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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON POLICY TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
of the
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

At their first meeting your Committee agreed upon three propositions, as axiomatic in character, which should serve, it was agreed, as touchstones against which to test discussions and conclusions. Shortly stated, these propositions are as follows:

- I. That the Museum's activities all must be judged from the standpoint of quality;
- II. That the Museum must be in position to pay its bills; and
- III. That within the requirements of quality and solvency the Museum must maintain a searching and experimental attitude.

In the light of these axioms your Committee reports as follows:

I. QUALITY:

→ The war and the pressures of war have resulted in increasing the tempo and relaxing the quality of operations pretty generally throughout the Museum. We would not deny that the Museum had duties to the Nation at War which we, as good citizens, had to fulfill and we do not doubt that many operations, conducted under pressure with emergency staff and at a level of quality not up-to-grade, justified themselves from any proper war-time point of view. But the time has come when the Museum must get on a quality basis, else it perish as a cultural force. These are not merely words but represent your Committee's deep conviction: The Museum is financially vulnerable and only by doing what it does better than any other institution can do it, can it hope to command financial support; and, more important, we have no wish to survive other than an institution of first-rate quality.

On this basis, we recommend:

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A. The curtailment, pro tempore, of the Department of Photography; for this Department is not in a position to justify itself by quality operations and cannot be in a position to do so unless and until other staff is available and adequate financing is obtained. Recognizing, nevertheless, that the Museum has duties toward its photographic collections which must not be discarded, we recommend that minimal staff for the care of such collections be maintained. Mr. Clark and Mr. Abbott, as operating heads of the Museum, already have put this recommendation into effect, resulting in savings in budgeted costs of approximately \$14,500.00 annually as of July 1, 1944.

B. The curtailment of the Department of Dance and Theatre Design. This is a small department with no present prospect of material and staff resources adequate to its field and hence with no prospect of quality ^{operations} through the years. However, here also we recognize that the Museum has continuing obligations to donors of materials. Hence, again, their donations must be cared for and this we recommend be done as a part of library operations. Since this Department is small no great saving in cost of operations will result. Mr. Clark and Mr. Abbott, as operating heads of the Museum, already have put this recommendation into effect, as of July 1, 1944.

The Museum properly is judged and will be judged primarily by its exhibitions, its acquisitions and its publications. Hence no phases of the Museum's operations and plans received more consideration from your Committee than these.

C. EXHIBITIONS. Certain recent emergency exhibitions doubtless have operated to the detriment of the Museum's reputation as the world's leading institution for the enjoyment and study of contemporary art. Hence, we recommend that the recent course of easy acceptance of exhibitions be curbed sharply and at once.

As to exhibitions within the Museum: The annual average number of exhibitions held within the Museum during the past three years is forty. This is clearly too many for the Museum to put on, on a quality basis -- in terms of staff, space,

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time and expense.

Hence, your Committee makes the recommendation that the number of in-Museum exhibitions be reduced drastically in number, to approximately fourteen each year. (A schedule showing departmental responsibility for and location of these exhibitions, prepared by the Director of Exhibitions, is attached hereto)

Circulating Exhibitions: Because the Museum's circulating exhibitions are, in New York City, the least-known and least-understood of our operations, it seems well to summarize them briefly: Among the purposes of the Museum, as specified in its Charter, is "furnishing popular instruction". The fulfillment of this purpose, outside of New York City, is the job of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions and Educational Services which plans, assembles, produces and circulates exhibitions (and provides certain educational services) for museums, colleges, universities, schools, libraries, civic organizations, clubs and other agencies throughout the United States and, to a lesser degree, abroad. It is estimated that approximately 650,000 persons see these exhibitions annually and inquiry among discriminating and frank-speaking persons who know our circulating exhibitions brought forth reports that to discontinue them would be to destroy an important national cultural asset.

It may well be argued --- and indeed it was argued virogoously within the Committee --- that the business of "providing popular instruction" on a national and international scale is no part of the Museum's proper business; but, on balance, it is the conclusion of the Committee that this would be too narrow a view of the Museum's function. The deficit of the Department of Circulating Exhibition for the past fiscal year was \$8,711.92 out of a total Departmental Budget of \$62,537.10 --- the difference being income received from the work of the Department, principally in the form of exhibition fees. Clearly this, considering the esteem in which the Department's exhibitions are held throughout the country, is an excellent showing

As of the present, the Department of Circulating Exhibitions has 131 ex-

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hibitions of 103 titles in circulation. It is proposed to diminish this number by selling, dismantling, and turning over to Mr. D'Amico's division for use in New York City, a total of 49 of the exhibitions now on the books of the Department, leaving 54 in circulation.

It is the judgment of the Director of Circulating Exhibitions that the Department cannot operate successfully without approximately twenty new shows annually. Then of these shows it is proposed to obtain by circulating exhibitions first put on in the Museum: the rest will be prepared by the Department of Circulating Exhibitions with the assistance, where assistance can be obtained, from departmental curators. All will be subject to the approval of the Committee on Exhibitions upon whom will be the final responsibility for quality.

These drastic reductions in number of in-Museum and circulating shows are required in the interest of quality and it is further to be noted that reductions here, by decreasing the pace and pressure of work, also will have effect throughout the service divisions of the Museum, relieve the volume of material to be housed, relieve the general administrative pressure and diminish the volume of work to be put through the work shops. How much saving of cost of operations to the general budget will result we have no way of calculating. But it is clear that the reduced exhibition schedules will effect economy in nearly all the Museum departments and particularly in the production manager's office where overtime will be reduced under an easier schedule. And, equally if not more, important will be the gain in quality -- or, at least, nowhere in the Museum can there be acceptable excuses for less than the highest quality of operations.

D. ACQUISITIONS, Concerning acquisitions, we have not a final recommendation to make to the Board. But we desire to emphasize that acquisition is among the most important functions of the Museum as a museum. To buy on a quality basis, to encourage the best production of contemporary artists by purchase of their work, to stimulate the gift to the Museum of the best examples of modern art -- all clearly

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are very important.

