

PRESIDENTIAL ACCEPTANCE

L. C. PORTER*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I WISH to thank you for the very high honor which you have conferred upon me. I realize that this entails a great responsibility, and I assure you that I shall use my utmost endeavor to prove worthy of the confidence which you have shown. It is only because I feel sure of your full support and backing that I am willing to undertake the leadership of the Society during the coming year. I find myself in the position of having been elected to the highest office in the finest organization of motion picture engineers in the world.

Perhaps my greatest excuse for accepting this honor and the responsibility that goes with it, is my long connection with, and intimate knowledge of the growth and workings of our Society. In the past it has been my privilege to serve you as Chairman of the Papers Committee, Chairman of the Standards and Nomenclature Committee, member of the Board of Governors, Secretary, and President.

Let me assure you that all that I have learned from past experience will be drawn upon and placed at your disposal during the coming year. My heart is in the work. I have grown up with our little organization, and I love it. It is my greatest desire to see the Society continue to expand and become of increasing value to its members and the motion picture industry.

In most presidential campaigns it is customary for the candidates to state their platforms. In this case, however, at least as far as I know, there has been no campaign,—certainly none on my part, as the office was entirely unsolicited. I, therefore, feel that it might be well worth while taking the time to outline a few of the matters,—policies, if you like,—which I have been thinking over since I was asked to accept the nomination for president.

It seems to me that our Society is changing, both in personnel, in methods of operation, and in the character of our Transactions. This is as it should be to keep pace with the times. I used to feel

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that our convention programs were too full; that more time should be allowed for play and for getting personally better acquainted with each other. However, as our membership increases we necessarily have a decreasing percentage in attendance at the conventions. To those who do not attend, as well as to the ever increasing number of non members who purchase our Transactions, we owe a full technical program. We should give serious thought to replacing our present Transactions with a monthly journal. I believe the time has come when our Papers Committee Chairman is to be thanked rather than criticized for providing such a full program. Mr. Crabtree has done a wonderful work for the Society and for the industry as a whole. I most sincerely hope he can be persuaded to carry on.

I am very glad to see a number of members who dropped out of the Society at one time or another, due to differences of opinion, or disagreement with Society policy,—coming back into the organization. This is certainly an indication that the hatchet has been buried, and that a more harmonious spirit of cooperation has developed.

Our Membership Committee has done splendid work. We have reached the time when wide expansion of the Society's membership seems to be desirable. I do, however, look with some concern on the increasing number of commercial men and executives who are being admitted as Active members. I think there is just a little danger there. The success of an engineering society depends in no small measure on keeping it non-commercial.

As our Society grows, the amount of detail work that a few must do increases correspondingly. This, however, falls most heavily on the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Chairmen of the Papers, Membership, Publication, and Standards Committees. During the past year the Secretary, by actual record, devoted 26% of his office hours, and his secretary put in 75% of her time on S.M.P.E. work. Taking this as indicative of the time put in by others, it is clear that the Society's detail work would keep one person more than busy 100% of the time. I believe we have reached the time when we should have a permanent, paid assistant secretary-treasurer, with an office. Such a person could not only carry on much of the detail work, but could aggressively promote the interests of the Society. Ways and means of financing such an office

would have to be developed, as our present income is not sufficient to do so.

I have from time to time heard various complaints of the conduct of the Society's affairs, and numerous suggestions as to how it should be done. Most of these come from men who are perfectly sincere and who have the Society's welfare at heart. They are, however, often born of ignorance of conditions. That is perhaps partly their own fault for not studying such things as our constitution and by-laws and other available data, and partly due to the lack of effort on the part of the governing body to explain in detail the conditions back of their actions and the reasons therefor.

I believe that the affairs of the Society must be conducted by a relatively small number of men. I also believe that these men should have the full confidence and support of the entire membership; that they should know what the Society wishes and how it feels on all matters pertaining to the conduct of the Society. After all, our organization should be one of Motion Picture Engineers, run by Motion Picture Engineers, and for Motion Picture Engineers.

It is, therefore, my plan to exert every effort to lay before you all matters of the Society's policy and conduct, and to welcome constructive criticism, comment and discussion. I shall endeavor to keep you fully posted as to the actions of your Board of Governors and to take you all into my confidence.