

that an eighteen-gram slice of "Hollywood Bread" is the same weight as a slice of ordinary bread, and that, therefore, since it contains "only about forty-six calories" per slice, the "Hollywood Bread" is significantly lower in calories. The evidence convinced the FTC's hearing examiner that there was no substantial difference in the caloric values of this bread and ordinary breads and that the advertising was therefore based on a lie.

FTC watchdogs have also found it necessary to warn the public against recent land-development ads promising everything from "stability guaranteed by the U. S. Government" to "all city conveniences." The FTC says that no purchase should be made sight unseen because of the high incidence of misleading, if attractively descriptive, advertising. And, in the field of packaging, many a housewife has discovered to her distress that the outward and visible size of a carton or container often has little relationship to its contents. The ultimate result can only be disbelief in *all* packaging and advertising.

Considering these scattered examples, which, as every literate American knows, are repeated in varying forms every day, the AAAA's code of ethics would seem to have its work cut out for it. Hydra-headed, dishonest advertising can be chopped off with regularity by the FTC, the FDA, and other agencies functioning in the consumer's interest—only to grow new lies. And if advertising is ever to be regarded as a profession (in the sense that "profession" means an occupation in the public interest), the AAAA's new creative code of ethics will have to be more than words, and *all* agencies and advertisers will have to begin to memorize and apply a minimum code of honesty.

The American public will tolerate a very great deal before it explodes but, when it does explode, the offender beware! The AAAA can put teeth in its new code of ethics and sooner or later drive out an offending few who give advertising a bad name through deceitful copy. Lawyers and doctors have their own policing associations—why not advertising men? But, if the AAAA is unwilling or unable to make its moral code mean something besides a pretty scroll in a frame, other agencies of the people, including government, will surely step in to police one of the fundamental functions in the free enterprise formula. The worst mistake advertising people could possibly make would be to ignore the ultimate common sense of the American consumer.

—R.L.T.

## Letters to the Communications Editor



### RADIO COMEBACK

TOPEKA's WIBW-FM is one of "the hundreds of radio stations in the U. S. nowadays approaching the quality once identified solely with WQXR in New York." This statement by Mr. Tobin [SR, May 12] is right. I know, because I once was an ardent listener to the New York Times station.

We in the hinterland feel extremely fortunate to have such an opportunity. Our only fear has been that a lack of advertising would take it from us.

Therefore, it is comforting, indeed, to learn from these excellent articles—"FM: A New Trend Toward Quality" and "The Amazing Comeback of Radio" [SR, May 12]—that quality broadcasting is beginning to receive financial support.

Thank you for printing them.

O. W. BIDWELL.

Manhattan, Kan.

WE GENERALLY agree with your radio comeback and FM quality stories but:

There once was a radio station  
Whose culture produced wild elation.  
Erose dragons weren't slayed;—  
Proposed pledges weren't paid;—  
Downing tower, and power—and this  
alliteration.

We, who live by the word, ask to be heard. "Culture" must be offered slowly and gently—not to the people, but, rather, to the sponsors.

WESLEY B. TEBEAU,  
General Manager,  
WMUS.

Muskegon, Mich.

### BATTLEGROUND OF BELIEVABILITY

I HAVE NO DESIRE to prolong the argument over the validity of the survey we conducted for the Television Information Office, which was first reported by John Tebbel [SR, Mar. 10] and later "answered" by Arville Schaleben [SR, May 12]. However, as a member of the firm that conducted the survey and, in fact, as partner in charge of the survey, I would like to point out to Mr. Schaleben that this study was not intended as an attack on newspapers. Its purpose was to measure the public estimation of television, and only one of the six questions asked concerned itself with news believability. Mr. Schaleben is understandably preoccupied with the results of this one question, and I suspect the more so because two years earlier exactly the same question showed newspapers to be more believable than television, not less.

In view of the results of this question two years ago, as well as of Mr. Schaleben's own natural prejudice in favor of the newspaper industry, I think it is unfortunate

that he felt it desirable to cast suspicion on our study by reason of its sponsorship by the Television Information Office.

As to the statistics, I would point out that the Gallup figures Mr. Schaleben quotes not only do not refute our findings but rather tend to confirm them. In quoting Gallup's findings to a *different* question, Mr. Schaleben fails to point out that our survey found 28 per cent saying they would *least* believe the newspaper's version of a conflicting story. This 28 per cent compares with the one out of four that the Gallup survey found saying they do *not* believe their own newspaper gets the facts straight. Where is the conflict between the two sets of data?

BURNS W. ROPER,

Elmo Roper and Associates.

New York, N. Y.

ARVILLE SCHALEBEN has every right to disagree with John Tebbel's speculations about a recent study of public attitudes toward mass media. However, Mr. Schaleben's suggestion that Elmo Roper's professional integrity is open to question is quite another matter.

This office commissioned Elmo Roper and Associates precisely because their honesty and skills are respected by journalists, broadcasters, and the public.

In 1959, when the Roper survey used exactly the same questions on media "believability" used in 1961, Mr. Schaleben was not heard to doubt the validity of the findings—then more favorable to newspapers.

