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Peter Will Peter Out When The Electronic Age Arrives

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(Tribune Staff Writer)

I just want to bang out a final story on the old typewriter. It won't be around much longer. Neither will I.

K. R. Patrick said we're both getting obsolete, and I guess he knows. As managing director of Canadian Aviation Electronics Ltd., he gets the latest word on the future.

The sun was shining and everything was wonderful Wednesday when I went to interview Mr. Patrick, in town to make a

speech and visit his local plant. As we sat down to discuss electronics I had a song in my heart and a notebook in my hand. He looked critically at the notebook.

A Gadget

"I could make a gadget to read those notes," he said.

"Pretty clever," I sneered, "but I can't read them myself."

"No matter," countered Mr. Patrick. "It won't be long before you'll just go back to the office, feed your notes into a machine and wait for the story. It'll come out typed and perfectly spelled."

"Anybody can spell correctly," I said.

"In a few more years," he continued, "you won't even have to take notes. I'll talk into a machine and it'll write my story. We won't need you at all."

Sympathy for Horse

He laughed pleasantly. I said I felt like the horse when it saw its first Ford.

"Don't worry, you'll be comfortable. You'll have stoves to cook your meals in two minutes and high-frequency-sound washing machines to clean your shirts in 10 seconds.

"Your house will be heated,

air conditioned and lighted by glowing walls that turn hot and cold. Color television in three dimensions will be projected against a light-amplifying wall in your living room.

Flashlight TV

"Both your radio and television set will use so little power they'll run for years on flashlight batteries.

"Your telephone will be a 'visionphone' with a television screen. And you'll carry a little box in your pocket that will enable you to talk to anyone, anywhere in the world.

"If you want to travel, you'll

just get into your car, punch a formula into the buttons on its dashboard and relax as the car drives you to your destination. It's all done with radioactive materials in the road."

"Of course," I said, relaxing, "all this is pretty far in the future."

I thought I was beginning to understand Mr. Patrick. He was just a little . . . well, imaginative?

Not So Far

"Not as far away as most people think," he said. "We already know how to make everything I've described. It's just a

matter of ironing out production and cost problems.

"Radios that run for eight months on flashlight batteries will be on the market next fall and within several years the plug-in radio will be obsolete. Walls that heat and cool houses will begin to appear in five years."

It sounded like a soft life but I couldn't understand how I was going to buy all these things without a job. What happens to my pay cheque the day Computer XR 24 takes over the beat?

"You could always try electronics," Mr. Kennedy suggested. "I'll keep you in mind."