

REPORT 1962-63

of the

NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE, LONDON.

ACQUISITIONS

The National Film Archive continues to add new films to its collection every year, mainly as the result of gifts by the film and television industries. For the year ending March, 1963, 2,414 reels of film were added, and 716 reels of television material.

NEW STORAGE SITE

The Archive is now faced with considerable storage problems. Its present store has been designed for nitrate film. We continue to search for a new site near London which we could develop as a store for acetate film, and which will eventually become our main store. We are being assisted in this by the Government.

X STORAGE OF MAGNETIC TAPES

Because magnetic tape is growing in quantity and importance, not only for the recording of sound but also for the video tape recording of pictures by television companies, we have been seeking technical advice on the best method of storing magnetic tapes for Archive purposes. On 23rd January, we called a meeting of twelve electronic engineers from the most important television, production and manufacturing companies, and they discussed the problems of the Archive extensively. They recommended that magnetic sound tracks should be preserved by the Archive in their original form in order to keep the quality of the recording: the preservation of pictures recorded on video tape, however, presented such great technical problems, as well as financial problems, that the meeting unanimously recommended that they should be copied on to optical film for Archive preservation.

AGREEMENT WITH THE AMERICAN FILM INDUSTRY

Since it was formed, the National Film Archive has had difficulty in acquiring all the American films it needed; some American companies have co-operated continuously and consistently with the Archive, others have varied in their co-operation from time to time, and still others have helped the Archive hardly at all. To remedy this situation, the Archive entered into negotiations with the Motion Picture Association of America for the preparation of a model agreement for the deposit of films in the Archive which would be acceptable to the American industry. This model agreement has now been accepted by the MPAA and has been printed. Copies have been submitted individually to the main American distributors operating in England, and it is confidentially expected that they will all sign the agreement. We hope that, as a result of this, the difficulties we have had in the past in obtaining American films will come to an end.

FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE

The newly-formed Friends of the National Film Archive continues to give us most valuable support. On 2nd December, the Friends arranged an excellent illustrated lecture at the National Film Theatre on the History of the Colour Film given by Mr. Brian Coe, and on 23rd December they invited Mme. Malthete-Melies to give an illustrated lecture in London, also at the National Film Theatre, on the work of Georges Melies. In October of this year, the Friends will show in London an exhibition of Eisenstein drawings which has already been shown by some FIAF members. The Friends is also actively encouraging

British universities to use the collections of the National Film Archive for their research.

OVERSEAS AID

During the period from 28th November to 13th December, 1962 the Archive was happy to welcome Mrs. Yvette Biro, and Mr. Balint Magyar, of the Hungarian Film Archive who came to London to study our work at the invitation of the British Foreign Office.

The Archive also sent thirteen films of Alfred Hitchcock to the Museum of Modern Art Film Library in New York for its Hitchcock season. We co-operated with the British Film Producers' Association, the British Council, and the Central Office of Information to send thirty British feature films and over twenty documentaries to Rio de Janeiro for a retrospective on the history of the British sound film; most of the films were supplied direct by the British film industry, but one or two came from the Archive. The National Film Archive has also begun an exchange of films with the newly-formed Film Institute of India.

Finally, the Archive was able to offer copies of 340 duplicate books in its library to other FIAF members, and we are happy to say that 18 archives took advantage of this offer, and 216 books were distributed amongst them. Although these books were offered freely without any question of exchange, six archives did, in fact, offer books in exchange for which we are grateful.

CONCLUSION

For the National Film Archive, this has been on the whole, a normal year, and it has pursued its normal activities. In this report, I have picked out only a few of the items which I thought would be of general interest to FIAF members, but I should be very happy to provide any further information on these or any other activities if requested to do so.

ERNEST LINDGREN

Curator.