Like the current study, the 1959 research was completely controlled by Roper. Neither study was intended as an attack on newspapers. If they had been, then, according to Mr. Schaleben's reasoning, the 1959 report on "believability" should have been suppressed. In fact, the "believability" findings were released by the Director of the Television Information Office in a rebuttal to an argument by Bernard Kilgore of the *Wall Street Journal* that broadcasters should be denied the protection of the First Amendment.

Mr. Schaleben's concern about the standing of his profession is quite understandable, but it offers him no excuse to attack another.

ROY DANISH,

Assistant Director,

Television Information Office.

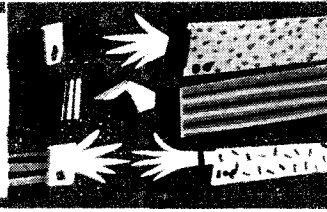
New York, N. Y.

MR. SCHALEBEN's article, "What Survey Do You Believe?" presents us with a new problem: What articles do you believe on what surveys?

Our study of newspaper influence cited in the article dealt with a specific problem: namely, what is the role of newspapers in

(Continued on page 58)

# Public Relations



## The Lesson of A.T.&T.

By L. L. L. GOLDEN

**B**USINESSMEN who think they can operate in a democratic society without being alert at all times to both the public interest and public opinion ought to take a long look at the world's largest corporation, American Telephone and Telegraph Company. Vast though it is, with its more than 725,000 employees in the Bell System and its 2,057,000 shareholders, powerful as it must be, it never forgets that it functions only with public consent.

Nor is it simply a pose for AT&T to be concerned about its relations with the public. It is part of the philosophy of the company, a philosophy ingrained in all its executives and continuously explained to all its employees. Moreover, this philosophy is not something new that began in the era of "big government." On December 28, 1883, Theo M. Vail, general manager of what was then the American Bell Telephone Company, wrote to all the company's executives to find out their opinion on its relations with the public "now that the telephone business has passed the experimental stage."

Then, in 1908, AT&T's Public Relations Department was formally established with the hiring of a full-time man, James D. Ellsworth of Boston, to handle its publicity and advertising. It was then that the company started the systematic explanation of its policies, in advertisements and, in other ways, to the public.

AT&T's basic position was probably best explained in a speech made thirty-four years ago by Walter S. Gifford, a former president, who put it this way: "... In other words, we must have a satisfactory financial condition if we are to go forward. In addition to that, we must at all times have public approval, because certainly in the United States you can't, no matter what your ability or what your intentions, succeed in the long run without public approval."

To continue to carry out this concept is not easy. It takes hard work, time, a willingness to understand the public, and a desire to do more than pay lip service to the public interest. In fact, it is rare to find an executive who holds

any position of importance with the company who has not, at some time or other, been exposed to the importance of public relations. Such a policy has paid off both in profits and in public esteem.

For those inside and outside the public relations business, it is worth a look at the public relations structure of AT&T. The vice-president in charge of public relations attends the weekly meetings held by the president and so has a chance to know and affect all major company decisions before, not after, they are made—in contrast to most large companies. In addition to these formal meetings there is constant discussion between the man responsible for public relations and other personnel on all levels of the various departments. It is almost impossible for a major decision to be made by AT&T without the public relations aspects having been thoroughly considered.

**U**NDER the vice-president in charge of public relations, J. W. Cook, there are four assistant vice-presidents. The range of their work can be seen from the list of direct responsibilities these four men have: public affairs; long-range planning; contributions; customer relations and new services; press relations and services; labor and bargaining information; revenue information; satellite communications; science-research-defense activities; studies of customer attitudes and similar subjects; Bell System advertising and promotion; advertising and sales promotion; contacts with other Bell companies; radio and television activities; exhibits; displays; general information for em-

ployees and public; films; community relations; school relations; talks; visits to company premises.

This is an impressive list of areas in which the public relations department functions. And though it is the responsibility of the secretary of the company to take care of shareowner relations, he works closely with the public relations department for help in the preparation of materials as well as for general public relations advice.

The company has 78 and the associated companies 390 people working in public relations, not including secretaries and clerical help. This does not seem to be a large figure when the size of the company and the job to be done are taken into consideration, but AT&T's greatest strength lies in this: it would be hard to find an important executive, or any employee for that matter, from the long-distance operator to the repair man, who is not conscious of the importance of the general public's good will toward the company.

The long view taken by the company can be seen from these facts: N. W. Ayer & Son has been AT&T's advertising agency for information and sales advertising for fifty-five years. Cunningham and Walsh has handled Yellow Pages advertising for nearly thirty-five years. And the outstanding example of stability in AT&T's public relations activities is Pendleton Dudley of Dudley-Anderson-Yutzy, who has been a consultant on public relations to AT&T's executives since 1912. This is probably some kind of record, and shows the appreciation the company has for one of the pioneers in public relations, and one of its most able and respected practitioners.

There is a lesson in all this for those chief executive officers of other companies who wonder why they are always in hot water with the public. There is an additional lesson for those corporate executives who think good public relations is some kind of trick instead of hard, long, serious labor. And above all, AT&T is proof that a company can have a good profit position and still spend time, money, effort, and thought on its public relations.

