

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

It is a pleasure to welcome you to this, the twenty-ninth convention of the Society, and especially those who are attending for the first time. In former days, when the Society was not so large, it was possible for your chief executive to know each member personally but with our present membership of about 800, this is not possible. However, I shall endeavor to meet every new member attending this convention.

I think I can say without fear of contradiction that the Society has made great progress since our last convention at Toronto. Perhaps we can get a measure of this progress by considering to what extent we have been fulfilling the objects of our Society as set forth in our constitution. These objects are as follows:

(1) Advancement in the theory and practice of motion picture engineering and the allied arts and sciences. I think that the large number, and high technical and scientific merit of the papers to be presented at this meeting are ample assurance of this, while the increasing eagerness on the part of the trade and technical press to publish our technical papers is an index of their value to the industry.

(2) The standardization of the mechanisms and practices employed in the motion picture arts and sciences. One of the most difficult problems in standardization ever undertaken by this Society has been that of the determination of dimensional standards for wide film. The Society was fortunate in obtaining Professor A. C. Hardy of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to accept the chairmanship of the Standards and Nomenclature Committee, and a subcommittee under the chairmanship of Mr. M. C. Batsel and consisting of the chief engineers of all the interested producing organizations has been meeting at bi-weekly intervals during the past three months, wrestling with this problem. Although at this moment no definite standard has been arrived at, the prospects of an early agreement are extremely promising.

At any rate, the Society has rendered a valuable service to the industry by virtue of preventing the producers from plunging blindly into this new development in the absence of a suitable standard and the danger of the recurrence of the chaos which prevailed in

the early history of the film business, when each producer used a different size film, I believe, has been averted. The committee is dealing with many other standards and has published a booklet which includes all the standards adopted by the Society to date and which have been approved by the American Engineering Standards Committee.

(3) The dissemination of knowledge by publication. Our Society took a great step forward when it decided to publish the scientific papers presented at our conventions in a monthly JOURNAL instead of in quarterly *Transactions*. By this means, papers are published promptly and the more important ones are made available with a minimum loss of time after presentation while it is now possible for the Society to publish contributed papers not presented at conventions, translations of papers in foreign languages, abstracts, book reviews, patent abstracts, and Society notes.

The value of the Society to the industry is largely determined by the extent to which the industry makes use of the scientific information which we make available and this is determined by its degree of distribution. Our JOURNAL is now reaching a much larger number of technicians than was formerly the case with our *Transactions* and the industry is benefiting accordingly.

One of the most pressing needs of the Society is a focal point in the form of permanent headquarters with clerical assistants to take care of the routine work of the Secretary and Treasurer. Through the generosity of our sustaining members, sufficient funds are now available for such headquarters and a paid editor for the JOURNAL.

The increasing value of the Society to our members has been manifest by the formation of a local section in New York City in addition to those now existing in London and Hollywood. Yesterday the Board of Governors also approved the formation of a section of the Society in Chicago. Such sections permit a more thorough discussion of the many perplexing technical problems now facing the industry and afford a means of discussing papers of immediate interest. The sections have already contributed a number of valuable papers to our JOURNAL.

Three new committees have been appointed as follows: The Color Committee under the chairmanship of William V. D. Kelley, which will keep the members informed of progress in this important field; the Historical Committee under the chairmanship of Frank J. Wilstach, which has made investigations on the early history of the in-

dustry and is collecting valuable films and apparatus which are to be placed in a suitable depository; the Solicitations Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. E. P. Curtis, which has performed a service to the Society by persuading the various manufacturing and producing interests to bear their fair share of the burden of the work of conducting the business of the Society by contributing financially through the medium of sustaining memberships. The Constitution and By-Laws Committee under the chairmanship of W. C. Hubbard has recommended a modification of the by-laws so as to bring them in conformity with the increasing size of the Society.

The Society owes a special debt to Mr. L. A. Jones and the JOURNAL Committee for conducting the Herculean task of publishing the JOURNAL with consistent promptness. This committee has issued three booklets which are available to members, namely (a) List of Members, (b) Instructions to Authors, and (c) Standards Adopted by the Society.

One of the most important technical aspects of this great industry is that of reproducing sound satisfactorily and the placing of the best possible picture on the screen from the film supplied by the producer. Our Projection Committee is investigating this great problem of getting improved sound and picture quality with an enthusiasm worthy of emulation. To give you some idea of this enthusiasm, the chief engineer of one of the large producing organizations sustained an injury the day previous to a meeting of the Projection Committee, but rather than miss the meeting he attended on crutches.

The Publicity Committee has consistently secured space in the trade papers. The Society has frequently obtained front page notices. A joint meeting of the Publicity and Membership and Subscription Committees was held in Schenectady on March 4th to outline plans for the extensive arrangements for publicity which have been made for this convention.

The resignation of our former secretary, Mr. R. S. Burnap, caused a deep feeling of regret but the Society has been fortunate in securing the services of Mr. J. H. Kurlander to continue this office and he is well known to most of you.

The future activities of the Society must be focussed on the one object of rendering increasing service to the industry. The acquisition of a paid editor with permanent headquarters and organized assistants will contribute materially to this end.

Of the pressing technical problems, that of getting better sound

both on and out of the film or wax record is the most important. The marvelous realism of the sound being reproduced in one of the smaller Broadway theaters by way of reproduction of the voice of a Metropolitan star is a sufficient indication that with existing equipment it is possible to record and reproduce sound with a much greater degree of realism than is manifest in many theaters today. One of the aspects of this problem is that of the education of the projectionist and theater manager. Projection has become so much more important and difficult and the projectionist must become so much more expert.

I feel sure that our Society will continue to participate increasingly in the advancement of scientific knowledge and the improvement of the realism of the motion picture, and thereby contribute to the education and enjoyment of the vast army of motion picture patrons throughout the world.

J. I. CRABTREE, *President*