

INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION AND RADIO SHOW : EARLS COURT

Opening Ceremony : 22nd August 1966

D.E. - files

I would in any case have been honoured to be asked to open the International Television and Radio Show, but I feel particularly honoured this year as so many developments important to broadcasting have occurred or are about to occur.

Firstly, this show is the first one, I believe in Europe, to be international in character, and the opportunity this affords to see variations in performance, conception, styling, price, in the products offered by the various manufacturers will be of the greatest interest and value to all manufacturers and to all who have to deal with their products. The stimulus to design and development that this kind of show gives will be of great value to all.

Secondly, it is the first show since the introduction of the BBC's extended transmissions on stereo. At the present time this is limited to a few hours a day from transmitters in south-east England but work is in hand to extend these transmissions to other parts of the country. Stereo will probably never be a service of wide popular appeal, but it does appeal to a limited discerning audience and is highly valued by them. It gives something to the VHF listener not available on medium wave.

Thirdly, and certainly making the greatest impact on the Industry and on all concerned with broadcasting, it is the first show since the start of a colour television service was authorised by the Postmaster General. As you all know, the PMG has said that colour will be introduced as a regular service towards the end of 1967.

However, a colour service is not something which can start over-night. It needs most intensive preparation, considerable new equipment, and considerable new skills on the part of all the people concerned. Colour transmissions must therefore start gradually and, although the regular service will not start until later next year, experimental transmissions must begin well before this and then build up in

volume and in complexity of programmes transmitted. It is much too early to try to give firm dates for any of this, but I think we have every reason to hope that well before the start of the buying season next autumn there should be an appreciable amount of colour test transmissions on the air.

The confused situation on the choice of a colour standard has now been settled, and it has been decided that in this country we will use the PAL variant of NTSC. We have in fact been doing test transmissions on this for some considerable time. These amount to about 18 hours per week, with increases for special occasions such as this Show. We shall however in the future further augment both the scope and the duration of these tests. Early in the new year, we shall be starting to make test transmissions using some of the new equipment we shall by then have acquired and we shall test with more ambitious types of programme than we have so far done. We want finally to be able to do programmes in colour as technically complex as those we do in black and white, and to ensure that the technical problems involved are fully solved, so that we do not, from an engineering point of view, put any limitation on the artistic concepts of our programme colleagues.

All this means a very considerable expertise to be built up, not only in the hands of the small number of men who so far have been doing virtually all the colour work, but in the large number of men, some hundreds, required to handle colour productions on a normal basis. Preparations for training ^{these} men are already in hand, but I must admit that the number of men we have to train for colour is very small compared with the number that Industry must train for the design, manufacture and service of the receivers. If however the public is to get good and consistently faithful reproduction, then it is essential that sufficient numbers of trained men will be available at all points where the colour signal is handled. In the United States colour suffered initially a considerable

setback because, although the colour system in use was good, the implementation and handling of it in many instances was poor. I think that all the equipment that we shall use will be as good as or better than that now in use in the United States and certainly much better than that in use there in the early days. Receivers in particular will be very much better. We must however all see that they are well handled. Public more critical of colour perhaps - ~~more decided principles~~ - sets will cost more.

While less spectacular than some of the items I have mentioned, there have been further improvements in the 405-line services and in sound broadcasting, and I would think that broadcasting in the U.K. is in a healthy state. However, a Correspondent in the Sunday Times a week ago certainly did not agree with this, when he said that Britain's TV blueprint has run off the lines, that the whole future of British television is in the melting pot, and that various people, including engineers and senior executives of the BBC, were unanimous that the policy laid down in the 1962 White Paper was unworkable. Few statements are further from the truth.

The TV plans in the White Paper are in good order and are being successfully carried out.

Of ~~the~~ 47 stations included in Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the BBC-1 relay stations foreseen in the White Paper, 44 have already been completed, while work is in hand on a further 38 of these relay stations in Stages 4 and 5. New stations are coming into service at an average rate of one a month - ^{this} rate of completion is increasing and all the relay stations should be in service by the end of 1968 when BBC-1 will be available to 99.5% of the UK population. The improvements to the BBC-1 programme by additional stations in Band III to serve Wales, Lancashire and Scotland have also been completed. Another high-power Band III BBC-1 station to serve Lincolnshire will be ready for service in the autumn.

In addition, 33 three-programme relay stations have been put into service for VHF sound, with a further 22 in hand, all of which should be ready by the end of 1968, and which will bring the population coverage of this service to 99% - all getting an interference free service.

BBC-2 started in UHF at the planned time. We have at the present time eight main and two relay stations in service, giving 50% population coverage. By the end of this year, we shall have eleven main and four relay stations, giving 58%, and by the time a regular service starts in colour television at the latter part of next year, BBC-2 will be available to more than two-thirds of the population of the U.K.

All these facilities have been planned for colour television operation, and the steps we are taking will we think ensure that, when we do start regular colour programmes, the pictures will be of excellent quality and reliability. Reception of BBC-2 faster than any other service - no prejudice to BBC-1 & VHF.

The 1962 White Paper said that a decision on the future of 405-line services and the means of converting these to 625 lines would be decided when experience of UHF television in this country had been obtained. This is of course just what we are now doing. It also said that the need was foreseen in fifteen years from 1960 for six programmes. The solution to these problems is undoubtedly a very complex one, and until all the important factors have been evaluated, particularly the one on UHF reception, it is hard to see how anyone could make a firm recommendation as to what should be done. Active work is in hand on a number of ways of solving this problem.

We feel that everything possible is being done and that the programme of work is well up to date.

Collaboration

Open Show

*Joint work: technical committees
Collaboration: many joint
trials being done with our
partners offering reviews
to our test film of reception problems*

MKPR
19.8.66