

OPEN FORUM

MR. CRABTREE: I should like to have any constructive criticism regarding the conduct of the meetings or the structure of the papers program and particularly regarding subjects which could be advantageously dealt with at our meetings. You might be interested to know that the method of attack in securing papers is either to select authors who I know are well acquainted with a definite subject; or else I think of subjects and inquire about the man to prepare a paper on the subject. I am particularly anxious to know of any subject not dealt with recently regarding which information would be of value.

MR. BENFORD: I should like to add to Mr. Crabtree's remarks that members are free any time they feel like it to send in a paper; Mr. Crabtree reserves the right to accept or reject it. I do not think we should wait to be asked for papers.

PRESIDENT COOK: In other words, anyone having knowledge in the industry should feel it incumbent upon him to express his willingness to impart it as a whole to the industry through the meetings of the Society and publication in the *Transactions*. There must be a great many members who have information to impart who should take it upon themselves to write to the Chairman of our Papers Committee and offer their suggestions for presentation of the material.

MR. GRIFFITH: Judging from the previous meetings as evidenced by the *Transactions*, it seems to me that the most outstanding feature of this particular convention is the number of papers involved and, I gather, the extent of the attendance. I think that those points should be brought to everybody's attention as an indication of the development of the Society and the value of what might be termed the collaboration of the various technical interests in the industry. The accelerated growth of the Society is directly traceable to that very factor. As I understand it, this convention has been the first in which the motion picture engineers have had in their audiences, men who represented many other phases of the industry, technical and non-technical. This contact has been a means of acquainting these men with the work and aims of the Motion Picture Engineers' Society. The interest

on the Pacific Coast or, let me say, in Southern California, in motion picture technical meetings has received a very great impetus, and I hope will continue to grow. The recently announced authorization of a Pacific Coast Section is a most important step in continuing the effort to bring the various technical men together and holding them together in a way which will permit the open discussion of those questions best solved by contribution of the experience of all. That is, of course, a thing not easily brought about in an industry that has not before had any common meeting ground for its various branches. The organizations within the motion picture industry are inclined toward a policy of secrecy with regard to their individual developments, and this attitude is hard to break down. I have been a member of several technical societies for a number of years. The Society of Automotive Engineers, for instance, at first had great difficulty in getting their members to talk about their accomplishments. The experimental room doors were locked very tightly, and no one not directly connected with experimental work had access thereto. Many companies were doing the same experimental work in their laboratories, each one going through approximately the same steps in development, thereby duplicating all the effort, the final result being little if any better than if each had been working with a general knowledge of what was then known. Of course, we cannot expect to have all experimental developments immediately laid out on the boards for everybody to see, but we can develop an increased spirit of liberalism. I cannot help but feel that this convention and the natural extension of the associations here initiated will be of the utmost importance in bringing about that spirit. The recent action of the Producers' Association in starting a Research Bureau will necessarily bring together the industry's technical interests, because the joint support by the producers will insure that the benefits of their laboratory will be available to all of them. Much work will be done which in the past has been undertaken separately by several producers. This work will be conducted more effectively because the central laboratory can employ the highest grade men and provide the best apparatus and equipment. No matter how brilliant a man may be, unless he has adequate tools, he cannot make very rapid progress. I cannot help but feel that this convention marks the opening of a new era for the technical man in the industry.

PRESIDENT COOK: Mr. Griffith has brought out a point which is very valuable. When the Society was first organized, very much the same condition existed in the eastern part of the United States in the various organizations represented. It was evident that secrecy or jealousy of individual effort existed which is characteristic as a rule in the early stages of any industry. It was discovered to be altogether wrong in principle, and I think the tendency now to impart knowledge in the eastern part of the United States has become very general. Almost all of the older members in the East have contributed the results of their investigations, and it is common knowledge to the entire industry. We were told that this did not exist to the same extent in the western part of the industry, and with that in mind, it was our hope that we might assist in the closer co-operation in the producing field. This was one of the determining factors in arranging for the Coast meeting. The dissemination of knowledge is of first importance to the entire industry. If you have a research laboratory here, it is altogether probable that action will be accelerated greatly because you will have available information from the various units contributing to the support of the laboratory, and perhaps no other single result would be so far-reaching as the co-ordination and co-operation in the organization of the producing units.

