

# De Reszke of course!

DR.274-14



CORK TIPPED OR PLAIN

## HOME TELEVISION IS A LONG WAY OFF

*But Theatres are Preparing for it*

THE LISTENER has frequently been asked when television will come to New Zealand. The answer, according to Commander E. F. McDonald, of Chicago, president of a "radionics" corporation, is that television is not likely to become general anywhere, mainly because of the cost involved. McDonald was interviewed recently for *Magazine Digest* by Dyson Carter, a writer on scientific subjects. Here is what McDonald says:—

There is no body with enough money to pay for television in the home. Public opinion surveys have revealed that a good many people plan to buy T-V receiving sets. These sets, if mass produced, would give very good reception, but the buyer would find little he wanted to receive on it.

Television broadcasting began in 1928. In the last 10 years several companies (in the United States) have sold receivers. After the New York World's Fair a heavy sales campaign was launched; but only about 3,000 sets were sold in the New York area and about 600 in Los Angeles. Those who tried T-V in their homes became bored after the novelty had worn off, and decided that radio and films gave them better entertainment.

Radio made greater strides in a year than television in 15 years. And the reason is that it gives the finest quality of music ever produced in the home. Radio audiences soared into millions; stations sprang up everywhere. The best musical and dramatic talent went on the air and news and information broadcasts became accepted features.

Magazine articles have promised us everything that radio now gives us, plus the actual sight of the players on the television screen. But the key to the whole television problem lies in the

cost of producing shows. A good average screen production costs about £170,000 and, because of its mass audience, that works out at about sixpence per head. When this is applied to television the money mounts. Even if a movie-type show could be perfectly telecast—which means months of rehearsal to produce a full-length feature in one uninterrupted session—the cost would be at least £70,000. Such a weekly feature would cost the sponsor about £3,000,000 a year, exclusive of station time.

### The Human Eye is Fickle

According to Commander McDonald, no television sponsor could afford to pay the price unless he could count on a mass audience. And we cannot get that audience, he argues, because present television programmes are far inferior to radio or movie shows. You cannot fool the public on what it wants. As they are now, television plays are not acceptable; so we are promised current events and news telecasts.

And how often, McDonald asks, would you like to settle down to watch a commentator for 15 minutes, just sitting at a desk reading his notes? Actual tests prove that the effect is one of annoyance. We come up against what some have called the fickleness of the human eye. Tests over the years have proved that our eyes become bored very much more quickly than our ears. A lover of classical music can enjoy a Beethoven concerto or a Tchaikovsky symphony over and over again. But only the rare individual wants to see a movie a second time. Seen three or four times, a film drives most people to distraction.

What has this to do with television? Television broadcasting of movies is highly advanced. But, to operate economically, a T-V broadcasting system would have to be run at least four hours a day. This would use up all the sound

(continued on next page)

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## "THE CHANGING WORLD"

Winter Course Talks at 3YA

THE CHANGING WORLD is the over-all title chosen by Station 3YA for the Winter Course talks this year. These talks begin on Monday, June 10, at 9.15 p.m., and the attention of listeners is drawn to the change in day and time. In recent years 3YA has broadcast Winter Course talks at 6.45 p.m. on Wednesdays, but owing to rearrangement of programmes this period is no longer available.

The series *The Changing World* will be opened on June 10 by A. J. Danks, M.A., Lecturer in Economics at Canterbury University College. He will give two talks, entitled "Speaking of Economics." In the first he will discuss the general, and in the second, the New Zealand problem. These will be followed by two talks on another question of the

hour—atomic energy. The speaker this time will be C. D. Ellyett, M.Sc., Lecturer in Physics at Canterbury University College, who was in the United States when the atomic bomb was being developed. During the war Mr. Ellyett was employed as instructor in radar for the Army and Air Force. In 1942 he was appointed Scientific Director of ionospheric work, and in 1943 was sent to Australia to do research in this subject. The next year he went to the United States as one of two New Zealand representatives to the International Radio Propagation Conference. Mr. Ellyett is to go to England shortly to study atomic physics.

Next there will be a series of talks, organised by L. W. McCaskill, M. Agric. Sc., of Canterbury Agricultural College, Lincoln, on Agriculture in a Changing World. Among the tentative titles of these talks, which will be given by the staff of the college, are "From Hunter to Husbandman," "Patterns in Mother Earth," "From Bent Stick to Tractor Plough," and "New Plants for Old."