In the matter of purchases, your Committee is of opinion that especially in view of the Museum's limitations of exhibition space and of purchase funds, the present policy guiding purchases for the Museum's collections is much too indefinite. We think it is necessary to adopt a clearly-stated policy in reference to purchases and we recommend that the Committee on Museum Collections be directed to formulate such a statement and report it for the consideration of the Board of Trustees.

The issue to be resolved by the Trustees, as the issue developed in this Committee, is the following: If the Museum collections are limited to major works, the collections will be deficient as teaching instruments by reason of the lack of supplementary minor works. If the collections be developed with emphasis on work primarily historical in character, the collections will be deficient in major works of quality. What is the Museum's best policy in this situation?

The members of this Committee have views upon the matter but agreement has not been arrived at, and, in view of the importance of the question to the present and future of the Museum, have thought it best to put it up to the Committee on Museum Collections for an all-aspect study and report to the Board.

However, here we firmly suggest that the Museum's Permanent Collections -- our acquisitions -- should be shown once each year for an extended period, a showing in the nature of a report to the Trustees and to the public upon our stewardship. What the collections of the Museum contain is largely unknown, even to the Trustees, and this is an unhealthy condition in that we do not get the benefit of advice and criticism upon them, it provides fuel for charges of cultism and preciousness, and omits fulfillment of one of our primary functions.

E. PUBLICATIONS: It is clear that there is no more thriving operation, considered both on a quality and on a financial basis, than the Museum's publications; and we have no comment to make upon it other than to commend all those concerned with the operation. Under this head we include the Museum's series of color prints and,

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as to them, we recommend that the staff study the possibilities, in the post-war period, of developing the series into a source of greater income for the Museum.

F. IN GENERAL. Concerning the curatorial departments of Architecture, Industrial Design and Manual Industry, the Film Library and all the service departments, this Committee has only the general recommendations, (1) that they also hew to the line of quality, for from that point of view will their operations be judged; and (2) that, in view of the next section of this report, they strive to get the utmost value out of every dollar they spend and remember that a dollar saved is a dollar earned. For from this point of view will they also be judged.

II. SOLVENCY:

We make no apologies for the prominence given to the proposition that the Museum must be in position to pay its bills, despite the charges of Philistinism which may be made thereat. From one point of view, and we declare it a wholly tenable point of view, the first duty of the Museum is to remain solvent; for if we become insolvent we shall be able to accomplish nothing.

The broad facts upon the matter of solvency are these:

We own land, buildings and equipment carried on our books at a conservative valuation of \$2,063,428. We have collections valued at approximately \$1,500,000, plus approximately \$550,000 films in the Film Library, which is a separate corporation. Our membership is now 7,069, an increase of 2,042 since March 1, 1943. Our attendance at the Museum was 415,926 last year, to which should be added about 650,000 who see our circulating shows annually. We have capital funds of more than \$1,000,000 plus an estimated \$350,000 to come from the Rainey Rogers bequest. We have \$125,000 available for the purchase of works of art. We have a publication inventory of \$42,000.

To have achieved all this in fifteen years is a great success, from any point of view -- no doubt about it. Unfortunately there is another side to the picture which cannot be kept toward the wall:

During the past three years the Museum has had annual deficits, in round

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numbers, from \$14,000 to \$79,000, of which the largest is the 1943-44 deficit for the fiscal year just passed. The total accumulated deficit, to July 1st, 1944, is \$114,000.

This deficit has been covered by borrowings against the security of our endowment funds. It is apparent therefore that unless the present course of deficit financing is checked promptly, and indeed reversed, the Museum's life, as the vigorous, going concern we know it, is bound to be short.

This is an alarming statement but not, we think, too alarming in view of a square look at the facts. We recognize that the course of deficit financing by borrowings may be reversed but it is very important that both the Trustees and staff shall be clearly aware that it can be reversed only by (1) decrease of expenditures, (2) increase of income, or (3) both.

We have done what we could to decrease expenditures: more cannot be done without radically altering the character of the Museum as it has been built up by the Trustees and staff through the years; and we had no mandate nor desire to do that. And, of course, we had no mandate nor qualifications for increasing income.

We recognize that as respects this matter of living beyond its means the Museum has been the victim of its successes, but it is the view of at least the Chairman of the Committee that both Trustees and staff have neglected their clear duties in permitting the accumulation of deficit -- the staff by recommending operations for which funds were not in hand or in sight and the Trustees by approving those recommendations. A deficit for one year may be cleared away and if so presents no problem; but a deficit accumulating, and increasing annually, through three years is another and entirely different matter.

While doubtless it was legal to pledge capital funds against borrowings, it is clear that donors do not view with favor the depletion of capital gifts -- for such it is unless the borrowings are repaid -- to provide funds for current running expenses.

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Another aspect of the matter of solvency which requires attention is the following, and for the purpose of illustration we shall review the operating budget for 1943-44, the fiscal year just passed:

The total general Museum expenses for the year were \$709,999.

Income for the year was made up as follows:

Memberships, admissions, income from capital funds and other earned income	\$365,502.	
Contributions:		
from foundations	6,000.	
from industry	16,600.	
from individuals	<u>257,705.</u>	<u>645,807.</u>
Ledger deficit		64,192.
-to which must be added profits properly credited to the rotating publication fund		<u>14,890.</u>
Actual deficit <u>1943-44</u>		\$ 79,082.

The item of contributions from individuals, totalling \$257,705 -- which constitutes 41 per cent of our operating income (exclusive of governmental sources) -- deserves sharp attention:

Twenty-six persons made donations of \$500. or more and their contributions total \$255,512. Of these 26 donors, seven made contributions which account for 81 per cent of the total. In short, the loss of contributions from only seven persons, resulting from death or decrease of interest in the Museum means disaster -- and death is sure to come. Clearly the Museum must acquire a broader base of major support than this. To acquire that broader base clearly is the responsibility of Trustees and staff.

