

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

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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. . . .

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