

## Men in Movement

**L**AST month's review of recent industrial films was so distressing that it prompted me to make a somewhat unorthodox survey among some of the nation's more imaginative film-makers to discover whether they had any film ideas worth talking about. I asked that they limit their answers to films they were really eager to do, films they thought were "sponsorable," and which they were willing to have written up for everybody to read about.

Eight of the nineteen film-makers who were sent the letter responded at length. The ideas they submitted were actually more varied and intriguing than I had guessed they would be. In locale they ranged from the South Seas to Madison Avenue, in subject from the history of trees to the history of music, and from the modern skyscraper to the backyard swimming pool. Although the answers to my questions were often hasty and half formed, they showed the vital sparks of personality and excitement which must be present in the conception of an outstanding film.

I enjoyed reading about these films, and I feel sure I would enjoy seeing them come true. To any unscrupulous people who might want to lift one of the ideas sketched below and claim it for his own I can say only this: when you take someone else's good idea you have only his good idea—you do not have his good name, his good sense, or his good work.

Since the films are as yet unborn, and consequently unnamed, I have arranged things alphabetically by film-maker:

**JULIEN BRYAN.** Appropriate to the school season, Mr. Bryan writes that he is most interested right now in producing a series of films designed to attract young people to careers in science and engineering. Most kids are bored with mathematics, physics, and chemistry, he says, when these ought to be the most exciting things in the world. A "pilot" film for the project would cost about \$100,000. "I have no intention of making all six films myself," Mr. Bryan says, "but rather getting three or four of the ablest documentary film producers in America to work with us." The idea of making a series of stimulating science films for school use is one in which a number of film-makers have been expressing interest. It does not seem far-fetched that some industrial manufacturers and educational foundations would be interested in pooling resources to sponsor a dynamic series of motion pictures on this most important mid-century educational topic.

Julien Bryan is Executive Director of the International Film Foundation, Inc., at 270 Park Avenue, New York 17, N.Y. He is best known for the wartime series of Good Neighbor films made for the Office of Inter-American Affairs, and for many postwar documentaries made in Italy, Japan, Britain, the U.S., and elsewhere.

**HELEN GRAYSON and WILLIAM NOVIK.** This hands-across-the-sea partnership promises to be one of the most exciting and productive of the postwar decade. Miss Grayson, one of the few women directors in the world, is best known for "The Cummington Story" and for a State Department series on American history. William Novik, a French film-maker, is the creator of the outstanding color film "Medieval Images." Joining forces, they plan to make a Franco-American film about Benjamin Franklin in France, a black-and-white short with French and English versions for use here and abroad. Cost is estimated at about \$30,000.

The film will be shot in Paris and in the United States, using the camera to animate engravings and survivals of the time. Interesting or amusing events, as well as customs and viewpoints, will be described as far as possible in Franklin's words and in the words of his contemporaries. In contrasting the brilliant artistic and intellectual life of eighteenth-century Paris with the plain, forthright, and dynamic figure of the visiting American, Miss Grayson and M. Novik feel that the film will be an important addition to Franco-American understanding—showing freedom, rugged enterprise, and optimism on the one hand, and on the other a highly developed art of living and a zest for ideas and knowledge. "Because of our respective interest in each other's countries," Miss Grayson writes, "and because we both enjoy bringing a subject to life in this way, we see the film as a 'natural' and a 'must.'" An enterprising sponsor with a French or European market to develop will find here a first-rate idea for a film and two top film-makers. Helen Grayson can be reached at 118 East 37th Street, New York City (during September) and later at Hotel Paris-Dinard, 29 rue Casette, Paris (VIIe), France.

**CHARLES GUGGENHEIM.** This young St. Louis film-maker, whose hard-hitting films on municipal deterioration have won international attention, writes that the film he would most like to make right now is a documentary on the housing problem in a large American city. It would be twenty-seven and one-half minutes long (suitable for television), and would cost about \$50,000. Mr. Guggenheim feels that it could be financed by manufacturers of building materials, who have a vested interest in the rehabilitation of neighborhoods and slums. He writes that in the past several years he and his colleagues have seen what most people do not have an opportunity to see, or do not care to see. "We have seen a city spend the greatest majority of its public health and public safety funds on areas which are not worth saving," he writes. "We have met and talked with the people who live there, and whose children have been influenced by the never-ending bleakness and pessimism which are bred in a bad neighborhood. . . . Certainly here is a perfect subject. . . ."

Mr. Guggenheim concludes that any film can be interesting to make and to watch if the sponsor allows an interesting point of view. Sponsors who are so inclined might address themselves to Charles Guggenheim and Associates, 5522 Delmar Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri.

**LEN LYE.** By way of New Zealand and England, Len Lye came to the United States as an originator of lively hand-drawn abstractions and documentary films; in this country he worked for a number of years as a director of March of Time films. Mr. Lye outlines several unusual films, matching his somewhat checkered film career. "I'm crazy about the islands of the South Pacific," he writes. "To me no one has filmed their romanticism and social 'feel' and certainly not in relation to the world at large." Having grown up with New Zealand Polynesians, traded in Samoa, learned to respect Melanesians, he feels that this is a film he is particularly suited for. Soap or pineapple concerns would surely get their money's worth from such a film, in prestige, public relations, and sales.

