

S.A. Oscar award sparks film row

SUNDAY EXPRESS REPORTER

FOR the first time in this country, an "Oscar" award is to be made to the South African actor and actress who are considered to have given the best performance of the year.

But the innovation will NOT be supported by the Motion Pictures Producers' Association, which says:

- "We do not know the sponsors," and
- "The award, which is premature, will not be recognised by us."

Mr. Jamie Uys, who is an executive committee member of the M.P.P.A. which has vetoed the award, is, ironically, a "hot favourite" on the list of film actors who are in the running for the male Oscar award.

He told the Sunday Express yesterday, "Should I be awarded the Oscar, I will not accept it."

Mr. Uys declined to make further comment.

The man behind the Oscar idea is Mr. John Steenekamp, a 24-year-old opera singer, who is now a co-director in a Johannesburg screen test agency.

He told me yesterday: "Everybody thinks the Oscar award is a good idea . . . EXCEPT the M.P.P.A."

Boom coming

"How can they say the idea is premature? Over 20 films were made in South Africa this year, and it is quite obvious that a boom is coming for this country's film industry."

Mr. Ronald Brantford, chairman of the M.P.P.A., told me yesterday: "We are not taking any interest in this premature venture. In any case we do not know the sponsors."

The two bronze figures—one male, one female—will be known as "The Huguenet Oscars" in



Actor-producer Jamie Uys . . . he will refuse to accept any Oscar if it is offered to him.

honour of Andre Huguenet, the popular actor who died earlier this year.

Mr. Herman Wald, the sculptor who designed the leaping buck in Johannesburg's Oppenheimer Park, has been commissioned to sculpt the Oscars, which will be presented to the winners at a film star Christmas ball in Randburg on Friday night.