

Report of the President

By EARL I. SPONABLE

MOVIETONEWS, INC., NEW YORK, N.Y.

IT IS CUSTOMARY at this time for the President of the Society to submit his annual report, and to bring to your attention such matters as seem to him worthy of your consideration. First, I am glad to be able to report to you that the year 1949 has been filled with healthy activity on the part of the Society and has resulted in an even greater service to the motion picture industry than at any time in the past.

The total membership at this time is over 3000: a real credit to the Membership Committee which has brought in 280 new members since April 1 of this year. This number of new members has more than made up for an unusually high loss of previous members, due probably to the aftermath of the war and to changing business conditions. Among our membership are representatives from 48 foreign countries, including Canada and Mexico, and from each of our 48 states.

I am proud of the work done by our 38 standing committees in which 471 members are giving their time to help improve the industry through standardization, and in other important ways. Parenthetically, at this point I would like to say that we would welcome the assistance of any members who are not now serving on committees, and who would like to do so. I suggest they get in touch with the chairman of the committee in which they are interested.

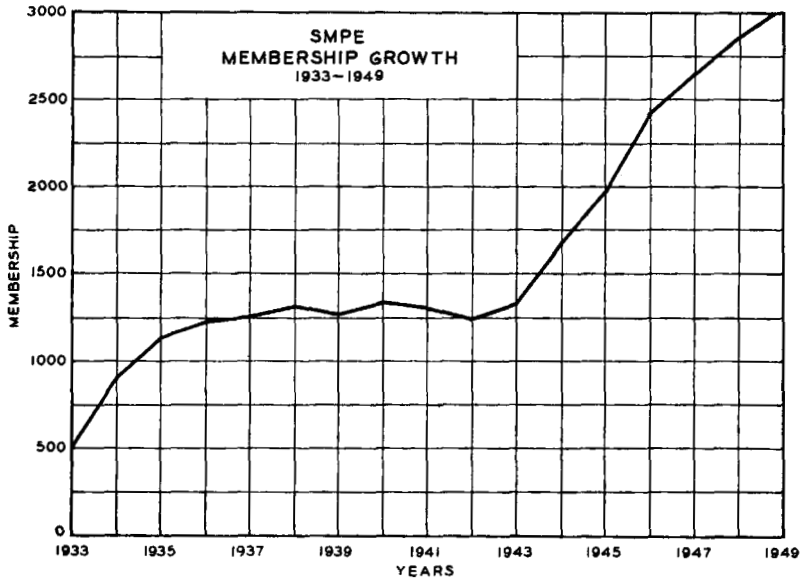
The Officers and Governors have been diligent in their jobs and most patient and helpful to me at Board Meetings. I want particularly to thank those men who are now finishing their terms of office and to urge them not to diminish their activity in Society affairs.

The general office is now well established at 342 Madison Avenue in New York City. The space, while not elaborate, has been adequate for our present needs. By the way of review, we have an efficient, small staff headed by Boyce Nemece, our Executive Secretary. The work of the engineering committees is handled by William H. Deacy, Jr., Staff Engineer; and Sigmund Muskat is the Office Manager.

PRESENTED: October 10, 1949, at the SMPE Convention in Hollywood.

Improvement has been made in various office activities: The accounting system has been modernized; the committee work is being handled rapidly and efficiently; membership applications are being processed promptly; Journal publication has been speeded up; and our press relations are much improved.

Besides its own committee work, the Society now contributes to the support of, and has representation in, related organizations including the American Standards Association, the Inter-Society Color



Council, the United States National Committee of the International Commission on Illumination, the American Documentation Institute, and the National Fire Protection Association.

Our three local Sections have been unusually active during the current year. The chairmen and managers have arranged for papers that have commanded increased attendance. One highlight of the year was the joint meeting of the New York and Chicago Sections through the use of inter-city television, dealing with "A Study of Television Lighting." The combined attendance at this one meeting exceeded 1000 and resulted in important publicity and improved public relations for the Society.

The 65th Semiannual Convention, held this past spring in New York City, was an outstanding success. Its theme of television attracted an all-time record registration of 715. This current Convention, the Society's 66th, also has a program of great interest that has been made possible by most diligent work on the part of the Program and Local Arrangements Committees. I am sure that this Hollywood Convention will be one that we all shall remember as an enlightening experience.

