

moneymaking regional newspaper chain operation:

"The sale is an indication not that the Booth newspapers occupy a position of unusual journalistic power or influence, but that such chains are considered an investor's dream. . . . Each of the eight newspapers is the only local daily in its home city and therefore has little competition for readers and local advertising."

A picture of the Booth chain emerges: it relies heavily on readership surveys, reports local news and supplies community information, and is "careful not to rock the boat by running exposes of political scandals and the like." It uses extensive reports from the AP, UPI and other news agencies on national and foreign news. There is a certain local autonomy editorially -- for instance, four of the papers endorsed President Ford: three, Mr. Carter, and one follows a policy of ;not endorsing candidates.

The Booth corporate officers have noted, adds the New York Times story, that the new owner, Samuel Newhouse, has had "a reputation for letting his newspapers operate autonomously, so long as they returned a good profit."

The Gannett Company is today the largest of the regional chains in terms of numbers (50 daily newspapers) and geographically the most widespread in the United States. It also owns dailies in Canada and Guam, several weeklies and semi-weeklies, broadcast stations and a cable television property as well as a national public opinion survey firm.

Like the Newhouse chain, Gannett stresses a policy of local news autonomy with the motto that "a good newspaper is good business." Gannett sold the Hartford, Connecticut Times when it declined in advertising and circulation and is adding Sunday editions to half a dozen other newspapers in areas where there were