MR. EGELER: With regard to the nature of our programs and their scope, I think that the Papers Committee should be commended on providing the Society with very complete programs. I do not think we are passing over any important phase of the industry's developments. There is the possibility that as our Society grows in years and judgment we can direct our programs by having one or more sessions devoted to laboratory work, others to projection, *etc.*, and by rigid selection of the papers. I think in that way we could make the papers of more general interest to everybody, and certain developments which may not be of importance to the whole industry might be carried over until they are further developed, or passed by entirely.

MR. FLORA: A secret process once disclosed is open to the man who discloses it, but if presented to the Society, it becomes a protection to the inventor. If everyone understood that, they would not be so chary in disclosing ideas.

DR. HICKMAN: I believe that is true in this country, but under the international convention that does not always hold. In England, publication precludes patenting, not only by other people, but also by the inventor. Publication is useful to large concerns who wish to protect themselves from rival patents in those cases where they do not wish to patent for themselves.

MR. FEAR: If the inventor was free to use his idea, he would not mind, but he doesn't want the other man to be protected so that he cannot use it himself. Many of the patents are so basic that anyone can infringe them.

MR. CRABTREE: In reply to Mr. Egeler, of course, at the last few meetings we have made a deliberate attempt to hold sessions devoted to one particular subject. At this particular convention Thursday morning was devoted to projection. The evening sessions have been devoted to studio lighting, but the more I learn of motion picture work, the more I realize the necessity of every member knowing all he can of every branch, because no matter what your specialty is, you must know a little about the other branches in the industry.

With regard to the quality of papers, as the Society grows and becomes more influential, it is becoming easier for the Papers Committee to secure worth while papers. There has not been much necessity for censorship because few authors submit papers voluntarily. It is necessary to go to the individual for the papers.

DR. HICKMAN: I do not think we have sufficient material to give us a first-class program twice a year unless a certain number of the papers are short technical papers. In the past, we have had meetings in the East, and now we know we can have meetings in the West. There is the question of how often can we do it. It is expensive for the companies sponsoring a large number of men. I want to suggest that when we come again to Hollywood that there is only one convention that year, and at such a time of year that we shall have reduced fares from the railroad companies. It will happen once in two or three years and it will give a focus of interest.

PRESIDENT COOK: The Chair rules that your suggestion is entirely in order, but the decision rests with the Board of Governors.

MR. GRIFFITH: Speaking from the standpoint of local requirements, I hope that Dr. Hickman's suggestion that only one Hollywood meeting be held every two or three years is not the consensus of opinion of either the eastern or western members.

Two years should be the limit, and even that is too long. I am afraid that the Coast Section may have difficulty in keeping going during the interval. A small local section usually has a hard time. There are one or two meetings which are fairly successful, then the interest dies down and three-quarters of the members fail to attend, and the section dies out. Without a definite and regular impetus such as the national convention, it seems to me we locals are likely to have a dismal time ahead of us.

MR. JONES: I think Dr. Hickman's suggestion is well worth consideration. The question of holding one meeting a year has been considered many times in the past and I have been rather favorably disposed towards such an arrangement. I do not know of any other similar technical organization that holds two meetings a year.

Most of the discussion thus far has centered about the technical papers program. I feel that there is another phase of our meetings which is of almost equal importance, that is the opportunity for contact and acquaintanceship between the various members. In fact, I believe in many cases we have too many papers and that time is taken up too completely with paper sessions to the exclusion of opportunities for members to get together in little groups and talk over things of mutual interest. This factor of personal acquaintanceship is extremely important and in many cases when we know a man only by reputation we are inclined to think he is peculiar or snobbish or has some other disagreeable character traits. In almost every case this feeling disappears as soon as personal contact and acquaintance is established. I should like, therefore, to make a plea that in the arrangement of future programs more opportunity for this personal contact be given.

