

# AIR, OUTDOOR GIVE AND TAKE

## Radio Reaps \$ By Promotion On Fair Dates

### Reciprocal Co-Operation

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kind of promotion is attested to by dozens of stations.

First station to get hep to the possibilities inherent in fairs was WLS, Chicago, which in 1925 made its first visit to the Illinois State Fair. Since then the station has gone all out and had representation also at the Indiana and Wisconsin State fairs.

For this year's Illinois fair, which will be held August 8-17 in Springfield, WLS will do its top job. It will originate its Saturday night *Barn Dance* program there for four and a half hours on August 9, and will use the grounds for about one hour a day of standard shows usually aired from its studios. Also, it will do a half hour of daily wire-recorded news coverage from the fair and will have its own tent, exhibits and radio talent shows. Indiana and Wisconsin will be the same story.

### Hoosier Co-Operation

The Indiana fair, this year set for Indianapolis August 29-September 5, is one of the best examples of top fair-radio co-operation. Last year, Harry K. Smythe, of the *Hoosier Hop* show on WOWO, Fort Wayne, lined up the 18 Indiana stations into an organization known as the Indiana Association of Broadcasters, for the express purpose of joint coverage of the fair. This year the association plans to air six hours of programs daily from the fair. One or more of the stations will be carrying all these shows, and all will be linked in the airing of a Saturday night program, *Radio Round-Up*, presented from the Coliseum, with Red Skelton, MGM starlets Marilyn Maxwell and Marjorie Mann and others. Each of the stations will have booths and lines to the fairgrounds.

### WBBM and WGN

Chicago stations of a non-agricultural flavor, such as WBBM and WGN, also will air shows from the Illinois fair this year, as they did last. Last year WBBM did a half-hour spot, summarizing the entire fair. This year it will have at the fair its farm director, Harry Campbell, and a gal to get women's angles, and will put in a line to air at least one show a day from the grounds.

### WLW a Pioneer

WLW, Cincinnati, has had an attraction working fairs and outdoor celebrations since 1938. The first was John Lair's *Renfro Valley Folks*. Bill McCluskey joined in December, 1939, to handle all talent bookings, and the station formed a new hillbilly unit known as the WLW Boone County Jamboree. Some 18 months ago that title was changed to the *Sohio Midwestern Hayride*.

Another WLW attraction which started last year is the WLW Circle Arrow, heard Coast-to-Coast on NBC over 56 stations each Sunday morning, 10:30-11. WLW's *Everybody's Farm Show*, piloted by Roy Battles, is also a steady feature at fairs.

On the season the WLW hillbilly unit will work an average of 40 (See *Radio Reaps \$* on page 145)

## Business Outlook Gives Ops Little Cause for Heebie-Jeebies

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peaceful existence, but now they are wondering if there will be enough loose folding money around so they can continue to hit the jackpot grosses, high, wide and handsome.

### 25 Per Cent Slump?

Had the weather been a bit more kind during the Florida winter season and thru these early spring days, the casual observer might be able to give these redoubtable purveyors of canvas-covered amusements the right answer, but it has been so bad that business has been away off the 1946 pace and the lads are talking about a general slump of 25 per cent in their business.

Even if their grosses do slump 25 per cent, they still will handle large bundles of cash and will have enough left to pay the grocery bills during the ensuing winter. Naturally, profits would not be as great, as nothing can be done now about cutting operational costs and still maintain the high level of productions, midways, etc., the folks are learning to look for at outdoor enterprises.

### Weather Wallops 'Em

Those who had the actual experience of bucking the weather in Florida, especially in the carnival business, are not too pessimistic. Carl Sedlmayr, owner of the Royal American Shows, has expressed the opinion that his org would have snatched more than \$175,000 in the 11-day stand at the Florida State Fair, Tam-

pa, if it had been accorded just half a break by weather.

In 1945, Royal American glommed more than \$136,000 at Tampa under near-perfect weather conditions, and this last February it garnered in excess of \$100,000 and did not have a single perfect fair-going day. This indicates that Sedlmayr couldn't be dreaming too much of a dream in his 175 grand pipe, and maybe that 25 per cent-off-crowd is bleating an unnecessary sour note.

### Young Is Disappointed

Eddie Young had his new Royal Crown Shows at the Pinellas County Fair, Largo, Fla., and Winter Haven's Florida Citrus Festival, and in both spots the inclement weather didn't put him far off the record grosses of 1945. Young was disappointed at both spots, as he expected to wrap up records, but that is only natural, as who in outdoor showbiz isn't dis-

(See *BIZ OUTLOOK* on page 64)

## Click Bloomington Date Gives Davies Good Tour Windup

DIXON, Ill., March 22.—Ayres and Kathryn Davies Circus moved into local quarters this week after concluding a successful eight and one half weeks' contracted season with a click engagement at Bloomington, Ill., Saturday (15). The Davies said the show presented 92 performances in 44 stands, only three of which were for two days.

