

Make the Most of Your Camera

— By J.W.B. —

IN these days of high prices and shortage of film the amateur photographer cannot afford to have unsuccessful photographs. This article is intended to help prevent those failures.

The common mistakes fall under five headings: incorrect exposure, bad focusing, camera shake, moving objects and lack of composition.

In exposure various points must be considered. They comprise brightness and intensity of light, illuminating the object; nature of the subject—seascape or dark street; aperture of the lens being used; and speed of the emulsion.

Beginning with the last point, consider emulsion speed. Most films are marked for speed by the Scheiner system. For example, Selo fine grain panchromatic film is marked 27 degs. Scheiner; others may be 28 degs., or 32 degs. The one marked 32 degs. is faster film than 27 degs. The speed value of films will be learned with use and practice.

It is obvious in considering lens aperture that the larger the opening the more light will reach the film. Therefore, on a dull day the aperture must be increased to allow in more light. The aperture opening as a rule is marked F8, F16 etc., the greater the number the smaller the aperture. As a rule, a box camera has a maximum aperture of F12, which means that with a box one cannot hope to take pictures under varying light conditions, as with, say, a F4.5 lens which will allow much more light to the film, without distortion of the picture. It is for this reason that makers of box cameras do not advise the taking of pictures on dull days, without time exposure.

The nature of the subject affects the exposures. It is obvious that the light reflected from snow is greater than that



from a dark street. Remember to expose for the shadows and leave highlights to look after themselves.

Brightness and intensity of light are controlled by various factors. Latitude is one. The nearer the equator the greater will be the light intensity. The time of day and the month of the year are important. In the morning the brightness of the light is less than at midday; and in Italy the light in December is not as bright as in June. Under intensity of light can come the use of filters since, if a filter is used, the intensity of light reaching the film is decreased. This is controlled by whether the filter is "1 times," "2 times," etc.

An exposure table is printed with this article which should prove valuable to photographers.

Bad focussing is frequently the cause of failures. Most box and cheaper cameras are of the fixed focus type which means that no adjustment is needed for an object at any distance. The more expensive and precise the camera the greater the attention which must be paid to correct focussing. The camera must be set so as to be focussed for whatever the distance the object is from the camera, and with the precise instrument this is done with a range-finder. Poor focussing causes fuzziness and is an annoying defect, especially when exposure has been correct.

Camera shake also must be guarded against. When taking a photograph, care must be taken to keep the camera very steady and to press the button gently. If possible, rest the camera on