

bers are taking the service.

Mr. Karp said Teleprompter expects the new pay service to make "a significant contribution" to its revenues and income. The company has been making a comeback from drastic financial losses in 1973 through a program of cost-cutting and by increasing rates and subscriptions. It has added more than 100,000 connections since January 1974.

Teleprompter's stock, which plunged to 1-1/4 last December, last week was being traded on the New York Stock Exchange at 7-7/8. Mr. Karp attributed the rise not to reports of a possible HBO agreement but to the company's improving financial picture.

During the New Orleans convention of the National Cable Television Association this spring—at which HBO's satellite pay TV plans were the headline event (BROADCASTING, April 21)—Teleprompter's Mr. Karp participated in a panel session that concluded there might be a million pay cable subscribers within the next two years. His company's action last week may go a long way toward fulfilling that prophecy.

It's blood, sweat toil etc. for ABC in network race

Chairman Goldenson makes rare appearance to rally affiliates with demands for team spirit and hard work; over-all picture leaves members less than excited, hiring of Silverman an encouraging note

Leonard H. Goldenson, chairman of ABC Inc., made a rare and unexpected formal appearance before the ABC-TV affiliates at their convention in Los Angeles last Thursday to exhort them to join ABC in quest of a new goal: Winning the three-network race.

ABC-TV, he told them, finally fought its way to parity with CBS-TV and NBC-TV a couple of years ago and, though it has lost as well as gained some ground since then, it has on the whole "maintained that hard-won parity."

"Now," he said, "it is time to set our sights higher than they have been set before. It is time to enter a new phase of ABC Television history. It is time we set out to win."

Mr. Goldenson assured the affiliates that ABC-TV has "a winning team," developed by ABC Inc. President Elton H. Rule and led by ABC Television President Fred Pierce and ABC-TV Network President Jim Duffy, soon to be joined by Fred Silverman, hired away from CBS-TV to be president of ABC Entertainment.

Mr. Goldenson wanted to leave no doubt that he and Mr. Rule support the TV management team 100%. "And," he added, "we believe that the short-term and long-term plans which that team has brought to Elton and me for approval can

and will move us forward to a position of leadership."

To Mr. Goldenson, the present opportunities represent a turning point in ABC's 22-year history. He concluded fervently:

"We want ABC to grow. We want ABC to lead. We want ABC to win. We are going to have to overcome some adversity to do these things. But we have been challenged by adversity before, and we have all rolled up our sleeves and gone to work, and we have met those challenges. With our outstanding team and with your help, we will do it again."

Mr. Goldenson's call, only three or four minutes in length, came at the end of a morning-long presentation on 1975-76 prime-time plans and brought an ovation from a room full of affiliates who had seemed only moderately enthusiastic about much of what they had seen.

Of three new pilots screened in full during the convention, Mel Brooks's *When Things Were Rotten* seemed unquestionably a success with the station executives, though there was a recurrent question about whether its antic pace could be sustained.

Of the two others screened in full, an informal, random and limited sampling of affiliates found little support for the chances of *Welcome Back, Kotter* (Tuesday, 8:30-9), a comedy about a teacher and his delinquent students, and not a great deal more for *On the Rocks* (Thursday, 8:30-9), a comedy about four robbers in a minimum-security prison.

Yet even those who professed reservations about the new schedule often seemed to be of two minds about it, saying they thought it weak or spotty or uneven but that they nevertheless felt they would be able to maintain or improve their competitive positions in their home markets.

Some liked the schedule, or most of it, and some—though a distinct minority in that informal random sampling—thought it strong enough to take ABC to second place in the network race.

It seemed clear that the affiliates were impressed by ABC's hiring of CBS's Mr. Silverman. He was not present but he sent greetings through Mr. Pierce from his vacation place on Cape Cod, and his name



Goldenson

was invoked often by ABC officials.

Those officials also seemed confident enough in their own right. They tended not to make specific rating claims for 1975-76 other than that the momentum is moving in the right direction. Or, as Edwin T. Vane, senior vice president and national program director, put it after he and Prime-Time Vice President Michael D. Eisen had run through the nighttime schedule, the new lineup "will make us fully competitive next season," giving ABC and its affiliates "a banner year all year long."

Family-viewing decision was hard but necessary step—ABC's Rule

Affiliates told effort has to be industrywide and that it does not represent a giveaway of freedom

ABC supported the proposal to write the family-viewing concept into the television code because it seemed a calculated risk worth taking, but it did so only in awareness that the policy must be "practical" and "workable" rather than "a sweeping statement of principle," Elton H. Rule, president of ABC Inc., told the ABC-TV affiliates convention in Los Angeles Thursday (May 29).

This meant, he said, that the policy would have to be industrywide, without exception; that it had to be "realistic" in applying not only to the first hour of network prime time but to the preceding hour as well; that it had to be adopted voluntarily without compromising broadcasting's First Amendment rights, and that "there had to be some way to translate the broad concept of 'family viewing' into reality."

Mr. Rule told the affiliates that he realized inclusion of the 7-8 p.m. NYT hour in the family-viewing concept "has made some of your scheduling problems somewhat more complex than they already were." And he said that "I sincerely hope our industry will find a way of easing those problems." Meanwhile, he said, "all I can tell you is that Dick O'Leary, president of our owned [TV] stations division, is scratching his head just as hard as you are."

But, he said, if that first hour had not been written into the family-viewing period, conscientious parents would have been "summoning their children back and forth, to and from the television set, as the evening wore on," and "we would have deserved the charges of cynicism they would have leveled against us."

Similarly, he said, "nothing could be more irresponsible" than for some to follow a policy such as this while others did not, adding that since a "certain amount of sacrifice is necessary to make the policy work, everyone should bear at