

THE VIDEO REPORTER

by Samuel Kaufman

ALTHOUGH television has yet to make initial commercial headway, the employment side of the video art already offers promising opportunities to capable men. Even at this early stage of the new industry, the call is for "experienced" men in key television positions. And it is surprising at the substantial number of experienced television men at hand. As a matter of fact there is a small group that may well come under the heading of television veterans.

Two of these television veterans recently figured in important job changes. William C. Eddy, until recently with the New York RCA-NBC set-up and formerly with the old Farnsworth laboratories in Philadelphia, was named to an executive post with the forthcoming Balaban & Katz video station in Chicago. And the second change involved Marshall P. Wilder, the ace television engineer formerly with the National Union Radio Corporation and, more recently, for a brief period, with the American Television Corporation, who is now assigned to the RCA-NBC television staff.

The Video Reporter saw Bill Eddy for the first time on a television receiver in Philadelphia several years ago. Bill, a tall thin lad, was standing on the side of a group in a Farnsworth experimental telecast. It wasn't until I met Bill a few minutes later that I realized that there was no distortion around the picture edge at all, but that his tall frame, by contrast to the shorties forming the rest of the group, was his actual, real-life build.

Bill is a retired navy captain, well-versed in radio, who has the rare knack of being



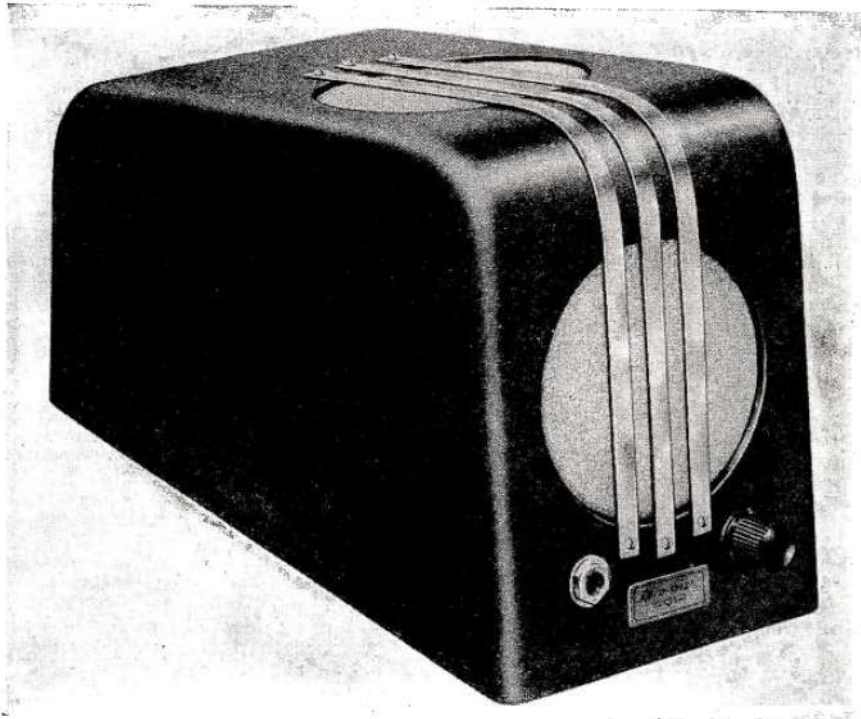
World's Fair Setting of a modern living room with a television set.

able to tackle program problems from an engineering angle and always finding a solution. He pioneered both at Farnsworth and RCA-NBC in television studio lighting and in the use of miniature sets which gave the illusion of mammoth landscapes and seascapes.

Wilder's television career goes back beyond his association with National Union, but it was with that firm that he gained his greatest trade recognition. He helped develop the short "Stubby" cathode-ray tube used in many of the television kits marketed the past two years and developed many other improvements in use today. We're told that one of his first assignments at W2XBS will be to formulate service plans on adjusting the early 441-line RCA receivers to the forthcoming 507-line standard.

THERE are some lively arguments in New York trade circles as to just how much better an image will be obtained when television resumes on higher-definition standards. Actually, the very term of higher-definition means the picture will be an improved one. But the arguments center about whether the average eye can observe any added quality in the increased number of picture lines. These impromptu debates
(Continued on page 48)

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Note to Magazine Editors

THIS is written in a sincere desire to correct not necessarily an evil, but more of an oversight. Every so often articles appear which provide constructional information covering test equipment. In a number of instances the information given, particularly the schematic and the constants of the parts, shows immediately that the performance cannot be all that is claimed for it. As a matter of fact, in many instances certain definite defects exist. Construction of the devices substantiates these beliefs and the suggestion is made for the benefit of all, that is the readers as well as the magazine, that such constructional articles submitted to magazines should be accompanied by the finished product. More than likely some editors will tell us to mind our own business and perhaps they are right, but it is exasperating to build equipment and then find that it does not perform as stated.

