

SPONSORS STILL LOVE MAIL

Cash and Paper Novelties Plus Diamonds and War Bonds Produce Results

CBS Has 14, NBC 11 Programs With Come-Ons

NEW YORK, July 31.—Hooper and Crossley surveys notwithstanding, no sponsor is completely happy unless he sees fan mail. Once again free offers, premiums and whatnots are easing their way back into the network broadcasting picture.

Of course, the hundreds of giveaways that were available as pre-war box-top come-ons are no longer to be had, and in many instances there are no box tops. As a result promotion men for ad agencies, networks and sponsors are forced to dream up other mail pulls, most of them without too much imagination. Summer, 1943, No. 1 pull is naturally Mr. Whisker's securities—War Stamps, Bonds and greenbacks.

Paper Pulls

Balance of offers come under paper heading—printed copies of programs, "jokes," recipes, "lists of questions," speeches, lectures, sermons, etc.; recipes and household hints books, premium catalogs, health pamphlets, volumes of general information, encyclopaedias and technical matters, pictures of program personalities and books on a wide variety of other subjects.

Sponsors offering merchandise premiums have dwindled almost to extinction. They can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Miles Laboratories still offer a portable radio promising delivery after the war. A couple of ration bookholder offers, candy bars, cigarettes and diamond rings complete the list. Incidentally, the supply of "chips off the old blarney stone" seems to be holding up. Tiffany Diamonds are still popular, pulling 10,000 fan letters a week for one program.

CBS and NBC both report that they have fewer programs with inducements for audience mail now than this time last year.

NBC hopes that institutional campaigns will replace many present programs that make premium offers. Right now they have 11 come-on programs, but hope to inspire definite decline in the next few months.

CBS Mail Pleas Up

CBS with 14 offer-making shows has experienced a slight increase in programs of this type in the last three months. Its Lady Esther shot, with its free powder sample and Cudahy Packing Company's *Something To Talk About*, which pays off to the tune of \$100, \$50 and \$25 in cash each week, are two that are responsible for an upsurge in fan mail.

In fall program planning no indication of a change in giveaways is apparent. General Electric's *Hour of Charm* has a contest slated for debuting August 1; the 101 prizes in War Bonds totaling \$10,500. Other programs do not intend to deviate from gold-edged securities or paper pattern.

Programs pay off in stamps and bonds for such brain-strainers as "the rarest and most amusing sentence composed of various types of food," "unusual facts," "household hints," "lists of hard-to-spell words," "little known historical facts," "jokes," "recipes," "lists of questions," "lists of answers," "original verses for designated tunes" and "hard-to-believe stories." Others award prizes of bonds, stamps or outright cash for general war slogans or slogans on a specific drive, usually bond selling. These, however, are in the minority. Regardless of the dearth of the variety, listener response has upped, the three major nets claim. The Blue's audience mail has increased 100,000 over last year's half-year figure.

Blue's Four Leaders

Hop Harrigan, *Gene and Glen*, *Breakfast at Sardi's* and *The Quiz Kids* are credited with substantially aiding in the increased letter writing at the Blue. *Gene and Glen*, sustainer which has been

off for several weeks, rolled up an impressive mail response by offering a ration bookholder and G and G picture in exchange for a dime and "your favorite soap wrapper." Wrappers are still deluging WJZ and station hasn't decided if it should lay in a new supply of ration books and pictures or disappoint its listeners and return the dimes.

Hop Harrigan, also sustaining, pulled 124,264 letters in its second month. Giveaway was cash and toy aeroplanes. Both *Breakfast at Sardi's* and *Quiz Kids* remain steady in mail pull.

Mutual can claim only one program that offers something for nothing. Up-ton Close's talks are mailed out without cost with no strings attached.

There's quite a few sustaining programs that now offer dough and a few commercials that pay cash on the line. Vick Chemical Company's *Dr. I Q*, which pays off to the tune of \$200 for quiz suggestions and \$250 for biographical sketches, leads in the latter group. Brown & Williamson, not so generous, gives \$25 and \$50 in cash and throws in a carton of Raleigh cigarettes to contest winners on its *Beat the Band*. Colgate-Palmolive-Peet pays \$11 for jokes and augments the dough with a six-month supply of their "pearly smile increaser."