What distinguishes an industrial film, Mr. Lye points out, is its subconscious preoccupation with the significance of life rather than with products. Two other films which he is keen on making are one on music (in which he would use abstract color accompaniments to help clarify the difference between ritualistic, serious, and jazz music) and one on the advertising and public-relations industry (a documentary showing how a good campaign is ironed out, the juggle for time and space,

etc.). Mr. Lye concludes wisely, with regard to the latter idea, that of all the industries in need of a good public-relations film the public-relations industry's need is greatest. Len Lye has organized a small production company called Direct Films, at 41 Bethune Street, New York City.

**NICHOLAS READ.** In this country Nick Read is most prominent for his work in heading up the Southern Educational Film Production Service. His pet idea for a film is one that deserves a sponsor and might easily find one. It deals with the care and management of a back-yard swimming pool. From personal experience Mr. Read can offer a script that tells how the pool was changed from a neighborhood nuisance to a well-run community project. "The story of how we learned and what we learned," writes Mr. Read, "could be told in film with considerable zest and humor. Frankly, I think the film would help sell swimming pools even if we leaned over backwards not to make this its purpose. . . . Done with our own pool and people, and at our own schedule and by our own shop, we could bring in a nice film in color with some dialogue as well as narration for \$10,000 or under." Potential sponsors, in addition to swimming-pool manufacturing companies, might be found among insurance companies, for as Mr. Read states, "People who own pools have holes in their heads as well as their yards if they don't automatically have large insurance policies." When he is not making films in Nicaragua, Greece, or Africa Mr. Read can be found at Potomac Film Producers, Inc., 1536 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Washington 6, D.C.

**HENWAR RODAKIEWICZ.** With a record as long as any in documentary film writing and directing, Mr. Rodakiewicz has gone back fifteen years or so to dig out an idea he has been yearning to make into a film. It would be a feature-length film based on George R. Stewart's "Storm," an exciting semi-documentary novel which traces a storm which gathers off the coast of Japan and ends creating havoc in the California Sierras. The film would cost about \$500,000, and might well find joint sponsorship among transportation and communication companies. It would be shot in California and Nevada, with as many authentic scenes as possible in the various weather, train, and telegraph offices—and a real storm in Donner Pass climaxing the film. "I am far from alone in wishing to do this film," Mr. Rodakiewicz writes. "Practically every documentary film-maker has for years been wishing to have a crack at it." Having already made films on Florida hurricanes and Atlantic ice-patrols Mr. Rodakiewicz seems well qualified to tackle further weather problems. As a freelance writer-director Henwar Rodakiewicz has his business address at 400 East 50th Street New York City.

**GEORGE STONEY.** A contemporary examination of all our natural resources is one of the ideas that George Stoney would like to put off film. "What I want to demonstrate," he writes "is the eternal struggle that goes on between man's needs and nature's limits. Each time we learn to handle one 'problem' another crops up . . . and it will always be thus. But just what are the limits, what are the possibilities? What actually happened in the famous dust bowl area? Is the lesson of 'The River' still valid? What are the real facts about the lumber resources? Why are more acres in timber now than fifty years ago? What are the facts behind the differing claims of those who advocate and those who oppose the importation of oil into the U.S.?" Mr. Stoney's outline takes on the tone of a "Dragnet" mystery, a wholly appropriate mood for this often beclouded subject.

Recently he has been working out of Washington, D.C.; this month he takes up the position of director of the Film Institute, City College, Convent Avenue, New York, N.Y.

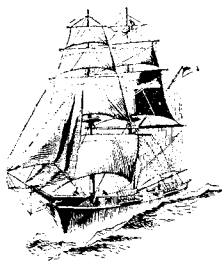
**ROGER TILTON.** From the maker of "Jazz Dance" come plans and hopes for two more films about contemporary America. "Sky-scraper" is Mr. Tilton's title for a film which "would interpret the upward growth of our great architecture in terms of movement and sound, absorbing the audience in a play of emotional, dramatic, vertiginous experiences created on the screen. Through it the audience would 'live out' the process of building."

Another film Mr. Tilton would like to do is called "Parkway." He feels it could well be sponsored by the concrete or asphalt companies which have a stake in the new national highway systems. Mr. Tilton now heads Roger Tilton Films, Inc., at 417 West 21st Street, New York 11, N.Y.

Well, even if they never get made it's good to think that film-makers still dream about good films, even if it's hard to make the dreams come true.

—CECILE STARR.

# Books for Young People



—“Action Starboard.”

CHILDREN'S librarians are asked often to give an exact age or grade for which books they are reviewing are suitable. Unless they know the child who will read the books they seldom like to do this because of the many variables that affect reading. Children master the mechanics of reading at different ages; their emotional, social, and physical development varies; the reading habits of their families differ. Children interested in a subject will read books on that subject of far more difficulty than they will in their general reading. These and many other factors make it well-nigh impossible to pinpoint a book for, example, the eight-year-old boy or the twelve-year-old girl.

