

fessional sports.

The new contract includes all home games of the New York Knickerbockers basketball and New York Rangers hockey teams, 20 entertainment events and the option for 25 additional programs. The deal had been in negotiation for three months.

The suit—filed by Howard Slonim, an attorney with the New York law firm of Solk, Slonim and Young—charged that the Knicks and Rangers games were scheduled to begin last Oct. 13. Under the new agreement with Madison Square Garden, they began last week (Nov. 11).

The delay in agreement was caused, according to a Sterling spokesman, by "small legal points." Under the new agreement, the cable firm will continue to transmit the Knicks and Rangers games to the lower portion of Manhattan. Additionally, the agreement allows Sterling to transmit games for the next three years on its systems in Nassau and Suffolk counties, Long Island, N.Y.

The agreement was said to be the longest cable television contract in professional sports. Over the five-year period, more than 600 sports events will be carried. All telecasts from the Garden are produced by Madison Square Garden Productions. Commentary is provided by Bob Wolff.

Mr. Slonim is asking over \$3 million in damages for himself and the 25,000 Sterling subscribers. In the three-part action Mr. Slonim is suing Sterling Information Services and Manhattan Cable TV Services for \$3 million worth of service charges for the 25,000 subscribers, \$30.40 for his own monthly service charge and \$25,000 on his own behalf for alleged "fraud and misrepresentation."

The attorney said his suit will remain unchanged in light of the new agreement reached with the Garden and Sterling. Sterling has 20 days to answer the suit.

Charles Dolan, president of Sterling Manhattan Cable, said he saw "no merit in the suit." "There was never any agreement signed between the company and the subscribers concerning the telecast of the Knicks, Rangers games," he said. "We have been very careful not to say definitely that they would be on. Sterling pioneered the effort to bring blacked-out sports to the public last year as an 'experiment.' The negotiations took so long because we didn't want a one-year deal for our subscribers. We wanted a five-year contract."

Richard Flynn, attorney for Sterling, added that a "consumer has no right, according to law, to sue for other consumers."

Sterling also announced that it has signed a contract with Janus Films for 30 uncut feature films, including a num-

ber rated "C" (condemned), by the Legion of Decency.

"These will be shown at 10 p.m.," said Mr. Dolan. "We will keep an eye on subscriber reaction to them." Movies will premiere on the cable system Monday, Dec. 7.

Mr. Dolan was also enthusiastic about increased advertiser support for Sterling's programs: "Last year we had only a handful of advertisers on the Garden events. This year we have already sold as much advertising as we are going to accept. The net income from this advertising is sufficient this year to pay the cost of the programs."

Teleprompter, New York cable-operator serving residents in Upper Manhattan, has signed a one-year contract with the Garden to carry 125 events including all home games of the Knicks and Rangers (BROADCASTING, Oct. 5). Sterling held an exclusive contract with the Garden last year.

## Networks at work on casualty lists

Midseason changes in night-time schedules were under way at the TV networks last week. Though no changes were announced, CBS and NBC were expected to replace two series each, and ABC was said to have a more extensive overhaul in mind. All three will move some shows around in the schedules.

At NBC, *Bracken's World* (Friday, 10-11 p.m.) was reported canceled, and *Nancy* (Thursday, 9:30-10) likely to share that fate. NBC was known to have two series ready to go in as replacements—*The Strange Report*, one-hour scientific crime-solving show produced by Norman Felton in London and a likely substitute for *Bracken*, and *Bird's Eye View*, a Sheldon Leonard half-hour comedy series about an airline stewardess. It was questionable whether *Bird's Eye* would move directly into the *Nancy* time period, NBC sources indicating that a fair amount of juggling of time periods could be expected.

At CBS, the future of *The Governor and JJ* (Wednesday, 8:30-9) was in doubt, with *To Rome With Love*, now in the Tuesday, 9:30-10 period, likely to be moved into *Governor's* spot. A new half-hour show, *All in a Family*, was mentioned as a replacement, but at CBS also several changes in time periods of existing shows will be made. *The Tim Conway Show* (Sunday, 10-11) was also up for decision at CBS, and network sources indicated that reruns of *The Honeymooners* with Jackie Gleason would be a likely replacement, though not necessarily at that hour.

At ABC, there were reports that a two-hour movie will be moved into

Monday nights when professional football closes out its season. In addition, in the latest available Nielsen report, there were nine ABC shows in the bottom 12. These were *Barefoot in the Park*, *Silent Force*, *Young Lawyers*, *Young Rebels*, *Odd Couple*, *Matt Lincoln*, *Dan August*, *The Immortal* and *Most Deadly Game*. But as one ABC official said last week, it was conceivable that the network may attempt salvage by moving some of these shows to new time periods.

## A graduate version of 'Sesame Street'

A new educational television series aimed at bolstering reading skills of 7-to-10-year-olds was announced during last week's National Association of Educational Broadcasters convention (see page 40) by Joan Ganz Cooney, president of Children's Television Workshop and "mother" of the much-lauded *Sesame Street* series.

The new half-hour program will premiere Oct. 25, 1971, and will be broadcast daily over the Public Broadcasting Service.

Mrs. Cooney asserted that "there is very little question that there exists in the United States a crisis in education. We believe that television at this point has an extraordinary opportunity to help meet the problem."

She said the reading program—the subject of almost a year of feasibility studies—will be even more experimental than the *Sesame Street* format. It will be designed in particular to reach disadvantaged children, Mrs. Cooney said, pointing out that some 20 million children in the country are "reading cripples" and that another 24 million Americans aged 18 or older have already left school without learning to read.

The new series is scheduled to be aired at 11 a.m. and again in the late afternoon to reach children both in school and at home.

Mrs. Cooney said CTW hopes to obtain funding for the show from the U.S. Office of Education, the Corp. for Public Broadcasting, the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corp. all of which aided in financing *Sesame Street*.

She added that in production approach the new series will lean on *Sesame Street* as a developmental model, but that this would be the only direct connection between the two series.

CTW is pushing to have the two programs scheduled back to back, with the reading show following *Sesame Street*.

The new show—as yet untitled—is not intended as a comprehensive beginning reading curriculum but rather as a means of developing certain basic