

70th Semiannual Convention

Close technical ties between movies and TV were a "natural" phenomenon clearly apparent throughout the Society's 70th Semiannual Convention in Hollywood last month. From the luncheon at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel on Monday, October 15, to the closing session on Friday evening, 600 engineers who took part repeated over and over the *movies-TV* theme. Not only did registration hit a high mark for West Coast conventions, but also attendance at the luncheon and at the Wednesday banquet far exceeded expectations. Even the heavier-than-usual program of 65 technical papers closely

packed into 12 sessions failed to exhaust the energies of technical people who came to hear or be heard.

On the next few pages are luncheon remarks made by our President and skillful master of ceremonies, Peter Mole, and by the guest speakers: Donn Tatum, Director of Television, American Broadcasting Company, Hollywood, and Jerry Wald of Wald-Krasna Productions, Hollywood. All three hit the front pages of all motion picture and television trade papers and a fair share of East and West Coast newspapers the following day.

Get-Together Luncheon Remarks by President Mole

[We convened] our 70th Semiannual Convention with a much rosier picture than prevailed at the time of the New York meeting last spring. Since then a concentrated program of selling entertainment to the public has been under way. The motion picture industry has rediscovered the few million people who are willing to spend money to see good motion picture entertainment, and the actor, writer and director ambassadors of good will are speeding to the four corners of the country to stimulate attendance in the motion picture theaters.

All this is as it should be—a deliberate and successful effort to attract the famous entertainment dollar.

Coast-to-coast television was initiated with the signing of the Japanese Peace Treaty in San Francisco. Theater television is developing by leaps and bounds, stimulated by special showings such as the Robinson-Turpin fight in New York. I believe that movies and television are now finding a common ground for their mutual benefit and will complement each other.

These developments should encourage the members of this organization and their associated companies to continue their scientific research in the belief that the entertainment business will continue to expand and that production will need better tools with which to work.

I remarked at the Spring Convention on the lack of unified effort between the

engineer, producer and exhibitor. I see no reason yet to change my views. Nor do I see reason to alter my belief that a successful future for the producer and exhibitor depends upon a close alliance with the engineer.

In the past, the production end of our industry has been the recipient of many technical advances brought about by forward thinking men who had the courage to spend time and money on the development of new ideas. From these engineers who carried on their work outside the field of motion pictures came sound and color. Now, in this time of optimism the producers and exhibitors must take the initiative. They must push vigorously for new technical developments and they must be sympathetic to research work in their planning.

Although sound and color came to the motion picture industry from outside interests, further new developments may not materialize in a finished form unless the industry shows a willingness to share in the program. Equipment manufacturers can no longer be expected to do research and development work on speculation. The exhibitors who plan to use theater television or wide-angle projection must share at least part of the engineering burden. Producers who wish to adopt new sound recording methods or improved color processes, must share in the development as well.

It is our way of business life to risk capital—to produce more business and to secure greater benefits—and we should continue this practice. The time is here to complete the cycle on current developments. The capital has been ventured. It still remains to be recovered through acceptance by the industry of technical

developments already being offered by the engineers.

As for the future: We must go forward—focus our attention on other engineering advances not yet introduced. And we must concentrate on things that hold promise of enhancing the entertainment values that are the life blood of our industry.

Excerpts From Address by Don Tatum

“Television broadcasting and motion pictures are not mutually exclusive media of communication and entertainment. They will complement each other, each occupying its own particular and important niche in the lives of the American people. A very substantial part of all the television programming will be produced on motion picture film and the great pool of administrative, creative, artistic and technological talent, as well as the magnificent production facilities of the motion picture industry, will constantly and steadily be more and more devoted to the making of filmed television programs.

“When the current allocation problems have been resolved and television becomes a full-blown national medium as more and more television stations come on the air, the impact of this new medium will work changes in the business and the methods of producing motion pictures for theater exhibition purposes. There will be fewer theaters, film costs will go down and there will be fewer motion pictures made for theater exhibition than has been the norm up to the present time. This means that there will be major motion picture studio capacity available for the making of television films and at lower costs than is presently possible.

“There are many similarities in the methods, techniques and objectives of television broadcast programs and motion picture films, but they are not identical. From the creative standpoint, there are close analogies in the techniques of writing and directing and acting, but writing or directing or acting in a television program is a different thing from performing the same functions in the making of a motion picture. The same is true of the technical end. Lighting a motion picture for theater projection and lighting one pri-

marily for television purposes is different; and the requirements with respect to scenery and sets and the like are different.

“The objectives and the end results are different. Under our free system of broadcasting, the television industry must be supported by advertising revenues. As a result, more and more we shall note that television programming, whether live or on film, will come to reflect the necessity for constructing and tempering the programs so as to best serve the needs and the requirements of advertisers while continuing to serve the public interest and to satisfy the requirements of the television viewing public.

