



Television any good? Study these telltale faces. These children are viewing video in a candy store. The owner installed a set to keep them off the streets.

**F**EWER than five years ago a hot debate was raging on the question: *Is television ready?* Is television, it was asked, ready for popular use or should it be kept under laboratory wraps a while longer?\*

The doubts are now academic. When John Q. Public discovered that from his easy chair in his own living room he could see as well as hear drama, grand opera, prize fights, football games, and other events, he became an avid television enthusiast.

So it is that today manufacturers are producing receiving sets at the rate of 16,000 a week. Sometime this year it will be doubled. And then it will be tripled. Now a million sets are in use and those who make them prophesy that by 1955 the figure will be 17 million. Eventually there will be one or more television sets in every one of the 40 million homes in America.

Television will be developed to be the most powerful instrument of communication ever devised—the most universal and most ef-

\* See the debate *Is Television Ready?*, in *THE ROTARIAN* for February, 1945.

fective purveyor of education, information, culture, and entertainment yet known to man. That will come because the desire of the public is matched by the enterprise of men willing to take a loss today in anticipation of profit tomorrow.

Only half a hundred television broadcasting stations currently operate in the United States, but 75 more are being built, and more than 300 applications are pending before the Federal Communications Commission. Within two years I estimate that 400 will be on the air and that by 1955 there will be 1,000.

Those figures take on meaning when it is realized that a station may cost from a quarter to a half million dollars. And to operate means to lose \$10,000, \$25,000, or more every month. One network has publicly stated that it was in the red 3 million dollars for 1948 and another reports that already it has sunk 40 million dollars in its venture. Television is the only business I know of in which the enterprisers boast of the money they are losing.

Why? The answer lies in the

# LOOK

fact that the Federal Communications Commission is committed to a "truly nation-wide and competitive system of television."

Television in other countries may be operated by Governments without commercial advertising, but sound radio has set the pattern in the United States which television follows. It will be broadcast by private stations and it will carry advertising. Because nine-tenths of what we learn comes through our eyes, promoters of television are confident that it will be the most powerful, most effective, and eventually the most profitable medium for mass merchandising yet devised. That is why they are willing today to invest huge sums; their eyes are on tomorrow.

One technical difficulty after another has been wiped away by the tremendous drive of the industry, but the radio spectrum itself presents a special difficulty for it is a rapidly contracting public domain. Broadcasting, radar, radio heating, automobile radio, telephones, and many other types of radio communications are insistent claimants for these prized channels. Only 12 are now reserved for television, but since 1945 we have been searching upstairs in the spectrum—the 475- to 890-megacycle band—for room for additional channels and perhaps for color television.

Several manufacturers have assured us that when additional channels are added, they will be able to produce adaptors at reasonable prices to enable present receiving sets to tune in the new stations. To get a high-band experimental station in Washington, I am using such an adaptor which is, in effect, a universal television receiver.

Television broadcasts cover a 40- to 50-mile radius. That limitation is, however, being rapidly



# Out for Television

IT'S HERE! CERTAIN BUSINESSES  
WILL BE HURT, OTHERS WILL BE HELPED BY IT.

overcome through a complicated device known as the coaxial cable which makes possible instantaneous transmission over a network. Thus on January 12, Chicago and other Midwestern cities were linked with the Eastern seaboard. I hope to see coast-to-coast television within the next two years and am confident that eventually television will blanket the nation.

What will this mean to other mediums which rely heavily on advertising for support? And what will this mean for other sources or channels of information, entertainment, and education? The problem is grave and complicated, but it is a serious mistake, I think, to suppose that television must inevitably grow as an incubus, sucking out the lifeblood of other mediums; it also would be unfortunate if other me-

## By Wayne Coy

*Chairman, United States Federal  
Communications Commission*

dioms should stick their heads in the sand and assume that this new development may not affect them adversely.

When the weavers of England were thrown out of work by mechanical looms, they demonstrated their hostility by smashing the new machines. That isn't the way to cope with the new competition of television. A famous old showman and playwright who made quite a name for himself in London of the 16th Century had something to say about this kind of situation:

*There is a tide in the affairs of men  
Which taken at the flood, leads on to  
fortune:*

*Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.*

That's the spirit in which to approach the problem of adjustment—or changing horses, if the one you now ride is to be run down by this new electronic juggernaut. Facts must be faced honestly and with courage, if necessary.

Newspapers, magazines, and radio, for example, should take due account of television's unsurpassed advantages as an advertising medium. It is better than a show window, because a show window, after all, is static. On the television screen—under ideal conditions in which the customer is relaxed and concentrating in his own living room—the advertiser does not merely show his product or his service. He demonstrates it. He can make his point with a wider variety of visual aids than he has ever had at his command before—the presentation of



Photo: General Electric

*A television camera-  
man tilts his "big eye"  
for an angle shot. Rap-  
idly improving equip-  
ment promises clearer  
pictures, better effects.*

the actual subject, motion pictures, still pictures, paintings, graphs, maps, animated charts, animated cartoons. To this he can add speech, drama, music, and sound effects.

