

Filmland Clamors for Radio Artists

ASCAP Affiliation With AFofL Urged

Hollywood Producers Set Up Scout Offices To Comb Studios

By DAVID GLICKMAN
COLLAPSE of motion picture domination of radio talent is in the immediate offing, in the opinion of observers in Hollywood. All indications point to a swing of the balance of power from pictures to radio, with the latter lending what talent it chooses to films and lifting what it wants from that field of entertainment.

Radio has suddenly come to the realization that it has been giving everything to the Hollywood motion picture industry, it is pointed out, but getting very little in return, except criticism.

Signal indication of the trend to radio power is the failure of major Hollywood film companies to block-book their player lists to network shows. Balking of topline motion picture stars to restrictions which their studios have sought to impose upon their radio activities is also indicative of the breakdown.

A fundamental cause of the motion picture industry's power leakage is the studding of feature player contract lists with talent primarily loyal and contracted to radio. Major picture studio talent lists show definite domination by radio headliners in at least two instances and heavy enrollment almost without exception.

Need of New Talent

The motion picture industry is constantly in need of new faces and talent and has conducted extensive raids on radio for entertainers and dramatic players, with Hollywood scouts reaching out to many broadcasting studios. With radio remaining virtually the only virgin field for new and untried talent, most of the major Hollywood picture studios have established intelligence boards in the larger cities to look over and pass temporary judgment on local radio talent.

First to effect such a tieup was RKO Radio Pictures Inc., which brought Patricia Dunlap, Chicago radio entertainer to Hollywood for screen tests. Columbia Pictures Corp., has a similar "discovery" organization independent of the studio's regular casting and agent channels, while Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corp., first studio to recognize in NBC's Don Ameche a potential dramatic star, has set dates for a series of screen tests of radio actors and entertainers soon to be brought to Hollywood. Tyrone Power, at this studio, is a former NBC Chicago personality. Recent Universal Picture Corp. acquisitions are William Lundigan, Syracuse announcer; Ella Logan, from radio; Michael Fitzmaurice, Los Angeles announcer and radio actor. Warner Bros. has Walter Cassel and Doris Weston, both NBC contractees.

Paramount Productions Inc. contract list is indicative of radio's domination. Talent under contract includes Jack Benny, Burns & Allen, Charles Butterworth, Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour, Kenny Baker, Gladys Swarthout, W. C. Fields, Martha Raye, Fibber McGee & Molly, Niela Goodeele, Andre Kostelanetz, Judy Canova, Shirley Ross and a host of others whose allegiance is strongly shared by radio.

Pertinent example of film company's loss of power is seen in the failure recently of Paramount to put Dorothy Lamour on the CBS *Hollywood Hotel* program as guest artist. NBC Artists Bureau, with whom she is under contract, turned down the appearance because she was signed exclusively for another weekly program. Although Miss Lamour was willing to go on the broadcast, and Paramount brought pressure to bear, radio held the balance of power and refused to yield, winning its point.

Hollywood advertising agency executives are also of the opinion that the motion picture control is virtually at an end and predict that radio's easy-big money days for guest artists are going into eclipse. They point out that sponsors are tired of paying exorbitant prices for guest star appearances which have enriched film celebrity purses by more than a quarter million dollars this past year. This, they say, will be eliminated shortly.

These advertising executives have found that "name value" is over-rated unless coupled with adequate material. Headline names are taking secondary place in the current balance of radio values they say. Several of the leading Hollywood agencies, Young & Rubicam Inc. among them, are definitely emphasizing material in shaving

dramatic programs. They feel that the vast amount of available box office talent in Hollywood will insure capable casting. The about face on the commercial agency front, only recently seeking to build shows around headliners, is throwing the whole business of radio entertainment open to new ideas and giving strong impetus to a broadened scheme of entertainment.

The market has become strong likewise for assembled shows with one or more top talent headliners. But with a 52 weeks season, the commercials are weighing every factor involved before signing contracts. It is the material and its possibility of carrying a wallop over a sustained period that is interesting the Hollywood agencies. Bitter experience of having to bolster a lagging show with costly guest stars from the motion pictures has made them not only cautious but forehanded in diagnosing show setups.

DON WILSON, NBC Hollywood announcer, has been cast for a character role in *Behind the Mike*, to be produced by Universal Pictures Corp. He is also appearing as narrator for a series of 13 sport shorts, to be released by RKO Radio Pictures Inc., Walter Bunker, NBC Hollywood producer, was a collaborator in writing *Behind the Mike*.

Don Lee to Add More Stations to List; KOL, Seattle, — KQW, San Jose, Likely

DON LEE Broadcasting System, the Pacific Coast unit of Mutual Broadcasting System, plans to add two more stations to its list of ten by Aug. 15. It is understood KOL, Seattle, and KQW, San Jose, Cal. have been signed.

