

it contained alleged obscenity (BROADCASTING, May 17).

Media Ranch Inc., New York, charged in a complaint filed in Supreme Court, New York county, that Manhattan Cable had "wrongfully" breached a contract it had for *Midnight Blue* and another series, *Late Late Blue*, and had caused the plaintiff "severe monetary loss and damage to its business reputation."

At the time it took the erotic series off the air, Manhattan Cable said the program had exhibited "a regular pattern of flouting governmental regulations related to obscenity." Time-Life sources said Media Ranch is resorting to a damage suit because "it doesn't have a strong case on First Amendment obscenity grounds."

HBO drops 20 hours from program slate

Cutback due to fewer afternoon viewers, lack of family films

Home Box Office has dropped 20 hours from its weekday programming schedule—roughly one third—changing its start time from 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The weekend schedule now begins between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., adjusted to the time of sports events.

According to HBO, a lack of "P"- and "PG"-rated films, as well as few viewers in the afternoon, prompted the cutback. Since it does not run "R"-rated films in the afternoon, HBO said its schedule had to be filled with reruns and "secondary" programming. HBO told its affiliates that money saved from afternoon programming will be invested in the evening schedule. Subscriber rates go unchanged.

HBO now is programming some 55 to 60 hours per week, with its day ending usually between 1 a.m. and 1:30 a.m. With the cutback, HBO returned to the schedule it had prior to the inauguration of satellite transmission in September 1975.

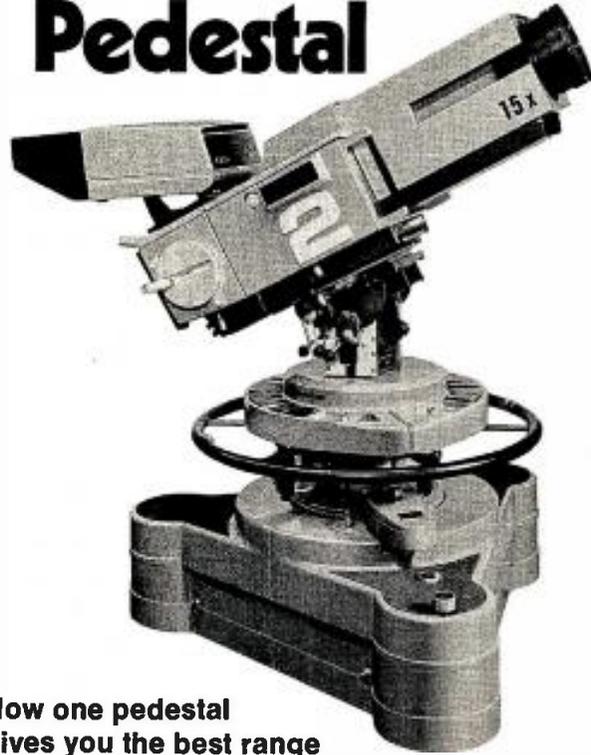
HBO said that on the whole its affiliates see the cutback as a constructive step.

Gains for Warner Cable

Warner Cable Corp.'s 1976 gross revenues are expected to exceed \$50 million, Gustave M. Hauser, chairman, told a group of security analysts in New York. Other Warner officials said this would represent a gain of 66% since 1973, when Mr. Hauser took over the top post. Mr. Hauser said Warner's 140 cable systems in 30 states, serving 550,000 subscribers, are all cash positive and that this year's third-quarter results should improve on the second quarter's \$1,511,000 pretax income and \$12,855,000 revenues. Mr. Hauser also reported that Warner Cable is exploring per-program cable, including the technology to handle it, as a potential supplement to its Star Channel monthly pay service which he said currently has 40,000 subscribers and plans pay service in 1977 in, among other places, Boston, Columbus, Ohio, and Palm Springs, Calif.

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