Many people in the industry believe that television will not necessarily get its advertising support by depriving other mediums of its present advertising support. They point to the fact that with the advent of radio it was believed that advertising expenditures had reached an all-time high—less than 500 million dollars in 1927. But in 1947 the advertising volume on radio alone was in excess of the total of all advertising expenditures in 1927. And the total expenditures for the major mediums were in excess of 2 billion dollars.

Sound broadcasting has not been particularly successful in getting any substantial portions of the advertising budgets of department stores and similar retail services. Television, as a demonstration sales medium, may be



*Author Coy as he addressed the Rotary Club of Chicago recently on what's ahead for television.*





### Baltimore Rotarians Provide a 'T-V' Set

**I**N a well-lighted, cubicled room at the Children's Hospital School in Baltimore, Maryland, lie seven cheerful young people who are a community through circumstances: all have infantile paralysis and all are condemned—some per-

manently—to the tedium of life in an "iron lung."

Last Spring, however, the Baltimore Rotary Club acted to reduce their boredom and, with the cooperation of the Stromberg-Carlson Company, installed a television-FM set in the sufferers' room.

This "window on the world," standing about 4 feet high and so placed as to be visible in all the overhead mirrors with which "iron lungs" are equipped, has made Mary L. Dunlop, hospital superintendent, enthusiastic in her estimate of the therapeutic and inspirational value of television for these handicapped people.

"The patients are happier and more contented," she says, "and that means a lot to them and our staff. Television puts a daily 'bright spot' in their lives and gives a close contact with the outside world that nothing else could bring."

Baltimore Rotarians are happy over the success of their experiment and properly so. They've made the world look mighty good, even from an "iron lung."

able to tap this source without serious adverse effects on radio advertising. But it may have serious consequences in terms of newspapers and magazines.

My own impression is that as television grows, there may be a temporary loss of advertising volume by one medium or another to television, but that in the long run television will tend to increase the total volume of money spent for advertising. Perhaps the most significant thing of all in terms of the competition of the various mediums for the advertising dollar will be the kinds of adjustments that they will make.

The great American industry of sound broadcasting, with its 3,000 stations in operation or under construction, must make serious readjustments. When television comes into a home, the interest swings sharply away from sound broadcasting. A recent check-up indicates that people who own television sets use them twice as much as people in non-television homes use their radio.

As television progresses, persons conducting both television and sound radio stations will, I believe, abandon the latter to concentrate on the former because

of the incompatibility of the two services under one management. Sound broadcasting in the metropolitan areas will always be necessary to supplement television. In the rural areas it will be expanded.

Television is able to present news, information, instruction, and entertainment just as efficiently as it does an advertising message. That is why the world of sports is wondering how long it can retain its customers when television can turn a whole nation into one vast knothole gang. Newspaper publishers already are studying changes in coverage and format to interest readers who have seen and heard far more of the biggest news events of the day than a big stable of "trained seals" can write for them or a large staff of photographers can show them.

And there is the motion-picture industry. The new electronic home theater will not change its billings once or twice a week, but daily. It will boldly invade what has hitherto been the theater's exclusive field and exhibit motion pictures on a scale far surpassing the present rate of theater showings. What will this mean to

Hollywood, and to the around-the-corner theater? Can the nation's 18,000 commercial movie houses hold their own against 40 million home theaters?

Perhaps it is pertinent to remind movie men that what is happening is but another spectacular eruption of free enterprise in the entertainment world—competition between categories of entertainment as well as within. It is strangely like what occurred not many years ago when that brash young art centered at Hollywood nosed out the legitimate theater and vaudeville in the competitive free-for-all. Now it's celluloids versus electronics.

Surveys show that when families acquire television sets, their attendance at theaters dwindles. Theaters must meet this challenge by improving their programming, and it is altogether possible that they may use the very art of television to bring to their theaters outstanding public events simultaneously with television.

