



“Takes the Resistance Out of Radio”

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Radio and Prosperity

By HUGO GERNSBACK

IT IS a curious fact that, ever since radio became a recognized industry, there has always been dissension in its ranks, instead of the industry's working for its common good. This condition developed immediately after the height of the 1922 boom; and there has been dissension ever since.

Whatever one group of radio people do, another group will promptly denounce and deery. Whenever a pioneer brings out something new, he is promptly set upon and denounced by the industry. Of course, these outcries are usually traceable to selfish reasons; because every manufacturer does not like to direct his efforts continually into new fields.

When the loud speaker first made its appearance the head-phone manufacturers were, naturally enough, loud in denouncing the “rattletraps” which (so the 'phone manufacturers claimed) were ruining the industry by driving people away from radio instead of into its folds. Of course, the inevitable happened; the loud speaker triumphed, and the 'phone manufacturers went out of business, except for those who saw the handwriting on the wall and made loud speakers themselves.

It was thus less than two years ago; when the Pentode was announced in America for the first time, and RADIO-CRAFT ran the first article on it. The Pentode was pooh-poohed and made sport of by the radio industry. Today, all those radio manufacturers and others, who cried loudest, are featuring the Pentode in all receivers.

A year or more ago, when the midget set arrived, nine out of ten of the radio industry were in violent opposition; and they denounced the midget set in no uncertain terms. As usual, we find that, today, those who were the most vociferous and apoplectic in their denunciations are themselves making midget sets.

It is a fact that, from 1919 until 1922, when radio was booming, there was no dissension; and, as Dr. Julius Klein, Assistant Secretary of Commerce, said in a recent address at the Radio Show: “Radio in 1921-22 helped to bring the country out of the depression that prevailed at that time.” As Dr. Klein put it: “Radio has played an important and helpful rôle in the depression. It has helped psychology outside of the lower end of Manhattan Island, where the psychology is unique. One of the invaluable elements of these reconstructions is the vigorous participa-

tion of new industries. In that respect radio was an invaluable contribution in accelerating our recovery after the slump in 1921-22.”

“The radio industry rendered invaluable assistance in the great task of lifting American business out of the post-war collapse,” continued Dr. Klein. “It can again render an equal service by conserving fully the assets of vigor and resourcefulness which are so conspicuous in this young giant in the business world.”

All these preliminary remarks are leading up to the point which I wish to make today, and that is—Television. Nine out of ten radio manufacturers, whether they make parts or sets, are today pooh-poohing television just as loud as the 'phone manufacturers were pooh-poohing loud speakers some years past. The radio manufacturers, who should today shout “Television!” most boldly from the roof-tops, are croaking dismally and are running around aimlessly because they apparently do not know what to do next. They seem not to have awakened as yet to the fact that there is today an actual, healthy demand for television material.

It is perfectly true that television today is crude; for that matter, as crude as radio was in the crystal-detector stage. Yet, if all the croakers would jump on the television bandwagon, and if they had as much courage as they had in 1920, they would soon forget their lamentations. They would find that television is again repeating radio history, as radio broadcasting did in 1920.

By next year, the present crepe hangers will be a sorry lot; because they will have found either that someone has beaten them to it, or that they are lagging behind in an industry that should be rightfully theirs.

There was a time when the radio industry believed in the future of radio, and had the courage of its convictions. In many of our so-called radio leaders, this quality seems to have vanished; but, as usual, newcomers who have more courage will take their places, unless the old-timers wake up speedily and do something for themselves before it is too late.

And, make no mistake about it, television is here this time to stay. During the next three years it will rival the present radio industry, and reach heights that no one today believes possible.

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