

# Excerpts — Speeches at the Miami Beach Convention

*The speech of welcome was delivered by President Norwood Simmons May 4, 1959, at the Get-Together Luncheon of the Society's 85th Convention. Mitchell Wolfson, President, Wometco Theatres, Inc., Miami, was Guest Speaker at the Luncheon. The special address by Major General John B. Medaris on Monday evening is planned for excerpting later for Journal Publication.*

## Evolution and Progress

By NORWOOD L. SIMMONS, SMPTE President

I BELIEVE . . . every delegate at this convention (felt it) a rare privilege . . . afforded him this week: A happier combination of opportunity to learn and a delightful place in which to do it cannot easily be imagined. Miami Beach is a lovely city -- warm and gracious. . . . It is with much personal pleasure that I thank the members of our Board of Governors who several years ago voted that this convention be held in Miami Beach.

The manner in which our local members took command, once the decision was made to hold a convention here, and the tremendous effort which they have put forth, deserves our warmest thanks.

This convention is marked with an international flavor. It is the result of much effort by your Program Committee. Program Chairman Gar Misener, with special assistance from the local Associate Program Chairman Andy Beal, has assembled technical sessions of papers, many from outside the United States, covering the wide and timely interests of the Society. All the local arrangements and management of the week's show have been accomplished under Local Arrangements Chairman Norman Bean (see full story in news pages later in this *Journal*). . . .

We are particularly proud of the international equipment exhibit since it is the largest ever held by the SMPTE. . . .

The single word that best describes to me what has been going on in both our industry and our Society itself during the recent past is "evolution." In Hollywood we are witnessing a changing scene as the old-line major studios are gradually converting wholly or in part to television film production. There have been some rather drastic economic consequences of this shift. Instead of a continuation of the trend toward single ownership of all services and technical facilities that are needed in the making of a motion picture, we have seen a move toward establishment of specialized services of all kinds. Many studios have divested themselves of laboratory, sound department, camera department, and special-effects department. These operations have in many cases become commercial entities and offer their services on the open market, not only to the producer of films for entertainment, whether these be viewed in the theater or in the home on a TV set, but also to the producer of nontheatrical films. These shifts have increased the competition for the independent film producer's business. This results in more emphasis on good engineering practices. It means more opportunity for well-trained motion-picture and television engineers than has ever existed before.

Interest in many of the problems relating to the production of films for television is at fever pitch. This field is new enough so that engineers are pioneering in new techniques. Interest is reflected in the programs of our local sections and in the program content of this convention.

At the same time, there has been a tremendous growth in the use of the new, versatile technique, magnetic video recording. This method of recording TV programs has received such nationwide publicity in the daily press that I need not dwell on it. Our own children ask us about it. Your Society is engaged in formulating standards for this new technique.

The Society has recognized the serious need for improvement of picture and sound projection in the theaters, generally. You may have noticed from the press that about three weeks ago at

the instigation of TOA (Theater Owners of America) there was formed a Council for Improvement of Theater and Motion Picture Projection. The SMPTE has volunteered its services to this Council for the instituting of an immediate educational campaign of theater operators for improvement of projection, sound and physical theater maintenance.

Last fall the Society formed an Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Responsibilities of the Society toward meeting the needs of Science and Education. This was prompted by the interest of our members in the passage by our Congress of the National Defense Education Act, possibly the greatest boon to public education in this country since the Land Grant Act of 1865. This committee, under the Chairmanship of John Flory, has been engaged in determining ways and means by which SMPTE can contribute to the program under the guidance of the Commissioner of Education in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare of our government. . . . It is possible that engineers from SMPTE will be called upon to help plan the schoolroom of tomorrow, wherein each teacher will find his own personal effort enormously extended by the use of these audio-visual aids.

In recognition of the expanding field of instrumentation, and the large number of members of the Society who are workers in this field, the Board of Governors recently approved a change in the name of the High-Speed Committee, to The Committee on Instrumentation and High-Speed Photography. Aside from its engineering activities this committee has been diligently planning the Fifth International High-Speed Congress, which will meet in the Fall of 1960. I am pleased to announce that the general Chairman for this meeting will be D. Max Beard of the U.S. Naval Ordnance Laboratory and a member of the SMPTE Committee on Instrumentation and High-Speed Photography.

Among many other activities of the Society, there is the fine work continuing to be done by John Frayne's Committee on Education. At last count, approximately one thousand students had been taught in courses sponsored by SMPTE and, it should be added, taught by SMPTE members, at various accredited universities and colleges.

Your Board of Governors has recognized the need for reappraisal of the makeup of the Board itself, what with the large increase in membership and establishment of many new local sections of the Society. Consequently the standing Committee for Revision of the Constitution, Bylaws and Administrative Practices has been asked to study carefully the geographic allocation of Board representation to see if the Board of Governors correctly represents your Society. An Ad Hoc Committee has been appointed to consider many proposals received by the Board for changing the present schedule of membership grades and dues.

Our *Journal* continues to be one of the Society's major efforts. I would like to take this opportunity to thank publicly the editorial staff, and to mention especially Dr. Pierre Mertz, Chairman of the Board of Editors. Without his untiring efforts we don't know quite how we would manage.

I would like to welcome the Boston Section which is now about three months old and brings to eleven the number of local SMPTE Sections throughout the United States and Canada.