

# International Standardization

By F. T. BOWDITCH, SMPTE Engineering Vice-President

ON LAST JUNE 9, 10 and 11 at Columbia University, the first meetings of Technical Committee 36 on Cinematography of the International Organization for Standardization were held. This is the standards group charged with the preparation of world standards in fields of cinematography, under the Secretariat of the American Standards Association. A following report by Henry Kogel will give details of the several subjects discussed. We will consider here our general impressions of this very interesting event.

Contrary to the final feeling of a worth-while job well done, those of us from the United States who took part in this affair did so largely from a sense of duty to the Secretariat responsibilities of the ASA. None of us had any previous experience in international deliberations of this sort, and we were uncertain as to how much could be accomplished. At the end of three days of close association with our foreign colleagues, however, the opinion was enthusiastically unanimous that the meetings had been very much worth while; the only complaint to come to my attention concerned the schedule, in which only two days had been allocated to TC36. Arrangements were made on the second day to continue for a third, and everyone felt that a full week could have been spent with profit; as a matter of fact, with a series of group meetings burning the midnight oil on both Monday and Tuesday evenings, a good week's work was actually crowded into those three days.

In addition to the U.S. delegation, the meetings were attended throughout by

representatives of Canada, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. A Belgian representative joined us occasionally, and a space was continually reserved for the U.S.S.R., whose delegates were somewhere about, but scheduled uncertainly between cinematography and other concurrent meetings. The Russians never did visit us, which was a matter for some disappointment curiosity-wise, although the complication of a second translation of all remarks would undoubtedly have slowed our progress. As it was, the remarks of the delegate from France, M. Jean Vivié, were always made in his native tongue, with frequent pauses for translation into English; while the remarks of all other delegates in English were translated into French for M. Vivié. This would at first seem to delay things immeasurably, but we were fortunate in having a most capable interpreter, Mr. L. Foy, whose repertoire included perhaps ten languages any one of which he could translate extemporaneously and unhesitatingly into any other. He soon developed an amazing knowledge of motion picture technology and so operated with the highest efficiency.

The formal meetings were opened on Monday morning, June 9, by Vice-Admiral G. F. Hussey, Jr., Managing Director of the ASA. He introduced D. E. Hyndman, who delivered the welcoming address, calling attention not only to the great importance of international standards in facilitating world trade, but pointing out the forthcoming significance of television as an international force, and predicting a growing interest of TC36 in world

standards for this specialized form of motion pictures.

Dr. L. Knopp, delegate from the United Kingdom and President of the British Kinematograph Society, then proposed that the writer be elected as Chairman of the meeting, which was promptly done. This responsibility was approached with some uncertainty, but was soon exercised with greater confidence as the fine cooperative spirit of the delegates became apparent, and as the bilingual machinery operated with much greater smoothness than we had anticipated. Mr. W. Rambal of the central ISO office in Geneva sat at the Chairman's right in the first sessions, to offer helpful advice on parliamentary matters as needed.

As things developed, the formal meetings of the whole Committee were soon abandoned in favor of a series of six Working Group meetings on as many different subjects. These were attended by all the foreign delegates and by a limited number of U.S. delegates most interested in each particular subject. Chairmanships of these Working Groups were delegated to the French, German and United Kingdom representatives, as well as to the U.S., and all were conducted in a most efficient manner. Jean Vivie of France, Dr. Leo Busch and Wilhelm Waegelein of Germany, and Dr. L. Knopp and H. L. Griffiths of England worked tirelessly and conscientiously with all these groups, till late at night on Monday and Tuesday, and starting again early each morning. Gerald Graham of Canada was also present, but only as an observer since his country is not represented as a full working member of TC36; Mr. Foy, our indefatigable translator, was ever-present to bridge the language barrier. The U.S. delegation of 20 persons, ably headed by Dr. D. R. White, chairman of ASA Sectional Committee PH22 on Motion Pictures, had a somewhat easier time of it, with a different small number at each group

meeting. The many months of preparation by PH22 and by the several Engineering Committees of SMPTE proved exceedingly helpful here, as did the active participation of The Motion Picture Research Council. W. F. Kelley of the Council cooperated in all the group meetings, giving much helpful advice where motion picture studio considerations were involved.

Minutes of each meeting and copies of all resolutions were prepared in time for distribution at the next session, mimeographed both in French and in English. This required that an English version be prepared at the earliest possible moment. Henry Kogel, Staff Engineer of SMPTE, was of much service here, cooperating with J. W. McNair, Miss Virginia Kelly and Miss Carolyn Locher of ASA to get all of our deliberations correctly recorded.

At the final formal meeting of TC36 on Wednesday afternoon, it was agreed that all the Working Groups should be continued on a more permanent basis, under the chairmanships first assigned. It seems certain that cooperation via correspondence will now be very much more effective than before these personal acquaintanceships were made. Certainly the foreign delegates gave every evidence of a high degree of competence and sincerity, and in all instances were very well prepared to discuss the various matters on the agenda.

The U.S. delegates had also come well prepared and with open minds, as witness the agreement to recommend as a World Standard a picture-to-sound separation of 21 frames for 35mm film. The present American Standard specifies this distance to be only 20 frames, and any change at first seemed to be an altogether futile attempt to change a well-established U.S. practice. It soon developed, however, that the U.S. practice is in fact to use the 21-frame separation: projectors are threaded at 20-frames, but the studios adjust the sound-to-picture separation on the film to give

synchronization to an observer seated 50 ft from the screen. Some years ago this 21-frame French proposal was received in the U.S. via correspondence, and circulated here for comment over a period of months, with unanimous agreement that it would be impractical for the U.S. to change. A half-hour's direct conversation with the French, English and German delegates brought out the fact noted above, that the U.S. has been using this proposal all along — only the standard itself needs to be changed to bring everything into agreement!

The opportunity of serving as the chairman of this first meeting of ISO/TC36, although approached with some uncertainty, is looked back on with deep appreciation. This was a most heartening experience, and all who contributed to these meetings have the right to feel that the work of TC36 has now been given a most effective start. When men of good purpose sit down together and talk things over, much can be accomplished, as witness the following report by Henry Kogel. We are proud and happy to have played a part.

## Agenda and Accomplishments of ISO/TC 36 Meeting

By HENRY KOGEL, SMPTE Staff Engineer

THE PRECEDING REPORT on international standardization by F. T. Bowditch has clearly outlined the general aspects of the three-day meeting, June 9–11, of Technical Committee 36 on Cinematography of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO/TC 36). It is, therefore, the intent to present here only the specific details considered and the concrete results to date.

The draft agenda was considered first, then amended slightly. It is given below in its final form along with the Working Group associated with each item.

1. Welcoming Remarks, D. E. Hyndman
2. Introduction to Those Present, G. F. Hussey, Jr.
3. Opening Remarks by the Chairman, F. T. Bowditch
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Review of Scope
6. Dimensions of Raw Stock — Work Group 1, chaired by D. R. White, United States
7. Definition of Safety Film — Work Group 2, chaired by Leslie Knopp, United Kingdom
8. Emulsion and Sound Record Position in Cameras and Projectors — Work Group 3, chaired by Leo Busch, Germany
9. Dimensions and Location for Sound Records and Scanning Area — Work Group 4, chaired by Malcolm Townsley, United States
10. Location and Size of Picture Apertures in Cameras, Projectors and Printers — Work Group 5, chaired by Jean Vivié, France
11. Standards Relative to Projection Halls — Work Group 6, chaired by Leslie Knopp, United Kingdom
12. Review of Program of Work