24 Candy Bars and \$5.00

Clark Candy Company distributes candy bars in 24-bar lots accompanied by an easy-to-take \$5 bill. WJZ's sustainer, *History Is Fun*, offers \$25 and the Encyclopaedia Britannica as spoils. Another sustaining shot on the same station called *Singo* awards \$4 and \$8 for cute combinations of song titles. The Blue's *Lulu and Johnny* give two, three and five-dollar prizes for jokes, and winners are picked by a studio laugh meter.

Some of the commercial shows that pay off in War Bonds are P. Ballantine & Son's *Three-Ring Time*—\$25 bond per week; H. J. Heinz Company *Information Please* gives \$57 in bonds and stamps plus a 24-volume set of Encyclopaedia Britannica (program off until September 13—with offer still good). Bristol-Myer's *Noah Webster* pays with War Stamps and \$25 bonds for lists of words.

Listeners still respond to free offers, and despite the dearth of giveaway variations sponsors use them to keep their thumbs on the public's palpitating pulse.

BURLY PLOW-UNDER

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something better or else, if in uniform, find the canteens and other free entertainment much more inviting.

Inability of the burlesque impresarios to send out traveling shows last season also hurt. Because of transportation limitations and talent shortages, touring units had strip principals and comics only. And these were plenty scarce because of the more attractive salaries in other entertainment fields. Burly as the breaking-in point was passed up entirely by performers.

Biggest headache was in rounding up a line of girls. Change of line faces each week had a strong appeal with the patrons. There was little or no change this season, it having been found necessary for each house to get up stock line. The type of chorus girl attracted took burly back a decade or two. Only requirement for getting a job in the line was that the girl have two legs and be able to lift at least one of them part of the time. The age ceiling was frozen—at about 80.

Next Season Worse

Outlook for next season looks even worse. Not all the peel palaces that called it a season early spring are expected to be able to open in the fall.

PROGRAM REVIEWS

EWT Unless Otherwise Indicated

Hanson W. Baldwin

Reviewed Sunday, 3:15 p.m. Style—Military and naval commentary. Sustaining on WJZ (New York) and the Blue Network.

Hanson W. Baldwin knows what the war is all about from a military point of view and his introductory session July 25 proved that. What he didn't prove, however, was what he was going to be able to do that isn't done already. Naturally he has an audience among his *New York Times* readers, but the average dialer hitting him for the first time just wouldn't find anything in his voice or his presentation to hold the dial at the Blue spot.

That's one of the problems that authorities face when they come to the broadcast medium. Having something to say isn't enough to snag a decent Crossley or Hooper rating. Unlike a column in a newspaper, air wordage has to be showmanly presented on the air.

There's nothing wrong with Baldwin's voice nor with his delivery. No doubt National Concert and Artists Corporation, who represent him, will find a selling broadcasting frame in which he will fit and become salable to a sponsor. It's a shame, however, that Baldwin didn't find a format before he hit the networks.

Joseph M. Koehler.

"Report to the Nation"

Reviewed Tuesday, 9:30 to 10 p.m. Style—Dramatic news report. Sponsor—124 electric light and power companies. Agency—N. W. Ayer. Station, WABC (New York) and CBS.

One hundred and twenty-four public utilities thru 126 CBS stations started sponsoring *Report to the Nation* on Tuesday (27). The propriety of electric light and power companies sponsoring a dramatized news report is questionable, but a discussion of this has no place in a review of the program. CBS has, it's reported, refused to permit the collective sponsors the right of censorship over the material. The fact that the question came up at all makes the program suspect.

Report to the Nation naturally has its program ups and downs. Some weeks it has the punch of Dempsey at his best and on other weeks it's a Dempsey at the recent trial. On its commercial debut it was neither the best that it's been nor the worse. Perhaps the news was so dramatic that the program decided not to compete with the front pages at the moment. There was something not to "stop press" about the proceedings.

