

Radio on the Rise

WHEN CBS RADIO announced a 6.25% increase in station compensation [B•T, June 11], it was important news to more than the network's affiliates. Here is a tangible dollars-and-cents sign that tv's rise as a major advertising medium does not mean radio's eclipse. Here is the strongest kind of evidence that, in the belief of CBS Radio, at least, the bottom has been reached by network radio and the upward climb begun.

Alone, the CBS Radio action is important. But it is far from the only evidence that things are looking up for radio. In recent weeks, the pages of this magazine have reported:

- Radio station sales at record prices: Crowell-Collier pays \$2.35 million for KWFB Los Angeles, a city with more than 20 radio stations and a full complement of seven tv stations. Todd Storz buys WQAM Miami for \$850,000, an all-time high for a regional station. Station brokers report more seekers for good stations than sellers.

- Radio set sales continue to climb: In the first four months of 1956, a total of 1,984,915 radio sets were sold, compared to 1,609,182 sets sold in the like period of 1955. And that's without counting automobile radios which are bought with the car and not over the counter.

- Spot business is good: Summer radio campaigns have been placed for Nescafe coffee, Tangee lipsticks, Star-Kist tuna, Gelvatex paint, Pal razor blades, Anna Myers foods, Cheerios, Jewell processed chicken, Dromedary cake mix, Hills Bros. coffee and Tetley tea (to cite only those plans most recently announced).

- Network business is improving: At the end of *Monitor's* first year, NBC Radio reported that this weekend program service had since its inception attracted more than 40 advertisers and grossed billings of well over \$4 million. Sleep-Eze this month became a co-sponsor of three daytime serials on CBS Radio, to which Colgate-Palmolive Co. returns in September, also as a daytime advertiser. Perhaps these contracts, added to other new billings, were behind the network's decision to restore a portion of the cuts previously made in compensation to its affiliates.

A considerable part of the credit for radio's upward swing goes to Radio Advertising Bureau, whose presentations to individual advertisers and to industry groups have frequently opened the doors to the radio salesmen who got the business. RAB is not around to pose in the contract-signing pictures, but there are many that never would have been taken if RAB hadn't been there first. Heavily stepped-up sales activities planned for the latter part of the year, now that its budget increase has been approved, should make RAB an even more potent creator of new business for radio.

In 1954, for the first time since the depression-ridden '30's, radio broadcasting's overall revenues failed to equal those of the year before. Last year, sparked by a healthy upswing in local business, radio billings showed a gain over 1954 and a total second only to 1953's all-time high. Now, at midyear 1956, all signs point to gains on all fronts that will make this another record year, second to none.

The Other 'Commission'

IN THESE days of network investigations, uhf-vhf crises, and other phenomena of both immediate and long-range consequence, there may be a tendency among broadcasters to give only fleeting attention to the rising debate over the commission method of compensating advertising agencies. There still being only 24 hours in the day, the tendency would be understandable. But it would also be unfortunate.

At the moment the debate is being waged primarily between advertisers (who started it) and agencies (who contend that this ground has been fought over before and settled long ago in the most satisfactory way for all concerned). For the immediate future, at least, it appears apt to continue to pit advertisers and agencies as the chief protagonists and/or negotiators. Whatever will come of it, we don't profess to know.

We do know, and have said before, that the interests of media—of whom broadcasters are an increasingly important part—are inextricably tied up with the outcome. This is true whether the present compensation method is changed little or much or not at all. Broadcasters, along with other media, owe it to themselves to keep abreast of developments.

Elsewhere in this issue, B•T devotes several pages to a re-



Drawn for BROADCASTING•TELECASTING by Duane McKenna

"You guys are lucky—you don't have to spell."

capitulation of the controversy and its long history, with key quotes from speakers on each side, plus generous reproduction of the prevailing "decision" that settled the matter in the past. The purpose of this extensive treatment is to inform, not to inflame or to sell the merits of either side. The purpose of this editorial, however, is to sell everybody possible on the importance of the deliberations that are going on, and to urge all broadcasters to take an active, informed, and continuing interest in them.

Broadcasting's Crying Need: II

IN this space two week ago we cited the urgent need for a national public relations project for broadcasting.

We now renew that plea, after sitting in on a week of hearings before the Senate Commerce Committee on television networking. The abject lack of understanding on the part of some members of the committee, charged as it is with the origination of legislation dealing with the broadcast media, was frightening. Aside from the committee experts, most of the senators hadn't the slightest notion of how radio and television function.

This, we submit, makes even more essential and emergent the launching of a continuing public relations campaign. If the lawmakers themselves are not informed, how can they legislate in the best interests of an even less informed public?

This week the NARTB combined boards meet in Washington. Before the Television Board will be a proposal from its Television Information Committee recommending an adequately financed public relations program. It will urge a broad and vigorous project with the necessary creative talent in the right places. It will recommend this program as a fundamental function of NARTB itself.

We concur. We think it should be enlarged to include the broadcast media, and that means radio as well as television. It should have No. 1 priority, even if it means curtailment of other activities to remain within budgetary limitations.

Teeth: Real or False

THE ANNOUNCEMENT by the Television Code Review Board that several code memberships were in jeopardy [B•T, June 14] is the strongest action taken against offenders since the code was adopted in 1952.

It is to be fervently hoped that no stronger action will be needed.

Yet it is to be hoped with equal fervor that if stronger action becomes necessary to bring violators into line, the code board will have the courage to take it.

As we have said since the adoption of the code, it is an instrument of cynicism unless it is (1) enforceable and (2) enforced. If there is to be a code, members must adhere to it or be expelled. The alternative is to turn the code seal into a label of approval for any kind of broadcasting—good, bad or indifferent.