

2nd TV License

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New Move on Post-Newsweek

Miami

A group yesterday challenged the federal broadcasting license of a second television station operated by Post-Newsweek Stations, Inc., a subsidiary of The Washington Post Co., a frequent critic of the Nixon administration.

Miami attorney Cromwell A. Anderson said the group he heads, Tropical Florida Broadcasting Inc., feels it "is in the public interest that there be local ownership" of WPLG-TV. He also said the newly formed firm represents ethnic minorities.

On Tuesday a firm headed by President Nixon's chief Florida fund raiser in 1972, George Champion Jr., and financier Edward Ball filed a rival application for the license of Post-Newsweek, Inc.'s Jacksonville station, WJXT.

EX-SENATOR

Anderson, a law partner of former Senator George Smathers, a Florida Democrat who did not seek reelection in 1970 and who is a close friend of President Nixon's, said Smathers is aware of the application filed with the Federal Communications Commission but has nothing to do with it.

"I am sure there has been no communication between the President and Smathers about this," said Anderson, 46.

He declined to criticize WPLG's present operations.

James T. Lynagh, WPLG-TV's station manager, said the station has made dramatic improvements in programming since it was taken over by Post-Newsweek three years ago, and the management has "full confidence" that the rival application would be unsuccessful.

At the White House, press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler was asked whether Mr. Nixon or any of his aides discussed or encouraged Champion to file the application for WJXT's license.

REPLY

"No, absolutely not," Ziegler replied.

Ball and Champion, 43, a Jacksonville real estate developer, applied for the WJXT license as Florida Television Broadcasting Co. Ball is board chairman and Champion president.

The Jacksonville television station broke the story of U.S. Supreme Court nominee G. Harrold Carswell's white - supremacy speech which became a factor in the Senate's rejection in 1970 of the Nixon nominee to the nation's high court.

Ball said yesterday he is part of the effort to lift WJXT's license because it is "frequently pointing out bad things" about the community.

GROUP

The Miami and Jacksonville stations are among a group of three TV and two radio stations owned by Post-Newsweek. The other stations are WTOP-AM-TV in Washington, D.C., and WCKY, Cincinnati, Ohio, radio station.

The FCC has only once awarded a competing challenger the license of a TV station. That was WHDH-TV in Boston a year ago and that was based on allegations of improper activities many years earlier.

However, under recent court interpretations of the law, the FCC has little choice but to order hearings in both Florida cases. Such hearings can drag out expensively for years.

Associated Press