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# REPORT

OF THE

# INDIAN CINEMATOGRAPH COMMITTEE

# 1927-1928



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NOTE.—The evidence recorded by the Committee is published separately in four volumes. Miscellaneous papers are printed in Volume IV.

## RESOLUTION PASSED IN THE COUNCIL OF STATE ON THE 15TH SEPTEMBER 1927.

This Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he be pleased to appoint a Committee to examine and report on the system of censorship of cinematograph films in India and to consider whether it is desirable that any steps should be taken to encourage the exhibition of films produced within the British Empire generally and the production and exhibition of Indian films in particular.

RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, HOME DEPARTMENT, (POLITICAL), DATED SIMLA, THE 6TH OCTOBER 1927, No. D.-4169.

The question of the adequacy of the censorship exercised over cinematograph films in India has been attracting for some time past increasing public attention and has more than once been brought to the notice of the Government of India by resolutions in the Indian Legislature. The Government of India came to the conclusion that the subject was one of sufficient importance and complexity to demand a thorough enquiry by a special committee, which will take evidence and obtain opinions from all parts of India. At the same time the question had been raised by a resolution of the Imperial Conference of 1926 whether the various parts of the Empire could take any steps to encourage the exhibition of Empire films. As all Governments of the Empire have been invited to consider this question, it appeared to the Government of India that it would be appropriate that it should be examined by the proposed Committee. This extension of the scope of the Committee's enquiry would also enable it to address itself to a question which may have a far-reaching influence on the development of the cinematograph in India, namely, the possibility of encouraging the production and exhibition of Indian films.

2. A resolution embodying these proposals was moved on behalf of Government during the last session in both Houses of the Legislature. The resolution was passed without dissent in the Council of State, while in the Legislative Assembly the discussion was adjourned on the understanding that Government would be free to proceed with their proposals.

3. Accordingly the Governor-General in Council has decided to appoint a Committee which will start work at an early date. The terms of reference will be as follows :—

(1) to examine the organisation and the principles and methods of the censorship of cinematograph films in India ;

(2) to survey the organisation for the exhibition of cinematograph films and the film-producing industry in India ;

(3) to consider whether it is desirable that steps should be taken to encourage the exhibition of films produced within the British Empire generally and the production and exhibition of Indian films in particular; and to make recommendations.

4. The Committee will be composed as follows :—

*Chairman.*

1. Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar, C.I.E., Vakil, High Court, Madras.

*Members.*

2. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Sir Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer, *Kt.*
3. Colonel J. D. Crawford, D.S.O., M.C., M.L.A.
4. Mr. K. C. Neogy, M.L.A., Vakil, High Court, Calcutta.
5. Mr. A. M. Green, I.C.S., Collector of Customs and Member of Bombay Board of Film Censors.
6. Mr. J. Coatman, M.L.A., Director of Public Information.

Mr. G. G. Hooper, M.C., I.C.S., will act as Secretary to the Committee.

5. The Committee will visit important centres, and will take evidence on the questions stated in the terms of reference. Persons who desire to be called as witnesses should apply in writing to the Secretary, care of Home Department, Government of India, Simla, giving their full names and addresses together with a brief memorandum of the points in regard to which they desire to give evidence. It will of course rest with the Committee to decide what evidence they will hear.

H. G. HAIG,
*Secretary to the Govt. of India.*

## CHAPTER I.

### Introductory.

The power of the cinema.

1. The great potentialities of the cinematograph for good and for evil are generally recognized. The extraordinary increase in recent years in the number of cinema-houses throughout the world has resulted in special attention being devoted in many countries to the subject of the cinematograph and its effects. On the one hand, it has been found necessary in most countries to institute some form of censorship in order to control and, as far as possible, to eradicate the evil effects of the cinema; on the other hand, enquiries have been made for the purpose of ascertaining how far and by what means the cinema can be utilised as a medium of enlightenment and education.

The cinema as a recreation.

2. Primarily the cinema is an instrument of recreation. It affords the cheapest and most popular form of entertainment to the mass of the people. It is a well recognized maxim that there should be as little interference as possible with the recreations of the people. But in this respect some differentiation has been made in the majority of countries between the cinema and other forms of entertainment, such as the stage. There are two reasons for this differential treatment of the cinema. One reason is that the cinema appeals to a much wider audience. The number of persons who witness a successful play is infinitesimal compared with the vast numbers who witness a successful film. The second reason is that the film has a special and peculiar appeal. It has to achieve its effect visually, without the aid of the spoken word. The result is an exaggeration of physical expression and suggestive action. Every device is employed in order to intensify the visual impression, such as the well-known device of the "close-up", and thus a peculiarly direct and vivid impression is produced upon the mind of the spectator.

The object of censorship.

3. The object of censorship is strictly limited, namely, to preclude that which is definitely undesirable or unsuitable for public exhibition. Rules and principles may be laid down for the guidance of the censor, but it is in the application of these rules and principles to particular cases that the difficulty arises; and therefore much must be left to the discretion of the censor. Ultimately, the criterion to be adopted by the censor must be based on what he conceives to be the enlightened public opinion on the subject. He is the interpreter of public opinion, and ultimately his decisions derive their sanction from public opinion. It is arguable, and it has been argued before us, that censorship is unnecessary and that it should be left to public opinion to decide what is suitable or unsuitable. Without entering into

the merits of this argument as a general proposition, we may say that, as far as India is concerned, public opinion is not sufficiently organised or articulate to make it possible to dispense with censorship. On the other hand, it has been proposed in some quarters that the scope of censorship should be extended and that films should be censored not only on moral and social grounds but on artistic grounds as well; and that films which do not come up to the required standard of artistic excellence should be debarred from exhibition. We are aware that such a practice is in vogue in certain countries, but we do not consider that it is either practicable or justifiable to make one man or one body of men the arbiter of taste for a whole population, nor is it desirable in the present condition of the trade in this country.

The cinema in education.

4. In its aspect as an instrument of education the cinema has been the subject of various national and international conferences, and has engaged the attention of the League of Nations. It can be used educationally, in the limited sense of the word, as a mode of supplemental instruction in schools and colleges, and for illustrating certain technical and scientific processes. It has, however, a special value as a medium of education in the wider sense; for the purpose of propagating ideas or information among the masses on such subjects as public health, hygiene, improved agricultural methods, civics and a variety of other matters. And in this connection it has a special interest for India with her vast illiterate population.

General effect.

5. The general effect of the cinema upon the people must vary in different countries according to the class of films generally shown and the conditions of the country. We are concerned with the effect on the people of India. In India the problem is one of peculiar complexity owing mainly to the fact that the majority of the films exhibited are produced in the West and portray an entirely alien civilisation. There is the danger of Westernisation, of denationalisation—the ancient problem of new wine in old bottles. In the forefront of our report, however, we desire to place on record our unanimous conviction that the general effect of the Western films in India is not evil, but, on the whole, is good. India is essentially a conservative country, possibly an ultra-conservative country. We are satisfied that the Western films, in spite of their defects, have an educational value for the people of India. They tend to open the eyes of the uneducated to other and more advanced conditions of life and to give them some idea, however imperfect, of conditions in other countries; they tend to broaden their minds and widen their outlook.

Indian censorship.

6. The present system of censorship in India was introduced by the Indian Cinematograph Act, 1918. Previously there had been some form of censorship by voluntary Boards regarding which little information

is available. Under the Act, which was subsequently amended in various particulars, no film can be exhibited unless it has received a certificate from one of the Boards of Censors. In 1920 Boards of Censors were established in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Rangoon. These Boards are each empowered to grant a certificate valid for the whole of India, but any Provincial Government can uncertify a film which it deems unsuitable for public exhibition in such Province.

Criticisms of the Indian Censorship in India and England.

7. Film censorship in India has been the subject of a certain amount of discussion both in India and in England for several years. In 1921 Mr. W. Evans, a cinema expert, brought out by the Government of India to make a survey of the cinema industry in this country, stated in his report that the existing Boards of Censors were "weak and inexperienced" and suggested that the Government of India should urge the Provincial Governments to "stiffen up, and raise to reasonable efficiency, the present censorship, which is largely nominal." The Advisory Publicity Committee who considered Mr. Evans' report recommended " that the local Governments should be asked to stiffen up their control in censoring films for exhibition in India."

This led to a re-examination of the subject by the Government of India in correspondence with the Provincial Governments.

Press criticisms.

8. Letters and articles have appeared from time to time in the British Press asseverating that much harm was being done in India by the widespread exhibition of Western films. We have seen several of these Press comments from 1923 onwards. The general trend of them is that, owing to difference of customs and outlook, Western films are misunderstood and tend to discredit Western civilisation in the eyes of the masses in India. Such criticism was chiefly directed against "cheap American films." To give an example of this sort of criticism, a well-known Bishop intimately acquainted with India stated (as reported in the Press) in a speech at a conference in England in 1925:—

"The majority of the films, which are chiefly from America, are of sensational and daring murders, crimes, and divorces, and, on the whole, degrade the white women in the eyes of the Indians."

We have also seen other complaints and communications of a similar nature which came to the notice of Government.

This view did not, however, go altogether unchallenged. Thus, on the 21st April 1926 there appeared in the *Times of India* an article commenting on a representation made by the Federation of British Industries to the Board of Trade regarding the practical monopoly enjoyed by American films, in which the Federation were reported to have said that those pictures were "detrimental to British prestige and prejudicial to the interests of the Empire, especially in the Dominions which contain large coloured populations." This idea was ridiculed by the *Times of India*. The

*Indian Daily Mail* on the 22nd April 1926 animadverted on the same theme.

Questions in Parliament.

9. Some questions also were asked in Parliament regarding the censorship in India. Thus on the 9th November 1921, Sir C. Yate asked the Secretary of State for India what had been the result of the establishment of censorship of cinema films in India, who were the censors, and what had they done.

In his reply Mr. Montagu, after referring to the Boards, stated: "I have not received any reports as to their work. But I understand that the Government of India has recently had its attention drawn to the matter and suggestions have been made to it for making the censorship in each place more efficient."

Again on the 11th July 1927 Lieutenant-Colonel Howard-Bury asked the Under Secretary of State for India "whether his attention has been drawn to the nature of certain American films that are being shown in India; and whether he can state what steps are being taken to prevent such films being shown." The reply was as follows: "The Government of India were asked by a despatch, dated 31st March last, to give their attention to the whole question of the censorship of films shown in India and particularly to the question of the suitability or unsuitability of films of Western, especially of American, production for exhibition in India. The Government of India's reply is awaited; and I have no information as to what steps have as yet been taken to strengthen the existing system of censorship."

The following supplementary questions and answers then ensued:—

Lieutenant-Colonel Howard-Bury: "Is the Noble Lord aware that public opinion is very seriously disturbed in India over the harm which is done by these undesirable films?"

Earl Winterton: "Yes, but that disturbance is not greater than the disturbance caused in this country. The problem is an exceedingly difficult one, and it is to find an efficient form of censorship for films."

Colonel Day: "Is the Noble Lord aware that the last film banned was a British film and not an American film?"

Earl Winterton: "I do not know that, but, at any rate, it was an undesirable film."

British Social Hygiene Delegation.

10. The British Social Hygiene Delegation visited India in the cold weather of 1926–27 and among other drastic criticisms of the films exhibited in India which appear in their memorandum on the cinema, there occurs the following:—

"In every province that we visited the evil influence of the cinema was cited by educationists and the representative citizens

as one of the major factors in lowering the standard of sex conduct, and thereby tending to increase the dissemination of disease."

The memorandum was not sent out until July 1927 but similar statements had been made in speeches by at least one member of the Delegation before they left India.

National Council of Women in Burma.

11. About the same time the National Council of Women in Burma, as the result of a memorial drawn up by the Rangoon Vigilance Society, appointed a sub-committee to conduct an enquiry into the standard of films shown in Burma. In their report (21st July 1927) in which they treat the whole subject of censorship, they state: "The majority of films shown are actually those shown in Western countries but the general standard is lower here, because a smaller proportion of really good films is imported. Owing to the different standards of behaviour many films which would be harmless in the West are definitely pernicious here." Again, they say: "It is desirable and necessary to ban the numerous pictures in which sex is treated with vulgarity and the physical side of it over-emphasised." They refer also to "crime" films, the effect of the cinema on children, and other matters.

We shall deal in more detail, under the head of Censorship, with the nature of the criticisms made. We have merely referred here to these instances to give an idea of the sort of complaints which were being made from time to time.

Other complaints.

12. It may be added that there were also sporadic complaints from the Trade of over-strictness on the part of the censors. Criticisms were also made of the method of inspection adopted by some Boards, and of the whole system under which a film passed in one province might be banned in another.

Discussions in the Council of State and questions in the Legislative Assembly.

13. The question has been discussed on two occasions in the Council of State. On the 22nd January 1925 the Hon'ble Mr. (now Sir Ebrahim) Haroon Jaffer moved the following resolution:—

"That this Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council that in place of the various existing Provincial Boards a single salaried Board be appointed for the whole of India to regulate the import into India of cinema films and to exercise a stricter control over cinemas generally."

In the course of his opening speech he stated: "I have come to the conclusion that some such action as is suggested in this resolution should be taken in view of the altogether erroneous impression made on the Indian mind of the social life of England, America and other Western lands by many of the cinema films permitted to be shown throughout India, an impression which is decidedly inimical to the interests of the country in general." Again he said: "A picture which would be perfectly harmless

in Europe where all the circumstances would be understood and all the humour or sarcasm immediately recognised, might be of great harm in India." He referred also to the importation of undesirable films, saying: "It would almost appear that certain of the American producers cater especially for such countries as India and Japan and make films which they would never dare to release in America or England." "I believe it is also true that any films which are so suggestive as to come under the ban of the Censorship Board of America are silently packed up to places like India, where, up to the present, the authorities have not been so strict in these matters."

The Home Secretary (the Hon'ble Mr. J. Crerar) in opposing the resolution expressed sympathy with the intention of the mover and referred to "the gross misrepresentations of Western morals, of Western culture, and Western civilisation which have not infrequently found their way into cinema exhibitions." He pointed out, however, that in the Cinematograph Act the Legislature had expressly provided that there must be a large non-official element on these Boards. He mentioned also that control of cinematographs had been advisedly made a provincial subject and quoted instances where it had been found necessary to ban in one province a film found unobjectionable in another. He also emphasised the great inconvenience to the trade of a Central Board. In the course of the debate the Hon'ble Mr. R. P. Karandikar stated: "It has been a matter of complaint all over India that the student world is drawn away from the right path by the kind of cinema representations that are open. It is time for us to look into the matter more closely." Other speakers referred mainly to provincial differences. The Home Secretary in his reply said: "We have recently, in a general review of the whole question, called the attention of local Governments to the directions in which, under the existing Act by the existing machinery, improvements can be attained."

The resolution was negatived.

There followed on the 2nd February 1925 a question in the Legislative Assembly by Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan:—

"Will the Government please state—

(*a*) if there exists an All-India Board for exercising control over cinemas;

(*b*) If not, will they please consider the desirability of constituting an All-India Board for the purpose?"

In the reply on the part of Government the questioner was referred to the discussion in the Council of State and he was informed that "a proposal to this effect has recently been considered but the Government of India were not satisfied that the practical difficulties in the way of such a proposal could be surmounted." A further question was asked by the same gentleman on the 15th March 1927 regarding control over exhibition of films.

On the 21st March 1927 the Hon'ble Mr. V. Ramadas Pantulu moved the following resolution in the Council of State:—

"This Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council to improve the system of censorship and control over cinemas and other public resorts of amusement, and to adopt adequate measures to prohibit the exhibition therein of films and other shows which are calculated to corrupt the morals of the people."

In the course of his speech he said: "The films that come from America—there are a large number of them exhibited all over the Empire and the world—contain very many scenes which are calculated to corrupt public morals." He referred also to the effect of "crime" films. Regarding the censorship he stated: "My complaint is that the control exercised is so feeble and the work is done so carelessly that a large mass of films which are really objectionable are allowed to pass without censorship and are actually on the boards." He mentioned that the idea of tabling the resolution had occurred to him after hearing an address given by Mrs. Neville Rolfe (of the British Social Hygiene Delegation).

In the course of the discussion the Hon'ble Rao Sahib Dr. U. Rama Rao stated: "It is a matter of grave concern and one of great consternation too that the cinema shows at present exhibited in most of the theatres exert a most demoralising influence on the inhabitants of this country" and again "I can boldly and without fear of contradiction assert that the growing increase in crimes and the moral depravities of men and women in India are partly the outcome of the so-called educative value of these cinema shows." He referred also to the "abominable love-scenes which . . . lead the unfortunate youngsters astray."

The Home Secretary (the Hon'ble Mr. H. G. Haig) in accepting the resolution on behalf of Government agreed that it was desirable to improve the system of censorship but was not prepared to condemn the work of the Censor Boards which, on the whole, making due allowance for the difficulties, had been carried out very successfully. Of these Boards he also said: "they have adopted methods which in the special conditions with which we are faced in India we find it difficult to suggest any immediate improvement on." He stated: "the films which are shown in India represent an alien civilisation interpreted by these crude and vivid methods to an audience which in many cases comprehends very imperfectly the social conditions presented. That makes the effect of the cinema particularly difficult to determine."

"The censor has to decide not only what is tolerable from a Western standpoint in the representation of Western manners but what is tolerable from an Eastern standpoint, or even what is tolerable from the standpoint of probable error or misrepresentation." He mentioned that "at various times within the last few years a number of complaints, for the most part of a general nature, have been received by the Government of India, and they have carried on a somewhat prolonged correspondence with the

local Governments under whose immediate control the censorship is conducted. The general attitude of those local Governments. . . is that they are achieving a great measure of success in a matter of considerable difficulty." Elsewhere in his speech, referring to the attempts being made to produce more British films, he expressed a hope that if more British films were forthcoming there might be some improvement, and went on to say "But it seems to me that a still greater improvement would lie in a considerable extension of the production of Indian films,—showing Indian stories in an Indian setting."

The resolution was adopted.

In neither of these debates was any voice raised to deny that the cinema was having a harmful effect in the country.

Correspondence between the Government of India and Provincial Governments.

14. From the time of the Advisory Publicity Committee's recommendations in 1921 onwards (and even before that time) the subject of the censorship was constantly under examination by the Government of India in correspondence with Provincial Governments. We have had the privilege of perusing this correspondence. Endeavours were made to ascertain whether there were any grounds for believing that there was any laxity in the censorship. The allegations made however were almost invariably of a vague and general character and it was practically impossible to obtain specific instances to substantiate them. Attempts made to obtain such information ended in failure. Apart however from the difficulty of determining whether in particular cases undesirable films had slipped through the hands of the Censors, there remained always the more fundamental problem of whether the main principles on which the Censors worked did not need revision; in other words, whether a different standard of censorship altogether was not needed in view of the special conditions in India. This was necessarily a larger problem than could be tackled by correspondence with Provincial Governments; its solution depending on a consideration of what exactly was the effect on the illiterate population of witnessing these films of an alien civilisation—a matter very difficult to ascertain.

At the same time it was felt that there were defects in the system on which the Boards were organised and in their methods of work. In particular some dissatisfaction was felt in regard to the system of inspection of films by subordinate Inspectors which prevailed at Bombay and Calcutta, and the lack of uniformity of standard which must necessarily result where there are several Boards with equal powers. Attention had been called to the former of these apparent defects by the Advisory Publicity Committee, and to the latter by the Hon'ble Sir Ebrahim Jaffer in the Council of State on the 22nd January 1925. Various proposals were examined from time time to remedy these defects. These proposals will be considered more in detail at a later stage in this report.

The main remedy appeared to lie, in the one case, in the direction of a system of inspection of films either by Members of the Board exclusively or by stipendiary Censors with high qualifications, and, in the other, in the creation of some Central body either in addition to or in substitution for the local Boards. On examination however, serious obstacles were disclosed in the way of carrying any of these proposals into effect and, as it appears, a kind of deadlock was reached.

Encouragement of the production and exhibition of Indian films.

15. The question of encouraging the production and exhibition of Indian films has a natural connection with the subject of censorship. Thus, if, in fact, the exhibition of Western films is doing some mischief in this country the best remedy would seem to be to encourage Indian films to take their place, and this is the suggestion made by many of the witnesses. Apart however from this consideration the encouragement of a national industry of this description is clearly advisable *per se* for reasons which are too obvious to require elaboration. As early as 1921, Mr. Evans had strongly emphasised the importance of encouraging the production and exhibition of Indian films. The Advisory Publicity Committee recommended a 25 per cent *ad valorem* tariff on imported films "in view of the necessity for encouraging the production of films in India suited to Indian audiences."

A question was asked in the Council of State on the 15th September 1925 by the Hon'ble Mr. (now Sir Ebrahim) Haroon Jaffer as to the amount of production of cinema films in India during 1924, and the capital invested in the industry. The reply was that Government had no information. In the Legislative Assembly on the 26th January 1926 Lala Piyare Lal asked what help Government had given to the cinema industry and was informed that no help had been given. Again, on the 30th August 1927 Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan asked a question in the Legislative Assembly regarding the Indian film industry and in his reply the Hon'ble Mr. J. Crerar remarked that Government had no exact figures as to the number of producing concerns in India and that they were considering the institution of a detailed examination of the position of the industry.

Encouragement of British Empire films.

16. The subject of British Empire films is raised in the third clause of the terms of reference. In 1926 the Imperial Conference passed the following Resolution:—

"The Imperial Conference, recognising that it is of the greatest importance that a larger and increasing proportion of the films exhibited throughout the Empire should be of Empire production, commends the matter and the remedial measures proposed to the consideration of the Governments of the various parts of the Empire with a view to such early and effective action to deal with the serious situation now existing as they may severally find possible."

The " remedial measures proposed " were those suggested by the Economic Sub-Committee and were as follows:—

(1) Effective customs duties on foreign films, whether accompanied by a change in the basis on which duties are payable or otherwise;

(2) Ample preference or free entry for films produced within the Empire;

(3) Legislation for the prevention of " blind" and " block" booking;

(4) The imposition of requirements as to the renting or exhibition of a minimum quota of Empire films.

It therefore became incumbent on India in common with other parts of the Empire to consider whether or not she should take any steps to give encouragement to British Empire films.

The debate in the Assembly on the resolution recommending the appointment of this Committee.

17. On the 14th September 1927, the Home Member (the Honourable Mr. J. Crerar) moved the following Resolution in the Legislative Assembly:—

" That this Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he be pleased to appoint a Committee to examine and report on the system of censorship of cinematograph films in India and to consider whether it is desirable that any steps should be taken to encourage the exhibition of films produced within the British Empire generally and the production and exhibition of Indian films in particular."

In the course of his speech the Hon'ble Mr. Crerar referred to some of the criticisms which had been levelled against certain classes of films exhibited in this country, and against the machinery of the censorship. Regarding British Empire films he alluded to the Resolution of the Imperial Conference and said:—

" Whether we find it possible to proceed on these lines or not, it would be premature to say. That is a question which might very well be examined." He emphasised the importance of encouraging the Indian film industry. Reverting to the desirability of appointing a Committee he said that the censorship question had been under the consideration of Government for a number of years and added:—" We have now reached the stage where the ordinary method of examining questions of public importance by correspondence between the Government of India and the Local Governments and between the Local Governments and the various subordinate authorities has been nearly exhausted. We have passed that stage." Among the several members who took part in the ensuing debate there was unanimity on the need for the appointment of a Committee to examine the question of censorship and consider steps for the encouragement of the Indian film industry. Controversy was confined mainly to the question of British Empire films and the constitution of the Committee. Among the speakers Mr. C. Duraiswami Ayyangar (who moved an amendment), said:—" When we see

the various kinds of films that are exhibited in this country we find that there has been absolutely no efficient or effective control over the exhibition or the selection of appropriate films in India." He expressed a strong objection to the introduction of religion into the films, particularly in the form of perverted or unworthy renderings of the Puranas. (We may say at once that in the course of our extensive enquiry we did not come across any complaint that in the Indian films there was any wilful attempt to pervert the Puranas or that they were unworthily rendered. There were some complaints, however, of inaccuracies in dress and fashions and of inapt language.) Lala Lajpat Rai in the course of his speech alluded to the misrepresentation of Asiatics in general and Indians in particular in films which he had witnessed abroad. Colonel J. D. Crawford said that he had received very many complaints from his own community regarding the misrepresentation of the conditions of Western life in films shown in this country, and emphasised the necessity for encouraging the Indian film industry. Mr. Mohammad Yamin Khan disputed the point that people in India attached any importance to the scenes of Western life which they saw on the films, but said that there were some films which were objectionable from the point of view of school-children, youths and women; and added: "Though some things may not be considered objectionable in Western countries . . . from the point of view of India, on account of the different social customs prevailing here, they are really objectionable." He also referred to religious and communal questions which were dragged into the films, and to misrepresentation of Indians in some of the imported films. He added further "Indian ladies have now started to see the cinematograph and I like it very much. But it would not be desirable that Indian ladies after coming out from purdah should see such kinds of films that are exhibited nowadays." The debate was not concluded.

The debate in the Council of State.

18. On the following day a resolution in identical terms was moved in the Council of State by the Home Secretary (the Hon'ble Mr. Haig). In the course of his speech he said:—"I think we are probably all agreed that the cinematograph is an influence with great potentialities for good or evil, an influence that requires to be watched very carefully. I think we are probably all agreed that in some respects at the present time that influence is not good, and we want to see whether we can eradicate the evil aspects of the cinematograph and improve the good." He then proceeded to review the main problems which were for the consideration of the Committee and which may be summarised from his speech as follows:—

(i) "The fundamental question of method, whether the censorship should remain as at present on a Provincial basis or should be centralized." "That will be the first and perhaps the main problem that the Committee will have to consider."

(ii) "The constitution of whatever censoring authority they decide is required, and in particular how non-official opinion should be brought to bear on this work of censoring."

(iii) "The mechanism of the censoring authorities"; in other words, the system of censoring: whether for example, the censoring should be done by subordinate Inspectors or, in all cases, by Members of the Boards themselves.

(iv) "Whether the existing standards of censorship are generally satisfactory"; that is, not merely whether the present principles and rules are satisfactory but how those principles and rules are to be applied.

The above represents the "first and primary group of problems which this Committee will have to consider." The second group is—

(v) The Committee should look into the question how far it is possible to develop the production and exhibition of Indian films; because (*a*) the problem of censorship would be largely simplified if we could increase the number of Indian films showing Indian stories in an Indian setting, and (*b*) "it seems desirable that the audiences in this country should have presented to them pictures which give them their own social conditions, their own culture. In that way the cinema may become an instrument of great educational and moral value."

(vi) "There is another factor, really based on the same idea. The Imperial Conference considered that it was much to the advantage of the Empire from the cultural and social point of view that films exhibited in the Empire should show Empire manners and customs, and should acquaint the various parts of the Empire with what is being done in other parts." "I do not think the Imperial Conference really had mainly in view trade interests at all. I think they had mainly in view the cultural and social side, and certainly the Government of India have not any trade interests in view. Their interest in the matter, so far as they have any interest at all, is simply that the proportion of films showing Empire conditions, Empire manners, should be increased. But the Government of India have come to no conclusion on this matter. They have been asked to consider the problem, and they remit the problem for the consideration of a Committee with a non-official majority and themselves express no opinion."

(vii) "Finally we hope that the Committee will be able to give us some information about the organisation of this important industry as a whole. We are very ignorant of the details of its working, and we hope that the Committee will be able to give us some needed information on this point."

Several speakers supported the Resolution and no opposition was expressed, though there was some discussion as to the implications of the reference to British Empire films. The Hon'ble Sir Ebrahim Jaffer expressed the view that the present provincial arrangements for censorship "do not seem to have helped

to any considerable extent in the attainment of the object which such censorship should have in view." The Hon'ble Mr. P. C. Desikachari stated: "I believe a systematised and centralised form of censorship with an effective control would be better than the sort of censorship which is being exercised, and I find actually from the films exhibited in very many places, specially in Burma, that those films which are most objectionable always find very large audiences in picture theatres. It is high time that steps were taken to find out ways and means for effective censorship."

Appointment and procedure of the Committee.

19. The Committee was appointed by the Resolution of the Government of India (Home Department), No. D-4169, Political, dated 6th October 1927, which is printed immediately preceding this Chapter. The Chairman proceeded to Simla on the 3rd October to take up the preliminary work and under his instructions such materials as were immediately available were collected and arranged. The Committee met for the first time at Simla, on the 18th October and after settling the Questionnaire, a draft of which had been prepared beforehand, adjourned to allow time for the printing and issue of the Questionnaire and for the receipt of the earlier replies. (The Questionnaire is printed as Appendix B). The Committee reassembled at Bombay on the 6th November and commenced the examination of witnesses on that date. Thereafter witnesses were examined in the capital towns of each of the Provinces, except Assam and Bihar and Orissa, and flying visits were paid to a few of the smaller places. Witnesses from Assam and Bihar and Orissa were invited to attend at Calcutta. On the conclusion of their tour the Committee reached Delhi on February 9th where they were engaged in the examination of witnesses until the 25th. As the majority of the members were at this period much occupied with their duties in the Central Legislatures, it was not possible to proceed at once to the report stage. Moreover, the materials collected had to be analysed and brought together. Accordingly, the Committee adjourned on the 26th February and reassembled on the 10th April at Ootacamund to draft the Report. In the meantime the statistical tables, abstracts of evidence and other material mentioned in Appendix K had been prepared.

Number of witnesses, etc.

20. The number of copies of the Questionnaire issued was 4,325. It was originally intended to issue about 3,000, but as requests for large numbers of further copies were received from several Provinces it became necessary to print additional copies. The number of replies received was 320. The total number of witnesses examined was 291 (counting a group of witnesses examined jointly as one). The total number altogether was 353. Of those examined, 114 were Europeans, Anglo-Indians or Americans, and 239 Indians of whom 157 were Hindus and 82 non-Hindus. Of the non-Hindus, 38 were Muslims, 25 Parsis, 16 Burmese, 2 Sikhs, and 1 Christian. Altogether 35 ladies

were examined, of whom 16 were Europeans and 19 Indians, Parsis and Burmese. Among the witnesses were 26 members of the Legislatures, 101 officials, and 98 persons connected with the cinema trade. Of the 353 witnesses, 59 appeared at Bombay, 13 at Karachi, 35 at Lahore, 13 at Peshawar, 18 at Lucknow, 72 at Calcutta (of whom 2 were from Bihar and Orissa and 1 from Assam), 53 at Madras, 38 at Rangoon, 11 at Mandalay, 1 at Jamshedpur, 14 at Nagpur, and 26 at Delhi.

The Committee visited some 45 cinemas and witnessed, in addition to a number of short-length or educational films, about 57 feature films, of which 21 were Indian or Burmese productions. Thirteen producing studios were inspected. (See Appendix E.)

The total distance travelled was approximately 9,400 miles.

General nature of the enquiry.

21. The nature of the enquiry rendered it necessary to obtain the views of all sections of the public; of officials and non-officials; of residents of the towns and of the mofussil; of politicians, educational authorities, social workers, artists, businessmen, and, in particular, of as many members as possible of each branch of the trade and industry. On the subject of censorship and the social aspect of the cinema it was clearly advisable to cast our net as wide as possible and we endeavoured, as far as was practicable, to give a hearing to all those who had something definite to say, especially when they represented some new point of view or some different element of society. Nevertheless, of those who submitted written statements there were 154 whom it was not possible for us to examine. In our investigation into the condition of the trade it was necessary to examine a great many trade-witnesses in considerable detail. These considerations account for the large number of Questionnaires issued and for the very voluminous character of the evidence which has been recorded. It was also desirable that we should ourselves witness as many as possible of the films which were being exhibited throughout the country, including an adequate number of Indian films. It was also necessary to see something of the actual processes of production and the equipment and condition of the studios. For the accomplishment of these objects the time at our disposal was comparatively limited. We were only able to devote three months to touring and from this period must be deducted the days occupied in travelling from place to place.

None of us had any special knowledge of the industry and we have not had the advantage of seeing the working and organisation of film-production as it exists in those countries where it is more highly developed.

The dearth of statistics and reliable information.

22. The main difficulty which we experienced from the outset of our enquiry was the almost complete dearth of statistics and reliable information regarding the production, exhibition, and distribution of films in this country, and even, to some extent, regarding importation. The departments of the Government of India and of the Provincial Governments have practically no information regarding these matters.

The same dearth of accurate information is found in the trade itself. Such statistics as we were able to obtain from members of the trade were often widely divergent. The Provincial Governments collected at our request particulars from each district in their respective Provinces; but the compilation and comparison of this information revealed various discrepancies, which, in view of the peculiar nature of cinema statistics, are perhaps inevitable until some organised system of returns is instituted. The Boards of Censors maintain records of their work, and these, within their limits, have been very useful to us. As regards importation, it is only since 1922–23 that figures of the importation of films have been recorded separately, and the year 1927–28 was the first in which a distinction was made in those figures between raw and exposed films.

Reasons for the lack of information.

23. The lack of information on the part of Government is partly to be attributed to the fact that it is only within the last ten years that the cinema trade has assumed appreciable dimensions, but it is partly due to the general defect of the Government organisation for the collection and supply of statistics in this country. The attention of Government has been concentrated almost entirely on the question of censorship, and the trade aspect of the cinema has been largely neglected. The public also have been apathetic and scarcely any interest has been displayed in the subject of the production and exhibition of Indian films. We have been constantly confronted with the opinion that the production of Indian films is "negligible", whereas it is very far from negligible.

Information regarding other countries.

24. Another difficulty which we have experienced is that of obtaining up-to-date information of the position in other countries in regard to such matters as methods of censorship, State aid to the industry, and the production and utilization of educational films. Through the courtesy, however, of those Consuls whom we have addressed and of the High Commissioner in London we have been supplied with information on some aspects of the matters under enquiry. Even in the case of the United Kingdom accurate statistics of, for example, the annual production of films are not available, though we are indebted to His Majesty's Trade Commissioner in India for such figures as could be obtained. In the case of America alone there was no such difficulty, and through the kind assistance of the United States Trade Commissioner, as well as from other sources, we were able to obtain ample information.

Lack of interest in the enquiry on the part of Provincial Governments.

25. Provincial Governments generally, with the marked exception of the Punjab and to a lesser degree the North-West Frontier, showed a lack of interest in our enquiry, indicating that the great potentialities of the cinema had not received from the authorities in India that appreciation which they deserve and which they have received in

other countries. We were particularly surprised that this should be the case in Bombay which is the main centre of the trade and of production in India.

Suspicion regarding the Committee.

26. We have been handicapped to some extent in our enquiry by the suspicion which has been felt in some quarters regarding the object of this Committee. There has been a rather widespread suspicion that this Committee was appointed for the purpose of bolstering up the British film industry and foisting upon India some measure for the assistance of that industry at the expense of this country. We are satisfied that there was no such motive behind the appointment of the Committee. It is somewhat unfortunate that this suspicion should have arisen, because the Committee have from the first been unanimous in their desire for the advancement of the Indian industry and have never entertained the thought of any measure for the encouragement of non-Indian films which would be in any way prejudicial to the Indian industry or to Indian interests. The Chairman in his opening speech at the first meeting of the Committee stressed the point that the interests of India would be considered first, and the Committee have unanimously adhered to that view throughout. Some of the trade-witnesses were clearly influenced by this suspicion of the object of the Committee, and the fact that they were unwilling to furnish the detailed information, requested by us, of the working of their concerns must be largely attributed to this cause; though in part it may have been due to a reluctance to disclose their trade-secrets, even confidentially. In any case, the information was not forthcoming.

Appointment of an enquiry opportune.

27. We have been told that this Committee is 10 years too late; we have also been told that it is 10 years too early; we have even been informed quite frankly that this Committee is altogether unnecessary. To us it appears that the present time is peculiarly opportune for an enquiry into the condition of the cinema industry in this country. That industry, though still in its infancy, has now reached a sufficient stage of development to enable a definite opinion to be formed of its quality and characteristics, its effects and possibilities; it has not yet reached the stage when it may be difficult to direct it on the right lines. Again, the industry is as yet entirely in Indian hands; non-Indian interests, though certainly watchful, have not yet established any control over it. It is well that the danger should be recognized and guarded against before it is too late. Now, in particular, is the time when some guidance and encouragement is required if the industry is to make any further advance. Other countries have been active in fostering the production and exhibition of their national films. Germany is a prominent example with her *Kontingent* system and her subsidies to U.F.A. Italy has her quota system. The new French Regulation is directed towards the encouragement of national ideas in films exhibited in France.

Great Britain has recently passed her Cinema Act which imposes a quota for British Empire films. A Royal Commission is enquiring into the cinema industry in Australia. New Zealand has a quota under consideration. Japan has a very rigorous censorship of foreign films and the percentage of Japanese films exhibited in Japan has increased from 5 or 6 per cent to 72 per cent in 7 or 8 years. It cannot therefore be said that it is premature for India to take this matter in hand.

How our conclusions have been reached.

28. The conclusions embodied in this report are based on the general impressions which we have formed on the very considerable amount of evidence which has come before us. They have not been reached by any exact process of weighing the evidence on this point or on that, or by counting the Ayes and the Noes.

The scheme of the Report.

29. The general scheme of the Report is as follows. It has seemed more convenient to deal with the industry first and the social aspects afterwards; as a discussion of the latter must necessarily be prefaced by some account of the number of cinemas in the country, of the extent to which the cinema-habit has developed, and the types of films which are exhibited and which are popular and so on. Chapter II is accordingly devoted to a brief survey of the condition of the cinema-trade and industry, with the special object of bringing out the existing defects and difficulties. Chapter III contains a description of the main organization which we propose for the assistance of the industry. In Chapter IV are detailed our specific recommendations in regard to production, distribution and exhibition. Chapter V is concerned with Educational and Public Utility films, and Chapter VI with British Empire films. In Chapter VII we deal with social aspects and control, including censorship. Chapter VIII is devoted to some miscellaneous points. Chapter IX contains a summary of our conclusions and recommendations and Chapter X some supplementary matters.

## CHAPTER II.

### Survey of the Trade and Industry.

Introductory.

30. This chapter will be devoted to a concise survey of the cinema trade and industry in this country and of the conditions which affect the various branches, and will conclude with a summary of the main defects and difficulties which appear to the Committee to require attention. Of the three branches—Production, Distribution and Exhibition—it will be convenient to deal first with Exhibition, though it will not always be practicable to maintain a hard and fast line between the different branches.

*Exhibition.*

The Indian "Territory" and "Key Cities."

31. The Indian "territory" for cinema purposes consists of India, Burma and Ceylon. When the exclusive right of exhibition of a film in India is acquired, that right ordinarily extends to the whole of this "territory." Within this "territory" Bombay, Calcutta, Rangoon and, perhaps, to a less degree Colombo may be said to be the "key-cities," in the sense that before exhibition throughout India or throughout a division of India a film is generally shown in the first instance in one or more of these "key-cities" which are the most important from the trade point of view and yield the largest returns. It has not of course been possible to extend our enquiry to Ceylon and the Indian States. It is understood, however, that there are few cinemas in Ceylon.

The number of cinemas.

32. The number of permanent working cinema-houses in British India (including Burma) is approximately 300. This figure is based on information collected by the Provincial Governments from each of the districts, and its approximate correctness is substantiated by the evidence of trade witnesses. The difficulty of arriving at an accurate figure has been accentuated by the fact that statistics collected by the Provincial Governments on different occasions during the last twelve months reveal a certain amount of variation. From detailed information supplied recently by those Governments a list of the permanent cinema-houses in India has been compiled. According to this list (which is printed in Volume IV) the exact number is 309. This figure does not include about 37 "seasonal" cinemas, mostly in hill-stations, which are open only for a part of the year, and about twelve privately-owned regimental cinemas. There are numerous halls which are occasionally used for cinematograph performances; it is impossible to estimate the number of these and they have been

excluded from the figures. In addition to the cinemas in British India it is estimated that there are about 60 in the Indian States.

Progressive increase in number of cinemas.

33. The number of cinema-houses in the country has shown a progressive increase from year to year, and the total to-day is more than double the number existing in 1921 which is reported to have been 148. The detailed figures with an explanatory note will be found in Table 1.

Distribution.

