

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Spring Meeting of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers,
New York, N. Y., May, 1929

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LADIES and Gentlemen, both members and guests:
LIT gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Spring Convention of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers. Last Spring we met in Hollywood, the center of the producing end of the industry. It is, therefore, particularly fitting that this meeting is held in New York City where a great deal of the technical design and manufacture of motion pictures is centered and where there is the greatest consumption of the Hollywood films. Thru these two meetings the Society will get a well balanced picture of the present status of the entire motion picture industry, and the industry will have had opportunities to become familiar with the Society and its possibilities.

We have not held a meeting in New York City since 1917. Since then, there has been a steadily growing call for a meeting here, culminating in a recent letter ballot sent to the entire membership, both Active and Associate, which resulted in a two to one vote for New York City over the next choice, Asbury Park.

It has been the policy of the Society for several years to hold alternate meetings in a large city and a more or less secluded place. The advantage of the former being an opportunity to see things, and for the latter, the keeping of those in attendance at the convention, together with an opportunity for fuller papers sessions and closer personal contacts.

In line with the above policy our Papers Committee has arranged that this New York meeting will be largely a tour of inspection. In order to conserve time, most of our papers will be presented at the various places which we are to visit rather than at the hotel.

The papers Committee has prepared a wonderful program. This was done under considerable handicap as the Chairman was on

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the West Coast during most of the time usually spent in preparation for a convention. I should like to take this occasion to thank Mr. Coffman and his associates for the work they have done and will continue to do before this program appears in our Transactions. This program again features sound and its latest developments. In the past we have heard of and about television; our present program indicates that we are to have an actual demonstration of this latest marvel of engineering science.

Last fall, I outlined some of the policies which I proposed to follow as chief executive. Among those, was that of having the membership in general participate as much as possible in the conduct of the Society. You may have noticed an evidence of the carrying out of that policy by the increased number of committees and the increasing personnel of those committees. We now have 13 committees with a total membership of 125. There are, of course, some cases where the same man holds membership on more than one committee, but this has been avoided as far as practical. The total number of members may be reduced as experience indicates those who take hold and work and those who do not.

These committees were selected by the following method. A circular letter was sent to the entire membership, Active and Associate, asking each man if he would be willing to do committee work, and if so, on which committee he desired to serve. The Board of Governors was asked to recommend the man who they thought was best suited to act as chairman of each committee.

The Committee Chairmen were then appointed. They were then asked to name the men whom they felt would be most useful on their committees. All of these data were carefully reviewed and checked up against the knowledge I had, as to individual characteristics gained thru long and intimate connection with the conduct of the Society and the men's past records of service to the Society.

The personnel of the committees was then selected and appointments made. Obviously, it was not possible to please everybody in every instance. I believe, however, that we have well balanced committees representative of the various interests in the Society, and with a combined knowledge of their particular fields far in excess of that held by any other bodies of men in the world.

The response of the various committees to the work assigned has been splendid. It has been my privilege to sit in on several

committee meetings. I can truthfully state that I have never seen a more sincere, earnest collection of men who are giving freely of their time and ability for Society affairs.

These committees are backed by a Board of Governors that is well balanced as to older, experienced and perhaps conservative men, well versed in the Society's history and policy, and younger men with perhaps more vision, enthusiasm and initiative.

Our committees are working out certain things that will have a far-reaching influence on the future of our Society. The membership committee is particularly active. They have as their ambition 1,000 members by 1930. Such a rapid expansion of our membership however creates new problems that must be, and are being, given most serious consideration. Among these is the question of finance.

Our Business Relations Committee made up largely of executives is doing some excellent work along those lines. This committee, of course, has the closest co-operation of our Treasurer.

I cannot speak too highly of the thorough manner in which Mr. Hubbard is handling the finances of the Society. It is a thankless, detail job. Dunning people for dues, again and again, is anything but pleasant. Collecting for transactions and keeping the books of the Society is a job which we are mighty fortunate in having a man of Mr. Hubbard's ability do for us.

Another problem that expanding membership raises is, the possibility or advisability of replacing our present Transactions with a monthly journal. Our Journal Committee is collecting some excellent data along those lines.

Increasing membership and the rapid expansion of the sound picture has created many new problems for our Standards and Nomenclature Committee. Perhaps few of us realize how much the future success of the industry depends on standardization during the early development period we are now going thru,—you might almost say, on the honeymoon of sound and pictures. Our present Committee has already laid the foundations for some exceptionally good work along those lines.

I have not gone into the details of the work done by those committees, nor even mentioned all of our committees. Each will report to you in detail later on in the convention.

Our ambitious Membership Committee, co-operating with the Reciprocal Relations Committee, has given birth to a new child since our last convention. We now have a healthy London Section of some 60 or so members. Many problems have arisen in connection with this Section. The difference in characteristics of Englishmen and Americans; the time involved in correspondence, etc. have caused some delays. We are fortunate in having the Chairman of the London Section Mr. Rowson with us. As a member of the Board of Governors, he will have an opportunity to discuss with us personally the problems of the London Section, some of which may come up for Society action at a later time in the convention.

