

INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING CONVENTION, 20th - 22nd SEPTEMBER
at the Royal Lancaster Hotel

Notes for Opening Speech by Lord Hill at 10 a.m. on
Wednesday 20th September

This International Broadcasting Convention, sponsored by the Electronic Engineering Association and the Royal Television Society with the support of the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland Section of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, comes at a most opportune time of unprecedented rate of development in broadcasting, and particularly television broadcasting, over the whole world.

We have come to accept the present dominance of television and radio, especially of television, as a part of the natural order of things, but when we look back we see that it is not so many years since they started and that when they did start they grew fairly slowly at first and then they rapidly gain public acceptance. In many ways this made things easy for everybody. The demand for equipment and for men to handle the new techniques grew slowly; there was plenty of time for development, for trial and error, and to train the men both theoretically and on the job. The rate of growth was slowed up also by the sheer difficulty of creating new networks, finding transmitter sites and so on. This will not be the situation with colour television, either in this country or elsewhere. The public already knows and likes television and will welcome the increased pleasure and the increased appreciation of the good things of life/^{that colour}will bring to them. On the constructional side for most organisations it will not be necessary to build new networks for colour, but to introduce colour into the existing networks. In the U.K. we will have to cope with both of these, in that colour has been introduced in the existing BBC-2 network and will be introduced into new networks for the BBC-1 and ITA duplicated programmes. However, the problem will be eased as these new networks will be built at existing sites, using existing masts and so on. We can therefore expect a very rapid increase in the demand for colour.

So, while the manufacturing industries in all countries were able to develop and perfect equipment in black-and-white over a period of time, colour will be expected to spring like Athene from the brow of Zeus. This is all right for the recipients and for Athene, but how to get Athene fully armed for colour is the problem for the engineers, scientists and manufacturers represented at this Convention.

The very fact that the public are so accustomed to television, that they will pay appreciably more for their colour set than they would have done for a black-and-white set and that the eye sees lack of fidelity in colour much more readily than it sees it in black-and-white will make the public more exacting for colour than for black-and-white. On the other hand, the inherent technical difficulties of colour make it harder to achieve the required results and call for more care in setting up the colour signal than the black-and-white signal and much more accurate measuring techniques. This means considerable equipment, which I am sure the people represented here will be able to supply, and it also means considerable skill in the hands of the people operating the equipment. Whatever it means, however, the public will rightly insist that the engineers deliver the goods and I am sure you will do so.

Moreover, as I said earlier, instead of this skill being required at first only at the centre and then spreading out gradually over the whole of the area to be served, the skill will now be required all over the area and will be required not only in the hands of the people producing and broadcasting but also in the hands of the radio servicemen dealing with the receiver. It means that we have to have very well organised methods of operation and measurement of what we are doing and it means widespread training facilities must be provided. Very considerable progress has been made in these latter respects: test transmissions are to be put out, and both manufacturers and colleges are organising special courses for the training of the engineers and technicians engaged in this operation.

The coming of colour will still further stimulate the public appetite for international exchange of programmes, particularly sporting programmes. The EEC development of equipment to convert colour signals from the American standards to the European standards, or vice-versa, is a very great step forward in meeting this demand. If, as is expected, this equipment is used to bring colour pictures from the Olympic Games in Mexico City to the whole of Europe in the summer of next year, it will enormously stimulate public interest in colour. In future years programme exchange between satellite in all parts of the world will undoubtedly become commonplace. In some parts of the world where land-based communications are difficult, it is very probable that transmission direct to the public will be made from satellites. Such a form of broadcasting will undoubtedly be first introduced in large areas such as Canada or Africa, or parts of Asia, but it must not be lost sight of that we could also bring additional services to such densely-populated areas as Europe.

Television, and particularly colour television, dominates the broadcasting scene at the present and is likely to do so for many years. We must not forget, however, the enormous interest that still exists in every country in radio broadcasting. New services are being brought into existence, and improved equipment is enabling new types of programmes to be created. It is to be hoped that it will be a long time before television is provided in cars, even for the back-seat passengers, as the driver's frustration at not seeing the programme would be dangerous. Radio in cars does give, however, a very real service, and there is no doubt that this will increase, and the present rather slow move towards getting VHF/FM used in car radios will be accelerated. For the dedicated hi-fi listener stereophonic services are growing in all countries of the world.

This present Convention is the first of those to be held in London and has assembled a very impressive list of authoritative Chairmen and speakers on broadcasting subjects from many countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia. The bodies exhibiting the equipment are also doing so on a world-wide basis. With this combination of first-class papers, excellent equipment exhibitions, and fascinating subjects for discussion I am quite safe in wishing the Convention a successful start with profit not only to the participants and the organisers, but also to all the broadcasting world.

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