34. Among the provinces Bombay heads the list with the largest number of permanent cinemas, 77; Burma is next with 58; Madras has 43; the United Provinces, 28; Bengal, 26; the Punjab, 22; the Central Provinces, 15; Bihar and Orissa, 13; the North-West Frontier Province, 10; Delhi and Assam, 3 each; and there are about 11 others in Cantonments situated in Indian States. Of the total of 309, 77 are located in the provincial capitals and the remainder in the smaller provincial towns. Sixty-six are in Cantonment areas.

The small number of cinemas in India.

35. It will be noticed that the number of cinemas in India is extremely small when compared with the size of the population. There is one cinema for every 802,589 of the population. America with a population of 120 millions has 20,500 cinemas; while Australia with a population of only 6 millions has 1,216 cinemas. Great Britain with a population of 47,146,506 has 3,700 cinemas; Germany (population 62,592,000) has 3,878 cinemas; France (population 39,209,000) has 2,947 cinemas; Italy (population 42,113,000) has 2,200 cinemas and Japan (population 83,454,000) has 1,050 cinemas.

Again, the total seating accommodation of the cinemas in India is approximately 222,000. If the average attendance per diem be taken as 200 at each cinema, the average daily attendance will be only 61,800. The explanation of the small number of cinemas in this country is to be found partly in the poverty of the people and the fact that the great majority of the population reside in small villages where a cinema would not be a paying concern; and partly also in the fact that the cinema-habit is not yet widely developed.

The character of the cinema-houses.

36. The large luxuriously-appointed cinema-palaces which are not uncommon in the cities of the West do not exist in India. There are a few comfortable well-appointed cinema-houses; but the majority are necessarily cheap unpretentious constructions which are however not inadequate for the purpose. The average seating accommodation is about 800. Admission prices range from As. 3, which is ordinarily the lowest, to Rs. 2 or Rs. 3, with special charges for boxes. The prices of seats in Western cinemas are generally higher. The music naturally varies according to the class of audience which patronises the hall. In those

cinemas frequented by Europeans and educated Indians Western music is provided by means of a piano or a small orchestra; while in those patronised exclusively by Indians the music is Indian, and costs less. The Burmese cinemas have their own peculiar music.

Number of performances.

37. Generally two performances per diem are given, with an extra performance on Saturdays and Sundays; but in some cinemas which show Indian films the number of daily performances is larger. Thus in the cinemas in Bombay which show Indian films four daily performances are given during the week and five on Saturdays and Sundays. Occasionally special matinees are given. For example, in some cinemas in the larger cities there are "all-comic" afternoon programmes once a week, which have a special attraction for children; while in Peshawar there is an exhibition on Friday afternoons for the special benefit of the tribesmen from the independent tracts, traders, and others who visit the city on that day.

Western and Indian cinemas.

38. A distinction has to be drawn between those picture-houses which cater mainly for Europeans, Anglo-Indians and educated Indians, and those which cater for wholly Indian audiences. There are a few of the former in each of the big cities, and there are others in cantonments, hill-stations, and in connection with clubs and institutes. (For convenience these may be termed Western cinemas.) The programmes of such cinemas consist entirely of Western films. Of 271 cinemas regarding which information is available, 64 are shown as exhibitors of Western films only. There is no doubt, however, that actually the figure should be larger. The number of cantonment cinemas alone is 66. Probably the number of Western cinemas is at least 100. The remaining cinemas show both Indian and imported films in very varying proportions. There are some which show Indian films almost exclusively, and only resort to Western films when they cannot obtain Indian. The fact that the supply of Indian films is not equal to the demand accounts for the fact that only a negligible number of cinemas have been described in the returns as showing exclusively Indian films. Again there are many cinemas which show an Indian film occasionally, while there are many which show a fair proportion of each kind.

Circuits.

39. There are two circuits of cinema theatres. The largest is that of Madan Theatres, Ltd., who own 65 cinemas and are in association with over 20 others who are under an arrangement to take pictures from them. The other circuit is that of Globe Theatres, Ltd., who supply their pictures to 35 cinemas of which 7 or 8 are under their direct control. Madan Theatres, Ltd., import and exhibit a large proportion of American films, with a few British and Continental pictures. They also exhibit and distribute their own Indian productions and a few of the films of other Indian producers. Globe Theatres, Ltd.,

exhibit and distribute Western films exclusively. They specialise in British films, of which they are the largest importers, and also import an almost equally large number of American films.

Composition of the audiences.

40. In India the cinema has as yet scarcely touched the fringe of the vast rural population. Those who attend the cinema are the inhabitants of the big cities and the larger provincial towns. It is only through the travelling cinemas that the rural population has been affected, and only to a very slight extent. The composition of the audience varies according to the part of the country concerned as well as to the particular locality and to the class of the cinema. It is therefore not possible to lay down any classification of an average audience which would be true for the country as a whole. It can be said however that on the average a large proportion of the attendance is from the educated and semi-educated classes, and that on the whole the illiterates are in a minority. The bogey of the danger of showing Western films to the illiterate masses has been frequently raised, but the rural illiterates scarcely attend the cinema at all; while of the town-illiterates only a small proportion attend. Indian women rarely attend the cinema, particularly Muslim women. It is only in the case of an Indian religious or mythological film that there is any appreciable attendance of women, and these are, naturally enough, Hindus. The percentage of children in any audience is extremely small. Generally speaking, Hindus patronise the cinemas much more than Muslims. This is partly due to the fact that among some sections of the Muslim community, particularly in Northern India, there is a religious objection to the moving picture, but more to the fact that the Indian films which are so popular with the Hindus do not generally appeal to Muslim sentiment. In some parts of the country however where the population is predominantly Muslim, e.g., in the North-West Frontier Province and in Lucknow, the audiences are mainly Muslim.

The types of Western films which are popular.

41. In India both Western and Indian films are widely exhibited. There is no prejudice against Western films, which are much enjoyed and appreciated. There are certain types of Western films which appeal to all classes and communities. The spectacular super-films and the films featuring Douglas Fairbanks, Harold Lloyd and Charlie Chaplin, have a universal appeal. A film in which any of these world-famous figures of the screen appears can be sure of an enthusiastic reception in any cinema in India. The most popular film ever shown in India was the "Thief of Baghdad," with Douglas Fairbanks in an Oriental setting.

The taste of the Westernised Indian and of the Indian who has some knowledge of English and acquaintance with Western ideas is akin to that of the European and generally the same films whether social dramas, comedies, or whatever they may be, which

are popular in the West are appreciated by this section of the community. The bulk of the population however, which is insufficiently acquainted with the English language and with Western ideas, enjoys films with plenty of action, especially comic and adventure films, but finds no attraction in the social dramas. This is natural enough; being unable to read the captions, which are almost always in English, they derive their entertainment from watching the "stunts," comic or adventurous. If there is plenty of action they can follow the sequence of events, and they are very quick at grasping the significance of the scenes and picking up the story. The hearty applause which is heard from the cheap seats when the hero administers summary justice to the villain or rescues the heroine in the nick of time shows a proper appreciation of the events and is very seldom at fault. On the other hand, the social drama, depending very often for its appeal on some matrimonial entanglement or other complications of an entirely alien social life, is quite unintelligible to an audience of this class, who can neither read the captions nor follow the action. At one time the "serials" which consist of a series of sensational and thrilling episodes,—fighting, kidnapping, escapes, rescues, with a lavish employment of motor-cars, aeroplanes and submarines—were the most popular type of film with this class of audience. The "serial" however has lost its former popularity, and has been largely supplanted by the Indian film.

The types of Indian films which are popular.

42. Indian films are extremely popular with Indian audiences, particularly with the less cultured classes. The educated Indian is generally apt to find them somewhat lacking both in technique and in artistry and to compare them unfavourably with the more finished American products. Indian films of a religious or mythological character, such as "The Birth of Krishna," have a special appeal and tend to attract Hindus of all classes throughout the country. Films of a historical or quasi-historical character and Indian social dramas are often popular, but their appeal, especially in the case of the latter class, is apt to be limited by provincial differences of dress and customs The Indian comic film can scarcely be said to exist as yet, though comic scenes are sometimes introduced. Films depicting Muslim life are few in number, which is partly due to the difficulty of producing a film of this type which will not give offence to some section of Muslim opinion. Some films founded on stories from the "Arabian Nights," however, such as "Aladdin" and "Ali Baba," have achieved a very wide popularity throughout India.

The relative popularity of Indian and Western films.

43. As regards the relative popularity of Indian and Western films, there is no doubt that the great majority of the Indian audiences prefer Indian films. Generally, an Indian film draws much larger audiences than a Western film. This general rule holds good provided that the film is a suitable one; an exception has to be made in the case of those films

which are unsuited to the local taste owing to provincial idiosyncrasies, a subject on which we shall have more to say later. Even however if Indian productions could be brought up to the artistic and technical level of the Western productions it is likely that there would always remain a considerable demand for Western films, as there is a natural desire to see something of the life of the West, which, to the unsophisticated at any rate, is full of novelties. One example of this taste among the uneducated class was given by a witness from Assam who told us that at first the labourers on his tea-garden were content with the films of their own life and surroundings which he used to show them, but afterwards demanded films of Western life.

Change of taste.

44. Change of taste is a factor which has to be noticed. We have seen how public taste has changed away from the "serials" which at one time were so popular. It would seem also that the old "Wild West" films have lost much of their popularity. There is also a perceptible change in the public taste as regards Indian and Burmese films. The more stereotyped pictures are losing their attraction and there is a demand for better quality.

Indian films more profitable than Western films.

45. The evidence of trade-witnesses is almost unanimous that in cinemas which cater for purely Indian audiences an Indian film is ordinarily more profitable to the exhibitor than a Western film. Although the exhibitor pays more for the Indian film, his gross receipts are greater owing to much larger attendance. The crowds which flock to witness a popular Indian film (and many of them are popular) are really remarkable.*

Exhibitors are able to obtain imported films at reasonable prices. There has been a certain amount of complaint from the exhibitors that they cannot obtain the best Western films as the supply of these is alleged to be cornered by Madan, Ltd. There have also been other complaints that this circuit is injuriously affecting the interests of the exhibitors. These complaints against Madans' circuit will be examined separately later.

Exhibitors cannot always obtain Indian films, as the demand is greater than the supply; in particular there is some difficulty in obtaining the better productions, which command relatively high prices as compared with the ordinary Western films.

Although in the course of our enquiry many figures were given to us of the cost of different films and classes of films, no useful purpose will be served by quoting these figures as the cost of a film, whether to the importer or to the exhibitor, varies enormously. The royalty on a super-film may be Rs. 20,000 or more, while on

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*Note.—In Appendix L are printed, (1) figures of receipts in Bombay from three of the best Indian and three of the best non-Indian films, the receipts from the non-Indian films being higher, (2) receipts from taxed seats (i.e., over annas 4) in three cinemas in Bombay showing Western films only and three showing Indian only, during a period of 6 months, the receipts from the Indian films being higher.

the other hand a second-hand American film can be purchased on the London market for £5. Similarly the rates paid by the exhibitor vary between extraordinarily wide limits according to the class of his cinema, its situation, the box-office value of the film and whether it is for the first run or the second run. Specially low rates have to be allowed in the case of the small mofussil cinemas. It is understood that in the case of such cinemas an imported film of the cheaper class can be obtained for Rs. 100 per week or half-week or less, but that for Indian films the charge is seldom, if ever, less than Rs. 40 per diem.

The financial aspect.

46. Whether exhibition is a paying concern is not a question which can be answered by a simple negative or affirmative. It depends upon a number of different factors, such as the locality, the terms of the lease, the amount of competition, and the business capacity of the manager. The largest returns from films are obtained in the big cities such as Bombay, Calcutta and Rangoon. There is no doubt that some of the exhibitors, particularly in the big cities, are making profits. In Bombay and Calcutta there is an entertainment tax and there have been strong complaints that this tax is a heavy burden on the exhibitor. It is true that in many cases the exhibitors pay the tax from their own pocket and do not pass it on to the public. In our opinion the levy of the tax on tickets of Re. 1 or over does not greatly affect the exhibitor but when, as in Bombay, it is imposed on tickets of less than Re. 1 it is a definite handicap to him. In Madras legislation has been passed to enable the imposition of an entertainment tax, but, pending the publication of the regulations under the Act, the tax had not been levied up to the time of the Committee's visit. All the evidence, however, is to the effect that, with a few exceptions, the mofussil exhibitors are having a hard struggle to make a living. Most of them hold their cinema-houses on lease and there has been a general complaint concerning the exorbitant rates which they have to pay. We believe that in many cases it is true that the rent which they are compelled to pay is disproportionate to their receipts, and that this is one of the causes of the frequent failures of exhibitors. It has come to our notice that cinemas, especially those in the mofussil, are constantly changing hands. It has been stated by trade witnesses that this is often due to the fact that persons without experience and business knowledge take up exhibition.

Travelling cinemas.

47. In addition to the permanent cinemas there are a number, a somewhat indefinite number, of travelling cinemas. At the request of the Committee enquiries were made by the Provincial Governments to ascertain the number of travelling cinemas in their respective provinces. The figures so obtained are printed as Table 6. The total number according to this information is about 116. The evidence of witnesses however tends to show that this figure

is too high, and the number of local licences issued to travelling cinemas (see Table 7) clearly points to the same conclusion. It is probable that the total is not more than about 50 or 60. The figure must necessarily be somewhat indefinite as the travelling cinemas come into existence and pass away; moreover it would seem that they work spasmodically, and that some only function occasionally. These travelling cinemas visit the smaller provincial towns where there are no picture houses and big fairs (*melas*). They sometimes hire local halls, but according to such evidence as we have been able to obtain, they more generally carry with them their own tents and benches, transported on bullock-carts. They halt for varying periods at the centres they visit, in some cases making a stay of two or three months. The lowest admission charge is ordinarily two annas, sometimes one anna. At *melas* they give a succession of shows, which may amount to ten in one day. They are more common in Southern India than in the North, but they are found to some extent in practically all the provinces. Naturally they do not need to change their programmes in the same way as a permanent cinema, and so they carry only films sufficient for two or three programmes. Ordinarily they exhibit old second-hand western films which can be purchased very cheaply, and according to our information these films are generally much worn and in very poor condition. Sometimes, but, we believe, very seldom, Indian films are exhibited by travelling cinemas. In Calcutta there is some manufacture of Indian films especially for travelling cinemas and certainly these are shown to some extent in Bengal and the neighbouring areas. These travelling cinemas in India are poorly organised, poorly equipped concerns, and certainly are not profitable. The evidence which we have received clearly shows that they barely pay their expenses and have a hard struggle for existence. Their principal grievance is the number and expense of the licences which they are compelled to take out.

New and topical films.

48. Ordinarily news and topical films are exhibited only in the first-class cinemas. The most widely exhibited are the Pathé Gazettes (British) of which there is a considerable importation. The Pathé Gazettes, in fact, account for a large proportion of the imports of British films. The footage of these Gazettes which passed through the Boards of Censors was 217,480 in 1925–26 and 243,982 in 1926–27. Copies of the same film are imported at Bombay and Calcutta and examined by the Censors at each place. Deducting copies of the same film, the footage would be approximately 153,784 and 175,436 for those years respectively. There are also some other Gazettes, such as "Urban Movie Chats", imported by Madan's and exhibited in their circuit.

Extremely few Indian news or topical films are exhibited There is no demand for such films and ordinarily it is not profitable to produce them. Madan's however produce a few both for

home consumption and export and find them paying, no doubt because of the facilities they have for their exhibition in their large circuit.

*Distribution.*

Distribution of imported films.

49. The films exhibited by the cinemas are either, (1) imported or (2) locally produced. There are four main importers in India, Universal Pictures Corporation, Ltd., Pathé India, Ltd., Madan Theatres, Ltd., and Globe Theatres, Ltd. The two former have their head-offices in Bombay, and the two latter, in Calcutta. Universal import the productions of their principals in America, and since 1927 have imported some British films also. Pathé are sole agents for Pathé and First National (American) pictures but are not confined to these two firms. Madan Theatres, Ltd., mainly import American pictures; and are under contract with several of the leading American producers. Globe Theatres, Ltd., import both British and American pictures, as already explained. There are also several minor importing concerns such as the Empire Film Company, Bombay and Karachi; Jeena Company, Bombay; Gulana Brothers, Karachi; Alliance Trades Agency, Calcutta; Capitol Bioscope, Karachi; Great Eastern Corporation, Delhi; Hindustan Film Company, Madras; Peninsular Film Service, Madras, and Mr. B. D. Gupta, Delhi. But the four companies mentioned, supply most of the Western films exhibited in the country. Universal supply pictures to 85 cinemas; Pathé to about 100; Madan's to 85; and Globe to 35. But this does not mean that each of these companies supplies all the pictures required by the number of cinemas specified. There is no doubt that Madan's obtain most of the super films and the more famous and costly productions. while it is from Universal's in particular that a large number of the smaller cinema-houses obtain their supplies of the less expensive classes of films.

Distribution of Indian films.

50. The distribution of Indian films is in most cases undertaken by the producers themselves who negotiate directly with the exhibitors. Only a few of the Indian producers employ a distributing agency; in such cases the distributor is under an obligation to distribute only the pictures of a particular company; and himself advances money to the producer. Indian producers very rarely sell the rights to exploit any of their productions.

Percentage and fixed hire systems.

51. Films, both Indian and imported, are distributed in some cases on a percentage system and in others on fixed hire. Generally the principle is that the percentage system is adopted when the exhibitor is of good standing and recognised reliability, while the small exhibitors or those who are not known to the

producer have to take the picture at a fixed rate per diem or per week or where there is a bi-weekly change of programme for the period of three or four days' exhibition. The percentage demanded by the producers in India is generally 40 per cent of the gross-receipts of the exhibitor; the exhibitor retaining 60 per cent. The exhibitor bears the advertisement and other charges. Some of the Bombay producers ask 45 per cent and sometimes 50 per cent is obtained. Naturally the percentage varies; if the picture is taken up by a big circuit the producer may get only 25 or 30 per cent but as against this difference in the percentage there are corresponding advantages. These figures are for " first-run " pictures, i.e., for the right to exhibit the picture for the first time in a particular area. For a " second-run " picture the percentage is lower, and is sometimes 33⅓. Where there is a distributor, he generally retains 10 per cent of the producer's share as his commission.

In Burma, when a picture is run on percentage, the producer, in the case of a good picture, obtains 70 per cent, but himself bears the advertisement charges and sometimes supplies the music; for an average picture he gets 55 per cent, the exhibitor bearing the expenses. But in the case of the better Burmese pictures, the producer frequently hires a hall and undertakes the exhibition of the picture himself, paying a percentage of the gross receipts to the owner of the hall. There is however an agency which distributes the productions of six of the less important producing concerns.

Distribution unorganised.

52. There is no organised system of distribution in this country such as obtains for example in America where the producer normally is financed by the distributor or by financial houses. It is in an undeveloped stage and methods are not uniform.

Meaning of block and blind booking.

53. The terms " block " and " blind " booking are not always used in the same sense. The block-booking system is sometimes understood to refer only to the system of contracting before the beginning of the year to take the whole output of pictures of a particular producer in that year before those pictures are produced, i.e., contracting for a block of pictures before they are produced. In some cases the names of the pictures and other particulars regarding them, including the names of the "stars" who will take part, are known beforehand. Where such particulars are not known, the booking is " blind " as well as " block." The terms are also used in a more general sense to mean the system whereby the exhibitor (or purchaser) who wishes to obtain certain super-films or films of recognised box-office value is compelled to accept with them a number of inferior films; and the booking is " blind " when he engages to take a fixed number of pictures or " programmes " without knowing what pictures will be supplied. " Block " and " blind " booking, in both senses of the terms, prevail to some extent in India. It is undesirable,

and, for our purpose, unnecessary to mention particular companies or to give specific instances.

Block and blind booking as regards imported films.

54. The system prevails among importers to the extent that in certain instances the importer contracts with a producer in America to take the whole of the year's output before it is produced. He does so because he knows from experience that that company can be depended upon to turn out pictures of box-office value, and that the "stars" they employ are popular. As regards other pictures, they are often released in America and Europe long before they come to India; and thus the importer has an opportunity of knowing the merits of a picture before he orders it. Whatever pictures he imports, good, bad or indifferent, the importer must induce the exhibitor to accept. In order to dispose of the inferior films he must compel the exhibitor to accept a block. It has been difficult to discover the real facts, as importers and distributors have been anxious to deny that they themselves force the exhibitors to accept pictures which they do not want, while the exhibitors have assured us that even when they book in block they are allowed a certain amount of choice. The block-booking system as between the exhibitor and the importer exists in India, but is by no means invariable; and we believe that in many cases the system is not absolute but that there is a certain amount of give and take; and that the exhibitor has some freedom of choice. Owing to the interval of time which elapses between the release of a picture abroad and its arrival in this country the exhibitor has generally the means of knowing in advance the merits of any picture which he orders or which he is due to receive; and many of them study the trade-journals and other trade literature for this purpose. The interval between the release of a picture abroad and its release in India varies enormously. Occasionally the two releases are almost simultaneous; but the period may be anything up to 18 months or more. The interval depends to some extent on the fact that the bigger pictures are generally released in the winter, which is the exhibition season in India. According to our information some of the cheaper pictures are very old, having been produced by the smaller independent exhibitors in America sometimes as much as six years previously.

Block and blind booking as regards Indian films.

55. As regards Indian pictures we have met with the same difficulties in ascertaining the real facts concerning the booking system, owing to the reluctance of trade-witnesses to give full information on the subject. Those of them who were requested to allow the Committee to see their actual contracts were unwilling to do so. We understand however that the practice of contracting for the whole year's output of a producing concern does exist to a certain extent. But exhibitors invariably informed us that they had some freedom of choice.

56. The system of "trade-showing" does not exist in India. But, as has already been explained, the merits of a foreign picture are generally known approximately before the picture is imported, while in the case of Indian pictures the mofussil exhibitor keeps himself informed of the reception accorded to a picture on its first release in one of the "key cities" and arranges his bookings accordingly.

Trade showing.

*Production.*

57. There is a considerable amount of production of Indian films in some parts of India, a fact which has not been sufficiently known either to Government or to the public. The number and footage of feature films produced in India is, for example, largely in excess of the number and footage of feature films produced in the United Kingdom. In 1925 the production of feature films in the United Kingdom was 34, in 1926, 26, and in 1927, 48. The approximate number of feature films produced by Indian concerns (excluding Burma) in 1924–25 was 70, in 1925–26, 111, and in 1926–27, 108. Indian films are very popular with Indian audiences and are shown in every part of India, and, to a small extent, in Burma also. The majority of the films exhibited in India are imported and are mainly American, very nearly 80 per cent of the films imported being American. But of the total quantity of films exhibited the Indian films form an appreciable percentage. There are no data available from which the proportion of screen time devoted to Indian films can be compared with the proportion devoted to imported films. But some indications of the extent to which Indian films are exhibited can be obtained from the number and footage of Indian films examined by the Boards of Censors. Every film before exhibition must be passed by one of the Boards of Censors in India; and therefore the footage of Indian films examined by the Boards in any year compared with the footage of imported films so examined will give some idea of the proportion of Indian to imported films exhibited.

The amount of Indian production.

58. In 1924–25 the footage of Indian films examined by the Boards (excluding Burma) was 485,858 and the footage of imported films 3,620,055. In 1925–26 the figures were 727,352 and 3,802,364 respectively; and in 1926–27, 886,477 and 4,920,427. For the year 1927–28 (up to February 29th) the figures are 777,375 and 4,432,164 respectively. The percentage of Indian films to the total footage examined in India proper was therefore 11.83, 16.05, 15.26 and 14.92 in those years respectively. (Detailed figures are given in Table 9.) If Burma is included, the footage of Indian and Burmese films examined by the Boards in 1924–25 was 789,588; in 1925–26, 1,152,952; in 1926–27, 1,447,577, and in the eleven months of 1927–28, 1,336,525; and the percentage of Indian and Burmese films to the total footage examined in those years was 16·5, 21·7, 21·6 and 21·2 respectively. These figures do not give any indication of the screen time

The proportion of Indian films.

involved because one film may be shown in 10 cinemas and another in 50. Moreover several copies of the same film may be circulated. There is a tendency to show Indian films for longer continuous periods than Western films. Thus in Calcutta and Bombay an Indian film, if popular, often has a run of several weeks in the same cinema. Again in those towns more daily performances are sometimes given in the Indian than in the Western cinemas. On the other hand, the number of cinemas in which an Indian film can be shown is limited as explained in paragraph 78 below.

Progressive increase of Indian production and of imported films.

59. The progressive increase of Indian production may similarly be gauged by comparing the footage of Indian films examined by the Boards in each year. In 1921–22 the total Indian footage so examined was 393,068 and in 1922–23, 438,541 as compared with 886,477 feet examined in 1926–27 and 777,375 feet examined in the first 11 months of 1927–28. (See Table 9.)

There has also been a progressive increase in the quantity of imported films. The figures of imported films examined annually by the Boards do not give an accurate idea of this increase because in the years 1921–22 to 1923–24 those figures are abnormal owing to the fact that a very large number of films already in circulation were put up for examination in the early years of the Boards' existence, and this abnormality assumes large proportions in the case of the imported films. The figures of annual importation of films into India are as follows:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1922–23 | ... | 7,310,429 ft. |
| 1923–24 | ... | 7,201,655 ft. |
| 1924–25 | ... | 9,444,760 ft. |
| 1925–26 | ... | 13,917,199 ft. |
| 1926–27 | ... | 17,482,664 ft. |
| 1927–28 (11 months) | ... | 19,668,648 ft |

As it is only from the year 1927–28 that raw and exposed films have been recorded separately, it is difficult to determine accurately the progressive increase in the amount of exposed film imported. Our colleague Mr. Green, however, who is experienced in such figures, has made a calculation (which is explained in Appendix F) of the approximate imports of raw and exposed films in each year, with the following results:—

| Year. | Raw film. | Exposed film. |
|---|---|---|
| 1922–23 | 520,429 | 6,790,000. |
| 1923–24 | 1,451,655 | 5,750,000. |
| 1924–25 | 3,194,760 | 6,250,000. |
| 1925–26 | 6,258,199 | 7,661,000. |
| 1926–27 | 7,715,632 | 9,767,032. |
| 1927–28 | 11,221,054 | 10,235,656 (or excluding re-imports 9,322,366), an increase over 1922–23 of nearly 51 per cent. |

* Full year based on eleven months' actuals.

Early days of Indian production.

60. There is little information regarding the early days of film production in India, but it is understood that the first Indian film was produced by Mr. Phalke and was screened in Bombay in 1913. Mr. Phalke produced several films, all of which were successful, and his business was afterwards converted into the Hindustan Film Company, which is located at Nasik and is one of the leading producing concerns. We have been informed that those who acquired experience in the earlier days of production tended to set up separate studios of their own, and in this way the number of producers has grown.

Number and distribution of producing companies.

61. There are 21 producing concerns in India actually producing films and 17 in Burma. Of the 21 Indian concerns, two are situated in Indian States, namely, the Maharashtra Company at Kolhapur, and the Lakshmi Pictures Company in Baroda. Eight or nine are producing a steady output, whereas the output of the others is small. Bombay is the seat of the producing industry in India. There are 13 producing agencies in the Presidency excluding the Kolhapur Company. The only other centre in India where there is any appreciable production is Calcutta, where there are four concerns, of which one is Madan Theatres, Limited. Of the other three, one has as yet produced one film and another two. There are two producers at Lahore, but they have so far devoted themselves to the production of educational and public utility films for Government and of a few topicals. In Madras there is at present no production though a few films have been produced there in the past. In Rangoon there is a considerable output of Burmese films, and this output has shown a remarkable increase in recent years. The footage of Burmese films examined by the Burma Board in 1921–22 was 68,800 feet, while the figure for 1926–27 is 561,100 (see Table 10). Of the 17 Burmese producing agencies, only about four can be considered as established concerns with a steady output. The remainder produce spasmodically and some of them are of an ephemeral character. (A list of producing concerns in India and Burma is given in Table 22.) With reference to the relatively large number (when compared with the total output) of producing concerns in India and Burma, it is interesting to note that in America, although there are a great many smaller producers, the bulk of the pictures are produced by a very few, perhaps seven or eight, companies.

The character of the producing companies.

62. Excluding Madans, the producing agencies in India are comparatively small and none of them are public companies. Their capital has been provided by a single individual or by several partners, and, as far as it has been possible to ascertain, the capital invested does not ordinarily exceed two lakhs. Those engaged in running these concerns, for the most part, are not experienced business men, nor are they well qualified by technical or artistic training abroad nor can they in general be described as men of high culture. In most

cases they have acquired their experience as they proceeded. In a few instances there are directors, camera-men or other members of the staff who have had some training abroad, but this training has generally been of a somewhat desultory character. By these remarks it is not our intention to cast any sort of reflection on the Indian producers; on the contrary, we consider that much credit is due to them for having achieved, without the advantage of any thorough training, the measure of success which has been obtained, and for having advanced Indian production so rapidly within the last few years.

Lack of organisation and information.

63. The producers, like the exhibitors, are not properly organised. There are some associations of the trade and of producers but there is little strength or solidarity in these associations. Similarly the producers and the trade as a whole are much handicapped by lack of trade information. There are a few publications concerned with the cinema in India, but there is no reliable trade journal or book of reference. From leading members of the trade in India who are in the best position to know the real facts, we have been surprised to receive the most widely divergent statistics and information.

The studios and their equipment.

64. Most of the producing concerns possess their own studio. Thirteen of these studios were inspected by the Committee. They are comparatively simple affairs consisting of one or two areas walled with high screens and with a roof of glass or merely of framework, and with an arrangement of curtains for diffusing the light.

Attached to these studios are in some cases rooms where the films are developed, printed, dried, titled, joined, etc., property rooms, and other adjuncts. As regards the cameras and printing machines we have not sufficient technical knowledge to pass an opinion. It is remarkable that only two or three of the producers employ arc lights. We were informed by Madan Theatres, Limited, who propose to develop their studio on up-to-date lines, that they have ordered a quantity of the latest mechanical equipment. In some places there is a difficulty in obtaining sufficient voltage from the public supply. We were informed that this is the case both in Calcutta and Madras. Competent electricians are lacking. In one studio which we visited we found that although they had installed arc lights they had little or no knowledge of how to handle them and proposed to learn their use by experiment. In the West artificial lighting is regarded as indispensable for shooting both out-door and in-door scenes. In India a system of reflecting mirrors is employed to obtain the lighting effects which they require. But in our opinion the employment of arc lighting is essential for the progress of the industry. Not all of the companies develop and print their own pictures. Madan Theatres, Limited, for example, at least in some cases, send the negatives abroad for printing. We are very doubtful if the best results

can be obtained from the existing studio laboratories. We understand that developing is difficult in India in the hot weather; and the temperature of the developing room must be maintained at an even temperature of 60° Fahrenheit. Again dust must be rigorously excluded. Photographic experts have informed us that the printing of positives is the most difficult of the processes which the film must pass through between its exposure and its appearance in the market and that ordinarily in this country there is inadequate knowledge of this subject. Better results could certainly be obtained if well-equipped independent reliable laboratories with an expert staff were available to which the producers could send their films.

Direction and technical staff.

65. The technical staff consists essentially of a director, or directors, and camera-men. They lack training. For the most part they seem to have picked up their experience. Very few have had any training in the West, and in such cases (as has already been remarked) it generally seems to have been of a desultory character. There is a tendency for one man in the studio to combine several functions, which, again, is probably due to the dearth of trained men.

Actors and actresses.

66. In the larger studios a permanent staff of actors and actresses is maintained, whose salaries range from about Rs. 30 for a super to Rs. 700 or Rs. 800 for a "star." With a few exceptions (mostly in Bengal), the actors and actresses are not drawn from the cultured classes. The actresses are mainly recruited from the "dancing girl" class. Indian women of the better class do not take up film-acting as a profession. In the case of one film (the "Light of Asia") which was produced under special circumstances, some cultured Indian ladies took part. Owing to the difficulty of obtaining suitable Indian actresses some Anglo-Indian girls have adopted the profession and several of them play Indian parts with considerable success and are among the most popular "stars." We came across Indian films in which male actors played female parts, though we have not heard of many such cases. We trust that this artistic atrocity will soon become extinct.

There is no lack of theatrical talent in India but, generally speaking, it is not attracted to the profession of film-acting. This is partly due to the fact that a certain stigma is attached to the studios, owing to the social class of many of the women employed in them. In Bengal, however, several men of education and talent have taken up the profession.

The majority of the actors and actresses have had no training in acting, whether for the stage or the film. Some of the leading film actors and actresses have acquired their art in the first instance by studying Western films. Film-acting is very different from stage acting, and we understand that the latter requires less training and that a very great deal depends on the Director. We have

been informed by a leading expert that the primary consideration in selecting a film actor or actress is to ascertain whether he or she has a "film face," and that in America various photographic tests are made for the purpose. These refinements are not as yet appreciated by the Indian producer. We may add, as a matter of interest, that the same expert informed us that the best "film-faces" were to be found in the Punjab.

Scenarios.

67. In some cases the producers write their own scenarios. There are, however, a certain number of literary men and journalists who specialise in this art. It is understood that the best scenario-writer in Bombay is paid Rs. 1,300 for each scenario. Scenario-writing is also an art which requires training, and here also that training is lacking. We were particularly struck by the weakness of many of the scenarios.

The types of films produced.

68. The pictures produced by these companies are mythological or religious, historical, and social dramas. There are two or three companies which specialise in mythological films. The first films produced in India were of this character. These mythological films are less affected by provincial differences than the social dramas; they have an especial appeal for the uneducated people, and, if they are of good quality, they appeal to the deep-rooted religious instincts of all classes. The historical, or quasi-historical, pictures and those which require such settings are taken in certain of the Indian States where facilities are obtained for "shooting" scenes in palaces and fortresses and also for the employment of soldiers, horses, cannon, and other paraphernalia. In the social dramas there is frequently a tendency not only to borrow plots and incidents from Wetsern novels, but also to imitate the Western films both in action and treatment. This kind of mimicry is not pleasing or successful. Though much can be learned from the Western films this sort of crude imitation is to be avoided. Indian pictures should be faithful to Indian life and should preserve its essential character.

The above remarks apply mainly to the Bombay productions. In Bengal there is a tendency to produce a type of film having a more intellectual appeal, generally founded on well-known Bengali novels. This is a promising development and is clearly on the right lines. The vernacular literature of Bengal is of course peculiarly rich, and the Bombay producer has not the same literary resources to draw upon.

The commonest type of Burmese film is a kind of fairy-tale with a lavish indulgence in the supernatural and a variety of demons. Though novel and fantastic on first acquaintance these films are very stereotyped and the same sort of stories, incidents, and costumes are endlessly repeated. In the Burmese social dramas the mimicry of the West is particularly pronounced.

69. Indian pictures are generally crude in comparison with Western pictures, and are defective in composition, acting, and in every respect. They are defective both artistically and technically. Plots and scenarios are indifferent and lack originality. The acting is apt to be wooden and inexpressive; scenes of struggle and fighting (which are profusely introduced to appeal to the popular taste) are particularly weak. Episodes are long drawn-out, so that the action is slow, and the multiplicity of captions accentuates the slowness of the action. Generally the films are too long. There has been some improvement in the quality of the films, especially in the photography which is perhaps the best feature. But until the arc light is habitually employed the photography must remain definitely inferior to that of the Western productions.

The quality of the pictures.

The length of the Burmese films is altogether excessive and the action is correspondingly protracted. It appears that this is in accordance with the taste of the Burman public who like long films with an abundance of captions. The high percentage of literacy or semi-literacy in Burma probably accounts for the taste for captions.

Of the popularity of Indian films we have already spoken.

70. As regards the output of the studios, there is, according to our information, one studio which has an average output of fifteen pictures per annum. Of the others several (4 or 5) average twelve pictures a year each; another averages ten; and the rest four or five, sometimes even fewer. They readily find a market for their productions, and it has been seen that they generally deal direct with the exhibitor. Some account has already been given of the methods of distribution, and the system of percentage and fixed hire.

Output.

71. On the average about three prints are said to be made of a picture. The life of a print seems to vary enormously. By members of the trade who should be in a position to know the facts the life of a print has been variously stated as from 150 days to 3 years, shown daily. The former figure is probably nearer the mark. As the film ages it becomes scratched and worn and the sprocket holes wear out causing flickering. The life of the film naturally depends largely on the care and skill of the operator and the condition of his projector. Many renters complained bitterly of the carelessness and indifference of many of the mofussil operators.

Prints.

72. Ordinarily the cost of production may be said to be Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 20,000, including overhead charges. Some pictures are produced for Rs. 5,000. In a few cases up to Rs. 50,000 has been spent, and on one film intended for the international market the expenditure amounted to two lakhs. If the picture is of good box-office value

Financial aspects.

the cost of production is recovered quite rapidly in Bombay and other key cities. Thereafter, the profit is obtained from the mofussil cinemas and comes in much more slowly. A good Bombay film will be shown for several weeks in Bombay and the whole cost of production may be recovered there; the weekly return received by the producer being anything from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 5,000. Similar returns are not however obtainable in the other big cities, and the returns from the smaller mofussil cinemas are often not more than Rs. 150 from each. Naturally, the profits vary; but there is no doubt that very large profits compared with the cost of production have been made on some of the more successful pictures; though, of course, the gross figures hardly bear comparison with the huge figures we hear of in the West. Instances have been given us of Indian films on which profits of several hundred per cent were made, but these are of course exceptional cases. In most cases there is a good margin of profit. The producers however are in many cases short of capital, and only too often have to wait for the profits on the previous picture before they can undertake the next. There has been a certain amount of evidence that the financial difficulties of the producers are due to the fact that they do not put back their profits into the business; and we believe that there is some truth in this criticism. Often, in order to find the money for the outlay on a picture the producers take loans from money-lenders at the usual high rates of interest. Sometimes (where they have their own distributor) they get an advance from the distributor at rates which vary according to their mutual relations. The real difficulty is that in India there is no regular system for financing the producer. This is largely due to the absence of an organised distribution system. The producer cannot get advances from Banks, because he has not sufficient security to offer. Similarly he cannot get loans from Government under the Industrial Loans Act, in those provinces in which such an Act exists, for the same reason. These Industrial Loans Acts are useless to the producer, because their requirements in regard to security are very drastic; and if he possessed such security as is demanded by these Acts he would have no difficulty in obtaining advances from Banks. Again capitalists are very shy of investing their money in this industry. It is, at first sight, difficult to understand why capitalists should be reluctant to invest in an industry which is distinctly profitable. The reason generally given to us is that there is a certain stigma attached to film-production owing to the necessity for the employment of women of the " dancing girl " class. We are inclined to think however that the explanation, apart from the general apathy in this country towards industrial enterprises, and the general ignorance regarding the trade, is rather that the status and business-methods of the present producers do not command confidence. We are not suggesting any aspersion on the character of the producers; our suggestion is that they are untrained in business-methods.

73. Another reason for the shyness of capital is that a number of producing concerns have failed in the past. One of the first in Bombay was the Oriental Films Co., with a foreign expert, which failed after producing one film. In Calcutta the Taj Mahal Co., the Indo-British, and the Photoplay Syndicate failed; in Madras, Venkiah Bros.; and there are other cases, The Great Eastern Corporation of Delhi have not produced any picture since the "Light of Asia" which, for reasons which are given elsewhere, has not so far been a financial success to them. In Mandalay, we heard of three producing companies which had been started there and failed; and in Rangoon there have been a number of mushroom companies. In other branches of the trade also there have been failures. It has already been mentioned that cinema houses are constantly changing hands in the moffussil. The largest importers, K. D. Bros., failed in Bombay. Finally, the balance-sheet of the largest concern in the cinema-trade has not been such as to inspire any considerable optimism, as it is only within the last two years that they have paid a dividend, though it should be remembered that they are expanding their business. We enquired into the causes of the failure of the particular producing enterprises, both from those who were concerned in them and from others who were in a position to know the facts. In every case we learned that failure had not been due to losses on the pictures produced; the pictures had been profitable; but it was due to other causes such as mismanagement, disagreement among the partners, speculation in other business, and so on.

Concerns which have failed.

The only instance in which foreign or non-Indian capital was employed which has come to our notice is a proposed film "Shiraz" which is in process of production in India by a British company.

74. There is no doubt whatever that the production of Indian films on the existing scale is a paying concern. Although we have not had the advantage of inspecting the budgets and balance sheets of the producing concerns, the evidence which we have received has completely satisfied us on this point. A good Indian film is extremely profitable to the producer; even an indifferent film generally yields a fair margin of profit.

