

# Newspapers That Talk

(Continued From Page 1.)

while he was still living in his native Germany.

## NO TIME

The principle behind his invention is relatively simple. The components, however, are the secret. In order to make it work, Kratz invented a special plastic which can be manufactured easily and cheaply.

The plastic is thin, strong and pliable. Impressions can be pressed out again so that the plastic can be used over and over much like the tape used in recorders.

The company producing the talking newspapers, rather than printing words on paper, employs announcers to record the news stories on the plastic through normal record making techniques.

Then, a printing press simply reproduces the impressed plastic sheets to which are added ink photographs and headlines.

As the rolled plastic is fed into the machine a needle jerks back and forth along the grooves.

## ADVANTAGES

There are many advantages to the invention, said Kratz. First of all, production costs would be sliced in half. The plastic would be 80 per cent cheaper than newsprint.

Rise in cost to the subscriber would be almost nil. Based on production of 1,000,000 of the machines, they would sell for \$1 each.

Cost per paper would be 15 cents for the first one to cover deposit, and 10 cents for all others.

Since the machine works on electricity, and could run off batteries, it could be used anywhere, including automobiles. It could also be produced in stereo.

Commercials would be of the talking variety such as now are used on radio. The invention could be used not only for newspapers and magazines, but anywhere records of events are required.

There are, however, a couple of hang-ups to the system. One of them is that for a newspaper the size of the Vancouver Sun, say, it would cost around \$4 million to convert.

As far as the subscriber is concerned, listening to the newspaper could become even

more time-consuming than before despite the fact hands and eyes would be free for doing other things.

## WHOLE SPIEL

Instead of being able to browse headlines and pick out stories of interest, the subscriber would have to listen to the whole spiel. There is no way of backing up the plastic to replay sections, although the machine can be stopped and started by a button.

But another problem could prove to be the biggest obstacle to Kratz' talking newspaper.

The very fact that use of his invention, said Kratz, would cause an imbalance in competition between newspapers and therefore affect many of them adversely, could cause resistance to it.

It would also cause the rapid decline in many pulp mills, he added, because of the greatly reduced need for newsprint.

Kratz said they would, in fact, decline to the tune of 90 per cent less production.

For this reason, the two companies acting as agents for the invention feel widespread use of talking newspapers could be held up for some time.

## KEEP OFF MARKET

One possibility is that rights to it will be purchased simply to keep it off the market.

Kratz, however, is more confident. Over 35 companies have expressed interest in the invention and the asking price is \$5 million. "But", he says, "I'd probably settle for two or three."

He has a patent pending on it so he's fully protected. Kratz figures a publisher will buy either all rights or a licence to produce the system.

He also thinks there's a good possibility of selling it this year and that it will be put into use within seven months.

Kratz is the original home inventor. His education has not been science oriented; his inventions are born out of his natural ingenuity and foresight.

He's worked on several other inventions (one other present invention he's perfecting is designed to stabilize space craft) but none of them has worked out as well as this one.

And if Kratz has his way, you could well be listening rather than reading this newspaper within a year or two.