Going back a moment to the question of two meetings a year. The Board of Governors at one time proposed that the Society have only one meeting a year. This was strongly opposed by the members, and, if I am not mistaken, the proposition was turned down by a large majority.

With regard to the frequency with which the Society can look forward to meetings held on the Pacific coast, I think it is a thing which cannot be settled arbitrarily or at the present moment. It is something which will have to be dealt with in the future and as occasion arises. It must be recognized that there is a rela-

tively large membership in the East which cannot attend meetings held on the west coast. Likewise, there are many on the west coast who probably cannot attend the meetings held in the far East. I think it would be a fine thing if at the next meeting which will probably have to be held in the East, the coast section could send a good sized delegation. I am sure those in the East would look forward to such an occasion with the greatest of pleasure, and a better acquaintanceship between those of you who reside in the West and those who live in the East would be a wonderful thing to promote good fellowship and co-operation.

Now in regard to the coast section itself, I think there is little doubt that you can have here in California a very active and worth while section of the national organization. I should like to bring to your attention a rather parallel case. The Optical Society of America is a national organization having perhaps four or five hundred members. In Rochester during the past eight years or more we have had in operation a local section of this society. We have on our rolls a membership of about one hundred, many of whom are not members of the national society. We hold meetings at approximately monthly intervals during the autumn, winter, and spring, making, in all, about eight or nine meetings per year. The program at each of these meetings is usually taken by a single individual who gives a paper of tutorial, résumé, or new material type. In many cases we bring speakers of note from out of town in which case the evening's meeting is preceded by a dinner given in honor of the speaker at which there are in attendance ten to twenty members. My own idea of the West Coast Section of the S.M.P.E. is something of this same order. Certainly in Hollywood and vicinity there are more men intimately interested in motion picture engineering than there are individuals in Rochester who are interested in optics as a science, and I think there is no doubt that a very successful and interesting program can be arranged for your sectional meetings. It is only a question of a few men being enthusiastic and willing to spend some time and effort in keeping the section running.

MR. GRIFFITH: Speaking again for the local members, we should like nothing better than to appear in force at the next meeting in the East. If we seriously intend to do that, however, it will be necessary to convince the producers that it is good business to send us.

With regard to the success of the local section, in the last analysis that depends upon the two or three live men who make or break the section. Without at least one really live member who is given adequate support, the section will fail. Success depends upon selecting leaders who will be willing and able to devote the requisite amount of time and energy to pushing the local section.

MR. DUBRAY: It occurs to me that the publication of a bulletin the circulation of which should be confined within the Society, would be very beneficial to the members. From these papers and the bulletin, the Papers Committee would get a good idea as to the subjects that should be presented at the semi-annual convention.

DR. HICKMAN: I think we should have a scheme in which certain general papers—in the *Transactions* some things appear over and over—should be presented as lectures and not papers. We do not have any system of publishing notes not presented by the Society. We have no means of a private member making a suggestion, which is noticed by silence on the part of members disagreeing. There is no means of the Board of Governors assuring themselves of the sense of the meeting.

MR. CRABTREE: That is the function of this Open Forum—With regard to the two sessions a year, it is easier to get papers twice a year than once because many of the members are so modest that in the case of new apparatus more than a few months old, it is beneath their dignity to present such a paper, so that we are relieved of the necessity of presenting material more than six months old.

PRESIDENT COOK: The Board of Governors gives very careful consideration to every suggestion that is presented to it. It has been found by experience in the past that an effort to conduct the Society's affairs by discussing matters of administrative policy in open meetings resulted in a chaotic condition because many of those present insisted on rather long expositions of their personal views. It might seem to you that because we don't continue to have those votes and referendums that the Board is trying to limit the vote of the Society on any question. Where it has been evident to the Board that there is a difference of opinion among members, we have not hesitated to submit a referendum to the membership at large, and I believe without any exception the opinion of the Board with respect to the matter has been strongly supported by the Society at large. It is im-

possible to satisfy every member of an organization in any administrative policy. It is only the belief that it is acting in every respect in accordance with the greatest benefit to the organization at large that the Board of Governors makes its rulings. We are always glad to have any suggestions made in writing to the Board, and they are given very careful consideration.