

Mechanical Survey Brings Surprises

Boston Tests, Using New Device, Prove Interesting As Listening Habits of 500 Homes Are Studied

MAJOR BOWES and **Jack Benny** first—each having a listening audience of approximately 50% more than any other programs on the air!
Next in order in popularity—**Fred Allen**, **Rudy Vallee** and the **Bakers' Broadcast**, with "Believe It or Not Ripley".

Dick Tracy with the leading day-time audience, and **Jack Armstrong** the runner up!

The average family listens consistently to 3½ to 3¾ hours per day!
Sunday evening is the greatest listening night—about 20% ahead of Wednesday and Thursday, which are practically tied for second!

And, amazingly enough Saturday ranks next, with only 5% less than the listening audience on Wednesday and Thursdays!

THESE are some of the surprising results procured in the unique mechanical survey method devised by Prof. Robert F. Elder, of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, at the half-way mark in his test survey of the Boston radio market. The results were taken from the record tape on instruments covering a sample of 500 Boston homes in every economic category over a five-week period. John Shepard 3d, president of Yankee Network, is financing the experiment which may become the long-coveted "fool-proof" method of measuring audience reactions.

The 10-week survey began Nov. 3, when 100 of the instruments were placed in 100 selected homes by Prof. Elder and his associate, Prof. L. F. Woodruff of MIT, who perfected the clock-like instrument. Each week the recorders were transferred to another selected group of 100 homes. The metering instruments show days, hours and minutes of listening. Since an accurate record of the homes with the instruments is kept, the economic position of each is known. Thus, a cross-section of practically every type of listener data is procured. [See Dec. 1 issue for article by Prof. Elder.]

It's All Automatic

WHEN the 10-week survey is concluded, the listening habits of 1,000 families will have been studied. This, it is held, is fully as large as that used in any radio survey ever made in the Boston area. Moreover, the surveyors do not have the human element to contend with and a far greater accuracy is indicated, since the process is entirely automatic.

But now for the results of the survey at the half-way mark. The metering instruments were calibrated to show positions of eight so-called "key" stations in the Boston area, all other positions denoting outside stations. Listening periods were broken down to show the morning hours from 6:30 a. m. to 1 p. m.; 1 p. m. to 6 p. m., and 6 p. m. to 1 a. m. There were classifications for every day in the week and totals for the week and for the particular stations, which, of course, indicated the particular programs and the opposite competitive features.

According to the analysis for the first five-week period, made available through the courtesy of Mr. Shepard, the programs standing out in the Boston area are those of Major Bowes' amateur hour and Jack Benny, both Sunday night

features. The Chase & Sanborn show had a slight lead over the Jello-sponsored Benny feature, at the half-way mark. But the more important finding was that both these programs have a listening audience of about 50% more than any other programs on the air.

The ratings of the Fred Allen, Vallee and Bakers' Broadcast shows were about the same, running next in line. All were considered by Mr. Shepard as tied for third place.

Falling about 20% below the three above programs in listening audience was the Maxwell House Show Boat. A large number of programs having approximately the same percentage of audience followed Maxwell House.

Getting into the results of the survey during the entire evening period for the five weeks of scrutiny, it was revealed that the CBS station had a slight margin of lead over each of the NBC outlets between the hours of 6 p. m. and 1 a. m. This, according to Mr. Shepard, was so despite the fact that the six leading shows were NBC rather than CBS.

The leading day-time audience (except Sunday) was won by Dick Tracy at 5:45 p. m., with the second largest following credited to Jack Armstrong at 5:30 p. m. In third position was the Vivatown Band, with Carl Moore at 5:15, and in fourth place the Yankee Network News Service at 1:30. These results proved the immense children's audience between 5 and 6 p. m., which also proves, in Boston at any rate, to be the peak hour of day-time listening.

Singularly, both the Dick Tracy and Jack Armstrong programs are transcription programs in the Boston area. The third and fourth programs—Vivatown Band and the news service—likewise are spot placements, with live talent.

Saturday Listening

SATURDAY listening reports were bolstered, obviously, by the afternoon football games. Usually the one big game is carried by two different stations and as a consequence even the robot audience surveyor cannot give a precise rating, for the listeners are split among the stations broadcasting the games.

One of the interesting results of the survey was the showing made by the three big script acts on the three leading network stations running competitively between 7 and 7:15 p. m. Here is how they figured: (1) Myrt and Marge; (2)

Amos 'n' Andy, about 10% less than the Wrigley feature, (3) Easy Aces, approximately one-half of the leading feature.