These sets of facts -- (1) our deficits and (2) our narrow base of support -- clearly show that, considered as an operating institution looking toward the future, the Museum's financial position is precarious. The position must be corrected in the near future else the period in which the Museum can be the vigorous entity we know it to be -- and we are not interested in a tomb of modern art -- is bound to be short, barring windfalls upon which no institution is entitled to bank.

This matter is crucial for the future and also is important for the present

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in several ways. For instance:

There are in the United States many first-rate works of modern art in private hands. The Museum, the natural recipient of these works, is less likely to get them unless an impression of stability is achieved. That impression of stability has not yet been achieved.

Members of a staff of an institution such as the Museum doubtless do not turn in the best work of which they are capable unless there is a sense of stability in their situations -- a sense of stability not now justified.

Other matters pertinent to the broad question of solvency upon which the Committee has recommendations are these:

As part of the Museum's deficit of \$79,082. on its 1943-44 operations, there was a loss of \$5,932. on the restaurant, including the garden and the members' room. Clearly this loss should be avoided in future by abolishing restaurant activities unprofitable to such a degree. This is almost as great a loss, be it noted, as was incurred by the Department of Circulating Exhibitions serving hundreds of thousands of persons in the Museum's field, which it should be remembered is art, not food. And yet, we recognize that this problem of restaurant deficit is not simple. Doubtless some small deficit resulting from a continuance of our supplying our members with the pleasant facilities of the restaurant is justified, but nothing like six thousand dollars. The matter of the restaurant really is related to the question of all that we do for our members, and, in conjunction with the question of restaurant deficit, we recommend a study of the cost to the Museum of its memberships.

Further, the Trustees should be made aware that the Museum has never charged any depreciation or obsolescence against capital account. Therefore our maintenance and replacement costs due to obsolescence and depreciation, which are charged against current operations, are bound to show a steady tendency to increase. Future budgets necessarily must reflect this state of affairs.

Elsewhere in this report we have made recommendations which will reduce the

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pace and pressure of work, reduce the volume of material to be housed and reduce the volume of work in the shops. We have made these recommendations primarily to raise quality and reduce expense. Moreover, it is a reasonable expectation, we think, that the Museum, now almost bulging at the joints, under the reduced program again will become adequate to accommodate what we do. But whether it prove to be ideally adequate or not, our financial situation does not, we think, support plans to do any building. Clearly it is a prior requirement that we must get our house in order, and have in sight adequate income, before we attempt to raise funds for new construction and thereby add to our operating expenses.

This Committee's recommendation is that a Committee should be appointed to endeavor to raise \$100,000 of new money, from new sources, on as broad a base as possible, toward the operating budget for 1944-45. If this cannot be done, there will be no solution of the Museum's financial problem except drastic lopping off of major activities.

III. A SEARCHING AND EXPERIMENTAL ATTITUDE

We have said before that the Museum can survive only if it does what it does better than any other institution can do it. That is not an impossible nor even a very difficult goal: the United States Steel Corporation cannot compete successfully with small producers of special steels. We too are specialty producers, and like all specialty producers we must carry on unceasing research, study and experimentation. We must be in contact with the best professional opinion in the fields of our operations. We must search for new talent, we must be sensitive and questing, humbly questing. We must constantly be searching on the frontiers of artistic expression and we must have the vision and the courage to make an original judgment of what we see.

This is the most difficult of human judgments, be it noted well, and yet, be it noted equally well, it is the judgment we must make to continue to deserve the adjective modern. Academic hardening of the arteries can afflict the modernist as

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easily as the medievalist.

We have been too busy and it is part of your Committee's idea in reducing the pace and pressure of exhibitions that that would give our curators time to do pioneering work in a sense that has not been done.

But what they can do, we conceive, will not be enough. We must take other means to enable us always to be on the frontiers, and to that end we propose, following, a plan of advisory relationships to the Museum:

We propose that there be constituted an Advisory Board which shall sustain an advisory relationship to the Museum upon its operations and policies. This Advisory Board shall be composed of persons of undoubted professional eminence and creative points of view. They shall be persons who work professionally in painting, sculpture, films, photography, industrial design and other fields of the Museum's interests. They shall have a clear mandate to search for talent; they shall upon their own initiative have the right to prepare and submit to the Museum plans and suggestions for the work and policies of the Museum. Department heads shall consult them constantly.

In short, we propose a device whereby, if the members of the Advisory Board be well-selected, the Museum may reach out into all of its fields both nationally and internationally, and whereby if the Museum acts upon its advisors' advice it will have powerful defenders at home and abroad, and will have sensitive proponents of the best that is going on.

If the Trustees adopt this suggestion we are prepared to submit a By-Law to carry it into effect and to suggest a list of persons to be members of such an Advisory Board.

Concomitantly, we suggest that the present Advisory Committee of the Museum be disestablished.

For the better functioning of the Museum there is required, we suggest, a set of directives to each of the curatorial departments of the Museum setting forth

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in general terms the objectives of each department, and the means by which it is expected that those objectives will be realized. These directives should be framed so that they do not in any way hinder or cramp initiative within the departments but rather so as to give freedom to initiative and creative effort within limits previously agreed upon and budgeted. Curators should "write their own tickets" and submit them to the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committee annually for approval, modification or rejection. Following approval, curators should have a free hand to conduct their operations as they see fit, subject only to the Board of Trustees or appropriate Committee of the Board. Curators thus will have opportunity to plan ahead and will have freedom to employ their abilities to the full, and the Board annually will have opportunity to judge the operations of each department.

In this matter, while it is suggested that departmental heads write their own tickets, the proposed Advisory Board would, if properly used, take important parts; for departmental heads would be expected to consult with members of the Advisory Board of professional competence within the areas of their departments and obtain the benefits of their suggestions upon policy and operations.

Such planning as is herein proposed would have an important part in fiscal policy, we think, for it would give the Board opportunity to judge of the relative value and urgency of competing claims to the Museum's limited funds and it would provide time to attempt to raise funds for specific purposes --- which conditions are not present under the rather catch-as-catch-can operations of the present.

