

HOW MEXICO UNION WORKS

9 Divisions Cover All Crafts; Health, Old-Age Home, Funeral, Sports, Among Member Benefits

By CHARLES POORE

MEXICO CITY, D. F., July 25.—The Mexican performer, with the backing of the various craft unions centralized under the Federación Nacional de Uniones Teatrales y Espectáculos Públicos, is now in the strongest bargaining position since the formation of the union in 1918. The performer here is now able to receive greater welfare benefits than ever with the union's most recent acquisition, a home for retired actors, which was recently opened.

One of the most dramatic instances of the concern for the welfare of its membership was recently exhibited when the union paid all expenses for the funeral of Carlos Lopez, gave a grant to his family, and sent a specially chartered plane to bring the body back to Mexico City.

The strength of the union lies in the vertical set-up of its jurisdiction. It has under its wing all crafts allied with the theater. The federation contains nine subsidiaries, foremost of which is the National Association of Actors, a broad union which makes no distinction as to the type of house or medium in which the performer works. The other eight subdivisions are Association of Directors and Organizers of Shows, Mexican Union of Prompters, Union of Electricians and Scene Painters, Musicians, Authors, Composers and Editors, Employees of Theaters and Public Shows, and Ticket Agents.

Federation Supervises

The federation supervises the activities of all its subsidiaries and co-ordinates their endeavors. Federation secretary is Jorge Mondragon. Sarita Eugenia McDonald is the assistant. First of the unions after its formation had its jurisdiction

expanded until it now covers the entire performer and amusement worker field.

The central office of the federation, representing a membership of about 10,000, acts as a clearing house for the entire republic. Requests for talent from the United States are handled thru this office.

Members pay 2 per cent of their wages as dues. In return they receive, aside from union protection, free hospitalization service, keep in the new home for retired actors, and funeral expenses. In addition, the federation also encourages (See MEXICO UNION on page 17)



ONE of the Stem events of the week was the dedication of the Times Square Service Center for boys in khaki and blue, bankrolled by Pepsi-Cola. It teed off with speeches by Butch La Guardia, Helen Hayes, John Golden and others, in which much emphasis was placed on shower facilities and other comforts and also on the fine location. Which last evoked the prompt comment from a bystander: "Yea, the bookies are just around the corner." . . . Golden in his talk went on record as saying that Miss Hayes is the finest actress in America—a dangerous statement in any case. So Miss Hayes crossed him up by reciting *The Star-Spangled Banner* with enough corn to choke the Schnickelfritz band. The words of the anthem are strong enough to carry themselves; all they need is a sincere delivery. . . . The anthem, incidentally, had to be recited instead of sung because Local 802 of the musicians' union refused permission for part of the *This Is the Army* pit band of enlisted men to play for the ceremonies, which were broadcast. . . . The Pepsi-Cola banner over the new canteen occupies the ad space formerly leased by its competitor, Coca-Cola. . . . Speaking of *This Is the Army*, it's soldier-actors, contrary to popular belief, have anything but a cream-puff assignment. At least 10 a day are on punishment detail for minor infractions and, in addition to drilling, etc., the cast has to do all the dirty work around the theater during the day. . . . The boys at Columbia Pictures threw a combination sneak preview and trade press showing of *The Talk of the Town* at Loew's 83d Street Wednesday night (22), and they can sit back now and take it easy. The film will be one of the year's best, with Jean Arthur, Cary Grant and Ronald Colman giving superlative performances. Grant, in particular, does a magnificent job in the role of a mill worker. It might even start a trend toward labor heroes in filmdom.

HOW Broadway Situations Are Born: A certain press agent lost plenty of sleep recently when his meal ticket, a name band leader, parted company with one of his vocalists. The vocalist began explaining to the trade why he left the band, which aroused the maestro to an indignant denial and some pretty extravagant statements of his own. The poor flack had to bat out press releases which, if printed, would have wrecked the singer's reputation. But after planting the releases the p. a. had to recall them and issue new ones—because the hard-thinking wand-waver had decided to alter his version of the incident. And as if this weren't enough, after the corrected statements had been distributed the band leader suffered still another change of heart and ordered the perspiring tub-thumper to kill all the stories. Result is that the p. a. is now in hot water with the press, the band leader is the object of a lot of horselaughs among those in the know, and the singer is mad at almost everyone.

THE Hurricane just can't seem to get rid of fathers. During the run of Gertrude Niesen at the spot her pappy was a constant fixture around the place—and now, with Billy Vine succeeding Miss Niesen, Dave Vine is occupying the box formerly tenanted by Miss Niesen's pop. Maybe they should book Milton Berle, just for a change of diet. . . . Maurice Zolotow, who created something of a national sensation with his *SEP* article on Broadway Rose, has another saga in the forthcoming August 1 issue of *The Post*. This one concerns Howard Cullman, probably most active and certainly most successful of legit angels. Incidentally, the caption for one of the article's pictures mixes up Benay Venuta and Constance Moore. . . . Before Lou Levy's induction into the army Wednesday (22), the Andrews Sisters, whose personal manager he is, arranged a surprise party for him, inviting all of his competitors in the music publishing business. But it illustrated the danger of surprise parties. The sponsors of it themselves got the major surprise because, when Lou found out about it at the last minute, he was unable to attend because of previous commitments. (On top of that, he was rejected by the army). . . . The rumor that this is going to be a long war is now official. Loew's have pulled down the long electric sign, stretching some six stories, from the corner of the Mayfair Theater Building.

