Award, Samuel L. Warner Memorial Award, SMPTE Progress Medal Award and Honorary memberships.

Having been away from motion picture activities for a number of years, Louis Pacent had resigned from membership in the Society. He now plans to renew his interest in technical motion picture matters and his reinstatement as a Fellow received unanimous endorsement by the Board.

Student chapters of University of Southern California and New York University have both been active recently. To help them along the Board has appointed Loren L. Ryder and William H. Rivers as Society advisers.

Engineering Committees

The summer months in recent years have been periods of relative inactivity for the Society's engineering committees, but the current load of standards projects and work related closely to television has kept several committees working diligently throughout the vacation season. Here, briefly, are two items of interest.

Theater Television

Under the Chairmanship of D. E. Hyndman, the Theater Television Committee's detailed study of performance requirements for interconnecting facilities will be continued with an examination of the effects of bandwidth variations, signal-noise ratio, distortion and compression on quality of the projected theater television picture.

Representatives of the common carriers, as well as manufacturers of equipment for this new industry, have taken an active part and have highly praised the efforts of Otto Schade in his study of the four fundamental characteristics. Work on bandwidth requirements has progressed very well. A figure for admissible random noise has been proposed, based upon a detailed and objective sampling procedure developed by Mr. Schade, using the "noise" level of motion picture film as a reference. Subjective comparison of the experimental results between film and television pictures has already been made on a limited scale and will be repeated again, using full-scale commercial equipment for both pictures in the near future.

Tentative conclusions have been made concerning square-wave distortion limits. Further work is now being done and will soon be discussed by the Committee.

Screen Brightness

For more than fifteen years, considerable time and effort have been devoted to the well-organized programs of the Screen Brightness Committee, work having begun seriously in the early thirties. A comparison method of estimating screen reflectivity was adopted, and sample gray cards to serve as reflection factor standards were bound into the JOURNAL for June 1933. Extended study of print density, vision and screen illumination produced a series of JOURNAL articles in the mid-thirties.

Measurement methods have always been a serious problem. Just before the last war the Committee, under Frank Carlson, began to develop a photoelectric screen brightness meter, but the press of other urgent matters stopped the program shortly after a specification was agreed on. Three years ago the project was revived under the joint guidance of Erwin Geib and Bob Zavesky. A preliminary

survey of eighteen theaters was encouraging and set the stage for an extended program by serving as a proving ground for several types of instruments, as well as providing a review of survey procedures. The Committee has now completed plans to start work on a somewhat larger survey of an estimated one hundred theaters ranging from small houses having fewer than five hundred seats to the largest in the country. Outdoor theaters and review rooms will also be included.

The screen brightness meter recently developed for the Committee by Allen Stimson of General Electric has been doubly checked for accuracy and will be used in succession by six survey teams. Cities included and team leaders are: Los Angeles, C. W. Handley; Chicago, C. E. Heppberger; Toledo, A. J. Hatch, Jr.; Rochester, F. J. Kolb, Jr.; Philadelphia, C. R. Underhill, Jr.; and New York, P. D. Ries. Considerable publicity for the survey has been given by the motion picture trade press, which will help to insure the co-operation of exhibitors and theater projectionists who were very generous with their time and assistance in the previous work.

Letter to the Editor

I was very interested to read in the March issue of the JOURNAL the article on spontaneous ignition of decomposing cellulose nitrate film and the appendix on p. 381 on the film decomposition tests which have been carried out in this country [England].

There is, however, an error in the introduction to the latter, which I should be very grateful if you would correct.

The British Film Institute is described as "a Government Department similar to the U.S. National Archives." Although the British Film Institute, including its National Film Library, is maintained chiefly by a grant from H.M. Treasury, it is not a Government Department in the full sense of the term. The only Government Department concerned mainly with film preservation is that of the Government Cinematograph Adviser, at H.M. Stationery Office, which has in its care the films of the Imperial War Museum and those made by certain Government departments which are Crown copyright.

The National Film Library of the British Film Institute is the only other official body in this country concerned with the permanent preservation of films and film records. Our scope, however, is wider in that we are concerned with the film, not only as an historical record, but also as an art, and the greater part of our collection consists of nongovernment films. I imagine that whereas the Government Cinematograph Adviser's Department corresponds to the U.S. National Archives, the National Film Library here corresponds more nearly to the Library of Congress project which was in operation some years ago.

I hope that this clarifies the position. It is easy for confusion to arise because we co-operate most closely with the Government Cinematograph Adviser in all our preservation work and Mr. S. A. Ashmore, who advises the Government Cinematograph Adviser on technical matters, is also a member of our own Technical Committee. . . . .

ERNEST LINDGREN
Deputy Director and Curator
The British Film Institute

May 18, 1950