

The Commission received approval from the Executive Committee to nominate Mrs. Aveney of the Library of Congress as the new member to replace Dr. Montesanti, who has retired.

DOCUMENTATION COMMISSION.

The Commission met in Amsterdam February 11-13, as guest of the Nederlands Filmmuseum. On the subject of The International Index to Film Periodicals, it was reported that the cards for the 1973 annual volume would soon be ready to turn over to R.R. Bowker for publication, which is scheduled for June 1974. The Commission decided to include several new periodicals beginning in 1974, including Variety (film reviews only), Monthly Film Bulletin, and Film Facts. As these filmographic periodicals will make a large increase in the number of cards to be sent out and filed in the archives, it was decided for practical reasons to index more selectively the minor language periodicals for the card service only, although they will continue to be fully indexed for the annual volume. Plans are still underway to move the card distribution service from the FIAF Secretariat to London, where it will operate under the administration of the National Film Archive.

Other topics discussed by the Commission included the Draft Directory of Film and Television Documentation Sources, the classification of film literature, the international filmography, the international directory of set designers, data processing, and television documentation. The only project to be completed was the Guidelines for Describing Unpublished Scripts: with some minor changes, this will be published by the FIAF Secretariat and distributed to member archives during the summer of 1974.

SOURCE MATERIAL ON AMERICAN FILM PRODUCTION PRIOR TO 1920

Some notes on existing filmographic sources for American film production before 1920, other than the trade periodicals and newspapers, by Anthony Slide. When Mr. Slide prepared these notes he was working on the forthcoming AFI Catalogue, Feature Films 1911-1920. Since that time he has become Assistant Archivist at the American Film Institute Archives.

In my researches with the American Film Institute on early American film production, initially as a Louis B. Mayer Research Associate and now in connection with preparatory work on the American Film Institute Catalog: Feature Films 1911-1920, I have been able to uncover and gain access to more research material on the American cinema prior to 1920 than most other people working in the same field. What strikes me time and again is not that so much contemporary material is lost, but that so much has survived, and that what has survived is cataloged in a totally inadequate fashion.

Company records are, quite naturally, the primary--indeed the most important--source of research. The holdings of the Museum of Modern Art in relation to the American Biograph Company and D. W. Griffith are well-known, but the Museum also has a sizeable collection relating to the Edison Film Company. However, their collection is as nothing compared to the veritable treasure trove at the Edison National Historic Site (P.O. Box 126, Orange, New Jersey 07051), whose vaults contain original scripts, glass negatives and legal papers, much of which is as yet uncataloged. All the Site lacks is a sizeable collection of Edison Films. Albert E. Smith, co-founder of the Vitagraph Company, maintained meticulous business records, and these are now located, along with what must be the only complete run in existence of the Vitagraph Life Portrayals (1909-1916), in the Special Collections Division of the University of California, Los Angeles.