



COLOR TV: ALMOST, BUT NOT QUITE

FEW CAN dispute that color tv is the rainbow advertising medium, but is there a pot of gold at the end and if so when will it be found?

Predictions on future growth of color have come thick and fast ever since compatible color was born commercially in December 1953. Everyone agrees there will be a big industry boom in color tv, but opinions vary as to the time table and conditions.

Forecasts, however, now seem to be following a fairly common pattern. On Madison Ave., those agency executives hep to the broadcast media as well as to client needs cautiously point to 1958 as the year when the national advertiser no longer will just look at color tv but will buy.

Two such executives publicly have so called their shots—1958.

• Gerald W. Tasker, vice president and director of research at Cunningham & Walsh, predicted in an interview [B*T, July 9] that color tv by 1958 should reach the stage that black-and-white entered six years ago. Soon after, he thought color may emerge as one of the top advertising media.

• Rod Erickson, vice president and radio-tv supervisor at Young & Rubicam, predicts elsewhere in this issue (see page 136) that "by the fall of 1958," advertisers will be "willing to pay for a share of the transference into color and can justify it at that time on the grounds of impact."

A number of executives—in set manufacturing, in broadcasting, in the agency business—tend to think today in terms of a basic million color tv sets in circulation as the first benchmark on the road to color dominance.

Brig. Gen. David Sarnoff, board chairman of RCA, which by virtue of its estimated \$70 million investment alone is indisputably in the forefront of color development, recently forecast 500,000 to 1 million color sets in use sometime next year. It should be then, he says, that RCA will expect a return at both the program and manufacturing ends.

All Signs Point Up

Two tv networks—NBC and CBS—are colorcasting more program hours than ever before; there are more stations equipped to broadcast network color and to originate color locally than ever before. As set makers produce and the dealers sell color receivers and as long as there is a firm U.S. economy, there should be no reason for color acceleration to run out of gas.

The greatest hurdle to color dominance has been high costs to prospective set buyers, to potential advertisers, to broadcasters who must invest in equipment and to networks which must have facilities. Already, the cost barrier is being lowered, however slowly, by an increasing set circulation and

lowering prices of sets, acquired program production know-how and engineering advances affecting the quality as well as price of color gear.

The \$1,000-plus price floor on color tv sets has given way to under \$500—and electronically (tubes and circuitry) today's receiver is a far cry from that of yesteryear. This year alone, RCA, according to Gen. Sarnoff, hopes to sell 200,000 color receivers.

In programming, it is estimated that a half-hour color film program (on network) adds a third more in the below-the-line cost (program production and studio and technical facilities) than in black-and-white, and in some cases 10-15% more in the above-the-line cost (program creation). Even these "averages" vary with the type of show being put together. This is true in live production, too, where the shows have great variance, but the average added cost has been whittled to approximately 9-10%—much less than even a year ago and the gap is expected to narrow further.

For the national advertiser, however, who has a product that looks better and more attractive in color and which receives greater brand identification with color, it is lack of circulation even more than high cost that at present keeps him away from the multi-hued medium.

A network official in New York explains: A national advertiser pays about 40% more

for a color ad in a magazine (i.e. over black and white) while for a regular network show the increase to his total tv expenditure on an hourly basis would run from 5 to 10%. So far as a color message is concerned, he asks: "Which is cheaper?" The network executive fails to add that until there is color tv circulation the magazine is cheaper in its color costs.

Although basically the national advertiser who uses color today is doing so more as an experiment than anything else, the list of such advertisers is growing. On NBC this year there are 29 "color" advertisers; on CBS, eight with two others on a one-time color basis (see box, this page).

Both networks are geared to program still more color at almost any time, and ABC, which is not yet colorcasting, has the means to prepare itself when the time is considered ripe.

NBC is increasing color programming by 500% this season. It will have 120-130 hours of color in the final quarter of this year compared to 22.5 hours the fourth quarter last year. Translated into color hours per week, NBC will be programming from 10 to 11 hours in color each week (it programs 80-90 total hours weekly). At CBS, the average number of hours weekly of regular colorcasting is not so great. CBS-TV programs about 87½ hours weekly; of this an average 3¾ hours will be color.

