

## INTRODUCTION

BY ADOLPH ZUKOR\*

**I**T SEEMS to me that the work of the motion picture engineers is significant of the change which has taken place in the picture industry in the last few years.

In its early days the motion picture industry was a battlefield. The leaders of the industry were perforce absorbed in the industrial problems which this rapidly growing business presented daily. They were pioneers and had to fight the pioneer's battles. However, the solution of these problems and the gradual solidification of the industry have now made it possible for everybody concerned in its growth to devote his attention more and more to the great essential—the improvement of pictures themselves.



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And there has been great improvement. Never have the studios turned out such a consistently high grade product. Proud as we are of this improvement, we are equally proud of the fact that it has come entirely from within the industry. Our specialists, our technical men, our leaders both in the artistic and industrial development of the business, have been evolved directly out of the motion picture ranks. We in the picture business have been favored with a great deal of advice from people outside our business, but despite this almost universal desire to advise us, we have been obliged to depend upon ourselves for the development of men and means of improving our position.

Thus, the technical advances in direction have been made by men who have grown up in the studio. Most of our great stars and leading

\* President, Famous Players-Lasky Corporation.

players have received their training in pictures, alone. And now we have the author coming to our studios to learn the craft of picture writing.

Time was—and not so long ago—when a theatrical producer would not sell a play for picture purposes, when authors of reputation would not consent to have their writings screened. In a few swift years all that has been changed. Playwrights and novelists realize today the great advantages that accrue from having their plays translated into pictures. Many of them have even gone beyond that; they are entering the studios and are learning how motion pictures are made and then are writing their stories directly for the screen.

The result of this change of heart on the part of authors is that the screen has at its command today practically every novel, story or play of importance, in addition to the output of original stories written by men who have studied the technique of picture making.

Of significance, too, is the definite effort being made to train people who can assume leadership in the various phases of this big business. For instance, in our own studio on Long Island, we have a class of twenty young men and women who are being taught the fundamentals of screen acting. These young people have been chosen after an exhaustive search throughout the country and represent the finest type of American youth. They will be given a course of six months' intensive instruction under conditions that no beginner in this business has ever before experienced. We are training young men in the business of selling these pictures and have already had three classes from which have been graduated young men who have found important places in our own sales organization. Before this magazine is published we shall have opened another school—for the training of theatre managers. These young men will be taught the most modern methods of presenting motion pictures to the public, so that the efforts of the people in the studio will reach the great multitude of motion picture theatres under the best advantages.

So, you will see from all this that the leaders of the motion picture industry are alive to the possibilities of its future and are preparing man power to carry on the art and business of the motion picture to even greater heights. We have built a solid foundation, both financial and artistic, and this foundation is no less solid because it has been built through years of great stress and turmoil. Now we must erect the superstructure, and we have prepared for that task by developing the men and women who can do it.