values, by the same token, should belong to the communities that produce them. If justice were to prevail on the air waves, we might be able to lift the TV set above the "boob tube" level.

"Can We Afford Honest Assessors?" will be discussed on Channel 28 KCET Community Television on April 4th at 9:30 P.M. This will be a 90 minute special for Southern California viewers. Panelists will be Squire Needham Williams, Jr., David Robinson, Dr. Arch Woodruff and Dr. Irene Hickman. Harry Pollard, Los Angeles director, will be the moderator.