

**"TELEVISION: THE
REVOLUTION,"**

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"Television: the revolution," by Robert E. Lee

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*“Television:
The Revolution”*

by

ROBERT E. LEE

With a Foreword by
DR. LEE DE FOREST

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FOREWORD

THIS is a remarkable book—a bold, frank expression highly suggestive to the program director, the advertiser, the technical man and the public. In the early chapters is a clear statement of the problems involved in television, even to the technical—revealing a comprehension quite unusual for one whose training has been along a literary and commercial rather than engineering lines.

As regards the question of immediacy in Television entertainment, the Author has taken a very sensible view. His stand is quite a contrast with that of some directors of the Television industry, who in utter disregard of the question, "Who's going to pay the bills?" insist that Television entertainment, to be attractive, must be viewed while it is being broadcast. Indisputably they are wrong. The motion picture film alone can make Television economically profitable. And Mr. Lee shows why.

He also handles convincingly the question of commercialized radiovision versus wired toll-service here in America. The free-as-the-air broadcasting habit has too completely spoiled us to tolerate a conversion to the British type of government monopolized radio service.

The Author's forceful warning to the Television advertisers not to attempt to black-jack the watching public with offensive commercials is indeed timely. As he states, the surest way to smother Television in its cradle is to expect to pour on the screen the same sort of vulgar bombast as now darkens millions of our radio dials, except when news is on the air.

In analyzing this question of Television advertising, again the book demonstrates how indispensable to the economists of Television is the general and generous use of motion picture film. And how doubly essential will be the film at the commencement of television's introduction to the public. The three hour time differential between our East and West coast will of itself usually make film indispensable, even for live spot-news events—and this even assuming an actual trans-continental television network of automatic relay stations. It is doubtful that suffi-

ciently frequent sports or political events will occur, even ignoring the time differential, to make economically attractive the great expense of a trans-continental television relay station network at least for some time to come.

The Author has devoted a great amount of concentrated thought to this enticing subject of television entertainment, for which his extensive experience in radio production and writing has well equipped him. His suggestion of the Association for Advancement of Television is most constructive and far-sighted. Its agenda, as herein outlined, is far ahead of most present-day concepts of the power for good which radio broadcasts inherently possess. Nothing could be of greater benefit to the new industry of television and to its future patron, the American public, than the early organization and function of such an association. Now, before the war is ended, there should be an earnest meeting of the minds of the leaders of the coming art of sight-broadcasting, to organize and map out the destiny of that art (not the science) with the highest regard for the very best which Television can confer on American culture and American ideals. Mr. Lee advances here a proposal

of sterling worth which should be eagerly accepted, thoughtfully enacted.

If the Author is correct in his defining and timing of Television's "adolescence," then I say Television will never outgrow its adolescence. Which is quite all right, because adolescence is the most interesting period of life. For never will "the number of watchers in the nation exceed the number of listeners"; from the very nature of radiovision this fact will remain so. And as to his "maturity"—if this stage demands dependable trans-oceanic television, then frankly I can not agree that it may possibly come within ten years, or even twenty. To achieve this, we must either rule sun-spots out of existence, or send our pictures through and not above the surface of the earth.

As Mr. Lee points out in some detail, Television is certain to produce profound changes in the motion picture industry, especially in the picture-making division. Existing picture producers, the "B" class in particular, must be made to see the handwriting on the wall. The new Television industry will build studios and begin to turn out millions of feet per year of good entertainment for radio transmission. One hopes