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MID-WEEK SPECIAL

NEWS - COMMENT - POSSIBILITIES

Television film commercial production during 1956 grossed approximately 35 million (\$35,000,000) dollars. This estimate, made independently by Ross Reports-Television Index, has been projected from production reports included in the "1956 Survey - TV Film Commercials," published annually by this organization. (Copies are currently in the mail to all service subscribers). The production record is compiled from information supplied by the majority of the nation's advertising agencies with television accounts, and by commercial film producers. The production survey cross-indexes 9,078 film commercials of all types, the 759 advertisers for whom they were made, the 285 advertising agencies through whom they were ordered and the 212 film firms who produced the commercials.

Rises in costs and production values during 1956 resulted in the current dollar volume estimate, a \$10,000,000 increase over last year's estimate of \$25,000,000 for 1955 production. In each year, approximately 10,000 new film commercials were produced. Some agencies and film producers, because of company policy, do not report any but gross production; others report only a representative part of the total year's output. Also, there may be an over-lap from year to year in specific commercial production because of the different methods used by agencies in reporting production between the dates used for the survey (whether production is contracted for, in progress, or completed during the period). The dollar volume estimate is based on an evaluation of commercials by types rather than by the total number of films. The estimates take into consideration the length of commercials; content, such as "live" action and animation; and types of advertisers they were produced for, whether national, regional or local, since this qualification determines the approximate cost per commercial.

Transfilm Inc., New York, the leader last year, is again estimated to be the largest TV film commercial producer in the country, accounting for eight to nine per cent of the total dollar volume for the industry. Other national leaders are Universal Pictures Company Inc. Television, Universal City, Calif., and New York; MPO Television Films, Inc., New York; Hal Roach Studios, Culver City, Calif., and Sarra, Inc., New York and Chicago. These five firms account for approximately 28 per cent of the annual dollar volume of the industry. There are ten more major film organizations that do an additional 25 per cent of the dollar volume of film commercials. These 15 firms (including the five leaders named) account for about \$18,550,000 in gross film commercial production, 53 per cent of the industry.

The above listings include all commercial production, whether live action or animation or combinations of both. Animation production, separate from live action, now accounts for about 25 per cent of the industry's dollar volume, approximately \$8,750,000, largely because quality animation costs 75 to 80 per cent more to produce

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than quality live action commercials. Quality live action 60-second commercials fall into the \$4,000-5,000 cost class, while comparable animation ranges from \$7,000-9,000. (This is a median group comparison for purposes of the example, with most quality commercials falling into the price groupings for each type. Costs of commercials obviously have a much greater lower and higher range, depending on the requirements of the advertiser. These groups are typical of network program or major syndication "A" quality commercials in use). Firms leading in 1956 in animation production include Transfilm Inc., New York; UPA Pictures, Inc., New York and Burbank; Shamus Culhane Productions, New York and Hollywood; Academy Pictures, Inc., New York; and Playhouse Pictures, Hollywood.

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Chrysler Corp's Dodge and Plymouth Divisions have renewed their contracts for Lawrence Welk's Monday and Saturday night programs for next season over ABC, and have also contracted for the 9:30-10pm segment on Friday nights, with the program to fill the spot as yet not determined. Current occupant of the time is The Vise for Sterling Drug.....ABC has bought 26 feature films from RKO for showing on Sunday nights, 7:30-9pm EST, beginning April 7. Ted Mack's Original Amateur Hour will move to the spot currently held by the first hour of Omnibus, 9-10pm EST. The future of ABC's own news-public affairs series, Open Hearing, is up in the air.....ABC is also in the middle of new production deals for the fall. The net is reported to have made a firm buy of The Real McCoys, new film series starring Walter Brennan, to be produced by Brennan with Irving and Norman Pincus in one firm, jointly with Danny Thomas' Marterto Productions. Marterto staffers are doing preliminary production work on the series, which will have a situation comedy look.....My Friend Flicka, which was originally scheduled to replace Giant Step on CBS starting tonight, will move instead to a Saturday night spot, replacing Vincent Lopez, 7-7:30pm EST, starting March 16. Giant Step was renewed by sponsor General Mills for another 13 weeks and since CBS has a contract for Flicka the net couldn't afford to have it sitting idle, so Lopez got the network ax, although his local program, 6:30-7pm, continues at that time over WCBS-TV(NY).