A comparison was made of the two leading network news commentators. Boake Carter, on at 7:45 p. m. ran about 20% ahead of Lowell Thomas, who broadcasts at 6:45 p. m.

Taking cumulative totals on listening, it was found: While there are variations in the hours of listening, the programs listened to, and to some extent, the days of listening, every week of the five were surveyed—with 100 sets in operation each week—shows that the owners of these sets listened to between 10,000 and 10,200 quarter-hours of broadcasting. In other words, the number of hours of listening for 100 families is practically the same week after week.

This, according to Mr. Shepard, seems to indicate that a sample of 100 receiver-meters per week, as far as total figures are concerned, is reliable. The results from 100 sets, however, he asserted, will not prove conclusive when broken down into smaller units of time but should, at the end of the survey when 1,000 families' listening habits will have been studied.

Best Listening Days

THE BEST listening days showed up conclusively in the mechanical survey. It has been generally recognized that Sunday is the best listening day, but there has never been any accurate information as to how far it exceeds other peak days. In Boston the answer is that Sunday is 20% ahead of Wednesday and Thursday, which appear to be tied for second. The showing made by Saturday was a revelation, since it long had been considered the poorest day. Actually, it showed only about 5% less than Wednesdays and Thursdays. Coming next in listener rating is Monday, slightly behind Saturdays, and Tuesdays, with 7½% below Monday. By a slight margin, Friday brings up the rear in Boston.

In the afternoons, Sunday afternoon ranks first, with Saturdays second, Thursdays third, Tuesdays fourth, Mondays fifth, Wednesdays sixth, and Fridays last. In the morning the ratings are much the same as afternoon, except on Sundays, which becomes the poorest morning in Boston, where church services predominate. The audience drops there, apparently, because those interested in church services usually attend. Yet, for the shut-ins and for others, church services are considered not only worthwhile, but essential, and as a part of the public service obligation of stations.

Mr. Shepard, after analyzing the results of the five-week records, concluded that they show definitely that the big programs are the determining factors in listener habits, rather than the stations themselves. The Bowes and Benny programs, for example, he asserted, have the preponderance of listeners because of the calibre of programs, rather than the stations.

KWKC, KANSAS CITY, WILL GO ON BLOCK

SALE at auction of KWKC, Kansas City, to satisfy tax delinquencies amounting to approximately \$16,500 against Wilson Duncan, station owner, has been advertised by George R. Clark, Deputy Collector of the Bureau of Internal Revenue at Kansas City, Mo., to take place Jan. 22 in Kansas City. The advertisement, under law, was published in the *Kansas City Daily Democrat* on Jan. 14 and will appear again Jan. 21.

The station and all supplies and equipment, the advertisement stated, located in the Werby Building, will be sold at public auction. The property was seized, it was said, to satisfy assessments against the owner for individual income tax for the years 1928 through 1932.

There was some possibility that the auction might not take place as scheduled if an appeal is taken from the decision of the deputy collector to the Bureau of Internal Revenue, or if the delinquencies are met. The station operates on 1370 kc., specified hours, with 100 watts. Wilson Duncan is listed as the licensee.

Par Soap Tests Programs

GORDON-ALLEN Ltd., Oakland, Cal. (Par soap), which recently placed its national advertising with Tomaschke-Elliott Inc., Oakland agency, has signed for 52 weeks on the Columbia-Don Lee network of 13 stations. Not certain of the type of weekly program to offer, two separate programs were "auditioned" over the network from KFRC, San Francisco, Jan. 8, with listeners-in as the judges to make the selection. Programs were titled *Your Fellow Man's Opinion* and *The Other Woman's Diary*. Program polling the greatest response will be broadcast each Thursday, 8:15-8:30, starting Jan. 23. This is said to be the first prevue of a network program ever attempted in Western radio.

Commenting on the remarkable showing of Saturdays in the returns, Mr. Shepard said he was convinced that if there were better and more consistent shows on Saturday nights it would run second only to Sunday in listening popularity, as a general thing.

Elated over the showing of the mechanical measuring method, Mr. Shepard declared the basic popularity results check leading programs with the results of question-and-answer surveys. The exact number of hours listened during the five-week period in the 500 radio homes was 50,500. On this basis, it is shown that the average family listens consistently to 3½ to 3¾ hours per day. The two leading programs—Bowes and Benny—also are the leaders in both the Crossley and Clark-Hooper surveys. In the latter surveys, however, the so-called "memory method" is employed. The Elder mechanical survey showed from 20% to 50% more listeners to these programs than did the "memory method" surveys. Following the same theory, according to Mr. Shepard, it would appear that actual radio audiences on practically

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