

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA.

The last seven months have been the busiest in the history of the Film Archives of the Library. During the period some 95,000 feet of nitrate film have been transferred to safety stock, contracts have been let for the building of a new vault to hold the greatly increased volume of nitrate material now being located and much cataloguing of contemporary material has been achieved.

In the copying programme apart from short information films of the period 1915 - 1925, the following features have been found and transferred:-

1. PAINTED DAUGHTERS, 1925
2. ROBBERY UNDER ARMS, 1920
3. THE SENTIMENTAL BLOKE , 1932 version
4. CLARA GIBBINGS 1934
5. THE SILENCE OF DEAN MAITLAND 1934
6. SPLENDID FELLOWS 1934
7. WESTERN GATEWAY 1936
8. THE DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND. 1928

Amongst the information films was an interesting item, " THE TOUR OF AUSTRALIA BY THE PRINCE OF WALES" 1920; this included valuable descriptive material of the various capital cities.

A development which has given us great pleasure has been the everincreasing co-operation of the distributors and we have been delighted to receive preservation material for such recent films as "THE SIEGE OF PINCHGUT", "THE SUNDOWNERS", "BITTER SPRINGS" and "ROBBERY UNDER ARMS". With the promise of copies of most locally made films produced since 1950, we hope to relieve future archivists of the constant searching which has been our lot for so many years.

The third supplement of our catalogue "Australian Films" will shortly be printed. This covers Australian informational film production during 1961 and, with the original publication and the other supplements, provides a fairly complete picture of production of this type of film since 1940.

In co-operation with national and commercial television stations short programmes have been provided illustrating various early national events. As the Archive grows we hope to give the people of Australia a chance to see the treasures of their Archive by means of specially prepared programmes.

Preliminary work has also been commenced in a project which aims to provide compilations illustrating aspects of Australian film history. These compilations will be directed particularly to overseas students who may wish to gain a picture of Australian production. If all goes as planned we shall produce several language versions of each compilation which we hope will be acceptable as exchange material.

Perhaps it may interest other Members to know that we have found a commercial process called "Permanew" extremely valuable in restoring scratched and worn nitrate prints to something like new condition prior to copying. The process eliminates all but the deepest gouges from the copies which are much superior to the original.

Although our Archive is still small by comparison with those of our fellow Members and although we have managed to locate and copy only about one quarter of the Australian features produced up to 1940, we are still searching keenly for the remaining films.

Finally may we ask Members if they would watch for any sign of a film, "SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS", a 3000 foot religious film dealing with the early Christian martyrs. This was made in Melbourne in 1899 by the Salvation Army and has much of interest to all film historians in it. So far we have been unable to trace a surviving print although we have stills and have found 200 coloured slides which accompanied the film. Prints were coloured by Pathe in 1900 and some were known to have been screened in England, America and Canada.