

habits and customs of the inhabitants of other parts of Africa and shots of drumming and dancing are enthusiastically received. Repetition is not unacceptable to them, and one favourite whom they are prepared to see again and again is the inimitable *Charlie Chaplin*.

The place has become a social centre for the African population and greetings and conversation rise on all sides before the show commences. But sharp on the stroke of 9 p.m. the sound of the gramophone dies away, the pilot light is extinguished, the audience sinks to hushed attention; immediately the first picture is switched on to the screen. The operating is excellent; the picture is sharp and clear and correctly framed, and no white flashes are allowed to appear at the end of a reel. As the pilot light goes on, the gramophone starts up and everything is cut off with equal efficiency as the next reel begins. This is an admirable example of personal enterprise.

## The School of Instruction, Accra, Gold Coast

ONE of the long-range objectives of the Colonial Film Unit and perhaps its most important one is the creation of an organisation in each colony to produce its own films. It is logical to assume that if films are to achieve their purpose they must be made by those who have a thorough understanding of the mental processes of the people for whom they are being made. No colony will be wholly satisfied with many of its films, particularly those dealing with social problems, until they are made in their own territory by their own people.

An important step was recently made towards the achieving of this main objective when the first School of Instruction was opened in September at Accra in the Gold Coast. It is significant that practically the whole cost of this vital experiment is being shared by the Gold Coast and Nigerian Governments, an expression of faith in the importance the film is destined to play in the development of education and the social life of the peoples.

Past experience in the colonial field and association with colonials who have come to Soho Square for instruction have indicated beyond any doubt that there are many available now who are perfectly capable of becoming thoroughly efficient technicians. The trainees at present under instruction were selected with particular care to ensure the success of this initial effort. Many more were anxious to undertake the training but it was thought wise to limit the numbers so that the instruction would be the more thorough.

In consequence it has been possible to design the syllabus on liberal lines. Beginning with a short course of still photography, it includes

the elements of cinematography, film directing and script-writing, and it is confidently hoped that the training will eventually equip the students to produce simple topical and instructional films that will be of the utmost value in these territories. Reports that have already reached headquarters are indeed encouraging and examples of the work of the trainees show that they are particularly receptive and that the success of the experiment is assured.

The composition of the teaching staff ensures that the Colonial Film Unit's well-tried methods of approach and technique are used to the full. Mr. H. M. K. Howson, M.A., who has carried out extensive investigation in connection with most of the films already produced by the Unit in West Africa, was responsible for all the early organisation of the course. His extensive knowledge of the film requirements of the West African territories is unique and the trainees will benefit greatly from his experience, enthusiasm and thoroughness. Mr. F. Lagden, who gave the early instruction in photography, has thirty years' experience as a cameraman in the film industry. The excellence of his camera work in West Africa is certain to set a high standard for the trainees. In general charge of instruction is Mr. R. W. Harris, A.R.P.S., who spent upwards of twenty years on the staff of Messrs. Kodak, Ltd., of Harrow, where he was supervising a technical testing department for a number of years.

Achimota College, within easy reach of the School, is giving generous



assistance, and science specialists have volunteered to lecture the trainees on matters of scientific importance relative to photography and films.

It is fortunate for the pupils, too, that a 35-mm. camera unit is to operate in the Gold Coast this year. This unit will work in the closest liaison with the School of Instruction so that it will be possible for the students to follow the making of a film from the time of investigation through all the stages of its paper work to the actual shooting of the film on location.

There is great hope therefore that these trainees will form the nucleus of production units destined to operate in the two most important West African colonies.

## National Committee for Visual Aids in Education

*Visual Aids in Education*

*The Work of the National Committee*

By R. J. THOM

*Secretary, National Committee for Visual Aids in Education*

CONSIDERABLE interest has been shown in many countries in the recent significant developments that are taking place in England and Wales in connection with the use of visual aids in education, and it may be helpful to outline briefly some of the aims and activities of the National Committee for Visual Aids in Education, which is the body set up to plan the policy for visual education and develop it throughout the country.

The National Committee is representative of the local education authorities and teachers of England and Wales, and close liaison is maintained with the Ministry of Education through its assessors on the Committee. During the past year, the Committee has been largely engaged in determining the main lines of future policy with regard to visual aids in education, and in the creation of machinery to develop all aspects of the use of films, film strips and other visual material in schools, colleges and educational institutions generally.

One of the main functions of the National Committee is the collection and collation of the views and proposals of local education authorities and teachers and bodies concerned with education regarding visual aids. By this means the Committee will frame and carry out a policy that reflects the best current educational practice in the local areas.

Among its other functions the Committee includes consideration of such matters as the production, assessment and distribution of visual material; the supply, selection and maintenance of apparatus; research; the improvement of standards of film appreciation among children and adolescents; information services; the provision of facilities for the training of teachers in the production and use of films and other visual aids.