Earl McGill did his smooth production job, and this is as tough a presentation to stop-watch as any on the air. The writing wasn't inspired, but it was a good job by Bill Slocum Jr. and Margaret Miller.

Victor Bay didn't miss a musical cue, and both the announcer and Doug Edwards, reporter for CBS news, were really swell. One of the first bits that didn't register was the insertion of some direct English broadcasts from Rome, followed by the comment that the next time that *Report to the Nation* would bring an English voice from Rome it would be "the voice of a CBS news correspondent." The idea must have sounded like a million dollars on paper. It fell as flat as

Even house personnel is becoming an impossible problem. Ushers are at a premium, and most of the houses are doing without. The gals can do better at the movie temples if not interested in war work. The few males available are only interested in ushering at the backstage dressing rooms. It's a lean season ahead and only constructive suggestion offered up to keep interest in burly alive is to send out 100 road companies of *Star and Garter*.

an actor's page of script which has been discarded during a broadcast.

The bits in which actual heroes from the fronts participated also must have seemed good idea, but somehow or other they missed and listeners felt sorry but not thrilled by it all.

Report to the Nation is a good show. It will continue to have its ups and downs, as all news shows must. When the news is less dramatic the program will be more spinal thrilling.

The good-will commercials were in good taste. If the listener wondered why a commercial was necessary at this time, why public utilities had to spend the public's money to advertise something that they didn't want people to use too much of right now, he didn't wonder too much. However, there was one section of the program that is suspect. That's the portion during which CBS's Don Pryor is sent out thruout the nation to report on the home front. The picture of a world after the war in which everything will be changed is something that advertisers should stop selling.

Electrical firms more than any other should realize that the word "electronics" is being misused every day and not misuse it themselves. You'll never call as they did on the broadcast the "electronics people to check the air filter." Electronics would simply turn the filter on or off. You'll have to call an air-filter man to service an air filter, and the sooner that everyone is taught to understand just what electronics is, the better they'll be prepared for what may come 5 to 10 years after peace.

How about having the commercials on *Report to the Nation* stick to facts also. J. M. K.

"Bob Crosby and Company"

Reviewed Sunday, 10:30-11 p.m. Style—Variety. Sponsor—Old Gold Cigarettes. Agency—J. Walter Thompson. Station—WEAF (New York) and NBC.

There's something engaging about the opening of this show. You can't help liking the way Les Tremayne eases into his introduction with "my name's Les Tremayne." From that point on, however, the show isn't hot. Bob is second-rate Crosby sometimes swell, but more often sour Bing, and we're not thinking of cherries.

Also there's something nice about bringing a "new girl singer" to the network mike every Sunday evening—if they bring a "new" girl, but, starting with the first show they've been bringing girls who have been heard on nets in minor roles and sometimes in singing roles that haven't been so minor. Also the fans would like to think of "fresh voices" as being sweet and happy at the opportunity—instead of being handed "smart" comedy routines—or human interest lines in which Bob Crosby is cast as the stooge.

Matty Malneck's orchestra is supposed to be Bob Crosby's in this show and doesn't register—as the type that the audience thinks of—as Bob's. At least it didn't on the shows heard (July 18 and 25).

Taking the premiere, Bob Crosby opened with the Pied Pipers in *What's the Good Word, Mr. Bluebird?* Bob wasn't too bad in this. Later Les Tremayne joined Bob in *Laughing Tony*, from Bing's latest picture, *Dixie*, which was too bad. It's a tough comedy song to do, and at the worse it's something that these two had better forget, if they haven't forgotten it already. The first commercial came at eight and a half minutes after the start of the broadcast. It was the usual Old Gold "applehoney" take and it didn't slow up the show. Then came another musical number and then the "discovery," Eileen Wilson. In one agency release she was called "20-year-old Los Angeles high-school girl." In the NBC release she was called "20-year-old University of California junior." When (See Reviews on opposite page)