APPENDIX 1

REPORT ON ART-SCHOOL TRAINING by Mr Morris Kestelman, painter (United Kingdom), member of the working sub-committee, presented to the 4th General Assembly, New York, October, 1963.

INTRODUCTION

The object of the questionnaire on art-school training was to initiate an enquiry into the methods by which young artists are trained in different countries. The guiding idea behind the questions was put quite simply. Each artist to whom they were sent was asked : " what would you suggest as a reasonable training or preparation if a young student came to you for advice as to how he should develop his talent?"

It is common knowledge that schools of art have come under a great deal of criticism in the past 40 to 50 years. The developments in modern art during the past half century have clearly made a decisive and disturbing impact on traditional teaching methods and attitudes This tradition was evolved largely from Renaissance practice and was ultimately solidified into 19th century academic teaching : the basis of that training was firmly laid down in drawing, painting and sculpture from the nude, the study of anatomy and perspective, composition and, later, colour-theories stimulated by the researches of 19th century scientists. Until the first world war, academic teaching prevailed. Apart from a few highly exceptional teaching ateliers—such names as Matisse and André Lhote spring to mind—there were few contemporary innovations in teaching until the appearance of the Bauhaus, when Klee, Kandinsky, Moholy-Nagy, etc., began to introduce radically new methods.

Since the end of the last war, however, rapid changes have followed in many countries. Methods, materials—the use of which would formerly have been regarded as revolutionary—are now currently employed; the " modern " techniques have widely penetrated the schools. Side by side with traditional " sound " teaching are to be found the most up-to-date procedures. To-day change has gone so far that these formerly radical methods are now, in their turn, being criticised as a " new academicism." In some countries strenuous efforts are being made to reform training courses—in state-schools and with official sanction. There is debate not only in regard to teaching methods, but also as to the type of school best suited to contemporary realities—whether the art-school best serves our needs or whether a University-type training is not to be preferred.

It is a matter of close interest to artists of mature experience as to how the younger generation is to be trained, or helped on its way; and it is surely a matter of concern to us that young artists should not have their time wasted or talents diverted in schools, whether through following moribund procedures, fashionable dogmas, or the seductions of ephemeral effects. When we look back on our own years of training and in the light of our later experience, do we really feel satisfied with what is being done? What remains valid in traditional teaching? What do we feel about the more recent developments? What, putting the question directly to each one of us who might be interested, if you were given complete " carte blanche," would you like to see as a training? It was with considerations of this sort in mind that the questionnaire was devised.