Production of Indian films is profitable.

75. The production of Indian News and Topical films ordinarily does not pay. We have heard the evidence of a number of people who have attempted to produce such films and who have found that, as far as the home market is concerned, the production of such films is not profitable. Madans alone have stated that they find the production of these films profitable, and, as has already been remarked, this is probably due to the fact that they have a large circuit in which they can exhibit them.

News and topical films.

There is therefore very little production of Indian News and Topical films. A few such films are however produced and sent to America, where they are embodied in Gazettes of news of the world. We had the evidence of one enterprising young man who makes his living by taking such films and sending them to America. The price paid is 2 dollars for each foot of News film accepted and 1 dollar 10 cents for each accepted foot of Topical (or Review) film. Only a small proportion, however, of the footage sent is accepted. The American dealers insist upon the negatives being sent undeveloped. Attempts to produce a Topical Indian Gazette have not been successful.

Conditions, favourable and unfavourable.

76. In order to understand the present position and future prospects of the industry it is necessary to consider the conditions, favourable and unfavourable, under which it is working.

*Prima facie* it would seem that with a population of 246 millions (or, including the Indian States, 316 millions) of whom the great majority have a definite preference for Indian films (in so far as they have an opportunity of witnessing them) there should be a vast prospect before the industry. The production of Indian films however is hedged round with some special and peculiar limitations which have to be borne in mind. How far these limitations are permanent or how far they can be expected to pass away with lapse of time or through effort is also for consideration.

Climatic and other favourable conditions.

77. Climatically India is suited for film-production. There is an abundance of sunshine, though from about 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. the actinic value of the light is low. It must not however be forgotten that in any country artificial lighting is required in order to obtain the best results. In any case in the hot weather it would scarcely be practicable to shoot scenes in the open during these hours. During the rainy season out-door work ordinarily ceases, while the studios, as they exist at present, are not sufficiently weather-proof for in-door work.

In the hot weather developing is difficult and cannot be properly done in the plains without a special form of laboratory with an arrangement for maintaining the temperature at 60° F. Without such equipment a laboratory in the Hills is requisite.

India is well-supplied within her borders with every variety of natural scenery, including scenery of a grandeur and beauty scarcely to be surpassed in the world. She possesses an abundance of ancient palaces, fortresses and temples and provides ready-made the most picturesque Oriental settings—streets, markets, crowds and so on—which can only be reproduced artificially in the West at enormous cost. Also almost every Oriental type of humanity is to be found. Pictures of Eastern life and pageantry could, in fact, be produced in India at a trifling cost compared with the cost in the West.

The cost of production is extremely low in India. The cost of producing a picture in India is only a fraction of the cost of producing a picture in England and the cost of production in England is considerably less than in America. In India labour is cheap; and the salaries of actors and actresses, even of "stars", are relatively very small. Moreover, to appeal to the mass of the population elaborate production is not required; nor is a high standard of art or technique necessary.

The limited market (small number of cinema houses available).

78. But the first and main obstacle to any great increase of output of Indian films is the limited market. In spite of a population of 246 millions, the market for Indian films is limited. It is limited because in the whole of British India there are only about 300 cinema houses and there is practically no outside market, except in the Indian States where there are 60 cinema houses. The limited number of cinemas is due to the fact that the bulk of the people can only pay small admission fees and cannot afford to visit the cinema frequently. The result is that a cinema can pay only where there is a large aggregation of people. It has been stated that a cinema does not pay except in a town with a population of at least 50,000 people. This is not correct. There are successful cinemas in many such towns. But often (where there is a lesser population) it is a place where there is a large student or industrial population or which is a centre of resort. The number of towns in India with a population of 50,000 or over is 86. Even however if 20,000 is taken as the minimum required, there are only 282 towns with a population of or exceeding that number.

The above figures include the Indian States but exclude Burma. In Burma there are 8 towns with a population of 20,000 or above, and only 3 with a population of 50,000 or more.

Of the 300 cinemas there are about 100 which cater exclusively for Europeans and educated Indian audiences. These cinemas show only Western films and there will be no opportunity for Indian films there until Indian production has progressed very considerably in quality. And even then the preference will be generally for Western films. Further Indian films can be shown in very few of the 58 cinemas in Burma.

Then again it has to be remembered that an appreciable number of the cinemas are concentrated in the big cities. The same film cannot be shown in more than one or two (at most 3) of the cinemas in such a city; and this further reduces the number of available cinemas.

Then there is the fact that 85 cinema houses are controlled by one company (Madan's) who in so far as they show Indian films naturally prefer to show their own productions, so that the opportunities for Indian films produced by others is small in that circuit. The result is that there is at present not a large outlet for Indian films.

79. A further limitation is due to provincial differences. The class of people for whom Indian films are produced and to whom they appeal are, generally speaking, not familiar with the dress and customs of other provinces. Thus a film of Bengali life will appeal to the Bengali but is not much appreciated by the uneducated in Madras, and still less on the Bombay side. This difficulty is sometimes exaggerated, but it is nevertheless a real one. Bombay films are shown in Peshawar, Lahore, Lucknow, Calcutta, Madras, Nagpur, Rangoon and Mandalay. Some of them are of general appeal, e.g., mythological or from the "Arabian Nights," but films of Bombay social life are also being shown in many places. It is in fact not true to say that a film depicting life on the Bombay side has no appeal elsewhere. It does draw audiences but to a much smaller extent. Bengal is perhaps especially affected by provincial differences. A film of Bengali life has little or no appeal outside Bengal except where there is a strong Bengali element in the population. Similarly, a film of social life in Bombay or Madras has practically no appeal in Bengal.

A further limitation (provincial differences).

Strictly speaking, the divergence of taste is not so much provincial as cultural. It is not exactly a question of provincial boundaries. In the south of India, for example, the Deccanese or Mahratta mode of life has a distinct appeal; and the Bombay pictures reproduce this mode.

Burmese pictures have no attraction for Indians, nor Indian films for Burmans. Burmese pictures have not however been tried in India. In Burma, Burmese, Indian, Chinese and Western films are exhibited. The Burmese films are attended only by Burmans, the Indian by Indians, and the Chinese by Chinamen, though the Western films are popular with all communities.

For the present this limitation will continue to be an obstacle so far as the social dramas are concerned. But eventually, as the cinema-going population becomes familiarised with scenes of life in other provinces, it is likely that this narrow outlook will be broadened, i.e., if it is a good film it will draw in spite of provincial differences, though no doubt there will always be a tendency for audiences to prefer social dramas of the life of their own provinces. It has been seen that the difficulty can be evaded by producing films of general appeal. There are many Oriental stories which lend themselves to such treatment and there is a wide field here which has not been sufficiently explored.

80. There is another limitation in that films which appeal to Hindus frequently have no appeal to Muslims. Thus a Hindu mythological film which is very popular with Hindus does not draw any Muslim audience. Generally Muslims prefer films of their own social life, and, failing these, Western films.

Another limitation.

81. There is a certain output in Bombay of films which may be called 'historical' (though the history is sometimes fictitious) depicting life in olden days in Rajputana. These are very stereotyped and unconvincing. Indian history is rich in romantic stories very suitable for presentment on the film,

The difficulty in regard to 'historical' films.

and there is a vast field here. That it has not been drawn upon more is due no doubt partly to lack of financial resources on the part of the producers and partly to the dearth of cultured scenario-writers; but there is another factor which has to be recognised. This is the difficulty of producing a historical film which will not give offence to some section of the community. A film depicting any of the struggles between the Hindus and Muslims is very liable to give offence. Similarly, there is a difficulty in presenting the exploits of the Mahrattas. Such films as "Veer Durgadas" and "Shivaji" had to be stopped. This difficulty accounts for the resort to fictitious history.

Special difficulties as regards Muslims.

82. Again, Muslim opinion is particularly sensitive in certain directions regarding the presentation of historical characters. This matter will be dealt with more fully under the head of censorship. It may merely be noted here that objection is apt to be raised by certain sections of Muslims to the presentation of famous Muslim characters in other than a favourable light, even when the facts are historically correct, e.g., Jehangir drinking wine; there is also an objection to the representation of famous Muhammadan women as not observing purdah; and a further objection to *any* representation whatsoever of persons venerated as holy by Islam. We are not now discussing how far such objections have the support of the general body of the Muslims or imputing any blame. But the fact remains that such objections are made and recognised and are an obstacle to the producer.

General limitation.

83. The producer as yet has not been successful in producing a type of film which has much appeal for the educated classes. It is easier for him to draw uneducated audiences. He has to cater more for the taste and intelligence of uneducated audiences; and stories, subject and treatment have been adapted to that end.

The language difficulty.

84. Then again there is the language difficulty. An Indian film has little chance of success unless the captions are in the vernacular of the area in which it is shown. It is true that Western films do not have vernacular captions and are nevertheless popular; but the Western film appeals for different reasons. An Indian film is expected to have captions in a familiar vernacular. It is in fact one reason why the Indian film is preferred in spite of its artistic and technical inferiority. It is true that a considerable proportion of the audience are illiterate even in their own vernacular; but the custom is for those who can read to repeat the caption aloud for the benefit of the others. The confused murmur which greets the appearance of the caption on the screen and which is the result of this custom must be familiar to those who frequent Indian cinemas. The caption therefore must be in a known vernacular. There are innumerable vernaculars in India. The main vernaculars however are Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu. A producer who wishes to exhibit

his film throughout India must have each caption in three or four of these vernaculars as well as in English. To some extent the difficulty is met by making different copies for different parts of the country. But the captions are ordinarily in three or four languages, and we have seen instances where there were as many as six. This involves additional expense and lengthens the film as well as detracting from its appeal. This is inevitable as there is no *lingua franca* for all India. The only solution would be to have an interpreter. It was only in Malabar that we heard of the existence of such interpreters or demonstrators. In one province we were told that it had been tried but was not successful, as the audience found the demonstrators a hindrance rather than an assistance. The ingenuity of Indian producers will possibly tend to devise films which require a minimum of captions. A German film ("The Last Laugh") was produced without any captions, but we understand that it was not a success although it was a very fine film.

**The difficulty of obtaining actresses.**

85. The difficulty that Indian film-actresses of a suitable type are not obtainable has been mentioned. This is a real handicap to the producer, though it has been seen that the difficulty has been overcome to some extent by the employment of Anglo-Indian actresses.

**Financial difficulty.**

86. The difficulty of obtaining finance, of inducing capitalists to invest their money in this industry, has also been mentioned.

**Foreign market.**

87. It has already been stated that the outlet for the Indian film is confined to the home market. The class of films produced in India to-day have practically no prospect of a market in Europe or America. The few attempts which have been made in the past to exhibit Indian films in Europe did not yield very promising results; though we have seen one film ("Sacrifice"), one of the latest and most ambitious of Indian productions, a film of considerable artistic merit, which we think might well be acceptable in the West; but this film is an exception. A few Indian films find a market abroad in places where there is an Indian population such as Ceylon, and East and South Africa. Our information is that there are prospects for Indian films in Malaya, the Straits Settlements, and Fiji; but up to now these markets have hardly been exploited although there have been some business negotiations. While therefore there seems some prospect for Indian films in those countries where there is an Indian population, the prospect of obtaining a footing in the Western markets is more remote and must be dependent on a definite improvement in quality as well as on the production of films specially adapted to Western tastes; for the sort of film which would be popular in India would probably not appeal in the West.

88. Before concluding this brief survey of the trade and industry, there is one question with which it is necessary to deal separately, as it is concerned alike with Exhibition, Distribution and Production. There have been complaints from some members of the Trade against Madan Theatres, Limited. There have been allegations that they have acquired or are attempting to acquire a "monopoly" and that their activities are injurious to the rest of the Trade and against the public interest. Madan Theatres, Limited, are a big company largely interested in the Theatrical and Amusement Trade generally as well as in cinemas. They are producers, importers, distributors and exhibitors of films; and they have an extensive circuit comprising 65 cinemas under their direct control and over 20 in association.

Complaints regarding Madans' alleged monopoly.

Smaller concerns are certain to suffer in competition with such a formidable trade rival, and therefore some complaints are to be expected. These complaints are however of such a nature that it is necessary to give them due consideration. The main complaints against Madan's are:

(1) that they have a monopoly of the supply of pictures, i.e., that they obtain all the best pictures from America, and that others can only get what is left;

(2) that they are acquiring a monopoly of exhibition in the key-cities by buying up the theatres and are therefore killing competition; and are (*a*) pushing out other exhibitors from the lucrative key-cities and (*b*) preventing producers from getting their pictures shown in these lucrative key-cities;

(3) that they are injuring the Indian producer because, when they show an Indian picture in their large circuit, they only show their own; and

(4) that they adopt unfair methods of competition.

89. As regards (1) it is true that Madan's obtain the cream of the market, particularly of the American market, in the way of the super-films and the world-famous productions, such as "The Thief of Baghdad", "Ben-Hur", "Beau Geste", "Variety" and "Chang." With their large resources, extensive circuit and great experience they are naturally in a position to outbid their rivals for the world's super-productions. Any suggestion that they are establishing a corner in the supply of films is of course preposterous. There is a plentiful supply of first-class films available in America; and, in addition, there is the world-market open to their competitors. Madan's operations in this connection are in no way different from those which are followed in every trade; and the same position commonly arises in all forms of business. It does not seem to us that this complaint discloses any ground for interference in what is after all an ordinary feature of business competition. There is nothing here which is remarkable or which is unfair, or which calls for any interference.

—That they have a monopoly of the supply of pictures.

90. As regards (2) the position is that in Bombay Madan's control 7 out of 20 cinemas. They own 4 and 3 others are in association with them. In Calcutta 12 out of 14 cinemas are controlled by them. In Rangoon they have 6 out of 9. In Calcutta and Rangoon, therefore, although they have not a monopoly, there is a tendency towards monopoly. This is clearly disadvantageous to their trade rivals, as it is in these key-cities that the returns are largest. It is not however apparent that there is as yet any disadvantage to the public. If Madan's or any other company were to obtain a monopoly of exhibition in any of the key-cities it is suggested that they might put up their prices and provide inferior films. Should this happen, we believe that the public would not attend; moreover such a course would immediately invite competition. We should not contemplate with equanimity the passing of all the cinemas in a big city into the hands of one company; and in Calcutta this position has very nearly been reached. Healthy competition is certainly in the best interest of the public. But as things are at present we do not believe that the interests of the public are suffering. It is legitimate for Madan Theatres to extend their business. It is very difficult and extremely inadvisable to interfere by legislation in a matter of this kind, and to place restrictions on the growth of business. We shoud be reluctant to propose any such legislation except on the strongest grounds. Regarding the matter from the point of view of the public there is certainly no ground for such a proposal; from the point of view of the trade, whether rival exhibitors or Indian producers, we realise their difficulty; but we do not consider that this is a matter in which we can justifiably recommend legislation. The proposal has been made to us that it should be declared unlawful for any one concern to own or control more than a certain percentage of the cinema-houses in one locality. Apart from the inadvisability of such an interference with trade we believe that it would be impracticable to enforce and that such a restriction in practice would be evaded. Moreover, the trade is still in its infancy and it will be unwise to check its growth by legislative limitations.

—That they are acquiring monopoly of exhibition in key-cities.

91. As regards (3) a large proportion of the cinema-houses controlled by Madan's are "Western cinemas." They control many of the best cinemas throughout India, which are catering for the taste of Europeans and educated Indians. They therefore require to show a large proportion of Western films. They themselves are producers of Indian films and have produced 61 in the last 7 years—an output which is likely to be increased in the near future. It is natural that when they exhibit Indian films they should prefer to exhibit their own films. It is not a fact that they entirely exclude the productions of other Indian companies; they hire a certain number of them, but not a large number. We have obtained particulars of the

—That they are injuring the Indian producer.

films which they have hired. Certainly it is a disadvantage to other producers that their productions are largely debarred from access to this large circuit which includes many of the most lucrative centres; but this circuit comprises less than one-third of the cinema houses in India; and unquestionably Madan Theatres are entitled to show their own productions in their own circuit. The other producers do not seem to realise that they cannot expect to get the same percentage from a well-organized circuit as from stray independent exhibitors. Here again there does not seem to us sufficient ground for interference.

—That they adopt unfair methods of competition.

92. As regards (4) we have made some enquiry into the specific charges under this head which relate mainly to a particular instance of the lease of a cinema-house at a price alleged to be unreasonably high and unfair to competitors. In trade competition of this sort the big concern with the large resources will always be in a position to outbid its rivals. This is inevitable in business, and we have found no reason to believe that Madan Theatres, Ltd., have adopted other than legitimate methods of business in these matters. At the same time we are not satisfied that Madan's are alive to the truth of the maxim "Live and let live" or that they realise that cut-throat competition is definitely harmful to the healthy expansion of the trade.

Summary.

93. Having concluded this brief survey of the Trade and Industry, a survey necessarily somewhat inadequate based as it is on data not easily ascertainable with exactitude and frequently incomplete, and rendered more difficult by the undeveloped state of the industry and the consequent lack of uniformity in its methods, we proceed to summarise in the case of each branch what appear to us to be the main defects and difficulties which call for special attention.

—Exhibition.

94. While exhibition in larger towns and in those smaller towns where there is a considerable population of students or of the industrial labouring classes may be said, generally speaking, to be a paying concern, many of the mofussil exhibitors are labouring under great difficulties and are having a hard fight for existence. This is partly due to the poverty of the bulk of the population who are unwilling, and generally unable, to pay the price of admission; and partly also to the fact that the cinema habit is insufficiently developed. In some cases failure is due to inexperience. Very often however the mofussil exhibitor cannot afford to own his cinema-house and is handicapped by the heavy and disproportionate rent which he is compelled to pay. Again, with the two exceptions that we have mentioned, there is a notable absence of the circuit-system; exhibitors do not combine to form circuits. Further, exhibitors are insufficiently organised for mutual exchange of information and to safeguard their common interests; there is an absence of exhibitors' associations of any importance.

The entertainment tax, where it exists, is a distinct handicap to the exhibitor when it is imposed on the cheaper seats.

—Travelling cinemas.

95. At present, the travelling cinema is a poor and struggling concern. As the cinema-habit spreads it is likely that the travelling cinema system will develop. Even now, we are not satisfied that they could not improve their business by investing in better pictures and better equipment; but the main obstacle is the fundamental fact of the poverty of the people which we have already mentioned. They are however definitely handicapped by the amount which they have to pay in license fees.

—Distribution.

96. The distribution of Indian films is not sufficiently organised. The system, prevailing abroad, under which the distributor normally finances the producer, has not yet developed in this country; though it exists to a small extent in a rudimentary form, as some of the producers have their own distributors who have made advances to them. The fact is of importance in connection with the financial aspect of production.

Although block and blind booking are practised to some extent in this country it cannot be said that this is an evil which requires remedy. It is a business arrangement between the distributor and the exhibitor, which is of some convenience to both. It is convenient for the distributor because it enables him to dispose of his whole supply of pictures; it is convenient for the exhibitor because he obtains his pictures cheaper. If the exhibitor wishes to select particular pictures he can, in many cases, do so but he must pay more for them. The disadvantage of the system is that the exhibitor is sometimes compelled to accept inferior pictures. Interference with the system would certainly be prejudicial to the trade as a whole at this stage. We have had a few complaints from exhibitors, but in general the Trade seems satisfied with the system. Neither from the point of view of the Trade, nor of the public interest do we consider that there is sufficient ground for interference in this matter. The conditions which existed in the United Kingdom in regard to block-booking and which necessitated the recently passed Cinematograph Act, which is mainly directed against block-booking, are absent in this country. In England an outlet for British films could not be found because the exhibitors were completely booked up far in advance with American films. In India, however, there is no such state of affairs, and any suitable film available at a suitable price can find a market.

—Production.

97. Although we have been impressed by the progress made in the production of Indian films in the last few years, we have been even more impressed by the necessity for improvement in the quality of the films produced if that progress is to continue. It is very desirable that

more Indian films should be produced; and indeed the demand is greater than the supply. But unless the quality is improved, the demand will diminish, and there is little hope of future expansion. Already we have observed indications of a falling-off in the demand for Indian films. Some cinemas (in Madras, for example) have reverted from Indian to Western films. The novelty of the Indian film has worn off; and many of the present productions are not suitable as they have not an all-India appeal. There is urgent need for improvement in the subject or story, in the scenario, in the acting, in the technique, in the photography, in fact, in all respects. Although there has been some improvement, especially in photography, the Indian film will not progress unless considerable improvement in quality is effected. Such improvement can only be effected by the better training of all concerned—scenario-writers, directors, camera-men, laboratory men, electricians, actors and actresses. Such training is not available in India, and can only be achieved either by importing experts from abroad or by sending Indians abroad for training.

It is essential that the whole level of production should be raised. This means that men of culture must come forward and take up this profession. There is no reason why they should not come forward. This is an art worthy of the attention of cultured men. Moreover they will be doing national work, by propagating Indian ideas and ideals and interpreting Indian literature, history and traditions. Also, it is profitable: there have been many instances of successful Indian films which have been extremely lucrative. But it is not merely as producers that cultured people are required; educated men and women must be induced to act for the film. At present there is a sort of stigma attached to film-acting, because the actresses (and to a less extent the actors) are generally not drawn from the respectable classes. The whole tone of the studios must be raised.

Another of the main difficulties of the producer is finance. Capital is not forthcoming; capatalists are shy of investing their money in this industry. This is partly due to the stigma which, as we have mentioned, is attached to the studios, partly to the fact that the present producers do not command confidence, and partly to the failures which have occurred. Capitalists are not satisfied that this industry is a good investment. The result is that many producers have to wait for the returns on their previous pictures before they can afford the outlay on a new picture. The fundamental obstacle, however, in the way of the expansion of the industry is the limited home market; and at present Indian productions are practically confined to the home market. The number of cinemas in India is small, and it has been seen that about one-third of these confine themselves to Western films. The remaining cinemas could with profit show a much larger proportion of Indian films, if suitable films at reasonable prices were available. A better class of film is not produced because the producer is short of

finance. His main object is to get a quick return on his outlay; he knows that by producing a certain type of cheap film appealing to the uneducated classes, he can get the return which he wants. There is therefore a kind of vicious circle here; the exhibitor does not get enough suitable Indian films because the producer does not produce them; the producer does not produce them because he is short of finance; if he produced a better type of film he would get a better return; but he does not do so because he is short of finance. It is not however entirely a question of finance, it is a question of imagination, of enterprise, and of culture. There are also the difficulties alluded to in the chapter on Censorship.

The producers are insufficiently organised. There is a lack of Trade associations of sufficient authority, and connected with this is the question of information. There is a remarkable dearth of statistical and other reliable information regarding the trade. Without better organisation and better information, there is little hope of progress.

In Chapter III will be explained our key proposals for the assistance of the industry and in Chapter IV will be given our detailed recommendations regarding each branch.

## CHAPTER III.

### The Cinema Department.

### Central Bureau and Advisory Committee.

The necessity for a central organisation.

98. We now come to the most important and constructive of our proposals. In the concluding portion of the last chapter we have emphasised the main defects and difficulties of the cinema trade and industry in this country. We have already dwelt upon the importance of the cinema both to the people and to the Government. We are convinced that if the trade and especially the film-producing industry are to develop, and to develop on sound lines, it is essential that there should be some central organisation to guide, assist, and control. The defects which we have specified cannot be remedied nor the difficulties surmounted without a strong and combined effort. Co-ordinated and organised effort on the part of those engaged in the cinema trade and industry is most needed, but at the present stage there is little hope of success in this direction without some external guidance and assistance. We have spoken of the urgent need for training, especially technical training, in the producing industry in this country; and such training can be given only by experts. There is little prospect of the producers obtaining such experts unless some special provision is made for the purpose. We have referred to the necessity for full and up-to-date information regarding cinema conditions and activities both in India and abroad; some arrangement is required for the systematic collection and distribution of such information. We have therefore come to the conclusion that until the trade and industry are sufficiently organised there should be a Cinema Department, or Central Cinema Bureau, attached to the Government of India, and we now proceed to consider in detail the grounds for the establishment of such a Bureau and the functions which it should perform.

Lack of statistical and other materials.

99. There is an almost entire absence of that statistical and other material dealing with the conditions of the film industry in this country which is so necessary for a proper understanding of the real position of the trade and the best methods for improving it. Our enquiries have shown conclusively that the film-producing industry in this country needs to be brought closely and continuously into contact with the progress of the industry in Western countries, that some satisfactory means must be found of applying the lessons taught by the experience of those countries, and that it is highly necessary to make arrangements for the collection and distribution of all sorts of materials and information which will be useful to the cinema industry in India.

The need for films with a national or general appeal.

100. We have been very strongly impressed with certain evidence which has been given to us on the subject of the lack of appeal of films produced in one part of this country when shown in other parts. We have indeed reason to believe that there is some danger that the film-producing concerns in different parts of India may tend to produce films of purely local or regional appeal. Such a development as this is to be deprecated on every ground and we are anxious not only to lay stress on this danger, but if possible to devise means to avoid it. We regard it as of the very highest importance that Indian film producers should be encouraged and assisted to turn out films of a truly national character and wherever possible with a universal appeal.

The need for foreign expert assistance.

101. We are satisfied that at present the producing industry in this country is not in a position either to avail itself of and apply to its own conditions in this country the results of the experience of Western countries in film-making, or to avoid the serious danger which we have pointed out above. It has neither the capital resources, the banking facilities, the knowledge, nor the personnel required for these purposes. We have heard much evidence as to the desirability of importing foreign experts or sending Indian youths abroad to acquire expert knowledge in all branches of the industry, and we agree that for some time to come foreign assistance and training will be necessary.

An independent agency required.

102. For a variety of reasons, chiefly the unorganised character of the industry, the precarious or insufficient finances of the small producers who at present compose the greater part of the producing side of the industry, and, also, the fact that satisfactory profits are undoubtedly being made by the present inefficient and uneconomic methods of production, we realise that it would be nothing more than a pious aspiration if we asked the producers themselves to take the steps which are necessary to improve the technique, quantity and quality generally of their work. To effect the necessary improvements involves a considerable increase of expenditure on production. We have been strongly impressed in our enquiry by the fact that owing to the present limited home-market it does not ordinarily pay the producer to increase to any great extent his production-cost. If he spent much more on a picture he could not hope to get a sufficient return to bring in a profit. Moreover, it is not only technique and quality which must be improved; it is the whole organisation of the producing-industry—its financing, business-management, scale of production, distribution and so forth. The present small producers are living on the edge of a precipice. The formation of a strong, well-financed public company for the production of films would drive most, if not all, of them out of business. It is, therefore, clear

that some agency or body independent of the present producers will have to perform these services for them until the trade is sufficiently organised to help itself.

A. Government of India agency.

103. It is just as clear that this agency will have to be brought into existence by the Government, and, again, for its first years kept in being and controlled also by the Government. The question arises as to the appropriate governmental authority for this work. The provincial authority suggests itself naturally in the first place, since the development of industries is a provincial subject, but we may say at once that we do not propose to leave this to the provinces. Every characteristic of the cinema industry makes it unsuitable for provincialisation. It differs completely and in essence from the cottage or smaller factory industries which are the proper objects of provincial assistance. The services which we contemplate must be on a national scale, if for no other reason than this that no one province could provide the necessary resources to carry out these services. Further, substantial results can be achieved only with the co-operation and assistance of all Provincial Governments and Indian States also. Moreover, the independent entry of the provinces into this field would mean much reduplicated and uneconomic effort. The Central Government is, therefore, obviously indicated and we must now consider the agency through which the services contemplated shall be rendered, the exact kind of services to be rendered, details of organisation, finance and so forth.

Technical and business advice.

104. We have already seen that the film industry in this country needs (*a*) assistance and tuition in the purely technical side of its work, that is, in the production of better films, and (*b*) advice and guidance in business organisation generally, including finance, company promotion, preferably by amalgamation of existing producing concerns, marketing—primarily in India, but without overlooking the foreign market—co-operation, if necessary, for the purchase or supply of raw material, accessories, properties, and so on. In particular, the possibility of extending the home exhibition market by the building of new cinema theatres, where this would be commercially sound, should not be ignored. New ground might be broken by the collection and distribution to the industry of useful and relevant information received from Indian Trade Agents, when these are appointed, and from British Consuls in various parts of the world.

Technical experts.

105. As regards (*a*), the services of experts in the various technical sides of production must be secured. Their number should be kept down to a minimum, and, as a working basis, we propose the following:—A director of film production, a camera man, a printing and developing expert and an electrician. Nearly all the experts will probably have to be foreigners at first, but this could be decided after receipt of replies to advertisements in Indian and foreign

newspapers. The term of contract in all cases should be for three years, with the option of renewal at the discretion of Government.

An Advisory Committee.

106. As regards (*b*), other considerations must be taken into account since the problems which arise are primarily problems for business and financial men. The technical experts can do no more than place their technical knowledge at the disposal of a body which shall be competent to advise the industry on its business side. This shall be the function of an Advisory Committee to be composed mostly of non-officials, including business men and members of the cinema trade, and partly of officials of the Government of India and the Provincial Governments. It is not intended that this body shall undertake the day-to-day work which will be involved, but that it shall work through a permanent Secretary of approved qualifications who shall be under the general control of the Committee and whose actions shall be subject to the approval of the Committee at its periodical meetings, which should be not less than four per annum. The Bureau shall consist of the Secretary as its head and the experts employed.

Composition and personnel of Advisory Committee.

107. The Committee should consist of not more than 14 members, of whom 8, including the Chairman, shall be non-officials and the remaining 6 officials. We recommend that the Chairman and the majority of the members should normally be Indians. Of the officials, three will be chosen to represent the provinces and three will represent the departments concerned of the Government of India. Appointments to the Committee shall be by nomination by the Governor-General. It shall be open to the Committee to consult, whenever necessary, with representatives of Government Departments, both Central and Provincial. In selecting non-officials for the Advisory Committee care should be taken to distribute the membership, as far as possible, between the different communities, with due regard to the various interests—business, literary, scientific and other—whose co-operation will be needed.

Studio and laboratory.

108. The technical officers will be available to advise the industry in their own subjects, but whether they shall themselves operate a studio or studios must be left for later decision by the Advisory Committee after investigation by the experts chosen. But in any event we think it likely that the Bureau will have to pioneer a printing and developing industry in this country, which might be handed over later on to private enterprise.

The Secretary.

109. The Secretary will be the mainspring of the Bureau's activities, for it will be his task to bring the industry and the experts together and to collect and distribute the information of all kinds which will be required by producers and exhibitors alike. His duties in this regard will be comprehensive since the Bureau is exepected and meant to become a clearing house of information and technical

assistance for the cinema industry generally in this country. All concerned in the trade will be under statutory obligation to furnish him with whatever statistics and information he requires, so that he and the Committee may be thoroughly conversant with all the conditions of the industry. As we have already indicated, he will be expected to collect from Indian Trade Agents and British Consular officers abroad all information likely to be of value to the cinema industry here, and this information he will make available to those concerned.

A film library.

110. The Secretary will maintain a library of films of sound educational merit, both imported and produced in India, to be exhibited on conditions to be later laid down by the Bureau and the Advisory Committee. Elsewhere in this report we make certain suggestions for the interchange of films of educational value between India and the different States of the British Commonwealth and other countries. There will soon be established under the auspices of the League of Nations an International Institute of the Educational Cinema. The Bureau and the Committee should be the agents of the Government of India for this purpose. We regard the establishment of this library as being of great importance. In other countries educational films of high value have been prepared and are available, but cannot be shown in this country in the ordinary way since their exhibition is not a commercial proposition. It is, however, highly desirable that students and others in this country should have access to such films and therefore we suggest that the Central Bureau should stock a representative selection of them and should distribute them to exhibitors on terms to be decided later on. Elsewhere in this report we recommend the compulsory exhibition of a certain footage of educational films which we expect will prove an extra encouragement to the production of such films in India and will also be of help to the development of the industry. This recommendation would impose a burdensome obligation on exhibitors who would not be able to procure the necessary amount or kind of films unless aided in the manner we propose by the Central Bureau.

Publicity.

111. Lastly, the Secretary will see that due publicity is given to the productions and developments generally of the industry in this country, preferably through the medium of the Indian Trade Journal in the first instance. Probably it will be possible in a short time for the Bureau to publish a journal of its own, which should pay through advertisements.

Registration.

112. An important part of the Bureau's functions will be the registration of films produced in and imported into this country. We visualise four main registers:—

(1) There will be a general register of all producers, exhibitors and distributors. Every person who wishes to take part in the trade in any of these capacities must come on to the register and

be licensed. The film which he produces, distributes or rents for exhibition will be registered and this, coupled with our specific recommendations regarding registration of copyrights, should form an efficient safeguard against breaches of copyright and also against piracy.

(2) This will be a register of those who export positive films from this country, all of which must be censored before export.

(3) This will be a register of persons exporting undeveloped films to be developed abroad. All such persons must make a full declaration of the contents and character generally of the undeveloped film, wrongful declarations being made punishable.

(4) This register will contain the names of all those persons connected with the cinema trade who are declared to be eligible for such facilities as Government may hereafter decide to give to the trade, e.g., railway facilities. All who apply for admission to this register will have to comply with the conditions laid down for this purpose.

There will also be a register of copyrights, subsidiary registers, and such special registers as may be required for the purpose of the administration of the Quota-system which is recommended in the next Chapter.

This system of registration will be of high value for protecting copyright, for collecting information required by the Government and by the trade, and for helping the Bureau to administer the functions allotted to it. These suggestions are intended solely for the benefit of the trade and care should be taken to avoid any inquisitorial interference with the internal business affairs of any particular concern.

Award of prizes for meritorious films and scenarios.

113. We consider that a stimulus to the production of better films will be given if the Bureau award annually a prize or prizes for the best Indian productions of the year. These prizes may be of little intrinsic worth and may take the form of a gold medal or even a certificate. Their true value will be found in the hall-mark which they give to the productions thus distinguished and to the consequent advertisement both of the films themselves and of the concerns which produce them. In the same way the Bureau might offer a prize or prizes annually for the best scenarios submitted for its approval. These prizes may be substantial sums in cash with the object not only of paying for the work involved in preparing the scenarios but also with a view to tapping all available sources from which competent Indian scenario writers may be obtained. Prize scenarios shall automatically become the property of the Bureau for disposal to the trade of the country. In our chapter on Production we have made other suggestions on scenario-writing, which, if adopted, will involve the assistance of the Bureau. The Bureau and Advisory Committee will no doubt be able to devise other methods of stimulating good production and improved acting.

114. The Central Cinema Bureau shall be regarded as the Executive branch of the Advisory Committee with its headquarters in Bombay, where the bulk of the producing industry is already located and where the greater part of the foreign films which are imported into this country are censored.

Status of Central Cinema Bureau.

115. We must now consider how this Bureau is to be financed. Obviously it would be unfair to ask the Central Government to undertake this responsibility in its entirety. It must be repeated that the functions of the Bureau are generally to improve the conditions of the Indian cinema trade both in its producing and exhibiting capacities. Certain departments of the Central Government and all Provincial Governments are interested in this matter as well as the actual cinema trade in this country. The Central Cinema Bureau should be able to co-ordinate the activities of all the Government departments, whether Central or Provincial, which are interested in the improvement of the Indian cinema industry. In another part of this report we give reasons for urging the Central and Provincial Governments to take up seriously the question of mass education and propaganda on public utility subjects by means of the cinematograph, and in our remarks on this important subject will be found, we believe, full justification for these present recommendations and for our invitation to all interested Government departments, whether Central or Provincial, to subscribe to the expense of the Bureau. The Railway Board has already begun to advertise by means of the cinematograph, but there is vast scope for improvement in the technique of its propaganda films, particularly as these are to be shown abroad, where the taste in these matters is highly developed. It will be not only more effective but also more economical if there can be co-ordination of effort between the provinces and certain departments of the Government of India, particularly the Railway and the Army Departments, and the trade in this matter. All Central departments should be directed therefore and Provincial Governments invited to co-operate in establishing and maintaining the Bureau. We feel convinced that the advantages of the Bureau will be rapidly recognized by the Provincial Governments and that its services will be eagerly sought by all of them, and that where they do not make fixed contributions they will pay reasonable charges for work done on their behalf.

Contributions from Central and Provincial Governments.

116. The Trade also must do its share since it will be the main beneficiary. We propose, therefore, that together with the existing 15 per cent customs duty an additional 5 per cent should be collected by the Custom Houses on all imported exposed films and that the proceeds of this cess, which would on the last year's basis amount to Rs. 1,20,000, should go towards the upkeep

Cess on imported films.

of the Bureau. We further propose that any surplus from censorship fees should also be paid to the Bureau. Further, registration fees, at moderate rates to be decided on later, will be charged for the privileges of enrolment in one or more of the four registers above mentioned. Registration fees also shall be devoted to the maintenance of the Bureau.

Estimate of cost.

117. It is estimated that the recurring cost of the Bureau and Advisory Committee will amount to Rs. 4,00,000 per annum rising to Rupees 5,00,000, as the work expands. As Indians are substituted for the foreign experts, however, the cost will diminish. The proceeds from the cess, registration fees, and the surplus from the censorship fees should be about Rs. 2,50,000, cess alone being estimated to bring in approximately Rs. 1,20,000. The contributions from the departments of the Government of India and Provincial Governments and local bodies who take advantage of the Bureau and its activities may very nearly meet the balance. Any deficiency will have to be found by the Government of India.

The Bureau should be attached to the Commerce Department.

118. We have also considered the question in what department of the Government of India for administrative purposes the Bureau and the Committee should be attached, and after duly considering the claims of the Industries, Education, Health and Lands, and the Commerce Departments, we have decided to indicate our preference for the one last named as the majority of the functions allotted to the Bureau will require the co-operation of that department. We also anticipate that an inter-departmental committee of the various central departments including the Army and the Railways will have to be improvised for assisting in the work of this Bureau.

Summary of functions of Committee and Bureau.

119. As we visualise the future, the functions of the Central Advisory Committee and the Bureau will be as follows:—

They are expected to help and guide the Trade and Industry on its business side, to be a clearing house of information and technical assistance to the cinema industry generally. They will certify Indian films for merit and maintain registers of producers, exhibitors, renters and importers. They will, after due enquiry, register copyrights and the names of those eligible for grant of concessions and privileges. The Technical Experts attached to the Bureau will train Indians in the various technical aspects of the Industry. The Bureau and the Committee are also expected to bring the Trade and Industry together by periodical conferences, to discuss matters of common interest; if necessary, they will pioneer a printing and developing laboratory and also start a Government studio for producing educational and public utility

films. The Central Bureau is expected to be of use to all the Provincial Governments and the various departments of the Government of India in producing and circulating educational and public utility films. They will guide the industry generally, by improving the technical side of it, by holding annual competitions and offerings prizes for scenarios and devising measures for removing all difficulties arising out of language differences and provincial peculiarities. In fact the Bureau will be a real centre of information and co-ordination and will be entitled to call for reports and information from the Censor Boards and the Trade, and issue periodical publications for the benefit of the Trade and Industry. They will act as advisers to the Government of India in dealing with appeals and revision petitions and generally in the administration of all matters relating to the cinema.

General advantages.

120. No demonstration is needed at this point to convince all who are interested in the film in this country, that the proposed Bureau will be of high value to the various Governmental authorities as well as to the Trade. An expanding industry means increasing employment, growing revenues and a constant addition to the general welfare of the country. But, apart from this, the Cinema Bureau will be of value to the Government by keeping the latter in close, exact and constant touch with all the conditions of the industry, and, as we shall see in Chapter V, it should play a large part in helping the Governments, both Central and Provincial, to develop a propaganda and publicity policy and technique, which might, and probably will, produce important results in mass adult education in the widest sense of that word.

*Note.*—While this report was in the press a memorandum was received from the Director of the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau regarding the work of the Bureau, which is printed as Appendix J and is of interest in connection with the above chapter.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Examination of the measures proposed for encouraging Production, Distribution and Exhibition.

The beneficent influence of the cinema.

121. From the general survey we have made in a previous chapter of this report of the film industry in all its aspects and from the recommendations we have hitherto made and are making later it will be seen that we are more impressed with the beneficent than the harmful side of the cinema; and we think it is vital that the Government of India should take early steps to guide, control and utilise in the interests of Indian nationhood the potentialities of the cinema.

Present inefficiency and future potentialities.

