

# History of the Membership Committee

By ROBERT R. KING

**H**ISTORICALLY, the Membership Committee is one of the three original standing committees of the Society. This distinction it shares with the Governing Committee and the Committee on Uniform Methods and Cooperative Work. Realizing from the start that the value and strength of the Society depended upon its steady growth, the founders provided in the original scheme of organization that the vice president should head this important committee. When the growth of the organization made it necessary in 1923 to provide three vice presidents to carry on its various functions, the chairmanship of the Membership Committee was made automatically one of the duties of the first vice president.



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According to the provisions of the by-laws the committee consists of the first vice president, as chairman, the secretary, and at least two other members selected by the vice president and approved and officially appointed by the president. By necessity and custom the committee has been enlarged through the years until it at present consists of the above two officers, the three other vice presidents as ex-officio members, and eight active members.

The duty of the committee, as its name signifies, is to promote the growth of the Society by adding to its membership persons or firms qualified for one of the three classes of membership in the Society. In addition, the chairman and the eight active members of the committee are charged with the responsibility of approving or rejecting the applications of prospective members on the basis of experience or educational qualification for the class of membership sought, professional reputation, and general suitability for membership in the Society, as provided by the constitution.

In former years, when the committee was much smaller than at present, this was easily accomplished by sending the application successively to each active member of the committee. With the growth of the committee to its present size this procedure became too time-consuming. In order to shorten the time between receipt of application and notification of the applicant of his acceptance, recent committees have instituted a procedure of sending separate ballots to each committee member. Upon return of the completed ballots to the chairman the results of the balloting are noted on the application, which is then forwarded to the secretary for his approval and notification of the applicant. This method of handling

ballots has greatly facilitated the work of the Membership Committee.

At the 35th Annual Meeting in New Orleans, held in May, 1944, Lamar Kishlar instituted an unofficial membership award in the form of a cup consisting of a stainless steel refining cup mounted on a Bakelite base. K. S. Markley, as chairman of the 1943-44 Membership Committee, was first holder of this award in recognition of the record number of 158 new members brought into the Society through the activities of his committee. It is the intention that this cup remain in possession of the chairman of the Membership Committee who brings into the Society the greatest number of new members during his year until it passes to the next chairman who exceeds this number of new members. This award may possibly become one of the "traditions" of the Society.

In the past the number of new members obtained by the committee has largely depended upon the efforts and interest of its chairman. The past two committees have established new highs in activity. The present committee, realizing the magnitude of the example set by its immediate predecessors, has labored mightily—with the result that it has exceeded all previous records and has attained the honor of bringing the Society to more than 1,000 in numbers.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the eleventh article in the functional series describing the work of A.O.C.S. committees. Reprints are available.)

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