



Television Magazine

RADIO STUDY

no. 33

Analysis of the new sound in Los Angeles:
The Crowell-Collier radio station KFWB.

RADIO—WEST COAST STYLE

WHEN a station dominates a market such as Los Angeles (at least eighteen AM and seven FM stations), with a 2.0 share of audience, nearly twice that of its nearest rival, it is indeed radio operation that deserves close study. KFWB, the Crowell-Collier station in Los Angeles, has an successful track record which few stations in the first 10 markets can rival. This station has one of the largest listening audiences in the nation today.

That this pattern is not peculiar to the Los Angeles market is best illustrated by the rapid rise of sister station KFWB in San Francisco, which has vaulted from sixth to second place in share of audience in the last eight months.

What is behind the Crowell-Collier radio touch? What has permitted it to win the favor of listeners so quickly?

Polished version of music and news formula

These stations program in the tradition of post-war independent radio, the music and news formula. But they have refined the pattern of "modern radio" still further. They have evolved a product which started with the techniques of Storz and McLendon, and the WNEW concept, but to which much that is unique has been added. Not only is their product polished and perfected, but it is much more relaxed. Excitement, fun and entertainment are communicated, yet without the frenetic quality so common to many "modern" radio stations. The noise and the shouting, the phoney stimuli used to simulate excitement by other outlets are not heard on these stations.

Expert management and guidance is, of course, at the

heart of this success. Two experienced men are the brains behind the Crowell-Collier radio formula. They are Robert Munford Purcell, the 48-year-old director of its broadcast division, and 30-year-old Chuck Blore, vice president of programming for Crowell-Collier. Tall, genial Bob Purcell is also president of KFWB and the youngish Blore is its director of programming.

KFWB's real achievement in Los Angeles was lifting itself from a close second to a strong first in its market. The station was, by no means, a weak franchise when purchased by Crowell-Collier in 1957, but features were created which enabled it to project itself much above the rest of the pack.

For the most part present day non-network radio is composed of the "prototype hour." In this hour, the same elements of broadcasting are repeated constantly; they are recorded music, news, disk jockey chatter, commercials, public service announcements and promotion material. These hours are, of course, repeated throughout the day. Within the rigidity and sameness of the "prototype hour," KFWB created diversity. It is that diversity which has attracted its listeners in greater numbers.

In a typical "prototype hour" at KFWB, there are 13 records played, 16 minutes of commercials presented, five minutes of time consumed by public service, five minutes of time allowed for international, national and local news, two-and-a-half minutes devoted to local news solely, and two-and-a-half minutes allocated to news of sports. Disk jockeys are on mike about three minutes each hour.

One of the keys to KFWB's programming distinction is its

To page 77