exist as sodium hydroxide and would be converted into the products of reaction between it and the gelatin, and any that might still then be left would be changed into sodium carbonate, also very soluble.

The chance of accidental contamination with sodium hydroxide is quite remote because of the method of the washing of the film.

Mr. Cummings describes the control in nitration as so accurate that there would be very little chance of overnitration.

Without going into too involved a chemical explanation, it is readily conceivable that cotton, being a natural product, does not always produce cellulose in exactly the same way; differences due to soil, weather, accidental injury to the plant and other factors would tend more or less to alter the cellulose, and it is quite possible that under these varying conditions some cellulose of the cotton might be susceptible to further nitration.

The writer has seen a blowout occur right at the nitrating spot in a chemical plant. The operators thought nothing of it, saying that it was a thing to be expected. The nitration kept right on regardless of the blowout because the plant was constructed in such a way that it could take care of it. Why did the blowout occur if the control is so perfect?

It is realized that spontaneous combustion due to high nitration is fortunately rare, but who knows exactly how rare? The point to stress is that with such a substance as cellulose nitrate, the storage conditions should be such as to insulate the fire when it *does occur*, a general point on which both the writer and Mr. Cummings agree.

June 22, 1950 JOSEPH H. SPRAY

Book Review

Handbook of Basic Motion-Picture Techniques, by Emil E. Brodbeck

Published (1950) by Whittlesey House (McGraw-Hill), 330 West 42d St., New York 18. i-xiii + 307 pp. text + 3 pp. index. Profusely illus. 6 × 9 in. Price $5.95.

"Right at the outset of this book," says the author right at the outset of his preface, "there are a few vital truths which you should know. First is the fact that the *technique* of making motion pictures and the *mechanics* of making them are two different things. Technique is the 'art' and 'skill' of movie making. The mechanics of movie making are such things as learning to focus, to expose your film correctly, to load and wind your camera."

To members of SMPTE and readers of the JOURNAL, the mechanics of movie making should be an old story. Mr. Brodbeck's first 48 pp., therefore, may well not hold for them anything helpful or revealing. The bulk of his book, however, in which in ten major chapters he discusses the "techniques" of movie making should be of interest (and perhaps aid) to the practicing technician, especially if he makes movies on the side as a personal hobby.

Mr. Brodbeck's ten chapters take up such subjects as panning, using the tripod, shot breakdown, screen direction, matching action, newsreel technique, build-up, composition, indoor lighting and applied techniques. Each chapter presents the subject in the form of a lesson—with text, practice assignments and rules to remember. Mr. Brodbeck's approach to his subject is vigorous and forthright, his illustrations practical and informative. On the whole, however, the pictures suffer throughout this volume from muddiness of reproduction.

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