

**Telecasting Notes:** Acid pen of George Jean Nathan, the veteran dramatic critic, pours its vitriol on TV in Aug. *Esquire Magazine* with such observations as these: That TV is no threat to stage, offering as much competition to the legitimate theatre "as that offered the N. Y. Philharmonic by a Trinidad calypso band." That TV has failed to develop a single dramatic actress with any drawing power. That its leading playwrights and comedians have all been failures on the stage . . . Nathan goes on: "When you come right down to it, TV as we get it today is essentially just the movies without the popcorn, and its threat to the theatre is just about what some people once said the movies would be, which of course turned out to be negligible." And he concludes with this barb: "Let it [TV] go on for exactly what it is, a money-making invention for the pleasure, delight and enthusiasm of boobs with boob tastes and no one will complain, except maybe the boobs when they are surfeited with old western films in a state of flickering decay, crooners with overworked, rusty larynges and dramatic classics performed by actors who never got beyond *Three Men on a Horse* and *Charley's Aunt*" . . . "Nine production companies will turn out better than 80% of all TV film made this year," reports July 14 *Billboard*, listing these as the 9 "majors": Desilu, 4-Star Productions, Hal Roach Studios, Kagan-NBC Film, McCadden Productions, Revue Productions, Screen Gems, TCF-TV (20th Century-Fox), Ziv-TV . . . "Largest TV film project in Canadian history," as announced by CBC, begins soon with filming of 39 half-hour episodes of *Last of the Mohicans* by Normandie Productions Ltd., Toronto; CBC series will be distributed elsewhere in world by TPA . . . Hal Roach Studios' commercial div. reports first 6 months billings 58.8% over same period last year, 12 new major advertisers joining list of customers . . . Universal Pictures sells 31 serials produced in 1936-47 to Hygo TV Films for about \$1,500,000 . . . RKO Teleradio reported ready to enter TV film syndication field on major scale . . . Stepping up use of feature films, NBC flagship WRCA-TV, N. Y., plans daily 5:30-6:45 p.m. first-run series and Sat. & Sun. night movies next fall.

Martha Rountree's second *Press Conference* program on NBC-TV went virtually unnoticed by press this week because of lack of news—in sharp contrast to last week's tumultuous debut featuring Attorney General's scoop announcement of anti-trust suit against General Motors (Vol. 12:27). Guest July 11 was Sen. Mansfield (D-Mont.), who had no prepared "story," gave inquiring newsmen very little news. The Senator had defended Miss Rountree and her show against criticism of some newsmen who contended Brownell saved up big news to assure largest possible audience on commercially-sponsored program (Corn Products Refining Co.), and took crack at Brownell for not holding more press conferences on or off TV. Note: *Newark News'* Washington correspondent Arthur Sylvester reported that Brownell's old N.Y. law firm, Lord, Day & Lord, represents Corn Products Refining Co., but quoted those associated with program as saying that had nothing to do with getting Brownell on first show.

High school credit course in freshman English will be offered on WNBQ, Chicago, 10:30-11 a.m. for 40 weeks from Sept. 16, by arrangements this week between Jules Herbeveaux, NBC v.p. & WNBQ gen. mgr., with Dr. Benjamin Willis, supt. of schools. Period has been occupied for last 5 years by award-winning *Live & Learn*, and new show will be carried in color.

President Eisenhower signed S-3674 this week, aimed at tightening laws relating to fraud by TV, radio or wire communications from abroad (Vol. 12:15-16, 18, 27).

**A** VOWEDLY OUT TO ACQUIRE stations of its own, as part of its proposed foray into the TV business with the important MGM backlog of films (Vol. 12:25), Loew's Inc. has suggested to certain stations that it will give them exclusive deals on the films in exchange for stock interests—but, as far as we can learn, it has had no takers as yet. That's behind flurry of reports in the theatrical trade press that Loew's has begun dickering with stations, notably WATV, Newark-New York (Ch. 13), with view to acquiring ownership interests.

Spokesman for WATV, heavy film user which recently signed for the NTA package of 20th Century-Fox films, said no deal with Loew's is in progress and, though many people have sought to buy the station, there is no plan to sell it or any part of it. At one time Storer made overtures to buy, he said. As for swap-for-film deal, he called it "unthinkable." Loew's new TV operations v.p. is Charles C. (Bud) Barry, reporting to pres. Arthur M. Loew.

There were reports again that unnamed principals had bid between \$5,000,000 & \$6,000,000 for WABD, New York (Ch. 5), owned by DuMont Broadcasting Co.—but no confirmation. Carl M. Loeb, Rhoads & Co., which engineered spinoff last Oct. of DuMont broadcasting stations from manufacturing firm (Vol. 11:33-34, 39, 42), indicated at time that more capital would be raised in order to acquire additional stations, both TV & radio, but nothing has yet been done. DBC also operates WTTG, Washington (Ch. 5).

Report was published this week that *Philadelphia Bulletin*, which owns WCAU-TV (Ch. 10), had purchased 50% of WGBI-TV, Scranton (Ch. 22) from estate of Frank Megargee—but checkup revealed that, though there have been some preliminary talks about possibility of purchase, nothing has been finalized. Three-year-old CBS-affiliated uhf station in all-uhf Scranton-Wilkes-Barre area (4 stations) is reputed to be substantial money-maker and purchase by big-time operator like *Bulletin* would give uhf big boost—at least, in non-intermixed areas.

"Cash giveaways" on radio appear to be in for further FCC scrutiny, for this week it sent McFarland letter to Todd Storz's Mid-Continent Bestg. Co. questioning whether its proposed \$850,000 purchase of WQAM, Miami from *Miami Herald* (Vol. 12:21) is in public interest. Letter indicates hearing may be necessary because FCC has information that the "largest single factor in [Mid-Continent's] pattern of operation is the giving away of sums of money to the listening audience; that, in effect, Mid-Continent appears to be 'purchasing' the listening audience for its stations; that this pattern of operation, with its apparent success, appears to be the inducement to other broadcasters to adopt similar methods; that this pattern of operation tends to limit the ability of station licensees to provide the service they consider necessary to meet the tastes and needs of their communities and results in a deterioration of the quality of the service previously rendered to the public." Storz operates radios KOWH, Omaha; WTIK, New Orleans; WHB, Kansas City; WDGY, Minneapolis. WQAM sale is required under duopoly rule, inasmuch as owners are among principals in new WCKT, Miami (Ch. 7) and its radio adjunct WCKR (formerly WIOD).

Action to extend hours of daytime-only radio stations was urged this week in statement by Daytime Broadcasters Assn. pres. Jack S. Younts, in answer to request for comments by House Small Business Committee, which once indicated desire to investigate daytimers' complaints. Younts scored Commission's long delay in case, telling Committee "the limits of patience are reached when a turn of the wheels [of Govt.] must be measured in terms of decades or generations." DBA's Washington counsel now is Benedict Cottone, group having switched from Frieda Hennock.