IN CONCLUSION:

It may be said, in view of the Museum's successes, that this report is unduly critical. To that we should respond that we recognize and rejoice in the successes of the past but that we were appointed by the Board as a result of the Board's dissatisfaction with some phases of the present state of the Museum. Under the mandate we had, we conceived it our duty to be critical. What we have criticized may be defended and excused, but we are not interested in defenses and excuses. We covet for the Museum

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policies so convincing and operations so well executed that they need no defense or excuse.

The Museum of Modern Art has as its corporate purposes, in the words of its Charter, "encouraging and developing the study of modern arts and the application of such arts to manufacture and practical life, and furnishing popular instruction". This is an unusual statement of purposes for a museum, and it should be remembered well, because it gives the key to the kind of entity the founders desired to create and because their vision, we think, still is fine and progressive.

Museums had their origins in collections formed for the intimate delight of princes -- temporal and spiritual -- and of rich men. Their character changed, a century and a half ago, when the French Revolution took the Louvre away from the kings, whose sole possession it had been for centuries, and gave it to the people. From that time on, under the impact of powerful forces -- for example, democracy with its concern for equality of opportunity, modern science with its ever-widening frontiers, aesthetic innovations -- the museum has been developing out of all previous recognition.

The Museum of Modern Art continues that development and should be its spearhead. It was founded to be an institution for the people, for the study of modern arts and the application of such arts to manufacture and practical life, and for instruction in terms of the best of the arts. These are purposes which require that the Museum be intensely alive not only to the new but also to progress in the older traditions; and, unless it is to be a false leader, require that it be able to choose what is best in what is new and what shows progress or has contemporary vitality in what is old. In the past, there have appeared traditionalists who were great as well as innovators who were great. The Museum of Modern Art must be able to recognize both.

This report, we suggest, should simply be one in a continuous series of

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critical examinations of the policies and operations of the Museum in the light of its chartered purposes.

THE COMMITTEE ON POLICY:

(Signed) HENRY ALLEN MOE, Chairman

" JOHN E. ABBOTT

" STEPHEN C. CLARK

" ADELE R. LEVY

" JAMES T. SOBY

" JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY

" MONRCE WHEELER

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REPORT ON EXHIBITIONS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE:

ONE-MAN SHOWS: A good many important twentieth century artists have not received the retrospective one-man showings that have been accorded by the Museum to others, no less important. It is desirable to decide upon the sequence in which these artists should be presented. When reasons beyond our control prevent the work of a certain artist from being shown in this sequence, it is proposed that the publications department issue a volume of his work similar to those prepared for major exhibitions, in order to keep our published studies of contemporary artists as complete as possible.

MAJOR EXHIBITIONS: The Exhibition Program of the Museum of Modern Art has always been fairly well balanced but it has never been very consistent. The inconsistency has been due to certain opportunism which may be inseparable from its declared purpose of relating art to the daily life of the people. It may or may not be a weakness to permit one of the eight curatorial departments to develop at the expense of another. But it is at present impracticable for each of these eight departments -- all of which operate with skeleton staffs -- to produce each year an exhibition worthy of the Museum's highest standards. Major department exhibitions, therefore, should rotate and be planned a year or two in advance with a view to obtaining the collaboration of another museum that would be willing to share the initial expense. This is one way to improve the quality of exhibitions and to reduce their cost. The Museum has already collaborated in this way with the National Gallery in Washington and the Art Institute of Chicago.

TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS: It is recommended that each curatorial department prepare each year one small exhibition to be shown first in the Museum and then made available to the Department of Circulating Exhibitions. Insofar as possible these shows should be planned and executed to suit the needs of the Circulating Exhibitions program.

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SMALL PERMANENT DEPARTMENTAL GALLERIES: If each department is to have but one New York exhibition each year, it should then be permanently represented in the Museum by at least one small gallery which will show daily to visitors the significant recent achievements in each field and call attention to departmental services and publications. In this way the Museum's influence in the various fields with which it is concerned will become as constant as in the fields of painting and sculpture. This will reduce the space available for our current exhibitions but it will give to the Museum's departmental activities a valuable continuity which (with the exception of painting and sculpture) they have never had before.

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON POLICY TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

of the
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

LIBRARY
 ARCHIVE
 MOMA History

At their first meeting your Committee agreed upon three propositions, as axiomatic in character, which should serve, it was agreed, as touchstones against which to test discussions and conclusions. Shortly stated, these propositions are as follows:

- I. That the Museum's activities all must be judged from the standpoint of quality;
- II. That the Museum must be in position to pay its bills; and
- III. That within the requirements of quality and solvency the Museum must maintain a searching and experimental attitude.

In the light of these axioms your Committee reports as follows:

I. QUALITY:

The war and the pressures of war have resulted in ^{increasing the tempo and} relaxing the quality of operations pretty generally throughout the Museum. We would not deny that the Museum had duties to the Nation at War which we, as good citizens, had to fulfill and we do not doubt that many operations, conducted under pressure with emergency staff and at a level of quality not up-to-grade, justified themselves from any proper war-time point of view. But the time has come when the Museum must get on a quality basis, else it perish as a cultural force. These are not merely words but represent your Committee's deep conviction: ^{the Museum is} ~~we are~~ financially vulnerable and only by doing what ^{it does} ~~we do~~ better than any other institution can do it, can ^{it} ~~we~~ hope to command financial support; and, more important, we have no wish to survive other than an institution of first-rate quality. ^{On this basis,} ~~Hence,~~ we recommend:

- A. The ~~Department of~~ ^{curatorial,} ~~at least~~ pro tempore, of the Department of Photography; for this Department ~~the~~

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is not ~~now~~ in a position to ~~do so~~ ^{justify itself by quality operations} and cannot be in a position to do so unless and until ~~other~~ ^{other} staff is available and adequate financing is obtained. Recognizing, nevertheless, that the Museum has duties toward its photographic collections which ~~cannot~~ ^{must not} be discarded, we ~~had to~~ recommend that minimal staff for the care of such collections be maintained. Mr. Clark and Mr. Abbott, as operating heads of the Museum, already have put this recommendation into effect, resulting in savings in budgeted costs of approximately \$14,500.00 annually as of July 1, 1944.

