

April 9, 1956

\$50 Million Gross Predicted for 'Days'

Robert J. O'Donnell, head of the Interstate circuit of 100 theatres, predicts that Mike Todd's "Around the World in 80 Days" will gross 50 million dollars.

O'Donnell, who returned to Texas yesterday after a special screening of the spectacular Todd project said, "This picture opens up brand new horizons, and it, together with De-Mille's 'Ten Commandments' and 20th Century-Fox's 'The King and I,' proves that the theatrical motion picture industry is wide open to new ideas and new enthusiasms that will result in a phenomenal boxoffice never envisaged."

In a personal salute to Todd, O'Donnell said, "You have got to admire the courage, foresight and daring of a man who will go out and risk \$5 million on a radically different and new idea. But there is no question in my mind that the investment will be returned in a gross ten times over."

"All the television and motor driving in the world are nothing to worry about with attractions like '80 Days,' 'Commandments' and 'The King and I.'"

Todd Closes With Soviet Officials On 'War & Peace'

New York.—Mike Todd, who has been "Around the World" a bit in his time, finally found himself in Moscow two weeks ago and immediately proceeded to close a deal with the top Soviet officials for the production of "War and Peace." And what's more the entire arrangement is said to have the blessing of the Yugoslav government which had a little of its own loot tied up in Mr. Todd's postponed plans to film the Tolstoi classic.

Todd is confining himself to an embarrassed "no comment" on this "diplomatic level" deal which evidently has more angles to it than have yet been disclosed. And whatever wide-

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George Skouras and Mike Todd are tilting for a legal skirmish because Todd refuses to play "80 Days" at the NY Rivoli . . .

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Special Todd-AO Prologue Devised

New York.—A foreword for Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!" running 10 minutes and demonstrating the differences between Todd-AO and Cinerama and other wide-screen processes, is being completed here by Louis De Rochemont Associates.

Prologue is known to have considerable footage made by Mike Todd in 1953 in Todd-AO and used in demonstrating then for Rodgers and Hammerstein and others. This contains exact duplication of footage in the first Cinerama film. Big emphasis is said to be that Todd-AO gives the same picture without the demarcation lines.

Soviet Attache To See '80 Days'

New York.—Yuri Gouk, cultural attache of the Soviet Embassy in Washington, leaves for Hollywood tonight to see Mike Todd's "Around the World in 80 Days." Gouk participated in discussions between Eric Johnston and the Soviet ambassador regarding possible sale of Hollywood films to Russia. He has also met with Spyros Skouras on several occasions in connection with the 20th-Fox president's forthcoming trip to Russia.

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3 More Roadshow Dates Are Set for 'Oklahoma!'

New York.—Three additional openings have been set for Rodgers & Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!" which will give the Todd-AO production a total of 10 roadshow engagements. New dates are Tivoli Theatre, Toronto, April 25; Strand, Milwaukee, May 4, and Allouette, Montreal, May 10.

Richard Rodgers arrives tomorrow for some "Oklahoma!" re-scoring . . . "Oklahoma!" previews in July . . . In September RGH start "The King and I" at 20th, with costumes by Irene Sharaff . . .

Bollengier Joins Magna Theatres

New York.—A. E. Bollengier has joined Magna Theatre Corp. as v.-p. and treasurer, succeeding Malcolm Kingsberg, who resigned some time ago, it was announced yesterday by George Skouras, president.

Bollengier is a veteran in film financial affairs, having served with Price, Waterhouse & Co. as indie auditor of several major Hollywood studios. He was also studio comptroller for Universal, treasurer of Eagle Lion, Hal Roach Studios and United Artists.

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Standard Prints For 'Oklahoma!'

New York.—Rogers and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!" will be released abroad by RKO for projection in Todd-AO or CinemaScope, with standard prints available later, it was announced yesterday by Daniel T. O'Shea, president of RKO. On Monday, O'Shea and George P. Skouras, president of Magna Theatre Corp., jointly announced that RKO would distribute the Technicolor musical in all parts of the world except the United States and Canada.

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screen process is used, whether Todd-AO or some new improvement of this method, it will very likely wind up as the Soviet's own answer to the wide screen craze now on in every country of the world.

Despite Ponti-De Laurentiis and Paramount and their multi-million-dollar "War and Peace" now in the Technicolor vats in London, Todd has always insisted he will some day make the Tolstoi film on the grand scale which it deserves. Fred Zinnemann, who worked on the story for Todd for a considerable period of time, has recently said he has no more connection with this venture. Todd does however have a screen treatment and perhaps even a scenario written by the late Robert E. Sherwood.

The Russians during recent weeks have openly bid for some sort of co-production with an American company. It is believed they will make all physical facilities as well as their army, etc., available in this new deal with Todd. Reported that some of the Yugoslav's materials made for "War and Peace" have already been shipped from Belgrade to Moscow.