

REPORT OF THE PAPERS COMMITTEE*

Summary.—*A brief account of the plan followed by the Committee in constructing and arranging Convention programs.*

A year ago this Committee initiated the plan of publishing in the JOURNAL abstracts of the papers and Committee reports to be presented at the Semi-Annual Conventions. This plan has been followed for three consecutive meetings, the material being published each time in the issue of the JOURNAL appearing several weeks prior to the Convention. Abstracts of approximately eighty-five per cent of the papers and reports for these three meetings have been published, and it is believed that the publication of these abstracts has aroused greater interest in the meetings, helped to increase the attendance, and facilitated the discussions.

In our April, 1936, report a proposal was made that the program of the next Convention should be prepared as follows: (a) publication of a request for papers in the issue of the JOURNAL published five months before the meeting and in each succeeding number prior to the meeting; (b) personal solicitation of papers on subjects of current interest; (c) assignment of preferred positions, with ample time for presentation and discussion, to the best papers submitted up to approximately five weeks before the meeting; (d) balancing the remainder of the program by adding papers as submitted up to about three weeks before the meeting. An attempt was made also to obtain a manuscript of each paper before it was read at the Convention.

A fair response to this plan was realized, but the number of manuscripts turned in by the date specified was not as great as had been expected. The bulk of the preliminary program material was obtained finally by urgent solicitation during the last week before it had to be released for printing. Manuscripts were obtained, however, for 90 per cent of the papers.

At the open forum, which was held at the Rochester Convention on Friday afternoon (Oct. 15, 1936), comment was made that our

* Presented at the Spring, 1937, Convention at Hollywood, Calif.; received May 13, 1937.

programs were too crowded with papers, and that insufficient time was allowed for discussion. It is very difficult to know exactly how much time to assign to a paper, because the ability of authors to present their papers in a condensed but clear manner varies considerably. Each author has been urged to rehearse his presentation, but we fear that very few authors do so.

The Committee well realizes the importance of intelligent discussion, but we wish to point out to the membership that, in addition to a Convention program, the Society also publishes a monthly JOURNAL. The papers read at the Semi-Annual Conventions comprise 95 per cent of the material for this JOURNAL. We have nearly 1400 members distributed throughout the world. Of the 1400 it must be remembered that perhaps 1000 never get to our meetings. Those members depend upon the JOURNAL as their source of information, and, in fairness to them, it is very important that the present size of the JOURNAL be maintained.

The editorial office has been faced twice during the past year with an acute shortage of material for several issues of the JOURNAL, which has been alleviated only by vigorous efforts by this Committee and the Board of Editors. A healthier situation would be to have on hand more material than is required, from which the best could be selected for publication.

Although the number of papers submitted for publication *only* (not read at the Convention) has increased slightly in recent years, the stimulus of attendance at a Convention is apparently necessary to get the majority of authors to write papers for the JOURNAL.

It is of interest to note that 32 of the 35 papers read at the 1936 Spring Meeting, and 30 of the 34 papers read at the 1936 Fall Convention, have been published. These figures indicate, however, that very little material was on hand on May 1, 1937, for the July, 1937, issue, and how necessary it is that manuscripts for each meeting be turned in to the Committee before each meeting.

To remedy this situation and alleviate somewhat this shortage of material, the Papers Committee urgently requested in January that the Board of Governors approve a five-day Convention in May, 1937. This was done, and with the coöperation of a special local section of the Committee we have been able to arrange a well balanced program.

For discussion of the technical papers, 25 per cent of the total time allotted is intended for discussion, and 50 per cent of the total time for apparatus papers. It is believed that, with the full coöperation

of the authors and of those who take part in the discussions, the program will go forward as scheduled.

G. E. MATTHEWS, *Chairman*

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