

Bob Fuller Of 'Laramie' Big in Japan

By JOHN RODERICK
TOKYO (AP)—"I'm not this big in the United States, you know," drawled the handsome young man in the black felt hat, black jacket and frilly white shirt. "I guess I've fallen in love with Japan."

The love affair is mutual. When Bob Fuller, 28, arrived in Tokyo, twirling his six-shooter, he was met by the cheers, squeals and wails of more than 2,000 teenagers.

Wherever he went, hundreds of young Japanese dressed in cowboy boots, broad-brimmed hats and blue jeans followed. Police have had to keep back the crowds.

IS NATIONAL FIGURE

For Fuller, co-star of the TV Western "Laramie," is a national figure in Japan. His adventures as the ex-bad man turned good guy in the role of Jess Harper keep millions of Japanese glued to their television sets each Thursday night.

He speaks to his audience here directly, in perfectly dubbed-in Japanese. The series is so popular it has given rise to "Laramie clubs" from frigid Hokkaido to balmy Kyushu with a claimed membership of three million pistol packin' teen-agers.

Fuller is only the most recent in a succession of movie and film stars of varied magnitude who have been treated here as Greta Garbo and Rudolph Valentino were in America back in the 1920s. Japanese television, which is the third biggest in the world, with sets in almost every noodle shop and bar and in many private homes in the country, has brought to many American stars into the Japanese orbit.

'LARAMIE' IS SPECIAL

The success of "Laramie," however, is a special one. Cowboy movies and TV shows have always had a hold on the popular imagination here.

The "Laramie" series is distributed throughout the world, but its biggest reception is in Japan. Fuller says he gets an average of 3,000 letters a week from Japan, some containing proposals of marriage.

How well this 5-11 blue-eyed Hollywood actor has succeeded in cementing his popularity was vividly illustrated on May Day a year ago.

Caught in the middle of a wildly demonstrating mob of leftist youths chanting the "International" and carrying anti-American slogans, he began to worry. Then someone in the snake-dancing crowd spotted him.

"Hi, Jesse," he shouted, "Jesse, konniti was (hello), Jesse banzai (long live)," shouted hundreds of others.

Jesse, grinning broadly, walked away unharmed.

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