

Radio In Review

By JOHN CROSBY

If You Can't Lick 'Em, Join 'Em

A SMALL storm has been kicked up by a booklet issued by the Theater Owners of America, proposing that motion picture theaters lick the menace of television simply by installing theater television and outbidding the broadcasters in their own field.

This proposition seems on the surface deceptively simple and at least threatening enough to have alarmed E. F. McDonald Jr., president of the Zenith Radio Co.

The plan, which I consider basically unsound, was advanced by Nathan L. Halpern, a television consultant, and has the blessing of Gael Sullivan, executive director of the Theater Owners of America.

Ten cities, says Mr. Halpern, soon will have theater television; that is, large-screen television operating on closed circuits unavailable to the home set owner.

If, say, 2,000 theaters were hooked up on a closed circuit, they would have a potential box-office of about \$1,800,000 for a single attraction and could well afford to pay \$500,000 for a single show. Half-a-million clams, of course, is quite a lot beyond the means of an advertiser who has no box-office.

ON SPECIAL EVENTS and sports, Mr. Halpern continues, the theater owner again simply could outbid the sponsors in gaining exclusive rights to the World Series, the Kentucky Derby, heavyweight prize fights, and even a wild flight of fancy—presidential inaugurations.

Mr. Halpern's proposition is a great deal more detailed than this outline, but I think I have the essential points.

Mr. Halpern has something to say about the "average" American family has two and a half children.

sets out to disprove a poll showing that the "average" American family has two and a half children.

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WHEN THE MOVIES came in, there were thousands of legitimate theaters in the land. There are now only a fraction of that number, and there are 19,000 movie theaters in their place.

Ten years from now, virtually every American home will be its own theater. There still will be a motion picture industry, as there still is a legitimate theater. But I doubt very much that there will be 19,000 motion picture theaters.

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SCHOOLMASTER IS KING... Who's taking off whose hat to whom? King Feisal of Iraq, a pupil in Harrow School, Middlesex, Eng., raises his hat to the headmaster at the roll call parade of the Speech Day ceremony. It was the first time since World War II that the wearing of hats at this function was compulsory.

sports event of any kind is not going to lure the set owner from Milton Berle when he stops to consider that 75-cent admission fee, the sifter problem and transportation to and from a theater.

In a foreword to this novel proposal, Gael Sullivan says:

"We theater owners... can make television our ally and not our enemy. Through our combined buying powers, our 'know-how', and televising over closed wavelength circuits, we can offer superlative quality of talent and showmanship not possible on home television... if we band together and harness this new giant, television, to work for us."

Both Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Halpern seem to misunderstand the nature of the revolution wrought by television. The whole point of television is that it is now possible to pipe Bob Hope into a man's living room.

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Roving Reports

VALLEY FORGE

THE fat man toiled wearily up a hill in the encampment of 47,000 Boy Scouts here for their second national jamboree.

Despite the hot sun the man—being romantic, as most fat people are—was swept with sentimental memories of his own days as a Scout.

He passed a tent just as a fat young boy in shorts came out. The fat man paused to rest, mopping his flushed, perspiring brow. He looked at the fat Boy Scout. Then he twisted his face in a grimace and said loudly:

"Kreeee!"

The fat boy stared doubtfully at him and asked:

"What did you say, sir?"

"KREEEE! KREEEE!" said the fat man hopefully. "I used to belong to the Eagle Patrol. That is the cry of the Eagle Patrol—Kreeee! Don't you recognize it?"

"No, sir, I don't."

"Well, I can't blame you for that," said the fat man. "I always thought it sounded funny for eagles to go around saying: 'Kreeee.' But that's what the Scout handbook says they did—when I was a boy. What is your patrol?"

The fat boy promptly clapped his hands loudly.

"NEVER MIND the applause," said the fat man angrily.

"But that is the sign of my patrol—the Beaver Patrol, sir," said the young Scout. "You clap your hands together. It is supposed to be like the sound of a beaver slapping his tail on the water as a signal of alarm to the other

beavers."

The fat man asked him why he had joined the Beaver Patrol. The boy fidgeted a moment, then said:

"Because I thought it was the easiest cry to make of any of the patrols listed in our handbook, sir."

"HMM," SAID the fat man. "What are some of them?"

"Well if you join the Otter Patrol our handbook says the cry is—'Koi-oi-oi!' I just couldn't say 'Koi-oi-oi!' and feel like I was a real Otter. And the cry for the Porcupine Patrol is just to make your teeth chatter. That's hard, too. And if you join the Gull Patrol you go 'Kow-hawk,' 'kow-hawk!'"

The fat man wanted to know about the other choices. So the fat boy ran into his tent and came back with the scout handbook opened at the page giving the patrol names and their calls.

THE FAT MAN glanced and saw a few:

Raven—"Kar-kaw."

Panther—"Keeoek."

Moose—"Oh-ah, oh-ah, oh-ah."

Flaming arrow—"Whssss."

Heron—"Quawk, quawk."

Owl—"Loud coo."

Alligator—"Grunting hiss."

Rattlesnake—"Rattle pebbles in can."

Pine Tree—"Rustle paper."

Beaver—"Clap hands once."

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