

REPORT OF STANDARDS AND NOMENCLATURE COMMITTEE*

The present Committee on Standards and Nomenclature was organized during January of this year, and the first meeting was held in New York City on January 27th. All members of the Committee were present at that time except the representatives from France and the West Coast. A second meeting was held in New York on April 14th and was likewise well attended. Undoubtedly one reason for the excellent attendance at these meetings is the greater opportunity of service to the Society which the new method of adopting standards provides. Whereas as much as two years might elapse under the old method before the recommendations of this Committee could be adopted by the Society, the new method permits the adoption by letter ballots, which are sent all regular members of the Society immediately following the appearance of the report in the JOURNAL.

The work that this Committee is undertaking at present may be summarized under the following headings: Preparation of Booklet, Nomenclature, Safety Code for Projection, Standard Practice, and Wide Film Dimensions.

PREPARATION OF BOOKLET

The booklet giving the standards adopted by the S. M. P. E. to January, 1928, is now out of print. The board of governors has recently authorized the preparation and publication of a new booklet which will include also the standards adopted by the Society since January, 1928. The editor *pro tem* of the JOURNAL, Mr. L. A. Jones, has kindly assumed the responsibility for publication of this booklet and a few copies have been struck off. The Chairman of this Committee is taking the necessary steps to obtain the approval of the American Engineering Standards Committee, and it is hoped that the booklets will be available for distribution within a short time.

NOMENCLATURE

A subcommittee, consisting of Messrs. Carson, Dubray, Powers,

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and Rayton, *Chairman*, has been appointed to make such revisions in the glossary of technical terms as may be necessary from time to time. It is planned to print the revised glossary in the JOURNAL every year, preferably after the Fall meeting of the Society. Wherever possible, the foreign equivalents of the terms in the glossary will be included also. This should be a welcome addition, as these terms are seldom found in the dictionaries of foreign languages.

SAFETY CODE FOR PROJECTION

Most states and important municipalities have enacted regulations governing the projection of motion pictures, but these differ widely from place to place. It is felt that this lack of uniformity creates an unnecessary hazard. As matters stand at present, the projectionist must often learn an entirely new code whenever he moves from one city or state to another. Undoubtedly, the approval of a standard safety code for projection by an impartial body like this Society would provide a basis for new legislation which would tend to become standardized as time went on. To this end, a subcommittee is being organized to deal with this important problem and to report at a later meeting.

STANDARD PRACTICE

Although motion picture practice is constantly changing, certain details of the art tend to become standardized; and it is felt by this Committee that the publication of the details of recommended practice should be of benefit to the industry. A subcommittee has been organized, consisting of Messrs. Farnham, Hubbard, Mitchell, and Rackett, *Chairman*, which will present and publish recommendations on the length of titles, notching of negative film, sound film practice, and such other features of the art as it may seem wise to attempt to standardize. It is hoped that a report of this subcommittee will be available in time to be presented at the Fall meeting of the Society.

WIDE FILM DIMENSIONS

The Committee felt that the standardization of wide film dimensions was the problem of prime importance before it, and this subject was discussed at considerable length at the meeting of January 27th. The points under discussion were treated in the following manner, which seemed to afford a logical approach to the subject:

1. Is a larger screen desirable and can it be used in existing theaters?

2. Should the angle of view be increased—in other words, should the screen include more action than at present?
3. Can a larger screen be used with the present 35 mm. film?
4. What is the best ratio of width to height of the screen?
5. Is a wider sound track desirable?
6. What detailed film dimensions should the Committee recommend to the Society?

The Committee agreed unanimously, and experience has undoubtedly proved that a large screen is desirable and that it can be used in practically all existing theaters. The Committee also agreed that the enlargement of the screen should be accompanied by an increase in the camera angle so that more action will be included. In other words, the focal lengths of both the camera lens and the projection lens should remain about the same as at present. The wider film then automatically includes a larger camera angle and covers a larger screen without destroying the perspective relations, which are approximately correct with the present 35 mm. film. Although an increase in film size requires both the camera lens and the projection lens to cover a wider field angle, the Committee believes that there is evidence to show that the optical manufacturers can deal with this problem satisfactorily.

The Committee feels that it is impracticable to cover a larger screen with existing 35 mm. film since the magnification of the film on the screen is now about as great as can be tolerated without exceeding the limit at which the graininess becomes decidedly objectionable. At the present time, no method of reducing the graininess of photographic materials is known that does not entail a sacrifice of speed or sensitivity. The use of materials of lower sensitivity would introduce greater difficulties in the lighting of studios and does not appear to be a thoroughly practical solution of the problem. It has often been demonstrated (notably by J. H. Powrie, *Trans. Soc. Mot. Pict. Eng.*, No. 19 (1924), p. 49) that the graininess of the positive can be markedly decreased by printing by reduction from a larger negative. Thus, if graininess were the only factor, it might be possible to cover a much larger screen with 35 mm. positive film by increasing the size of the negative film only. However, the increased magnification required by the larger screen accentuates any unsteadiness of the film in the gate, and introduces some severe mechanical problems. With the increasing use of color films, it seems undesirable to contemplate any greater magnification between the film and the screen than at present

and a slightly lower magnification is to be preferred. Also, the amount of light flux passing through the film is already so great that only with difficulty could it be increased to meet the requirements of the larger screen.

The ratio of width to height of the screen was discussed by the Committee at considerable length. It was felt that the best ratio depends upon the type of subject and that the old 4:3 ratio was not far from the best compromise. With the advent of sound films, the picture has become more nearly square, and it is quite generally agreed that this change was in the wrong direction. As the height of the screen can be increased only slightly in most theaters, any great increase in the size of the screen must be in the width. The Committee feels that the proper ratio can be determined only after comparative tests, and is arranging for a demonstration to which the producers will be invited.

At the time of the January meeting of this Committee, it was apparent that the entire Standards Committee was too large to undertake the problem of wide film standardization. Consequently, a subcommittee was appointed consisting of Messrs. Batsel, *Chairman*, Davee, DeForest, Evans, Griffin, LaPorte, Spence, and Sponable. This committee has worked faithfully on the problem and has held no less than seven meetings since February 13th. Every possible phase of the subject has been examined exhaustively, with the result that it now appears that there is little to choose from an engineering standpoint between the present 65 and 70 mm. layouts. It is thought that the 65 mm. film would be somewhat improved if the margins between the exposed areas were increased, and the 70 mm. film would doubtless be improved by the use of five perforations per frame instead of four.

As soon as it became apparent that the problem was no longer an engineering one, a second meeting of the entire committee was called on April 14th, which resulted in a resolution that the Chairman should interview the producers and acquaint them with the situation and propose that the producers agree to pool the cost of scrapping existing equipment where necessary in order that the industry may promptly arrive at a common standard for wide film.

Pursuant to these instructions, the Chairman called on Mr. H. L. Clarke, G.T.E.—Fox; Mr. A. Zukor, Paramount-Famous-Lasky Corporation; Mr. H. M. Warner, Warner Bros.; and Mr. H. Brown, R.K.O. Mr. L. P. Mayer is in California, and a letter has been di-

rected to him there. The Chairman is pleased to report a general desire to do whatever is best for the industry and a feeling that the matter of standards can safely be left to this Committee.

We regret that we are unable to put a specific recommendation before you, due to insufficient time to arrive at an agreement on all points under consideration. However, work on this problem will be continued and an early report on this subject is anticipated.

Respectfully submitted,

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