Sight & Sound

By Ernest Kreiling

HOLLYWOOD - Its been ous competition from which 75 cents per hour less for re-Minow proclaimed television to be a Vast Wasteland. This fa

currency that a strong impres-sion was created that the public, to a man+was in complete agreement about television's aridity.

reinforced a month or so later reinforced a month or so later when the FCC announced that it had received 4,200 letters from citizens, 98 per cent of whom agreed with the Chair-man's attitude.

But Elmo Roper recently released the results of a survey of public attitudes toward tele-vision and other media that tells a different story. As the two most powerful and per vasive media of public infor mation both the press and tele-vision can look to the Roper report for guidelines in strengthening their claim to the public's loyalty.

NEWSPAPERS need not re-treat from the fact that 57 per cent of the people still get most of their news about what's happening in the world from newspapers. Television apparently serves 52 per cent of the adults as their primary source of news.

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The survey group was also asked to indicate if it thought each of the following was do-ing an excellent, good, fair or poor job: schools, newspapers, television stations, and local government. It's a tribute to government. It's a tribute to our free and competitive sys-tem of news dissemination that a substantial majority of the public believes that both newspapers and TV are doing either an excellent or good job. Newspapers, in fact, r anked several percentage points higher than TV.

HOWEVER, the next findings reflected an especially high prestige for TV, something the great newspaper in dustry should accept as a chal-lenge to ever greater service to the public. Ten per cent more people found television news reports more "believa-ble" than newspaper reports of the same story. This is per-haps not too surprising when one considers that many news stories are reported visually on TV, thereby lending greater credence than the written word. It's hard to beat the idea, "I saw it with my own eyes." dustry should accept as a chal-

And finally this same group of respondents reported that if they could keep only one of the four major information me-dia—newspapers, TV, radio, magazines—42 per cent would heap. TV, 28 per cent would magazines—42 per cent would keep TV, 28 per cent news-papers, 22 per cent radio, and 4 per cent magazines. Certainly these results don't support the contention that the public agrees wih Mr. Minow's characterization of TV as a unet wasteland vast wasteland.

THE FINDINGS also indicate the generally high regard most people have for both the newspapers and television, but, insofar as there is a competi-tive instinct between the two giants, neither can afford over-confidence. A healthy respect on the part of each for the other will heighten the vigor-

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