B. The ~~curtailment~~ ^{curtailment} of the Department of Dence and Theatre Design.

This is a small department with no ~~prospect~~ ^{present} of material and staff resources adequate to its field and hence with no prospect of quality operations through the years. However, here also we ~~had to~~ recognize that the Museum has continuing obligations to donors of materials. Hence, again, their donations ~~must~~ ^{must} be cared for and this we recommend be done as a part of library operations. Since this Department is small no great saving in cost of operations will result. Mr. Clark and Mr. Abbott, as operating heads of the Museum, already have put this recommendation into effect, as of July 1, 1944.

The Museum properly is judged and will be judged primarily by its exhibitions, its acquisitions and its publications. Hence no phases of the Museum's operations and plans received more consideration from your Committee than these.

C. EXHIBITIONS. ^{Certain} Recent emergency exhibitions doubtless have operated to the detriment of the Museum's reputation as the world's leading institution for the enjoyment and study of contemporary art. Hence, we recommend that the recent course of easy acceptance of exhibitions be curbed sharply and at once.

As to exhibitions within the Museum: The annual average number of exhibitions held within the Museum during the past three years is forty. This is clearly too many for the Museum to put on, on a quality basis -- in terms of staff, space, time and expense.

Hence, your Committee makes the recommendation that the number of in-Museum

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exhibitions be reduced drastically in number, to approximately fourteen each year. (A schedule showing departmental responsibility for and location of these exhibitions, prepared by the Director of Exhibitions, is attached hereto)

Circulating Exhibitions: Because the Museum's circulating exhibitions are, in New York City, the least-known and least-understood of our operations, it seems well to summarize them briefly: Among the purposes of the Museum, as specified in its Charter, is "furnishing popular instruction". The fulfillment of this purpose, outside of New York City, is the job of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions and Educational Services ^{which} plans, assembles, produces and circulates exhibitions (and provides certain educational services) for museums, colleges, universities, schools, libraries, civic organizations, clubs and other agencies throughout the United States and, to a lesser degree, abroad. It is estimated that approximately 650,000 persons see these exhibitions annually and inquiry among discriminating and frank-speaking persons who know our circulating exhibitions brought forth reports that to discontinue them would be to destroy an important national cultural asset.

It may well be argued -- and indeed it was argued vigorously within the Committee -- that the business of "providing popular instruction" on a national and international scale is no part of the Museum's proper business; but, on balance, it is the conclusion of the Committee that this would be too narrow a view of the Museum's function. The deficit of the Department of Circulating Exhibition for the past fiscal year was \$8,711.92 out of a total Departmental Budget of \$62,537.10 -- the difference being income received from the work of the Department, principally in the form of

nowhere in the Museum can there be acceptable excuses for less than the highest

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exhibition fees. Clearly this, considering the esteem in which the Department's exhibitions are held throughout the country, is an excellent showing.

As of the present, the Department of Circulating Exhibitions has 131 exhibition of 103 titles in circulation. It is proposed to diminish this number by selling, dismantling, and turning over to Mr. D'Amico's division for use in New York City, a total of 49 of the exhibitions now on the books of the Department, ^{having} ~~having~~ 54 in circulation.

It is the judgment of the Director of Circulating Exhibitions that the Department cannot operate successfully without approximately twenty new shows annually. Ten of these shows it is proposed to obtain by circulating exhibitions first put on in the Museum; the rest will be prepared by the Department of Circulating Exhibitions with the assistance, where assistance can be obtained, from departmental curators. All will be subject to the approval of the Committee on Exhibitions upon whom will be the final responsibility for quality.

^{se drastic} The reductions in number of ^{in Museum and} circulating shows ^{are} required ^{in the interest of} to get the Department's operations on a quality basis and it is further to be noted that ~~reductions here,~~ by decreasing the pace and pressure of work, also will have ~~the~~ effect throughout the service divisions of the Museum, relieve the volume of material to be housed, relieve the general administrative pressure and diminish the volume of work to be put through the work shops. How much saving of cost of operations to the ~~General Budget~~ will result we have no way of calculating. ~~The same was said of our recommendation for~~

~~se.~~ (But it is clear that the reduced exhibition schedule will effect economy in nearly all the Museum Departments and particularly in the Production Manager's office where overtime will be reduced under an easier schedule.)

And, equally if not more, important will be the gain in quality -- or, at least, nowhere in the Museum can there be acceptable excuses for less than the highest

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quality of operations.

Concerning acquisitions,
 D. ACQUISITIONS: *we* have no final recommendation to make to the Board, *but* desire to emphasize that acquisition is among the most important functions of the Museum as a Museum. To buy on a quality basis, to encourage the best production of contemporary artists by purchase of their work, to stimulate the gift to the Museum of the best examples of modern art -- all clearly are very important. *we have suggestions set forth in other places in this Report concerning certain aspects of this*

In the matter of purchases, your Committee is of opinion that especially in view of the Museum's limitations of exhibition space and of purchase funds, the *present* policy guiding purchases for the Museum's collections is much too indefinite. We think it is necessary to adopt a clearly-stated policy in reference to purchases and we recommend that the Committee on *Museum Collections* be directed to formulate *such a* statement *of policy* and report it for the consideration of the *Trustees*.

The issue to be resolved by the *Trustees* ~~Committee on acquisitions~~ as the issue developed in this Committee, is the following: If the Museum collections are limited to major works, the collections will be deficient as teaching instruments by reason of the lack of supplementary minor works. If the collections be developed with emphasis on work primarily historical in character, the collections will be deficient in major works of quality. What is the Museum's best policy in this situation? The members of this Committee have views upon the matter but agreement has not been arrived at, and, in view of the importance of the question to the present and future of the Museum, *Museum Collections* have thought it best to put it up to the Committee on *acquisitions* for an all-aspect study and report *to the Board*.

