

PIX SCRIPTERS IN SELLERS' MART

Copyright Coverage for Pix to Be Sought at UNESCO Conv. in D.C.

Washington, Oct. 24. A drive to get specific copyright coverage for motion pictures in countries all over the world will be one feature of the UNESCO copyright convention which opened yesterday (23) and will last about two weeks.

Principal purpose of the meeting, which has attracted experts from many nations, is to seek a formula for a universal copyright convention under which not only literary works, but music, films, plays, etc., would be covered in all countries by a single system.

Many nations have no language in their copyright regulations covering films. In some motion pictures are covered by the general copyright language. In others, an imported Hollywood film, for instance, could be copied and pirated without anyone being subject to legal action.

The U.S. has individual copyright arrangements with many countries but is not a member of either the Berne or Buenos Aires conventions. Former includes most of Europe, Canada, Brazil, etc. Latter takes in most of Latin America, although Brazil is out and Mexico and Cuba are not members of any convention.

Prior to the current international huddles, reps of American industry and government—motion pictures, video, radio, music, books, etc.—met in New York to work out an "official" American position for purpose of the UNESCO meeting. As it will be explained to the world delegates in the next couple of days, is willing to make a number of concessions in moving toward an international UNESCO copyright convention under which an American song or motion picture, etc., could be assured copy-

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Korda's Busy Schedule Of Filmmaking Keeps His Aides On Transatlantic Move

Ascendancy of Sir Alexander Korda to unquestioned leadership in British production, with the decline in J. Arthur Rank's activities, is sending Korda execs on a transoceanic spree. Harold Boxall, managing director of London Film Productions, Ltd., arrived in New York from London Sunday (22), while Morris Helprin, Korda's U. S. top-per, hopped in the opposite direction the following day. Both men will be away from their home bases about two weeks.

Hugh Quennell, London financier who until recently held a top financial spot in the Korda hierarchy, was in New York from London last week, while Arthur Jarratt, managing director of the producer's British Lion distributing company, was over the week before.

Quennell was in the U. S. only partially on Korda biz. Jarratt was in on affairs of BL, which handles Republic product in Britain. Boxall is involved in distribution deals in this country of Korda product, as is Helprin. Latter took a number of such deals to London with him for final okay by Korda.

Helprin is also in London to sit in on the windup of the long dispute between Korda and David O. Selznick over "Gone to Earth," the Jennifer Jones-starrer, which was a Korda-Selznick joint production in England. Final details on a new pact to end the battles between the two producers have been worked out by lawyers for both sides in London, and the contract is expected to be signed this week.

Helprin is also slated to accompany Korda to Paris and Rome for discussion of co-production deals with local filmmakers there.

Par Ups Segal

Maurice Segal has moved up from the press book department to trade press contact at the Paramount homeoffice. He replaced Jack Alicote, resigned.

Burt Sloane, freelance writer, has replaced Segal in press books.

Lesser Names Morris To Swing 'Tarzan'

Claud Morris, vet publicity-exploitation man, has been named coordinator and special rep for Sol Lesser on the 35th anni celebration of the "Tarzan" films. The Edgar Rice Burroughs yarns will hit their 35th year on the screen with release of "Tarzan's Peril" by RKO next spring.

Morris is making his headquarters at the RKO h.o. in New York. Another Lesser rep, Jack Osserman, who will handle the producer's affairs in England, is due in New York from the Coast Nov. 16 on his way back to London. He's been huddling with Lesser on co-production and releasing plans.

UP Sells \$4,000,000 Butterfield Stock To U. of Michigan

Sale by United Paramount Theatres of its stock interest in the two Butterfield circuits in Michigan to the U. of Michigan for \$4,000,000 was disclosed by Leonard Goldenson, UPT president. Substantially all of the purchase amount is payable, together with interest, over a period of years out of dividends or distributions received by Mich. U. as holder of the stock.

Deal covered UPT's 25% interest in W. S. Butterfield Theatres and 33 1/3% in Butterfield Michigan Theatres. W. S. Butterfield has 100% interest in 68 houses and partial holdings in 23 others. Butterfield Michigan has 100% ownership of 20 houses and a partial interest in two other spots. All theatres of the two chains are located in Michigan.

The \$4,000,000 stock acquisition entails a minimum of cash outlay by the university, if any at all. The terms specify that if at maturity of the deal any balance of the sale price and accrued interest remains unpaid, stocks in the two chains are to be sold to the highest bidder, with the proceeds to be applied to payment of the balance to UPT.

Goldenson also reported sale by UPT in the past three months of a number of individual theatres

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'MEDIUM,' ITALIAN PIC, FOR U. S. THIS WINTER

Rome, Oct. 24.

