

The Ban and the Operator

Coin machine industry sees no cause for alarm as Petrillo recording stoppage goes into effect. Diskeries have heavy backlog which imports and reissues will augment if ban is protracted.

AS WHISTLES blew and horns sounded promptly at midnight, December 31, heralding a new year, the lights snapped off in recording studios throughout the country and weary musicians, singers and technicians brought to an end a hectic three months of around-the-clock recording sessions. For with the dawn of the year 1948, the ban by the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) against the making of records by its 225,000 members went into effect.

Operators of music machines around the country watched the latest AFM ban threat develop into an actuality with slight concern.



ONE OF THE FEW instruments unaffected by the record ban is the harmonica, a non-union instrument. Here the Philharmonic Trio cuts a side for Capitol.

Many had passed thru the strike of 1942-1943 and, despite the unorthodox (war) times, had felt the ban only slightly. They read AFM Prexy James C. Petrillo's 1948 work stoppage statement, but the consensus was that "never again" would develop into "well, hardly ever," and finally

In Short

There appears to be no reason for the music machine operator to be concerned at this time about the American Federation of Musicians' (AFM) recording ban. These are the reasons:

1. Record companies have built up heavy backlogs and will reissue old favorites.

2. Operators will get a longer play per record, with publishers scheduling longer plug periods and record companies spacing their releases.

3. Bootleg activities are expected to top anything seen in the 1942 ban, and the resistance power of the entire disk business is unquestionably greater than ever before.

4. The Taft-Hartley Act outlaws secondary boycotts.

5. Imports are expected to play a part in beating the ban.

6. Congressional intervention is almost a certainty.

evolve into a settlement thru the use of reverse tactics—bargaining by pretending no interest in bargaining whatsoever.

Industry representatives in the East put it this way: "We have been told that the recording companies are working day and night to build up backlogs for the ban. For our purposes, these backlogs should be more than sufficient. Records in juke boxes will now have a longer life, as music publishers will work on songs longer, and there will be plenty of reissues of old favorites that formerly were popular in juke boxes, and will be again."

Compared to his 1942 recording ban, Petrillo faces much greater opposition in 1948, i.e., if he aspires to gain from his ban anything other than his announced objective of "never to record again." Realistic music experts can't believe that Petrillo wants to battle technological progress endlessly (this despite his recent answer to his critics' statement that the Model T never would have evolved had Henry Ford been forced to wait on the pleasure of the blacksmith. Petrillo said: "You could make the Ford without a blacksmith; you can't make music without musicians.")

As the ban spreads, in just a few weeks the AFM is expected to call musicians off the radio networks, complaints by the commercial users of musicians are expected to flood Congress; senatorial committees will be formed and will listen to Petrillo

in 1942 is this: the resistance power of the entire disk business is unquestionably greater than before. Hundreds of new recording companies have mushroomed into existence, as have the pressing plants that turn out the platters. In 1942 there were probably no more than three or four independent pressing firms, each of which was easily policed by the AFM. Yet at that time non-union records appeared in some quantity:

In 1948 the bootlegging can be expected to top anything seen six years ago. Many smaller labels have stated that they would seek non-union talent or use established artists under nom de plumes, marketing the platters on an "as is" basis.

Taft-Hartley Considerations

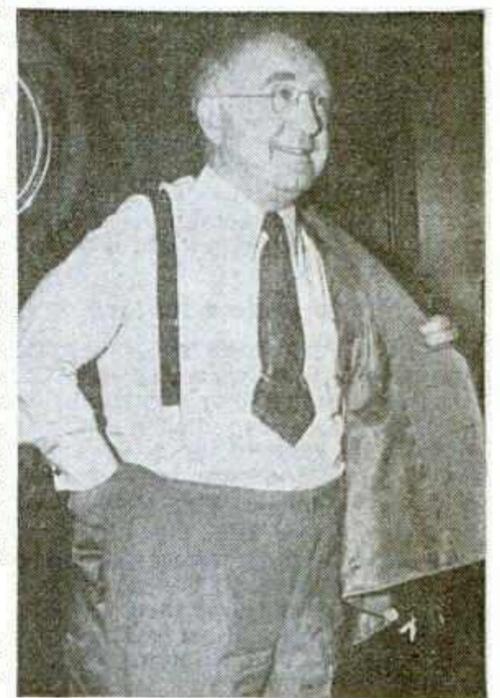
Under the Taft-Hartley law, secondary boycotts are specifically outlawed. The support of a work stoppage, not a strike, would in itself be a problem for sympathetic unions without such a law. But with the Taft-Hartley law an actuality, there is considerable doubt the AFM could get help from the United Electrical Union workers in pressing plants, etc. Small labels are not concerned as to where they will be able to get non-union musicians. They claim that the dollar lure can readily turn up AFM members who will make bootleg records under fake names.

Import Situation

Imports are another factor that will play a part in beating the AFM ban

for companies such as the London label, which will sell records of pop tunes by British artists in this country. Those record sales here mean dollars for Britain.

There is even the possibility that domestic artists will be booked into foreign countries, where recording facilities are available, so that they can make records for export to the United States. It is known that some artist representatives had thoroly



JAMES C. PETRILLO, president of the AFM, who is the focal point of the current controversy. How long will he hold the line?



XAVIER CUGAT, along with other recording artists, put in long sessions right up to the December 31 deadline to build up a backlog of releases during the ban period.

present his arguments and will then take action, probably demanding that the issues be settled. The outcome will be settlement, but when and who wins will depend on who puts up the best fight. It is conceivable, however, to believe that settlement will come before the operator of music equipment is seriously affected by the ban.

Bootleg Activities

What makes it more difficult for Petrillo on certain scores now than

this time. In 1942 the war blocked diskers from wholesale dabbling in imported wax. This year it's a different story, with the recording companies in a position to search Britain, Mexico, France and other countries for musicians. The possibilities of Petrillo getting any aid from the British Musicians' Union (BMU) appears slight at this writing. With a socialist government in power in England, with the dollar situation so critical, it is doubtful that the BMU would refrain from cutting records

investigated this possibility prior to the January 1 recording deadline.

Congressional Action

In Congress, Petrillo faces even more resentful opposition than in 1942. Press reaction to his recording ban has been no more sympathetic than six years ago and a Republican House and Senate echo the sentiment. The same group of legislators that pressed thru the Taft-Hartley law and the Lea-Vandenberg Act could possibly add on specific legislation aimed at curtailing Petrillo even further. Too, the Justice Department entered the picture in mid-December and is now at work on a solution to the problem.

Talent and Tunes

Talentwise and tunewise, the recording ban becomes more arduous for Petrillo and the AFM. Bands today are not the selling factor they have been in the past. Instrumental music backing is in the end essential to recording but a capella ersatz might prove to be a more effective stopgap in 1948 than it was in 1942. The backlogs of the major companies are the greater for the years of dinking since the last ban. And the current plethora of revival stands to keep disk company profits going

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