ABC President Robert Kintner says his tv network will stick close to this position: ABC-TV (via parent American Broadcast-

39 COLOR PIONEERS

THERE will be at least 39 national advertisers sponsoring color programs on network tv this season, most of them on a regular basis.

NBC-TV reports 29 advertisers sponsoring color shows: Chevrolet, Aluminum Co. of America, Goodyear Tire & Rubber, Hallmark Cards, Schick Inc., S. C. Johnson Co., Whitehall Pharmaceutical Div. of American Home Products (starting in January), Lever Bros., RCA, John Hancock Life Insurance, Buick, Purex Corp., Speidel, Liggett & Myers Tobacco, Max Factor, Kraft Foods, Toni Co., P. Lorillard Co., Gold Seal Co., Noxema Chemical, Kleenex, Sunbeam Corp., S & H Green Stamps, American Tobacco, Warner-Lambert, Oldsmobile, Helene Curtis, Lewis Howe, and Vick Chemical Co.

CBS-TV reports eight advertisers sponsoring colorcasts: Toni, Bristol-Myers, Pillsbury Mills, Kellogg, Chrysler, Ford Motor, SOS and General Mills. Two others, Colgate-Palmolive and Westinghouse, are sponsoring color on a one-time basis.

ing-Paramount Theatres Inc.) has \$10-15 million set aside for its use once color is off the ground. That time may come when perhaps there are 5 million sets in circulation. Many of ABC-TV's film shows, seen

in black-and-white, are in color—e.g. *Disneyland*, *Mickey Mouse Club* and *The Lone Ranger*. ABC-TV would invest in color studios and related facilities for live production.

The number of stations equipped for color is on the increase. NBC-TV's owned and operated stations are stepping up color schedules: WNBQ (TV) Chicago is an all-color station, has been since April; WRCA-TV New York can telecast 65¾% of its weekday schedule in color; WRC-TV Philadelphia is broadcasting 15 hours a week in local color; WRC-TV Washington is having studios built that will be designed and constructed with color in mind (will be completed next year); KRCA (TV) Los Angeles starts local programming about Dec. 1 and WBUF (TV) Buffalo (uhf) can carry network color and plans local transmission in color, too.

As of September, there were 478 tv stations on the air in the U.S., of which 456 were commercial and 22 educational. Of the 478 stations, 249 were equipped for network color; 72 for local color slides; 66 for local color film and 29 for local live color.

These figures compare to 188 network color; 43 local slide and film, and 15 local live, as of May 1955 (B•T estimate, May 9).

(On Jan. 1, 1954, when NBC-TV colorcast the Pasadena Tournament of Roses on New Year's Day, about 20 stations carried it in color.)

Thus, the color facilities on the network and station level are coming of age but how about set circulation? In the main, the out-

standing set makers which would turn out color receivers are RCA, Westinghouse, General Electric, Emerson, Sylvania, Philco, Motorola, Admiral, Muntz Tv and a few others. Just how many are actually producing sets—other than RCA—is difficult to learn.

It is in this general area that predictions are the most conflicting and puzzling. RCA at one point hoped to turn out 300,000 color sets by next Christmas, perhaps even more. Other sources tone down this figure somewhat. Gen. Sarnoff places the figure at 200,000 sets this year—but this is in sales, not production. This would indicate production at RCA is humming along.

How about the others? Except for RCA, there is not too much activity. Each firm checked by B*T admits it has much in blueprints or is ready to go when the "demand

materializes." The check found:

Westinghouse: Makes a 22-inch color glass rectangular tube color receiver. Has no production estimates. Does not report a price range.

Emerson: Will not estimate production for this or next year. It is pricing its color consolette at about \$678.

General Electric: Priced competitively with RCA (RCA's lowest priced color model is a table set at \$495). Finds more public interest in color now than ever before. Ready to produce as many color sets as the public wants but so far reports slow pace. GE is getting into mass production just now, having announced color set making only last month.