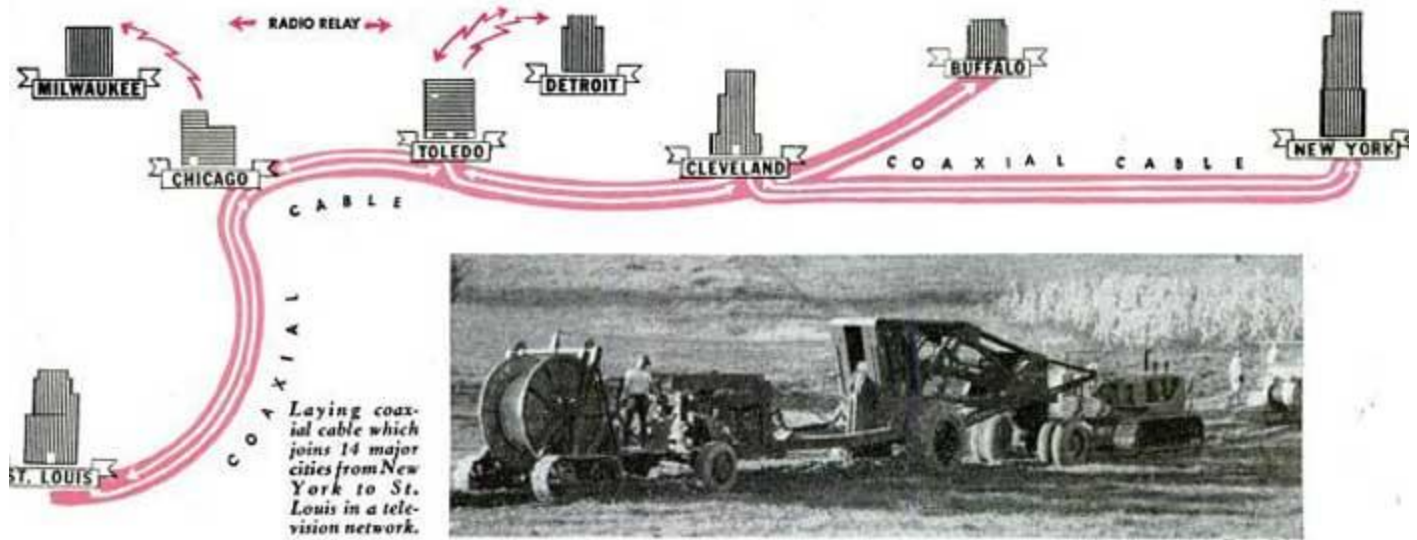
Large-screen television—with screens 15 by 18 feet—was shown in London theaters as early as 1939, and was demonstrated experimentally in two New York theaters in 1941. Experiments have been conducted by the Paramount Theater in New York using its regular screen. The Radio Corporation of America has demonstrated large-screen television in black and white and in all-electronic color on several occasions.

Warner Brothers and Twentieth Century-Fox are conducting experiments on frequencies allo-

*Phonevision is the latest development. Paying subscribers call the phone operator for*







cated by the Commission to television broadcasters for remote pickup and studio-to-transmitter transmissions. If these should lead to real development and the interests involved request commercial operation, the Commission would of course attempt to look elsewhere in the spectrum for any allocation it might decide to make for such a service.

Common carrier coaxial and radio relay facilities are, however, becoming available for the intercity transmission of television programs. There lies the exhibitor's opportunity, for by picking up these programs from common carrier facilities he would not require a license from the FCC.

Feature films may be supplemented with symphony concerts and popular entertainers by

means of the coaxial cable. The half dozen or so newsreel companies now in the business of supplying theaters may combine in whole or in part and build up a newsreel service for theaters on the basis of international, national, state, regional, and local coverage of news events much like the news budgets of our great wire news services.

Theaters may take a leaf out of the television book and build up their own newsreel programs of local events. Another possibility for drawing people from their fire-sides is to make the theater a leader in community activities. At present the only opportunity for gifted local talent in the movies is Hollywood; perhaps the exhibitor can give that talent an opportunity on his screen.

But television is another threat to the motion-picture theater. Television broadcasters will bid against the exhibitor for the feature films, for the specialty films, and other short subjects by film. Television operators face an almost superhuman task in programming their stations 12 to 18 hours a day. Film will of necessity be one of their essential requirements. Either they will get the film from the present producers in competition with the exhibitors or the producers will make film tailor made for television or new producers will make them or the television broadcasters will make them.

Viewing the problem broadly, what we now are witnessing is our

industrialized society undergoing one of its periodic growing pains. Science has given us a new instrument of great potentialities and we are trying to fit it into our civilization. It may wipe out some established businesses. The railroad, you remember, outmoded the oxcart, stagecoach, and canal boat, but now faces the competition of the airplane. Ours is a dynamic society. Technology and human desires will not let it-grow stale and static.

Some industries may go under because of television; others will contrive ingeniously to adapt themselves—perhaps forming a partnership with the newcomer, as the phonograph did with radio—and rise phoenixlike to new successes. Television already is reviving vaudeville, which fell a victim to the movies, and I am sure the video screen will bring the legitimate theater to millions who have never had the opportunity to enjoy it. What visual broadcasting may mean to techniques of instruction for schools is an inviting possibility yet to be explored.

Adjustments always are difficult. But I am confident that out of the free competition in the realm of communications we shall evolve many new ways to serve mankind. Television will bring more and better information, more and better entertainment, and more and better education for all. Its implications for broadening the base of our democracy and for making its processes more efficient are beyond conjecture.

the key frequency which enables them to get televised motion pictures in a sharp focus.

Photo: Zenith Radio Corp.