122. It will have been noticed that we are not satisfied with the general condition of the industry. Lack of organisation, of technical knowledge, of business capacity, of financial credit, of banking facilities—all these have contributed in a very large measure to the present inefficient condition of the industry and its slow progress. We are not unmindful, when comparing the growth of the cinema industry in India and abroad, of the fundamental differences which exist between this country and others, especially those in the West. The cinema itself is only as old as the present century and as a recent writer points out:

"There is certainly no mechanical invention that has ever made more rapid strides in 27 years than the film. The half has not been told of its potential wonders, sound films, television films, wireless films, perfect colour films, stereoscopic films, non-inflammable films, modifications in the projection of films, which to-day have to be jerked 16 times a second through the beam of light in order to create the illusion of movement on the screen—all such developments have or will come, and the field for experiment and invention is immense.

"Every film-man in Hollywood, Paris, Berlin or London will tell you that daily, hourly, changes are taking place in the direction of the acting; the writing of scenario; story, treatment and sub-titles; the choice of material and musical accompaniment; the planning of picture theatres; and the modes of world-wide distribution of the pictures. The whole film-universe is in a perpetual state of flux."

The cinema has come to stay.

123. The economic condition of the bulk of the people, the popular predilections and prejudices, and the general inefficiency here, have, in a large measure, retarded the growth of the industry. But at the same time that the cinema has come to stay in this country also and is bound to spread must be taken as established.

The present opportunity.

124. We consider that the occasion which has now arisen for the Government of India to consider the resolution of the Imperial Conference in regard to the exhibition within the Empire of films produced within the Empire as interpreted in relation to India should be availed of to supplant, in some measure, foreign films by home production.

The centralised and somewhat stricter censorship, which we have suggested in the chapter on censorship, may have the effect of restricting to some extent the import of foreign films. If the supply from outside is thus reduced by such censorship, the void must be filled and we consider that in the main India herself should be relied on for filling it. The industry, defective as it is in many respects, is not altogether negligible as it has been believed to be till now, and this is the opportune time for taking all possible steps to encourage its growth on proper lines. During our enquiry it came as a surprise to us that so much spade-work in production had already been done, especially in Bombay and Burma.

The industry is progressing only in certain places.

125. We have in a previous chapter recommended measures for the establishment of a Central Organisation which would, in a large measure, help and guide the industry and, in course of time, remove many of the defects which we have indicated in previous sections of this report. While the producing side of the industry is showing signs of real life and growth in Bombay and in Burma, it will be seen from the table subjoined that in Bengal and in Madras the industry is distinctly languishing, while in other provinces it is non-existent.

*Number of Indian feature films examined province by province.*

| | Bombay. | Bengal. | Madras. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1921–22 ... ... | 45 | 16 | 2 |
| 1922–23 ... ... | 46 | 20 | 4 |
| 1923–24 ... ... | 52 | 6 | 5 |
| 1924–25 ... ... | 55 | 11 | 4 |
| 1925–26 ... ... | 94 | 14 | 2 |
| 1926–27 ... ... | 96 | 9 | 1 |
| 1927–28 (11 months) | 73 | 7 | 1 |
| Total ... | 461 | 83 | 19 |

*Number of Burmese films examined.*

| | Feature. | News. |
|---|---|---|
| 1921–22 ... ... | 10 | 5 |
| 1922–23 ... ... | 33 | 12 |
| 1923–24 ... ... | 22 | 9 |
| 1924–25 ... ... | 26 | 14 |
| 1925–26 ... ... | 34 | 9 |
| 1926–27 ... ... | 47 | 17 |
| 1927–28 (11 months) | 49 | 21 |
| Total ... | 221 | 87 |

The one producing concern in Madras has also closed down.

The necessity for guidance and encouragement.

126. We have it also in the evidence led before us that unless the industry is guided on proper lines and if allowed to shift for itself on the lines the producers are now pursuing, the undoubted popularity of the Indian films with Indian audiences is bound to wane, and they will gradually disappear even from the home market, not to mention the possible market overseas. There are indications already of a tendency in that direction, for in Madras we heard of one or two theatres which used to show Indian films and have reverted to foreign films.

The progress made is insufficient.

127. During the last seven years the number of foreign films examined by the Boards in India (excluding Burma), was 8,832 with a footage of 27,786,989. The number of Indian films (excluding Burmese) produced during that period was only 902, with a footage of 4,142,415. It is not the percentages or even the rate of growth which should be the guide, but it is the volume of business which has to be taken into account. The total footage of films examined in this country during the last seven years is nearly 32 millions of which Indian films count only 4 millions and a trifle over. Taking India alone, the yearly average of foreign films is 1,262 while the yearly average of Indian films is only 128. These figures relate to all films produced or imported into India proper; but, taking feature films alone into account, during the last seven years the total number of Indian films (excluding Burmese) comes only to 563 as against 4,430 foreign films. And reckoned by footage they amount only to 3,877,224 as against 23,808,957 of imported films. The volume of cinema business, both Indian and foreign, is growing undoubtedly, but, notwithstanding the fact that Indian films are universally reported to be popular with Indian audiences the growth of Indian films has not been as steady or satisfactory as it should have been; nor, as appears from the evidence, has it kept pace with even the limited demand in the country. It is not a question of comparison of Western with Indian films as to quantity or rate of progress. It is a legitimate aim for the country to see that the Indian film supplants at least 50 per cent of the imported films within the next few years. It is true that the rate of progress in Indian production is appreciably higher than that in foreign imports but that is not the proper test to apply.

Burma is not included in the above figures as Burmese films do not enter India, and we have no definite evidence as to the exact number of foreign films in circulation in Burma. Table 10 may be referred to in this connection, where detailed figures are given. It may be added that Burmese films are generally longer.

The financial difficulty.

128. That there is money in the business is well known to the producers on the Bombay and Burma sides, although they are not able to make the best use of it owing to the fact that they

have not much financial credit nor banking facilities. Most of them borrow at high rates of interest and are bent upon making money as quickly as they can and of spending it either on themselves or in repaying the amounts borrowed. Very little of the proceeds, we have been told, is put back in the industry to improve or to extend it. Having produced one film, some have to wait a long time to get the money to make another and thus although there are about 23 Indian producing units, the average number of feature films produced in the country during the last seven years is only about 80 per annum, i.e., less than 4 per producing unit; though it is true that the number of feature films produced has increased from 63 in 1921–22 to 106 in 1926–27 and 81 in the eleven months of 1927–28. Some of these 23 units exist only in name.

National ideas.

129. That there is plenty of wealth and of material in each province in its own history, literature and scenery and in its festivals, fairs and *melas* which would, and should, appeal to Indian audiences cannot be gainsaid. Much of it can also be utilised by suitable handling so as to have a universal appeal. It is not only the potential value of the Indian film industry in the financial sense to the country that we lay stress on, but we are firmly of the opinion that it is necessary to remove from the screens the foreign grip, mainly that of America, which at present threatens to establish itself. Luckily, the cinema has not yet invaded the interior to any large extent. And before the public in India are taught to like the pictures dealing so often with the superficialities of life which come from abroad, we consider that timely steps should be taken to create a national atmosphere. The cinemas are now a very powerful medium through which national ideas can be spread. They unconsciously influence the thought and outlook of the people. Further it has been brought prominently to our notice during the course of our enquiry that however strict the censorship may be—and there is a limit to it—films produced elsewhere to suit other tastes and other peoples will continue to present the same difficulties and to give room for complaints of the sort which have hitherto been frequent. It is unnecessary to emphasise this aspect of the matter much further, for, from a perusal of the extraordinarily voluminous mass of correspondence, of despatches, and of other proceedings on paper in connection with the cinematograph censorship, to quote the words of the Hon'ble Mr. Crerar in the Legislative Assembly, we are satisfied that the Government of India are alive to the fact that " censorship alone is by no means a final answer to the various problems which confront them and if this Committee could devise means by which this nascent Indian industry could be encouraged and put upon a sound footing it would have rendered a very great service from every point of view." And we take it from the speeches of the Government members in both Chambers of the Legislature and from the terms of reference to this Committee that Government realise the extreme importance

of encouraging the growth of the film industry in this country on sound and healthy lines and that they are only too anxious to adopt well-considered measures to achieve that object.

When in 1921 some measures to encourage the industry were urged upon the Government by the expert who had been brought out to survey the situation, they were not adopted because of the financial position of the Central and Provincial Governments. Now everywhere the position has been considerably improved. Almost every Indian publicist who came before us was anxious that every possible step should be taken to encourage the growth of the Indian film industry. One of our colleagues, Colonel Crawford, speaking as a representative of the European community in the Legislative Assembly, emphasised that he was anxious that very real assistance for the building up of an Indian cinematograph industry should be devised by this Committee. And almost all the witnesses agreed that one of the effective methods to be adopted for combating the alleged evil influence of some of the Western films was to substitute Indian films in their place.

*The main proposals.*

Measures of encouragement which have been proposed.

130. The question now remains what further measures are needed to establish the industry on a sound basis. In addition to the formation of the Central Bureau, which may be said to be the key-note of our recommendations, three main proposals have been made: viz.,

(1) Financial aid to the producer;
(2) Building of more cinemas;
(3) Compulsory quota for Indian films.

We are unanimously of the opinion that finance is the great difficulty in the way of this industry developing. We are also agreed that the producing industry should be encouraged as far as possible and that the quality of production requires considerable improvement. We also attach the greatest importance to the spread and establishment of more cinema houses in the country.

Recommendation of loans to producers.

131. The question now is, can anything be done to help the industry in the way of removing this great difficulty about finance. While all of us are agreed as to the existence of this difficulty and of its being a real stumbling block to the growth of the industry, we have, by a majority, decided to recommend that loans should be given by Government on the security of produced films approved by the Central Bureau in consultation with the Boards of Censors, or other approved security, to producers on cheap and favourable terms as to interest and period of repayment. This, in the opinion of the majority, would be a real relief to the producers and involves no great risk to the Government. The industry as such by reason of the social stigma attaching to it is not popular

with the big financiers, and the class of people now engaged in the industry have, as we have already stated, not much financial credit. Many of them are feeble in their efforts and spend the proceeds of a film on themselves; while in any case the proceeds come in too slowly to be used with advantage in the development of their business. The most extravagant terms are imposed upon them by the money-lenders. The majority are satisfied that unless this sort of aid is given much leeway for the improvement of the industry would not be made even by adopting the other recommendations we are making. It is true it is not a key industry but we are not satisfied, as we have shown in another place, that the industry would continue of itself and grow. It cannot be denied, however, that the way in which the people of a country utilise their leisure hours is one of serious concern to a Government. That consideration and the fact that Government have to watch that industry by establishing an effective censorship indicate the importance to the public of the industry. It is not in all cases that financial aid will be asked for or is recommended. It is only on the advice of the Central Bureau as to the box-office value of the film and as to the reliability of the applicant concerned that the majority recommend the grant of a loan. Indian films, however poor, pay well.

The loan will help the man to go forward with the other productions he may have on hand and will relieve him from the hold the money-lender has on his time, labour and industry. Further, the staff employed in the studios will be kept continuously at work instead of, as at present, being employed only at intervals; and a greater output of suitable films will be forthcoming so as to supply the demand which already exists and the new demand which, we hope, will be created by the establishment and construction of more cinema houses and by the exhibition of Indian films in a larger number of theatres than at present.

Loans required in the initial stages.

132. The intelligence and the business and organising capacity of people vary from country to country, and it is well known that the small industrialists in this country are comparatively deficient in those qualities which are required to build up a successful business. In the absence of industrial banks, both in the Presidency towns and in the mofussil, the difficulty of obtaining loans and financial assistance which is felt by the middle-class industrialists who are unable to offer security or sureties is well known. Indians suffer in a special degree from this deficiency. This industry is almost entirely in the hands of Indians and of middle-class industrialists. Some of the failures, both in Bengal, Madras, Bombay and elsewhere, have attracted more attention than the success obtained by some individuals. Naturally capital is shy. With better organisation and co-operation, which, we hope, will result from the recommendations we have made regarding the Central Bureau and its functions, the need for taking loans from Government will gradually disappear. But in the initial stages, till the

beneficent results have established themselves, it will be absolutely necessary, in the opinion of the majority, that some form of financial aid on the lines recommended should be resorted to. We need only refer to the weighty remarks made by the Indian Industrial Commission on the question of industrial finance (vide Chapter XX of their Report). What is most necessary for the people is the provision of initial and current finance. In some of the provinces there are already Acts in operation for the grant of loans to industries. But it has been brought to our notice—both by officials and non-officials—that the terms of those Acts are far too rigorous to be of any practical use to the industrialist.

The justification for Government loans.

133. The minority are opposed to this recommendation on the ground that it is unnecessary and unsound from the public point of view. As regards such aid not being necessary, the majority point to the fact that the great difficulty of the producer in this country is the financial difficulty, and that is recognised by the minority also. As regards the question whether it is unsound from the public point of view—after the policy of qualified protection which has been adopted in this country recently and the policy underlying the Loans to Industries Acts in the various provinces which have received the sanction of the Government of India—the majority consider it is needless to argue that point. While such aid will be of great practical value to the industry, which we are all anxious to develop, the limitations we have imposed as to the conditions on which the loan should be granted minimise the risk to be taken by Government in this direction. There is a certain amount of risk in all these matters, but that risk has to be faced in the larger interests of the country and of the public.

Extent and duration of financial aid.

134. A floating capital of about 5 to 10 lakhs of rupees set apart for this purpose, whether by the Central Government or by contributions from Provincial Governments, and placed at the disposal of the Central Bureau or of the Central Board is not such a large sum that it cannot be spared without inconvenience to the other activities of Government.

Government loans are advanced in our country for the purchase of motor cars and for erecting buildings, even for erecting social club buildings. In other countries Governments resort to direct pecuniary aid to this and other industries of a similar kind. It is therefore difficult for the majority to comprehend where the unsoundness of principle comes in.

The proposals we are making are of a tentative character to last ten years, at the end of which time it is expected that the industry will be able to stand on its own legs and the trade and the industry will have organised their resources.

Necessity for more cinemas.

135. Mere encouragement of production will not be fruitful unless provision is also made for the outlet of the increased output which we expect will follow from our recommendations. From the Tables attached to this report it will be seen that in British India for a population of 248 millions there are only 309 cinemas; i.e., one cinema to 802,589 of the population; or one cinema to 3,560 square miles. The total seating accommodation in all the cinemas is only 222,000; i.e., if all these seats were occupied every day it would take nearly three years for the entire public to see the cinema at least once. But as a matter of fact the average daily attendance calculated on a liberal scale comes only to about 200 per diem, per cinema, totalling in all 61,800, the average monthly attendance coming to 1,854,000 and the average yearly attendance to 22,248,000. That 200 per diem per cinema is a liberal estimate is clear from casual figures which we have collected. And we have also noticed during our inspections on several occasions that, even when attractive Western films were shown, the houses were thinly attended, sometimes not even two dozen in a hall which would seat over 500.

The total number of towns with a population of above 20,000 in British India is 250 and the number of such towns having a cinema is only 94. And in the Indian States for a population of nearly 70 millions and odd there are only 60 cinemas. The figures here given, though approximate, may be taken to be very near the fact. These figures compared with those of some other countries reveal the fact that the cinema as yet plays a most insignificant part in the life of this country and that there is ample scope for expansion.

In the United States of America, against which the accusation is sometimes rashly, and in our opinion untruly, made of producing cinema films for sole consumption in the East, there are 20,500 theatres with a seating capacity of over 18,550,000. The daily attendance at the cinemas is 7,000,000. That is, there is one picture theatre to every 6,500 persons and each citizen visits the cinema once a fortnight. Nearly 300,000 people are employed regularly in production, distribution and exhibition not including those employed in allied industries. The theatres pay £37,000,000 per annum for their films.

In England there are 3,700 theatres; that means there is a cinema for every 12,000 persons and each citizen visits the cinema once in six weeks. The theatres pay £6,000,000 per annum for the films, which goes mostly to America.

In Canada 1,750,000 people are reported to attend the cinema every week.

In Italy there are 2,200 theatres besides 4,000 privately owned halls where motion pictures are occasionally shown.

In Japan 2,000,000 persons a month attend the picture houses which are about 1,050 in number. There are a very large number

of seasonal or temporary cinemas besides. There are about 60 first-run houses. The shows start in the morning and run until late in the evening. While 6 or 7 years ago Japan imported more than 90 per cent of her films, to-day she is showing 72 per cent of Japanese pictures. As in India, the Japanese people prefer their own product. There are 37 producing companies.

In Australia, with a population of just over six millions, there are 1,216 theatres. There were only 800 theatres in 1921. During 1925, 37 million people paid admission to theatres, i.e., each citizen visits the cinema more than six times a year.

Since the war Germany has opened 1,580 theatres for pictures. In 1918 there were 2,299 houses with a seating accommodation of 803,508, while at the end of 1925 there were 1,402,462 seats in 3,878 theatres. The average daily attendance is 900,000.

In Russia the industry is completely controlled by the Government. There are 800 theatres for a population of 160 millions and there are 3,500 working-men's clubs which also show films.

Even of the 309 theatres in India about 100—most of them being of the better equipped class—show only Western films. (Vide Table 5.)

Poor equipment of cinemas.

136. In a recent publication, "Films, Facts, and Forecasts," an Englishman, Mr. Fawcett, thus describes the condition of the smaller cinemas in Britain: "The music is bad, the attendants incompetent, the equipment of the building out-of-date, the seats uncomfortable. It is marvellous what the public will endure, and how the entertainment purveyor drives them. Now and then the public rebel and an exhibitor goes into liquidation." That description, except the last portion, will apply with much greater force to the condition of most of the picture houses which show Indian films in India. We have seen several such theatres.

Circuits showing Western films.

137. The best organised circuits owning, controlling or supplying to the larger number of well-equipped theatres all over India are reluctant to show Indian films for fear that their better class patrons, namely, the Europeans and those Indians who prefer European ways, will desert them. With the present class of pictures, with notable exceptions, that fear cannot be said to be ill-founded, and has to be taken into account very seriously by us in making any recommendations as to any compulsory provisions. But the fact remains that the "Globe" who supply 35 cinemas mostly of the better class while they show a considerable volume of foreign with a very fair proportion of British films, have not shown or distributed a single Indian film hitherto. It is fortunate that Madans, who own the biggest circuit and who are accused of being the monopolists in the trade and control 85 theatres, are also producers of Indian films. In some of their theatres which are situated in Indian quarters or near Indian quarters they show their own films and have very

occasionally shown Indian films produced by other companies. That is only natural. During the last six or seven years they have produced over 60 Indian films and they must be given some credit for not neglecting Indian films altogether. But in quarters where they cater particularly for Europeans and Westernised Indians they do not even show their own productions because of the same fear.

At one of the inspections which the Committee made they found almost an empty house in Madras showing Pathé films. It is situated in an Indian quarter with a small Anglo-Indian population interspersed. The local manager when asked why he did not show Indian pictures said he was afraid to do so because of the fear mentioned above. And other well-managed agencies dealing with Western films do not undertake the distribution of Indian films.

In fact, the best Indian production, Indian in every sense of the term (unlike the "Light of Asia" which was a combined effort), we have seen is the film known as "Sacrifice" based on Tagore's famous play. The producers found it difficult to get that film taken up by Madans or other well-known agencies. We are told that the " Globe " made an offer which was accepted, but it has not yet been shown. And in fact it was shown to large audiences only in two theatres in Bombay city. It was not shown in the West End there and has not been shown elsewhere in India, and the latest report we heard about the film was that it has been taken to Europe to be reprinted and exhibited there, if possible. A film like that produced either in America or in England by its own nationals would have been competed for with zest by the exhibiting agencies. And here we have the sorry fact that the best Indian production has not yet found an adequate market in its own country, partly for the fear that it may not be attractive to one section of the patrons of cinema shows, who undoubtedly favour the better class seats. That this is a difficulty in the way of Indian producers has been brought to our notice by several witnesses. Many of them complain that Indian productions are excluded from a large number of theatres, and that Madans naturally prefer to show their own productions in their own theatres and other producers consequently do not get the same facilities as Madans have in the matter of an outlet for their productions, and that they are able to show Indian films only in about 50 houses in all in India.

Conditions are decidedly better in Burma as the Burmese show a marked preference for Burmese films. Even there some theatres show only Western films.

Discussion of the proposal for a quota.

138. It would be an easy solution for this difficulty if we could recommend the imposition of a compulsory quota for Indian productions on every theatre. But in the circumstances of India, where tastes are not uniform, where the East and West mingle in large towns and especially in the key towns like

Calcutta and Bombay, one should not lightly recommend a compulsory system. The remedy may be worse than the disease, for even the existing custom might disappear without substituting other customers in its place. It must be recognised that Indian subjects are very seldom likely to appeal to Western audiences, and probably much less in India, where they see Indians every day, than elsewhere. While every nation would naturally like to see their own institutions on the screen it is only occasionally that they would want to see other nations and their conditions of life. But one cannot depend upon such casual custom for the advancement of an industry. That is why those of us who are inclined to support the quota system are unable to support it in its entirety as it has been imposed recently in Great Britain. In Great Britain there are not these diversities of tastes nor of predilections of communities, but here religions, communities and races meet on a common ground and as little as is possible should be done to disturb existing factors. But, at the same time, we are not unmindful of the fact that, both in the matter of censorship and in the matter of respecting the tastes and predilections of communities, the censoring authorities and also the exhibitors have been too nervous and too tender to superficial and unsubstantial objections.

Better distribution of Indian films, and encouragement of travelling cinemas.

139. The first and obvious remedy for this difficulty in the way of Indian producers is to so organise the distributing agencies as to bring Indian pictures within the reach of all the theatres which now exist, as far as possible. Secondly, to encourage the travelling cinemas in the country to take Indian pictures more than they do at present. They and the inferior cinemas in the interior, we are told, resort to those cheap second-hand films of other countries which find their way to India and, curiously enough, through London. Every effort should be made to substitute Indian films for those cheaper films.

Encouragement of the building of more cinemas and of the use of halls.

140. In the third place—this is the most important of all—organised effort should be made to make a survey of the possibility of extending the theatres in places where they do not exist and of encouraging the use of existing public and educational halls also for cinema shows and to get the local and municipal authorities and the public to embark upon a building programme.

We have been advised by more experts than one that the real and effective method of spreading the cinema among the masses is to build more and more theatres and bring more and more cinema halls into existence. This will not only encourage the industry generally, but will also afford facilities for providing education for the masses, using the term education in a very broad sense, by carrying through the eye valuable information

and instruction. It is in these directions that organised efforts both by Government and the people should be made.

The means to this end—loans for building cinemas.

141. What is most needed in this direction is—

(i) removal of financial difficulties,

(ii) an intelligent survey of potentialities, and

(iii) co-operation of the various departments of public utility.

The Central Bureau which we have recommended, will, we are sure, be able, in the course of a few years, to devise means to achieve this end. But to have real effect Government co-ordination and encouragement in the first instance is most essential. All of us are agreed that local bodies and municipalities might be encouraged to bring into existence more halls within their areas for public purposes generally, including cinema shows. And for this purpose if local bodies and municipalities require loans from public funds, we are of the opinion that such loans may and should be granted. The minority, while they have no very strong objection to this recommendation, cannot definitely join in it. In the case of private individuals or companies who propose to build new cinema halls in any appreciable number, we, by a majority, recommend loans from public funds to approved individuals or companies. The majority are convinced that the local boards and municipalities have already many burdens on their shoulders which, with the best will and effort, they are not able to carry with any great success. The majority are therefore not hopeful of any tangible results from that direction. On the other hand, if approved private individuals or companies, especially producers, can be encouraged to go in for building circuits of theatres, the object which we have in view and believe in very strongly, namely, the coming into existence of more cinema houses scattered throughout the country, will be speedily accomplished. It is in that view that the majority recommend that on the recommendation of prescribed authorities loans for that purpose should be granted by Government. The security is always there and not much risk is taken in advancing loans, especially when a previous survey has been made by competent people as to the potentialities of the proposed theatres.

Recommendation of increased use of halls by travelling cinemas.

142. Further, we are all unanimously of the opinion that public halls and halls attached to educational institutions should be placed at the disposal of travelling cinema shows, only actual expenses being charged.

Exhibition of educational films.

143. We have elsewhere recommended compulsory exhibition of educational films by every exhibitor for a certain length of time in his programmes and most of the exhibitors have agreed to such a clause. Although in some places there has been a clause to that effect in the licenses already granted, it has been a dead

letter because such films have not been available. We have in our recommendations made provision for the Central Bureau to arrange both for internal production of such films and for obtaining supplies from abroad. We hope that in a few years educational films of the right type will be exhibited in every cinema show in this country.

Cultivation of a taste for Indian films.

144. The majority further hope that, with the production of a better class of Indian films, they also will form a prominent feature in every cinema programme. The exclusive preference for Western films shown by a certain section of the audience, both European and Indian, will, we hope, gradually disappear with a greater production of suitable Indian films. Although in the first instance the qualified quota system, which the majority of the Committee are recommending in the immediately following paragraph, might have a disturbing effect on some of the cinema theatres, it will not be serious, for we expect that in the course of a year or two people will gradually acquire a taste for Indian films also, just as uneducated Indians have acquired a partial taste for Western films. The better class theatres usually provide other attractions, such as good music, refreshments, etc., which must attract the cinema-going public. It may be mentioned also that we came across an instance during our inspections of cinema houses when an English lady, who had not seen an Indian film before, accompanied one of us to view an Indian film and after seeing the film for a short time made up her mind to stay on and see it through, contrary to her original intention of staying only for a short while. This was a mythological film and of high photographic value. The experiment of including Indian films in the "Western" cinemas has not been tried as the exhibitor is overnervous.

Recommendation of a qualified quota system.

145. It is an unsatisfactory feature, not to be accepted as permanent, that Indian films in India should be excluded from any theatre; and everything must be done to eliminate it gradually. It is therefore with the double object in view of finding an outlet for suitable Indian productions in every theatre in India and also of removing this unsatisfactory feature that the majority recommend that a qualified quota system be imposed. And in doing so they have not ignored the weight of objections on the part of those exhibitors who show only Western films in certain theatres and who are nervous about showing Indian films in those theatres. Without their co-operation it is idle to expect a successful working of the quota system or the betterment of the Indian film industry. Fortunately, the exhibition side of the industry is also in the hands of Indians who have got the same national outlook as the producers themselves. And if they can but co-operate, as we expect they will, in the course of a few years the compulsory system will cease to be necessary.

Reasons for imposing a quota.

146. The reasons which led to the imposition of the quota system in England are somewhat different from those which induce the majority of this committee to adopt a modified quota system in this country also. There the home production was not adequate and the exhibitors were tied down by forward contracts to showing films mostly from one country. Here the better class exhibitors are nervous and unwilling to exhibit Indian films and some of them are not absolutely free to take Indian films by reason of the partial prevalence of block booking. It is true, however, that blind and block booking are not so prevalent as in England or the colonies so as to tie down the exhibitors absolutely.

Every country which had to get rid of a foreign grip and advance its own film industry has had to resort to this quota system. Germany has done so with marvellous effect. Notwithstanding her *Kontingent* system she has maintained her reputation for excellence in technique, just as America has won the first place for excellence in business organisation and management in the film industry. Italy has also resorted to it successfully. Austria and Hungary have their *Kontingent* systems. France has been considering a quota. We have not been able to ascertain definitely how Japan in so short a time has been able (as already mentioned) to supplant foreign films to such an amazing extent. But it appears to have been due to private enterprise combined with a natural preference for Japanese films and a strict censorship. After considerable discussions, conferences and debates, Britain, which is mainly our guide in many matters, has resorted to this quota system. And the majority have therefore no hesitation in recommending the adoption of such a system in the best interests of the industry. That the best theatres in her own country should not be open to her own productions is a reproach which must be removed, and it is hoped that the exhibitors, with the national outlook that they undoubtedly have, will welcome any measures which will facilitate the introduction of Indian films in all the theatres and that the cinema-going public, who may have some prejudices at present, will also be educated out of these prejudices by the measures the majority propose to recommend.

Objection to compulsion in regard to amusements.

147. The majority are quite aware that the cinema is only an amusement, and that there should be no compulsion as to what amusement people should choose. But this is a principle of universal application and notwithstanding that factor other countries have resorted to this remedy. Remedies which are apparently objectionable in principle have often to be resorted to for a time to remove greater evils, especially those which affect the national interests of the country. The majority, therefore, recommend that an obligation should be imposed on the lines indicated in the scheme appended to this chapter on every exhibitor to show a certain percentage of Indian films in his weekly programme, if not in every theatre at least in a group of theatres to which he

belongs or has allied himself. And in order to give him time to adjust his business they propose that this compulsory provision should commence its operation from the beginning of 1930.

The difficulty of compulsion for all theatres—Transferable quota.

148. We recognise the initial difficulty of compulsorily showing Indian pictures in every theatre. But it must be easy for an exhibitor himself to own two or more theatres in a given area or to combine with other theatre-owners in that given area so that the two together might supply the required quota. The majority hope that within the next ten years the desired goal will be reached, namely, that 50 per cent of the films shown in this country will be Indian. And they have attached a skeleton scheme to this report giving particulars of the quota they recommend.

The objection regarding mushroom concerns and production of inferior films.

149. The fear expressed by the minority that it will lead to the growth of mushroom concerns and the production of inferior films is not a serious one. The same fear has been invariably mentioned whenever the quota system has been proposed in any country, and yet the quota system has survived and found acceptance, even in Great Britain, and is spreading. Far from having that effect which the minority apprehend, it will act as an incentive to every producer to improve his quality so as, with the aid of the quota, to suit better tastes and audiences. On the whole, the majority are satisfied that it is the only sound basis on which we can develop the growth of the Indian film industry in this country. There will be a larger number of exhibitors ordering good films and competition will be kept up on account of the higher prices they will offer for better films.

Competition of cheap foreign films.

150. The Indian film industry has to struggle against odds, as has been pointed out already, and particularly against the competition of the cheap, though technically superior, second-hand foreign films from well-organised countries which are supplied from the London market.

Participation of non-Indian films in the quota.

151. It is again a matter for consideration whether other than purely Indian films, as we have defined them, should be allowed to qualify for the quota.

We have in another place dealt with the question of the recommendations of the Imperial Conference in regard to British Empire films and it is therefore unnecessary to deal with it here.

*Certain other measures for assisting the industry.*

Modifications of the tariff.

152. Having so far considered the four main proposals (including the key-proposal) which have been suggested to us for assisting the industry, it now remains for us to examine certain other measures proposed with the same object. It has been suggested

that the duty on imported films should be enhanced as a protection to the indigenous industry, and we will now deal with that suggestion and other relevant matters connected with the Customs duty, such as a rebate on educational films, exemption of raw materials, the objections taken to retaining the present uniform *ad valorem* duty and other kindred matters.

Assessment on a tariff valuation inevitable.

153. Under item No. 105 in the Statutory Import Tariff, all cinematograph films, negative or positive, whether virgin or exposed, are dutiable at 15 per cent *ad valorem*. Where any article is declared by the statute to be dutiable *ad valorem*, the Government of India have power under the Tariff Act to notify for it a tariff valuation. Such tariff valuations are normally scrutinised and, if necessary, revised annually, and are meant to represent the average current market value, less of course the duty included therein of all kinds and qualities of the article. Such a tariff valuation has been fixed for all exposed standard positive films, new or used. The reason for this seems obvious. The potential value of a film is incalculable, as it depends on its box office value, and its actual cost to the importer is also very difficult of appraisement. Unless the film is 'junk' the importer normally pays a royalty to the overseas owner of the copyright for the exclusive right of exploiting the film in a certain area or territory for a certain period. (The 'Indian Territory' usually covers India, Burma and Ceylon.) He also pays at so much a foot for each positive copy of the film which he requires. Further he may contract with the overseas owner to pay him a certain percentage of the box office receipts, and we understand that this is becoming increasingly common in the case of the best films. For the Custom Houses to obtain correct information about royalties is difficult in the extreme, and the percentage system is an additional complication. Consequently, we consider that assessment on a tariff valuation or at a specific rate is inevitable. Of the two, we prefer assessment on a tariff valuation, as such a valuation can, at any time, be revised by a Government notification if real prices vary.

Recommendation regarding positives printed abroad.

154. When we began our enquiry in November 1927, the tariff valuation stood at 4 annas per foot. The assessable value of 1,000 feet, which is a convenient unit to take, was thus 4,000 annas or Rs. 250, and duty thereon at the statutory rate of 15 per cent amounted to Rs. 37-8-0. The duty, it will be noted, was thus the same whether the film was a 'super feature' or mere second hand 'junk.'

During the currency of our investigation a change was made both in the tariff wording and valuation. On our making a reference to the Government of India it was explained to us that it was made in the ordinary course of the annual revision, and that no question of policy or principle was raised or decided. With effect

from 1st January 1928 exposed standard positive films, new or used, which are proved to have been printed from negatives produced in India, have accordingly paid duty on a tariff value of only one anna per foot, whereas the tariff valuation of all other exposed standard positive films has been raised from 4 annas to 4½ annas per foot. We may say at once that we consider this concession to positives printed abroad not only an unnecessary but a retrograde step. We are satisfied from the evidence which we have heard and from the actual results which we have seen that negatives can be satisfactorily developed and positives printed therefrom in India, and that such developing and printing are essential to the expansion of the Indian producing industry. The despatch of films abroad for printing, and still more for developing, should therefore certainly not be encouraged, and in fact should be definitely discouraged. We strongly recommend a reversion to the position prior to 1st January 1928 so that all standard positive films should be liable to the same taxation.

Increase of duty on imported films as a protective measure not recommended.

155. We do not consider that the existing duty, which at the new tariff valuation of 4½ annas per foot amounts to Rs. 42–3–0 per 1,000 feet, is a heavy burden on the importer or exhibitor. At the same time we hold that no increase in the duty is necessary to protect the Indian producing industry. In the first place, no very serious trade demand for protection has been made, and even if it had been made, the producers have put themselves out of court by refusing our request for a frank disclosure of their financial position, despite our assurance that their figures would be examined in the strictest confidence. In the second place, we feel that the exhibitor must not be unduly penalised. Some of the recommendations which we are making elsewhere for the benefit of the trade and the industry as a whole will involve an additional financial burden on the exhibitor, and possibly, through him on the consumer. The exhibitor must continue to show a considerable proportion of imported films for some time to come, and if his programmes became unduly expensive he might be driven out of business, and the number of cinema houses would tend to decline. We regard the opening of more houses as of the utmost importance, and anything that would restrict the expansion of the exhibiting industry, and still more anything that would cause a decline in it, would be to the direct detriment of the Indian producer, inasmuch as it would damage his market. Moreover, no slight enhancement of the duty would prove of any value as a protective measure. The increase in duty for such a purpose would have to be very high, and this the trade could not bear, so that the net result would prove detrimental to the development of the industry. In any case, we feel that our recommendations formulated elsewhere for the benefit of the producing industry will give producers all the assistance which they need.

156. There is, however, one tariff concession which we consider the producing industry can legitimately claim. Raw or virgin film is the raw material of the industry. It has been made clear to us that the production of finished films, especially of good films, inevitably involves a very considerable wastage of raw films. Raw film is not made in India, nor is it likely to be so made for many years. That the raw material of an industry should be free of duty is almost axiomatic. Imports of raw films into British India in the eleven months ending 29th February 1928, as reported by the Director-General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, were valued at Rs. 4,93,238. The annual value may thus be taken as Rs. 5,38,000 on which the duty at the rate of 15 per cent would be Rs. 80,700. We feel that the Government should be prepared to sacrifice this relatively small revenue. For the sake of administrative convenience and also for the reason that imports of non-standard cinematograph film cannot be considerable, we recommend that all classes of raw cinematograph films should be put on the free list of the tariff.

Recommendation of abolition of duties on raw films.

157. It has also been suggested to us that all cinematograph machinery, such as cameras, projectors and printing machines, should be exempted from duty. The expenditure on such machinery only forms a small part of the general expenditure of producers and exhibitors, and it does not appear that all the imports are exclusively consumed by the industry. Consequently we do not think that a case has been made out for the amendment of the tariff in this sense. The exemption of chemicals used in film laboratories would of course be administratively impossible and is certainly unnecessary.

Machinery and chemicals.

158. We consider that imported films possessing a definitely educational value ought to be free of duty. We recognise that the Custom Houses can hardly be expected to decide at the time of import what films would be entitled to this concession, and therefore duty must be charged at the time of import. But whenever the censor views a film which he considers to qualify, he should immediately move the Central Bureau to give the importer a certificate, and this certificate, if presented by the importer to the Custom House within three months of the importation, should entitle the importer to a refund of the duty paid. No 'feature' films should receive this concession, but in all other respects the words "educational value" should be liberally interpreted, and should be held to cover public utility films, such as public health or agricultural propaganda films, films exhibiting industrial methods, and the like. Very few such films have hitherto been imported, and the concession will therefore sacrifice very little revenue.

Recommendation of rebate on educational films.

159. It has been suggested to us that imported films have an advantage over Indian films, in that if re-exported within three years of importation the exporter can obtain under the Sea Customs Act a drawback of seven-eighths of the duty paid. If, however, a film had been exhibited all over India, it would possess little value when re-exported, and the Sea Customs Act prohibits the payment of drawback on any article which is not worth the duty. Further, old films do not in fact seem to be re-exported under claim for drawback. Consequently we do not think it necessary to suggest that the payment of drawback on re-exported films should be prohibited.

Drawback.

160. Two questions touching the tariff remain to be considered. We have it in evidence that the flat rate of duty presses heavily on the cheaper imported films, in particular on the very cheap and often used films, sometimes known as 'junk', which are shown by the poorest class of permanent and travelling cinemas. It is exactly this class of films which must compete with the cheaper Indian productions, and apart from this it is a type of film whose disappearance we would view with satisfaction. Consequently, we consider that it should receive no tariff concession.

Import of cheap and second-hand films.

161. Nor do we think that when more than one positive copy of a film is imported, any concession should be made to the second or succeeding copies. Such copies are not generally imported unless they have a considerable box office value. It would be exceedingly difficult for the Custom Houses to administer any such concession, and we imagine that when the tariff valuation is fixed, account is taken of the fact that copies after the first are obtainable by the royalty payer relatively cheaply.

Duplicate copies.

162. We will now proceed to deal with some of the minor suggestions and proposals. It has been suggested that in order to encourage the production of good films bonuses might be granted to films certified as good. We do not approve of that suggestion. Good films have increased box-office value and there is no reason for the grant of any extra bonus. But we recognise that something should be done to create competition among the producers for the production of good and better films. We therefore recommend that the Bureau in conjunction with the trade might arrange to hold annual competitions and grant medals or certificates, as the case may be, for the best productions. This will have the desired effect and will act also as an advertising medium for the trade and will create an interest. We have noticed that in other countries the trade are asked to vote for the best ten films of the year, the best ten actors of the year, and so on. The adoption of a similar system accompanied by the grant of medals and certificates, to which Indians attach very great value, would, in our opinion, be a sound measure.

Recommendation of annual competitions.

Increased use of the cinema by Government departments.

163. We have in another chapter dealt with the advisability and, indeed, the necessity of the increased use of the cinema by the various Government Departments. And if those recommendations are accepted the measures proposed will also be of indirect assistance to the industry generally.

Recommendation regarding scholarships.

164. It has been suggested to us that scholarships for studying the various technical subjects connected with the industry, tenable in foreign countries, such as Germany, America and England, might be recommended by us. We consider the suggestion a very good one. Here again the Central Bureau and the trade will be able to devise measures for the award of such scholarships. It will be part of the duty of the experts attached to the Central Bureau to give the necessary facilities for the training of Indians in the various technical aspects of the industry. We do not in any way underrate the importance of those employed in the industry acquainting themselves at first-hand with the methods and practices adopted in countries where the industry is already well-established and organised, and we consider that Government should use their agents and the agents of the Home Government abroad to see that Indian students get free and full opportunities for acquainting themselves with all the processes adopted in the manufacture of films. Some witnesses who have appeared before us have complained of the difficulty of getting those opportunities whether in England or elsewhere, while others who have been abroad have been able to get the access they wanted without much difficulty. It is a matter in which the High Commissioner for India in England and the trade commissioners and ambassadors abroad could be instructed to help the scholarship holders. In the granting of scholarships we consider that preference should always be given to those who have actually gained some experience in the line in this country. Provincial Governments and the Central Government are already granting foreign scholarships for the study of technical subjects abroad and this Committee feel that some additional provision for scholarships in this line might also be provided for either by independent action or by conjoint action on the part of the various Governments. Having regard to the fact that at present the field for employment of those trained abroad is not very large, we recommend that only a limited number of scholarships, whether organised by the Central Bureau or by the Governments, should be created.

