

Television has stolen soap operas from the radio, opera from the opera house, drama from the theater, and variety shows from vaudeville.

But there is one type of program that is done only on television-the documentary. Except for a few great years when Pare Lorenz and Robert Flanerty led the way with majestic film studies, the motion pictures have all but abandoned them. TV can now claim the documentary for its own. It is also the thing that TV does best.

The TV documentary is an immeasurably powerful weapon of public information and influence and with it goes an equally great responsibility for accuracy on the part of those who write and produce them. A recent audience survey showed people generally tend to believe what they see on TV. If this is true, it grea
increases TV's responsibility to tell the truth.

Several recent television documentary studies have drawn sharp claims of distortion, bias and false reporting. One of them was the NBC investigation of the public relief program in Newburgh. City officials claimed that statements were taken out of context and interviews were slanted. The debate is still open. A second was the CBS program on the so-called "radical right."

Another commentator who has drawn criticism from "the other side" is David Brinkley whose wryly personal viewpoint is expressed weekly on "David Brinkley's Journal" on NBC.

The February 7 "Brinkley Journal" dealing with the Republic of Colombia drew a stinging charge of "monstrous lie" from Edgar A. Wells-Castilla, 1 East 57th Street, New York city.

He quotes Brinkley: "Through a great'part of its history, Colombia has been one of the most brutally tortured countries in the world, robbed, pillaged and abused by one dictatorship after another.
(1)

Wells-Castillo comments: "This montrous lie, openly stated in tones of great authority in a television program with tens of millions of listeners, will
have far-reaching consequences and cause incalculable harm to Colombia.
"The truth is, ironically enough, that Colombia is the ONLY country among the 20 Latin American republics which has a history of nearly 100 years of
constitutional democracy, interrunted just once by ONE dictator who lasted four years and was thrown out by spontaneous, collective action of the people.
. This ignorance might be forgiven the average citizen, since so little is taught in Am cannot be forabout Latin America-but Ar. Brink having at his command the enormous research facilities that he must have in order to speak to the Nation on a top program of a major television network.

Where the truth lies is left to students of Colombia in this case. But Mr. Wells-Castillo's final point is documentaries in general. Does a television commentator actually need to be backed by qualified research "in order to speak to the Nation on a top program of a major television network?

If not, we're in big trouble now, and we're in for a lot more trouble in the future.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE







DR. HAYAKAWA

Noted Semantics Expert To Speak at El Camino Lt. Governor $\begin{aligned} & \text { Dr. S. I. Hayakawa, interna- } \\ & \text { tionally known leader in the } \\ & \text { field of semantics, will speak }\end{aligned}$ has taught as a professor of
language arts at San Francisco $\begin{aligned} & \text { semantics., the the professor } \\ & \text { states happily. }\end{aligned}$

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terms. $\begin{aligned} & \text { dent of the International So- } \\ & \text { ciety of Semantics. Founder of the three books he wrote, } \\ & \text { "Language in Thought and Ac- }\end{aligned}$
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ning of my teaching career in
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