“For the same reasons, the importance in television broadcasting of feature length motion pictures made primarily for theater purposes will constantly diminish. This tendency will inevitably result from the different requirements in the two media with respect to time of the program, costs, production techniques and the difficulty of accomplishing with a feature length motion picture that close relationship between the program content and the advertising objective of a television program no matter what may be its form. For that reason I believe that some of the estimates that have been bandied about of the enormous potential value of motion picture libraries now in the vaults of the major motion picture producing companies will prove to be highly excessive.

“I would like to add my confirmation to the point of view which I know is shared by many of the leaders of the SMPTE: that what we should have is a large scale independent research program in which both our businesses would share and in which we would pool our resources and know-how.

"To those in the television business and to those in the motion picture business who look upon each other with distrust, suspicion and sometimes scorn, I would say forget your differences and accept each other because that is what you are

inevitably going to have to do. To those in the motion picture business who say that television is simply an extension of the art of making motion pictures, let me say that you are wrong and that there will be no complete marriage of the two."

Excerpts From Speech by Jerry Wald

"Thirty-five years ago, you engineers joined up with a business which, primitive as it was, entertained an easily satisfied public, and made good money.

"It would have been easy then to say, 'The public likes these cowboy and Indian thrillers, and custard pie tossing orgies, even though they shake like a shimmy dancer. As long as the customers cheer when the cavalry rides to the rescue, and howl when the comic takes a pratt fall, or receives a pie in the face . . . why bother about the shakes and shimmies, the flickers and the frequent blackouts? Let's don't throw a monkey wrench into a machine that turns out dimes and nickels, faulty as it is.'

"Luckily, the inventive mind doesn't work that way. You engineers went to work on the machine, and you've been working on it ever since. As a result, you've got us one that turns out dollars instead of nickels and dimes.

"The creative end of our business . . . I don't like that term because if any people in this business are creators the engineers are . . . but I'll use it for want of a better one . . . has of course advanced with you. Sometimes I feel we've been pulled along. Again, the advances have been made by sheer inspiration, and, again, by careful plodding and intelligent planning."

Mr. Wald went on to discuss the much-discussed health of the motion picture industry and expressed a robust optimism with the reminder that he and his partner Norman Krasna have recently launched a \$50,000,000 production schedule at RKO, consisting of 60 motion pictures to be filmed over a five-year period.

"With your continued magnificent technical assistance," he concluded, "we will achieve a future that will, by comparison, make the golden past seem like the dark ages."

Following Jerry Wald's spirited address at the Monday luncheon, our Society's David Sarnoff Gold Medal was presented to the initial recipient, Otto H. Schade, for technical contributions to television. A full story about this portion of the Monday program will appear in the December *Journal* along with a detailed account of several other awards including the Warner and Progress Medals which were presented during the Wednesday evening banquet. A complete and accurate list of all papers presented during the 70th Convention arranged in order of actual presentation and including the names of all authors with company affiliations will be the last item in the December *Journal*.

Technical sessions Monday afternoon and evening at the Hotel and Tuesday

evening at CBS' Studio A concentrated heavily on television. High-speed photography papers filled the Tuesday morning and afternoon sessions while on Wednesday a group of "high speeders" were guests of the Naval Ordnance Test Station at Inyokern, Calif. On Friday morning another group participated in a desert photographic experiment where atmospheric conditions were favorable and they could concentrate on certain philosophical rather than technical aspects of rapid motion photography.

The Wednesday morning session at the Hotel was devoted to 16-mm film and its use in television and training. After a 1½-hour warm-up on formal papers there was a most enthusiastic panel discussion of the 16-mm emulsion position question. Difficulties have occurred in

the use of 16-mm prints for television broadcasting because certain methods of film production yield 16-mm release prints with emulsion facing the projection lamp, the nonstandard position. When nonstandard release prints are spliced together with prints having standard emulsion position the broadcasters have picture and sound focusing troubles that are rarely predictable. This problem and what can be done about it were considered verbally and at length. The entire discussion was recorded and has been mimeographed for distribution to all participants for review. It will be printed in full in an early issue of the *Journal*. Echoes from the emulsion-position debate were still reverberating when the laboratory session was called to order Wednesday afternoon.

As in most of the Society's recent Conventions, magnetic recording occupied a fair share of the program. Thursday morning and afternoon were entirely devoted to papers on this subject, supplemented by an unscheduled but well attended forum on proposed standards for 35-mm magnetic-track placement that followed the last morning paper. The discussion ran until after 1:30 p.m., forcing a thirty-minute delay in the start of the afternoon papers. Conflicting recommendations were based upon conflicting performance data. Because eventual American standards for track location will be with us for a long time to come they must have a broad and acceptable basis in experience; therefore the entire discussion will be published in the earliest possible issue of *Journal*.

Several different types of three-color motion picture release print films were described and demonstrated during the session on Thursday evening at the Republic Studios scoring stage. Papers on various aspects of lighting were grouped into the Friday afternoon session at the Hotel. That evening the past caught up with the future at the Paramount Studio Theater where several methods of producing pseudoscopic and stereoscopic motion pictures were described and demonstrated with varying degrees of clarity.