Certain phrases, general indications of age and grade ranges, are often given in a review: “a picture book,” “for the youngest” are self-explanatory; “for the beginning reader,” “for younger children” usually mean those children who are able to read but are not yet proficient, and this may mean a child anywhere from six to nine years old; “for older boys and girls” usually indicates children in the upper grades who are able to read long, somewhat involved stories; and, of course, “for the teen-age,” “for young adults” are again self-explanatory. Sometimes suitability is indicated by a grade or age range: “for nine- to twelve-year-olds,” “boys in the fifth and sixth grades.” Or there is within the descriptive matter of the review a clue to the probable reader: “ten-year-old John,” “seventeen-year-old Mary,” “simple, easy-to-read text,” “many full-page illustrations,” “for the unusual child.” Thus do we try to indicate in a general way the groups for which books seem suitable, depending upon the person who knows the individual child to make the final selection appropriate for him.

Reviewers for this issue: Elizabeth Nesbitt, Associate Dean, School of Library Science, Carnegie Institute of Technology; Nance O'Neill, Librarian, Manual Arts High School, Los Angeles, California; Ruth Hill Viguers, Lecturer, Library School, Simmons College; and Elizabeth O. Williams, Supervisor, Library and Textbook Section, Los Angeles Board of Education.

FRANCES LANDER SPAIN, *Coordinator, Children's Services, The New York Public Library.*

**ONAH THE FISHERMAN.** By Reiner Zimnik. Translated by Richard and Clara Winston. Pantheon. \$3. “In Paris the fishermen sit by the banks of the Seine and fish. . . . These fishermen of Paris catch nothing but little fish, but they do not care.” When one of them, Onah, discovered how to catch big fish he was no longer welcome to fish from the banks of the Seine. He went out into the world teaching people how to catch big fish, becoming rich and seeing many wonderful sights, but homesickness drove him back to Paris, where at last he was content to catch small fish.

There is a mingling of sophistication and childlike quality in the line drawings which will probably make it appealing to many adults as well as children. Some of the drawings are reminiscent of Roland Emmett, but most of them have originality and charm and can be compared with the work of no other artist. A gay, amusing picture book. —RUTH HILL VIGUERS.

**KNOW A LOT OF THINGS.** By Ann and Paul Rand. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.75. This picture book, the first by an

American artist designer and his wife, evidences an appreciation of the sense of wonder which little children feel in their growing knowledge. The brief and simple text is often enlivened with the kind of fancy associated with fact which delights the preschool child. Less frequently there is a prosaic quality which may be overapparent in contrast with the predominating imaginative touches. The impressionistic illustrations in bright, varied colors achieve, without resort to minute details, harmony with the text.

—ELIZABETH NESBITT.

**BERRIES IN THE SCOOP.** A Cape Cod Cranberry Story. By Lois Lenski. Illustrated by the author. Lippincott. \$2.25. **WE LIVE BY THE RIVER.** By Lois Lenski. Illustrated by the author. Lippincott. \$2.25. These are two more titles in the Round About America Series for boys and girls seven-to-nine years of age. There are warmth and understanding in these stories of how cranberries are grown and gathered by Portuguese workers in the bogs of Cape Cod, and of how the rivers color and influence the lives of the river children and

their families at work and play. They make an authentic contribution to the social studies units on American life for the youngest readers.

—ELIZABETH O. WILLIAMS.

**HIPPOLYTE: CRAB KING.** By Joy Anderson. Illustrated by Peter Spier. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.25. The island of Trinidad is the setting for this story of a little boy who earned the money for his carnival costume by catching swamp crabs and selling them in the big market, surprising the villagers of Tuna Puna.

Hippolyte's little house on “tall spider legs,” his family, and his friends have the charm of the unfamiliar, but the story is told so simply that the youngest readers can enjoy it for themselves. The many black-and-white drawings are full of life and atmosphere and the gaiety of festival time.

—R. H. V.

**STOWAWAY TO THE MUSHROOM PLANET.** By Eleanor Cameron. Illustrated by Robert Henneberger. Little, Brown. \$2.75. A great many eight- to ten-year-old boys will be made very happy by the sequel to “The Wonderful Flight to the Mushroom Planet.” There is in the second book no diminishing of the expert combination of fact and fantasy, of science and wonder, of humor and imagination which made the first book so original and delightful. There is a new element of suspense and danger in the person of the stowaway, Horatio Q. Peabody, a deadly serious and self-seeking young scientist, whose pride of knowledge unsuccessfully defies the Law of Order. If there is a warning here it is pleasantly integrated with the story.

—E. N.

**A DOG FOR DAVIES HILL.** By Clare Bice. Illustrated by the author. Macmillan. \$3. This is the story of a boy who befriended an old beggar and was rewarded with a hungry little dog. Davies trained the dog, Fly, to help the sheep dogs, and it was a proud day when he placed first in the novice class at the trials. There are strange and thrilling



—From “Stowaway to the Mushroom Planet.”

“. . . fantasy, science, humor, imagination.”