

DuMont buys WNEW on "an even balance sheet basis," officials explained—exceeds by better than \$3.4 million the \$4,076,887.67 which Messrs. Buckley, Wrather and Loeb paid for WNEW when they bought it from Mr. Buckley and a group of his associates in October 1955 [B•T, Oct. 31, 1955]. Mr. Buckley and associates had acquired it in 1954 from the William S. Cherry interests for about \$2.1 million.

The two latest WNEW transactions do not represent consecutive records for radio station sales. Between them stands the \$5.3 million paid by Westinghouse Broadcasting Co., in buying WIND Chicago (560 kc, 5 kw, also independent) from Ralph L. Atlas and associates last summer [B•T, Sept. 3, 1956].

WNEW's acquisition by DuMont is subject to DuMont stockholder approval, but officials anticipate no problem on that score.

It will be submitted to the regular meeting of stockholders on May 13. A majority vote is necessary for approval.

The purchase also involves the offering of approximately 300,000 additional shares of DuMont stock. Each current stockholder will be offered one new share for each three he now holds. There currently are about 900,000 shares outstanding.

Officials said Paramount, as largest single stockholder, not only endorsed the purchase but would buy its full quota.

The stock offering will be underwritten by Kuhn, Loeb & Co. and Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades & Co. John Loeb, one of the present WNEW owners, is senior partner of Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades & Co.

When DuMont Broadcasting was formed in the 1955 "spin-off," officials said the company would "take steps to acquire or establish as many television and radio sta-

tions in important markets in the country as FCC will approve." Last week, following announcement of their first acquisition, they acknowledged that they were interested in "further expansion," but said that at the moment they had no definite plans.

Mr. Wrather, young Texas and California industrialist (oil, real estate), has a grant for ch. 44 WJDW (TV) Boston. He owns 38.9% of Wrather-Alvarez Broadcasting Co., which owns KFMB-AM-TV (ch. 8) San Diego, holds a grant for ch. 13 KYAT (TV) Yuma, Ariz., and is paying \$2.15 million for ch. 10 KERO-TV Bakersfield, Calif. [B•T, March 18]. Mr. Wrather also owns the *Lassie* and *Lone Ranger* series.

#### \$600,000 for WEAT-AM-TV

FCC APPROVAL was sought last week for the \$600,000, plus obligations, purchase of

## ADVERTISERS & AGENCIES

# DICHTER UNVEILS NEW METHOD TO PRE-TEST TV COMMERCIALS

- Its name's a mouthful: Motivating Response Patterns
- It measures how people feel about tv advertisements
- Its advocates think it supersedes older techniques

TELEVISION commercial research to date has been a million dollar dud.

That's the impression Dr. Ernest Dichter, president of the Institute for Motivational Research, left with members of the American Marketing Assn. last week as his organization unveiled its new testing service, Motivating Response Patterns.

Speaking before two separate AMA luncheon sessions—the first on Tuesday at Chicago's Carson, Pirie, Scott & Co. department store, the second on Thursday at New York's Hotel Biltmore—Dr. Dichter and his colleagues not only hailed MRP as the first effective means of pre-testing television commercials, but also said that most of the methods employed over the past decade were "unreliable" and "misleading."

Describing MRP as "the end result of a 20-year search for a pattern of response that motivates marketing behavior," Dr. Dichter told AMA members that his institute's theory "combined the statistical approach to research with that of practical experience."

Albert Shepard, executive vice president of the Croton, N. Y., research organization, told how MRP could best serve the advertiser and his agency in bettering tv commercials.

Mr. Shepard first traced the history of MRP's development and noted that it combined Dr. Dichter's studies at both CBS and

J. Sterling Getschell Adv. with test runs on 117 tv commercials submitted by 29 advertisers (the latter over the past six months). Some 200,000 men, women and children were exposed to commercials of 700 brands. He said that "while we do not yet have all the answers," the institute feels safe enough to challenge traditional research theories.

"The past studies on behavior, such as 'like-dislike' or 'recognition-recall' were incomplete and often misleading," Mr. Shepard said. "For example, is it reliable to base a commercial's effectiveness on the fact that a consumer buys product 'A' over product 'B'? No, because you must first know why the consumer has picked brand 'A.'" (This is the basis of motivation research: to find out why they buy what they buy.)

Mr. Shepard noted that "recognition and recall of an advertising slogan does not insure the translation of this slogan into sales effectiveness." He cited several well-known slogans, among them "what'll you have?" and noted that while 9 out of 19 people will immediately chant "Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer," this method "has not solved Mr. [Marshall S.] Lachner's problems, nor that of Leo Burnett." (Mr. Shepard was referring to the current solicitations by a number of agencies for the Pabst account now serviced by Burnett. Mr. Lachner is Pabst Brewing Co.'s president.)

He went on to describe the "like-dislike" method of testing as "unreliable." By asking people what they liked or disliked about a certain commercial without stopping to ask why, Mr. Shepard continued, "you are listening to the critics—the people who judge a commercial on the basis that it is a commercial, and these people represent a narrow and biased sample of maybe only 15%.

The other 85% judge the commercial emotionally, perhaps unreasonably, but they, and not the critics, represent the consumers."

"Some commercials," Mr. Shepard said, "are like a blindfolded salesman talking to a gagged customer." The salesman cannot look through the tv screen and judge the effectiveness of his talk, and the viewer cannot tell the television salesman what she thinks of his commercial. He cited as an example the anxiety expressed in the agencies servicing the Revlon account in the early days of *The \$64,000 Question*.

"Those boys," Mr. Shepard recalled, "were terribly worried about the fluffs Hal March made when he delivered the very first commercials. They were afraid that in fluffing, March may have left out several important sales points. But when we checked the audience, we found the people were delighted with the show's spontaneity, with its almost casual approach to the commercials." He added, "Perhaps the agencies ought to write in a few more fluffs in their tv commercials."

Another "erroneous concept" hit by Mr. Shepard was the inclination of some agencies to judge the commercial's impact by the reaction of its various sales points on the test viewer. "Tv commercials must be judged as a whole," he said, "for the total impression may be more—or less—than the sum of its parts."

#### Accept or Reject

As an example, he cited a Philip Morris cigarette film commercial which showed a farmer astride his tractor, stopping to pull out a Philip Morris. "Now the viewer was ready to accept this," Mr. Shepard explained, "until a woman's hand popped out of the side of the screen, lighting the man's cigarette, and this gave way to the announcer."

The abruptness of the juxtaposition, he noted, "jarred" most viewers. Instead of accepting the commercial, he said, "they would now reject it, criticize it by saying, for instance, 'Bet that announcer got his shoes pretty muddy out on that farm.'"

The next point raised by Mr. Shepard was



DR. DICHTER