With Gian Carlo Menotti's "Medium" due for completion at the Scalera studio in about two weeks, the film likely will preem in New York sometime this winter. General release for other sections of the U. S. has not been arranged as yet.

For the picture's N. Y. debut, special projection equipment will be installed. Deal for the venture was set in the U. S. with Menotti by Pietro Bullo, who reps Scalera in America. Walter Lowendahl, formerly with Transfilms of N. Y., is producing while Menotti directs. Latter also adapted the original stage version for the screen.

Cast includes: Marie Powers, Leo Coleman, Beverly Dame, Belva Kibbler and Don Morgan, all of whom appeared in the N. Y. production.

Only newcomer is Anna Maria Alberghetti, a 14-year-old coloratura. When "Medium" winds up she starts a three-picture pact with Paramount. Meantime, Menotti's "Consul" will be presented at the Carlo Fenice in Genoa next month, at the La Scala in Milan, and La Fenice, Venice, in January.

STORY EDITORS SEEK ORIGINALS

Hollywood, Oct. 24.

Sellers' market for writers is on upswing. Emphasis is on original material.

Variety of yarns is sought by studios, split among adventure, if topgrade; emotional and action melodramas, human interest and non-formula westerns, according to major studios' survey by Screen Writers Guild.

Twentieth-Fox's Julian Johnson says the downbeat is on crime, fantasy and psychiatry, unless latter is extraordinary. Studio will consider a war story if very fine, as well as adventure if unusual.

RKO's William Fadiman wants "A," "B" emotional and action melodramas. Republic's Irene Francis is seeking action, human interest and non-formula westerns.

Warners' Ellingwood Kay is encouraging submission of originals with fresh ideas. Kenneth McKenna, Metro, states: "our needs are many and varied. We have so many stars here that we will buy any good story at any time." Bernard Smith at Paramount puts it tersely: "We need good stories."

Latest SWG bulletin reports a drop of 32 in writer employment, as of Oct. 16, compared to Oct. 24, 1949. Total for month reached 502 in all capacities. Bulletin also notes 264 manuscripts registered at SWG during September.

Breakdown of employment is: Columbia, 27 writers, with six as producer-directors; Metro, 45 writers, 11 producer-directors; Paramount, 23, 10; Republic, 14, one; RKO, 15, seven; 20th-Fox 38, seven; Universal, 22, three; Warners, 21, eight. Working in independent field are 150. Sixty-one are employed in documentaries and television, and 33 in other capacities in indie field.

Discounts Par Coin Statement

Leonard Goldenson, president of United Paramount Theatres, cautioned against drawing any conclusions from the circuit's earnings of \$7,963,000 for the first nine months of 1950. He said in N. Y. on Friday (20) that he found it impossible to figure a comparison with the 1949 profit because of the vast changes in the circuit's holdings made during the past year.

Excluding capital gains (\$1,465,000), the earnings for the new nine-month period amounted to \$6,498,000. For the corresponding period in '49, the circuit had a profit, also excluding capital gains, of \$7,501,000, as shown in the Par pro forma statements issued early this year. Goldenson said in effect that the drop of \$1,003,000 does not mean a commensurate drop in theatre business. Actually, whether it reflects even a greater decline or possibly an increase is not known because of the extensive revision of the UPT holdings. Many new theatres were acquired, many disposed of, and still many more partial ownerships were revised.

During the 39 weeks in '49, UPT reported capital gains of \$6,943,000 which, less \$155,000 due to Paramount Pictures as rental for the N. Y. Paramount theatre, brought the total consolidated earnings for the period to \$14,444,000.

UPT earned \$2,114,000 in the 1950 third quarter, excluding capital gains. This is against the \$2,337,000 which the circuit netted in the '49 corresponding quarter but here again the comparison is regarded for the most part as meaningless. Firm had capital gains of \$414,000 for the third '50 quarter.

Goldenson made the report in a letter to stockholders which accompanied third-quarter dividend checks in the amount of 50c per share. Total of 3,261,388 shares were outstanding as of last Sept. 30, he stated.

Exhib-Sponsored Cinema Prods. In Deal With 3d Dimensional Cinerama

Short's Indie Film Passes to Allied Artists

Hollywood, Oct. 24.

Paul Short's indie production deal with Allied Artists terminated, and Short's interest in "The Policy Story" passes to Steve Brody setup.

Allied also bought Short's profit participation in "Bad Boy" and is negotiating for similar washup to three other pictures. Short has three other films on his production slate.

Price Upturn Slows 3 Majors On Stock Buys

Upturn in the market price of Warner Bros.' common during September slowed the company's program of buying up its own securities in preparation for the theatre divestment. Its monthly report to the Securities & Exchange Commission disclosed that it had acquired for retirement only 6,700 shares during September as compared to 72,100 in August.