However, here we firmly suggest that the Museum's Permanent Collections -- our acquisitions -- should be shown once each year for an extended period, a showing in the nature of a report to the Trustees and to the public upon our stewardship. What the collections of the Museum contain is largely unknown, even to the Trustees, and this is an unhealthy condition in that we do not get the benefit of advice and criticism upon them, it provides fuel for charges of cultism and preciousness, and omits fulfillment of one of our primary functions.

E. PUBLICATIONS: It is clear that there is no more thriving operation, considered both on a quality and on a financial basis, than the Museum's publications; and we have no comment to make upon it other than to commend all those concerned with the operation. Under this head we include the Museum's series of color prints and, as to them, we recommend that the staff study the possibilities, in the post-war period, of developing the series into a source of *greater* income for the Museum.

The
 F. IN GENERAL: Concerning *the* curatorial departments of Architecture, Industrial Design and Manual Industry, the Film Library and all the service departments, this Committee has only the general recommendations, (1) that they also hew to the line of quality, for from that point of view will their operations be judged; and (2) that, in view of the next section of this report, they strive to get the utmost value out of every dollar they spend and remember that a dollar saved is a dollar earned. For from this point of view will they also be judged.

II. SOLVENCY:

We make no apologies for the prominence given to the proposition that the Museum must be...

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Concerning acquisitions,
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II. SOLVENCY:

We make no apologies for the ^{prominence} given to the proposition that the Museum must be in position to pay its bills, despite the charges of Philistinism which

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may be made thereat. From one point of view, and we declare it a wholly tenable point of view, the first duty of the Museum is to remain solvent; for if we become insolvent we shall be able to accomplish nothing.

The broad facts upon the matter of solvency are these:

We own land, buildings and equipment ^{carried on our books} ~~valued at~~ \$2,063,428. We have collections valued at approximately \$1,500,000, plus approximately \$550,000 films in the Film Library, which is a separate corporation. Our membership is now 7,069, an increase of 2,042 since March 1, 1943. Our attendance at the Museum was 415,926 last year, to which should be added about 650,000 who see our circulating shows annually. We have capital funds of more than \$1,000,000 plus an estimated \$350,000 to come from the Rainey Rogers bequest. We have \$125,000 available for the purchase of works of art. We have a publication inventory of \$42,000.

To have achieved all this in fifteen years is great success, from any point of view -- no doubt about it. Unfortunately there is another side to the picture which cannot be kept toward the wall:

During the past three years the Museum has had annual deficits, in round numbers, from \$14,000 to \$79,000, of which the largest is the 1943-44 deficit for the fiscal year just passed. The total accumulated deficit, to July 1st, 1944, is \$114,000.

This deficit has been covered by borrowings against the security of our endowment funds. ~~Interest charges now total \$3,850 a year.~~ It is apparent therefore that unless the present course of deficit financing is checked promptly, and indeed reversed, the Museum's life, as the vigorous, going concern we know it, is bound to be short.

This is an alarming statement but not, we think, too alarming in view of a square look at the facts. We recognize that the course of deficit financing by borrowings may be reversed but it is very important that both the Trustees and staff

ata conservative valuation of

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shall be clearly aware that it can be reversed only by (1) decrease of expenditures, (2) increase of income, or (3) both.

We have done what we could to decrease expenditures; more cannot be done without radically altering the character of the Museum as it has been built up by the Trustees and staff through the years; and we had no mandate nor desire to do that. And, of course, we had no mandate nor qualifications for increasing income.

We recognize that as respects this matter of living beyond its means the Museum has been the victim of its successes, but it is the view of at least the Chairman of the Committee that both Trustees and staff have neglected their clear duties in permitting the accumulation of deficit -- the staff by recommending operations for which funds were not in hand or in sight and the Trustees by approving those recommendations. A deficit for one year may be cleared away and if so presents no problem; but a deficit accumulating, and increasing annually, through three years is another and entirely different matter.

While doubtless it was legal to pledge capital funds against borrowings, it is clear that donors do not view with favor the depletion of capital gifts -- for such it is unless the borrowings are repaid -- to provide funds for current running expenses.

Another aspect of the matter of solvency which requires attention is the following, and for the purpose of illustration we shall review the operating budget for 1943-44, the fiscal year just passed:

← The total general Museum expenses for the year were		\$709,999.
Income for the year was made up as follows:		
Memberships, admissions, income from capital funds and other earned income	\$365,502.	
Contributions:		
from foundations	6,000.	
from industry	16,600.	
from individuals	257,705.	645,807.
Ledger deficit		64,192.
-to which must be added profits properly credited to the rotating publication fund		14,890.
Total ^{Actual} deficit 1943-44		\$ 79,082.

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-- which constitutes 41 per cent of our operating income (exclusive of governmental sources) --
 The item of contributions from individuals, totalling \$257,705, ~~deserves~~

sharp attention:

Twenty ~~two~~ ^{six} persons made donations of ~~\$1,000~~ ^{\$500.} or more and their contributions which account for 81 per cent of the total. Of these ~~22~~ ²⁶ donors, ~~two~~ ^{seven} made contributions of ~~\$5,000 or more, total~~ ^{seven} ~~ing \$219,000.~~

In short, the loss of contributions from only ~~two~~ persons, resulting from death or decrease of interest in the Museum means disaster -- and death is sure to come. Clearly the Museum must acquire a broader base of major support than this.

To acquire that broader base clearly is the responsibility of Trustees and staff.

-- (1) our deficits and (2) our narrow base of support --
 These sets of facts clearly show that, considered as an operating

institution looking toward the future, the Museum's financial position is precarious.

The position must be corrected in the near future else the period in which the Museum can be the vigorous entity we know it to be -- and we are not interested in a tomb of modern art -- is bound to be short, barring windfalls upon which no institution is entitled to bank.

This matter is crucial for the future and also is important for the present in several ways. For instance:

There are in the United States many first-rate works of modern art in private hands. The Museum, the natural recipient of these works, is less likely to get them unless an impression of stability is achieved. That impression of stability has not yet been achieved.