As the final session ground to an official halt, there was unanimous agreement that the papers and the local arrange-

ments committees had really put on a show. Everyone was exhausted including the usually indefatigable Bill Kunzmann who was glad to see his 70th Convention in 35 years become one with history.

Special credit for a good job well done should go to:

Fred Albin, American Broadcasting Company, Hollywood, Papers Committee Vice-Chairman, and in charge of the Papers program for the 70th Convention;

Charles R. Daily, Paramount Pictures, Hollywood, Chairman of Local Arrangements, who organized the sessions held away from the Hotel including particularly the special facilities for the session on stereo motion pictures;

Ed Templin, Westrex, Hollywood, in charge of public address equipment and discussion recording;

Norwood Simmons, Eastman Kodak, Hollywood, "Secretary-General" who planned and supervised both luncheon and banquet programs;

Harold Desfor, RCA, Camden, and *Walter Simons*, Altec Lansing, Hollywood, proficient purveyors of publicity; and

Clyde Cooley and *Frank Erler* who operated film and slide projectors at times under very difficult conditions.

Ladies from all corners of the United States who attended took full advantage of the well organized program prepared for them by the Ladies Committee under the superior administration of Mrs. Charles R. Daily. There were radio and television shows, a luncheon with a costume show and tour of Universal Studios, a tea at the Beverly Hills Hotel and, of course, the Convention luncheon and banquet. Headquarters for the Ladies Committee remained open all week and became the regular gathering place for the fairer participants.

On Tuesday evening officers and staff members of the Society were dinner guests of the Motion Picture Research Council at Chasen's Restaurant. The men who guide the destinies of both engineering organizations enjoyed not only the drinks and fine meal served with customary movie capital hospitality but also welcomed the opportunity to talk shop informally for a couple of hours with men from different ends of the business, including television.

Engineering Committee Meetings

Six Engineering Committees met during the 70th Convention; three at the Headquarters of the American Society of Cinematographers (High-Speed Photography, Sound, Film Dimensions) and three at the Staff Engineer's suite in the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel.

High-Speed Photography. This Committee, Chaired by John Waddell, met Monday afternoon with an attendance of four Committee members and 14 guests. The key activities consisted of an outline of future Committee work and an effort to expand the work of the Society to better serve the West Coast high-speed photography members.

Sound. This Committee, Chaired by Lloyd Goldsmith, met Tuesday morning with an attendance of 11 members and 15 guests. A very considerable agenda was thoroughly discussed and concrete action undertaken for the future. Key issues were the questions of edge guiding and magnetic recording standards and test films.

Laboratory Practice. Chaired by John Stott, this Committee met Tuesday afternoon with 10 members and guests attend-

ing. Several items of importance were discussed and definitive progress made on proposals for negative cuing for printer light changing and brightness of screens in laboratory review rooms.

Color. This Committee, Chaired by Herman Duerr, met Wednesday morning with a rather small attendance of six members and guests. The small attendance precluded any specific actions, but did permit a general but useful discussion on several of the projects before the Committee.

Screen Brightness. Chaired by Wallace Lozier, the Thursday afternoon meeting of this Committee was attended by 10 members and guests who discussed methods of utilizing the theater survey recently completed. In addition, a first draft of the revision of the screen brightness Standard was agreed upon.

Film Dimensions. This Committee, Chaired by A. C. Robertson (alternate for E. K. Carver), met Friday afternoon with a total attendance of six members and guests. Despite the attendance, there was an excellent discussion on low-shrink film and a first draft of a Standard was agreed upon for circulation to the full Committee.

Board of Governors Meeting

The fourth meeting of the Board of Governors during 1951 was held on Saturday morning, October 13, at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood, California. It preceded by two days the opening of the Society's 70th Semiannual Convention also held at the Hollywood Roosevelt, and was remarkably well attended. The meeting ended early in the afternoon. A number of Board members left immediately for a chuck wagon dinner sponsored by the Theater Equipment and Supply Manufacturers Association.

FINANCIAL

R. B. Austrian presented the third quarterly financial statement and in the absence of F. E. Cahill, Jr., Treasurer, also read the treasurer's report. It was noted that test film sales, financial aspects of publications and all other administrative operations were within the limits of the

1951 budget. Loss of members who were delinquent in payment of dues continues to be a serious problem. On September 30 there were 300 delinquent members, each of whom had received two membership dues bills and two written invitations for reinstatement. Although still high, this figure had been reduced from 395, the total of delinquent members on June 30, 1951.

The Board was also advised that while recuperating from a recent operation Pierre Mertz saw in a New York newspaper a list of unclaimed monies in the Chase National Bank. He discovered that the list included a "Society of Motion Picture Engineers, address unknown." Dr. Mertz notified headquarters and Mr. Muskat contacted the bank, arranging to pick up an amount of \$101.00 that was found to be an unclaimed foreign bank draft held open by the bank since 1936.