

FIAF Congress.
Lausanne. October, 1954.

Report on National Film Library, London, 1953 - 4.

The normal work of the Library has continued throughout the year. The Library's three Selection Committees (Film, History, Science) have met regularly and selected films to be subsequently obtained by voluntary gifts from their producers and distributors. A few collections of early films have been acquired. Regular testing of films in the Library's collection has been maintained, and those found to be approaching deterioration have been copied. The work of the Cataloguing Staff has been interrupted by the FIAF Catalogue (see below) and some other special tasks, but has otherwise continued normally. Programmes of films from the Library given weekly at the British Film Institute's National Film Theatre, under the general title, "50 Years of Film" continue to be extremely successful. We are grateful to other archives who have occasionally lent us films for this series. We in turn have lent films to other members of FIAF (Stockholm, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Paris, Milan, Rome, Wiesbaden), but virtually no permanent exchanges have taken place owing to shortage of money. The Stills Department of the National Film Library has added several thousand stills to its collection, and has been most active in supplying copies also for exhibitions arranged by film societies and schools. One or two developments during the year, however, call for special mention.

Government Films

Recently a Committee appointed by the Government has been considering the preservation of Government Records of all kinds in England which is at present controlled by an out of date Act of 1877. Many films have of course been made by Government Departments (including the well known documentaries of G.P.O. Film Unit and Crown Film Unit). These are considered as Government Records but the Committee has recommended that all such films should be preserved in the National Film Library. This recommendation has not yet been carried into effect, but it is of great importance in the development of the Library and we are at present strenuously engaged in revising our future storage plans to meet this new responsibility.

FIAF Catalogue

The Cataloguing Staff of the National Film Library has spent four months on the preparation of the FIAF Catalogue although this was preceded by preliminary work which had taken very much longer.