Sylvania: This firm puts out a table model at \$595 and another—\$100 higher—model (console). Sylvania is watching pub-

lic acceptance of color very closely this year for its base on which to plan for next year. No estimates.

Philco: Has been off and on. Stopped color early in summer, although it did produce a "limited" quantity. No predictions, no estimates. Philco will study what happens in color sales this year.

Olympic (Radio-Tv div. of Unitronics Corp., New York): Pilot models delivered on request. Priced competitively: \$495, table set; \$595 and \$695 for consoles. Waiting for "right market."

Motorola: Gears thinking to market. No immediate plans to expand output. Has three 21-inch models in \$500-\$600 range. Selling "token quantity" daily.

Admiral: Still thinks color tv "logjam" will break in fall. Not releasing production estimates. Has complete line of 21-inch color models from \$499.95 up to \$799.95.

Hallicrafters: Not in production, has no plans. Did produce a 21-inch set last year.

Zenith: No plans this fall, will go into color once sets are "practical" and tube "situation" resolved.

Hotpoint Co.: Will market color sets probably next year (receivers made by parent GE).

Muntz Tv: Earl Muntz has glowing predictions. Plans to turn out 1,100 consolettes at \$399.95 by today (Oct. 15). Expects to triple production later this year.

Sentinel (Magnavox-owned): Working on new models with new chassis at its Evanston, Ill., plant. Will increase output but has no estimates.

Other companies such as Warwick Mfg. (Silvertone color units for Sears, Roebuck), have plans only in "discussion stage."

It is as difficult to get an estimate as to what overall unit production is today as it is to pin down Greta Garbo's age. Private estimates range from 100,000 units for the year to RCA's more optimistic figures. Be that as it may, color circulation is on the way up.

There are some signs that new color developments may affect the level of set prices. Allen B. DuMont Labs and Chromatic Labs (50% owned by Paramount Pictures) are combining their facilities in an attempt to place a color set, priced perhaps as low as \$350, into mass production sometime late next year. Other firms, like Philco, have been working on new color set design.

Work has been underway at RCA Labs for some time on a tricolor video camera. RCA, Ampex and other companies are working diligently on commercial-type color tv magnetic tape, a development that could revolutionize colorcasting. As recently as May 1955, RCA-NBC transmitted a color tv program recorded on magnetic tape closed circuit from New York to St. Paul. Use of tape would make it cheaper to broadcast color than black-and-white or color film. Its speed of operation would cut the volume of live shows and the number of hours needed for both commercials and programs.

NBC has placed into operation its new lenticular film system it developed jointly with RCA and Eastman Kodak Co. The system permits NBC to delay color programs for the West Coast. The lenticular process

CONGRATS...

TO OUR PALS SOL,
MAURY, ED AND ALL
THE GANG AT B•T



Hi! I'm BIG 9...
speakin' for the folks
at KWTV — Oklahoma
City. I'm the animated
channel number who introduces
program promotion spots for them.

May you always stay
25 years young!

OKLAHOMA CITY'S
world's tallest
man-made structure

EDGAR T. BELL—EXEC. VICE PRESIDENT
FRED L. VANCE—SALES MANAGER

REPRESENTED BY
AVERY-KNODEL, INC.

KWTV
CHANNEL 9

registers electronic color information on black-and-white film via minute lenses which form a portion of the film itself. This film can be processed rapidly in the manner of normal black-and-white techniques and then played back as a color tv program.

In the past year, NBC has completed its \$12 million color expansion program: the lenticular system; conversion of WNBQ (TV) to all color; the building of additional color studios on the West Coast, in Brooklyn, on the East Coast and in the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York City.

Color tv has had a turbulent history. And yet the history is "young" by any yardstick. Only 15 years ago, the FCC allocated spectrum space for black and white tv but put aside color as too far in the future. By 1945, FCC had reserved uhf channels for

the future expansion of television, including color.

