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This last year, the twenty-first of the National Film Archive, has been a significant, and at the same time, a difficult one in its history. Significant because of the internal re-organisation which has taken place: difficult because of shortage of money and of staff.

The National Film Archive is a part of the British Film Institute and although it is a most important part, the Institute has other activities, such as the National Film Theatre, the distribution of films to film societies, teaching of film appreciation for schools, publication of SIGHT AND SOUND and so on. It became apparent that it was necessary for the success of the Archive to create a clear distinction between the Archive and these other activities. It is our experience that the film industry will give films to the Archive to be preserved, but they will not do this so readily if they believe there is a danger that the films may automatically be used also for exhibition (for example, in our National Film Theatre) or for distribution (however limited). I will refer again in a moment to our present relations with the film industry, but here I will simply say that in our experience it is vital to good relations to put the chief emphasis on preservation, and to establish a clear distinction between this and any other activity. Later, when a film has been received, one may seek permission in certain cases to use it in one way or another, but this should be treated as a quite separate operation, not automatically dependent on the preservation activity.

It was in order to realise this policy in our own case that we changed our title from National Film Library to National Film Archive. We also entirely re-organised our Archive Committee, which is now both stronger and more independent. In fact it has complete responsibility for the control of the Archive in all matters except finance. This new Committee began its activities during the last year with energy and enthusiasm.

Our colleagues in FIAF will have noticed that for the first time we have our own Archive notepaper, and an Archive emblem. These are small things, but not without significance. We are also publishing an illustrated booklet on the work of the Archive; I hope copies will be ready in time for the Congress, but if not, they will be sent to our colleagues immediately afterwards.

The Government, which is the source of our finance, is also prepared to help us in the preservation of our films, but in the present difficult economic position it gives us very little assistance with our other activities. We have been able this year to build twenty-eight new storage vaults (each to hold 500,000 feet of film) and we have engaged in a considerable programme of copying early films in danger of deterioration. We have received no money, however, to make copies for exchange with other archives, and this has brought our exchanges almost to a standstill. I hope we can break this deadlock in the coming year.

The chief British film distributor, the Rank Organisation, has given us for preservation lavender copies of all its most important films. Some other companies, and notably the American companies, have been less co-operative. The Government is at this moment changing our Copyright law, and in this connection several Members of Parliament tried to obtain for us a right of legal deposit. This was naturally opposed by the film industry and it failed. The film industry is, of course, a little angry



that this attempt should have been made at all, and we now have to do our utmost to re-establish good relations with them. This is where the film industry members of our National Film Archive Committee can be helpful and they have suggested that talks between the Archive and the industry should be held. I hope that the result will be better co-operation than we have had before, but it is too early yet to be optimistic. We have acted in the spirit of the proverb: "Nothing venture, nothing gain"; but for the moment the result is that we are confronted by the most serious crisis in our history.

Fortunately, we have a long history of good relations with the industry, and I hope this will help us now. The Rank Organisation is helping us to mount an ambitious series of retrospective programmes of their films in the National Film Theatre in September; this series will be pre-viewed at the Edinburgh Film Festival, and will afterwards be shown also by the Netherlands Film Museum in Holland.

Our staff difficulties are caused by the fact that with the full employment which has existed in our country since the War, commerce and industry can pay more for workers than a cultural organisation such as our own, dependent on a fixed income. This has made it difficult for the British Film Institute to attract sufficient workers, and competent workers. Since our resources are always stretched to the limit and the work is always growing, this imposes a heavy strain on our loyal core of administrative staff. Some of our smaller colleagues in FIAF may wish they were as large and complex as the British Film Institute, but it must be remembered that a larger organisation often simply results in greater and more complex problems.

Finally a word must be said about the exhibition SIXTY YEARS OF CINEMA which was created by the Cinematheque Francaise, and has now moved to London, where it has taken a new shape. The London exhibition has been organised principally not by the Archive, but by the British Film Institute as a whole, although the Archive has supplied most of the stills which constitute the main part of the exhibition. The exhibition has been financed by the London newspaper THE OBSERVER, and in order to attract a large public, has been conceived in a much more popular form than the exhibition in Paris; it was reported on August 25th that 200,000 people had visited the exhibition since it opened.