

# SEEGER ACCUSES C.B.S. OVER SONG

Act Cut When He Refused to  
Drop Verse, Says Singer

By GEORGE GENT

Pete Seeger, the folk singer who was blacklisted by commercial broadcasting for 17 years, yesterday accused the Columbia Broadcasting System of censoring one of his songs on "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" last Sunday.

Mr. Seeger, by telephone from his home at Beacon, N. Y., said the network had asked him to drop one of the verses of "Waist Deep in the Big Muddy," his latest song hit, and that when he refused the entire song was dropped from the program.

"I'm very grateful to C.B.S. for letting me return to commercial broadcasting," Mr. Seeger said, "but I think what they did was wrong and I'm really concerned about it. I think the public should know that their airwaves are censored for ideas as well as for sex."

Mr. Seeger, who sang several songs on the Hollywood-produced show, said he was particularly upset about not being allowed to do "Waist Deep in the Big Muddy," a song about a soldier in 1942 who drowned because his commanding officer forced him to walk in water without knowing how deep it was.

## Song Wins Applause

"It's strange that C.B.S. should have objected to it," Mr. Seeger said. "No song that I've done in the last 10 years has got the applause that this one has. I think it's one of the best things I've ever done, and I've sung it before lots of family audiences."

He said C.B.S. programing direction in New York had objected to the song's sixth verse, which relates the song to the present and goes:

*Now every time I read the papers  
That old feelin' comes on  
We're waist deep in the Big Muddy  
And the big fool says to push on.*

(Copyright, 1966, Melody Trails.)

Asked if he thought the song might be too political for television, the folk singer said:

"I don't think that way about songs. I feel that one song is as political as another, but it is wrong for anyone to censor what I consider my most important statement to date. It's as if The New York Times interviewed someone and then left out his most important statement."

Mr. Seeger said he did not mean to criticize Tom and Dick Smothers, the stars of the show, or Saul Ilson, the producer. "They couldn't have been nicer," he said, "and I would be willing to do anything for them. The order, as I understand it, came from New York."

In Hollywood, Mr. Ilson admitted that the network's program practices office had objected to the song. He said Mr. Seeger's appearance on the program had been cut by almost 10 minutes.

"We originally taped a 20-minute segment with Pete," Mr. Ilson said, "but we edited it down to 10 minutes and 15 seconds. We felt that was about right for program balance. Everyone was delighted with Pete. The other cuts were made entirely for program balance."

Asked to comment on the other cuts, Mr. Seeger said he had originally been asked to do only two songs, and that he was very pleased with the amount of time given him on the show.

## Cut Confirmed Here

A C.B.S. spokesman in New York confirmed the fact that the song had been dropped from the show, but denied that Mr. Seeger had been asked earlier to drop the controversial sixth verse.

"We felt that other music would make a better contribution to the show," the spokesman, who declined to be identified, said last night. "In this case, indeed in all cases, we assume full responsibility for all material that appears on our air."

Mr. Seeger's political views, which sometimes get into his songs, have often aroused controversy. He was convicted in 1961 of 10 counts of contempt of Congress for refusing in 1955 to answer questions of the House Un-American Activities Committee. The conviction was reversed in 1962.

Mr. Seeger had not appeared on network commercial television since 1950. Then he was on the Weavers, the folk quartet he formed in 1948.