tronic industry. And herein lies the problem for HDTV.

". . .I don't know if HDTV will ever be broadcast."

The Japanese have developed a technology, HDTV, that is superior to any other system currently available. Many interests in the U.S. and elsewhere initially decided to adopt the NHK Japan standard as the de facto world standard for disseminating HDTV.

My words are chosen carefully here because I don't want to say broadcasting; I don't know if HDTV will ever be broadcast in the manner in which we are accustomed to mean when we speak of broadcasting. HDTV's technical advancements make it much more suitable for uses other than broadcasting on discrete TV channels, as we are used to.

Just a note about this thing called "a world standard."

A world standard was sought for HDTV because it was felt that, purely on a technical level, one standard would best serve the needs of the medium. A single world standard would obviate the need for standards convertors and would avoid the problems associated with the proliferation of a number of "broadcast" systems as is now the case. There are more issues that surround the topic, but they should be reserved for another column.

Inevitably the passage of time and the need to preserve national interests has colored the opinions of those in the U.S. and Europe because they have now seen the big picture.

William F. Schreiber provided an excellent overview of this issue in an article entitled *Advanced Television Systems for the United States: Getting There From Here* in the October 1988 issue of the *Journal of the SMPTE.* Schreiber pointed out that if the NHK standard was accepted it would be severely injurious to the domestic American electronics industry, relegating it to the status of that of a third world country.

The Japanese already have a significant head start on everybody else interested in advanced imaging systems, so they would naturally reap most of the economic benefits, profits, jobs, spinoff industries and research and development into even more advanced imaging systems.

This could cripple or destroy the domestic electronics industries of those countries that accepted the NHK standard as the world standard unless, of course, they already had no industry to speak of. The net result would be even greater unemployment.

One of the problems currently plaguing the U.S. is a workforce that isn't educated well enough to compete. Twenty-five per cent of the students in inner city America don't graduate from high school; as a result American industry spends roughly two billion dollars annually to teach employees basic skills such as reading.

Until roughly 10 years ago, the U.S. led the world in the development of new technologies. That primacy has been constantly eroded by the decline in the value of the American's resource-based industries as the world moves towards a service-based economy where technology is king.

In the U.S. a great deal of the advancements come from research done at private and public universities, not the military-industrial complex. But the military is a direct recipient of the research and the recent successes of technology in the Gulf War can in no small measure be attributed to research done at academic institutions.

Research, and the funds for domestic high technology research, could be seriously eroded if the electronics industry was controlled by interests outside the U.S.

These facts haven't been lost on Europe and the countries that want to protect their domestic electronic industries. They too realized that if they accepted the Japanese standard they would be placing themselves behind the eight ball.

To sum up, a world standard for HDTV is stalled by nationalistic interests; the debate continues.

I conclude this column with the promise to bring you information next time on another of the sectors of this industry — the Status of the Artist legislation currently under review in the House of Commons.

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