

**Ferdie J. Deering**

# Reading Only Way to Stay Informed

**W**OULD you like to be better informed than people you meet? It might not be difficult to achieve this distinguished status.

One easy way would be to spend as much time each day reading newspapers, respectable magazines and good books as you spend watching TV, including movies and football games.

Television has become a major source of news and information for much of the population and the only source for some. This is not progress. Even television executives admit this.

In the first place, ordinary readers can absorb 300 to 500 words per minute from the printed page, while it takes a pretty fast talker to hit 200 words per minute. Better readers can achieve speeds higher than 1,000 words per minute.

Because of the time it absorbs, viewers may think they are getting more TV news than they actually are. Total news output of most stations for an entire day could be printed in less than a page of ordi-

nary newspaper columns.

The Wall Street Journal has been running a series of articles headlined "The Television Era." One noted: "It's widely felt that the local news show has become pure entertainment in which fires, crime and highway accidents seem to be an extension of the evening's offerings on the networks."

The Journal went on to quote Newton Minow, former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, who said: "Local TV people feel everything on their news programs has to be movement and excitement. But that doesn't allow them to deal in depth with complex stories like local government."

A reason for this is suggested by an article in a recent TV Guide magazine, which stated: "When you read a newspaper, your eye skips to the matters in which you are interested; you just bypass items about matters that you do not understand. When watching news on TV, there is no way to skip around."

Bill Moyers, who has moved from

public TV to CBS, was quoted in Newsweek as saying: "I don't think any one program can be more than a headline service. Television is a superficial medium made so by the short attention span of a peripatetic audience."

CBS News President Richard Salant was quoted as saying: "I find it deplorable that a hell of a lot of people turn to us as their sole source of news. They shouldn't. At the end of each newscast, I'd like to say, 'For further information, consult your local newspaper.'"

Experts analyzing and evaluating the presidential campaign debates mostly seem to agree they are desirable but of uncertain effectiveness. One columnist's comments were headlined: To the Boring Go the Spoils.

Television is a marvelous invention, and every home should have one. It must be recognized that it offers a variety of features but not all of any and none at all of some matters.