Government studio.

165. It has also been suggested to us by some witnesses that a well-equipped Government studio or studios would be of great advantage to the industry; for it would afford opportunities for small producers to avail themselves of the facilities in such studios for producing their own films. While we are strongly impressed with the advantages of such a proposal, especially for the purpose of public

utility films, we are also impressed in a way with the point of view advanced by certain other witnesses that in producing films required for Government Departments as much use as is possible should be made of the studios already in existence in this country, which will be one method of indirectly aiding the studios to stand on their own legs. We have accordingly left to the Bureau and the Advisory Committee which we have proposed in connection with the Bureau the question of deciding the necessity or desirability of starting a Government studio or studios after examination of the existing facilities in the country. It is a matter to be determined by the Bureau after ascertaining the nature and volume of the work required.

While on the one hand the objection that the private producer is generally tempted to quote high rates for Government orders remains, there is on the other hand the fact that Government-managed concerns have a tendency to inelasticity and to the red-tape involved in Government rules and orders and to the creation of a multiplicity of appointments. The existence and actual working of well-equipped film-producing studios is of great importance to the industry generally and we have no doubt that a suitable decision will be reached by the Bureau and Advisory Committee within a very short time after they have examined the situation for themselves.

Recommendation of a developing and printing laboratory.

166. But we are strongly impressed with the fact that there is a crying need for the establishment of a Developing and Printing Laboratory by Government as a pioneering effort, to be handed over after a certain time to private concerns. Some of the technical defects which are often observable in Indian films are due to imperfections in the printing and developing of films. And a modern institution with modern equipment established in this country for such work will tend in a large measure to improve the quality of films produced in India. We therefore recommend that one of the first subjects to be taken up by the Central Bureau for consideration and action should be the addition of this adjunct. They can also usefully employ the experts who will be attached to the Bureau, as recommended elsewhere, in practical demonstrations.

Classes for training.

167. We do not consider that there is any necessity for opening classes either in schools or colleges for training students in the various branches of the industry, as has been suggested to us by some of the witnesses; for, we are not satisfied that a sufficient number of students will be forthcoming if such classes are opened. Nor will there be, for a long time to come, sufficient openings for the employment of any large number of students so trained. When the industry has established itself and has spread, we have no doubt that such classes will spring up of themselves.

Facilities and concessions.

168. It has further been pressed upon us by many witnesses that recognised producers should be granted facilities of access to public buildings of historical or scenic interest, and allowed the use of troops, horses and other facilities, and also that they should be given the advantage of reduced railway fares such as are granted to theatrical troupes and others. We consider that these proposals are just and reasonable provided any actual expenditure incurred in that behalf is met by the producer and that there is no inconvenience caused to public business. Of course there is no question of actual expenditure in the case of concessions in railway fares. The representative of Army Headquarters who appeared before us stated that there would be no objection to the loan of troops in suitable cases for cinema purposes provided that there was no interference with training and that expenses, if any, were paid. It is true no doubt that some of the producing concerns obtain access to such places in the Indian States and are able to borrow there troops, horses, cannon and other paraphernalia. Some of them have also been able to get free access to operate in public streets and public places in British India. It depends more or less upon the personal push and influence of the individual producer. It is not every one who is able to approach Collectors of districts or authorities in charge of public buildings with letters of introduction from high places. We think that the grant of facilities or concessions to industries should rest on a uniform procedure and we recommend that such concessions and privileges should be given only to concerns registered and recognised by the Central Bureau.

Recommendations regarding registration and returns.

169. We are strongly convinced that all producers, exhibitors, renters, importers, and distributors, except private individuals employing non-standard films for their own private use, should be brought on to one register under the control of the Central Bureau, and only registered persons or companies should be allowed to perform any of the functions connected with the cinematograph industry in this country. This is very necessary for many reasons. Every other country in which this industry flourishes possesses up-to-date materials from which statistics can be supplied and which render possible a survey of the conditions of the industry in the country, not only for Governmental purposes but also for the benefit of the trade itself. In the course of our enquiry, as has already been pointed out, we had to make repeated attempts in various quarters to get accurate figures as to the number of cinemas, of producers, of films produced, and such other matters. In fact in his speech in the Council of State on the 15th of September 1927 the Hon'ble Mr. Haig mentioned that the Government were very ignorant of the details of the working of the organisations of this important industry and they hoped that this Committee would give them some needed information. We were surprised to find the Government of India in their Industries Department

had no information whatever regarding this industry, while the Commerce Department was able to supply figures only in regard to imports; nor was it any better with the Provincial Governments. And the trade themselves are hopelessly ignorant of the conditions of the industry. Even some of the most intelligent producers gave us figures of production which were merely conjectural and which do not correspond with the figures which we have been able to collect after laborious compilation from the reports of the Censorship Boards. For that reason alone registration of the various branches of the industry and trade, and the provision for compulsory returns to be made periodically to the Central Bureau which we have recommended, become a matter of great importance.

The danger of non-Indian control of the trade and industry.

170. Apart from that we have also to guard against non-Indians acquiring vested interests in the trade in this country to the detriment of the national interests. It was only recently that we were threatened by the conclusion of an agreement between the owners of the largest circuit in this country and certain foreign films by which producing interests in another country would acquire control of a large circuit of cinema houses spread all over the country. That this would not be a desirable eventuality will be readily admitted by all who are interested in the advancement of the film industry in this country; and therefore, while we are not satisfied that the danger is at present imminent or probable, at the same time we are of the opinion that should such an occasion arise or be likely to arise when non-Indians threaten to acquire interests in any branch of this industry or trade to any large extent, otherwise than under the conditions and terms which are laid down for the purpose of sharing in the quota system and for getting the benefits of concessions from Government and other public bodies, the Government should arm themselves with legislative powers to exclude such concerns from operating in this country. For it is easily conceivable that powerful interests concerned in production in other countries might try to capture the market by acquiring control over the cinema trade here. Or again, powerful interests concerned in the cinema trade in other countries might establish producing agencies in this country, or build cinema circuits to advance their own interests and to the detriment of the indigenous producers and exhibitors already in the field. The minority agree generally with this recommendation, but as they are opposed to the quota scheme, in their separate minute propose a different restrictive principle.

Registration compulsory for production, exhibition, etc.

171. Only registered persons and companies should be allowed to produce or exhibit or rent or distribute or import, and only persons who qualify themselves by complying with the conditions imposed for sharing in the quota system should be granted concessions and privileges for producing or owning or controlling large circuits of cinema houses. It is not unlikely that

if the quota system is imposed foreign interests will come into the country and try to produce Indian films. The predominance of the Indian element in such concerns should always be assured. Otherwise there will be no meaning in the quota system.

Provision for foreign assistance.

172. With that view we have adopted, *mutatis mutandis*, the definition in the British Cinematograph Act of a British film and a British company with modifications suited to the conditions in this country. And we think we have made liberal provision in that modification for the advent of foreign assistance in production and in the development of the cinema. Producers who merely take the photos here and send the negatives for developing and printing and exhibition abroad should be allowed to do so only when they have lodged with the Central Bureau a signed declaration as to the nature of the subjects dealt with in the film in such form as may be prescribed.

Misrepresentation of Indians in films exhibited abroad.

173. Secondly, positives when they are exported abroad should be subjected to censorship before they are allowed to leave the country, for we have heard complaints, that Indians are depicted in an objectionable light in some of the films exhibited abroad. We have also had strong representations made to us that in films produced outside India Indians are depicted in the character of villains and crooks. Should such cases occur, we consider that the Government of India should bring their diplomatic influence to bear upon the other countries either through their own agents abroad or with the assistance of the British ambassadors, consuls, trade commissioners, trade agents and others in those countries. We have come across several instances in India during our investigation where, out of deference to objections taken by consuls of different countries, censors have either banned films or excised portions on the ground that they are likely to cause offence to citizens of friendly countries. And we are glad to note that those consuls have been keenly alive to the interests of their mother countries in this direction in our country. Similarly this country has a right to expect its representatives and the representatives of the Home Government abroad to take similar steps in those other countries, and we strongly urge upon the Government of India to use their influence in that direction.

*Certain difficulties and defects of Production.*

Actors and actresses.

174. We shall now proceed to consider certain difficulties and defects of film-production in India, which have been indicated in Chapter II. The motion picture in its very essence as a visual art depends for its success upon representation of men and women in various aspects on the screen. Actors and actresses of excellence are the first and primary requisites for the success of the film. Acting on the stage and acting for the film are fundamentally different. Hitherto there have been no regular facilities either in schools, colleges, or private institutions for learning or

acquiring the art. Nor had the people who have taken to film acting in this country the opportunity of seeing famous film stars actually at work. The high standards of excellence which we see in Western films cannot therefore be reasonably expected of them, and it is creditable that some of the actors and actresses have done well so far.

It is a deplorable fact that many of the actresses now in the field come from a class of people who unfortunately have not the best reputation. It is at present an inevitable but regrettable fact. With time, spread of education, and improvement of conditions of life we hope that this difficulty will disappear. Considerable restraint or rather much less freedom between the sexes than is prevalent in the West would have to be aimed at here for film-acting if ladies of position and standing are to come forward. With the establishment of the Bureau and the Advisory Committee that we have proposed, and with the co-operation of the trade, we are convinced that standards of conduct suited to India will soon be devised and followed. But such as they are, we are satisfied that for this unfortunate class of people film-acting affords an escape from the miserable life they have to lead. In that sense we welcome the opportunity afforded to them, and, so long as they behave well enough when they are in the studios, we consider the criticisms directed against them do not deserve much attention. They have contributed to the growth of the film industry in this country, and it is not proper to say that all of them come from a disreputable class. The situation, however, is very promising and we are hopeful that things will right themselves in the desired direction, and we do not think that any specific measures are needed for that purpose. We have heard of instances where cultured ladies are willing to come forward provided a suitable atmosphere is created, and we expect that that suitable atmosphere will be created when the trade have learnt to combine and organise the industry with the help of the Central Bureau.

Scenarios and titles—Recommendation of examination of scenarios and competitions.

175. Other defects which have been mentioned to us and which also struck us are: that the composition of the scenarios is not good and that the titles and sub-titles are defective and cumbrous. These are again matters in which conditions will improve when a guiding agency such as we have recommended is established.

As regards scenarios, we would recommend that the Central Bureau might offer to examine, with the assistance of the experts on its staff, the scenarios, on the application of either the producer or the scenario-writer, and make suggestions and improvements. This might be done for a nominal fee. Moreover we also recommend that they should hold a competition for scenario-writing and buy the first 5 or 6 best scenarios and offer them to the trade for the purpose of production. It is the absence of technical knowledge that is responsible for the existence of these defects, and the technical experts attached to the Bureau will be

in a position to advise the trade and industry in this direction. There should be no compulsion on the trade to submit scenarios to the Central Bureau, but such submission should be encouraged.

Imitation of the West.

176. One other fault which has been noticed both in India and Burma is the tendency to imitate the West in introducing fighting scenes and other characteristics which appear in the Western serials. There is also a tendency either to translate Western stories or introduce matter from Western stories and imitate Western methods. The activities of the Bureau will tend to remove these defects also.

Co-operation of the educated classes.

177. All the defects that we have mentioned here and elsewhere show that there is a sad want of co-operation from the educated classes in the production of films, and with the establishment of the Central Bureau we are looking forward to the employment of more and more educated men and women in the production of films and in the several departments of the trade.

Muslim tastes.

178. Unfortunately the Muslim community have not hitherto interested themselves in the production of films. There are many subjects in their history and literature which can be utilised for producing stories for the film. Some Muslims have entered into the industry more as financiers than as scenario-writers or actors. It is to be hoped that when the trade and industry are better organised films suited to Muslim tastes will also come into existence in larger numbers. As it is, such films are few, and consequently the Muslim attendance at the cinemas when Indian films are shown is rather poor. This is a matter which we commend to the Bureau for their early attention.

The language difficulty and provincial differences.

179. The two great difficulties in the way of Indian films attaining universal popularity in India itself, i.e. the language difficulty and provincial differences in taste, dress and manners, have already been mentioned. We are not able to suggest any definite recommendations to overcome these difficulties which are real. But with experience gained and with more intercourse by way of conferences between the various producers from the different provinces under the auspices of the Bureau these difficulties also can be overcome or at least minimised.

Demonstrators.

180. In connection with the language difficulty it may be mentioned that in some theatres we found it was the practice to interpret the captions in an attractive way by demonstrators especially employed for the purpose. It will be for the trade to determine whether the training of intelligent people in that way will not be the proper remedy for overcoming language difficulties. In every theatre

to which we went we found the so-called illiterate classes, sitting in the body of the hall, taking a great interest in reading the captions aloud, probably for the benefit of their companions close by. These are matters which we cannot adequately deal with. They must be left to experience and the trade. But we have referred to them here as they have been mentioned to us by several witnesses.

Communal susceptibilities.

181. One difficulty in the way of the production of historical films has been mentioned, that susceptibilities of communities, especially Muslims and Hindus, can easily be wounded. While we are alive to the necessity for respecting the feelings of communities whether in social or religious matters, we are convinced that, if the film industry in this country is to succeed, the extreme tenderness which is now shown to them both by censoring authorities and the executive should disappear. Some of the objections which we have heard taken against some of the films in certain quarters should not have been tolerated, and we have referred to a few of them in the chapter on censorship. The Indian producer has to contend against odds, and he cannot be expected to rise even to moderate prosperity in the industry if frivolous or hypercritical objections are to be respected.

Publicity.

182. The Indian producer and the exhibitor lack the knack of advertising and pushing their goods. They have not begun to understand the elements of good publicity, good advertising and corporate action. Artistic advertisements and posters are sadly wanting in the case of the Indian films. We are hopeful that the Bureau we are advocating will be able to help the trade in that direction.

Historical books of reference.

183. In fact there are many minor matters which will have to be attended to with the assistance of experts. There is the lack of authoritative literature dealing with historical subjects, the modes and manners of different ages, styles of dress and other things. We have referred in another place to the valuable suggestions made to this Committee by Sir John Marshall in that direction.

*Distribution and Exhibition.*

The independent exhibitor.

184. As regards the distribution and exhibition side of the industry specifically, we have heard few definite suggestions or proposals for alleviating or removing such difficulties as exist. The independent exhibitor in every country has to suffer from the inherent disadvantage of being an independent exhibitor. In a trade like this the best interests of individuals require that they should combine and form groups. Then only will they be able to command the better class films. The complaint that they are obliged to buy the better class films at a higher rate is one which is inevitable. The tendency in other countries where the industry is firmly established is for the producer to command his own circuit

for the outlet of the films which he produces. With the growth of the industry we are hopeful that similar conditions will arise here, and the grant of loans and facilities that the majority have recommended will, we hope, induce the formation of such groups.

Piracy of films.

185. Some of the exhibitors have complained to us that the exclusive rights which they acquire under contracts with the producers or owners of films elsewhere—and some of them are valuable rights in super films—are infringed by the free introduction of pirated copies of such films by other exhibitors. This is an injury to the exhibitor which we think he should be protected against. We have to some extent examined the existing legal remedies open to the exhibitor.* We are not satisfied that they are adequate. Prevention is better than cure, and legal remedies always take a long time. We therefore recommend that, to have protection for their rights, the exhibitors should be permitted to register their exclusive rights with the Central Bureau, who, on production of the necessary documents of title, will, if they are satisfied, grant certificates, which will *prima facie* hold good. When such certificates have been issued in favour of one, the censoring authorities should refuse to certify other copies of the same film on the application of any other person. Of course it is open to the aggrieved party to get the registration cancelled by recourse to the Civil Court. Till then the censoring authorities will give protection to the aggrieved party. The applicant for such certificate should be called upon to pay a registration fee of Rs. 50 and should of course indemnify the censoring authority and the Bureau against any claim by other parties. The Customs authorities have now power to withhold for a time the clearing of goods and that power also may be exercised in these cases as in other cases subject to the usual conditions. There have been undoubtedly instances where valuable rights have been thus invaded. The exhibitor is not always very prosperous, and it is only in the case of valuable films that rights are likely to be invaded, and it will be difficult to compensate the owner of such rights by damages that he may recover ultimately in a Court of law, if he can do that at all. It should be possible to clothe the Central Bureau by legislation with the requisite authority to grant certificates of this character subject to an appeal to any prescribed Civil Court, and we recommend that this course should be adopted.

Free passes.

186. We have heard some complaints that the exhibitor is often obliged to grant free passes to subordinates of departments with which he has to deal in order to ensure peace in his avocation. While the remedy for this state of things lies in his own hands we consider that the provisions we are making for the submission of returns from every exhibitor of the daily attendance and the issue of tickets will be a check upon any abuse in this matter, and we do not think that any further measures are needed to remedy this evil.

* See Chairman's note on Copyright and Piracy printed as Appendix H.

187. It has also been pressed upon us that the entertainments tax levied in certain areas acts as a deterrent and burden upon the trade. We are satisfied that this is in some cases and places a real grievance. These taxes are imposed by Provincial Governments and Provincial Legislatures and we are loath to criticise them. But we are satisfied that it does act as a great hardship on the class of people who have very little leisure at their disposal and who resort to the cinema for spending the little leisure they have. Again, the cinema in their cases is a necessary relaxation after the hard life they are obliged to lead, and in many cases, perhaps, the cinema habit keeps them from mischief. So it is better to encourage the cinema habit in their case provided sufficient care is taken that the films shown are not open to very serious objections, for which the censorship is the effective machinery. We therefore recommend that in any event seats costing less than Re. 1 should be exempt from such taxes. We have to point out that we find no justification whatever for the distinction made in one of the provinces, namely, in Bengal, between the stage and the cinema.

Entertainments tax.

188. The question of increasing the number of travelling or itinerant cinemas and giving them facilities is one of great importance in view of the fact that the number of permanent cinemas is not large and that they are not so paying to the exhibitor in the mofussil as in the large towns. We consider the travelling cinemas ought to be more and more encouraged. It was very difficult in several places to obtain an accurate list of the people who were travelling about with cinema shows. We were able to get at some of them in Calcutta. From their evidence it appears that these travelling cinemas are subjected to a great deal of inconvenience and expense by having to take out more than one license for the purpose of their business during their progress from district to district, from municipality to municipality, and sometimes from province to province. This involves heavy expenditure for these poor exhibitors and subjects them to much inconvenience. We, therefore, recommend that the Cinema Act should be so amended as to provide that the exhibition license required by the Act shall, in the case of travelling cinemas, have currency at least throughout the province in which it is taken. The license should contain conditions to safeguard public safety, and when the itinerant cinema proprietor goes on tour he must be required to give timely notice to the local licensing authority of his proposal to hold an exhibition in a specified place in that area, so that the authorities may satisfy themselves that the conditions as to public safety are complied with before the exhibition opens. From what we have gathered during our enquiry in all the provinces these travelling cinemas are not a very paying proposition. Moreover, we are convinced that cheap secondhand old films find their way into the country through these travelling cinemas. As in another place we have dealt with the use of the cinema for mass education and the great improvements required

Travelling cinemas—Recommendation regarding licenses.

we will merely refer here to what we consider should be done to improve the quality of the films shown by the travelling cinemas. These people should be supplied free of cost, subject to their return in good condition, with practical educational films and they should be required to show such films for a certain length of time. Further they should be afforded facilities for exhibiting them in the public halls or school halls in the locality. If the travelling cinemas can help forward such propaganda, as well as provide healthy amusement in the shape of comics and other films of "entertainment value," they will become more and more popular and will perform a very useful function in the country. We are strongly of opinion that they should not be subjected to payment of other license fees in municipal areas. Rules as to the exemption of educational establishments from local rates should also apply to these institutions. They should also receive concessions in railway fares as in the case of theatrical troupes for carrying their equipment about. We would recommend that particulars of licenses issued to these travelling cinemas should be communicated to the Central Bureau for registration, and that the licensees should also be themselves registered in the same way as other exhibitors.

*The Foreign Market.*

Countries with an Indian population.

189. We have hitherto dealt with the question of the development of the Indian film industry with a view to its expansion in the home market. But if India is to reach the position of other well-established countries in the matter of the film industry with a foreign outlet different considerations arise. It is universally admitted that the Indian films—even the best of them, as they are at present, with all the improvements which have taken place—are not likely to have an appeal outside the country, to Western audiences. In places like Ceylon, East Africa, the Federated Malay States, and possibly South Africa also, where Indians are settled in large numbers, there will be a limited market even for these films. And we have been told that attempts are being made to extend the market in that direction and that some negotiations are taking place. A few have actually been shown as far afield as Africa.

Films of universal appeal.

190. But as regards the production of films of universal appeal there are considerable difficulties in the way. It has been stated to us in evidence, and we believe there is some truth in it, that what appeals to the Indian or Burman is not likely to appeal to the Westerner. Careful choice of subjects which would be of universal appeal has to be made and they have to be handled in such a way as to appeal to Western tastes. And it is that selection and treatment which perhaps may not appeal universally to the people of the country.

We have heard of a few attempts to exhibit films in the West and they have been failures. The film "Savitri," an Indian subject, entirely produced in the West by Western artists, was

a success in India on account of the nature of the subject. But we are not aware whether it commanded any success in any of the Western countries.

The "Light of Asia."

191. The "Light of Asia" alone has been tried in parts of the West with some success, especially in some parts of the continent of Europe. We have had conflicting accounts about its popularity and box-office value from different persons who have been in one way or other connected with that film. It was a film produced by an Indian company formed in Delhi, with Indian finance. The actors and actresses were mostly Indians and it was based on the life of Buddha, a subject which is well-known, at least among the cultured classes, in the West. German artists and British business people were also concerned in the transaction. While the shooting of most of the scenes took place here, the development and printing were done out of the country. It does not appear to have been a success in England financially. None of the key or important theatres took it up and there have been varied explanations for that fact. Although it is more than two years since the film was produced the Indian capitalists who financed the concern are still to the bad to the extent of Rs. 50,000. That there have been some internal quarrels and differences among the promoters is clear enough from the evidence. It should have been a first-class test case to find out whether Indian films, properly handled and capably produced, would have the chance of a market abroad. But unfortunately the circumstances attending its failure in that direction are such that we cannot draw any safe conclusions from its history.

There is no insuperable reason why well-produced and well-handled Indian films should not appeal to the West. But for the time being, till the home market has been well developed, and the indigenous industry has been placed on a sound footing, there is little chance of the indigenous film finding a market abroad.

Combination of Western and Indian enterprise.

192. We are unanimously of the opinion that primary attention should be paid to the developing of the home market. But at the same time we think earnest attempts should be made for combined effort in the direction of producing some very good films which may also appeal to the West. Here co-operation between Western artists and Eastern artists and Western and Eastern business men is absolutely necessary. The majority hold that a film produced in India, dealing with an Indian subject in an Indian setting, entirely by foreign corporations of individuals, using perhaps Indian crowds and a few actors or actresses here and there, cannot be looked upon with favour nor encouraged. The Indian interest should predominate in such a concern. Then only the Indian will have the opportunity of learning the best side of the various aspects of the industry.

193. Occasional employment of actors and actresses and use of the crowds in the country which can be easily gathered together is not of any substantial benefit to the country or the industry. The powerful American or German organisations could step in and produce such films with ease. But if India is to gain a reputation abroad for the film industry, unless her children are predominantly responsible for the production of the films, it will not be the Indian who will get the credit and the reputation but the non-Indian combines. Our eventual aim should be that the producer in India, in addition to making a large number of money-making films for Indian consumption, which is absolutely essential for the prosperity of the industry, should also make a few pictures which shall stamp our producing centres as capable of fine individualistic work. Then only the public taste in the country will be improved, the technique of the industry as a whole will be advanced, and permanent good will be done.

The wrong kind of combination.

194. It is however necessary that some restrictions should be placed and conditions imposed before Indian materials and Indian settings are allowed to be filmed by non-Indians. The industry will welcome the co-operation of the talent and experience of the West. But it can only be on certain terms. It is a very difficult question as to how best to attain this object. We cannot absolutely prevent non-Indians coming of their own accord and taking films in this country. We can only subject them to certain conditions, as we have already stated, as to registration, declaration and censorship. We can impose additional restrictions and conditions only in the case of those people who wish to avail themselves of the facilities, privileges and concessions which can be granted either by Government or Governmental authorities. In such cases the provisions we have made already in the definition of an "Indian film" and of an "Indian company" for purposes of quota should apply. Then the Indian representation in the production of the industry will have been assured. We have tried to limit the restriction as much as possible, as we are satisfied that there is a necessity for foreign assistance in developing the industry, and within those restrictions we consider that the formation of partnerships or companies to produce Indian films, both for home consumption and for exhibition abroad, should be easy.

Restrictions on non-Indian enterprises.

195. One recent instance of a combined effort for producing a film to be styled "Shiraz" has come to our notice from the evidence of Mr. Himansu Rai, the gentleman connected also with the production of the "Light of Asia." It must be mentioned here that the Great Eastern Film Corporation at Delhi has not followed up the "Light of Asia" with any other production and as a producing company it exists only in name. From the description given by Mr. Himansu Rai of the terms and conditions

"Shiraz."

under which this partnership is working for producing "Shiraz" the majority of us are not satisfied that that is the sort of combination which should be looked for or desired. In this concern the finance is entirely non-Indian and, except for shooting scenes in India with the help of casually engaged actors and actresses, the entire work of production is done out of the country. The original scenario, written years ago by an Indian, has been bought outright. The whole business management is non-Indian. All the experts except one are non-Indian and scarcely any Indian has any interest in the profits. It is purely an accident that any Britishers are concerned in this enterprise. According to Mr. Himansu Rai's evidence, had the original negotiations with Germans fructified the predominant interest would have been German. If this sort of enterprise were considered deserving of encouragement what is there to prevent America from embarking upon such enterprises here ? It is true that Mr. Himansu Rai says he tried to get Indians to take a financial interest in this venture of his and failed.

By all means let non-Indians come into the country and produce films, whether for consumption here or abroad, subject to the ordinary rules of registration, declaration and censorship, and provided the requirements of the quota system are satisfied there is no objection also to their establishing theatres or circuits in the country. But, without such a safeguard, it will not be in the best interests of the Indians engaged in the industry or of the Indian public to encourage, by giving aid or facilities of any kind, non-Indians to use the materials, the talent, the scenery, the literature and the history of the country and to erect cinema houses.

*General conclusions.*

196. In conclusion we have to point out that the cinema contributes its share of income to the general revenues of the country and having regard to its great importance in every respect we strongly recommend to Government that the industry and trade should receive liberal and sympathetic treatment at their hands.

The industry should receive liberal and sympathetic treatment from Government.

197. Speaking on the influence of American films on the British people Viscount Peel could legitimately and successfully appeal in the House of Lords to the British public in these terms: "We have our own typical civilisation and have our own standards and it surely is unfortunate that this vast range of influence should shower on our people through foreign rather than through domestic sources." How much more has India to complain about this foreign domination and grip on her children when her civilisation and standards are far more typical and are fundamentally different from all that is Western? And all American and European films of whatever nationality are to

Preservation of national ideas.

her merely Western. We find evidence throughout, more especially in cities, of the effect on the sentiment, habits and thoughts of the people of the constant exhibition of Western films.

Change of customs and tastes.

198. Customs, as well as the demand for goods, are being largely influenced by changes in ideas and fashions other than those associated with Indian habits; and later such preferences are without much comment accepted as desirable, and these films have undoubtedly played a part in moulding the public taste in many directions in the larger cities.

The influence on the rising generation.

199. Different observers may attach different degrees of importance to these factors but undoubtedly, in the minds of a great many thoughtful Indians, the influence on the minds and sympathy of the rising generation is by far the most important.

## THE SCHEME FOR QUOTA.

### EXHIBITORS' QUOTA.

*Explanation.*

This is only a rough outline for a quota scheme. At the hands of those who favour a quota it is open to considerable improvement and it is also open to destructive criticism by those who are opposed to any quota. The majority recommend that as soon as the principle is accepted, a small committee of three, including a representative of the trade, should be asked to sit and devise a tolerably workable scheme. We have the British Act and Rules thereunder for guidance. The majority consider it unnecessary to go into greater details now at this stage.

*Scheme.*

1. The rules as to quota will apply only to all exhibitors who have not in the year immediately preceding the year under consideration shown at least 50 per cent of Indian registered films, that is to say, a person to be exempt should have shown Indian films to the extent of 50 per cent of the total footage of registered films to the extent of 50 per cent of the total footage of registered any city, town or village, for that year.

*Explanation.*—If the same person owns or has taken on lease more than one theatre in the same city, town or village, the 50 per cent required may be arrived at by taking the total footage shown in all the theatres put together.

2. Every exhibitor to whom these rules apply shall from the beginning of the year 1930 exhibit 5 per cent more Indian registered films; i.e., in the succeeding year, he must show more Indian films in addition to the quantity of Indian films he may have shown the previous year to the extent of 5 per cent of the total footage of all registered films exhibited by him in the previous year in the theatre or theatres belonging to him or leased by him in any city, town or village.

The explanation to Rule 1 will apply to this also.

This rule will automatically cease to apply as soon as he has reached the level of 50 per cent under rule 1 and will apply again in case he fails to keep up to the level of 50 per cent year after year.

3. For the purposes of calculating the respective footages the rules in the British Act will apply.

4. Any exhibitor failing to comply with the requirement of rule 2 shall be liable on conviction to punishment as in the British Act.

5. *Definition of*—

(*a*) An Indian registered film (vide below).

(*b*) Registered partnership or company (vide below).

The definition of a film shall be the same as in the British Act.

6. Similar provisions to those in the British Act shall be adopted for—

itinerant cinemas;
change of ownership;
programmes, returns and registers;
grant of exemption and lawful excuse.

7. The Central Advisory Committee shall perform the functions allotted to the Board of Trade and shall appoint a sub-committee of three to perform the functions referred to herein.

8. Indian films released for public exhibition from and after the 1st January 1927 shall be entitled to qualify for quota.

9. Two or more independent exhibitors in any city, town or village can combine for the purpose of satisfying the requirements of these rules, provided that all of them are pecuniarily interested to the extent of at least 25 per cent in each theatre when their interests are not equal.

10. Every itinerant cinema shall from 1st January 1930 show in any place through which it travels at least 20 per cent of Indian registered films.

11. Provincial executive authorities dealing with censorship shall also deal with these rules as to quota and be the local agents for the Central Advisory Committee.

12. A film should be deemed to be an Indian film if, but not unless, it complies with all the following requirements:—

(*a*) (i) It must have been made by a person who was at the time the film was made a British Indian subject or by two or more persons each of whom was a British Indian subject or by an Indian company.

(ii) A non-Indian permanently domiciled in India shall be deemed to be an Indian within the meaning of this clause.

(*b*) The studio scenes must have been photographed in a studio in the Indian Empire.

(*c*) The author of the scenario, if he is not an expert attached to the Central Bureau, must have been a British Indian

subject at the time the film was made, or, if he is not a British Indian subject, must have resided continuously for a period of not less than seven years in India at the time the film was made.

(*d*) Not less than 75 per cent of the salaries, wages and payments specifically paid for the labour and services in the making of the film (exclusive of payments in respect of copyright and of the salary or payments to one non-Indian actor or actress or producer or technician, but inclusive of the payments to the author of the scenario) must have been paid to British Indian subjects or persons permanently domiciled in India, but it shall be lawful for the Central Bureau and Advisory Committee to relax this requirement in any case where they are satisfied that the maker has taken all reasonable steps to secure compliance with the requirement and that his failure to comply therewith was occasioned by exceptional circumstances beyond his control, but so that such power of relaxation shall not permit of the percentage aforesaid being less than 70 per cent.

Every film which is not an Indian film shall be deemed to be a foreign or non-Indian film.

13. The expression "Indian company" means a company constituted under the Indian Companies Act of 1913 with rupee capital and not less than two-thirds of the directors of which are Indian or British Indian subjects.

14. It shall be lawful for the Governor-General in Council to extend the privileges and protection afforded to Indian films herein to those produced by subjects of Indian States on his being satisfied that by compliance with prescribed rules the States in question have qualified themselves for the purpose.

15. (*a*) The expression "maker" in relation to any film means the person by whom the arrangements necessary for the production of the film are undertaken.

(*b*) The expression "producer" in relation to any film means the person responsible for the organisation and direction of the scenes to be depicted on the film.

16. These rules shall remain in force for ten years commencing from 1st January 1930.

17. As soon as the Central Bureau begins to function, it shall take steps to collect the necessary information for administering them from 1st January 1930. The Bureau shall be entitled to call for the necessary returns from all exhibitors and shall require Indian producers to register their films for purposes of quota. A small fee may be charged for the purpose of registering the films.

18. All films in circulation, both imported and Indian, during the year 1929 shall be reported in a prescribed form to the Central Bureau by the exhibitors for each theatre and the Bureau shall keep a register of such films for their guidance in administering the rules in the first instance.

## CHAPTER V.

### Educational and Public Utility Films.

The importance of the subject

200. Neither the survey of the organisation for the exhibition of cinematograph films and the film producing industry in India, nor the consideration of the steps to be taken to encourage the exhibition of films produced within the Empire and the production and exhibition of Indian films in particular, will be complete without an examination of the organisations for the production and exhibition of educational films also. The Imperial Conference of 1926 expressly referred also to production within the Empire of "films of sound educational merit." This aspect of the subject has certainly an indirect, if not also a direct, bearing on our enquiry and is of such great importance that we propose to deal with it in a separate chapter.

General considerations.

201. At the outset we wish to distinguish between the use of the film in education in the narrower or technical sense and its use in the broader sense in educating the adult masses of this country in such important subjects as public health and hygiene, agricultural operations, cottage industries, and similar matters as well as its use in bringing before them conditions of life in other countries—in a word, the use of the film in making the people of this country into better, happier and more enlightened citizens. Throughout this section of our report we wish to bear in mind not only the above considerations but also the beneficial effect which will be produced on the Indian cinema industry by an adequate, well-thought-out, consistent and co-ordinated policy of mass education by means of cinematograph films. Not only will such a policy increase the market for Indian films by the number of educational films required—educational in the broader sense as above defined—but it will bring into existence the film habit where this does not at present exist, and, best of all, it will tend progressively to develop an educated taste for good films and this cannot but react to the advantage of the Indian cinema industry.

Use of films in schools and colleges.

202. Many persons engaged in education in this country have favoured us with evidence on the use of the cinematograph in educational establishments. It is not our intention to say very much about the use of the film in education in this narrow sense of the word. The majority of the educationists who appeared before us were agreed that the film could be usefully employed in educational establishments, chiefly higher educational establishments, in teaching students certain specific subjects, principally of the technical kind, but none of them would be willing to spend

money on films if it meant taking that money from their existing budgets. They would welcome expenditure on films for educational establishments provided such expenditure implied no diminution in the sums already at their disposal. We agree with these views. We think that the film can certainly be employed as a useful adjunct to existing educational methods and that, while it can be used with advantage in teaching certain specific and mainly technical and scientific subjects in the universities and possibly in the schools, the scope for its employment decreases rapidly as we go down the educational ladder towards primary education. We are not prepared, therefore, to recommend expenditure on films and projectors in educational establishments where such expenditure would have to be provided out of the normal budgets. Until the number of educational establishments of all kinds and degrees, the provision of properly trained teachers, the supply of equipment, and so on, are far more adequate for the needs of a modern progressive nation than is at present the case, we cannot but regard these as the main objects of expenditure on education. At the same time we draw the attention of Provincial Governments, local self-governing bodies, and public-spirited citizens to the desirability of providing for school and college students facilities for seeing suitable films of an educational value as frequently as possible.

The cinema in mass adult education.

203. Turning now to the use of the cinema in mass adult education we would like to draw special attention to what is being done in other countries. A perusal of the catalogues of educational films produced in all the leading European countries and in America will show what a rich variety of subjects has already been treated and will impress the reader with a profound sense of the educative potentialities of these films. It is clear, moreover, that a large number of these films possess a distinct entertainment as well as educative value and that, provided they are not shown too frequently or at too great length, their exhibition can be made interesting and welcome to average audiences of adults whose primary object in going to the cinema is amusement and entertainment and not education. Educational films of the kind we have referred to are at present practically unobtainable in this country. The Committee had the advantage of a private view of some of the educational films which Patel & Sons of Lahore have stocked. The Chairman and the Secretary had the pleasure of being present when the children in Bennett's Girls' High School in Vepery, Madras, had the benefit of a cinema show of short educational films exhibited by Gauranga Brothers. Both of these agencies as well as Mr. Karamchand Bulchand of Hyderabad, Sind, complained that they were getting very little encouragement in their business in this line.

We have also read descriptions of such films produced in other countries and have been struck with the attractive way in which

simple lessons are conveyed. To mention only a few: "False Shame," "The Wonder of Creation," "The Manufacture of a Motor-car," "An Operation on a Stomach," "The Son-in-law and the Fat Potatoes" and the like. About every subject that can be of use in daily practical life short attractive stories embodying the human element are written and filmed. One catalogue contains a list of 1,001 such films.

The Committee have been struck with the vast potentialities of the use of the cinema for general mass education.

Necessity for action by Government and the public.

204. The exhibition of such films is not a commercial proposition and therefore they are not imported into, far less are they produced in, this country. Clearly, since the trade cannot be expected to purchase and exhibit educational films from motives of philanthropy, some Government and public action is required in this direction. This is a matter in which Government and public authorities and bodies, from the Government of India down to the humblest municipality or district board, might act with advantage. In every province in India sums of money which in the aggregate amount to a comparatively large expenditure are being spent on adult education and propaganda and other measures for improving public health, sanitation, agricultural methods, cottage industries, and so on, but we were surprised to find how very little use had been made of the film which indeed is far and away the most efficient instrument for such propaganda in this country. Some money is indeed being spent on the production of films by certain Government departments, but it is not spent to the best advantage. One striking example may be given to illustrate these remarks. During our sittings in Calcutta, one of the witnesses who appeared before us was Dr. Bentley, Director of Public Health, Bengal. At that time a cholera epidemic was raging in Calcutta and Dr. Bentley was obviously speaking with deep feeling when he agreed with a member of the Committee that if he had only had half a dozen copies of a cholera film available, it would have multiplied his protective measures manifold. Similarly, in every other subject in which Government and local bodies are anxious to instruct the public, the film can be used to magnify the scope and efficiency of existing propaganda instruments and we therefore press most earnestly upon the attention of all these bodies the use of this instrument.

The need for concerted action.

205. Further, we would strongly impress upon all concerned the benefits of concerted effort in this matter. Co-operation means not only increased economy and efficiency but also the improvement of the trade itself, and in this connection we refer to the section of our report which deals with the creation of a Central Cinema Bureau. In every province the Provincial Government, ministers, heads of departments and local self-governing bodies

should combine in a common policy for mass education in its broadest sense by means of the cinema. A Committee representative of all these different bodies and interests might be formed in each province in order to lay down a definite concerted scheme of mass education by means of the film and all provinces should combine to support the Central Cinema Bureau.

Benefits of such action.

206. Let us examine some of the benefits which will follow such a course of action. In the first place, it will be found possible ultimately to evolve a universal harmonious propaganda policy for the whole country in certain subjects of the highest value for the moral and material welfare of its inhabitants. Secondly, there will be no dissipation or waste of resources, no duplication of effort and none of the inefficiency or narrowness of outlook which is the inevitable result of small and local operations. The best brains and the most expert technical knowledge available in the country can be employed for the benefit of every part of the country. The propaganda value, the technique, and the appeal of the films will thus be the very best possible. Above all—and this is a point to which we draw special attention—this propaganda work, apart from the quicker and more efficient achievement of its immediate objects, can be made into an instrument of untold value for harmonising ideals, ideas, customs and practices all over the country. It can, in fact, be made into a nation-building force in the true sense of those words. The reasons why all provinces and departments should combine to establish and support a Central Cinema Bureau become therefore clearly apparent.

