

# New Goodson-Todman game: diversify

## FOOT SOLIDLY IN NON-GAME TV SHOWS; EYE ON STATIONS, SYNDICATION

Program packagers Mark Goodson and William Todman, whose abilities in establishing television's top quiz-and-game-show attractions have made them the kingpins in that category, are well on the way to diversification into other types of programs—live and filmed.

And Goodson-Todman Productions, New York, also has an eye out for a possible move into station ownership and the syndication field.

Though only one of the three Goodson-Todman programs to start on the networks in January is of the non-game variety (*One Happy Family*, a situation comedy, on NBC-TV), G-T has a half-dozen other non-game shows, all adventure series, in various stages of development: *The Yank*, *Las Vegas*, *U.S. Secret Service*, *Medical Detectives*, *Tigerero* and *The Cop*. *Las Vegas*, an hour-long series starring Peter Graves, starts next season on NBC-TV.

Bud Austin, executive vice president of the company, needed few words to tell exactly why Goodson-Todman is diversifying: "To keep growing, it's an economic advantage not to have all your proverbial eggs in one basket." Besides program development, there is talk at G-T of expansion into station ownership and the syndication field. He

said various station properties have been "looked at," and "we think we can bring great creativity to a network affiliate."

**First Winner** ■ Goodson-Todman is building on a firm foundation. In 1946, a \$15 investment in a demonstration record launched a CBS Radio quiz show titled *Winner Take All*, set off a long string of audience participation programs. Although earlier program ideas had failed to sell, Mr. Goodson, as an announcer, and Mr. Todman, a writer-director, were earning in the five-figure bracket and could take some risks.

Programs produced by the company last year represented more than \$20 million in gross time and talent costs and the gross total accruing to the company exceeded \$5 million. The tv packagers recently announced that 1960 represented a 25% increase over 1959, and they predicted a 30% increase in 1961, "when we expect to achieve a 50-50 ratio between live and film shows without any loss of the former."

The shop produced a succession of long-lived programs based on the formula that people like to play simple, uncomplicated games and make guesses: *What's My Line?*, the oldest half-hour on network tv (11 years), *Beat the Clock* (10 years), *I've Got a Secret*

(10 years), *The Price Is Right* (5 years), *To Tell the Truth* (4 years) and *Play Your Hunch* (2 years). The premieres this month of *Say When* on NBC-TV (Jan. 2) and *Number Please* on ABC-TV, which replaces *Beat the Clock* today (Jan. 30), indicate no loss of interest in tv games and panel quizzes by Goodson-Todman, the networks or advertisers. "In fact, advertisers are more interested than ever in sponsoring them," according to Mr. Austin.

Altogether, including a situation comedy, *One Happy Family*, which started Jan. 13 on NBC-TV, G-T's share of network programming stands at a highly respectable total of 25 half-hour segments per week.

**Wet Feet** ■ Mr. Austin, who joined the company five years ago as assistant to Mr. Todman, expressed G-T's approach to filmed shows this way: "We're in the film business to stay. The tempo is being stepped up and we hope to bring the kind of imagination to films that has been demonstrated in our live programming. We're getting our feet wet slowly because we are methodical and thorough. Much time, energy, and money goes into our researching and development of new programs . . . to the point of abandoning many projects after we have gotten quite far into them. We seek built-in longevity through uniqueness and audience empathy."

In 1959, he continued, "we had two pilots—*Rebel* and *Philip Marlowe*—and we sold both. *Rebel* was renewed by Proctor & Gamble and Liggett & Myers long before their options were up. In 1960, we also offered two pilots, *One Happy Family* and *The Yank*. *Yank* is under option to ABC-TV and may get an April start. We've never shown a property we didn't honestly think would be a smash hit."

Though they normally wet their toes slowly, they can jump in fast when necessary. To illustrate, Mr. Austin said the *U.S. Secret Service* project was started when Harris Katleman, executive vice president of G-T's film arm in Hollywood, called Mr. Todman to tell him he had just finished reading a book about the government service and he went on to describe how a film series could dramatize its work. Within 10 minutes after the call, Messrs. Todman and Austin were on their way to Washington to start the ball rolling. They received promises of cooperation and access to files. Mr. Katleman was called



Cross-country script meetings via AT&T's "Speak-A-Phone" system (note small speaker box on the telephone stand) are a daily routine between New York and Hollywood offices of Goodson-

Todman Productions. Harris Katleman (inset, r), west coast executive vice president, is shown here in a typical script consultation with (l to r): Bill Todman, Bud Austin, Mark Goodson.