AGVA Seeks To Up Salaries for Negroes in L. A.

HOLLYWOOD, July 25. — American Guild of Variety Artists wants to get night clubs to raise pay of colored performers. Two clubs have signed agreement so far, the 90-90 Club and the Cricket Club.

AGVA claims it has been a practice of some night spot operators to chisel on colored talent.

It was claimed that "Little Harlem" spots on Central Avenue were hard to reach, and that most good-will work would have to be carried out in clubs in the regular entertainment zones which feature colored talent. However, the Central Avenue situation is nothing to worry about, according to a union spokesman, because, with the exception of Club Alabam, the rest are small spots.

75 Private Clubs In Pittsburgh Use Sunday Eve Shows

PITTSBURGH, July 25.—Pro talent is being hired for Sunday night shows at about 75 private clubs in Western Pennsylvania. Flesh entertainment for a paying public is legally banned.

Foremost in presenting Sunday shows to members and friends are units of the Elks, Eagles, Moose, American Legion and similar clubs.

Talent-fee for Sunday night is \$7 in the city, \$8 within 100 miles radius, and whatever can be bargained for in sites beyond 100 miles of Pittsburgh. Pay for a six-night week is \$36 minimum per person.

Novelty talent particularly is in demand, according to Agent Don D'Carlo, who books 100 acts weekly in 40 clubs in Western Pennsylvania. Jugglers, animal specialties and instrumental novelties, especially.

Because so many of the clubs buy few acts but want long shows, talent with a lengthy, varied repertoire is favored.

Aqua Follies, Wirth Lake, Minneapolis

(Reviewed Monday Evening, July 20)

As one of the top features of the third annual Minneapolis Aquatennial, the *Follies* offers better than two hours of solid entertainment, with vaudeville and high diving and swimming mixed quite well into a potpourri of much fun. Produced by F. W. (Nick) Kahler at a sum reputed to range from \$25,000 to \$30,000, *Follies* is shown in the amphitheater built at Wirth Lake here. John Ross Reed staged and directed. Ray Dean is emcee.

Program is opened by Ben Barnett's ork playing *Waters of Minnetonka, Beautiful Lady, Carioaca and Strike Up the Band*. The Frank Bennet Singers, eight men, do *I Am an American*. Parade of the Mermaids includes 29-girl line plus nine-girl water ballet. Pauline Dorn, strong-voiced soprano, leads audience in national anthem. The Lake Shore Water Ballet of nine girls takes the pool to present a beautifully done concerto in excellent precision. Got strong hand.

Dorothy Ziegler and Billy McDonald, divers, and Fred Springer, comic diver, take over the springboards to present some very intricate and (by Springer) funny manipulations into the water from the various towers.

Adolph Kiefer, present world's champion backstroke and medley swimmer, is next in the pool to present a swimming exhibition. He does an excellent job to heavy applause. Kiefer makes a fine talking man, too, as he goes into a bit of repartee with the emcee.

Chinese Fantasia, vaude number, is presented by Pauline Dorn, the Margot Koche Girls (dancers), Bennett Singers and 13-girl line dressed as Chinese. Fine entertainment. Good reception.

A race against time presents Otto Jaretz and Henry Kozlowski, sprint swimmers, in some very fast movements in the pool. Both received fine hand. Two 11-year-olds, Zoe Ann Olsen and Harry Spannus, get a tremendous hand with some very fancy diving, with Harry jumping from the uppermost tower. Beautiful diving form is next presented by Helen Crlenkovich, A.A.U. world's champion woman diver; Ronnie Trumbull and Miller Anderson, with Miss Crlenkovich jumping from the top tower.

The Lake Shore Water Ballet then does a *Waltz of the Flowers* number that is beautiful and uncanny in its precision. (See AQUA FOLLIES on page 17)

PHIL SPITALNY

(This Week's Cover Subject)

PREVIOUS to forming his amazing all-girl orchestra several years ago, Phil Spitalny was on top, internationally known for his work in theaters, on the radio and in important locations. But since developing the all-girl outfit, his stature in the musical world has increased. Perhaps the outstanding tribute paid Spitalny has been the testimonial of Arturo Toscanini, who labels Spitalny's weekly "Hour of Charm" broadcast his favorite radio program.

That Toscanini is out alone in his high appraisal of the Spitalny program is attested to by its consistently high Crossley rating and the enthusiasm with which the orchestra is greeted in its all-too infrequent personal appearances.

The Spitalny formula is not merely to conduct a group of women who happen to be able to play musical instruments. His orchestra is composed for the most part of conservatory graduates, all excellent singers, some of them capable enough arrangers to help Spitalny with the scoring. The orchestra is rehearsed as carefully as the finest symphony group, and the results pay dividends.

In addition to pleasing a whole lot of radio listeners with its unusual brand of music, the Spitalny band is noted as a discoverer and developer of tunas. Last year's Spitalny hit was "Madeline" and this year it is their thrilling "We Must Be Vigilant," adapted from the familiar "American Patrol."

Spitalny is heard on Columbia records and is sponsored each Sunday over NBC by General Electric.

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