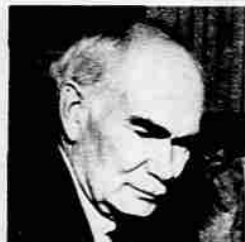




ILLUSTRATION BY PETER BURCHARD



by DR. LEE DE FOREST as told to Alfred Balk

THE COMING

"The Father of Radio" looks to the

Dr. Lee de Forest, often referred to as "The Father of Radio," is one of the United States' most famous scientists. In 1906, 11 years after Marconi introduced wireless telegraphy, de Forest devised the audion tube, which made transmission of the voice possible.

Now retired and living in Hollywood, Calif., he made the survey which resulted in the accompanying exclusive forecast for Family Weekly.

A HALF-CENTURY AGO, after my introduction of the audion tube, a professor and I began speculating on what the world of the future would be like. I won't recall our ideas, for time has proved us quite unimaginative. I, for one, never foresaw that radio, which the audion tube made possible, would evolve into the force it did—and lead to television.

Yes, science seems to move so fast nowadays it even surprises scientists. In 1951, one of my colleagues, Brig. Gen. David Sarnoff, asked researchers for three "gifts" for his 50th anniversary in electronics, then five years off. The developments were major ones—a magnetic tape recorder for black-and-white TV, an electronic air conditioner with no moving parts, and an electronic amplifier of light—but five years later they were realities.

More and more, such research "miracles" have become commonplace, and from what scientists in many fields have told me, we will see the world of tomorrow sooner than we think. Before this century has ended, for example, it seems to me these "dreams" will be realities:

Space Exploration

Men will have orbited around the earth and moon many times over. Space platforms outside the earth's atmosphere will be in use as relay stations. We will have landed on the moon and established a base there. Instrument-equipped missiles will be fired millions of miles into space, and will return to earth with data on the planets and other bodies of our solar system.

Communication

You will have portable telephones no larger than a king-size cigarette pack (transistor radios of that size already are being built). Walking down a street in Boston, you can call your family at home, or phone a friend in Los Angeles—or even abroad.

A miniature TV screen will let you see the person you are phoning. (By accepting a less-detailed image than that of home TV, we already can send such pictures over telephone wires and narrow radio bands.) You can also see items you may be considering for purchase, from small products to pieces of real estate.

When you phone a foreign country, electronic translating equipment, built on the principle of today's computers, will translate your conversation instantaneously. If, for example, you are calling Japan, answers will come back translated from Japanese.

World-wide television, both color and black-and-white, will be common. Atmospheric disturbances never will disrupt it; relays will be possible through communications satellites or use of the atmospheric "scatter effect" which reflects some TV waves over phenomenal distances even now.

Miniature TV sets, completely portable, and flat-surface sets hung like pictures on your wall will be old-hat.

Transportation

Cars will have "automatic pilots." After entering an expressway, you can relax and ride an invisible beam. It will keep your car at a safe distance from other autos, and radar automatically will apply your brakes as required.

Passenger-carrying helicopters—helibuses—will take you up and over congestion, turning the sky into radar-controlled, multilevel highways which, incidentally, will be much less costly than those on the ground. Inexpensive private airplanes equipped for vertical take-off and landing also will fill the air.

Atomic-powered missiles will carry freight and mail between cities—and continents—within minutes. Jets and missiles will be commonplace for passenger flights.

Downtown streets will have moving conveyor-type sidewalks. They will carry you from one store or office to another—as you sit on a portable golf-type stool if you like.

Light

Electroluminescence, or "cold light," will revolutionize the appearance of homes, industries, and entire cities. With no heat, shadow, or glare, this lovely "glow" will usher in a new era of comfort and safety in individual rooms, at airports, and on highways. A touch of a button will permit changes of color nuances for entire wall panels.

Power

Nuclear energy will be a practical power source for industry, autos, ships, missiles, trains, and planes. One "shot" of atomic fuel will last years, even decades. A single atomic battery will produce all the electricity needed for years in homes or factories in isolated regions.

Devices which will catch and store energy from