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NAB Expected to Select Interim President

Broadcaster to Be Named Successor To Ryan

By SOL TAISHOFF

HARD-PRESSED to find a qualified man for the presidency of the NAB because of limited wartime availabilities, the association's presidential selection committee in all probability will recommend another "interim appointment" of a prominent broadcaster to serve from July 1 until total victory.

Involved in War Effort

While no formal recommendations yet have been drafted by the six-man committee, it was evident last week that unless the unexpected happens the committee will conclude that a practical broadcaster be drafted. It appeared equally certain that J. Harold Ryan, incumbent president, will return to his executive post with the Fort Industry Co. July 1, in keeping with the firm commitment made by the NAB Board of Directors at the time he was drafted in early 1944.

G. Richard Shafto, general manager of WIS Columbia, S. C. and chairman of the committee, told BROADCASTING last Thursday that it has become "increasingly evident" that many men who comprehend the public service impact of radio are now engaged in the war effort and propose to serve until final victory. Such men, he added, by virtue of their personal sacrifice and devotion to their sense of public responsibility, "cannot readily be dissuaded to leave their activities at this time".

One More Meeting

The NAB committee will hold one additional meeting before reporting to the board at its session in Omaha May 16-17. At that time it is expected the committee will draft its final report and recommendations and emphasize, among other things, the very narrow segment of available men, either in public life or private industry, for the NAB assignment. Thus, it is logically deduced the committee will recommend the interim appointment, pointing out that after victory a much wider group of qualified men now in Government or war service will be available.

The commitment made to Mr. Ryan, who assumed office on April

15, 1944 to succeed Neville Miller, was that he would not be asked to remain beyond July 1, 1945 unless there were most extenuating circumstances. Mr. Ryan has repeatedly stated that he must return to Toledo, where he will resume direction of the operations of the seven Fort Industry Co. stations.

Long List Scanned

It is presumed the committee, following its next meeting, will be prepared to recommend a broadcaster it would propose to have serve as interim president until the formal conclusion of the war. More than likely the committee will recommend an outstanding broadcaster, well acquainted with radio affairs and presumably with legislative and Washington front problems. Such an individual, of course, would have to obtain an indefinite leave from his regular duties to enable him to spend full time in Washington and to handle the multitudinous operations incident to the NAB presidency.

While it is yet too early to speculate upon possible selections for the interim presidency, it would not be surprising to see the individual

plucked from the presidential committee membership itself. In addition to Mr. Shafto, who has asserted he would not be available because of commitments to his principals, the committee includes Mr. Ryan, Don S. Elias, WWNC Asheville; James D. Shouse, WLW Cincinnati; Paul W. Morency, WTIC Hartford, and John J. Gillin Jr., WOW Omaha. Of this group, Mr. Morency alone has had practical trade association experience—he was field director of the NAB nearly 20 years ago.

Committee Active

The NAB board initially set up a three-man committee — Messrs. Shafto, Ryan and Shouse—to select the new president. Last February the committee was enlarged to six. The enlarged committee has held a number of meetings and has sifted a list of many names. At sessions held in New York in March, an original list of 17 names was reduced to eight. Then at a mid-April session in New York, the eight individuals were considered—several of whom personally were interviewed. At this writing it is doubted whether there are more than one or two men who might be available, and the committee, as a conse-

quence, has all but concluded that the only plausible approach is for another interim appointment until the war is over.

While the committee was given virtual plenary powers in its selection of an NAB president, it is disposed, in view of developments, to make its recommendations to the full board. The board did not specify compensation to be paid for a permanent head. Mr. Miller, who was the first paid executive of the NAB, having served from 1938 until he resigned to join UNRRA last year, drew an annual compensation at that time of \$35,000 plus \$5,000 in allowances. Mr. Ryan has been drawing \$25,000—a figure he set himself.

Neville Miller Back

By coincidence, but having no relationship whatever to the NAB deliberations, Mr. Miller returned to his home in Washington last week, after nearly a year in Cairo as deputy chief of the Balkan Mission of UNRRA. He traveled extensively in the Balkans and prior to his return to this country he traveled extensively in Palestine and the Holy Land.

Sponsors Prepare for Summer Season

Some Agencies Delaying Decisions on Show Replacements

By HELEN HOUSE

SUMMER replacements on the networks will lean toward dramatic programs and name bands or artists in the popular or semi-classical music field. There will be a dearth of laugh-provoking programs relying on star comedians, with many of the strong comedy shows going off, their leading talent set to entertain servicemen or subject to military service themselves.

Seek Humor

Eddie Cantor, Ed Gardner and Jack Benny are planning armed forces tours, their sponsors granting long-term absences of 16 to 17 weeks. Stars from musical and entertainment shows who will play for servicemen include Bing Crosby. Kraft Cheese Co. replaces Mr. Crosby in *Kraft Music Hall*, NBC Thurs. 9-9:30 p.m. with show star-

ring comedian Edward Everett Horton, starting July 5, 13 weeks, agency, J. Walter Thompson. The experts on *Information Please* and the *Andrews Sisters* are also considering tours.

To keep up the balance of humor, agencies and production firms are offering audience participation programs, which need not rely so much on name comedians.

Extent to which the summer lay-off eats into the list of favorites can be seen by the most recent C. E. Hooper Inc. list of "First Fifteen" programs [BROADCASTING, April 23]. Of 16 programs (there is one tie), indications are that 12 are going off or dropping lead talent this summer. That includes Sealtest Inc.'s *Village Store* show, NBC, which loses Joan Davis permanently after June 28 but continues with Jack Haley and same format.

To fill summer periods, half a dozen or more former shows are being revived, including *Summer Silver Theater*, with Conrad Nagel

as m.c. CBS Sun. 6-6:30 p.m., replacing *Ozzie and Harriet*, off June 10, back Aug. 12, *Yong & Rubicam*; J. C. Flippen's *Correction Please*, replacing, for *Bristol-Myers*, *Duffy's Tavern* NBC Fri. 8:30-9 p.m., off June 8 to Oct. 15, Y&R; B-M's *Time to Smile* NBC Wed. 9-9:30 p.m., will carry on without Cantor, off June 20, back Oct. 2, Y&R.

Topper Show

One of the new programs is General Foods' *Adventures of Topper*, a Rockhill Inc. package based on two Thorne Smith "Topper" stories with Stanley J. Wolf producing, Kirby Hawkes, Benton & Bowles, directing. Program starts June 7 on NBC Thurs. 8:30-9 p.m., replacing Dinah Shore. Time shifts for the 15-week summer run of Topper from Y&B to B&B which lined up the show and products from frosted foods to Maxwell House Coffee. Last broadcast for

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