This was indicated July 10 by Lewis Allen Weiss, general manager of Don Lee following his return from San Francisco. The report was that active affiliation would start within 30 days. It also was indicated three more California stations will be added shortly and that negotiations are on to bring seven stations in Washington and Oregon into the affiliated group.

Negotiations are definitely on with KIEM, Eureka, and KVCV, Redding, to affiliate by fall. KHSL, Chico, is another objective. KOL and KQW will take all Don Lee network programs originating from KHJ, Los Angeles, and also Mutual programs under the planned agreement. KQW is operated by Ralph R. Brunton who also operates KJBS, San Francisco. KOL, a link in the CBS Pacific Coast network, an affiliation which will be severed by January, is operated by Archie Taft and Louis Wasmer. KIRO, then becomes the CBS Seattle outlet.

Don Lee may also have a Fresno station, a construction permit for new outlet in that city having been granted to George Harm by the FCC. Mr. Harm is Cadillac motor car distributor at Fresno and thus associated with the Don Lee organization. The FCC permit is for a 100-watt station, operating on 1310 kc. with unlimited time. Don Lee network owns and operates KHJ, KFRC, KGB, KDB, and has as affiliates KFXM, KPMC, KDON, KGDM, KVOE and KXO.

Discussing MBS plans, Mr. Weiss stated that arrangements have been

completed in the East to send a heavy schedule of football broadcasts over Mutual this fall and the network will increase its sports coverage generally, as well as originate several other types of transcontinental programs from Los Angeles and Hollywood.

Two new network programs to be produced at KHJ for Mutual release have already been set, he said. George Jessel and Norma Talmadge have been signed to head a new variety show under group sponsorship, starting Sept. 5. Titled *30 Minutes in Hollywood*, it will be heard Sunday, 2:30-3 p. m. (PST), and will carry a dramatic spot and be augmented by a name orchestra, probably David Broekman's. The second is a nightly quarter-hour sponsored script show starring Nat and Alexander Carr, in a *Max & Mawrus* skit reminiscent of their "Potash and Perlmutter" comic antics. Eight weekly transcontinental programs now originate from KHJ.

With all this heavy production scheduled Don Lee Broadcasting System is continuing its negotiations with NBC to lease that network's present quarters in Hollywood [BROADCASTING, July 1]. Mr. Weiss stated that inventory of the NBC Hollywood studios has been taken and terms are being discussed. If they come to an agreement Don Lee network will move into the NBC studios by Jan. 1. Under these conditions MBS should make its future plans announcement by the end of July.

Meanwhile the Don Lee Broadcasting System is in for a big publicity buildup. Radio Features Service Inc., Hollywood, has been hired to supplement the activities of Seymour Peiser, Don Lee network publicity director, in publicizing network programs.

Help in Legislative Battles Seen Under Union's Wing

A DEFINITE move to affiliate ASCAP with the American Federation of Labor was started in Hollywood July 7 at a meeting of



more than 100 members of the organization, when E. C. Mills, ASCAP administrative committee chairman was principal speaker.

ASCAP has battles on its hands in 22 states against adverse legislation and many of the leaders of the organization feel that these fights can be carried on more successfully under the protection of AFofL. There are, however, so many problems to be solved, so many questions to be answered before such affiliation can be consummated, that the plan to take a formal vote was postponed until a future date, when such action will be taken in New York, according to Mr. Mills. The intervening time will be used to perfect plans and to judge the results, pro and con. Members at the meeting apparently were not of one mind on the subject, which was the reason for deferring the vote to seek AFofL affiliation, although Mr. Mills stated that the move to join was favorably received.

Mr. Mills told those at the meeting of the troubles besetting the organization in its effort to enforce collective bargaining for its members and the harmful bills introduced in many legislatures, all of which, he said, are sponsored by smaller radio stations to prevent the operation of ASCAP as such bargaining agency. The AFofL setup, he advised, would give them complete autonomy, and the right to decide as a unit the extent of their support of other labor groups on strike.

It was pointed out that the executive committee of the AFofL has already indicated its willingness to accept ASCAP membership as a union group, affiliated with the Musicians' Federation. Regardless of a victory for ASCAP in its hearings before Federal Courts, the organization will probably go union, feeling this is the most satisfactory method to protect its royalty-gathering functions.

W. T. Grant Placing

W. T. GRANT Co., New York, which operates 479 variety stores throughout the country, will launch a radio and newspaper-magazine campaign early in the fall, using a transcribed quarter-hour variety show to be broadcast three times weekly for 13 weeks on 19 stations beginning Sept. 5. Station list is not definitely set as yet, but the cities in which the programs will be broadcast are: Buffalo, Detroit, Jacksonville, Miami, Philadelphia, St. Paul, New Orleans, Nashville, Louisville, Richmond, Memphis, Dallas, Indianapolis, El Paso, Houston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City and Kansas City. Agency is N. W. Ayer & Son Inc., New York.