But let us consider, not the widest aspect of this subject on which we have just trenched, but the advantages which would follow from our proposals in the preparation of any ordinary propaganda film. Suppose a cholera film is being prepared. Part of this film would have no exclusive connection with Indian conditions, still less with any particular part of India. This part of the film would be prepared under the supervision of the best technical experts of all sorts available in this country. Of the rest of the film, much would be studio work which, again, would be done under the best conditions possible in this country and those parts of the film which had to be local and peculiar to Bengal, the Punjab or any other province, could be shot in the required localities, again under the best possible supervision. The result would be that each province desiring a cholera film would get a film of propaganda value, technique, and effectiveness far greater than anything which could have been produced under Provincial auspices and this, too, at a smaller cost than if it had been prepared locally. The Central Publicity Bureau of the Indian State Railways is already producing railway and public utility films. While we welcome and applaud that effort, we are confident that a transfer of the technical side of their work to the Central Bureau will yield results better in every way.

The value of the film for mass education, especially in India, is indisputable.

207. We believe that it is not necessary to argue this side of our report any further. The advantages and benefits of the use of the film in mass education and in the different sorts of propaganda which it is the duty of every modern Government to undertake, cannot be denied and the necessity for its application to India seems to us to be equally indisputable. This is a matter in which public duty, national welfare and the development of a cinema industry in India go hand in hand.

Compulsory exhibition of educational films.

208. We spoke earlier in this chapter of the films of educative value which have been and are constantly being prepared in other countries. If our recommendations are followed, we may expect to find a body of films of this character coming into existence having been produced in India. One of the duties of the Central Cinema Bureau, if it comes into being, will be to build up a library of films of educational value, partly imported from abroad and partly produced in India. These films we desire to be made available to the Indian public and therefore we recommend that it should be obligatory on all exhibitors to show at every exhibition a small percentage of educational films. We recommend that such exhibition should not exceed 15 minutes and may be as little as 10 minutes. As we remarked above, many of these educational films are of distinct entertainment value and we believe that this recommendation of ours will involve no hardship either to the public or to the exhibitor. As regards the latter, we recommend that he be supplied free by the Central Cinema Bureau with films of educational value, but if he asks for any particular film from the catalogue, which will be supplied by the Bureau, he shall be required to pay for it at a rate to be decided upon between himself and the Bureau.

Other modes of exhibition.

209. If Provincial Governments, local self-governing bodies, and Government departments adopt the policy outlined above, they will, of course, themselves decide on the best means of exhibiting the films to the public, and, no doubt, travelling cinemas will be largely employed by them, and we expect that they will not overlook the wider range and increased mobility afforded by the use of well-equipped motor lorries, such as are used for this purpose by certain Government departments in the Punjab. We would, however, draw their attention to the desirability of acquiring or erecting permanent buildings in suitable places for the exhibition of educational films—buildings which could be used also for the exhibition of films of purely entertainment value. This would be an excellent method of increasing the market available for Indian films.

## CHAPTER VI.

### The Resolution of the Imperial Conference concerning the exhibition within the Empire of Empire Films.

The Resolution of the Imperial Conference.

210. We have carefully considered the Resolution passed at the Imperial Conference of 1926 together with the connected papers. We have read the proceedings of that Conference as also the recommendations of the General Economic Sub-Committee on which the said Resolution was based. We may say at once that we are unanimously of the opinion that no recommendations in the directions indicated at the Conference are necessary. In the proceedings of the Conference we note it is recognised that circumstances vary in different parts of the Empire and we wish to emphasise some of those circumstances which apply to India, and particularly those which render the problem extremely difficult.

Circumstances peculiar to India—
(1) Racial differences.

211. Of the difficulties alluded to above, the first and foremost is that, unlike the other parts of the Empire, the bulk of the cinema-going public in this country are Indians; either Hindus, Muslims, Indian Christians, or Burmese. So far as these people are concerned, their mode of life, standards of conduct, dress and manners, their religion, their customs, their history, their traditions, and, in almost every respect, their outlook, are entirely and fundamentally different from the Western nations. American civilisation is as much Western civilisation to them as British civilisation. Both are foreign. If there is a misunderstanding, as has been asserted, of American scenes shown in the films and confusion of them with European civilisation, more especially British civilisation, it is because they regard all of them as one. This is a recognised fact. If too much exhibition of American films in the country is a danger to the national interest, too much exhibition of other Western films is as much a danger. In other parts of the Empire, notably in Australia and Canada, the patrons of the cinema are members of the same race and civilisation as the British with the same historical traditions and with the same social habits and customs, and are likely greatly to appreciate and enjoy the manners and customs portrayed on the film.

The British social drama is as much an enigma to the average Indian audience as the American. In fact very few Indians can distinguish American manners and customs from British manners and customs; very few Indians can distinguish an American, German or Frenchman from an Englishman or Scotchman. If the cinema therefore has any influence on the habits, lives and

outlook of the people all Western films are likely to have more or less the same kind of effect upon the people of this country.

(2) Necessity of encouraging the Indian film industry.

212. Secondly, India has got her own film industry which, as we have shown elsewhere, requires to be protected, guided and encouraged. It is in its infancy and it is vital to the national interest that the indigenous industry should be encouraged in every way. There is in Indian history and Indian literature a vast mass of material which can appeal to Indian audiences and possibly also be entertaining to audiences outside. That material has hardly been touched.

(3) Lack of appeal of Indian films outside India.

213. Thirdly, while films produced, for example, in Canada and Australia would undoubtedly appeal to Western audiences, in Britain for instance, Indian films produced on Indian subjects, unless they are of a very superior kind, are hardly likely to command any audience in the West. This is well known. Although India has been producing a number of Indian films during the last 10 or 12 years not one of them has yet been taken by the trade in any other part of the Empire and for many years to come the Indian or Burmese film is not likely to have a universal appeal to any appreciable extent.

(4) Competitive inferiority.

214. Fourthly, India is yet in a very backward state as regards her industrial activities and equipment, and scientific and technical knowledge. She will hardly be able to hold her own with Britain, for instance, with her centuries of industrial organisation and accomplishment. So also she will not be able to compete on equal terms or even nearly equal terms, with other parts of the Empire where remarkable progress has been made in industrial advancement.

(5) Economic condition.

215. Fifthly, the economic condition of the country is not yet comparable with that of the other parts of the Empire. With teeming millions in the country, the earning and spending capacity of the Indian hardly compares favourably with that of the citizen of other parts of the Empire. With a 6 million population, Australia, as already stated, has 4 times the number of theatres which India has, and the citizen there goes to the cinema many times more frequently than the Indian is able to do, as we have shown in another place. So also in Canada.

India can afford but a poor market or outlet for Empire films. While, much as we might desire that the films produced in the country may have an outlet in the 4,000 theatres in England and possibly as many more in other parts of the Empire, the difficulties already stated cannot easily be overcome. India stands to gain indeed if really her films can find an outlet to an equal extent to which Empire films can find an inlet here. But as matters

are at present and are likely to be for several years, the chances are too remote to be taken into account in deciding practical issues.

(6) Imperial preference a large and complicated question.

216. In the next and the last place, the question of Imperial Preference is so bound up with so many other political issues of a very vital and substantial character that on a small issue relating to the cinema industry, even if it were an aid to the Indian industry, a view which we do not hold, the question cannot be examined satisfactorily. The question is in fact bound up with issues political, racial, economic and the like. For instance, no discussion on the general question of preference can avoid consideration of the status of Indians abroad and in India itself. While some of us may believe in Imperial Preference we are all agreed that it is a matter which has to be considered in all its aspects as one question covering all the issues which arise, and can be decided only by the Central Legislature. It is the introduction of this question in the terms of reference to this Committee which has, in a great measure, induced the suspicions of the people of this country as to the motives of the Government in appointing it, and opinions have been freely expressed, most unjustly as we consider, that this Committee is but a device to bolster up British films. The difficulties attendant on this question which we have enumerated have not escaped the attention of the Government in India nor of the authorities at Home.

Preference unnecessary.

217. Considering the question on its economic merits also we are satisfied that there is no necessity for any preferential treatment for the admission of British films in this country. The chief exhibitors in this country, including Madan's, are not to any great extent tied down by that system of blind and block booking which prevails in England and in other parts of the Empire. Most of them are only too ready to take British films and some of the chief exhibitors very often prefer British to other films. While, as we have stated, there is a small modicum of compulsion in this country also on exhibitors to take films from one source alone, still they are generally free to take any films which they consider that the public will fancy. Their freedom of choice is not materially restricted.

Further, there are a large number of cinemas in India which cater mainly for European audiences. These audiences being largely British, have a natural preference for British films. In such cinemas a good British film generally draws larger audiences than films of other nationalities. Figures supplied to us by one of the leading exhibitors showed conclusively that the receipts in his theatre from British films were on the average greater than those from American or other films.

A considerable footage of British films is now being imported annually by each of the four leading importers. Moreover, from

the figures we have examined of the import into India of films from the United Kingdom compared with those relating to production there during recent years (see Table 15), India may be said to have taken an amount nearly equivalent to the whole of the output in the United Kingdom. Taking feature films alone, which are the chief concern, we find that in 1925 India imported from the United Kingdom 20 as against 34 films produced there; in 1926, 27 against 26, and in 1927, 27 against 48. That is, taking all the three years together, against 108 films produced in England 74 films have been taken. In other words, an amount equivalent to 70 per cent of the films produced in England has been imported into this country. Examined by footage, the figures are even more telling. During the three years 1925 to 1927, the total production in the United Kingdom of feature films was approximately 648,000 feet, and during the three years 1925—26 to 1927–1928 there passed through the various Indian Censor Boards broadly 560,881 feet of British feature films. The total quantity of British films imported (including both news and feature films and copies) was 596,686 feet in 1925 and 726,222 feet in 1926. The figures of production and export to India were furnished to us by His Majesty's Trade Commissioner in India.

There has been no complaint during our enquiry throughout India and Burma, either on account of forward contracts or any predilections of exhibitors, about British films not gaining admittance or that any films were refused exhibition in this country.

Why more British films are not imported.

218. No artificial aid is therefore needed to advance the British film trade in this country. We entirely endorse the remarks of the Australian Board of Censors in their report for 1925: "If fewer British films are imported into this country the reasons are generally well known. The prices have something to do with it; the quality has something to do with it. Whereas other countries have got agencies here, British producers are scarcely represented at all." As in Australia, here also there is no accredited representative of the British film industry. When British Empire films can show the quality and finish and can be had for the same prices as other Western films, there will be no difficulty in those films finding such market as is available in this country. In fact the old and strong trade connection between India and Britain and the natural predilection of Britons in India do give British films a definite preference. It is no good to India to substitute artificially one class of non-Indian films for another. Our aim will be, and should be, to remove the non-Indian grip on the screen.

The danger of estranging foreign countries.

219. We are fully cognisant of the fact that under the Customs regulations prevailing in England films made in India enjoy a preferential tariff of one-third over films produced outside the Empire, and under the recent Cinema Act Indian films can qualify for quota. While most of us are anxious

to find the means, if possible, by which sentiments actuating Britain in passing her legislation may be reciprocated, the practical difficulties which we have stated prevent us from making any recommendation in the direction indicated. India needs the assistance of all the Western nations for learning the technique and art of the industry. Germany, perhaps, holds the field for technique and America the first place for organisation and excellence. India can ill-afford to estrange countries like Germary or America where she will have to send her sons and daughters for training. The Indian market is such a negligible factor to America (yielding not more than half of one per cent of her cinema revenue) that if she retaliates the Indian film trade is bound to suffer. India gets nearly 80 per cent of her imported films from America. And notwithstanding the fact that India takes very nearly the whole of the output of England, she is only able to get less than 10 per cent of her imported films from there. If to-morrow America retaliated by stopping her supplies, as she threatened to do in the case of Hungary, the film trade would cease to exist and opportunities for learning the technique and art of the trade, whether from Germany or America or elsewhere, would be lost. India is not yet well equipped in these matters. Some of the actors and actresses who have attained distinction in the field in this country did so by watching actors and actresses on the screen. Compared with the other parts of the Empire, India is already taking a large percentage of British Empire films, mostly from the United Kingdom, as there is very little production in other parts of the Empire.

Sufficient contact with British ideas.

220. India has also ample opportunities of getting into touch with the lives, surroundings, literature and civilisation of Britain and other parts of the Empire in her schools and colleges and through the day to day functions of Government in which sons and daughters of the United Kingdom take such a distinct part. The literature of England, both modern and ancient, is available to them and nowadays direct intercourse between Britain and India is becoming more and more common. For these reasons and on account mainly of the consideration that no need has arisen for giving any special encouragement or preference to British films, we do not make any special recommendations for the purpose of encouraging exhibition in India of films produced within the British Empire. Even had we decided on an Empire quota for India, it is obvious that the whole of it would have to be allotted to Indian films. These remarks so far apply to the Empire films of " high entertainment value " referred to in the proceedings of the Imperial Conference.

Films of educational value.

221. As regards the " films of sound educational merit, " we fully appreciate and endorse the views of the Conference that there is great need for the exchange of films of that sort between various parts of the Empire. In fact, India stands to gain a great

deal, on account of the vast illiteracy in the country, by having more such films not only from the Empire but also from other parts of the world. The standards of life, and the methods adopted in other countries in agriculture and other industries, the conditions of labour in big manufactories, the sanitary methods, the civic life of the people, these and other matters if properly shown on the screen will go a great way to remove the vast ignorance and tend to improve the condition of the people of this country. We have emphasised the importance of the more extended exhibition of such public utility films in another place and we have cast on the Central Bureau the function not only of arranging for the production of public utility films in this country but also of getting them from abroad and distributing them to the exhibitors.

Mutual arrangements for exchange.

222. We consider that these are matters which do not require any special or preferential methods and can be arranged for by mutual agreements between the Governments of the various parts of the Empire and other countries. We look to the Bureau to devise schemes by which such exchange can be effected. We also provide that educational films, in the broad sense of the term, should be imported duty free. We, therefore, strongly recommend to the Government that every possible step should be taken to come to mutual understandings with the various parts of the Empire and with other countries for exchange of films of sound educational merit, and also, as we have already stated, to arrange for their exhibition, if need be, free of charge through the various exhibiting agencies, and make such other special arrangements as the Central or Provincial Governments may deem fit to adopt for their exhibition. We have elsewhere, by a majority, recommended that a modified sort of compulsory quota system should be introduced into this country to encourage and develop the Indian indigenous film industry. So far as British films are concerned, as we have already explained, there is no necessity for resorting to any artificial aid for their introduction provided that they are of fair average quality and that the prices are reasonable.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Social Aspects and Control.

The need for censorship.

223. A few witnesses of advanced views suggested to us that public opinion is strong enough to prevent the exhibition of undesirable films, and that no censorship at all is necessary. The vast majority of witnesses, however, consider that censorship is certainly necessary in India, and that it is the only effective method of preventing the import, production and public exhibition of films which might demoralize morals, hurt religious susceptibilities, or excite communal or racial animosities. We unanimously agree with the majority view. We also consider that the existing censorship has yielded on the whole satisfactory results, but that its machinery is capable of improvement.

Statutory basis of the censorship.

224. We will first describe the existing position. The statute under which cinema exhibitions are controlled and films censored is the Cinematograph Act, 1918 (II of 1918) as amended by the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 1919, and the Devolution Act of 1920. The main objects of the Act of 1918 were (1) to provide for the safety of audiences, and (2) to prevent the exhibition of objectionable films. The pre-existing law relating to (1) was scattered over various Provincial Police Acts and Municipal Acts, while as regards (2) the only law applicable was contained in sections 292 and 298 of the Indian Penal Code, section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code and rules under the Presidency and Rangoon Police Acts.

Amendments were made in the Act by the Devolution Act (XXXVIII of 1920) by which certain powers given by the original Act to the Governor-General in Council devolved upon Provincial Governments.

Control of cinematographs is a Provincial Reserved subject; but is subject to legislation by the Central Legislature in regard to sanction of films for exhibition [see Devolution Rules, Schedule I, Part II, 33 (*f*)].

Certification of films.

225. The Cinematograph Act provides that no cinema exhibition shall be given except in a place which has been licensed. Such licenses are to be granted by the District Magistrate, or, in a Presidency Town or in Rangoon, by the Commissioner of Police, unless the Provincial Government appoints some other authority. The Act also provides that no film shall be exhibited unless it has been certified by the proper authority as suitable for public exhibition. Section 7 provides that any Provincial Government authorised in this behalf by the Governor-General in Council may constitute such authorities

as it thinks fit for the purposes of examining and certifying films as suitable for public exhibition. If such authority consists of a Board of two or more persons, not more than one-half of the members shall be persons in the service of Government. Under this section, Boards of Censors have been constituted at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Rangoon and (very recently) in the Punjab. Rules have been made under the Act by each of the five Provincial Governments concerned regulating the certification of films and prescribing the conditions of licenses.

Appeals.

226. Under the Act there is an appeal from the decision of the Board to the Provincial Government [section 7 (3) (*a*)].

Validity of certification.

227. A certificate granted by any of these Boards of Censors is valid throughout British India; but there are the following safeguards, namely:—

(1) A District Magistrate or, in a Presidency Town or Rangoon, the Commissioner of Police, is empowered to suspend at any time the certificate of any film pending the orders of the Provincial Government [see section 7 (5) of the Act]; and that Government can then declare the film to be deemed uncertified throughout the province or any part of it.

(2) The Provincial Government can take this action of its own motion.

(3) A Board of Censors can re-examine any film which has already been certified and suspend the certificate in that province pending the orders of the Provincial Government.

Constitution of Boards—Bombay.

228. The Bombay Board consists of (1) the Commissioner of Police, President *ex officio*, (2) the Collector of Customs, *ex officio*, (3) a member of the Indian Educational Service, (4) a prominent Hindu citizen of Bombay, (5) a prominent Muslim citizen and (6) a prominent Parsi citizen. All are appointed by the Government of Bombay. No European is appointed as such, as European interests are considered to be adequately guarded by the official members, some of whom at least are likely to be Europeans. The Board meets not less than twice a month and members present receive a fee of Rs. 16 for each meeting. For officially examining a film each member receives a fee of Rs. 2 per 1,000 feet with a minimum of Rs. 10 and a maximum of Rs. 20. The Board's stipendiary staff, apart from a clerk and a peon, consists of a part-time Secretary, who at present is an Indian, a member of the Indian Educational Service, and receives Rs. 350 a month from the Board apart from his service salary, and an Inspector on a salary of Rs. 300—25—500 plus a conveyance allowance of Rs. 60 a month. The Inspector is an Indian who possesses a good University degree and has travelled in the West. We understand that owing to increase in work the Board is about to appoint a second Inspector. The Board has a separate office in the Bombay Secretariat which is open during ordinary working hours.

229. The Bengal Board consists of the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, President *ex officio*, the Station Staff Officer, *ex officio*, a lady representative who is a European, representatives of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and of the Calcutta Trades Association, a Jewish merchant, a Muslim Principal representing the Education Department, and a Hindu lawyer representing the Corporation, the total strength being eight. A Deputy Commissioner of Police is *ex officio* Secretary, and receives an allowance of Rs. 100 a month. The Board has a part-time European Inspector, whose substantive post is Registrar of the Bengal Legislative Council, and who receives from the Board an allowance of Rs. 300 a month. There is an additional Indian Inspector whose pay is Rs. 100—5—150 plus a conveyance allowance of Rs. 25 a month. The members of the Board and the Secretary are paid a fee of Rs. 16 for attending Board meetings and for sitting on any sub-committee appointed to examine films. The Board has no separate office as at Bombay but is situated at the Calcutta Police Headquarters.

—Bengal.

230. The Rangoon Board numbers eight, and consists of the Commissioner of Police, President *ex officio*, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, *ex officio*, who also acts as Secretary, a military representative, a European medical man representing the Vigilance Society, three Burmese gentlemen and one Burmese lady. The Board has no salaried staff except a clerk. Each member receives a fee of Rs. 20 for each meeting attended—the Board normally meets once a week —and Re. 1 per 1,000 feet of films actually examined.

—Rangoon (Burma).

231. The Madras Board numbers six, and consists of the Commissioner of Police as *ex officio* President, a military representative, and four Indian gentlemen, one of whom is a Muslim. The full Board seldom meets; it has no receipts or expenditure of its own, and no staff. A sum of money equal to the fees levied for certification is distributed equally among the members of the Board who examine each film.

—Madras.

232. The Punjab Board has only been created very recently.

—Punjab.

233. Statutory rules have been made for the certification of films by each by the Provincial Governments concerned under section 8 of the Act, and elaborate conditions have also been laid down in order to ensure the safety of the public. A consideration of the latter precautions hardly falls within the scope of our enquiry. The rules for certification may be briefly summarised as follows.

Statutory Rules.

234. On receipt of the application, the Secretary shall himself examine or depute an Inspector to examine the film within the period prescribed by the Board from time to time, and shall report for the information of the Board the nature of the film and whether in his opinion it is suitable for public exhibition. The

Certification procedure—Bombay.

report shall be placed before the Board who shall decide whether the film is to be certified for public exhibition or not, it being open to the members of the Board to ask that the film be examined by a Committee before the Board gives its final decision.

—Bengal.

235. On receipt of the application the Secretary shall depute an Inspector to examine the film within a period of 7 days who shall report for the information of the Board the nature of the film and whether it is suitable for public exhibition. The report of the Inspector shall be placed before the Board which shall decide whether the film is to be certified or not.

—Burma.

236. A sub-committee consisting of not less than 2 members shall be appointed to examine the film and the result of the examination shall be reported to the President of the Board as soon as possible and, if the report is favourable, the President shall issue a certificate.

—Madras.

237. Films for certification shall be delivered to the President of the Board, who shall himself witness or depute one or more members of the Board to witness an exhibition of the film within a period of 7 days from such delivery. A report thereof shall be made by the President or the member or members deputed as aforesaid and such report will be placed before the Board who shall decide whether the film is to be certified or not.

—Punjab.

238. The Board was only constituted in the latter part of 1927, and when we visited the Punjab, it had hardly started to function or to crystallize its procedure.

Varying volume of work.

239. Now before we can consider the merits of these different procedures, it is necessary to emphasise very strongly the essential difference between the conditions at Bombay and Calcutta on the one hand, and at Rangoon, Madras and Lahore on the other. A reference to Tables 8 and 16 appended to this report will show that a predominant proportion of the censoring work for all India falls to Bombay and Calcutta. In 1926–27, the last year for which we have complete figures, 902 films were censored in Bombay, 679 in Calcutta, 126 in Rangoon and only 9 in Madras. The total footage examined was approximately $6\frac{2}{3}$ million, of which Bombay examined over $3\frac{1}{2}$ million feet, or nearly 53 per cent, Calcutta over $2\frac{1}{4}$ million feet or 34 per cent, Rangoon less than one million feet or nearly 13 per cent, and Madras only 22,465 feet or less than $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. These figures, it should be noted, refer to original examinations of films for certification, and do not cover re-examinations of films already certified. Now it takes approximately one hour to inspect 4,000 feet of film, so that the average weekly time spent on the primary inspection of films in 1926–27 was about 17 hours in Bombay, 11 hours in Calcutta, 4 hours in Rangoon, and half a minute in Madras.

Effect on procedure.

240. It is only necessary to cast back to the constitution of the Boards to understand why the members themselves are able to conduct the primary examination in Burma and Madras, and why this has to be entrusted to the permanent paid staff of the Boards at Bombay and Calcutta. The work is negligible at Madras. The Burma Board has eight members, and if each film is inspected by two members, each member will only have an average of one hour's inspection a week. But owing to the large (we think unduly large) amount of re-examination done by this Board, the demand on the members' time is more than one hour a week. In fact a former member of the Board, a lady whom we examined at Karachi, said that she often did 3, 4 or even 5 hours' work in a week, and found it distinctly trying and tedious. Now if a lady with no profession finds less than one hour a day trying, obviously busy official or non-official gentlemen would find it even more trying. The Bombay Board consists of three officials and three prominent Indian public men. If each film were examined by two members, each would have had in 1926–27 nearly 6 hours' inspection to do every week in the year. Indisposition, business calls or the temporary absence of one or more from Bombay would of course throw a still greater burden on the remaining members. Further, the time taken in actually viewing the film is not the only time expended. The viewer has to make his way to the place of exhibition, and in the case of doubtful films, record a note for the information of the full Board. He also has to attend the periodic meetings of the Board (in Bombay not less than two a month) and finally he may have to view films already certified by his own or other Boards which have been challenged or criticized. Actually members of the Bombay Board personally examined in 1926–27 as much as 305,557 feet out of the 3,508,094 feet already examined by their stipendiary staff. In other words, 8·7 per cent of the work of the stipendiary staff was checked by members of the Board. It would be clearly impossible to expect members of the Bombay Board, so long as it is constituted as at present, to do appreciably more work, and still less personally to view all films before certification. The same applies to the Bengal Board, though in a slightly less degree, since the Board numbers eight and does somewhat less work than Bombay.

Criticism of the cinema and of the censorship—General.

241. Having thus described and explained the present machinery of the censorship, we must now turn to an examination of the various criticisms both of its results and of its procedure. These have been mentioned in our introductory chapter, and as promised there, we will here consider them in more detail. The most important criticism is, of course, that the exhibition of many films certified by the Boards of Censors, has a demoralizing effect on those that see them. When we began our enquiry, some of us at least were inclined

to consider that this criticism was well founded. We found, however, that it had almost invariably been expressed in general terms. We accordingly set ourselves the task of trying to obtain from witnesses definite instances of objectionable films, and of the type of subject and scene which they considered objectionable. We were surprised at our lack of success. Many witnesses predicated that the cinema was a demoralising influence, but when examined had to admit that they very seldom visited cinemas for the very reason that they believed them harmful, inartistic or boring. Their logic is obviously vitiated by a *petitio principii*. Many more said that the cinema must be demoralising because as evidenced by posters and advertisements, it constantly exhibits crime, debauchery, adultery and the like. Very few of these witnesses knew the canons of censorship adopted by the Boards, of which the Bombay Board's 'Suggestions to Inspectors' (printed as Appendix G) are typical, or seemed to realise that posters and advertisements frequently mislead and exaggerate, and that in any case, the aim of the censorship was to excise the very scenes to which they took *a priori* objection. How far the censorship has attained its aim will be considered later, but we would emphasize that practically every witness agreed that the canons of censorship adopted by the Boards were in every way adequate, provided that they were intelligently and consistently applied. With this view we are entirely in accord.

Cinema 'misrepresentation'.

242. But even when we discarded the large mass of ill informed general criticism of the kind just recited, there remained a considerable body of sober opinion, both European and Indian, that the cinema unduly emphasises the lower side of life and the cruder passions of mankind, and must therefore tend to lower morality and to inflame passion. These critics take the view that as producers are out to make money, they deliberately pander to what they believe to be the naturally low tastes of the masses who form the greater part of their customers, and that as the cinema cannot, by its nature, avoid exaggeration, the life represented on the screen is but too often a gross misrepresentation of normal life. It is no doubt perfectly true that the commercial producer will ordinarily produce what he thinks will pay him best, that he caters primarily for the masses and that his aim is to provide entertainment and not instruction. Some measure of misrepresentation of normal life is the inevitable result, but can hardly be objected to unless it does harm. Most stage plays also do not give a true picture of normal every day life; if they did, their dramatic value would be sadly to seek. But the argument is that the cinema's misrepresentation does definite harm in India, especially to the illiterate and to the adolescent, and even to the educated man whose experience is limited to Indian life and conditions. This harm is envisaged in two very different ways. The majority

of the European witnesses who take the view that film misrepresentation does harm, seem to consider that this misrepresentation lowers Western, especially European, civilisation in the minds of Indians, and that *therefore the effect is injurious to Europeans.* In some cases they consider that the result is also injurious to Indians. Those Indian witnesses, however, who agree that Western life is misrepresented, consider that the misrepresentation is *definitely harmful to Indians* because it either induces them to ignore what is good in Western civilisation or to copy what is bad. There is a further body of conservative Indian opinion which definitely fears that the cinema whether it caricatures Western civilisation or whether it truly represents it, is tending to alienate young India from the old ways and landmarks of Indian civilisation and life. As against this, many European and a great many Indian witnesses have asserted either that the cinema is doing no harm, or at any rate that any possible harm is outweighed many times over by the good. In fact, thoughtful witnesses, European and Indian, have definitely pleaded before us for a more liberal censorship, on the ground that the cinema, by showing different types of civilisation, higher standards of living, finer buildings and the like, tends to open the eyes of Indians and to make known to them the good points of Western civilisation, and that the educative effect of this is most important. Many Indian witnesses have also urged that the cinema is weaning young persons and adults from much less wholesome recreations, and in particular instanced the decline of the 'nautch' in public favour.

No resulting demoralisation.

243. Now we may say straightaway that after having heard witnesses of all kinds from every part of India and Burma, after having seen a large number of films including some which had been banned, after having attended numerous public shows at which we carefully studied various types of audiences and their reactions to various types of films, we are without exception satisfied that the overwhelming majority of films certified for public exhibition in no way tend to demoralise the Indian public, or to bring Western civilisation into contempt. Later we will mention the exceptions. We have been profoundly impressed by one fundamental similarity of Indian audiences in all parts of this vast country, a similarity which they no doubt share with audiences the world over. With them 'the play's the thing.' They go to see a play enacted before their eyes, and to partake vicariously in the emotions of the players. They applaud the hero and the heroine, and enjoy the discomfiture of the villain, with no *arriére pensee*, and it matters little to them to what country, race or religion the hero, heroine or villain belongs. We have witnessed this with our own eyes. A striking example was afforded by the audience in a cheap cinema in Madras, where an old-fashioned serial was being exhibited. The white heroine in every reel was

being persecuted by a cosmopolitan band of villains whose leader was an Oriental and whose rank and file comprised other Orientals. Whenever the white hero made a timely appearance or the heroine escaped from the toils, spontaneous applause broke forth, and on one occasion when the screen showed the heroine about to fall into the hands of her Oriental persecutor an excited voice cried out in Tamil "Look out, Miss, look out!" No more convincing argument could be adduced to show that the sympathies of Indian audiences are not alienated or seriously affected by the portrayal on the screen of a life that is strange to them, always provided that an appeal is made to their human emotions. This proviso in effect stipulates that the audience will adequately understand the plot and its incidents. Despite some evidence to the contrary we are fully satisfied that Indians gain the cinema sense very quickly—the uneducated sometimes more quickly than the educated—and adequately understand at least the more straightforward film plays. The type of play that the ordinary Indian audience does not understand and does not like is the more subtle social drama, specially what is known as the sex drama. It is exactly this kind of film that is alleged to depreciate Western life in the eyes of the Indian. We witnessed several such films being exhibited to nearly empty houses with hardly an Indian present. We are satisfied that they do not attract Indians, except perhaps the educated Indian who can see them in their true perspective as dramas not necessarily true to life, and that they do no harm worthy of notice to European interests. It must be remembered that the type of Indian who sees any film at all is normally an inhabitant of a large city or one in which there are European residents. Either he understands the difference between European and his own life and customs, in which case he is not likely to misinterpret what he sees on the screen, or else he does not understand those differences and is likely to misinterpret them when seen in real life. Such a man or woman is no doubt often amazed and shocked by such commonplaces of Western life as the emancipation of women, their free social intercourse with men, their sports, their dances and even their dress. If he sees a representation of all this on the screen, it will hardly shock him further; it may on the other hand—and we believe it does—lead him to understand that different customs and ways of life do not necessarily connote either madness or immorality. Time and education—the latter partly supplied by the cinema itself—are the best remedies for any misunderstanding that may occur. Thus the Punjab Government, though it believes that Western civilisation is presented by the cinema in a distorted form and is misunderstood by Indians, hold that this cannot be remedied by censorship, and that the difficulty must be experienced until the present type of film is superseded by a better type. The Bengal Government take the view that films which are objectionable on the ground that they misrepresent Western civilisation are generally also objectionable on the ground that they are demoralising to

the public, though even when this is not so, they would like them excluded. They are, however, satisfied that the Bengal Board already excludes films which are objectionable in this way. The Government of Bombay is also satisfied with the work of its Board. Similarly the European Association, and indeed a large number of European witnesses, take the view that though films are misunderstood to some extent they do not know of any undesirable results from this. The same view has been expressed by prominent newspapers, edited by and primarily for Europeans, notably the *Times of India*. The whole matter was admirably summed up by Mr. N. P. A. Smith, an officer of the Imperial Police Service and head of the Sind C.I.D., the whole of whose evidence impressed us greatly. "If any slight misunderstanding," he wrote, "exists and lowers the public conception of Western civilisation, it is surely wiser to let time and education provide a truer perspective and a saner demand rather than to attempt to sanctify a civilisation, which, like all others, is humanly imperfect."

Effect on crime negligible.

244. Another not uncommon criticism of the cinema is that by showing crime and the *modus operandi* of criminals, it induces its frequenters to criminal ways and suggests new ways of committing crime. The frequent portrayal of criminals using motor-cars, for example, was at times held out to us as an example of this. But the motor-car has penetrated further into India than the film, and the criminally disposed can learn from real life at least as well as from the films. The London *Times* in its issue of 23rd August 1923 actually stated that a little while earlier there had been "definite proof that the abduction by natives of an officer's wife was suggested by a serial film in which scenes of violence occurred." We have sought in vain for any evidence to this effect, and the responsible police authorities of the North-West Frontier Province, the province no doubt alluded to, laughed the tale to scorn. In fact every responsible police officer in every province assured us that in their judgment the cinema had had no effect whatever on crime or its methods. A person with criminal propensities might, they admitted, occasionally get an idea from a film, but given those propensities, his natural abilities or observations would be much more likely to be a source of action. There is little doubt that sometimes prisoners untruthfully plead the influence of the cinema as an extenuating circumstance, in this country as in others, and this makes a good headline for the more sensational press. A Bombay trade witness actually showed us a headline in a local paper attributing a crime to cinema influence, although the body of the report contained nothing whatever to justify such an attribution. Again we invite a reference to the Bombay "Suggestions to Inspectors." Suggestion 5 (*a*) specifically lays down that those films are liable to objection which "extenuate *crime*: or which familiarise young people with crime so as to make them conclude that theft, robbery and crimes of violence are normal incidents of ordinary life and not greatly to be

reprobated: or which exhibit the actual methods by which thieves carry out their purposes and make the methods of crime the chief theme; or in which crime is the dominant feature of a serial and not merely an episode in the story." The fact that the police believe with such unanimity that the cinema does not incite to crime is proof of the soundness of this canon of censorship and of its adequate enforcement. The police evidence is to our minds conclusive.

The genesis of criticism.

245. It may be asked how it is, if the censorship is functioning satisfactorily, that there is any criticism of it. We have already pointed out that much of the criticism has been ill-informed. If the leading English newspaper can make mistakes like that just cited, if a prominent business man and Member of Parliament can inveigh against the false impressions of English history created by American films, and quote instances from "Nell Gwyn" which happens to be an English production,* it is not surprising that similar mistakes have been made in India. But there are two other main reasons why criticism has raised its head. The first is that no censorship can be perfect or can meet with universal approbation—*quot homines tot sententiae*—and that scenes must at times slip through which on a second viewing the censor himself might find questionable. The second reason is that there has undoubtedly been a great amount of trade propaganda with the object of discrediting American productions, and a necessary part of this propaganda was to assert that the Indian censors could not be doing their work properly, as they certified for exhibition so many of these "objectionable" American films. We will deal with these two points in order.

Scenes of passion, etc.

246. Now in all communities are to be found some puritans and ultra-conservatives and some free-thinkers and radicals. No censorship can satisfy either the extreme right or the extreme left but must aim at satisfying the average man. The average man is indeed hard to find in India, but the average man of most, if not all, the leading communities has presented to us a very similar view-point, and that is that the censor has made few lapses. The only general complaint made by moderate men in which we consider there is any substance is that certain classes of film-scenes showing passionate love-making have a tendency to demoralise the youth of the country. And we have reason to believe that such films cause distinct apprehensions in the minds of some conservative and thoughtful Indians. Here again we would point out that the Bombay "Suggestions to Inspectors" lay down a suitable guide, but we think that in some such cases the censors might justifiably have been a little more severe. We have not witnessed any film to which serious objection could be taken, and indeed we have witnessed films on which the censors owing to the presentment of scenes of passion have been perhaps unduly

* Vide page 32 of "Facts, Films and Forecasts" by L' Estrange Fawcett; a British author.

severe. But in a few instances we have felt that scenes showing long lingering kisses and passionate embraces, especially where emphasised by the fashionable expedient of the "close up", might well have been cut or abbreviated by the censor. On even rarer occasions too, we have seen scenes of drinking orgies and the like which might with advantage have been shortened. We however wish to make it quite clear that we regard these cases hardly as lapses of the censorship, but rather as instances in which a difference of opinion is honestly possible and sometimes inevitable, or as the occasional errors to which all human institutions must be liable. Our only recommendation therefore to the present or any future censoring authorities, as touching this matter, is that suggestive impropriety in dress, conduct and love-making should be somewhat more jealously discountenanced. We say this not because such scenes harm European interests or Indian morals in particular, but because they may have a tendency to corrupt the morals of adolescents of all communities. Nor must we be understood to suggest that all scenes of low life, even all repellent scenes, should be banned. The picaresque is a recognised form of art, and a drama of low life may easily teach a higher moral than a representation of the high and mighty. We cannot, for example, understand why the Bengal Board after certifying a film called "The Rat" should have refused to certify its sequel "The Triumph of the Rat." We viewed both films, which we would add in passing were British films possessing an admirable technique, and unanimously thought that if either film deserved to be banned, it was the former rather than the latter. We do not agree that "The Triumph of the Rat," though it exhibits low life in Paris, is of a low moral tone, or can demoralise European or Indian audiences, or lower the good name of Western civilisation, and therefore we consider that the Bombay Board correctly exercised its statutory duty in certifying the film with a few excisions despite their knowledge of the Bengal ban. But it is only fair to say that in appeal the Government of Bengal supported the view of the Bengal Board. How such differences of opinion can best be adjudicated will be discussed later.

Trade propaganda and rivalry.

247. We have cited trade propaganda as a source of criticism. We do not suggest that trade propaganda is illegitimate in itself, but obviously a man with wares to sell is not likely to lose any opportunity of criticising the wares of his rival. The British film industry very naturally wishes to recover the position which it held in the film world prior to the war, but when it attempts to show that the films produced in America are in one way or another inferior or harmful, the cautious man will bethink him of the adage that all is fair in love and war. The article in the *Times* which we have already cited lays emphasis on the fact that the "objectionable" films are of American origin. A fortnight later it printed a letter from the General Secretary, British

National Film League, stressing the same point. Early in 1926 the Federation of British Industries urged that American films are "detrimental to British prestige and prejudicial to the interests of the Empire, especially in the Dominions which contain large coloured populations." *The Times of India*'s comment on this was "American films should certainly be fought by business competition, but to try to suppress them by a hypocritical plea for Imperial welfare is merely ridiculous." These and similar instances explain to our mind the genesis of much of the criticism of the cinema in India. Further, a careful study of the facts has satisfied us that much of this criticism had its origin outside India, and sprang from persons who were either not conversant with Indian conditions or who had fixed convictions not based on facts. A criticism of the latter type must now be examined.

The Social Hygiene Council's ill-informed criticism.

