

R.C.A. BEGINS TESTS OF ITS TV IN COLOR

By JACK GOULD

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Sufficient Improvements Seen in Method to Make Direct C.B.S. Comparison Difficult

By JACK GOULD

The Radio Corporation of America started experimental tests of its color television system yesterday, but declined to predict when it might ask the Federal Communications Commission to review the method.

Sufficient improvements appeared to have been made in the R. C. A. method to make difficult a direct comparison with the Columbia Broadcasting System's color, which has won F. C. C. approval and is now being shown on a commercial basis.

Many observers at yesterday's press demonstration expressed the opinion that the color controversy had reached the point where only a side-by-side showing of the two systems would be pertinent in resolving the issue.

As in the corporation's demonstration last fall in Washington, the R. C. A. color program was picked up on present sets in black and white without the addition of extra equipment.

Tests to Continue All Week

Many viewers telephoned to the National Broadcasting Company, the R. C. A. subsidiary, and commented favorably on the quality of monochrome images that they saw during the color program that ran from 10 to 10:20 A. M. over Chan-

nel 4. The tests will continue at the same hour through this week.

The C. B. S. method, which technically is "incompatible" with present TV standards, requires use of an adapter for a color program to be reproduced in black and white. Without the adapter only meaningless lines appear on the screen.

Taking part in yesterday's studio program were Nanette Fabray and Yma Sumac, singers; Ray Malone, dancer; the "Howdy Doody" puppet, George Burton and his bird act, and several models. There was also an out-of-doors pick-up from the pool at Pallsades Amusement Park in New Jersey, where Buster Crabbe and a group of girls demonstrated dives and swimming formations.

The program was seen on sets with R. C. A. tri-color electronic tubes. A set with a tube of sixteen inches in diameter gave a color image of nine by twelve inches. A twenty-one-inch tube offered a picture of twelve and one-half by sixteen and one-half inches.

54 Tubes Are Necessary

The R. C. A. color set employs a total of fifty-four tubes, compared with the twenty to thirty required for black and white. The extra tubes are needed to handle the color signals. The C. B. S. color set, which now employs a rotating disk to inject the primary hues of red, blue and green but can use an electronic picture tube, has twenty-three tubes, of which three handle the color circuits.

In yesterday's demonstration, the R. C. A. system had a decided edge over the C. B. S. method in the reproduction of flesh tones. Its blue and green hues also seemed superior to the C. B. S. equivalent seen last week, but the R. C. A. red lacked the warmth of the C. B. S. red.

The R. C. A. colors did not appear up to the C. B. S. hues in definition and vividness, which in

part seemed a result of poor camera focusing. However, the R. C. A. system enjoyed marked freedom from flicker and it was possible to turn away from the screen without the eye's persistence of vision "taking along" patches of red, blue and green, a fault sometimes noticed with the C. B. S. method.

The projection of the tinted image directly on the face of the R. C. A. electronic tri-color tube also seemed noticeably more restful on the eyes than watching the picture through the magnifying lens presently used on C. B. S. color sets.

Public Demonstrations Later

Frank Folsom, president of R. C. A., said that his concern had no plans as yet to show its color system to the Communications Commission. First, he said, the system would have to be field-tested thoroughly. Public demonstrations of the system are scheduled to come "later in the summer," possibly in August.

Dr. E. W. Engstrom, R. C. A. vice-president, said that the corporation would work closely with the National Television System Committee, an industry group, with a view to reaching industry-wide agreement on proposed standards for an all-electronic color system.

The committee has indicated that it hopes to have such standards ready by the end of the year.