

# ABC RADIO: CUT HOURS, NEW NAME

- As of now: It's American Broadcasting Network
- Ultimately: A programming day of 8 to 9 hours

UNDER the new leadership of President Robert E. Eastman, ABC Radio is changing more than its programming [B•T, May 27]. It's going to shorten its broadcast day and, effective immediately, it's changing its name, too.

Henceforth it will call itself "the American Broadcasting Network," rather than "the ABC Radio Network."

The shortening of network operating hours was foreshadowed a week ago with Mr. Eastman's announcement that phonograph records and simulcasts would be eliminated. With its two major record shows out, the network will have gone a long way toward completing the cutback that Mr. Eastman has in mind.

On the theory that it's better to program less time with higher quality than to spread quality thin over a longer period of time, he anticipates a schedule which ultimately will total an average of about eight or nine hours of programming per day, Mondays through Fridays (weekends are another and more complicated problem about which Mr. Eastman has not yet reached any firm decisions).

The network currently averages about 11½ hours of programming during a 16-hour day that starts at 8 a.m. and ends at midnight. As Mr. Eastman envisions it, its eventual new schedule will start about 9 a.m. and end at 10 p.m., with probably three solid chunks of non-networking in between. In general, he plans to present no network programs between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; 4 and 6 p.m., and after 10 p.m.

Two of these three blocks already contain substantial periods in which there is no network service, and the third, 10-12 midnight, consists solely of a records program (*Mr. I-Magination*, featuring Milton Cross) interspersed with about 40 minutes of newscasts. Another record show, *Man About Music*, takes up 80 minutes of the afternoon time each day. In addition, the present 8-9 a.m. schedule contains 35 minutes of silence, the programming consisting of a quarter-hour co-op newscast at 8 and five-minute newscasts at 8:30 and 8:55.

Mr. Eastman, who moved into his network post a month ago from the executive vice presidency of a station representation firm, John Blair & Co., is making clear that American will not do what virtually all reps charge networks with doing: "invading" station time.

American, he says, intends to stay out of 6-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m., which are highly profitable station periods, and the same thinking probably figured in his plan to abandon another hour of the midday period. (In another station relations move, Mr. Eastman also has cautioned salesmen not to make any direct comparisons between network radio and spot radio in their presentations to prospects.)

The exact new programs which the network plans to introduce probably will not

be determined until after William S. Morgan Jr., formerly of KLIF Dallas, has had a chance to study and make known his own views in his new role of American programming vice president, Mr. Eastman said. Mr. Morgan was to assume his new duties as of last Saturday.

But Mr. Eastman already had served notice that ultimately all American programs will feature "live-talent" personalities. The network therefore is in the market for personalities to join Don McNeill, who already is under contract and who will continue to preside over his long-time feature, *Breakfast Club*.

Coupled with other developments, the network's name change would seem to reflect a desire to dissociate the radio operation from tv as completely as possible. The new nomenclature drops the call letters which are so prominent in ABC-TV's identification, and even before the change was announced, Mr. Eastman had suggested that ABC people, in their correspondence and conversation, substitute "American" for "ABC."

In addition, he has told his salesmen that in approaching advertising prospects they should not offer talent which is associated predominantly with television, if they can possibly avoid it.

The name change—and a new insignia is being prepared to go with it—also coincides more clearly with the corporate name adopted by the radio network when it was

established as an autonomous subsidiary of American Broadcasting-Paramount Theatres on May 1. The corporate name is American Broadcasting Co. Radio Networks Inc.

Plans for the name change were disclosed last week in announcement of a new system cue for the network. Effective today (Monday) the new system cue will be: "This is the American Broadcasting Network." In addition, four 10-second special cues have been devised for use on a rotating basis every hour on the hour, immediately following the new system cue. These go:

"... Only on American—more listeners than any other network each weekday morning."

"... With best local coverage of the nation's most important markets."

"... Eight million Americans a week enjoy *Breakfast Club*—lead-off program of the American morning."

"... American's weekend news is the leading program on radio."

## NBC Splits Sports, News, Public Affairs

IN a new alignment, NBC last week set up a special "creative programming unit" for public affairs programs and formed independent news and sports departments. Previously these departments were combined.

Robert E. Kintner, executive vice president for tv programs and sales at NBC, who announced the changes, said in the realignment NBC also intends to give greater emphasis to news and sports.

Henry Salomon, director of *Project 20* and writer-producer of *Victory at Sea*, was named to head the creative unit that will develop "a wide variety of new public in-

### TV NETWORK SALES UP IN APRIL

TIME sales of the tv networks at gross rates in April totaled \$41,206,913, or 5.7% ahead of the same month a year ago. For the first four months of the year, the networks had totaled \$167,747,111 or 7.8% above the 1956 period.

Publishers Information Bureau also reported an 8% gain in April for ABC-TV over the same month in 1956. CBS-TV was up 9.7% and NBC-TV showed only a scant rise of 0.1% in the April comparisons. In comparing the four-

month periods CBS-TV was up 11.1%, while ABC-TV gained 2.7% and NBC-TV gained 6.1%.

Based on PIB's data, the average monthly gross billing per network for the January-April period can be computed as an indication of a monthly level for each of the networks. On this basis, CBS-TV has about \$19.5 million, NBC-TV is at the \$15.8 million point and ABC-TV rests at the \$6.6 million level.

The tables follow:

NETWORK TELEVISION						
	April 1957	April 1956	per cent change	Jan.-April 1957	Jan.-April 1956	per cent change
ABC-TV	\$ 6,667,427	\$ 6,173,992	+8.0	\$ 26,407,344	\$ 25,722,106	+ 2.7
CBS-TV	19,385,098	17,668,950	+9.7	78,097,833	70,302,742	+11.1
NBC-TV	15,154,388	15,136,596	+0.1	63,241,934	59,632,400	+ 6.1
Total	\$41,206,913	\$38,979,468	+5.7	\$167,747,111	\$155,657,248	+ 7.8

### 1957 NETWORK TELEVISION TOTALS TO DATE

	ABC-TV	CBS-TV	NBC-TV	Total
January	\$ 6,715,581	\$20,231,474	\$16,554,941	\$ 43,501,996
February	6,175,488	18,309,088	14,900,631	39,385,207
March	6,848,848	20,172,173	16,631,974*	43,652,995*
April	6,667,427	19,385,098	15,154,388	41,206,913
Total	\$26,407,344	\$78,097,833	\$63,241,934	\$167,747,111

\* Revised as of May 28, 1957