Bad weather and icy roads proved no handicap, they reported, and all scheduled performances were played. Tour of Wisconsin gave org its best business, with West Bend coming up with the banner stand of the tour. Madison, Wis., proved the worst engagement of the trek, they said.

After a month's vacation here, the Davies will join the James M. Cole Circus for the summer tour. Meanwhile, they are readying plans for show's fall opening.

This season's line-up included Samaroff's Acrobatic Dogs, clowns, comedy acrobats, riding dogs, Paul Zallee's juggling act; the De Waldos, cyclists; pony drill and Bedell Troupe, teterboard. Corriell Family, doing a headslide, juggling act and a web number, was with the org until the final week when it left to join the Gil Gray Indoor Circus. Roy Adkisson was in clown alley and pinch-hit on the mike all season.

Paul Zallee carried his calliope all season and it was used for show and street ballys. Edna Earl had concessions. Both are expected to return in the fall. Most of the booking was done by Ayres Davies, while Ken Murray, of Bloomington, Ill., contracted a few dates. Remainder were inked by Mrs. O. M. Rogers, who will handle the advance next season.

### Plan CFA Convention

DAYTON, O., March 22.—Tom Gregory, president, and Bill Montague, publicity director, spent Saturday (8) here making arrangements for the convention of the Circus Fans' Association at the Biltmore Hotel May 10-12. Early reservations indicate a record turnout.

## Ops Tip Big Dough To Get Bally by Air

### Figure Ante \$1,500,000

(Continued from page 3)

in Worcester, Mass., and the Hamid-Morton Circus. He also has several lesser enterprises.

Three biggies in the outdoor field, Ringling Bros.' and Barnum & Bailey Circus, World of Mirth Shows and Palisades (N. J.) Amusement Park, all back the increasing importance of radio as a selling aid. Palisades, usually a top spender among parks, will up radio's share this year to as much as 25 per cent of its total ad budget.

Larger fairs, usually operating in a place for only a week, spend about \$1,000 weekly for air time over a two to three-week period. The New Jersey State Fair is typical. Smaller ones in the rural districts earmark \$300 to \$750. Spending for parks hovers around \$2,000 for their short summer seasons. Carnivals in all sizes strike about the same average.

### Other Media Unhurt

Publicists fronting for fair weather attractions started making extensive use of radio in the '30's as an additional aid to a fast selling job. The tendency since then has been to spend more dough for air time while maintaining the same budgets for newspapers and billposting.

Because it is spread so thin, the advertising budget of outdoor showbiz fails to show to advantage in the earnings of the larger stations. Indies in medium-sized towns, however, find it sizable, cash on the line and without discounts. Swap of paid time for free time has usually resulted in friendly dealing, with the show receiving vital publicity and the indie station giving its listeners an earful of feature stuff available once, or at the most, two or three times a year.

Most outdoor units contain a wealth of human interest. Numerous personalities with a Horatio Alger or daredevil background are available for standout interviews. And most of the guys and gals have garnered enough experience before a mike to make them first-rate radio subjects.

### Remotes Popular

Remotes from the lots have won favor with shows, stations and public alike. Sustaining time filled by outdoor agents has frequently featured bad production and talent, but the offerings are steadily improving. The reason is that an outdoor flack who works a top job now has to qualify as a passable radio emcee and be able to produce a creditable package from the show's available talent.

Ace press agents write, produce and wax several shows with the aid of transcription agencies. Platters, ready for airing at a moment's notice, are promotion naturals.

Some carnival managers' new recognition of the worth of radio as a publicity medium has resulted in their allotting big dough for talented troupes. These are carried even tho they do not make the nut any week in the season, just so an acceptable radio show will be available for any promoted or bought radio time.

## Act Famine Seen; Imports Bottled

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introduction of new act-buying events and the revival of large annuals, notably Toronto, Ottawa and Springfield, Mass., all Hamid-booked, have accentuated the shortage.

Two years of effort to import new talent from Europe have resulted in the signing of 19 acts, 11 of which are booked solid. But only three have arrived so far.

The case of the Rob Cimse Troupe, scheduled to dock within the next week and to open with Ringling Bros.' and Barnum & Bailey Circus in Madison Square Garden April 9, is typical of the difficulties hampering act importation. Hamid said it took three months to arrange transportation, even the passage was arranged here and paid for in American dollars. A Washington attorney spent three weeks getting visas thru the State Department. Preliminary dealings by mail and cable took weeks.

### First Come, First Served

Celebrations which have not yet set dates and contracted for talent will be sold on a first-served basis, Hamid said. No reservations for acts are being accepted. Increase in the number of celebrations since the war's end has created a special supply problem.

Hamid said he was advising carnivals and celebrations buying acts to confine their special event to one week. Previously, it was customary to sell an act for an additional day or two, on a pro rata basis. Now the acts want full scale for playing any part of a week, and are getting it.