

TELEVISION AND FILM UNIT AT THE LONDON ZOO

THE Zoological Society of London, its Gardens at Regent's Park and its Park at Whipsnade have always enjoyed a great deal of newspaper and radio publicity. With the advent of the Independent Television Authority (ITA) several programme-producing companies have been formed, and some of them have asked the Zoological Society of London to grant them television rights. The Society takes the view, however, that it would be wrong to grant exclusive rights to any one company, and that it would be equally impossible to have numerous companies working on the Society's premises, perhaps even at the same time, and disturbing its work. Exclusive rights cannot be granted nor can a completely non-exclusive arrangement be contemplated. The Society has therefore decided to make the best possible zoological material available and at the same time to retain control of the Society's interests in television programmes and films, and to ensure that no responsible organization is denied the opportunity of broadcasting the programmes of its work. This will best fulfil the Society's policy of presenting its work to the public.

Of the several approaches made to the Society, all of which were carefully considered, that made by Granada was by far the most attractive and practicable. Granada proposed that the Society, in conjunction with Granada, should establish a permanent resident Television and Film Unit to produce programmes for television, for the cinema, and for more specific educational and scientific purposes. The Unit will be under the direction of a university-trained zoologist and will have at least two cameramen, perhaps more, preferably people with some scientific interest in zoology. It will cover all the work of the Society at Regent's Park, Whipsnade, on expeditions abroad or wherever it may be necessary to go for special material. Its first function will be to provide the Society with documentary material, and it will be able to undertake long-term projects which may need a considerable period of time for their completion.

The Society looks to television for something more than revenue alone. It is the medium that can best project the Society's work and encourage the primary object of the Society's Royal Charter, granted in 1829, which is "the advancement of Zoology and Animal Physiology and the introduction of new and curious subjects of the Animal Kingdom" on a scale far beyond the possibilities previously available. The work of the Unit will fulfil these objects laid down in the Charter, and while it will not suffer from any lack of scientific integrity it will have a wide appeal to the public. The use of the new medium will do much more than exploit the easy entertainment value of animals; the possibilities for such a Unit are enormous and have never been grasped by any organization before.

In addition to its long-term projects and quarterly schedules of work, the Unit will keep a daily diary in picture and sound of events of special interest, new arrivals and so on, thus building up an extensive film and sound library for use in making programmes, educational and research films. Documentary matter needing the slow accumulation of material over months or even years will be recorded, and zoological expeditions to all parts of the world will also be an important part of the work of the Unit. Techniques to be used will include photomicrography, slow-motion cinematography, infra-red lighting and the 'hidden eye' to observe animal behaviour continuously over long periods.

The films will be available for production of television programmes and also for exhibition in cinemas, universities and schools. In addition, live broadcasts will be regularly produced. Granada will in general have first option; but the television programmes will be available to other users. Granada will distribute the programmes and films.

Under this arrangement the B.B.C., with which the Society has co-operated fully for many years, will be able to broadcast programmes of zoological interest in association with the new Unit.

SMOKE ABATEMENT IN BRITAIN

CONFERENCE IN BOURNEMOUTH

THE National Smoke Abatement Society may take credit for having provided for many years a platform on which discussion of the problems of smoke abatement have been given full scope. All elements of the community have in their turn been given their say. From year to year there have been heard the oft-repeated claims of the crusaders for cleaner air. For quite a few years careful research work and surveys of atmospheric pollution have been carried out by the Atmospheric Pollution Research Committee, and a conference of representatives of local authorities has been held under the aegis of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. One must not forget, too, the contributions to technical development, which have a bearing on these problems, made by a large body of scientists and engineers in fuel technology and resulting in a knowledge of how

to burn fuel smokelessly. The Society's platform has again in these fields been the means of publicizing from time to time the painstaking efforts in technical development that must provide the basis of any really effective action in smoke abatement.

In this critical year of the Society's history, the Government's Clean Air Bill is likely to be debated. Accordingly, the proceedings of this year's annual conference of the Society, held in Bournemouth during September 28-30, are of particular interest. In keeping with past traditions, all aspects of the thorny problems to be faced have in some measure received attention, and opinions have been voiced which ought to reach the ears of the legislators. In his presidential address to the Society, Sir Ernest Smith rightly stressed the influence, in bringing about this situation, of the informed body of opinion into