



ROBERT FULLER, star of the Laramie cowboy series, was recently awarded the highest decoration of the Japanese Red Cross for his efforts in behalf of underprivileged children in that country.

Cowboy Star Is Goodwill Ambassador To Japanese

HOLLYWOOD — An American favorite in Japan wears a ten-gallon hat.

They nod to him along the Ginza, on the Palace grounds and in the tea houses.

He has strengthened the bonds of friendship between this country and Japan in many ways.

His name is Bob Fuller and his chance at saddlebag diplomacy came when NBC-TV's Tuesday night Western, "Laramie," was aired in Japan.

The show quickly became the most popular in Japan, and this year Bob traveled to the island nation to meet his new fans.

"I knew the show was doing well there," he says, "but my own popularity was embarrassing."

Thousands were on hand to greet him at the airport despite an after-midnight arrival. Fans formed a Laramie Friends Club that soon boasted 90,000 members who paid \$1 each for a Laramie hat, badge and booklet, with all proceeds deposited in Japanese banks and earmarked for charities.

Grateful for his warm reception, Bob put on two two-hour shows in the Tokyo Gymnasium, drawing capacity crowds of 10,000 for each, with proceeds again going to Japanese charities.

In appreciation of his fund-raising, government officials honored him with the Golden Order of Merit, highest award of the Japanese Red Cross, presented in the name of the Emperor. To that they added the Heibon Award for the best actor of the year.

Looking for an explanation of

his popularity, Bob found it in Japanese culture.

"They relate our cowboys to the old samurai warriors," he says. "And, because I play a loner in the show and am dark and not so tall, they can identify with me easier than with some Western stars. They think of me as half-Japanese."

Now, after two trips to Japan, Bob is receiving 10 times more fan mail from Japan than from this country.

"They've adopted me and I've adopted them," he says.

Present plans call for him to make a feature film in Japan next March. It will be made by a Japanese company and his part will be dubbed in Japanese.

Further expression of his warm regard for Japan and her people will come when he builds a new home.

"One room of it will be devoted to housing the 3,000 gifts I received after my last trip," he says.

The Laramie show is at 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays on Channels 4 and 5.

'Insect Safari' On Expedition

"Insect Safari," the film account of a journey across Africa in search of the continent's smallest game—insects—is the Expedition program to be presented at 7 p.m. Monday on Channels 7 and 12.