

January 3, 1955

O'SHEA EXITS PAR TO HELM MAGNA POST

New York, Jan. 3.—Edward K. "Ted" O'Shea, Paramount Film Distributing Corp. veepee, has been appointed veepee and global sales manager of Magna Theatres Corp., prexy George P. Skouras reported today. Veteran sales exec swings over to assume new duties within a few weeks, after nine years with Paramount.

O'Shea joined Paramount when company acquired control of Liberty Pictures, and for many years was eastern and southern sales manager of Loew's, Inc., prior to his affiliation with Liberty.

Under O'Shea's direction, according to Skouras, plans for accelerated distribution of Rodgers & Hammerstein's "Oklahoma" throughout the U.S. will be formulated.

Stressing that O'Shea made "many important contributions to Paramount's success and welfare," Barney Balaban, Par prexy, declared: "He has wonderful human, personal qualities that are unique and will be given even greater scope in his new venture."

Mike Todd Reactivates 'War-Peace'; Zinnemann Busy; Seeks Director

Mike Todd insisted yesterday that he will put "War and Peace," adapted from the Tolstoi novel, before the Todd-AO cameras in the summer of 1957. He said that his original plans, shelved when Pontide Laurentiis managed to get off the ground first in Italy with the same property, will now be carried through.

Producer said he will use the outline written by the late Robert E. Sherwood, but another director may be substituted for Fred Zinnemann, originally set for the assignment.

Zinnemann, when Todd postponed his "Peace" project, set up his own indie production deal, for a Warners release, and is expected to be busy with this.

Asked if he thought the Pontide Laurentiis version, to be released by Paramount, might not take the edge off his proposed production of the Tolstoi work, Todd declared: "It might be a good trailer." He still has his deal with Marshal Tito, he said, for use of the Yugoslavian Army and military facilities, and full arrangements have already been finalized.

January 9, 1955

Report Mike Todd Nix Of \$7,500,000-Plus Offer For '80 Days'; UA Print-Down Distrib

Mike Todd has made a deal with United Artists to distribute his "Around the World in 80 Days" in the print-down version. The Todd-AO version of the film which will cost in excess of \$5,000,000 by the time it's finished, will start roadshowing around June.

In making the UA deal, Todd reputedly turned down an offer of \$7,500,000 plus 25% of the profits of the film. Offer was said to have come from one of the majors and was turned down by Todd against the advice of his attorney, David Stillman.

In closing the UA deal, Todd said, "I have been extremely impressed by the dynamic methods of operation displayed by United Artists' youthful top echelon." Todd, however, will handle the roadshowing of "Around the World" himself.

At present, there are only four theatres equipped for showing films in the Todd-AO process, with three more to be added shortly. Current, all showing the first Todd-AO film, "Oklahoma," are the Egyptian, in Hollywood; United Artists, L.A.; Rivoli, NY; and McVickers, Chicago. Houses in Detroit, St. Louis and Miami are soon to be equipped.

Meanwhile, producer's second Todd-AO production will be an unnamed project which he expects to launch this summer in Europe, as follow-up to his "Around the World in 80 Days." He leaves for Europe in May to finalize plans for the property.

Todd, who will handle the roadshowing of his first indie, "World," is dickering for the rental-purchase of five theatres in as many cities for first release of picture, he stated. He already has deposited earnest money, and will know on Jan. 24 whether or not he will be able to acquire the theatre properties.

By the time picture goes into release the first week in September, a total of 60 theatres will be geared for showing in the Todd-AO process, according to producer, 30 in the U.S. and 30 abroad. He reiterated that he has made no commitments for the release of film in the Todd-AO process, his deal with United Artists being for the print-down version only.

"If I find that I need their help, though, in the distribution of the film—in Todd-AO—I'll call on them," he added.

Todd refused to commit himself on how long it will be before the film goes out in regular release. "When I said that 'This Is Cinerama' would run a year, everybody said I was crazy," he pointed out. "Cinerama" ran locally over two years and a half.

CHI'S SHOW-TRAIN COUPLES 'OKLA' PIC AND LEGIT 'GAME'

Chicago, Jan. 8.—Legitimate theatre companies and the numerous railroads serving this midwest hub will be watching with interest the experimental show-train into Chicago being organized on a one-shot basis by the NY Central, producers of the musical, "Pajama Game," and Magna Corp., distributors of the "Oklahoma" motion picture.

As the first show excursion into the Windy City in modern memory, the NYC has set a tie-in deal with the two shows for a special 300-passenger train to run into Chicago on Jan. 22 from Elkhart, Mishawaka, South Bend and LaPorte, Indiana. Package includes the roundtrip fare, "Oklahoma" matinee and the evening performance of "Game."

Railway's ticket agents are to handle the sales, with the three companies splitting the newspaper advertising. NYC is additionally backstopping the venture with flyers and posters in its commuter trains and stations.