Since the last convention we have changed Secretaries. Our new Secretary, Mr. Burnap, took up the work without the advantage of having previously served on the Board of Governors. This, together with the rapid expansion of the Society made his task particularly difficult. In fact the work piled up so fast that it became imperative for him to have an assistant. This is something which we have foreseen for some time. Sally Renwick, a graduate of Colorado Womans College was engaged as Assistant Secretary Treasurer. She has been very busy and is doing excellent work. The new Secretary and his assistant, between them, are getting the mass of detail work into excellent, smooth running order. I think the Society is to be congratulated on having their services, and I know they have some good constructive things planned for the future.

Our Pacific Coast Section continues to hold regular, interesting and successful meetings. We are fortunate in having the chairman of this section, Mr. Dunning, here at the convention. He will probably tell you more in detail of the Section's activities.

In conformity with the policy announced by your chief executive of keeping the membership informed as to the details of the conduct of your Society, I am glad to advise you that your Board of Governors held meetings on December 3, 1928, and March 29, 1929, at which meetings the following essential actions were taken:

(1) The Business Relations Committee was authorized to try out their proposal to sell subscriptions to the Transactions instead of soliciting advertisements in numbers 36 and 37 Transactions. In order to meet the anticipated results of this campaign, 1,600 copies each of No. 36 and 37 Transactions were authorized instead of our usual 600.

(2) The application for the formation of a London Section of the Society was approved and the section authorized.

(3) The secretary was authorized to present a complete unbound set of transactions to both the London and Pacific Coast Sections.

(4) A paid assistant secretary-treasurer was authorized and an appropriation passed to cover the expenses of such an office.

(5) The auditors report of examination of the treasurer's accounts was approved and the Board's appreciation of the treasurer's services expressed to him.

(6) The Secretary was authorized to collect and store films of previous SMPE meetings.

(7) A committee was authorized to investigate the desirability of replacing our present Transactions with a monthly journal and to investigate ways and means of doing this.

(8) Reports from the various committees were discussed and accepted.

(9) The secretary was authorized to distribute a copy of the revised Aims and Accomplishments booklet to libraries in U. S. and Canada.

(10) The chairman of the Publicity Committee was authorized to increase size of the SMPE bulletin in accordance with sample submitted.

(11) The Secretary was authorized to take over the preparation and publication of the bulletin after the 1929 Spring Convention.

(12) The price of Transaction to non-members, starting with No. 37, was increased from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per copy. The price to SMPE members and libraries to remain at \$2.50.

(13) A rule was passed that no Transaction will be sent to delinquents. A delinquent being previously defined as a member whose dues remain unpaid six months after they become due.

(14) A registration fee of \$2.00 for members, \$1.00 for ladies and a charge of \$4.00 for the banquet for members and \$5.00 for guests was approved for the Spring Convention. Guest cards of admission to the papers sessions were authorized.

(15) Billing new members on a prorated quarterly basis, starting from the date of Secretary's notification of acceptance of application by the Board of Governors, was approved.

A recent analysis of our membership is very interesting. It shows that our Society is composed of a group of exceptionally capable men who report their positions as follows:

Engineers 129	}	chief	40
		research	22
		technical	14
		consulting	11
		projection	8
		chemical	6
		installation	6
		physicists	5
		mechanical	5
		electrical	4
		radio	3
		designing	2
	film recording	2	

Executives	}	Presidents	25
74		Vice-presidents	18
		Secretary and Treasurer	15
		Gen. Managers	16
Managers	}	Managers	22
56		Production Managers	15
		Technical	8
		Laboratory superintendents	6
		Experimentors	5
Cinematographers	}	Camera Men	25
45		Chief Cinematographers	20
Directors	}	Sales Managers	13
42		Editors	9
		Sales Representatives	6
		Advertising Managers	3
		Patent Attorneys	2
	Lawyers	1	
Commercial	}	Projectionists	30
58		Producers	11
		Owners	10
		Distributers	7
Miscellaneous	}	Manufacturers	5
14		Chairman	2
		Inventors	4
		Prof. of Photography	3

The class of men composing our membership is changing. We are acquiring an increasing number of members who are primarily interested in radio and acoustics as applied to sound pictures. We shall have to watch carefully to prevent unnecessary duplication of effort and papers with such organizations as the Institute of Radio Engineers, The Acoustical Society, etc. There must, of course, be close co-operation between our organization and others whose interests bear on, or interlock with ours.

As we grow in size we may soon approach the time when it will be desirable to hold local meetings between the main conventions. I believe several such meetings could to good advantage be held in New York City.

We have a very full program before us. In order to carry it out we shall have to stick pretty close to schedule. Insofar as possible, papers will be presented at the time and on the dates indicated; otherwise, they will be held over to the end of the con-

vention. Let me solicit your prompt attendance at all scheduled events.

In conclusion, I wish to express the most sincere gratitude and appreciation to our Convention Committee, and to all others who have worked long and hard to make this the most outstanding meeting so far in the history of our Society.