We do not doubt the sincerity of the authors and constructors, but it is true that there is more to the design of a piece of test equipment than just construction and during the construction, the replacement of one constant by another, because the exact required part is not available. Proper presentation of such construction articles should include certain definite tests made to establish the correct operating conditions with proper laboratory equipment.

Another criticism which has been voiced generally and which might be of interest to editors is that sufficient stress is not placed upon those of the constructional features which are critical in nature. Very often the original model is built with complete success during the initial effort without realization that some points in layout are critical. With the layout details missing, the reader builds and because he employs his own layout ideas, strict adherence to the original not having been stressed, trouble is encountered.

Still another point of interest in connection with tube voltmeters in particular is that associated with tube types. In many instances the author in building his original model did not check the full operating limits of the tube types suggested with the result that the constants used work well with the particular tubes used in the model but not with other tubes available upon the open market.

All of this is not intended to reflect either upon magazines or the editors, for both have to depend upon statements made by authors, but it would be a good idea if such equipment were sent in with the article and a routine test were made to see if the equipment as built would operate with the general run of components available upon the open market. If this is not feasible, then it might be a good idea if the authors stated definitely the operating characteristics of those components which, if not exactly duplicated, may be productive of trouble and the type of trouble which might be expected.

-130-

**First with the News:
Read RADIO NEWS!**

Video Reporter

(Continued from page 41)

parallel the current word duels regarding just how much better the average ear finds frequency-modulation broadcasts than amplitude-modulation programs.

At *NBC*, where the video lads seemed content to stay on the 441-line standard, the opinion seems to be that there won't be much noticeable difference on live pick-ups when the standard is stepped up to 507. However, a substantial improvement will be noticed in film transmissions, according to our *NBC* informant.

THE *British Scophony Company*, pioneers in big-screen home and theatre television on the British Isles may soon realize the launching of an American affiliate. The firm had representatives in New York about two years ago to help start an American corporation to market models similar to those that were a mild sensation during England's brief period of television program activity. There was quite a bit of publicity on the *American Scophony* plans two years ago but the whole thing was soon forgotten. It seems that the war clouds that hung over Europe in 1938 caused the idea to peter out and, when the war actually started in 1939, plans to organize a U.S.A. outlet seemed definitely shelved.

But, now, with the war still raging at the time of this writing, another *Scophony* representative is in New York with plans to introduce the big-screen television receivers on the U.S.A. market through a new firm said to have the backing of some prominent Americans.

Television transmitting is also in the *Scophony* plans and this angle would necessitate that the company be American-controlled inasmuch as licenses cannot be granted to aliens. This latter point was discovered by the British *Baird* firm many years ago when it attempted to set up a video station in New York.

The suggestion has been weighed by some American promoters to import the large quantity of television receivers that were completed in England before the suspension of telecasting and to dump them on the American market after revising the standards to conform with domestic transmissions. However, the plan was shot to pieces by the reduction of American television prices which made it more practical to buy domestic merchandise without the high cost of war-time trans-Atlantic shipments, plus the incidental shipping risks. On top of this, the lull in American telecasts had such an adverse effect on the television equipment market that the same promoters would have been interested in a plan whereby they could find foreign outlets for American merchandise.

With the exception of opportunists' viewpoints, the American trade seems to concur that television will be a closed domestic market in the U.S.A., with barely any imports or exports of video equipment. And, it is believed that this will hold true even when the European war is over. There may be some indirect international trade through the establishment of foreign subsidiaries. But, like the radio receiver business in the past few years, the only way American brand-name receivers can be sold in bulk in England—and many other big markets in normal times—will be to build factories in the respective foreign nations. The difference in standards is a small thing as compared with growing barriers of merchandise quotas, high customs taxes and mounting shipping costs.

SUSPENSION of television programs in the New York area brought surprisingly few squawks to the headquarters of W2XBS, the *RCA-NBC* station. As a matter of fact—taking the word of an *RCA* spokesman—not a single complaint reached his firm's executive offices. And the complaints reaching *NBC*, we were told, were of such a mild nature that they were actually more in the class of inquiries as to when the service will be resumed. But we can't help having our

doubts about the absence of squawks. Dealers and newspaper offices received stiffer comment on the suspension of telecasts than *NBC*. If the complaints were actually few, the *Video Reporter* believes that trade estimates that about 4,000 video receivers were in use in the New York area were excessive.

DETERMINED to show results and prove that its efforts are not merely perfunctory gestures, the *National Television Systems Committee* has plunged into its tasks with vigor and the general trade feeling is that some material results will soon be revealed.

There is a splendid spirit of cooperation in the committee's undertaking. Getting a batch of competitors to sit around a conference table and iron out industrial wrinkles is a real achievement—as we said before. And best of all is the cooperation extended to the *RMA* by the *FCC*.

