

PATHFINDER

February 20, 1937 p. 19

ON THE AIR

Networks

Girdling the United States today are two major national radio chains and one smaller chain. They are the National Broadcasting Company, the Columbia Broadcasting System and the Mutual Broadcasting System. NBC, with its combined Red and Blue networks, has about 110 stations. CBS on a single network has 101. Mutual has 45 and will add a new section of 10 more next month.

The Mutual organization was established last September. It was one of the few successful efforts to set up a rival combination to the giant networks. All other attempts have ended in failure.

In 1934 the American Network was established when Alfred E. Smith and Vincent Astor, as representatives for a Wall Street combination bought WMCA in New York. They hooked up 20 stations, reaching as far west as St. Louis, but the chain operated unsuccessfully and was disbanded.

The comedian Ed Wynn then formed the Amalgamated Network in which he is said to have invested a good deal of his earnings as a radio star. The network operated but two days. Two attempts at forming national radio chains were made by Samuel Insull, utilities magnate, and failure marked both.

An attempt was also made to form a chain by George McClelland, original manager of WAAF, New York outlet of the Red network of NBC in New York. The attempt also ended in failure and McClelland's death was attributed to that fact.

This background lent interest last week to two reports of plans for new national networks. One revolved around talk of a coast-to-coast hook-up to be formed by the Warner Brothers and Transamerican Broadcasting Company.

The other concerned reported plans of radio, civic and financial figures to form a new station line-up. Among those reported in radio circles to be interested are Richard C. Patterson, former executive vice-president of NBC, Dr. Stanley High, head of the Good Neighbor League, and Goldman Sachs and Company.