

# Special Pleas of Television Enthusiasts



LAST week we published the information that the British Postmaster-General had agreed that the British Broadcasting Corporation's experimental plant might be used, in hours outside those ordinarily occupied by broadcasting, for further experiment with the Baird television apparatus. It was stressed by the Minister that this concession in regard to experiments did not imply any immediate revision of the British Broadcasting Corporation's attitude following on the earlier experience with the Baird apparatus.

From articles appearing in the magazine "Television," the official organ of the Television Society, it would seem that this decision on the part of the British Postmaster-General is the outcome of persistent propaganda on the part of the television enthusiasts for greater co-operation on the part of the British Broadcasting Corporation in making available its technical resources and equipment for further experiment. The magazine "Television" has now been in existence for twelve months, and has attained a very creditable technical and editorial standard. Articles in the February issue now to hand strongly review the technical and practical attainments in television broadcasting, and make strong plea for "a more broadminded attitude" on the part of the British Broadcasting Corporation authorities. The claim is made that the measure of success so far attained by the Baird television system definitely warrants effective co-operation, and that by such co-operation more rapid progress would be possible in bringing this new phase of public service into popular use. The paper editorially states:—

## B.B.C. Yields to Importunity and Grants Facilities for Experiment

"A large number of critics of television, many of them with distinguished names, have stated not once but many times, and at great length, that television could never be successfully accomplished by mechanical methods. When Baird proved that it could be successfully accomplished, and while he was publicly demonstrating television images the scope of which enabled the head and shoulders of a person to be reproduced, the critics, being forced to admit that mechanical methods were successful, minimised that success to the best of their ability and stated in unequivocal terms that it would be impossible to increase the field of vision by mechanical methods and televise anything but small objects such as a person's head.

Baird, retaining his faith in his mechanical methods, continued his researches. The British inventor has so far perfected his system that it is now possible to televise whole scenes in which appear, full length, several people at a time. The received images as reproduced on the standard home televisor, though smaller, are nevertheless quite as completely recognisable. A further development relates to the projection of the received images on to a screen some four feet in diameter. Such a size of screen makes it possible to demonstrate television to a number of people at once. It could, in fact, be employed in a small hall. This marks the first step towards the ultimate development of the size of the image to kinema screen dimensions, so that audi-

ences in picture theatres may witness a reproduction, not of something which happened some time previously, as is the case with a kinema film, but of something which is actually happening at the moment of presentation.

"Surely these improvements constitute a vindication of mechanical methods of image scanning, and serve to discredit the theorists and armchair critics."

### The Technical Aspect.

A FURTHER article in the same number under the heading, "The Future of Television," by Dr. C. Tierney, D.Sc., F.R.M.S., vice-president and chairman of the executive of the Television Society, enters into a more detailed review of the technical position, and pleads for B.B.C. co-operation—which plea would now seem to have been successful. Dr. Tierney says, inter alia:—"We have recently read in a leading London newspaper, the 'Morning Post,' report of an interview between its representative and an official of the B.B.C., which purports to challenge Mr. J. L. Baird to come forward with any new development which will enable them to reconsider the question of affording facilities for broadcasting television. Without entering into any discussion as to the merits or demerits of this mode of negotiation, or whether the desired end is not more likely to be achieved by co-operation rather than by pseudo challenges, a few observations upon the results of some recent tests will be of interest.

"While theorists are still debating whether the disc and spot-light method of exploring is capable of scanning anything more than a very small object, and whilst they are theorising on the speed of the disc in terms of millions of revolutions per second which make one giddy to read, what are the facts? J. L. Baird has repeatedly demonstrated to scientific and other competent observers, as well as to the public, the adequacy of his well method for the transmission and reception of televised images.

"The image of the head and shoulders of the subject is received with complete satisfaction to all, and more recently he has transmitted a whole stage scene showing two athletes giving an exhibition boxing-bout to demonstrate the practical application of his system to larger scenes. The latter demonstration, which the writer, amongst others, was privileged to witness, was carried out from a stage some 15 feet by 10 feet, temporarily constructed for the test.

"The scene, received in another room of the same building, clearly depicted the small, but recognisable, images of the combatants and their every movement, which at times were particularly rapid, as blow upon blow was exchanged, and one or other would speedily dodge or retreat in order to escape an impending disfigurement. The reception only needed the loud-speaker attachment to render audible the ex-

change of blows, and perhaps the remarks, to complete the realism.

"A further difficult and exacting test was carried out with equally satisfactory results. A cyclist, riding a bicycle round a ring, illuminated by the same method, was transmitted to the same receiver, which accurately showed every movement, both of the machine and the rider in motion, and without any question as to identity or direction of movement, which abundantly justified our expectation.

"I have referred to these two experimental tests in order to show the practical application of the Baird system to extended scenes, and if further evidence were necessary to emphasise the possible development and potentiality of this system I may perhaps be permitted to refer to the subject of projected television, i.e., the projection of the image on to a large screen.

"In company with a number of distinguished visitors to Mr. Baird's laboratories, I subsequently witnessed the received image of a well-known person projected on to a screen some four feet in diameter, which could be seen and recognised by a large audience. The result, though as yet not fully developed, was astonishing. Not only was every movement of the head, the eyes, the lips, etc., reproduced with fidelity, but also those subtle expressions of pleasure or annoyance, or joy or grief, truthfully portrayed.

### Foreign Folk Interested.

"These few facts alone are sufficient to show that there is in these developments a potentiality as yet unappreciated in this country. Foreign governments and powerful organisations from abroad are concerned to acquire rights and privileges in these which our own authorities are so reluctant to secure, and which, in the opinion of those experts most competent to judge, are more than sufficiently advanced to justify trial through any of the British broadcasting stations, all of which, for good or ill, the British Broadcasting Company is granted the monopoly.

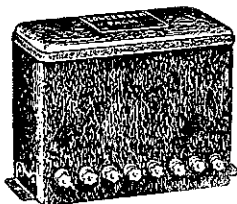
"Our present broadcast system was not perfected in its first year of service, nor indeed, while fully appreciating its excellence, is it perfect yet; but if, in the matter of television, the British public is expected to be satisfied with the transmission of still pictures when the living image is as readily available, then those responsible for the delay are failing in their duty to their employers and to the public in whose hands the ultimate remedy lies.

"To challenge Mr. Baird to produce anything new may appear very heroic, but it sounds rather like the smarting boy who whistles to keep his courage up. In any case it is not 'challengers,' but co-operation and a fair trial, that the public would welcome.

"The present attitude of the British Broadcasting Company is by common consent a fundamental mistake, and it is hoped that their mode of remedying this is not so insincere as it at first appears, and that the British public may yet have a British system of television which, in spite of ill-formed opinions to the contrary, is more ad-

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