But even with the best of intentions, plans can go astray. And that's as true of television as anything else. It is evident that, despite an effort for speed, the committee's work will take considerable time to complete. And therein lies the threat to the entire set-up.

The *Video Reporter*, from the outset, was enthusiastic over the committee's formation and work. He still is. And insofar as the committee's endeavors go there is little doubt that the desired results will be obtained. And there is every reason to believe that *FCC* Chairman James Lawrence Fly will cooperate with the committee.

However, it must be remembered that there's a Presidential election coming up and a change in the Administration will most certainly entail a new *FCC* setup. Of course, there is no reason to say that a new commission named by Mr. Willkie, in the event of his election, will retard any constructive television plans laid by the industry. But a new commission—and a new chairman—may have ideas entirely different than those of Mr. Fly and his aides.

Completing its task swiftly may enhance the real value of the committee's aims and labors. But it hardly seems that speed can be made once the vital issues reach the conference table. There are too many clashing viewpoints represented in the individuals on the committee's panels. Just who will give ground on the various problems remains to be seen.

At the time of this writing the *RMA* reports "rapid progress" on the committee's work. But virtually all of the work to date has been on the organizing of nine subcommittees—or panels, as the *NTSC* prefers to call them—and the real tasks lie ahead.

One of the most vital jobs is in the hands of the newly launched panel on coordination of transmitters and receivers. This subcommittee is to delve into essential factors in the design and operation of transmitters and receivers. Ironing out these industrial problems before the mass commercial launching of the video art will be one of the greatest merchandising boosts any industry ever obtained.

I. J. Kaar, of *General Electric*, heads this panel which includes the following members: E. F. W. Alexanderson, *General Electric*; F. J. Bingley, *Philco*; N. P. Case, *Hazeltine*; M. Cawein, *Farnsworth*; J. N. Dyer, *CBS*; T. T. Goldsmith, *Du Mont*; Herman Greenberg, *Fulton*; D. D. Israel, *Emerson*; A. G. Jensen, *Bell Labs*; R. D. Kell, *RCA Victor*; Paul J. Larsen, *Baird*; H. R. Lubcke, *Don Lee* and George Towne, *Stromberg-Carlson*.

ALL the fuss and furore over frequency-modulation has temporarily—at least—stolen the spotlight from television. Many persons who were reluctant to scrap their old broadcast receivers for a new one because they were "waiting for television" are now being told by the high-pressure FM merchandisers that they need wait no longer inasmuch as FM is the big improvement that's already here while television is a thing still in the distant future. And quite a few manufacturers were quick to fall in the FM line. But there is one outstanding holdout—*RCA*. And an *RCA* spokesman told us that not a single FM set will be included in the firm's line next season.

RCA has been known to change its mind before. And it may happen again. But stay-

ing out of FM is probably more than a whim. It is believed that *RCA* is pretty well burned up over the *FCC* boost given FM at about the very same time it shelved commercial television. Television receiver production at Camden is at a standstill pending further *FCC* action on video matters. However, the *Video Reporter* was told that *RCA* is counting on merchandising the high-fidelity sound of its television receivers to compete with FM. The effort will probably be based around the thought that the television set buyer gets high-fidelity sound in his instrument—plus sight reception facilities.

In line with the suggestion to merchandise the sound qualities of video receivers, *W2XBS* has already experimented with the use of the television frequency for sound programs sans pictures—something like being entertained by a talking picture with the screen darkened. The first experiments along this line were conducted in England where it was felt that high-quality musical reproduction—in which watching the musi-

cians might be monotonous—could be obtained by using the audio channel of the television set-up without picking up the picture.

QUITE a few popular and technical books on television were released in recent seasons. And, from what we hear 'round the trade, about a dozen or so authors are busy on forthcoming video books. The one thing most television books seem to lack is the value of long life. Many of them are out of date as soon as they're published. On the other hand, a few technical volumes issued several seasons back, still offer valuable study material for the television enthusiast. Highest mortality is in the non-technical, reportorial classification; these video books in the lighter vein have a habit of popping up on drug store bargain counters shortly after publication.

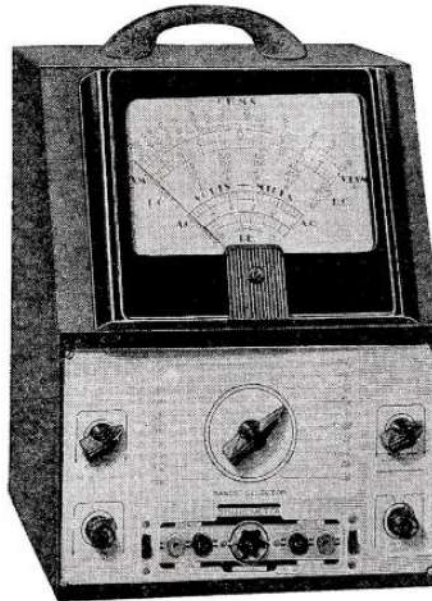
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