NBC's Tonight! is dropping Vernon Scott as one of its two Hollywood-origination feature-reporters, but a permanent replacement will depend on who makes good among a number of other people who are getting on-air tryouts. The West Coast favors Lee Giroux, KRCA-TV(LA) newscaster, but he'll have to survive the eliminations. Tonight! will also begin its remotes from cities other than its three main points, beginning probably next week, with one of the first scheduled to come from San Francisco..... NBC is going to a heavier sports schedule this summer. For the first time, the net will have the Baseball Game of the Week telecasts, starting April 6 for 26 weeks on Saturday afternoons. The major league telecasts were carried by ABC during the summers of 1953 and 1954 and by CBS during 1955 and 1956. Although Dizzy Dean and Buddy Blattner have been the regular commentators, NBC has not announced its choices for the summer. NBC has also been awarded the rights for the sixth time in seven years to telecast the NCAA football schedule for the 1957 season. Since 1951, NBC has carried the games every year except 1954.....CBS will buck NBC's telecasts of professional basketball on Saturday afternoon, with a two-Saturday special on March 16 and 23, with broadcasts of the opening game and the final championship game of the National Invitation Basketball Tournament at Madison Square Garden. The games will be simulcast, 2-4pm EST.

Jackie Gleason starts his second vacation of the season after his March 9 program, returning on April 6. Kate Smith will star on the March 16 Jackie Gleason Show, heading a group of variety performers.....Private Secretary, ending its five-year alternate run with Jack Benny on Sundays over CBS after its March 17 showing, returns to the net starting April 2 in a new time spot, Tuesdays, 8:30-9pm EST. Re-runs of

the hardy Ann Sothern series will replace The Brothers in the Tuesday spot. Sponsors will be Lever Brothers Co for its Dove Toilet Bar thru Ogilvy, Benson & Mather, Inc., alternating with W. A. Sheaffer Pen Co thru Russel M. Seeds Co.....The Marge and Gower Champion Show, moving in on March 31 as the replacement for Private Secretary in alternating with the Jack Benny Show, will be produced by Paul Harrison and directed by James Sheldon.....NBC's Motion Picture Academy Awards show on March 27 will have Jerry Lewis as m.c. from Hollywood for the second consecutive year. The show will be produced for the Academy by U-I writer-director Valentine Davies, with Bill Kayden and Bill Bennington producing and directing the show for NBC. Robert Emmett Dolan will direct the New York portion. Johnny Green is handling the music direction for the fourth time.....Desi Arnaz will be m.c. for the Emmy Awards over NBC on March 16, with Phil Silvers handling m.c. chores on New York segments.

Alfred Hitchcock signed to continue his Alfred Hitchcock Presents for Bristol-Myers Co thru Sept, 1958, on Sundays, 9:30-10pm EST. The agreement limits his TV appearances to that program.....CBS and Screen Gems resolved their reported difficulties over budget and star names and the net signed with the film producer for a minimum of five new filmed stories for the Playhouse 90 series for the 1957-58 season. All will have increased production budgets and major star names. Filmasters, Inc., is currently in production on three films for Playhouse 90, to complete a season group, in addition to eight filmed this year by Screen Gems, three of which are still to be shown later in the season.....CBS revises its morning net schedule starting April 8 when it replaces the one-hour Good Morning with Will Rogers, Jr. with Country Style, 7-7:45am EST and a 15-minute news show with Richard C. Hottelet reporting the news, Monday thru Friday. The following Captain Kangaroo, currently 8-9am, will be cut back 15 minutes, with Hottelet coming back at 7:45am for another 15 minutes of the news. Country Style will originate from WTOP-TV(Wash), starring singer-musician Jimmy Dean, his band, The Texas Wildcats; plus The Country Lads duo, ventriloquist Alec Houston and guest stars. The program will be produced by Connie B. Gay (of Town and Country Time, which also starred Jimmy Dean).....NBC has set the Wednesday, 7:30-8:30pm NYT spot, starting Sept 11 for its new Wagon Train film series, to star Ward Bond. Revue Productions is producing the one-hour filmed program.....P. Lorillard Co(Old Gold Cigarettes) thru Lennen & Newell, Inc., will sponsor one half-hour of time weekly over 128 stations of the NTA Film Network, beginning April 1. Warner-Lambert Pharmaceutical Co will sponsor one hour of time weekly, with both sponsorships running 39 weeks. All commercials will be integrated on film.

PEOPLE GOING PLACES: Robert L. Foreman, v.p. in charge of radio and TV for Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, Inc., upped to an exec v.p. of the agency..... Margaret Buell Wilder joined the CBS-TV story dept., Hollywood.....Richard L. Geismar named executive asst to the president, DuMont Broadcasting Corp.....Charles C. Beaton appointed promotion director, WTTG(Wash).

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