20th-Fox slowed up also in its program of retiring its preferred in preparation for split of its theatre circuit from its production-distribution organization. It acquired 500 shares of its \$1.50 cumulative convertible preferred during September, in contrast to 1,400 of the \$1.50 and 500 of the \$4.50 prior preferred during August.

Warners, with the new acquisition, has bought a total of 304,400 shares since it embarked on the reduction program in mid-June. 20th now has retired 48,200 shares of the \$1.50 preferred and 500 of the \$4.50.

WB plans to continue buying up its common as Paramount has been doing for several years. It has not set up any definite pattern of buying, however, figuring on jumping into the market whenever it feels the price is right. The 20th move is part of a major refinancing project that has included borrowing of \$7,500,000 to provide cash to the production-distribution company from the theatre company when it

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2 K. C. EXHIBS PLEAD GUILTY ON B.O. TAX RAPS

Kansas City, Oct. 24.

Two subsequent-run operators, Herman Illmer and Vincil Stamm, pleaded guilty to charges of evading payments of Government admittance taxes in U. S. district court here Friday (20) before Judge Albert L. Reeves.

The two conceived a plan of reselling tickets once-used and during a period from 1944 through 1946 cost the Government \$7,634, according to William Aull III, assistant attorney.

The five theatres in which the two men were involved are the Southtown, Tivoli, Strand, Bagdad and Fiesta. The Government information also charged Illmer and Stamm with assembling a printing machine and printing their own tickets. An investigation by the Government in July, 1946, brought to light the printing equipment. Under the law tickets when printed are reported by the manufacturer to the Collector of Internal Revenue, giving the bureau another method of checking on tax payments. The private printing of tickets is a violation in that it evaded this law, Aull pointed out.

The two men have been on virtual probation for nearly four years while the Government deliberated and prepared its charges, according to their attorney.

Promises of further advancement in exhibition innovations were made this week with the disclosure that the exhibitor-sponsored Cinema Productions has joined hands with Cinerama, third-dimension outfit financed by the Rockefeller interests. The two reportedly entered a deal providing for the Cinema firm to produce the first feature employing the Cinerama filming and projection process, which gives the effect of audience participation in happenings on the screen.

Exhibition's cry for "new dynamics" also was claimed to be at least partially answered with new developments in the field of color television for large theatre screens. Cinema Prod. has retained J. Arthur Ball, color film engineer, to act as its technical consultant in experimentation on the color TV. Firm also is said to be conferring with Arthur Matthews, head of Color Television, Inc., on the idea of providing theatres with the tinted video over a closed circuit of telephone wires. The system would not be subject to Federal Communications Commission regulations because of the private nature of transmission which it entails.

Cinema Prod. was formed by a group of 15 circuit operators, with M. A. Lightman, Memphis, as president, and Sam Pinanski, Boston, as board chairman. Production head is Lester Cowan, who now is in the east at work on the company's first picture, "The Customer's Always Right," which uses the Polaroid Vectograph system. Actual shooting is due in about five weeks. Vectograph process provides the third dimensional effect, but demands that the audience use colored glasses, similar to the stereoscopic method introduced in the industry about 20 years ago.

Cinerama appears the most ambitious departure from conventional exhibition since inception of

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20th Junkets Pix Crix To London, Kramer To P.R. for 'Cyrano'

The press junket, as an exploitation-publicity item for a pic, appears to be on a comeback after almost disappearing during the film industry's economy kick of the past few years. 20th-Fox is taking a group of metropolitan newspaper reviewers to London today (Wed.) for the Command Performance preem of "The Mudlark" there, while Stanley Kramer Productions takes a group to Puerto Rico Nov. 10 for opening there of "Cyrano."

The 20th junketeers will be abroad a week, being feted by their British newspaper counterparts prior to the showing for the King and Queen at the Empire theatre next Monday (30). Attending are Howard Barnes, Herald Tribune; Alton Cook, World-Telegram and Sun; Leo Mishkin, Morning Telegraph; Seymour Peck, Compass; Rose Peliswick, Journal-American, and Archer Winsten, Post. Group will also spend a day seeing the sights in Paris.

Kramer junket is being sponsored in large part by the government of Puerto Rico as a promotion for tourism. Group will include about 50 daily and trade newsmen, mag writers and radio people. Locale has been chosen because it is the birthplace of Jose Ferrer, star of the film and Puerto Rico's best-known citizen.

Group takes off from New York Friday, Nov. 10, and returns Monday, Nov. 13.

D. C. Honors Meakin

Washington, Oct. 24.

Hardie Meakin, RKO topper here, was awarded a special Board of Trade citation tonight (24) at ceremonies at the Motion Picture Assn. of America headquarters.

Meakin was singled out for the honor because of the many contributions he has made to local civic life.