

VIDEO SET OWNERS GET REASSURANCE

Head of Manufacturers Group Says Non-Color Receivers Are Safe Investment

C. B. S. 'WARNING' ASSAILED

Advice That Buyers Demand Set Makers' Guarantee Labeled Unwarranted

Robert C. Sprague, president of the Radio-Television Manufacturers Association, assured the television public last night over the Columbia Broadcasting System network that black-and-white video receivers today were a better investment than ever before. He declared further that they could be "bought with confidence" for many years to come, notwithstanding the imminence of color video on a commercial basis.

Mr. Sprague's talk was in reply to Frank Stanton, president of C. B. S., who, over the same facilities at the same time last week, warned the public to buy new video sets only if their makers gave positive assurance that they could be converted to the Columbia system of color. The Federal Communications Commission recently authorized the Columbia color system for use beginning Nov. 20.

Asserting that what he had to say "is not just one man's opinion," but the "considered judgment of the best-informed men of our industry," Mr. Sprague outlined two primary reasons "why we believe black-and-white programs will continue to provide the best television entertainment for years to come."

Difference in Cost Cited

"One is our profound conviction—the F. C. C. to the contrary notwithstanding—that the right kind of color television system simply isn't here yet," he said. "The second is an equally firm belief that black-and-white television will never be obsolete, even when a 'sound' color system has been developed.

"As black-and-white receivers will always cost less, they will appeal to economy-minded persons. Moreover, the advertisers who sponsor most of the best television programs will never to any large extent abandon this mass audience in favor of a much smaller number of persons who will be willing to pay extra for color."

On the matter of the adapters and color converters necessary to equip ordinary receivers to intercept color, he said the cost might be well in excess of \$100 apiece, varying with the size of the set's picture tube, and that to produce them in quantity might take upwards of six months.

When an adapter is used to get black and white reception for a non-compatible color broadcast the result would be a "poorer black and white picture" on present-day receivers, he said.

New System Being Worked Out.

"There is only one clear answer," Mr. Sprague asserted. "That is a fully electronic and compatible color system, which many of the industry's leading engineers and scientists have been working on for many months and are entirely confident can be commercially developed in the relatively near future. Such a system will offer no problems for the set owner. He will be able to receive in black and white all broadcasts, whether originating in color or black and white, without any additional expenditure for new equipment or adjustments whatsoever."

For those who want to "experiment with color," he said, despite its present limitations, they will be able shortly to buy converters and adapters, which can be added to their present sets.

After the broadcast by Mr. Sprague, Mr. Stanton declared in a statement (not broadcast) that the Radio-Television Manufacturers Association's expressed position was in violation of "its sworn commitment before the F. C. C." He asserted that the association's president had testified on May 5 under oath, "explicitly committing the association to accept any color decision" of the Federal body.