

barter and is not involved in the former pacts made by Regal.

Medallion initially got the pictures from Paramount Pictures Corp. in a separate transaction some years ago. The films were produced by the Pine-Thomas unit for Paramount and in

the motion picture field are considered in general as "the best of the Grade B's." ITC said the pictures will be first-run properties for many tv markets and include such stars as Barry Sullivan, Horace McMahon, Rory Calhoun and Rhonda Fleming.

ment of the properties, he assured newsmen, would rest with individual producers assigned to each MGM-TV program.

Capsule descriptions of each of the MGM-TV new series:

*Asphalt Jungle*—one-hour series, Jaime Del Valle who produced *Lineup* on CBS-TV as creative head. Series developed by MGM-TV staff from the novel by W. R. Burnett who is collaborating on telescripts with Paul Monash.

*The Islanders*—one-hour series, Richard Bare (director of pilots for *Cheyenne* and *77 Sunset Strip* now MGM-TV staff producer) assigned as producer. Tells adventures of two pilots with airline service in South Pacific.

*Dr. Kildare*—half hour series, Collier Young is producer; Lew Ayres would recreate his original role he played in MGM features. Dr. Kildare is conceived as an older man with romantic lead taken by actor in role of young hospital staff doctor. Robert Pirosh (wrote "Battleground" movie) assigned to script.

*National Velvet*—half hour series, story of a little girl and her high-spirited horse. Some touches of original motion picture preserved in this adaptation to be produced by Bob Maxwell who also produced *Lassie*.

*Me And My Gals*—half hour series, produced by Alan J. Lerner (book and lyrics of "My Fair Lady," "Brigadoon," "Gigi" and other productions). Comedy-adventure with musical flourishes.

*Steven V*—half hour series, produced by Mr. Monash, who also created story "glamour-adventure"—about an American educated ex-king of a small European country who becomes a private eye for international high society.

*P.S. From Paris*—half hour series, based on exploits of "New York Herald Tribune" columnist Art Buchwald. Comedy against a Parisian setting.

*The Paradise Kid*—half hour series, by Mr. Monash and to be produced by him. Story of young man recalled from Harvard to inherit his dad's fortune and defends Texas ranch against father's enemies.

*Night People*—half-hour series, Alex Gottlieb (*Oh Suzanna!*) as producer. Suspense adventure with Manhattan night life setting.

Others for which producers are not named and their themes:

*The Agatha Christie Series* (one-hour), based on vast library of novels and other stories of Miss Christie with whom MGM-TV has a pact giving company TV rights; *Mystery Street* (one-hour), TV adaptations of classic thrillers—many from MGM's library of literary properties; *Father of the Bride* (half-hour), domestic comedy from novel and motion picture; *Gold Eagle Gun* (half-hour).

## MGM-TV WILL PRE-SELL

### Action follows disastrous season of dropouts

MGM-TV is acting like a company that has decided not to take any more brash chances in television.

Last season, "Leo" chased its tail around in television. The company produced seven pilots, but failed to sell a single tv series. Down the drain went some \$400,000 in production (though MGM-TV executives say something may yet be salvaged).

This season, MGM-TV is taking cautious steps to come out safe and solvent.

It's not producing pilots without a commitment. And the company is talking about its new product well in advance of the "selling" season.

Last week, in fact, MGM-TV previewed for newsmen its "catalog" of 13 new tv series as "concepts." From now on, the company specified, MGM-TV will follow a pre-selling approach to television.

If MGM-TV concludes the sale of four tv series on the networks next season, the television activity could be chalked up as "successful," according to George T. Shupert, vice president in charge of MGM-TV.

Mr. Shupert revealed that three series already are "committed" to network financing through the pilot stage (this gives network first option): *The Islanders*, *Asphalt Jungle* and *Father of the Bride*. The latter series is being shared in the creation by ABC-TV, for which General Foods has first option as potential advertiser. (Initially *Bride* was being produced for GF [via Benton & Bowles] which some months back turned down the pilot).

**One hour long** • *Islanders* and *Jungle* are one-hour long. It's been reported that ABC-TV also may be the interested network for both these shows.

The "minimum" 13 new properties are for the 1960-61 season. The majority of the series was developed by MGM-TV's own creative staff under Richard Maibaum (who heads MGM-TV production facilities).

MGM-TV is offering "pre-production cooperation" between itself and networks, agencies or advertisers, a practice which Mr. Shupert believes will reduce much of the costly waste

of pilots. A 43-minute color film shown last week but already seen by the three networks and the major agencies was produced by MGM-TV's staff at a cost of \$21,000, or about a third of the approximate \$60,000 (or much more) cost for a pilot.

Of the proposed cooperative handling of production with networks or advertisers, Mr. Shupert described his concept as "share in creative control."

Mr. Shupert also disclosed that four other series in the 13 are in negotiation with either networks or advertisers: *National Velvet*, *Dr. Kildare*, *Me and My Gals* and *The Agatha Christie Series* (tentative title). Of these four series, MGM-TV wants firm 26-week commitments. *Kildare* of the four, he said, already is a self-contained package as opposed to a "concept."

So far as general policy on co-financing or co-responsibility, MGM-TV will seek the commitment for either 26 weeks (in instances like *Kildare*) or through the pilot-producing stage as in *The Islanders*.

Other highpoints of MGM-TV's tv "picture":

- *The Thin Man* re-runs are the only MGM-TV product now on the network air.

- *Northwest Passage* (half hours) is being sold for multi-sponsorship and in color. This series was on NBC-TV at the beginning of the past season but was in trouble from the start, Mr. Shupert said, because of its time slot.

- MGM-TV, according to its head man, now will exert caution on future scheduling in unfavorable network periods. Mr. Shupert said a "family situation" series was near a network sale which was turned down by MGM-TV because the show would have been placed against two "fast action" series on the competing networks. He reminded a series needs to build an audience.

- Lew Ayres, who will star in *Dr. Kildare* is prohibiting MGM-TV from selling the series to a beer or cigarette advertiser.

Mr. Shupert cautioned that sharing the creative control could not be construed as limiting producer. Major creative responsibility for the final develop-