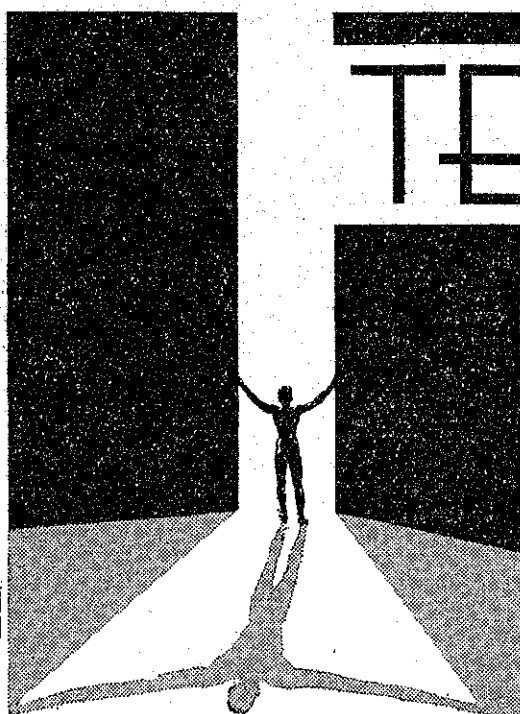




TELEVISION

What Is Behind the B.B.C.'s Decision To Cut Out Television Broadcasts For Three Years? Tremendous Interest in England.

THE decision of the British Broadcasting Corporation to drop television broadcasts for three years has come at a time when extraordinary interest was being shown throughout Britain in the new science. The leading papers announced last month that developments of the utmost importance were likely to be the subject of tests by the B.B.C. within a few months.

The developments fell under three classifications: (1) The use of the 7.75 metre ultra-short wave transmitter on Broadcasting House, hitherto used only in sound transmission; (2) Production of televised pictures of finer texture, in which the image will be divided into 120 strips instead of the present 30 strips, and (3) The use of the "cathode ray" tube, which simplifies the problem of keeping transmitter and receiver "in step" to the advantage of the resulting picture.

These developments, though at present only beginning, foreshadow most important and varied results. One is the perfection of secret signalling, of immense value in war time. Another is the effect on the present film industry. Inventions which will ultimately permit of the broadcasting of films will mean revolutionary competition with the cinema.

Actually, television was in an advanced experimental stage 10 years ago, although it is only within the past year or two that it was elevated to the ranks of a commercial possibility. Newspapers in Europe have made increasing use of it for the transmission of photographs of important events, while, a month or two ago, the finish of the Derby at Epsom was witnessed in a London cinema by means of television. The images were as clear as it would be possible to get them.

Television for the home is now definitely near and an instrument has been produced in an Eng-

lish laboratory which will reproduce the broadcast image on a screen nine inches high and four inches wide. The principal difficulty at the moment is that of keeping the picture steady, although the introduction of the "cathode ray" (mentioned above) is expected to reduce this trouble. The B.B.C., in deciding to continue its television experiments in private for the next three years, is prompted by the realisation that the new science requires considerable improvement before it can achieve the status of entertainment apart from novelty, and no farther steps will be taken as far as the public is concerned until technical satisfaction has been secured.

While television experiments in America seem to be more in the hands of the cinema magnates (a recent report states that R.K.O. is building a huge studio at Hollywood suitable for television transmissions) experiments in England are confined to the radio authorities. Various English film companies have lent the B.B.C. films for experimental purposes, but, if television comes into direct opposition with the cinema (as it undoubtedly will when it is perfected) it will be met with the strongest opposition.

With the placing on the market of suitably-priced television sets, however, and the promise of sporting, variety and miscellaneous programmes the television industry would be in a position strong enough to defend itself against any opposition from other entertainment media.

The first broadcast television of boxing was given by the B.B.C. last month on the National and Midland Regional programmes. The boxer could be clearly seen and the listeners (or see-ers, perhaps we should call them) gained a pretty fair idea of the bouts. The fight was staged in one of the B.B.C. studios and careful checks were made as the broadcast progressed.