

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

IT WAS somewhat of a shock to me when I was gently reminded by the Papers Committee that a Presidential address would be necessary. I really tried very hard to find some way to relieve you of the boring necessity of listening to such a thing. I should be glad if you would be frank enough to say that you don't want to hear it.

Evidently no one has the courage of their convictions, so you must suffer accordingly.

In the past, the ladies have always been welcome at our conventions, but this is the first time that official provision has been made for their comfort and entertainment. We are glad to have you with us and hope you will find our convention both interesting and profitable.

Most of our committees have been active during the past six months. This convention will be sufficient evidence of the work of the Arrangements, Utilities and Papers Committees. Our Buffalo Transactions, while a little late, bear evidence that the Publications Committee has done its duty well. Getting the papers published is no easy task, and it is a more or less thankless job. The work this year was new to the entire committee, and I wish to express appreciation of their efforts.

The Publicity Committee in arranging for little talks before the Allied Film Laboratories Association, and the Motion Picture Directors Association, has started a really big work for the Society. They are to be congratulated. It may interest you to know that the Publicity Committee made every endeavor to arrange for the broadcasting of their convention by radio. Even though unsuccessful this time, the effort is an indication that, I believe, predicts a future practice. We can congratulate ourselves on being the first technical society to seriously attempt it.

The Standards Committee, as you will soon find, has also started something.

Our Membership Committee has done splendid work and made a very material increase in both our Active and Associate membership. Let me urge the old members of the Society to get acquainted with these new men. Give them the glad hand of welcome and make them feel at home. Wearing the badges, which each member received at registration, will greatly help us all to get acquainted with each other.

Our Society's progress is made, to no small extent, through its committees. I would urge greater committee activity during the coming six months.

On past occasions we have had several mighty good retrospective talks. Therefore, I should like to look into the future. As a starting point, however, you may be interested in some curves showing the growth of the Society membership. The rapidly increasing slope of the total membership curve is inspiring.

This shows that the Society must be sound, and useful to the industry, or else it would not have continued to grow. There is no reason why its usefulness, and its accomplishments, should not bear a direct relation to its total membership, for after all, the greatest progress is made through cooperation. One individual working alone, seldom gets very far. Our conventions offer the opportunities and the place for our members and others interested in our work, to get together and find out what each is doing and planning; to put their problems before committees composed of the best experts in the country. Through these committees, data is collected, analyzed and made available to all by publication in our Transactions.

The wealth of information that is available in our Transactions should be given greater distribution than it has had in the past. It is my hope that our Publicity Committee will find ways and means to place our Transactions in every large library, and in every technical educational institution in the country.

The trade papers will find in our proceedings, material for articles that is of great value and interest to their readers.

Our membership includes the leading experts in the country, on the various branches of motion picture work. With such a foundation, therefore, there is almost no limit to what can be accomplished by the Society.

Any great industry to settle down to a permanent, stable base, must standardize. Our Society offers the channel for standardization in the motion picture industry. We have made a good start, but there are still many things in crying need of standardization. Things which, if standardized, would make for progress and save the industry a great deal of money. For example; there is no such thing as standard film density; standard screen illumination, standard actinic, of artificial illumination in the studio. Films are being made under the direction of experts, whose knowledge comes from long experience, and shown under various conditions of projection. Often the results are unsatisfactory, requiring retakes or new prints at no small cost. These things should be a matter of predetermination with scientific instruments of precision, rather than dependent upon an expert's judgment.

Our standards Committee has a great work before it. We cannot be too careful in determining and adopting our standards. This has been brought deeply home by the effort that is being made to have the standards, which we have set up in the past, recognized by the American Engineering Standards Committee. They have pointed out inconsistencies in our past efforts. We have things listed as standards that are wrong, and others are not standards, but definitions.

Our Standards Committee has put a great deal of effort into a proposed revision of the standards and nomenclature that we have

adopted to date. They feel that if their recommendations are accepted, we shall make a new start, as it were, on a much firmer foundation. I would ask your most careful consideration of their proposals.

There are still many unknown factors that affect the industry; often things which are not germane to any one of our members, but which, nevertheless, should be carefully studied. For example; no one to-day knows how rapidly a motion picture screen loses its reflecting power due to ageing, collection of dust, etc. Undoubtedly, there is a point where it becomes more economical to renew the screen than to furnish the additional illumination necessary to make up the loss; but where is that point?

Many of us know that there is a difference in definition, or sharpness of pictures projected with various lenses, yet no one knows how to measure it in exact terms, so that one lens may be compared with any other lens in quantitative units. We should have such data.

At present only about five per cent of the light generated for motion picture projection ultimately reaches the screen. What an enormously inefficient thing a projector is!

There is, therefore, a splendid opportunity for a non-commercial research laboratory supported by the motion picture industry. I know of no better body to guide the work of such a research laboratory than the Society of Motion Picture Engineers. The details of how such a thing might be operated I don't know; no one knows, but unquestionably they could be worked out by the talent available in our Society, cooperating with others interested in the work.

The first great application of motion pictures was for entertainment, but they are steadily working over towards the more serious business of education. Through the motion picture, education can also be made entertaining. It is here that the greatest future for the motion picture lies.

The time is unquestionably coming when every one of us will have motion pictures in our houses. We will take and project pictures as easily as we now use the Kodak. All educational institutions will use the motion picture.

To-day pictures are being transmitted by radio. It is but a step from the transmission of one picture to the transmission of a series of pictures, which joined together, make a moving picture. It is, therefore, not only possible, but probable, that we shall show in our educational institutions, great educational motion pictures broadcasted by radio.

Instead of the county scholar struggling along under incompetent teachers, he, as well as his more fortunate fellow in the great university, will have the inspiration gained from listening to lectures delivered in person by the greatest authorities in the world.

It is not too much to believe that our Government will supervise the broadcasting of educational lectures and pictures, so that thousands,—yes, millions of our people, may be instructed at once by the greatest teachers available. These teachers will be enabled to instruct their vast audience through the universal language of the motion picture, as well as through the spoken word.

It is misunderstanding that causes most of the difficulty between people and between nations. Communication, more than anything, assists in doing away with misunderstanding. When we are broadcasting motion pictures, as well as the human voice, a tremendous advance will be made in civilization, and towards the realization of universal peace on earth and good will toward men. Our society is playing no small part in bringing this to pass.

We have the opportunity to instruct the users of this wonderful new medium of education, so that they may get the most out of it, and to see that only the highest type of material is broadcasted in the best possible manner. There are to-day various educational courses on motion picture projection. Why should not all of these be coordinated through the Society, and furnished with the latest and most accurate data as a basis for their work. Can we not be of assistance to all authors of books on projection, etc.? Here is a little food for thought on the part of our Educational Committee. I hope they will keep in touch with the University Extension movement, and put the great films of the day within reach of those in communities that do not have access to the big theatres in our large cities.

I have already trespassed too far on your patience. Our Papers and Arrangements Committees have prepared a splendid program of both work and play. It is a full one, and in order to get through with it, we shall have to attend strictly to business. Let us make our debates and voting snappy.

I would ask the authors of papers to be as brief as practicable, and those discussing the papers, to make their discussions short and to the point.

L. C. PORTER