

# A collision of forces in Chicago

As NAB convenes for 45th time, broadcasters face internal conflicts, upheavals in ad practices—and effects of an AFTRA strike against networks

The quasi-peace that usually prevails in the broadcasting industry has a habit of falling apart just about the time a National Association of Broadcasters' convention rolls around. This year is no exception.

As more than 5,000 broadcasters gather in Chicago this week for the NAB's 45th annual meeting, they find themselves beset with problem pockets—most of them in television.

Many of the more pressing problems will not be found on the formal NAB agenda. But they will be discussed, dissected and deliberated on at the more specialized trade-group meetings, among the station representatives, at the network affiliate meetings and in the corridors and hospitality suites of a dozen midtown hotels.

Among the big issues this year are:

- The continuing softness in spot-TV business.
- The concern of TV affiliates about extra network commercial time in prime-time movies.
- The Petry proposal for new TV commercial time limits.
- The NAB Code Authority's propos-

al to simplify and streamline TV time standards.

▪ The move by independent UHF's toward setting up their own association.

And, as if those problems weren't sticky enough, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists pulled live talent off the television and radio networks four days before the NAB convention was to begin (see page 92).

**Soft Spot** ▪ Spot-TV billing, off in many markets since the start of the year, is at the crux of many of the industry's problems. The reps are maintaining, virtually to a man, that increased competition from the networks for tightened advertiser allocations has made the affiliates and the networks direct competitors for the same spot dollar.

In part, the reps are tossing a big portion of the blame on the Television Bureau of Advertising and they feel that TVB hasn't changed its role as fast as the industry has changed.

**Own Trade Group** ▪ Several reps are looking at ways to improve TVB's service, to make it an impartial salesman for the whole medium. But there appears to be an undercurrent of growing dis-

content among some major reps with TVB's role. These reps are of the opinion that either they should have a larger voice in TVB activities or that they should create a spokesman of their own.

Indicative of this concern by reps and stations is the announcement of NBC-TV last month that it is considering increasing the commercials in the Tuesday and Saturday night movies from 14 to 16 minutes per hour. Also under consideration by the network is an expansion of regular station breaks and a rewriting of affiliation contracts to bring station-payment formulas into line with today's network practice of selling participations rather than whole shows.

The reason for the increase in movie commercial minutes: NBC says its cost of acquiring prime-time films is going up.

To appease the affiliates, who took on a lean and hungry look after the announcement of more movie commercials, NBC said it would not change the existing two 62-second breaks in the films. It would also add a third 62-second break for Saturday night films



Mr. Armstrong



Mr. Murphy



Mr. Revercomb



Mr. Cobb



Mr. Ferguson

The largest National Association of Broadcasters convention in history takes place in Chicago this week and more than 5,000 broadcasters are expected to take part in this 45th annual meeting. Above are five men who played important roles in getting

this year's convention off the drawing board and into reality: George W. Armstrong, Storz Stations, Omaha, and John T. Murphy, Avco Broadcasting Corp., Cincinnati, vice chairmen of the NAB radio and television boards, respectively, and convention co-chair-

men; Grover Cobb, KVGB Great Bend, Kan., and Robert W. Ferguson, WTRF-TV Wheeling, W. Va., chairmen of the radio and TV boards respectively, and Everett Revercomb, NAB secretary-treasurer and convention manager for the association.