

BUSINESS FOR THE *Annual Meeting*

by Henry Wightman

This month's editorial contained a lengthy pep talk about how, if we have the right spirit, and whatnot, we will be able to take all of our problems in our stride, and become a stronger and closer knit organization than we have ever been before. This article is intended to present the above problems in greater detail, and contains comments on various suggestions that have been submitted.

Since it appears that, in the future, the Soaring Society will have to pay its own way, it will be impossible for it to pay the salary of a general manager, or to employ a full-time office secretary. The most pressing problem at hand, therefore, is that of distributing the work that has presumably been handled by the manager and the central office.

Since our problem is partly a financial one, let us find out, first, what income we have, next, what we must do with that income, and last, how we can do it most effectively.

Our income during the past year has come from three sources—membership, advertising, and selling merchandise on commission (*The Art of Soaring Flight*). Membership netted us slightly under \$2,000. Advertising, books, back issues of *SOARING*, and all miscellaneous items amounted to roughly \$600. All other income was classed as donations, and, therefore, does not concern this discussion. Now, with this \$2,600, what has to be done?

Among the routine, or standard items are bookkeeping, answering of correspondence, inquiries, etc., and the publishing of *SOARING*. The first item will require the services of a paid employee about two days per week, or about \$300 per year. It is conceivable that somebody might be found to do it in his spare time, but that is somewhat doubtful. The answering of correspondence and inquiries is already being taken over by the regional associations, and will probably cost the society nothing. This is discussed later in this article.

The greatest drain on our finances, and also the greatest source of income, is *SOARING*. Since the great majority of members seem to desire its continuation in its present form, we will consider its cost, as it appears today. \$180 per month, or \$2,160 per year, covers the cost of printing, engraving, mailing, secretarial help, and all items that can not be done by members of the Soaring Society. This issue cost \$169. This brings the total cost of operation, so far, up to \$2,460, leaving \$140 for telegraph, stationery, etc., assuming that we actually get the whole \$2,600 income.

Among the less standardized, but equally important tasks, is promotional and publicity work, scientific research, public education, etc. This work need not necessarily cost us anything, but requires a high degree of organization to be effective on a national scale. The following:

In writing this article, I do not intend to take advantage

of my position, as editor of the magazine, to publish my own ideas on the subject, without giving others the same chance. However, I will comment, from a technical point of view, on several suggestions that have been made repeatedly by groups and individuals. The two most important ones are offers that have been made by certain groups to take over the publication of *SOARING*, and the demand that there be a closer bond between clubs, regional associations, and the SSA.

First, from past experience, it seems entirely feasible that a group of three or four should publish *SOARING* in their spare time. There must be one person in charge of laying out the magazine, and dealing with the printer. There must also be several who will take the responsibility of collecting, editing, and preparing certain types of articles, and turning them over to the layout man. The layout man must be above the average in dependability, if he is to work only in his spare time, and he must always be sure that he has enough assistant "editors" on the job so that several of them can slip up without seriously disrupting the schedule. He will have to spend about ten evenings per month on the job. The others will spend less. The printer handles mailing.

Regarding the tie up between regional groups and the Soaring Society, a grouping together of all the suggestions that have been made gives us a rather complete plan that seems entirely workable. There has been a demand for combination memberships in regional groups and the SSA. There have been offers from these groups to take over the answering of inquiries and promotional work pertaining to those who make the inquiries. The logical combination of these suggestions seems to be to turn over all such work to the groups concerned, and to offer them a commission for all new members that they turn in, as is now done for magazine subscription agencies. Interpreted in a different way, this means that regional associations can get combined memberships in their group and in the SSA at reduced rates. Again, it may mean that the Soaring Society is supplying names of prospective enthusiasts to the groups and paying part of the expenses necessary to secure them as members. Such a plan should, of course, be carried further, and include a central SSA committee that could combine the regional projects most effectively. A financial tie-up alone will be an advantage, but will not be enough.

There may be adverse comment about selling anything for a commission. Since it is planned to increase the scope of these activities, it might be well to consider the reasons for adopting this practice. In the first place, our circulation is too small for us to obtain any advertising by the usual methods. Also, we are the only publication that reaches all those interested in soaring. In order to fulfill most effectively our purpose of promoting soaring activity, we should, therefore, furnish advertising service

(Continued on page 13)