Printing costs have gone up along with everything else. This has led to a study of the format of the *JOURNAL*, and designing it to use the available space more efficiently. Careful planning is in progress in co-operation with the Society's printer to effect a transition to a somewhat new dress wherein we may use for the most part a two-column page and achieve better readability and more text material per page, at practically no increase in cost.

During the year the Society published a book on theater engineering entitled *The Motion Picture Theater*, with which I believe most of you are familiar. In spite of a carefully worked out plan for sales we have not received the number of orders we anticipated. I believe, however, that an important reference book such as this will be in demand for some time to come. Our other less ambitious publications in the form of monographs entitled "Films in Television," "Theater Television," "High-Speed Photography," and "Color Symposium" were well received, have paid their costs, and have helped to gain the Society recognition in their respective fields.

The Society has continued its service of making and supplying test films. New films this year include a 16-mm sound service test film, and a television visual test film. Both of these films are very much needed in the industry. They will be described and samples will be shown at this meeting.

A number of new standards have been approved during the current year, and have been published in the *JOURNAL*. Also, the Board of Governors has authorized the publication from time to time of special reports to be known as "SMPE Recommendations." While these Recommendations have not reached the stage of standards, they will have been approved by engineering committees and the Engineering Vice-President and should be a useful guide to equipment manufacturers. They will be printed to fit the standards cover, but colored paper will be used to distinguish them from adopted standards.

The financial position of the Society, while on a sound basis at present, requires careful watching. Our expenditures and receipts run about \$125,000 per year. The year 1948 ended with a deficit of \$8,724. This was partly due to non-repetitive expenses such as furniture for new offices. This year the indications are that we will nearly break even. Our net quick assets are over \$90,000. Largely through the efforts of Don Hyndman we have materially increased our income from sustaining members. In 1945, income from this source was \$8,087, was brought up to \$20,250 in 1946, and this year it will total over \$24,000. If we are to continue to expand our service to the industry it is obvious that our income must keep in step. Every possible source of revenue will be studied carefully and every effort made to keep our operating costs as low as is consistent with our program of service.

Never in the history of this Society has it had the standing, or commanded the respect of the leaders in the motion picture industry, that it does today. This is no mere accident, but rather is the cumulative result of teamwork among all its members. The pioneer work in theater television, largely due to the efforts of Paul Larsen and a few others, is beginning to be recognized. The recent Society answer to the request of the Federal Communications Commission for advice regarding theater television (which will be reported on later at this meeting by Don Hyndman) is an example of what I mean. Likewise, the Theatre Owners of America and the Motion Picture Association have sought our advice in this same matter. We must carry on and justify the confidence that has been placed with us to do the proper engineering job and to give technical guidance, not only to the motion picture industry as it is now constituted, but also to the new, closely allied art of television.

This brings me to our plans for the future. Our Past President, Loren Ryder, has emphasized over and over that the scope of the Society activities includes all phases of pictorial rendition of action. With this I am in hearty accord. We are concerned with television whether we all like it or not. While television did not develop within the motion picture industry and while credit for its conception and growth belongs to the electronic and radio engineers, there is, nevertheless, a very large area of common interest in the two fields. The vast accumulation of knowledge of production problems, lighting, photography, sound recording, film handling, and projection technique are all parts of this common area; and this accumulated knowl-

edge of the membership of this Society represents such values to the growing television art that the television engineer will find himself able to acquire this information in only one of two ways: either by arduous, costly, personal experience, or alternatively, by becoming a member of this Society. We have, therefore, much incentive to offer to the television engineer to join with us; and on our side, there is much to be gained by this union, both from the point of view of society economics and from that of service to the industry. It is for these basic reasons that your Board, after due committee consideration, decided to recommend to the membership that the name of the Society be changed to "Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers," and that the founders and developers of this new allied art be actively encouraged to take part with us in developing a larger and more effective service. It is my sincere personal belief that such a change will profit the Society and the industry, and I hope that with your enthusiastic support of the enlarged program which I have just outlined, time will prove the wisdom of this course.