

EDITORIAL

On Reaching Fifty

This is the fiftieth number of TABS. As there are but three a year this represents an achievement which calls for a modicum of self-congratulation. Started in 1937 by Hugh Cotterill, who remained editor until April 1957, it has always been the aim to provide a journal devoted to stage lighting rather than to the Strand Electric and one which would, unlike the latest detergent coupon, find a welcome on the mat. An occasional referendum ensures that our mailing list is up to date and that it consists of people who really want TABS.

The only thing the first number of TABS has in common with those of recent years is Oxlade's inspired cover design, though this was then somewhat out of focus due to our printing the issue ourselves on an off-set machine. There were but 9 pages (including 2 pages of Weekly Hire Charges) and wide margins and spacing generally enabled little content to go a long way.

A series called "Personalities" began with Mr. Applebee in issue No. 2 and terminated with Mr. Corry in issue No. 3. The latter's ambition was said to be "to sell a Light Console" which then seemed more uncertain of attainment than a trip to the moon is now. Articles were unsigned before the war, but two contributors, later to be known as P.C. and F.P.B. were represented from the first. In one early issue a fulsome description of the pedestrian new installation in the Wimbledon theatre came from the latter. Is it imagination, or can one detect a cynical touch breaking through? and the former was frequently to be found masquerading under the name of Busker.

Things got really moving when publication was resumed after the war. The average number of pages being 26, finally settling down to 32, the maximum we can do without a serious increase of postage. To 32 pages we intend to be true, though there are times when we come dangerously near to three blank pages headed "Memoranda" or "Notes" topped by a list of branches and agents. Indeed a distinguished author having failed to make the press date, we have been "saved" in this issue only by a timely reminder that this is our fiftieth.

By the way, we take this opportunity to remind our readers that contributions are welcome and to point out that the unifying link—stage lighting—can be slender indeed. Our concern is, of course, with the departments off-stage which, of course, explains why playwrights, actors and actresses appear in our pages only as people who provide the excuse for lighting!