

Assignment TV

By **TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY**

"God decided he would come down to earth and speak to His people," envisioned Frank Orme recently at the Hollywood Festival of World Television.

"Everything was arranged. He would appear on the three networks and Early Bird would relay God's opinions live all over the world. But the television critics lost the chance to review one of the really big shows because the program had to be cancelled. David Sarnoff asked for equal time. It shows you what can happen when two people have books to sell.

"It's too bad. It could have

been one of the Great Debates of our time."

Few people have a better vantage point for such an observation. Frank Orme is the Vice President and Executive Director for the National Association for Better Radio and Television, the most successful and influential of all organized audience associations.

ORME EVEN foresees a time when all television criticism will be canned and will be delivered on video papers with a kind of hollow laugh track.

"TV critics will be bred in test tubes... Their reactions

will be registered electronically and their judgments will not be distorted by personal feelings. Their reviews will be perfect. The heads of the three networks will have done for criticism what they have already done for television itself.

"Do we need to have critics at all? There was a time when television thought it needed to have writers. That was when Raphael Hayes, Paddy Chayevsky, Tad Mosel, Horton Foote, Richard Nash and a lot of others were doing originals and adaptations for the dozen or more weekly dramatic shows. Remember the plays written by Rod Serling in the days before he decided he'd rather switch than fight?"

"But criticism hasn't saved writers. It hasn't saved music. It hasn't saved dignity, integrity, good taste, natural beauty, modesty or any of several other things that are

essential to a significant society.

"IT IS A national tragedy that a handful of merchants whose primary objective is to sell merchandise, has been permitted to gain monopolistic control over the world's most important instrument of communication. Under this control the bulk of our available creative talent is denied access to audiences, and audiences are denied the right to hear and see the programs which this talent could produce. The networks speak of freedom but too often the kind of freedom they want is the uninhibited right to exploit public interest. A network can say—and has said—"If we don't own it, it doesn't go on!"

"Criticism is good. Even BAD criticism is good in the same way that Los Angeles smog is better than no air at

all. Criticism begins when your wife wakes up in the morning. After 20 years of this you look at yourself and wonder. Nagged for 20 years and you're still a bum.

"Television has been nagged for 17 years and look at it! You can't measure the improvements criticism has achieved but still you know—deep within you where Nielsen can't reach—that without criticism you'd be dead.

"Commercial television is like a car with the motor running. But it isn't going anywhere; it isn't in gear and the driver doesn't care because the driver's God is A.C. Nielsen and the only thing that Nielsen knows is that the motor's on.

"SO WE have to conclude that we need critics because, until the test tube critics take over, a live critic loves and

'Head Start' Registration Announced

Registration for Head Start classes at 76 Los Angeles elementary schools is under way, according to Superintendent of Schools Jack P. Crowther. The eight-week classes will start Tuesday, July 5.

Sign-ups will be taken at participating elementary schools from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. throughout the month until all openings are filled, Crowther said.

Financed with a \$464,254

hates. He loves what he thinks is good and he hates what he thinks is bad. There is a personal emotional undertone for everything he writes. He is FOR something and he is AGAINST something. He is the anti-censor, the anti-supercritic.

"When the critics stop carping it won't be because tele-

vision is perfect: it will be because television is dead."

To qualify, children must be four years and seven months or older by July 1 and be entering kindergarten for the first time in September.

Classes will meet from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday for eight weeks.

School bus transportation is

not provided for the program. The Los Angeles City Schools' program primarily will be for youngsters who have not participated in previous Head Start classes, Dr. Crowther said.

Participating area schools are Barton Hill, 423 N. Pacific Ave., San Pedro; Hawaiian, 540 Hawaiian Ave., Wilmington; Normont, 1001 W. 253rd St., Harbor City; 118th, 144 E. 118th St., L.A., and 1140 Mahar Ave., Wilmington.

Children to See Fantasy Films

Four children's films will be shown, free of charge, at the Torrance Library, 1375 Post, Saturday at 10:30 a.m., and announces Mrs. Anna Held, Children's Librarian. The films are "Puss in Boots," "Little Blue and Little Yellow," "Moonbird," and "Madeline."



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