

# RADIO AND TELEVISION

## Edward R. Murrow's News Review, 'See It Now,' Demonstrates Journalistic Power of Video

By JACK GOULD

A striking and compelling demonstration of the power of television as a journalistic tool, lifting the medium to a new high in maturity and usefulness, was provided yesterday afternoon with the première of Edward R. Murrow's program "See It Now" (3:30 P. M. on the Columbia Broadcasting System.)

In its emotional impact, sensitivity and drama, the commentator's thirty-minute review of the week's news was in all respects a magnificent achievement—absorbing in its exploitation of video's technical capabilities and human and revealing in its understanding and point of view.

At the very opening of the program, Mr. Murrow did more to demonstrate graphically the potentialities of video than ever had been done before. For the first time the viewer sitting at home was able to see the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans on the same screen. With a flick of the switch in the studio, a camera in San Francisco picked up the Golden Gate Bridge; then a camera in New York showed the Brooklyn Bridge.

Slowly the San Francisco camera switched over to Alcatraz Island and it was followed by a sight of New York's skyline. On the West Coast the scene changed to Telegraph Hill and the San Francisco skyline; back here the camera picked up the Statue of Liberty and the Narrows leading out to the Atlantic.

In less knowing hands than Mr. Murrow's, the simultaneous pickups on the two coasts might have been only an amazing stunt, but he also pointed the meaningful moral: television is a medium to be approached in humility.

The body of the news program was on film, much of it especially taken for the program, but, thanks to the editing of Mr. Murrow and his colleague, Fred Friendly, it was a far cry from the conventional newsreel. There were "shots" of Prime Minister Winston Churchill speaking in London, of the ordinary person's deep desire for peace. From the United Nations in Paris there was shown Foreign Minister Anthony Eden's affirmation of British support of honest disarmament proposals.

But it was a filmed colloquy between Mr. Murrow and Howard K. Smith, Columbia's correspondent in France, that gave the sequence a sense of immediate reality. Mr. Smith noted wryly that "mutual ill will is entirely unimpaired," but that more countries were bringing their international problems to the U. N., in itself a forward step for civilization.

On the home front, Mr. Murrow showed a hilarious bit of film involving Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, candidate for the Republican Presidential nomination. It was a close-up of the Senator's face while he was attending a dinner at which Senator Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois declared that the next President must be first an American and then a Republican. The look of complete satisfaction on Mr. Taft's face at that moment was a classic visual cameo. And Mr. Murrow let it speak for itself.

The last half of the program was devoted to a documentary film that C. B. S. had taken in Korea. It showed all the hardship, good humor, and tension of the average soldier's existence at the front. The film was tough and real, but always thoughtful. And Mr. Murrow's sparing comments cut to the viewer's heart. When the film showed the G. I.'s digging their foxholes, he remarked: "If you dig before dark, you have a better chance of living until light."

Then came the climax. One by one the soldiers stepped before the camera and merely gave their name and home town. Mr. Murrow reported on what had happened to the company since the film was made: fifty casualties. With searching eyes Mr. Murrow looked straight at the camera and said that some of the wounded might need blood. "Can you spare a pint?" he asked.

To television, in short, finally has come Mr. Murrow's rare feeling for the value of understatement in reporting the news and telling the facts as they are. Those qualities obviously were a source of inspiration for all who contributed to the success of "See It Now" and, more important, to the persons privileged to watch their efforts.

Television had a taste of its true glory yesterday.