

SPOT'S PAPER JUNGLE

(Cont'd from page 33)

The question usually raised when a clearing house for spot is suggested, is: "How are you ever going to get a majority of some 3,000 radio and 500 tv station managements to get together, when they're so competitive?" The answer is that somebody did it and made it work with the music publishers — and they can scarcely be called non-competitive.

"If broadcasting could only begin all over again," said one adman, "so many things could be done differently and more simply. In the case of spot, both radio and tv have outgrown their bookkeeping systems. The value of both media keeps increasing, but the machinery of its bookkeeping remains a primitive art."

Kevin Sweeney, president of Radio Advertising Bureau, sees three major problems in spot buying: (1) rate cards, (2) paperwork, (3) "family resemblance." On the subject of paperwork, Sweeney says, "Much of the paper which is exchanged in buy-

ing spot has no real function because the paperwork is done after a campaign is under way. If we trust one another well enough to put a campaign on the air on verbal orders," asks Sweeney, "do we really need to follow up with as much papers as we now use?"

Sweeney explains the "family resemblance" problem as follows: "When a station representative goes in to sell, it's helpful if rate cards of stations on his list bear some resemblance to one another. Then he can at least present a simpler buy for the part of the medium he represents."

As for rate card structures, he says, "Unlike newspapers, radio rate cards vary to the point of confusion. A decision to make a buy cannot be based on a clean-cut decision to pick this or that plan; and there's no pattern within a market or by station types. A major job of persuading stations to simplify their rate cards has to be done which is something we've undertaken within RAB."

On the side of definition, the Storz

stations pioneered a meticulous defining of what constitutes a national and what constitutes a local advertiser. By their definition, the advertiser who can qualify for local rates is one whose copy is mostly local, whose billings emanate from a local agency, and whose bills are paid through a local bank.

In the move toward a single rate for all, the first station group to come up with such a plan is the Balaban Stations. "We felt," said John F. Box, executive vice president of the chain, "that the time is long overdue for all radio stations to face up to the fact that one of the greatest detriments to our business is the existence of a system of multiple prices for similar service. There is only one answer, and that is the single rate card for all advertisers, national, local and regional." To put it into effect, Balaban stations are gambling on \$100,000 in lost billings this year."

The local rate problem, while not directly responsible for the spot paperwork jungle, is certainly a contributing factor. The question of an agency paying full price is invariably, "Who's getting it wholesale?" and a lot of checking frequently goes into finding out.

"If I were giving a break to anybody," said one station rep to SPONSOR, "it would be to the national advertiser. Giving the cheaper rate to the local advertiser is the reverse of what it should be: he gains the most and should pay the higher rate if there must be any difference at all."

Beyond the double rate lies a widening area of grief to agency men involved in the paperwork of a spot buy. This is the complication within the rate structures of a single station.

All of these complications could be summed up in the words—"Frequency discount."

Newspapers smoothed out their operations after many years by eliminating these complex discounts. Today, probably less than 100 newspapers are complicating rate cards with such "rewards for frequent use." However, it has been noted of late, that a trend is developing among print media for a return to frequency discounts. "It would be ironic," said one adman, "if newspapers would now start to match spot in confusion."

Continued next week

**Cincinnati, Ohio? Bangor, Maine?
Savannah, Georgia?**



NO, THIS IS "KNOE-LAND"

(embracing industrial, progressive North Louisiana, South Arkansas, West Mississippi)

JUST LOOK AT THIS MARKET DATA

Population	1,520,100	Drug Sales	\$ 40,355,000
Households	423,600	Automotive Sales	\$ 299,539,000
Consumer Spendable Income	\$1,761,169,000	General Merchandise	\$ 148,789,000
Food Sales	\$ 300,186,000	Total Retail Sales	\$1,286,255,000

KNOE-TV AVERAGES 79.4% SHARE OF AUDIENCE

According to December 1958 ARB we average 79.4% of audience from Sign On to Sign Off 7 days a week. During 363 weekly quarter hours it runs 80% to 98%.

KNOE-TV

Channel 8
Monroe, Louisiana

CBS • ABC
A James A. Noc Station
Represented by
H-R Television, Inc.

First Street, Suite 200, Division One, Metropolitan Life Building, West Monroe, Louisiana