

The Future of Radio and Television

A Radio Authority Looks Ahead

By R. C. COSGROVE, *Guest Editor*

IT AFFORDS me genuine pleasure to cede this space this month to Mr. R. C. Cosgrove, Vice-President of the giant Avco Manufacturing Corporation and General Manager of its Crosley Division—one of the foremost radio manufacturing corporations in this country. Mr. Cosgrove recently delivered an address: "The Present and Future of the Radio, Television, and Appliance Business," before the National Electrical Wholesalers Association Convention at Buffalo.

From this address I have excerpted the major portion of his remarks. Coming from an expert, they will be, not only of great interest, but highly inspiring as well, to all readers.

—H. Gernsback

"More than 31 million radio sets were produced from the end of the war to January 1, 1948. More than half of these (about 19 million) were produced in 1947 alone—a record year for the industry. Thirty-seven million, or more than 90% of American homes have at least one radio receiver, and many have three or four. Five million automobile radios and millions of portables are in use. Altogether Americans currently own more than 65 million receivers. (Latest figures would run to more than 75 million.—*Editor*)

"Now, it is misleading to look at these figures and say that the market for radios is becoming saturated. On the contrary, any business that enjoys such universal appeal with the buying public should constantly provide a ripe market if it is a turnover business, and radio definitely is a turnover market. There are millions of console radios and radio phonographs in use today that are from six to ten years old. This replacement market is untapped.

"Hundreds of thousands of new homes are being established this year. Somewhere I have noted that a million and a half marriages will take place. Based upon our 93% figure, this should mean a market for a lot of new radios. Also, the radio industry's campaign for a radio in every room is making definite headway, opening up markets for additional millions of sets. We estimate that, with a free flow of materials, at least 14 million radios will be produced in 1948.

"The broadcasting industry is continuing to serve as a major stimulus to radio sales. New stations going on the air since the end of the war have raised the total to over 1,700—almost twice the number in operation before the war. Construction permits and pending applications represent another 300 stations, which will mean more than 2,000 in operation in the near future.

"We have developed radio to a fine point. No other industry has achieved greater scientific success. But by no means all the frontiers of radio have been opened. We have yet to develop, for instance, a truly personal radio. I mean one that you can carry on your wrist, in your purse, or in your vest pocket. When a dependable receiver of this kind is placed on the market—and it will be—you will have another new untapped source of sales.

"Another development of promise is very small radio equipment for two-way conversation between individual users. Almost all technical hurdles in this field have been cleared. 'Transceivers,' as they are called, which weigh only two and one-half pounds and are no bigger than a camera, have been approved by the Federal Communications Commission. With a transceiver of this type you can talk back and forth with another party as much as eight miles away. It is the 'walkie-talkie' principle made usable for the public. It is a part of your future in radio.

"Before the war, about 4,000 television receivers were

made and sold. Attesting to the reliability of the industry, even in its earliest public step, is the fact that most of these 4,000 receivers are still giving good service.

"In 1946, 6,500 television receivers were produced. In 1947, 175,000 were produced. Now, here is an indication of the expansion taking place today. In the first four months of 1948, more than 160,000 television receivers were built, or almost as many as for all of 1947. We expect at least 600,000 sets to reach the market this year.

"By the end of this month, 29 television stations will be operating in 19 cities. Seventy more permits to build stations have been issued by the Federal Communications Commission, and 192 applications are pending in 96 cities. By 1949, stations will be operating in 40 cities—supplying programs to areas representing 60% of the nation's population.

"Great strides have been made in the past 60 days in television programming. As a result, you are going to see a sharp upswing in demand for home receivers. Some newsreel companies have arranged to furnish daily newsreels to television stations. NBC is photographing its own newsreels of world events. And many local stations will televise local news by the same means.

"For some time, a network of stations here in the East has been telecasting historic events from Washington and New York. Millions have experienced by television the rare thrill of watching the President of the United States deliver major addresses to the Congress. Already, more Americans have seen President Truman by television in one day than saw Lincoln in public appearances during his entire term.

"Network facilities are moving along briskly, but the job is tremendous and can't be done overnight. Seven thousand miles of facilities are now installed or under construction. Another 7,000 miles will be started as soon as possible. Coaxial cable will reach as far west as St. Louis by the end of 1948. Other tie-ups between cities are being made by microwave relay. The West Coast should be linked with the East Coast by mid-1949. Meanwhile, the West Coast stations are not standing still. They, too, are linking themselves together for improving the shows they put on the air.

"Television is not for the few—it is for the many. It is destined to become as much a part of the American household as radio has become. Surveys have shown that television is by no means a 'rich man's toy.' Three separate, impartial surveys in the nation's major television area—New York and its boroughs—have proved that by far the largest percentage of television sets are owned by families with middle, and lower middle, incomes.

"The latest survey showed that 73½% of sets in the New York area were owned by families in the average income group. 26½% were owned by those in the high income group.

"Sets on the market today range from those with 7-inch picture tubes, which give a picture some 4 x 6 inches, to projection-type receivers giving a picture as big as a newspaper page. Prices range from less than \$150 for small table sets, to \$2,500 or more for large, opulent consoles.

(As we go to press, Pilot Radio Corporation announces a \$99.50 television set with 3-inch tube.—*Editor*)

"What we are now experiencing in television is not a 'boom,' as some have called it, but a logical and stable expansion. Barring defense emergencies, television for years to come will be a rapidly growing, major business. Most estimates on the retail value of annual receiver production by 1952 run around \$675,000,000. In the next five years, I expect to see television at least a billion-dollar industry."