

deed, have made it a full-blown trend.

First, Screen Gems took Art Frankel, who was operating as vice president in charge of business affairs, and placed him in the newly created position of vice president in charge of studio affairs (BROADCASTING, April 24). On the heels of this announcement, Paramount Television named Emmet Lavery Jr., who was functioning as vice president, business affairs, as executive vice president in charge of the TV division. Messrs. Frankel and Lavery, both attorneys, were classmates at the University of California at Los Angeles. They are but the tip of iceberg-sized realignments of the television production structures at Screen Gems and Paramount Television.

The specifics of SG's reorganization:

- Art Frankel, based in Hollywood, reporting to SG President John H. Mitchell in New York, becomes chief coordinator and administrator of the West Coast studio operation.

- Henry Colman, coincidentally moving over from Paramount TV, takes charge of SG's current programming on the networks, working day-to-day with on-air programs to maximize potential.

- Responsibility for program development gets split, with Robert Lovenheim working to bring new ideas to dramatic and long-form programming, and Joseph Goodson developing product for comedy and short-form programming.

Paramount Television's changes:

- As executive vice president in charge of studio operations, Emmet Lavery will be based in Hollywood and report to Frank Yablans, president of both Paramount Pictures and Paramount TV.

- Bruce Lansbury, producer of Paramount TV's long-running *Mission: Impossible* series, has been appointed vice president, creative affairs, reporting directly to Mr. Lavery.

- Program development will be split into four areas of responsibility, with individual executives (yet to be announced) responsible for developing specifically for ABC-TV, CBS-TV, NBC-TV, and for the over-all category of films for TV.

The Screen Gems change was officially said to be designed to place more importance on individual creative talents aligned with the studio—independent producers working in association with SG, staff producers, creative staff executives—instead of having a single individual supervise both the creative and business activities of the studio. According to SG's John H. Mitchell, the organizational change "will effectively meet the demands of the current and future television marketplace and give creative talent the opportunity to function in as stimulating an atmosphere as possible."

Paramount TV's change was said to be designed "to redouble company efforts in programing development." It clearly sets up a specialist system, with each executive operating in a circumscribed field and a business-oriented top man coordinating their individual efforts.

The changes at both studios are symptomatic of what's been happening in television production over the last sev-

eral years and before that in motion picture production. The seed for the current Screen Gems reorganization, for instance, was planted as early as 1969. At that time, Robert M. Weitman, first vice president in charge of motion picture production for SG's sister company, Columbia Pictures, was ushered out of his job with the explanation that "because of the changing nature of motion picture production it's recognized that the creative independent producer is assuming more control over the making of pictures than in the past, and, correspondingly, the role of the studio production chief is becoming less pertinent."

There's no question but that a similar situation prevails in television today, particularly at Screen Gems, which has working agreements with such high-powered independent producers as Bill Castle, Doug Cramer and Bill Asher. In addition, David Gerber, responsible this season for *Cade's County*, in association with 20th Century-Fox TV, made the move to SG last week.

In line with the independent production deals the studio has been making, it was thought to be a propitious time to have a seasoned business executive to represent SG in dealing with the independent producers (as well as staff people) on creative affairs. "My purpose is to guide and serve rather than to execute," Art Frankel explains. "Even though I'm business-oriented, I've always been interested in the creative side of the business. I think I understand the creative problems. If I had no regard for creative people I wouldn't be very effective. I think I know how creative juices must be channeled and directed."

Reportedly Mr. Frankel's appointment as chief operational officer of the studio was cleared with the creative people at Screen Gems before it was made official. But then it doesn't necessarily follow that creative people want to have a creative man as their boss. Supposedly a principal reason why the businessman is replacing the creative man as head of TV production is that the creative studio chief sometimes has been abrasive in his relationships with other creative people.

"The creative head is sometimes in opposition to creative people instead of functioning as part of the team effort," contends Mr. Frankel. "He has been known to impose his own creative ideas on producers."

There would seem to be some evidence that studio bosses, with a creative bent, have been in a fever to try out their

own creative ideas. Again, to cite the motion picture field precedent, Mike Frankovich, for one, once production chief at Columbia Pictures, left the job to become one of that studio's independent producers. In television, Doug Cramer, until a year ago executive vice president in charge of production for Paramount Television, is now one of the most active members of the Screen Gems stable of independent producers. Similarly, Leonard Goldberg, whom Mr. Frankel replaces as SG's top TV studio executive, is now an independent producer working with Aaron Spelling in association with ABC-TV.

Beyond the growing importance of independent producers and the need of studios to deal tactfully and effectively with them, other changes in the TV industry seem to dictate a move to the business-oriented executive. The cost of production has become so steep, the deficit financing so consistent and overwhelming, the competition for air time so cutthroat (particularly since the advent of the prime-time network cutback) that the administration of the business of making product for TV programs apparently can't be left in other than expert hands—hands that more often have turned the pages of a business ledger than the pages of a poetry book. It used to be that TV production firms would look for a creative man with a solid business sense or instinct to head their studio operations. Now they look for a solid businessman with a feel for creative undertakings, an understanding of the creative psychology.

It's not a sudden trend. Perhaps it started in the motion picture field with United Artists, which doesn't own a studio and, thus, doesn't really need the traditional studio head. Instead UA always has concentrated on the business of financing and releasing the product of independent producers.

Today such a major motion picture studio as 20th Century-Fox is under the supervision of Gordon Stulberg, a lawyer who also once was chief studio administrative officer for Columbia Pictures. In television, there are numerous examples of the business executives taking over the business.

Herb Schlosser, the astute head of programing for NBC-TV on the West Coast, is an attorney and former program administrator for the network. Sid Sheinberg, the brilliant young president of Universal Television, is another lawyer who first entered the studio's executive ranks in business affairs. Chuck Fries, executive vice president in charge of the production division of Metromedia Producers Corp., started his career as production controller at Ziv Television Programs Inc., and later was head of the accounting and cost control divisions.

It may be, indeed, that the creative man as head of studio production is a victim of current shock. Says new-wave man Art Frankel: "The changes in the industry have led to the conclusion that it makes more sense to go with the business-oriented structure."

Buffalo's Bills roam

Radio coverage of the Buffalo Bills pro football team will switch this year to WKBW(AM) Buffalo under a new contract that offers the station renewal options for 1973 and 1974. WBEN(AM) Buffalo had originated Bills games for the last 12 seasons. Tom Cronk, WKBW vice president and general manager, said a regional network in upstate New York will be set up.