Members of a staff of an institution such as the Museum doubtless do not turn in the best work of which they are capable unless there is a sense of stability in their situations -- a sense of stability not now justified.

Other matters pertinent to the broad question of solvency upon which the Committee has recommendations are these:

As part of the Museum's deficit of ~~\$78,000~~ ^{\$79,082.} on its 1943-44 operations, there was a loss of \$5,932. on the restaurant, including the garden and the members' room.

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Clearly this loss should be avoided in future by abolishing restaurant activities unprofitable to such a degree. This is almost as great a loss, be it noted, ~~then~~^{as} was incurred by the Department of Circulating Exhibitions serving hundreds of thousands of persons in the Museum's field, which it should be remembered is art, not food.

And yet, we recognize that this problem of restaurant deficit is not simple. Doubtless some small deficit resulting from a continuance of our supplying our members with the pleasant facilities of the restaurant is justified, but nothing like six thousand dollars.

The matter of the restaurant really is related to the question of all that we do for our members, and, in conjunction with the question of restaurant deficit, we recommend a study of the cost to the Museum of its memberships.

Further, the Trustees should be made aware that the Museum has never charged any depreciation or obsolescence against capital account. Therefore our maintenance ^{and replacement} costs due to obsolescence and depreciation, which are charged against current operations, ~~are~~ are bound to show a steady tendency to increase. Future budgets necessarily must reflect this state of affairs.

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with small producers of special steels. We too are specialty producers, and like all specialty producers we must carry on unceasing research, study and experimentation. We must be in contact with the best professional opinion in the fields of our operations. We must search for talent, we must be sensitive and questing, humbly questing. *constantly be searching on the frontiers of*

artistic expressions and we must have the

vision and the courage to make an original judgment of what we ~~see~~ see ✓

This is the most difficult of human judgments, be it noted well, and yet, be it noted equally well, it is the judgment we must make to continue to deserve the adjective modern. Academic hardening of the arteries can afflict the modernist as easily as the ^{modernist} classicist.

We have been ^{too} very busy, and it

~~It~~ is part of your Committee's idea in reducing the pace and pressure of exhibitions that that would give our curators time to do pioneering work in a sense that has not been done.

But what they can do, we conceive, will not be enough. We must take other means to enable us always to be on the frontiers, and to that end we propose, following, a plan of advisory relationships to the Museum:

We propose that there be constituted an Advisory Board which shall sustain an advisory relationship to the Museum upon its operations and policies. This Advisory Board shall be composed of persons of undoubted professional eminence and creative points of view. They shall be persons who work professionally in painting, sculpture,

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MRS. KATHLEEN ROMOLI, New York City, projects a history of Darien, the first colony of the American mainland, and of the discovery, conquest and earliest colonization of the Isthmus of Panama. Mrs. Romoli is the author of a book entitled, "Colombia: Gateway to South America," published in 1941, and of several articles.

DR. GEORGE ALEXANDER KUBLER, Instructor in the History of Art, Yale University, will write a book on the architecture of the 16th century in Mexico, the architecture to be regarded as the expression of cultural clash between the native Mexican and the invading European and as defining the earliest stable colonial culture in America.

DR. KENNETH EDWARD CASTER, Assistant Professor of Geology in the University of Cincinnati, will make a field study of the Paleozoic strata of the Northern Andes in Colombia and adjacent Venezuela.

DR. EDGAR ANDERSON, Professor of Botany, Washington University, and Geneticist, Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, Missouri, will study the genetics of Indian corn, in Mexico and the Southwestern United States.

For studies in fields of American political and economic history several Fellowships were granted:

DR. FRED HARVEY HARRINGTON, Professor of History and Political Science, University of Arkansas: A study of diplomatic aspects of the growth of American enterprise abroad, with emphasis upon the formative years, 1865-1900.

DR. LAWRENCE AVERELL HARPER, Assistant Professor of American History, University of California, Berkeley: A study of economic activities and governmental regulations in the English colonies in America.

DR. DAN A. BILLINGTON, Associate Professor of History, Smith College.

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films, photography, industrial design and other fields of the Museum's interests.

They shall have a clear mandate to search for talent; they shall upon their own initiative have the right to prepare and submit to the Museum plans and suggestions for the work and policies of the Museum. *Department heads shall consult them constantly.*

In short, we propose a device whereby, if the members of the Advisory Board be well-selected, the Museum may reach out into all of its fields both nationally and internationally, and whereby if the Museum acts upon its advisor's advice it will have powerful defenders at home and abroad, and will ^{have} be sensitive proponents of the best that is going on.

If the Trustees adopt this suggestion we are prepared to submit a By-Law to carry it into effect and to suggest a list of persons to be members of such an Advisory Board.

Concomitantly, we suggest that the present Advisory Committee of the Museum be disestablished.

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For the better functioning of the Museum there is required, we suggest, a set of directives to each of the curatorial departments of the Museum setting forth in general terms the objectives of each department, and the means by which it is expected ^{that} those objectives will be realized. These directives should be framed so that they do not in any way hinder or cramp initiative within the departments but rather so as to give freedom to initiative and creative effort within limits previously agreed upon and budgeted. Curators should "write their own tickets" and submit them to the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committee annually for approval, modification or rejection. Following approval, curators should have a free hand to conduct their operations as they see fit, subject only to the Board of Trustees or appropriate Committee of the Board. Curators thus will have opportunity to plan ahead and ~~to~~ ^{will} have freedom to employ their abilities to the full, and the Board annually will have opportunity to judge the operations of each department.

In this matter, while it is suggested that departmental heads write their own tickets, the proposed Advisory Board would, if properly used, take important parts; for departmental heads would be expected to consult with members of the Advisory Board of professional competence within the areas of their departments and obtain the benefits of their suggestions upon policy and operations.

Such planning as is herein proposed would have an important part in ~~financial~~ ^{fixed} policy, we think, for it would give the Board opportunity to judge of the relative value and urgency of competing claims to the Museum's limited funds and it would provide time to attempt to raise funds for specific purposes -- which conditions are not present under the rather catch-as-catch-can operations of the ~~the~~ present time.

