

Color Video in 3 or 4 Months Forecast After F. C. C. Test

By JACK GOULD

The commercial introduction of color television within three or four months was foreseen yesterday after members of the Federal Communications Commission had witnessed color pro-

grams on thirteen different makes of sets at a demonstration in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

Rosel H. Hyde, chairman of the commission, described the showing as "very impressive" and hinted there might be a chance of approval of new color video standards by Christmas.

Representative Charles A. Wolverton, Republican of New Jersey, chairman of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, declared:

"Color television is ready for the public. There's no reason for more delay."

The committee, which attended the demonstration in a body, has been keeping tabs on color TV developments for the last year.

Sets to Cost \$700-\$1,000

Initial color sets, providing a fourteen-inch picture, are expected to sell at \$700 to \$1,000, with lower costs and bigger images coming after the start of mass production. Barring further hitches, the first sets probably will be on display this winter or early next spring.

Color programming on a regular, though limited, basis is expected to begin coincidental with F. C. C. approval of transmission standards.

The introduction of color TV will not interfere with reception on present sets, which will continue to receive images in black and white. However, it will not be practical to convert existing receivers to color, and no manufacturer is planning conversion units. New sets, such as those shown yesterday, will receive pictures either in color or monochrome.

For the demonstration the thirteen sets were lined up in a long row. There was considerable variation in color shadings among the different sets, but the over-all impression was one of acceptable conformity and quality.

Appeal Beyond Challenge

The best receivers had very good definition, brightness and color contrast. In musical production numbers particularly, the added appeal and attractiveness of color over black and white were beyond challenge.

The sets still seemed rather critical in tuning adjustments, but Dr. W. R. G. Baker, chairman of the National Television System Committee, which staged the demonstration, said this was a relatively minor problem.

As part of the demonstration the Columbia Broadcasting System made a dramatic comeback with its color receiving tube, for which it claims major economies in production. After a poor showing last week the tube gave an excellent account of itself yesterday.

On the transmission end, the programs originating in a studio provided much better color than outdoor pick-ups, which still tend toward some instability in registration. However, the Radio Corporation of America's outdoor pick-up had a marked edge over the C. B. S. pick-up and was of usable quality.

Officials of manufacturing companies and networks participating in the demonstration agreed that the television industry now was on the threshold of a competitive race that might rival the excitement

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over the introduction of black-and-white TV.

"We've gone to the point where we can't turn back," one official said.

Apprehension was expressed as to what the imminence of color TV would do to the sale of black-and-white receivers.

An executive of one of the major manufacturers remarked cryptically after the showing: "There goes our Christmas market."

Some retailers already have reported that talk about color TV has slowed sales, especially of the more elaborate console models. They are hopeful, however, that when the public realizes the cost differential of perhaps \$500 between black-and-white and the first color sets there will be renewed buying.

Actually, black-and-white TV is apt to be dominant for at least a year to three years, according to industry circles. A semblance of mass production of color receivers, perhaps 4,000 a month, is not due for nine months after the F. C. C. approves the standards. Production of 50,000 receivers a month is not expected much before early 1955. There are 25,000,000 black-and-white receivers now in use.

Yesterday's industry demonstration was the first in the hectic history of color television that was free from argument over basic

technical standards. The standards used were those developed by the National Television System Committee and pioneered by R. C. A.

Earlier the commission had approved the Columbia Broadcasting System's color method, which could not be viewed on present sets without the purchase of additional equipment. Subsequently Columbia abandoned the system.

In addition to R. C. A. and C. B. S., the receiver manufacturers participating in yesterday's demonstration were Admiral, Crosley, Emerson, General Electric, Hallicrafter, Hazeltine, Motorola, Philco, Sylvania, Westinghouse and Zenith. The Du Mont, C. B. S. and National Broadcasting Company networks and the American Telephone and Telegraph Company cooperated on transmission.