248. Towards the end of 1926 the British Social Hygiene Council, Incorporated, sent to India a Delegation consisting of Dr. David Lees and Mrs. C. Neville Rolfe. Shortly before leaving India after a tour in India and Burma, Mrs. Rolfe in an interview deplored the effect of the cinema, and the delegation subsequently addressed memoranda thereon to the Government of India and to certain Provincial Governments. The Indian Committee of the British Social Hygiene Council also submitted to us direct a written statement, and Sir Charles McLeod, Bart., was good enough to give oral evidence as their nominee. The most striking pronouncement of the Delegation's memorandum is its opening paragraph, which runs: "In every province and State visited by the Delegation the evil influence of the cinema was cited by educationists and the representative citizens as one of the major factors in lowering the standard of sex conduct, and thereby tending to increase the dissemination of disease." In every place where we took evidence we patiently tried to discover the educationists and representative citizens who had put this view before the Delegation. We particularly questioned Directors of Public Health, medical practitioners, and ladies and gentlemen connected with education and with social work. We will quote some typical replies. The Director of Public Health, Punjab, said "So far as we are concerned, there is absolutely nothing to substantiate that statement" (i.e., regarding the dissemination of disease). His Bengal colleague, who actually met Mrs. Rolfe, declares: "I have nothing in my experience to support a statement like that." The Madras Director says "The Delegation met us frequently. I do not know where they got their information from. They never mentioned the subject to me. I would not have agreed with their views. As far as my experience goes, things are quite different." Lieut-Col. Gidney, I.M.S., told us that he had discussed the matter with Mrs. Rolfe, and added "I entirely disagree with

that view except that possibly such suggestive films may stimulate uncontrolled passions. She told me it was a conviction with her." Miss Cornelia Sorabjee also met the Delegation, and speaking on behalf of the Federation of University Women in India says with reference to the paragraph quoted "We never gave them that impression, nor did they ask us about it." At last, in Mandalay, a witness told us that after Mrs. Rolfe had given three lectures she held a conference at which the Headmaster of a school declared that the cinema was demoralising the people, and gave her two copies of posters which he had drawn. Then a resolution was passed more or less in the sense of the opening paragraph of the Delegation's memorandum. One or two other witnesses told us that Mrs. Rolfe had shown them a few suggestive posters. We had hoped to obtain from Sir Charles McLeod further evidence as to the facts and opinions on which the Delegation had formed its view, but he prefaced his evidence by stating that the memorandum submitted direct to us by the Council was based on particular evidence that the delegates from the Council gathered during their stay in India, and added "I am, therefore, to start with, saying that it is not necessary, and I am not prepared to answer any question you may ask as to where this came from." Now when a responsible institution makes serious charges against another institution—and the Delegation has in effect made serious charges against the Indian Boards of Censors—it is only natural to expect that those charges will be supported by evidence. The Government of India tried to get from the Delegation particulars about films which "had been rejected by large cities in England but were or had recently been in circulation in India and Burma" but the attempt did not prove successful. The Council has been given every opportunity of supporting its allegations before us, but has in effect declined to do so. We recognise that the Council's own memorandum does not go as far as their Delegation's memorandum, which apart from the particular statement already criticised makes other very doubtful statements and contains one distinct misstatement of facts, but even the Council's memorandum alleges that "emotional" films tend to promote in India a lax standard of conduct, and that the Indian "Film Censorship Committees" vary in efficiency. Frankly we cannot accept such *ex cathedra* statements, which are unsupported by evidence tendered to us by the makers or discovered by us in a lengthy and careful enquiry. Not only can we not accept them, but it appears obvious to us that they were made without any attempt at serious enquiry and partly, at least, as a result of pre-existing obsession. We greatly regret that such an institution as the Social Hygiene Council should, from whatever motives, have lent its authority to support statements which one witness, not without some justice, described as preposterous. We have considered it necessary to make these comments, because the Council has in effect libelled, or supported a libel on, the Indian Boards of Film Censors, who have been

carrying out their arduous and responsible duties conscientiously, with equal efficiency and with general success, and also on the trade as a whole.

Posters and advertisements.

249. From what has been said, it seems possible that the advertising methods of the cinema trade had more than a little to do with the formation of the Delegation's view. In fact their memorandum specifically refers to publicity material, handbills and posters. It is undoubtedly true that posters like any other catch-penny device are often much more lurid than the goods which they advertise, and at times refer to scenes which have been excised either by the censor or the exhibitor himself. We came across one such instance in Madras where an enlarged poster advertised " Kiss me again " in too suggestive a manner, but the film itself was absolutely harmless. Occasionally these posters are distinctly suggestive, and as they are posted in public places, may and do at times offend the cultured and possibly do moral harm to the ignorant and the adolescent. We are satisfied that no small amount of the existing criticism of films in India results from such posters, and that sometimes the critic has never seen the films at all. At present the censorship is not empowered to deal with advertising material, and the Police or Magistracy can only step in if actual obscenity is alleged. There is a considerable body of opinion, with which we agree, to the effect that posters need greater control. We consider precensorship would be administratively very difficult and also most inconvenient to the trade. We, therefore, recommend that the Magistracy or Police should be given power to direct any poster which appears to be objectionable to be forthwith removed, and that disobedience to such an order should be punishable by a Magistrate with a fine. The original order would in most cases have to be *ex parte*, but any party affected by it should be allowed to show cause against it before the authority passing the order, and, if the authority be not a Magistrate, to appeal to a Magistrate. We have no evidence that handbill advertisements constitute an abuse worthy of notice, and consider that newspaper advertisements can be left to the good sense of the press and to the existing law regarding obscenities.

Circulation of old and inferior films.

250. We have one or two final points to make about the censorship. The Boards as they now exist only started to function in 1920. Previous to this date there had been certain unofficial Censoring Committees. When the statutory censorship began, there was a large number of films in circulation which had been already exhibited over the length and breadth of the country. It was considered impracticable and unfair to insist that all these films should be called back for detailed examination. The Boards retained the power to examine them, and in some cases did examine

them, but the majority were given certificates, as a matter of course, on payment of a nominal fee of Re. 1. Some of these films were very old, and possibly would not have passed the present censorship without modification. Similarly, it is only natural to assume that in the early days of the statutory censorship, lack of experience and precedents permitted doubtful films and scenes to slip through. Now the point is that a considerable number of those films are still in circulation, and may occasion criticism of the censorship. We were very much struck by the antiquity of many films exhibited up-country, even in capital cities of provinces, especially in the cheaper theatres. We witnessed one film at least which was produced before the Great War. In Madras a number of old films are even to-day being tendered for certificates on the nominal fee system mentioned above. Such films cannot compare in technique, plot or dramatic value with the generality of films produced of late years, and this will explain why most of the adverse criticism of the cinema comes from up-country. These old films, mainly of the "Wild-West" and serial variety, are fast falling into disfavour and yielding to the competition of the indigenous production.

Undue sensitiveness.

251. The trade and some members of the public have one general complaint to make against the censorship. It is that too much tenderness is bestowed on communal, racial, political and even colour considerations. We consider that this complaint is not altogether ill-founded. We have already pointed out that in India as elsewhere people go to the cinema to be amused, and not to learn political or any other lessons. We can hardly believe that a historical film which may picture incidents, say, of the French Revolution, will incite any ordinary member of an audience to attempt to overthrow the Government by law established in India. A propaganda film prepared by a hostile power might of course have such a tendency, but neither the commercial producer nor the exhibitor has the least desire to upset the existing order of society. Objectionable scenes there may be, and these must of necessity be excised, but we deprecate the idea that a film should be banned merely on the general ground that the subject-matter may by over-subtle analogy be interpreted as having a possible reference to current questions. Similarly we consider that the censor and the administrative officers should not encourage or be too sympathetic to individuals who in their private or representative capacities object to film plots or incidents. Breaches of the peace must of course be guarded against, but over-much tenderness to frivolous objections is more likely to encourage dissension. After all, the exhibitor, the producer and the importer are the very last persons to desire to offend the public, or any section of it. They want to please and increase their audiences, and not to alienate them, still less to cause a riot and to see their theatres wrecked and films burnt. If a person does not like a film or type of film, his remedy is simple.

He should withdraw his patronage, and the exhibitor will then do his best to win him back by providing more acceptable fare. This argument applies to a considerable extent even to films of a religious or social reform tinge. The censors are, of course, right in not permitting themes or scenes which must deeply wound the susceptibilities of large sections of the public, but we hardly think that the Christian community should object to a film which shows that some Christians are hypocrites, that Hindus should object to a film discountenancing in a sober manner infant marriage or that Muslims should object to Nur Jehan being pictured without a veil. If such extreme tenderness were countenanced, the Indian producing industry would be impossibly handicapped. Let us give an actual example. It has been suggested that a well-known Indian film entitled "The Life of Buddha" should never have been certified, on the ground that it was offensive to Buddhists and had to be banned in Burma. It was originally certified in Calcutta, and was exhibited there in Bombay and in almost all other parts of India with great success and without objection. When it reached Burma it was banned, apparently on the ground that Burmese Buddhists objected to Buddha being represented on the screen by a human actor. Other reasons which we elicited from witnesses in Burma were that according to local tradition Buddha's features should be of a Burmese and not an Indian type and that he was represented as having too scanty a retinue of disciples. To us the banning seems hardly to have been necessary and with this some Burmese witnesses agreed. If the Buddhist objection was really deep-seated, it is certain that the film would have been a box-office failure and would have speedily disappeared from Burmese screens. But we do not profess to be able to appraise Burmese susceptibilities as well as the authorities of that province, and in no way seek to challenge their decision on this film. All we wish to point out is that India, which is not Buddhist, had every right to see the film, and that the Bengal Board had every right to certify it.

Moral standards of existing Boards identical.

252. We have carefully considered suggestions made from time to time that the standards of the different Boards vary, and are satisfied that as a general proposition they do not. Their canons are very similar if not identical, and their enforcement of them seldom differs. There must, of course, be differences of opinion; we have cited that of "The Triumph of the Rat," which Bombay certified after Calcutta had banned it. Similarly we find that Calcutta has certified a film "Alias the Deacon" which Bombay had banned and that Rangoon has certified a film "Forbidden Love" which Calcutta had banned. Again, each Board, except Madras whose work is negligible, has seen films which it had certified, banned or abbreviated on the motion of other Boards. Both from these events and from our not inconsiderable experience of the work of the Boards as evinced by

the films passed by each and viewed by us, we can confidently assert that there is in fact nothing to choose between the Boards in relation to moral standards. But it must not be thought that the actual differences of opinion between the Boards are many or very serious. The Boards, as at present constituted, have examined upwards of 13,000 films. Of these, 14 have been declared uncertified in Bombay, 8 in Bengal, 16 in Burma and 3 in Madras. This does not mean that 41 separate films have been banned, because some of the films have been declared to be uncertified in more than one province. The net figure seems to be 31, or less than ·025 per cent of the total number of films examined. Further, some of the banned films were films originally passed by the old unofficial Boards, others were re-certified after abbreviation or amendment, and others were banned purely because of local conditions or even on the representation of foreign Governments. It follows, therefore, that conflicts of opinion on moral questions are most exceptional. Nevertheless, it is desirable for more than one reason that there should be no such unadjusted conflicts at all. It is obviously contrary to public policy that there should be dissension between different Boards and provinces and it is not fair to the importer, producer or exhibitor of a film which has been duly certified by one Board for exhibition throughout the Indian Empire, that it should be banned in any province except on strong local grounds. The owner of the rights in an imported film which has been banned throughout India can, we understand, usually recover the royalty paid therefor. But if a film is allowed to be exhibited in one province and banned in another, he has no remedy. We will, therefore, now consider how this difficulty can be resolved, and whether any change in the machinery of the censorship is desirable.

The ideal—A Central Board of Censors.

253. We are agreed that the ideal solution would be a Central Board of Censors for the whole of British India. Such a Board would give authoritative decisions for the whole country and would achieve uniformity. It would be in close touch with the Government of India, who at present are commonly held responsible for the censorship though they have no direct contact with it, and through the Government of India would be the better able to get into touch with the Indian States whenever necessary. Its verdicts would naturally command greater confidence in Indian States than the verdicts of Provincial Boards. This solution was mooted more than once before our enquiry began, but was rejected as impracticable, mainly on geographical grounds. It was urged, with much force, that importers and exhibitors would be seriously penalised by the expense and delay that would be incurred in sending films from all parts of India to the Central Board. This difficulty we admit, but for the reasons already stated we do not admit the second objection, namely, that such a Board would be incompetent to decide whether a film suitable for exhibition, say,

in Bombay was also suitable for exhibition in Madras, Peshawar or Mandalay. The present Boards, which are essentially provincial, have in effect to make such decisions every time that they certify a film, and if they have been able to function without, as we have shown, incurring more than an infinitesimal amount of informed criticism, a stronger All-India Board should be able to function with even greater immunity from criticism. A Central Board would have the further advantage of stronger finances, and could therefore afford to employ more highly paid and better qualified stipendiaries than the existing Boards. We have been able to devise a scheme for a Central Board which we believe will avoid all genuine difficulties, and which we will now expound.

Our scheme for modified centralisation—A Central Board at Bombay.

254. Our contemplated Central Board, which should perhaps be designated the Indian Board of Film Censors, should be located at Bombay, because more films are imported at Bombay than at any other port, because the producing industry in India is predominantly based on Bombay, because Bombay is a cosmopolitan city where every creed, caste and race is represented, and because the Bombay Board already does more than half the censoring of the whole of the Indian Empire. The Board itself including the Chairman should consist of 7 or at the outside 9 members, a majority of whom should be non-official Indians. Four or five, as the case may be, will form a quorum. The members should be ladies or gentlemen—for sex should be no disqualification—of standing and wide culture and the Chairman should be a non-official Indian. All should be appointed by the Government of India, who would no doubt consult the Provincial Government. The Commissioner of Police should be a member *ex-officio*, and it should be permissible for him to depute a responsible officer to represent him if unable on any occasion to attend personally. The Board should have its own office, which would include a projection room or rooms and operators. As its Chief Executive Officer and Secretary it would have a Chief Censor on a salary of about Rs. 1,000—50—1,500, who should be a man of culture, preferably an Indian, with University qualifications, and who should have travelled abroad as well as in India. If for any special reason a non-Indian be appointed he should have had at least 7 years' experience of India. He will of course be a whole-time officer. All imported films tendered for censorship will be examined by the Chief Censor, who will forthwith issue a certificate in the name of the Board if he sees nothing objectionable in it, or if any excision or change in it which he may propose is accepted by the owner or his accredited agent. But if he considers that the film should be banned, or that excisions or alterations unacceptable to the owner should be made before certification, he will refer the matter to the Board for decision. The Board will, if necessary, view the film as a body or through a sub-committee of not less than two of its members. The Central Board will also deal with any Indian films that may be tendered to it. In the case of such films we think it advisable that members of the Board itself

should if possible conduct the primary inspection. We therefore suggest that they should be seen by the Censor with two members, or by the Chairman and the Censor. The Censor should be entitled to advise but not to vote. The final decision would lie with the full Board in contested cases. This procedure will enable the Board to keep in touch with Indian production and to report to the Bureau films of special merit. There should be fixed hours for censoring, and these should be freely notified. The probable programme for the ensuing day should also be posted in the office for public information. In order to associate the trade, the public and recognised institutions with the work of censorship, we propose that when any film is being viewed by the Censor or members of the Board, a representative of the trade, the Municipal Corporation, the University, the Police, and recognised social service organisations should be allowed to attend in an honorary and advisory capacity. Each recognised body or organisation might nominate a panel of representatives, any one of whom should be entitled to attend at one time. Any of these honorary assessors should be entitled to voice his opinion at the time of viewing a film, but reference to the full Board should only be permissible by way of a written representation clearly stating the grounds of objection, and submitted within 24 hours of viewing. The person or firm tendering any film for censorship or his agent should of course be entitled to be present at its inspection. Such a person would be notified of the actual time fixed for the inspection, but separate notices for each film would not be sent to the assessors or their nominators, and these would have to be content to study the programme of work posted daily at the Board's office and to attend such films as they might deem desirable. The Central Board will meet at least once a month, and oftener if work demands. The Chairman and members will be entitled to attend the censoring of any film, and should consider it part of their duty to visit periodically public exhibitions of films. The Chairman or any member will have power to require any film to be referred to the full Board. All members of the Board, including the Chairman, should receive sitting fees of Rs. 20 for three hours attendance or less when required to attend a Board meeting or to view a film, but should not receive fees for voluntary attendances. The Chairman should also receive a monthly honorarium of Rs. 250. The Chairman and members should be appointed for three years, and the appointments should be renewable. The Censor should be appointed for five years, subject to probation for one year, and this appointment should also be renewable.

Deputy Censor at Calcutta — Provincial Boards for indigenous films at Calcutta and Rangoon, and special arrangements for topicals.

255. It is obvious that a Board so constituted would not be able to do the censorship for the whole of India and Burma without causing delay and inconvenience to distant importers and producers, especially in Calcutta and Rangoon, and to the producers of topical films in any part of India or Burma. We therefore propose that there should be a Deputy Censor, subordinate to the Central Board, stationed

at Calcutta for the censorship of imported films, that there should be Provincial Boards, where necessary, for the censoring of locally produced feature films, and that where no Central or Provincial Board exists, power should be given to the Presidency or District Magistrate to certify topical films. We do not consider that Provincial Boards are necessary at present at any places other than Calcutta and Rangoon. The recently established Punjab Board has, so far as we are aware, done very little censoring as yet, and as all imported films will be examined by the Chief or Deputy Censor, subject to the control of the Central Board, as all topicals will be certifiable by the magistracy, and as separate provision will be proposed for the certifying of public utility films, there will be no work for the Punjab Board unless and until feature films are produced in Northern India. The Punjab Board should therefore disappear for the time being. Similarly the original censoring done by the Madras Board is so exiguous that this Board also should be discontinued. We have it in evidence that even at present films are sent elsewhere for censorship, owing to the delay that is alleged to occur in Madras. In Bengal and Burma, however, especially in the latter, there are existing producing industries, and the present Boards should therefore be reconstituted into Provincial Boards which should be entitled to certify for all India any topical or feature film produced in India or Burma and tendered to them. The Burma Board, as an exception to the general rule that all imported films should be censored by the Chief or Deputy Censor, should also be entitled to censor the Chinese films which reach Rangoon in some numbers and are exhibited almost exclusively to the local Chinese population, and also all imported topicals and educational films. The number of imported feature films other than Chinese films at Rangoon has fallen off heavily and totals less than three a month.* It will be no real hardship if such films have to be certified at Calcutta. The Bengal and Burma Boards should consist of five or seven members, including the Chairman, of whom not less than three or four, as the case may be, inclusive of the Chairman, should be non-official Indians or Burmans. The Commissioner of Police should be an *ex-officio* member, and should be entitled to depute a responsible representative if unable on any occasion to attend personally. The Chairman should have an office and a whole-time clerical assistant. Not less than two members should censor each film, with the exception that the Chairman sitting alone should be authorized to certify news gazettes. The full Board should be convened by the Chairman once a month or oftener. All members should receive sitting fees of Rs. 20 for three hours' attendance or less, and the Chairman should receive in addition a monthly honorarium of Rs. 150. If and when, owing to the initiation of local production of feature films on a reasonable scale, the Government of any

* The figures for the last four years are as follows :—

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1924-25 | .. | 96 | 1926-27 | .. | 32 |
| 1925-26 | .. | 143 | 1927-28 | .. | 31 |

Province other than Bombay, Bengal or Burma, consider that a new Provincial Board is necessary in the interests of local producers, such Government should move the Government of India to create a new Provincial Board, and if after consulting the Central Bureau and Board the Government of India consider that a good and sufficient case has been made out, a new Provincial Board should be constituted on the lines of the Burma Board. All nominations to Provincial Boards including Bengal and Burma should be made by the Provincial Government. Provision for the nomination and attendance of assessors as in the case of the Central Board should also be made.

Functions of Deputy Censor.

256. We recommend that the Deputy Censor at Calcutta, who will, through the Chief Censor, be subordinate to the Central Board, should censor all imported films tendered to him. He, like his Bombay colleague, will be a full-time officer, and should have his own projection room and a clerical assistant and be assisted by honorary assessors as at Bombay. Any member of the Bengal Provincial Board will also be entitled to attend, in an honorary capacity, the inspection of films, and by written notice given within 24 hours of the inspection require a reference to the Central Board. The Deputy Censor will issue certificates in the name of the Central Board for all films which he considers unobjectionable or which can in his opinion be made unobjectionable by excisions or alterations to which the owner or his representative agrees. If he considers that any film should be banned or should not be certified without excisions or alterations to which the owner does not agree, he will forward it to the Chief Censor for submission to the Central Board. The expense of forwarding, returning and insuring it will fall on the censorship if the Central Board does not uphold the objection. The Deputy Censor's qualifications should be those laid down for the Chief Censor, and he should be appointed for the same period and subject to the same probation. His pay should be Rs. 750—50—1,000.

Central Board to visit Calcutta.

257. In order to secure the completest liaison between the Central Board and its Chief Censor on the one hand, and the Deputy Censor on the other, and to enable the trade and the general public of Eastern India to have opportunities of personal contact with the Central Board, we consider that the Chief Censor should, at least for some time, visit Calcutta once a month, see the Deputy Censor at work, and interview members of the trade and public. The Chairman of the Central Board should also visit Calcutta twice a year, and if finances permit, the Central Board should actually hold one meeting each year in Calcutta.

Validity of certificates.

258. All certificates, by whomsoever issued, will be valid throughout British India, but if not issued by the Chief Censor or Central Board, the issuing authority must notify the Central Board so that complete records can be kept. Refusals to certify must similarly be communicated. The Central Board will lay down general canons of censorship for the guidance of its Chief or Deputy Censor and for the information of Provincial Boards.

Public utility films.

259. A certain number of public utility films are being made, and many more, we hope, will be made with the object of opening the eyes of the masses to the advantages of better sanitation, education, co-operation, agriculture and the like. Such films are usually made by or on behalf of Government departments or quasi-public institutions. Provincial Governments already have the power under section 9 of the Act to exempt such films from certification in their own provinces. Indeed they hardly need to be certified at all. It is however, important that such films should be on the Central Board's registers, and we therefore recommend that Provincial Governments when exempting such, or in fact any films, should send full particulars to the Central Board and that the Central Board should then issue a formal certificate, free of charge and if they think fit without examination, entitling the film to be shown in all provinces, and not merely the province of origin.

Appeals.

260. We have carefully considered the question of appeals. Obviously the right to appeal to Provincial Governments must in our scheme be withdrawn. There have been remarkably few such appeals hitherto, and in view of our proposals whereby the trade and the public will in some measure be associated with the censorship, we anticipate that there will be still fewer appeals in the future. We are indeed somewhat doubtful whether it is really necessary to allow appeals beyond the Central Board. In the case of a disagreement with the Chief or Deputy Censor, the matter will in any case go before the Central Board for decision. On the other hand, if uniformity is to be obtained both the Central Board and the Provincial Boards must have, so to speak, some common referee. On the whole, then, we consider that any person feeling himself aggrieved by a decision of any Board or other certifying authority or Provincial Government should be entitled to apply to the Government of India to revise that decision, and that the Government should always, when adjudicating the matter, have before it the report of the Central Bureau. In fact it might suitably be laid down that all such applications should be submitted to Government through the Bureau. This procedure would assist the Bureau to become that real centre of film information and co-ordination which we hope to see it become.

Provincial Governments' rights safeguarded.

261. It will of course be essential to safeguard the rights of Provincial Governments so as to enable them to exercise their duty of preserving law and order in their provinces. In other words, they must still retain the power to declare uncertified in their province any film, the exhibition of which may endanger law and order, or for special local or temporary reasons be likely to cause bad blood. This power should however be subject to the revisional powers of the Government of India mentioned in the previous paragraph. As at present, the Provincial Government could act on its own initiative, or on the motion of a District Magistrate or Commissioner of Police who should retain their power of suspension. But we strongly recommend two limitations. In the first place no film should be banned before it has been viewed. The authority concerned should have the right to demand a private view of any suspected film before its public exhibition, but the automatic imposition of a ban merely because some other authority may have imposed a ban, possibly for purely local reasons, is neither reasonable nor equitable. In the second place no film should be suspended, and still less declared uncertified, on merely moral grounds. We have already shown that the moral standards of the existing Boards in effect do not differ, and that there have been remarkably few differences of opinion between the provinces on purely moral points. The new, and for that matter, the existing censorship, will be a safer guide on morality than the extreme puritan or free-thinker, and the censorship's authority ought to prevail against an individual's whim or judgment until and unless there has been an impartial and informed adjudication. Such an adjudication should, we consider, be obtained in the same way as revision proceedings against the banning of a film. In other words, the Provincial Government concerned, either on its own motion or on the motion of a Magistrate or responsible Police Officer, should, if it considers that a certified film offends against good morals, move the Government of India through the Central Bureau to adjudicate the matter. We believe that such references will be rare, but consider that Provincial Governments should possess the right to appeal, so to speak, against an acquittal, just as the trade is given the right to apply for revision of an adverse decision. Difference of opinion between Provincial Governments will of course be adjudicated in the same way.

Central Board—General control.

262. A few minor points remain to be mentioned. It has already been indicated that the Central Board will lay down general principles, and keep complete records of all films certified either by itself or any other authority. It will accordingly have to prescribe forms of applications for certificate, the registers to be maintained, and the returns to be made, and make rules for the supply of extracts on payments of fees. It

will of course be necessary for the applicant for a certificate to state the country in which the film was made and, wherever possible, the result of any previous censorship elsewhere. The Board will also have to notify all films which have been refused certificates, and arrange for such notifications to be published in the *Gazette of India* and all Provincial Gazettes. Films certified after excisions or alterations might also suitably be so notified. The Board should also consider whether it could safely delegate any of its powers to other authorities. For example, it could, we think, safely allow Provincial Boards and District Magistrates to sanction omissions from certified films and also the insertion of translations of sub-titles or captions. Particulars of any such insertion or omission would have to be endorsed on the reverse of the certificate accompanying the film, and at once reported to the Central Board. In passing, we suggest that as the insertion of vernacular captions should be encouraged, the certifying authority should only charge a fee based on the length of new film to be inserted. At present the practice of the Boards seems to vary. Lastly, the Board should keep in touch with the public by inviting the lodging of information and by instructing the Chief and Deputy Censors to notify the hours each day when they will be open to receive and hear representations. The Board should also keep in close touch with the Central Bureau, which should be entitled to call for reports and information from the Board and from its Chief Executive Officer, the Censor.

Advantages of the scheme.

263. We venture to believe that the scheme given above will meet all reasonable objections against a centralised censorship, and also meet criticisms of the existing censorship. It provides for censorship either by well qualified and well paid stipendiaries or by actual members of the Boards, it will achieve uniformity of standard while preserving elasticity and safeguarding provincial and local rights, it will obviate delays except in contentious cases where some delay is inevitable, and it will confer on the trade one great advantage, namely, that its certificates will be more truly valid for all India and very much less likely to be challenged or suspended by local authorities than at present. It will also associate with the work of censorship accredited public bodies and the trade, and so ensure that in most cases no film is examined by one man alone. It provides for reasonable continuity of policy and personnel, which we consider most important. It is largely for this reason that we have not recommended censorship in all cases by members of the Central Board. Such censorship would necessitate the abandonment of the accepted principle of non-official co-operation and largely non-official Boards, and the institution of an expensive Board or Boards composed entirely of stipendiary Censors. We are convinced that Boards must be small if uniformity and continuity of policy are to

be obtained; but if the Central Board is to be small and largely non-official, then as already shown the demands on the members' time, if they had personally to view all films, would be impossibly great. Some witnesses suggested that the Board or Boards should be greatly expanded, so that two or more members could view every film without an undue demand on their time, but we are firmly opposed to any such plan. Uniformity would be bound to suffer, delays in examination would be very probable, and there would be the danger that the Board would become a debating society rather than a compact businesslike committee.

Financing of the scheme.

264. Our proposed reorganisation of the machinery of censorship will undoubtedly involve additional expense. It will however, benefit the trade both by giving them more authoritative certificates which will not easily be challengeable, and by associating them in some measure with the censorship. For these benefits we consider the trade can and should pay. We therefore recommend that the present low censorship fee should be raised to Rs. 10 per thousand feet, and that if on closing the accounts of any year there is a surplus, that surplus should be transferred to the Bureau to be used for the good of the trade. The censorship fee is only a small item of expense to the producer or importer of any except the cheapest and worst films, and an increase of Rs. 5 per 1,000 feet will not harm the industry. The fee of Rs. 10 will still be less than the English fee of £1 while the Australian fee is apparently 10*s.* plus a further £1 per reel when reconstruction is attempted and the film has to be reviewed. The fees would of course be payable at the place of censorship, and each censoring authority should remit the surplus to the Central Board or receive a grant from the Central Board to cover a proved deficit. Proper budgets and accounts will be essential. The footage actually examined by the existing Boards in the first 11 months of 1927-28 was 6,293,769 or say 6,866,000 for the full year. The footage has increased yearly during the past four years, and seems certain to continue to increase. As the fee is fixed per 1,000 feet or part thereof, and as fees are or will be chargeable for provisional certificates, duplicate certificates and extracts, the gross income will be somewhat higher than will appear at first sight. Consequently a Rs. 10 fee should at present, or very shortly, yield not less than Rs. 75,000 for the whole of India and Burma, and that sum should, we reckon, be sufficient to defray the recurring expenses of the censorship machinery proposed. A rough estimate is given below. The cost of fitting up projection rooms might be suitably defrayed by a non-recurring grant from Government.

| *Rough estimate.* | RS. |
|---|---|
| Pay of Censor ... ... ... ... ... ... | 1,000 |
| Pay of Deputy Censor ... ... ... ... ... | 750 |
| Honorarium, Chairman, Central Board ... ... | 250 |
| Honorarium, Chairman, Bengal Board ... ... | 150 |
| Honorarium, Chairman, Rangoon Board ... ... | 150 |
| Carried over ... | 2,300 |

*Rough estimate*—cont.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Brought forward ... | 2,300 |
| Clerks of all Boards ... ... ... ... ... | | 350 |
| Operators ... ... ... ... ... ... | | 200 |
| Contingencies ... ... ... ... ... ... | | 250 |
| Rents ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | | 750 |
| Members' fees ... ... ... ... ... | | 2,000 |
| Travelling allowances ... ... ... ... ... | | 400 |
| | Total per mensem ... | 6,250 |
| | Total per annum ... | 75,000 |

Children and the cinema.

265. Before closing this chapter, we should add that we have carefully considered whether the censorship can do anything to protect children from seeing unsuitable films. Children are probably less likely to suffer from seeing films of doubtful morality than from witnessing scenes of violence and sensation which are absolutely harmless to the adolescent or adult. For example, we have heard of a child being seriously upset by a scene in a "Jacky Coogan" film in which this popular child actor had for dramatic reasons to be shown as a persecuted and ill-treated little boy. We all recognise that it is mainly for the parents or natural guardians of children to protect them and keep them away from harmful entertainments, and we are definitely opposed to films being certified as for adults only. Such certification would only serve as an advertisement to attract the prurient, and it would be a matter of the greatest difficulty, both for exhibitors and the Police, to ensure that non-adults, however defined, did not gain admittance. Certification of films as for "Children only" would be even more disastrous; adults would certainly avoid them, and exhibitors would therefore not accept them. At the same time we realise that at present parents have little opportunity of knowing whether a particular film is suitable for children or not. We therefore recommend that the English practice of issuing two classes of certificates should be tried. One certificate will pass a film for "Universal" exhibition, the other for "Public" exhibition. The former will indicate that in the judgment of the censors the film contains nothing which can hurt a child, the latter that the film, though suitable for an ordinary audience, might unduly excite or distress children. It should be made obligatory on the exhibitor to indicate on his posters and on all advertisements when the film advertised has received a "Universal" certificate, and it will then be possible for parents and guardians to select films to which to take their children. Some of us, while not opposed to this experiment, are somewhat doubtful of its efficacy. We are, however, all agreed, that as soon as the Bureau is constituted, it should examine the methods adopted in other countries to protect children, and the League of Nations' investigations into this matter, and consider whether any better arrangements are possible.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Miscellaneous Matters.

Tampering with certified films.

266. Allegations have occasionally been made that films which have been certified by the censors are sometimes tampered with. Those portions which have been excised by the censor may be reinserted, or lengths of films never submitted to the censor may be inserted or substituted for innocuous portions of the films. Similarly, a film to which at its primary examination objection has been taken may be altered before its re-examination either by members of the Board or in appeal. An instance of this came to our notice during our enquiry. Two members of the Rangoon Board had objected to certain parts of a Chinese film, and had referred the matter to the full Board. Before the full Board viewed it, we viewed it, and could not understand why any objection had been raised. When, however, the full Board viewed it, it was discovered that the proprietor of the film had, without permission or notice, excised the objectionable parts. It is obviously necessary to lay down, presumably by rule, that once a film has been tendered for censorship, no alteration should be made in it pending the final decision, except with the consent of the censor. Another case which came to our personal notice was more serious. We witnessed at Nagpur a film called "The Answer of the Sea" which had recently been certified by the Bombay Board. It contained scenes of female nudity bordering on the obscene, and a reference to the Board disclosed that the objectionable scenes had been added to the film after it had been certified. The Board at once cancelled the certificate, and is, we understand, considering further action. Very few such cases, however, have been detected, and we do not consider that the offence is common. Nonetheless, it is important that it should be guarded against and that, if committed, it should be adequately punished. The measures to be taken are partly a function of the censoring authority, and partly of the general administration of the country.

Preventive censorship methods.

267. The statutory rules under which the existing Boards of Censors work usually provide, and we consider always should provide, that every application for censorship should state, *inter alia*, the exact length of the film and the number of reels, that when a certificate issues the exact length of the film as certified should be entered on the face of the certificate, and that if any excisions have been made, a description of the parts excised and their exact length should be endorsed on the reverse of the certificate. The stipulations regarding length are obviously necessary, but equally obviously do not constitute by themselves an adequate safeguard against abuse, because, as already indicated,

substitution without altering the total length is quite possible. The Bombay rules accordingly go further, and provide that all excised parts, both of the film examined and of all copies of it in the applicant's possession and intended for exhibition in British India, shall be handed over to the Board and destroyed after one year. This is an additional safeguard in the case of imported films, but will not necessarily be effective in the case of Indian films unless the corresponding portions of the *negative* be removed and handed over to the Board. If the negative remained uncut, fresh positives of objectionable parts could easily be made and inserted in the positive film. We recommend therefore that the Bombay Rule (No. 15) should be amended in this sense, and should be made generally applicable. This same rule prescribes, as a further safeguard, that whenever any film has been certified after any excision has been made, the certificate shall be marked with a clearly visible triangle in its left hand bottom corner. The Madras and Burma Boards follow the same practice, but Bengal uses a cross instead of a triangle. We approve the practice, but consider the mark should be uniform. The intention is that the distinctive mark, when seen either on the certificate itself or on the "trailer" certificate prefixed to the film, will warn every authority whose duty it is to prevent the exhibition of uncertified films, that the film was not passed exactly as tendered for censorship, and therefore needs special scrutiny. Such scrutiny will be facilitated if reference be made to the original certificate or a certified copy thereof. On the reverse of this will be found a description of the excisions made before certification, and the scrutinizing authority will then be able to satisfy himself that the excisions have not been inserted. The trailer certificate prefixed to the film itself is not sufficient for this purpose, as it does not, and cannot, reproduce the endorsements on the reverse of the original certificate. We therefore consider that every copy of a film should be accompanied, wherever it goes for exhibition, by the original certificate or by a certified copy of the certificate, which is already obtainable for the modest fee of Re. 1.

Penal section inadequate.

268. Problems of the administrative control of exhibitions of films are discussed later in this chapter, but this will be the appropriate place to consider whether the law as it stands imposes adequate penalties on the exhibition of films which have been tampered with. Section 6 of the Act is the only penal section, and directly penalises no one other than the owner or person in charge of a cinematograph, or the owner or occupier of any place, or in short the exhibitor. But if a film has been tampered with after censorship, it by no means follows that the exhibitor is the offender. In fact, as the exhibitor is normally only the hirer of the film, he is very unlikely to venture to make any alteration in it. The real offender is much more likely to be the owner of the film. Now if the owner tampers with a film, he can only be penalised for abetting an offence, normally committed innocently and in ignorance, by an exhibitor, inasmuch as the exhibitor will be exhibiting a film which, by reason of

alteration after censorship, has forfeited its right to be accounted certified. This appears to be a very clumsy and probably ineffective method of bringing the real offender to book. We consider that the Act should be amended so as to make tampering with a film after censorship a substantive offence, punishable, on conviction by a Presidency or First Class Magistrate, with a fine which may extend to Rs. 1,000 and the confiscation of the film. Moreover, to remind the owners of films of their responsibility, and so prevent them evading it, as they did in a case which came to our personal notice, by pleading that an employee had committed the offence without their cognizance, we recommend that the amendment should make it clear that the person firm or company at whose instance the film was certified should be deemed liable for the tampering unless he or they can prove that it was done without his or their cognizance. A reference, for example, to the Indian Companies' Act will show that such vicarious punishment is no legal novelty.

Civil administration's functions of control.

269. Now it is obvious that though it is the function of the censorship to certify films for exhibition, it is neither logical nor feasible that it should attempt directly to administer the Act in respect of public exhibitions. It is the business of the ordinary Civil Administration to do so, and to bring offenders to book, though there must, of course, be close *liaison* between the administration and the censorship. We consider that in each district the District Magistrate or some other prescribed authority, working with the co-operation of the subordinate magistracy and police, should take an informed interest in the cinematographs within his jurisdiction. It should be made obligatory on every exhibitor to furnish weekly programmes in advance to the prescribed authorities, and the certificate covering every film should be ready for inspection not later than on the occasion of the film's first exhibition in the district. Certificates bearing the triangle and films covered thereby should be carefully examined by a Magistrate or a Police officer, and any suspected offence investigated and reported to the censorship authority concerned. Similarly, if the Magistrate considers that for genuine local reasons a film should not be exhibited in his district, he should exercise his statutory powers under section 7 (5) of the Act. We have already emphasised, and would here repeat, that this power should not be lightly exercised. We do not see why such local control should be difficult or should occasion expense. We imagine that at least one policeman is normally present at every public entertainment, if only to preserve order, and that it will not be a serious tax on the police if the attendance of one officer at the first local exhibition of every film be made compulsory. In fact in some provinces police officers are even now deputed for this purpose. The duty of the Civil Administration in this respect seems to us so obvious that we need not enlarge on it further.

Co-operation of the public.

270. In Bombay and some other cities we observed that the censorship had posted notices in cinema houses stating to whom complaints about films should be made. This praiseworthy attempt to interest the general public in the Censor's work might well be copied elsewhere, and we recommend that the posting of such a notice in every house might be made a condition of its license. This may also encourage the formation of " Better film " societies and like institutions.

Obscene films.

271. A few suggestions have been made that definitely obscene films are sometimes smuggled into and might be produced in India. It was specially mentioned that this was common in Indian States. We are satisfied that the censorship has entirely prevented and will prevent the public exhibition of such films, and it is not the function of the censorship to deal with private exhibitions. We have no definite evidence that such films have been imported or produced, and from enquiries we caused to be made through the Political Department we found the allegations regarding Indian States to be not borne out by any credible evidence,, and in any case we consider that the ordinary administrative departments, such as the Customs and the Police, must be left to deal with the abuse if it exists.

Provincial Advisory Boards.

272. Questions regarding films will at times come before Provincial Governments, and a Government in whose province no Board of Censors exists will probably feel the need of an Advisory Board. We think, therefore, that the Provincial Governments other than those of Bombay, Bengal and Burma, would be well advised to constitute small but representative bodies to advise them about all film matters. In particular, the Advisory Board might suitably be consulted about propaganda and public utility films which any department of the Government might contemplate producing, and about any film of which the certificate had been suspended before that certificate is finally revoked. The members of the committee should also make it a point to visit the cinemas in their area so that they may keep themselves in touch with the actual conditions. In places where Boards of Censors exist the Provincial Governments will no doubt consult them in similar circumstances.

Military needs.

273. We have carefully considered the views of Army Headquarters on the matters referred to us, and are glad to be able to report that we have already proposed their chief desideratum, namely, a Central Bureau which the Army authorities can at any time consult. Both in the written statement and in the oral evidence of Colonel Lakin, Deputy Director of Personal Services, it was emphasised that,

though the Army was keenly interested in many aspects of the cinema, it at present has little accurate information and has no way of procuring it. It is anxious to co-operate with the trade, and the Bureau will provide the best possible avenue of communication. Similarly, the Bureau will be able to advise the Army on the procuring, whether by hire, actual production or otherwise, of the type of instructional or entertainment films which it desires. We do not think that the censorship can take special thought of Army needs when certifying films, and if the Army wants to obtain films of a particular type for exhibition it must make its own arrangements. The State Railways have been able to hire some of the most successful films ever exhibited, such as "The Thief of Baghdad" and "Safety Last", and an organised regimental circuit should be in at least as good a position to obtain good films. Whether such a circuit is practicable we leave to the Army to consider in consultation with the Bureau.

The Indian soldier.

274. We have it in evidence that the British soldier frequently visits the cinema, but the Indian soldier very seldom, if ever. It is a fact that the Indian soldier's abstention is mainly due to economic causes, but it is also true that he has not facilities for seeing the cinema within his lines equal to those enjoyed by British soldiers. He usually has to go some distance if he wishes to see Indian films in a cinema. We consider that the private exhibitor should be encouraged by the Military authorities to exhibit Indian films to the Indian troops. Facilities should be granted by the authorities for the exhibition to them of Indian films, e.g., by allowing the use of Government or regimental halls. We have little doubt that if the Army uses, as it desires to use, films for educational and training purposes, the Indian soldier will speedily gain the "cinema sense."