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IN CONCLUSION:

It may be said, in view of the Museum's successes, that this report is unduly critical. To that we should respond that we recognize and rejoice in the successes of the past but that we were appointed by the Board as a result of the Board's dissatisfaction with some phases of the present state of the Museum. Under the mandate we had, we conceived it our duty to be critical. What we have criticized may be defended and excused, but we are not interested in defenses and excuses. We covet for the Museum policies so convincing and operations so well executed that they need no defense or excuse.

The Museum of Modern Art has as its corporate purposes, in the words of its Charter, "encouraging and developing the study of modern arts and the application of such arts to manufacture and practical life, and furnishing popular instruction". This is an unusual statement of purposes for a museum, and it should be remembered well, because it gives the key to the kind of entity the founders desired to create and because their vision, we think, still is fine and progressive.

Had their origins in collections formed for
Museums began ~~as~~ the intimate delight of princes -- temporal and spiritual -- and of rich men. Their character changed, a century and a half ago, when the French Revolution took the Louvre away from the kings, whose sole possession it had been for centuries, and gave it to the people. From that time on, under the impact of powerful forces -- for example, democracy with its concern for ~~the common man~~ *equality of opportunity*, modern science with its ever-widening frontiers, aesthetic innovations -- the museum has been developing out of all previous recognition.

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The Museum of Modern Art continues that development and should be its spearhead. It was founded to be an institution for the people, for the study of modern arts and the application of such arts to manufacture and practical life, and for instruction in terms of the best of ~~the~~ ^{the} arts. These are purposes which require that the Museum be intensely alive not only to the new but also to progress in the older traditions; and, unless it is to be a false leader, require that it be able to choose what is best in what is new and what shows progress or has contemporary vitality in what is old. In the past, there have appeared traditionalists who were great as well as innovators who were great. The Museum of Modern Art must be able to recognize both.

This report, we suggest, should simply be one in a continuous series of critical examinations of the policies and operations of the Museum in the light of its chartered purposes.

THE COMMITTEE ON POLICY:

- (Signed) HENRY ^{ALLEN MOR} OWEN MOE, Chairman
- " John E. Abbott
- " Stephen C. Clark
- " ~~Adelt~~ Adelt R. Levy
- " James T. Soby
- " James Johnson Sweeney
- " ^{MONRBE} Honor Wheeler

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DEPARTMENT OF EXHIBITIONS

REPORT TO THE POLICY COMMITTEE

on Exhibitions of

New Page

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE:

ONE-MAN SHOWS:

A good many important twentieth century artists have not received the retrospective one-man showings that have been accorded to others, no less important. It ^{is} ~~would be~~ desirable to decide upon the sequence in which these artists should be ^{presented.} ~~considered.~~ When reasons beyond our control prevent the work of a certain artist from being shown in this sequence, it is proposed that the publications department issue a volume of his work similar to those prepared for major exhibitions, in order to keep our published ^{studies} ~~survey~~ of contemporary artists as complete as possible.

MAJOR EXHIBITIONS:

The Exhibition Program of the Museum of Modern Art has always been fairly well balanced but it has never been very consistent. The inconsistency has been due to certain opportunism which may be inseparable from its declared purpose of relating art to the daily life of the people. It may or may not be a weakness to permit one of the eight curatorial departments to develop at the expense of another. But it is at present impracticable for each of these eight departments -- all of which operate with skeleton staffs -- to produce each year an exhibition worthy of the Museum's highest standards. Major department exhibitions, therefore, should rotate and be planned a year or two in advance with a view to obtaining the collaboration of another museum ^{that} would be willing to share the initial ^{expense} ~~cost.~~ This is ^{one} ~~the~~ way to improve the quality of exhibitions and to reduce their cost. The Museum has already collaborated in this way with the National Gallery in Washington and the Art Institute of Chicago.

TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS:

It is recommended that each curatorial department prepare each year one small exhibition to be shown ^{first} ~~in~~ ^{the Museum} ~~New York~~ and then made available to the Department of Circulating Exhibitions. Insofar as possible these shows should be planned

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(b)
DEPARTMENT OF EXHIBITIONS REPORT TO THE POLICY COMMITTEE

Elsewhere in this report we have made recommendations which will reduce the pace and pressure of work, reduce the volume of material to be housed and reduce the volume of work in the shops. We have made these recommendations primarily to raise quality and reduce expense. Moreover, it is a reasonable expectation, we think, that the Museum, now almost bulging at the joints, under the reduced program again will become adequate to accommodate what we do. But whether it prove to be ideally adequate or not, our financial situation does not, we think, support plans to do any building. ^{It is a prior requirement that} Clearly we ~~must~~ get our house in order ~~before we can~~ and have in sight adequate income, before we attempt to raise funds for new construction and thereby add to our operating expenses.

This Committee's recommendation is that a Committee should be appointed to endeavor to raise \$100,000 of new money, from new sources, on as broad a base as possible, toward the operating budget for 1944-45. If this cannot be done, there will be no solution of the Museum's financial problem except drastic lopping off of major activities.

III. A SEARCHING AND EXPERIMENTAL ATTITUDE

We have said before that the Museum can only survive if it does what it does better than any other institution can do it. That is not an impossible nor even a very difficult goal: the United States Steel Corporation cannot compete successfully

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^(b) DEPARTMENT OF EXHIBITIONS REPORT TO THE POLICY COMMITTEE

~~TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS~~ (Continued)

and executed to suit the needs of the Circulating Exhibitions program.

SMALL PERMANENT DEPARTMENTAL GALLERIES:

If each department is to have but one New York exhibition each year, it ^{should} ~~must~~ then be permanently represented in the Museum by at least one small gallery which will show daily to visitors the significant recent achievements in each field and call attention to departmental services and publications. In this way the Museum's influence in the various fields with which it is concerned will become as constant as in the fields of painting and sculpture.

This will reduce the space available for our current exhibitions but it will give to the Museum's departmental activities a valuable continuity which (with the exception of painting and sculpture) they have never had before.

Continued on page 2