But the march to commercial tv was heralded by 1946-47, the years when CBS petitioned for commercialization of color. The FCC denied these petitions, feeling the art was not far enough along. The Commission felt that both CBS and RCA required too much spectrum space for their individual systems.

A lengthy—from Sept. 26, 1949, to May 26, 1950—FCC hearing took up the color question. This was during the "freeze" on all tv expansion which had begun in September 1948. On Sept. 1, 1950, FCC authorized CBS's color system.

On June 25, 1951, CBS, which used the field sequential system as compared to the compatible system of RCA, put on the first

commercial color telecast. It was an hour long and was sponsored by 16 advertisers.

The CBS system, however, was short-lived. Defense Mobilizer Charles E. Wilson requested manufacturers to cease work on color equipment for the duration of the Korean War. That was Oct. 19, 1951. From then on, color tv development was dormant. It was not until March 26, 1953, that the National Production Authority revoked its ban on the manufacture of color equipment.

The historic decision of Dec. 17, 1953, made by the FCC was approval of the National Television System Committee's compatible color standards (both NTSC and RCA-NBC had individually petitioned the Commission for such approval).

There were then some 340 tv stations on the air, an audience of about 27.5 million who watched tv on black-and-white sets. They had an estimated \$7 billion invested in television.

When FCC authorized compatible color standards, CBS-TV went on the air that day at 6:15 p.m. with a color show. NBC-TV, however, had been on the airwaves at 5:32 p.m. with the "first authorized color signal" showing its trademark (chimes) in three primary colors, and at 6:30 p.m. it put on its color show.

Although color was lucky to make even a ripple in an ever widening stream of black-and-white sets, shows and sales to national advertisers, persistence in the industry, led principally by RCA and its NBC broadcast arm, started the push that today shows signs of cracking the color barrier within another couple of years.

The first color commercial by a big national advertiser was reported in B*T's Jan. 4, 1954.

A picture in four colors—a still from the commercial—was printed depicting the colors and setting used in the commercial itself. American Cigar & Cigarette Co. for its Pall Mall cigarettes and its agency, Sullivan, Stauffer, Coldwell and Bayles, through Film Counsellors, commissioned Peter Elgar Productions Inc., New York, to shoot the one-minute commercial film experimentally.

Color Laboratories

Since that time many color film and live color commercials have been placed on the air. Agency activity is increasing along the color road. N. W. Ayer now has its own "color laboratory" and many other agencies similarly produce, test and place on the air various types of color commercials.

Color in commercials will have a great effect on the whole concept of merchandising and selling of many products. Already it has affected package design—and yet color tv has not "come of age." It will increase color-consciousness, in studio design and layouts, in lighting, in setting, in the clothes worn by sport participants, and even more important, what people buy and eat, use for home decoration, furnishings etc.

Fashions in clothing may be directly affected by what is shown on color tv; retail sales will most certainly be affected by color tv advertising. The ceiling is unlimited.

RCA President Frank Folsom predicts 12 million color sets in homes by 1960 and thinks that by 1963, virtually all of tv may be in color.

THE WINNER (WINR)

BINGHAMTON, N. Y.—COMPLETE COVERAGE TRIPLE CITIES



CONNIE SMITH "MISS WINR" 1957

ROUND THE CLOCK

FIRST! FIRST! FIRST!

- FIRST on the dial at 680
- FIRST with single rate card
- FIRST independent (music-news-sports)
- FIRST all night station
- FIRST with "Community Club-awards"
- FIRST three hour classical music show nightly
- FIRST with "Mystery Sounds"
- FIRST with homemakers request shows
- FIRST with musical station breaks
- FIRST with complete mobile unit
- FIRST with beauty contest
- FIRST with round the clock giveaways
- FIRST with male and female teams
- FIRST with complete council broadcast

NEW NIELSEN—NEW HOOPER—NEW PULSE THIS FALL

680 KC

WINR

1000 WATTS

Rep: George P. Hollingbery Co. — Ken Leslie, Gen. Mgr.