

Extract from

Amateur PHOTOGRAPHER

(See overleaf)

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OF.....

Grande -
Bretagne

By Amateurs for Amateurs

WELCOME to Harry Winsor, the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers' new chairman. He assumes office in what is likely to prove a critical year. True, the impending move to new premises has been deferred, but everyone who plays any part in the Institute's affairs knows that the problem has been shorn only of its urgency—it still remains in the foreground. However, a valuable breathing space has been secured and there is good reason to believe that under Harry Winsor's discreet but firm guidance real progress will be made. Very able in committee, he has the happy gift of encouraging discussion by giving courteous rein to all points of view while at the same time never relaxing his grip.

Already there are stirrings of a new spirit. The very busy disc department continues to thrive under the administration of Mr. and Mrs. Day and Gerald Mee in the north; the film library, which contains the largest collection of prize-winning films extant, is to come under the day-to-day management of Sidney Manasseh north of the Thames; new blood has been acquired by the publications committee; the new Festival committee unites newcomers with experienced old hands. But an office which has been vacant for too long still remains to be filled—that of membership recruitment; and the need for it has been made the greater by the retirement through ill health of the Regions Officer, Bernard Gurr. As architect and builder of the Regions scheme, Mr. Gurr incidentally carried the flag for the Institute during his countryside travels and contacts.

Like all organizations of the kind, the I.A.C. needs more members, but the need is the more insatiable in its case because of its unusual constitution. All its officers are unpaid but the sheer size of the present membership can only be coped with by a small full-time paid staff who deal with routine office affairs under the supervision of key members of the council who in their turn rely very largely on the regions. This method of working has enabled the I.A.C. to maintain the proudly held claim that the Institute is indeed an organization run for amateurs by amateurs.

Nevertheless, while the reservoir of freely given help and goodwill is not affected by economic conditions (except in so far as financial pressures in their own affairs may necessitate some officials devoting less time to Institute business), rents and salaries are. And it is to be doubted whether the amateur/paid staff set-up can continue to function efficiently

under rapidly changing conditions in which the emphasis is all on rationalization, streamlining and specialization. The time may well be approaching when the appointment of a director becomes imperative—an appointment which is likely to be strongly opposed by those who hold that the run-by-amateurs-for-amateurs boast still has meaning and which will make a big dent in the organization's already fully extended financial resources.

A rise in the cost of the annual subscription clearly cannot be delayed much longer, which is the best of all reasons

VIEWS and NEWS

by Gordon Malthouse

for those who have been considering joining to make up their minds now, since not only will they have the advantage of the current low rate but their enlistment could postpone or at least reduce any increase. Particulars of membership can be obtained from the Acting Administrative Secretary, 8 West Street, Epsom, Surrey.

Co-ordinating Rules

THE 5th Paris Biennale competition which closed this month included a section for experimental and *avant-garde* shorts exploring new techniques of film making, the uses of colour, resources of editing and fresh methods and styles in general. It was for young professionals only—another example of the way in which the professional leads the amateur, for I know of no amateur film competition in the world which specifically sets out to encourage fresh thinking. On the contrary, the experimental is usually frowned on, if not ridiculed, in amateur film circles.

But close attention continues to be paid to rules and regulations. The latest organization to emerge concerned with these is the International Association of Amateur Film Festivals with headquarters in America, and already many of the leading national bodies have joined. The idea is an excellent one: "to stimulate participation in

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amateur film festivals, to unify rules and regulations, thus eliminating confusion in the minds of contestants, to co-operate with member festivals and assist in solving common problems, and to maintain the highest possible ideals in conducting film festivals."

Entrants will in theory be able to judge the standing of any contest by its classification: Class A for those which have been running for five years or more and which adopt the Association's rules and regulations; Class B: fewer than five years; Class C: for members whose rules are different from the Association's; Class D: entries limited to local or specific areas; Class E: all other festivals, including those conducted by non-members.

Among the attractions of Class A festivals for intending entrants are the publication in the entry form of dates on which films will be returned and the undertaking to send the judges' score sheets to any contestant requesting them. But so far as Classes C, D and E are concerned, the entrant will not know how they differ.

Like the 5th Paris Biennale, Class A requires that the running time of all entries shall not exceed 30 minutes, an acceptable enough stipulation in the case of experimental films but less defensible for each and every type of film. Amateur status is left undefined, and as for score sheets, the more progressive competition organizers are strongly opposed to numerical marking (if this is what is meant by "score"), taking the view that it is impossible to break down a film into its constituent parts and to allocate a maximum number of marks to each.

To the extent that it seeks to look after the interests of the entrant, the Association is to be welcomed, but any effort to harness creativeness with universally applied rules is to no one's advantage.