Cantonment monopolies.

275. It has been suggested to us that in some cantonments the right to open a cinema has been given as a monopoly for a certain number of years. We recognise that it may be desirable for the Military authorities to observe a stricter licensing system for disciplinary reasons, but we consider that no cantonment authority should seek to make a financial profit out of such a restriction. If any profit is derived, it could equitably be devoted to providing greater facilities for the recreation of all units, Indian as well as European. And where there is a considerable civil population resident in a cantonment, the authorities should not ordinarily refuse permission for new houses to be opened primarily for their patronage.

Historical and archæological information.

276. Indian producers on more than one occasion represented to us the difficulty which they experience in obtaining reasonably correct historical data about dress, architecture, social customs and the like, without which all their

films except those dealing with the present day are likely to contain anachronisms. We put this difficulty to Sir John Marshall, Director-General of Archæology in India, who was good enough both to give oral evidence before us and later to send us a scheme for the preparation of a series of monographs. We reproduce this scheme as Appendix I. Briefly, it contemplates the compilation of six monographs covering different periods by selected independent writers, who would receive every assistance from the officers of the Archæological department. Sir John considers that a sum of Rs. 8,000 would suffice for the compilation of each monograph. We think that such publications would be undoubtedly useful to the trade, and that the Central Bureau should, as soon as finances admit, budget for the production, one by one, of the suggested monographs.

The position of Indian States.

277. A few words must be devoted to relations with the Indian States. The British Indian Act does not automatically extend to their territories, but it would be obviously desirable for them to enforce similar legislation, in which case a measure of reciprocity between each State and British India could probably be negotiated. If, as the majority recommend, a quota for Indian films be instituted, producers in Indian States will naturally and justly demand to share in the benefits of the scheme. This, however, could hardly be allowed unless they came under an enactment similar to that under which their competitors in British India were working. We therefore recommend the Government of India to point out to the Indian States the advantages of collaboration both in respect of legislation and administration, and to get them to contribute towards the success of the Central Bureau organisation.

Drafting defects in the present Act.

278. The Government of Bombay have pointed out two defects in the drafting of the Act as it stands at present. The first is that the Act, if literally interpreted, requires the certification of all films whether for private or public exhibition, and the licensing of all places at which exhibitions are held, even a drawing room where a "Baby Cinema" is used with non-inflammable films. They add that they have not enforced the law in the case of private exhibitions, but the penalties for failure to secure a premises license and certificate for the films used are still in reserve in case any private exhibition of obscene or seditious films comes to notice. The second defect in the Act is its unduly wide definition of a cinematograph—" any apparatus for the representation of moving pictures or series of pictures "—a definition which would include any ordinary peep-show using reeled films. We agree with both criticisms and consider that the Act needs amendment to meet them. If, however, private exhibitions are to be exempt from control, the conditions will need to be very carefully defined; otherwise, exhibitions which are in effect public may masquerade under the guise of private

and necessary control be avoided. For example, we understand that there is a growing import trade in films of non-standard size suitable for exhibition on miniature projectors. Such films can be and are hired; in fact, circulating film libraries are coming into being. We have heard no evidence on this point, and cannot make a definite recommendation, but the Central Board of Censors and the Bureau might, we think, investigate the question at an early date, and in particular consider whether non-standard films which are let out on hire should not require the Censor's certificate.

The bar in the cinemas.

279. Several witnesses advocated the abolition of bars from cinema houses and some of the exhibitors were not averse to that recommendation. It is only in the houses very largely patronised by the educated classes that a bar is provided and we have not heard of any complaints of any abuse of the bar where it is provided. It is a matter more for local authorities to deal with than for general legislation. We feel confident that the licensing authorities will prevent abuses and not permit the sale of cheap alcoholic drinks such as country spirit and toddy.

Smoking.

280. We found that in some places, especially in Burma, smoking is permitted inside cinema halls. These halls are often by no means well ventilated, and if the light on the screen is not very good, the clearness of the picture suffers. Apart from this, the atmosphere may become offensive, particularly to non-smokers. We think that exhibitors would be well advised to consider carefully whether permission to smoke attracts more persons than it keeps away.

# CHAPTER IX.

## Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations.

### Chapter I.

*Introductory.*

281. This Chapter is mainly concerned with the events leading up to the appointment of the Committee, and with the procedure of the Committee, but certain general conclusions are expressed—

(1) As far as India is concerned, public opinion is not sufficiently organised or articulate to make it possible to dispense with censorship. (¶ 3.)

(2) It is not considered that it is either practicable or justifiable to make one man or one body of men the arbiter of artistic taste for a whole population. (¶ 3.)

(3) In India the cinema problem is one of peculiar complexity owing mainly to the fact that the majority of the films exhibited are produced in the West and portray an entirely alien civilisation. (¶ 5.)

(4) The general effect of the Western films in India is not evil, but, on the whole, is good. (¶ 5.)

(5) The Western films, in spite of their defects, have an educational value for the people of India. They tend to open the eyes of the uneducated to other and more advanced conditions of life and to give them some idea, however imperfect, of conditions in other countries; they tend to broaden their minds and widen their outlook. (¶ 5.)

(6) If the exhibition of Western films is doing any mischief in this country the best remedy would seem to be to encourage Indian films to take their place. Moreover the encouragement of a national industry of this description is clearly advisable *per se* for reasons which are too obvious to require elaboration. (¶ 15.)

(7) The Chairman in his opening speech at the first meeting of the Committee stressed the point that the interests of India would be considered first, and the Committee have unanimously adhered to that view throughout. (¶ 26.)

(8) The industry is as yet entirely in Indian hands; non-Indian interests, though certainly watchful, have not yet established any control over it. It is well that the danger should be recognised and guarded against before it is too late. (¶ 27.)

### Chapter II.

*Survey of the Trade and Industry.*

This Chapter is devoted to a survey of exhibition, distribution, and production in this country, and concludes with a summary of the main defects and difficulties.

*Exhibition.*

(9) While exhibition in the larger towns and in those smaller towns where there is a considerable population of students or of the industrial labouring classes may be said, generally speaking, to be a paying concern many of the mofussil exhibitors are having a hard fight for existence. (¶ 94.)

(10) This is partly due to economic causes, partly to the fact that the cinema habit is undeveloped, and sometimes to inexperience. (¶ 94.)

(11) Very often the mofussil exhibitor is handicapped by the heavy rent which he has to pay for his hall.

(12) With two exceptions there is a notable absence of circuits and exhibitors do not combine to form circuits. (¶ 94.)

(13) Exhibitors are insufficiently organised. (¶ 94.)

(14) The Entertainment Tax (where it exists) is a handicap to the exhibitor when it is imposed on the cheaper seats. (¶ 94.)

*Travelling Cinemas.*

(15) The Travelling Cinemas are generally poor and struggling concerns. (¶ 95.)

(16) It is likely that the Travelling Cinema system will develop. (¶ 95.)

(17) They are definitely handicapped by the amount which they have to pay in licence fees. (¶ 95.)

*Distribution.*

(18) Distribution is insufficiently organised. This fact is of importance in connection with the financial aspect of production. (¶ 96.)

(19) "Block" and "Blind" booking prevail to some extent. But neither from the point of view of the Trade nor of the public interest do we consider that there is sufficient ground for interference in this matter. (¶ 96.)

*Production.*

(20) Although we have been impressed by the progress made in the production of Indian films in the last few years we have been even more impressed by the necessity for improvement in the quality of the films produced. It is very desirable that more Indian films should be produced. But unless the quality is improved there is little hope for future expansion. Already we have observed indications of a falling off in the demand for Indian films. (¶ 97.)

(21) There is urgent need for improvement in the stories, scenarios, acting, technique, photography—in fact, in all respects—although there has been some improvement, especially in photography. (¶ 97.)

(22) Such improvement can only be effected by the better training of all concerned, and such training is not at present available in India. (¶ 97.)

(23) It is essential that the whole level of production should be raised. This means that cultured people must come forward, not only as producers but as actors and actresses. (¶ 97.)

(24) The main difficulty is one of finance. Capitalists are shy. This is partly due to the stigma which is attached to the studios, partly to the fact that present producers are inexperienced in business and therefore do not command confidence, and partly to the failures which have occurred. (¶ 97.)

(25) The producers are insufficiently organised. There is a lack of trade associations of sufficient authority. (¶ 97.)

(26) There is also a remarkable dearth of reliable statistical and other information. (¶ 97.)

*Madan's alleged monopoly.*

(27) The complaints made against Madan's alleged monopoly are also examined, and it is found that there is not sufficient ground for recommending that any action should be taken. (¶ 88 to ¶ 92.)

## Chapter III.

*Cinema Department.*

*Central Bureau and Advisory Committee.*

*The need for a central organisation.*

(28) If the trade and especially the film-producing industry are to develop and develop on sound lines, it is essential that there should be some central organisation to guide, assist and control. (¶ 98.)

(29) At present, the producing industry in this country is not in a position either to avail itself of and apply to its own conditions the results of the experience of Western countries in film-making or to avoid the serious danger of production of films of purely local or regional appeal. It has neither the capital resources, the banking facilities, knowledge or the personnel required for this purpose. (¶ 100 and ¶ 101.)

(30) It would be nothing more than a pious aspiration if producers themselves were asked to undertake the steps which are necessary to improve the technique, quantity and quality generally of their work. (¶ 102.)

(31) Owing to the present limited home-market, it is not possible to expect an ordinary producer to increase to any great extent his production-cost because if he spends much more on a picture he cannot hope to get sufficient return to bring in a profit. (¶ 102.)

*Constitution of Advisory Committee and Central Bureau.*

(32) It is therefore recommended that there be created a Cinema Department to form part of the Commerce Department of the Government of India. This department shall consist of an Advisory Committee with a Central Cinema Bureau as its executive branch. (¶ 103 and ¶ 118.)

(33) The Advisory Committee should consist of not more than 14 members, of whom 8, including the Chairman, should be non-officials representative of different communities and interests; the remaining 6 should be officials comprising 3 representatives of Departments of the Government of India and 3 representatives of the Provincial Governments. The Chairman and the majority of the members should be Indians. (¶ 106 and ¶ 107.)

(34) The Central Bureau should consist of a body of technical experts, and should comprise, it is suggested, a Director of film-production, a camera-man, a printing and developing expert and an electrician. (¶ 105.)

(35) It will be located at Bombay, which is the main seat of production as well as the chief importing centre. (¶ 105.)

(36) At the head of the Bureau will be the Secretary of the Advisory Committee, who should be a permanent well-qualified officer. (¶ 106.)

*Functions.*

(37) The function of the Cinema Department will be generally to advise, guide and assist the trade and industry and work for its improvement. Advice and assistance in technical matters will be given by the experts of the Bureau and advice on the business aspects—finance, business-management, etc.—will be supplied by the Advisory Committee which will include experienced men of business. (¶ 106.)

(38) The Secretary will be the mainspring of the Bureau's activities. It will be his task to bring the industry and the experts together and collect and distribute information of all kinds. His duties in this regard will be comprehensive, since the Bureau is expected and meant to be a clearing-house of information and technical assistance. (¶ 109.)

(39) In order to execute its functions effectively it will be necessary for the Bureau—

(*a*) to maintain records of the facts and conditions of the trade and industry throughout the country. For this purpose it will keep registers of producers, importers, distributors and exhibitors and it shall be obligatory upon all those engaged in such activities to be registered. Similarly every film produced in or imported into this country must be registered. (The suggestions regarding registration are intended solely for the benefit of the trade and care should be taken to avoid any inquisitorial interference with the internal business affairs of any particular concern.) The Bureau will also prescribe returns which are to be made by members of the trade. (¶ 112.)

(*b*) The Bureau will also keep full information regarding cinema conditions and foreign markets throughout the world, and make such information accessible to the trade. (¶ 119.)

(*c*) The experts will train Indians in technical matters. (¶ 119.)

(*d*) It is left to the Advisory Committee to decide whether the Bureau shall actually operate a studio. (¶ 108, also ¶ 165.)

(*e*) It is likely that the Bureau will have to pioneer a developing and printing laboratory, which might later be handed over to private enterprise. (¶ 108, also ¶ 166.)

(*f*) The Bureau should maintain a library of educational films, both Indian and foreign, and arrange for their distribution. (¶ 110.)

(*g*) It should publish information regarding Indian productions and developments of the industry. (¶ 111.)

(*h*) It should hold annual competitions for the best Indian productions and award medals or certificates. (¶ 113.)

(*i*) Similar competitions should be held for scenarios with substantial money-prizes, successful scenarios to become the property of the Bureau for disposal to the trade of the country. (¶ 113, also ¶ 175.)

(*j*) The Bureau might also offer to examine for a nominal fee any scenarios tendered for the purpose. (¶ 113 and ¶ 165.)

*Finance.*

(40) The Cinema Department should be financed as follows:—

(*a*) The Departments of the Government of India should be directed, and the Provincial Governments invited, to contribute towards its maintenance as well as to co-operate in making it a success. (¶ 115.)

(*b*) The Trade, who are the chief beneficiary, will contribute by means of a cess. This cess will be in the form of an additional 5 per cent on imported films, which will be collected by the Custom Houses in the same manner and at the same time as the existing 15 per cent duty. (¶ 116.)

(*c*) Any surplus from censoring fees which remains after defraying the cost of maintenance of the proposed censoring organisation shall be allotted to the Cinema Department. (¶ 116.)

(*d*) Any deficiency will be met by the Government of India. (¶ 117.)

(41) It is estimated that the cost of the Bureau and Advisory Committee will be Rs. 4 lakhs per annum rising to Rs. 5 lakhs. (¶ 117.)

## Chapter IV.

### *Examination of the measures proposed for encouraging Production, Distribution and Exhibition.*

This Chapter opens with some general considerations regarding the present inefficiency of the cinema trade and industry in this country, its prospects, and its need of assistance. (¶ 121 to ¶ 129.)

It is then considered what further measures (in addition to the creation of a Central Bureau) are required. The three main proposals which have been suggested are then examined, and recommendations formulated as follows:—

*Financial aid.*

(42) In view of the fact that finance is the great difficulty in the way of the development of the industry, it is recommended by the majority that loans be given on favourable terms to producers by Government, on the security of produced films approved by the Central Bureau in consultation with the Boards of Censors, or other approved security. Such loans should only be required in the initial stages and it is proposed that the scheme should be in force for ten years only. A capital of 5 or 10 lakhs furnished by the Central Government or by contributions from Local Governments might be placed at the disposal of the Bureau or the Central Board of Censors for that purpose. (¶ 130 to ¶ 134.)

*The need for more cinemas.*

(43) It is necessary to find an outlet for the increased production which is anticipated. At present the market is very restricted owing to the small number of cinemas open to Indian films and to other limitations. Efforts should be made both by Government and the public—

(*a*) to organise the distributing agencies so as to bring Indian pictures within the reach of all the cinemas;

(*b*) to encourage travelling cinemas to take more Indian pictures; and

(*c*) to survey the possibilities of extending the number of cinemas and encouraging the use of public and educational halls for cinema exhibitions. (¶ 135 to ¶ 140.)

(44) What is particularly needed is the building of more cinemas. To this end it will be necessary (1) to remove financial difficulties, (2) to survey the possibilities, (3) to obtain the co-operation of the various departments of public utility. It is expected that the Bureau will be able to devise means of achieving these objects. (¶ 141.)

(45) But, in the first instance, Government must take definite action. It is unanimously agreed that local bodies should be encouraged to bring into existence more halls for public purposes generally, including cinema exhibitions, and it is recommended by the majority that loans should be granted by Government to local bodies for the purpose, if required. The minority, while they have no strong objection to this proposal, cannot definitely join in it. (¶ 141.)

(46) It is also recommended by the majority that loans be granted from public funds to approved individuals or companies who propose to build cinema houses in any appreciable number. (The minority are opposed to this.) (¶ 141.)

(47) It is recommended that public halls and halls attached to educational institutions should be placed at the disposal of travelling cinemas, only actual expenses being charged. (¶ 142.)

*Quota system.*

(48) With the double object of finding an outlet for suitable Indian films and removing the unsatisfactory feature that Indian films are excluded from a large number of the well-equipped cinemas in India, the majority recommend that a qualified quota system for Indian films be imposed, for a period of ten years in the form outlined in the scheme appended to the chapter. (¶ 145.)

(49) The difficulty of compelling all cinemas to exhibit a quota of Indian films is recognised and an arrangement for a transferable quota is therefore proposed. (¶ 148.)

(50) It is hoped that within the next ten years 50 per cent of the films shown in India will be Indian. (The minority, while sharing in the hope, are opposed to the quota scheme.) (¶ 148.)

Certain other measures for assisting the industry are then considered and the following conclusions and recommendations are formulated.

*Modifications of the tariff.*

(51) (*a*) It is considered that assessment of imported films on a tariff valuation or at a specific rate is inevitable. (¶ 153.)

(*b*) We are of opinion that the concession recently made in the case of positives printed abroad is unnecessary and is a retrograde step. The despatch of films abroad for printing, and still more for developing, should be definitely discouraged. We strongly recommend a reversion to the position prior to 1st January 1928, so that all standard positive films should be liable to the same taxation. (¶ 154.)

(*c*) Increase of duty on imported films as a protective measure is not recommended. (¶ 155.)

(*d*) The duty on raw or virgin films should be abolished. This is a concession which the producing-industry can legitimately claim. (¶ 156.)

(*e*) Exemption of duty on cinematograph machinery and chemicals is not recommended. (¶ 157.)

(*f*) A rebate of duty on films of definite educational value should be granted, on a certificate given by the Bureau at the instance of the Censor. (¶ 158.)

(*g*) It is unnecessary to propose that the payment of drawback on re-exported films should be prohibited. (¶ 159.)

(*h*) It has been represented that the flat rate of duty presses heavily on the cheaper type of imported films. The importation of films of this type is to be discouraged as they compete with Indians films, and they should receive no tariff concession. (¶ 160.)

(*i*) No tariff concession should be granted to duplicate copies. (¶ 161.)

*Scholarships.*

(52) It is recommended that provision be made, either by the Bureau or by independent or conjoint action on the part of the various Governments and the trade, for a limited number of scholarships for learning the technique of the industry abroad. Preference should be given to those who have had some experience in this country. (¶ 164.)

*Classes for training.*

(53) There is no necessity at present for the opening of classes in schools or colleges for training in the various branches of the industry. (¶ 167.)

*Facilities and concessions.*

(54) Producing concerns registered and recognised by the Bureau for that purpose should be allowed certain facilities of access to public buildings and the loan of troops, etc., on payment of actual expenses, and also railway fares at concession rates such as are granted to theatrical companies. (¶ 168.)

*The danger of non-Indian control.*

(55) If non-Indians should at any time threaten to acquire large cinema interests in this country otherwise than under the conditions prescribed for participation in the quota system (which are for securing the predominance of Indian interests) Government should arm themselves by legislation with powers to exclude them from operating. (¶ 170.)

(56) No concerns in which Indian interests do not predominate should be eligible for concessions or privileges. (The minority do not consider that Indian interests need necessarily predominate.) (¶ 171.)

*Misrepresentation of Indians in films exhibited abroad.*

(57) (*a*) The sending abroad of negatives exposed in this country should be allowed only after the sender has lodged a signed declaration of the nature of the subject in a prescribed form. (¶ 172.)

(*b*) No positive shall be exported until it has been passed by the Censor.

(*c*) If cases occur in which Indians are depicted in an undesirable manner in films produced abroad, the Government of India should bring diplomatic influence to bear either through their own agents or through the representatives of Great Britain. (¶ 173.)

*Certain difficulties and defects of film-production in India.*

(58) The difficulties and defects referred to in Chapter II regarding actors and actresses, deficiencies of scenarios, imitation of the West, lack of co-operation from the cultured classes, Muslim tastes, the language difficulty, provincial differences, communal susceptibilities, inadequate publicity, and lack of authoritative

historical books of reference, are expected to be overcome gradually with the assistance of the Bureau to which these matters are commended for special attention. (¶ 174 to ¶ 183.)

*Communal susceptibilities.*

(59) While we are alive to the necessity for respecting the feelings of communities whether in social or religious matters, we are convinced that if the film industry in this country is to succeed the extreme tenderness which is now shown to them both by censoring authorities and the executive should disappear. The Indian producer has to contend against odds, and he cannot be expected to rise even to moderate prosperity in the industry if frivolous or hypercritical objections are to be respected. (¶ 181.)

*Distribution and Exhibition.*

*The Independent Exhibitor.*

(60) The difficulties of the independent exhibitor are inevitable. The remedy lies in the direction of combination and the formation of groups, and it is hoped that the grant of loans will facilitate such combinations. (¶ 184.)

*Piracy of Films.*

(61) For protection against piracy it is recommended that owners of rights in films should be permitted to register their copyrights with the Bureau, and that thereafter no certificate for any copy of such films should be granted to others than the registered owners except after a decision in the Civil Courts. (¶ 185.)

*Free Passes.*

(62) This handicap, of which complaint has been made by exhibitors, is likely to be diminished by the system of returns which has been recommended. (¶ 186.)

*Entertainments Tax.*

(63) It is recommended that seats costing less than Re. 1 should be exempted from the tax. No distinction should be made between the cinema and the stage in this connection. (¶ 187.)

*Travelling Cinemas.*

(64) It is recommended that the Cinematograph Act be amended so as to provide for the grant of an exhibition license to travelling cinemas which, subject to certain safeguards, shall be current throughout the entire province. (¶ 188.)

*The Foreign Market.*

(65) There are limited prospects for Indian films in those countries where there is an Indian population. But Indian films, as at present produced, have little or no chance of success in the West. For the purpose of making films with a universal appeal the co-operation of Western enterprise is needed at present, but that

co-operation must, in the opinion of the majority, be subject to certain restrictions. In other words, the Indian interest should predominate in such a joint concern; otherwise they should not be encouraged. The minority while accepting the principle are for limiting the restrictions to a minimum. (¶ 189 to ¶ 195.)

*General conclusions.*

(66) The cinema industry should receive liberal treatment from Government. It contributes its share to the general revenue of the country. It is of great national importance. (¶ 196 to ¶ 199.)

## Chapter V.

## *Educational and Public Utility Films.*

### *Use of the film in schools and colleges.*

(67) Regarding the use of the film in schools and colleges we consider that it can be employed as a useful adjunct to existing educational methods, especially in teaching technical and scientific subjects in the higher classes. (¶ 202.)

(68) We are not prepared however to recommend expenditure, where such expenditure would have to be provided out of the normal budgets, as there are more urgent needs. (¶ 202.)

(69) But we draw the attention of Provincial Governments, local bodies and public-spirited citizens to the desirability of providing school and college students with facilities for seeing films of educational value. (¶ 202.)

### *Use of the film for mass adult education.*

*Its value.*

(70) We have been strongly impressed by—and we strongly urge the value of—the cinema for mass adult education in this country. (¶ 203.)

(71) Since the trade cannot be expected to purchase and exhibit educational films from motives of philanthropy, this is a matter in which public authorities and bodies, from the Government of India down to the humblest Municipality or District Board, might act with advantage. (¶ 204.)

(72) The film can be used to magnify the scope and efficiency of existing propaganda instruments, and the use of this instrument is therefore pressed most earnestly upon the attention of the Government and all these bodies. (¶ 204.)

(73) Propaganda work by means of the films, apart from the quicker and more efficient achievement of its immediate objects, can be made into an instrument of untold value for harmonising ideals, ideas, customs, and practices all over the country. It can, in fact, be made into a nation-building force in the true sense of those words. (¶ 206.)

*It is little used.*

(74) Although sums, which, in the aggregate, amount to a considerable expenditure, are being spent in the various provinces on adult education and on propaganda by Government Departments, very little use has been made of the cinema. (¶ 204.)

*Concerted action.*

(75) In every province, the Provincial Governments, Ministers, the Heads of Departments and local self-governing bodies should combine in a common policy for mass education in the broader sense by means of the cinema. A Committee representative of all these different bodies and interests might be formed in each province in order to lay down a definite concerted scheme of mass education by means of the film. (¶ 205.)

(76) All provinces should also combine to support the Bureau.

*Compulsory exhibition of educational films.*

(77) It is recommended that it be made obligatory on all exhibitors to show at every exhibition a percentage of educational films, for not exceeding 15 minutes. (¶ 208.)

*Other modes of exhibition.*

(78) It is suggested that Provincial Governments, Departments and local bodies might also consider the advisability of employing travelling cinemas for exhibiting educational films and (as in the Punjab) the use of cinema lorries. (¶ 209.)

(79) They might also consider the desirability of acquiring or erecting, for the exhibition of such films, halls, which could be used also for other purposes. (¶ 209.)

## Chapter VI.

*The Resolution of the Imperial Conference.*

(80) It is not recommended that any steps be taken for giving any special preference or encouragement to films produced within the Empire. (¶ 210.)

*Circumstances peculiar to India.*

(81) If too much exhibition of American films in the country is a danger to the national interest, too much exhibition of other Western films is as much a danger. (¶ 211.)

(82) The film industry in India is in its infancy and it is vital to the national interest that the indigenous industry should be encouraged in every way. (¶ 212.)

(83) Indian films produced on Indian subjects unless they are of a very superior kind are hardly likely to command any audience in the West. (¶ 213.)

(84) India is yet in a very backward state as regards her industrial activities and equipment, and scientific and technical knowledge. She will hardly be able to hold her own with Britain, for instance, with her centuries of industrial organisation and accomplishment. (¶ 214.)

(85) With teeming millions in the country, the earning and spending capacity of the Indian hardly compares favourably with that of the citizens of other parts of the Empire. (¶ 215.)

(86) India stands to gain if really her films can find an outlet to an equal extent to which Empire films can find an inlet here. But as matters stand at present and are likely to be for several years, the chances for her films are too remote to be taken into account in deciding practical issues. (¶ 215.)

(87) The question of Imperial Preference is in fact bound up with issues political, racial, economic and otherwise. For instance, no discussion on the general question of preference can avoid consideration of the status of Indians abroad and in India itself. (¶ 216.)

(88) While some of the members of the Committee may believe in Imperial Preference, we are all agreed that it is a matter which has to be considered in all its aspects as one question covering all the issues and can be decided only by the Central Legislature. (¶ 216.)

*The economic merits.*

(89) Considering this question of preference on its economic merits also the Committee is satisfied that there is no necessity for any preferential treatment for the admission of British films in this country. No artificial aid is needed to advance the British film trade in this country. The Indian market is open to British films. There is a demand for such films. India is already taking an amount of British films which, in proportion to the output, is considerable. If British films of suitable quality and price are imported, they will find a market. In fact the old and strong trade connection between India and Britain and the natural predilections of Britons in India give British films in India a distinct preference. (¶ 217 and ¶ 218.)

*Other considerations.*

(90) It is no good to India to substitute artificially one class of non-Indian films for another. Our aim will be and should be to remove the non-Indian grip on the screen. (¶ 218.)

(91) Under the Customs Regulations in England Indian films enjoy a preferential tariff of one-third over films produced outside the Empire, and under the recent Cinema Act Indian films can qualify for quota. While most of the members of the Committee are anxious to find the means by which the sentiments actuating Britain in passing her legislation may be reciprocated the practical difficulties stated prevent them from making any recommendations in the direction indicated. (¶ 219.)

(92) It is inadvisable to estrange foreign film-producing countries. (¶ 219.)

(93) India has already ample opportunities of contact with British ideas. (¶ 220.)

(94) Even if the Committee had decided on an Empire quota for India, it is obvious that the whole of it would have to be allotted to Indian films. (¶ 220.)

*Films of educational merit.*

(95) As regards films of sound educational merit, the Committee fully appreciate and endorse the views of the Conference that there is great need for the exchange of films of that sort between various parts of the Empire. India stands to gain a great deal on account of the vast illiteracy of the country by having more such films from the Empire and other parts of the world. The standards of life in other countries, conditions of labour, sanitary methods, civic life of the people, etc., if properly shown on the screen, will go a great way to remove the vast ignorance and tend to improve the conditions of the people in this country. (¶ 221.)

(96) Every possible step should be taken to come to mutual understandings with the various parts of the Empire and with other countries for exchange of films of sound educational merits. (¶ 222.)

(97) It will be the duty of the Bureau to devise means for such exchanges. (¶ 222.)

## Chapter VII.

## *Social Aspects and Control.*

### *General.*

(98) Censorship is certainly necessary in India and it is the only effective method of preventing the import, production and public exhibition of films which might demoralise morals, hurt religious susceptibilities or excite communal or racial animosities. (¶ 223.)

(99) The existing censorship has yielded, on the whole, satisfactory results, but its machinery is capable of improvement. (¶ 223.)

(100) Owing to the volume of work it is impracticable for all films to be examined by members of the Boards at Bombay and Calcutta. (¶ 240.)

(101) Most of the criticism has been of a general nature and much of it ill-informed. (¶ 241.)

(102) The canons of censorship adopted by the Boards are in every way adequate, provided that they are intelligently and consistently applied. (¶ 241.)

(103) The overwhelming majority of films certified for public exhibition in no way tend to demoralise the Indian public, or to bring Western civilisation into contempt. (¶ 243.)

(104) Time and education, the latter partly supplied by the cinema itself, are the best remedies for any misunderstanding that may occur. (¶ 243.)

(105) The fact that the Police unanimously believe that the cinema does not incite to crime is proof of the soundness of the canon of censorship regarding crime and of its adequate enforcement. The Police evidence is to our minds conclusive. (¶ 244.)

(106) Certain classes of film-scenes showing passionate love-making have a tendency to demoralise the youth of the country and cause distinct apprehension in the minds of some conservative and thoughtful Indians. (¶ 246.)

(107) Scenes showing long lingering kisses and passionate embraces, especially where emphasised by the fashionable expedient of the "close up" might well, in a few instances, have been cut or abbreviated. (¶ 246.)

(108) Suggestive impropriety in dress, conduct and love-making should be somewhat more jealously discountenanced, not because such scenes harm European interests or Indian morals in particular, but because they may have a tendency to corrupt the morals of adolescents of all communities. By this it is not suggested that all scenes of low life, even all repellent scenes, should be banned. (¶ 246.)

(109) A careful study of the facts will show that much of the criticism of the cinema in India had its origin outside India, and sprang from persons who were either not conversant with Indian conditions or who had fixed convictions not based on facts. (¶ 247.)

(110) Trade propaganda has been a source of such criticism. (¶ 247.)

(111) The Committee not only cannot accept the very doubtful statements of the Social Hygiene Delegation, but it appears obvious to them that they were made without adequate enquiry and partly at least as a result of pre-existing obsession. (¶ 248.)

(112) No small amount of the existing criticism of films in India results from suggestive posters. Sometimes the critic has never seen the films at all. (¶ 249.)

(113) The posters need greater control. Pre-censorship would be administratively very difficult and also most inconvenient to the trade. Therefore the Magistracy or Police should be given power to direct any objectionable poster to be forthwith removed, and disobedience to such an order should be punishable by a Magistrate with a fine. (¶ 249.)

(114) The complaint that too much tenderness is bestowed on communal, racial, political and even colour considerations in regard to films is not altogether ill-founded. (¶ 251.)

(115) It is hardly believable that a historical film picturing incidents, say, of the French Revolution, will incite any ordinary member of an audience to attempt to overthrow the Government by law established in India. A propaganda film prepared by a hostile power might of course have such a tendency. (¶ 251.)

(116) The idea that a film should be banned merely because the subject matter may by oversubtle analogy be interpreted as having a possible reference to current questions should be deprecated. (¶ 251.)

(117) The Censor and administrative officers should not encourage individuals who in their private or representative capacities object to film plots or incidents. Overmuch tenderness to

frivolous objections is more likely to encourage dissension. This applies to a considerable extent even to films of a religious or social reform tinge. (¶ 251.)

(118) There is nothing to choose between the Boards in relation to moral standards. (¶ 252.)

(119) Conflicts of opinion between the Boards on moral questions are most exceptional. (¶ 252.)

(120) It is contrary to public policy that there should be dissensions between different Boards and provinces, and it is not fair to the importer, producer or exhibitor. (¶ 252.)

(121) It is believed that a Central Board will obviate all genuine difficulties. (¶ 253.)

*The proposed re-organisation of the machinery of Censorship.*

(122) A Central Board, which may be designated the " Indian Board of Film Censors " should be established. (¶ 254.)

(123) It should be located at Bombay, because the producing industry in India is predominantly based on Bombay, a cosmopolitan city where every creed, caste and race is represented, and also because the Bombay Board already does more than half the censoring of the whole of the Indian Empire. (¶ 254.)

(124) It should consist of seven or nine members with a majority of Indian non-officials and a non-official Indian Chairman. The members should be ladies or gentlemen (for sex should be no disqualification) of standing and wide culture, and should be appointed by the Government of India. The Commissioner of Police should be a member *ex officio*. (¶ 254.)

(125) As its Chief Executive Officer and Secretary it should have a Chief Censor on a salary of about Rs. 1,000—50—1,500, who should be a man of culture, preferably an Indian, with University qualifications, and who should have travelled abroad as well as in India. (¶ 254.)

(126) All imported films tendered for censorship will be examined by the Chief Censor who will forthwith issue a certificate in the name of the Board if he sees nothing objectionable in it, or if any excision or change in it which he may propose is accepted by the owner or his accredited agent. But if he considers that the film should be banned, or that excisions or alterations unacceptable to the owner should be made before certification, he will refer the matter to the Board for decision. (¶ 254.)

(127) The Central Board will also deal with any Indian films that may be tendered to it. Such films should be seen by the Censor with two members or by the Chairman and the Censor. (¶ 254.)

(128) In order to associate the trade, the public and recognised institutions with the work of censorship, when any film is being viewed by the Censor or Deputy Censor or members of the Board, a representative of the trade, the Municipal Corporation, the University, the Police and recognised social service organisations should be allowed to attend in an honorary and advisory capacity. (¶ 254.)

(129) A sitting fee of Rs. 20 for three hours' attendance or less should be given to all members of the Board including the Chairman. No payment for voluntary attendances. The Chairman should be given a monthly honorarium of Rs. 250. The Chairman and the members should be appointed for three years, subject to renewal; and the Censor for five years, subject to probation for one year and also to renewal. (¶ 254.)

(130) There should be a Deputy Censor, subordinate to the Central Board, stationed at Calcutta for the censorship of imported films. (¶ 255.)

(131) Also there should be Provincial Boards, where necessary, for the censoring of locally produced feature films. (¶ 255.)

(132) Where no Central or Provincial Board exists, power should be given to the Presidency or District Magistrate to certify topical films. (¶ 255.)

(133) There will be no work for the Punjab Board unless and until feature films are produced in Northern India. The Punjab Board should therefore disappear for the time being. (¶ 255.)

(134) The original censoring done by the Madras Board is so exiguous that this Board also should be discontinued. (¶ 255.)

(135) In Bengal and Burma the present Boards should be reconstituted into Provincial Boards which should be entitled to certify for all India any topical or feature film produced in India or Burma and tendered to them. The Burma Board should also censor Chinese films. (¶ 255.)

(136) The Bengal and Burma Boards should consist of five or seven members, including the Chairman, of whom not less than three or four, as the case may be, including the Chairman, should be non-official Indians or Burmans. The Commissioner of Police should be an *ex officio* member. (¶ 255.)

(137) All indigenous (and Chinese) films should be examined by at least 2 members, except that the Chairman sitting alone should be authorised to certify news gazettes. (¶ 255.)

(138) If the Government of any province other than Bombay, Bengal or Burma, consider that a new Provincial Board is necessary in the interests of local producers, they should move the Government of India to create a new Provincial Board. (¶ 255.)

(139) All certificates, by whomsoever issued, will be valid throughout British India. (¶ 258.)

(140) The Central Board will lay down general canons of censorship for the guidance of the Chief and Deputy Censor and for the information of Provincial Boards. (¶ 258.)

(141) Both the Central Board and the Deputy Censor should have their own projection rooms, operators and offices. (¶ 256.)

(142) When the Provincial Governments exempt any films, they should send full particulars to the Central Board. (¶ 259.)

(143) Obviously the right to appeal to Provincial Governments must in the suggested scheme be withdrawn. (¶ 260.)

(144) Any person feeling himself aggrieved by a decision of any Board or other certifying authority should be entitled to apply to the Government of India to revise that decision and the Government should always, when adjudicating the matter, have before it the report of the Central Bureau. It might suitably be laid down that all such applications should be submitted to Government through the Bureau. This procedure would assist the Bureau to become that real centre of film information and co-ordination which the Committee hope to see it become. (¶ 260.)

(145) The Provincial Governments must still retain the power to declare uncertified in their province any film the exhibition of which may endanger law and order or, for special local or temporary reasons, be likely to cause bad blood. (¶ 261.)

(146) For this two limitations are advocated:

(i) no film should be banned before it is viewed;

(ii) no film should be suspended, and still less declared uncertified, on merely moral grounds. (¶ 261.)

(147) The authority of the censorship ought to prevail against an individual's whim or judgment until and unless there has been an impartial and informed adjudication. (¶ 261.)

(148) The Provincial Government concerned, either on its own motion or on the motion of a Magistrate or responsible Police officer, should, if it considers that a certified film offends against good morals, move the Government of India through the Central Bureau to adjudicate the matter. (¶ 261.)

(149) The Central Board will have to prescribe the registers to be maintained and the returns to be made and make rules for the supply of extracts on payment of fees. (¶ 262.)

(150) The Board could safely allow Provincial Boards and District Magistrates to sanction omissions from certified films and also the insertion of translation of sub-titles or captions. (¶ 262.)

(151) The Board should keep in close touch with the Central Bureau, which should be entitled to call for reports and information from the Board and from its chief Executive Officer, the Censor. (¶ 262.)

(152) The suggested scheme for a centralised censorship provides for censorship either by well-qualified and well-paid stipendiaries or by actual members of the Boards; it will achieve uniformity of standard while preserving elasticity and safeguarding provincial and local rights. It will also obviate delays except in contentious cases, and also will associate with the work of censorship accredited public bodies and the trade. (¶ 263.)

*Finance.*

(153) For the benefit the trade receives from the proposed reorganisation of the machinery of censorship, it should pay. The censorship fee should be raised to Rs. 10 per 1,000 feet. (¶ 264.)

*Children and the Cinema.*

(154) Children are probably less likely to suffer from seeing films of doubtful morality than from witnessing scenes of violence and sensation which are absolutely harmless to the adolescent or the adult. (¶ 265.)

(155) It is mainly for the parents or natural guardians of children to protect them and keep them away from harmful entertainments, and the Committee are definitely opposed to films being certified as for adults only. (¶ 265.)

(156) At present, it is recognised, parents have little opportunity of knowing whether a particular film is suitable for children or not. It is therefore recommended that the English practice of issuing two classes of certificates should be tried. (¶ 265.)

(157) It should be made obligatory on the exhibitor to indi cate on his posters and in all advertisements when the film advertised has received a "Universal" certificate. (¶ 265.)

## Chapter VIII.

*Miscellaneous.*

*Tampering with films.*

(158) Once a film has been tendered for censorship, no alteration should be made in it pending the final decision, except with the consent of the Censor. (¶ 266.)

(159) Every copy of a film should be accompanied, wherever it goes for exhibition, by the original certificate or by a certified copy of the certificate. (¶ 267.)

(160) The Act should be amended so as to make tampering with a film after censorship a substantive offence punishable, on conviction by a Presidency or a First-class Magistrate, with a fine which may extend to Rs. 1,000 and the confiscation of the film. (¶ 268.)

(161) The amendment should make it clear that the person, firm or company at whose instance the film was certified, should be deemed liable for the tampering unless he or they can prove that it was done without his or their cognizance. (¶ 268.)

*Post-censorship control.*

(162) It is the business of the ordinary Civil administration to administer the Act in respect of public exhibitions. (¶ 269.)

(163) In each district the District Magistrate or some other prescribed authority, working with the co-operation of the subordinate magistracy and police, should take an informed interest in the cinematographs within his jurisdiction. (¶ 269.)

(164) It should be made obligatory on every exhibitor to furnish weekly programmes in advance to the prescribed authorities. (¶ 269.)

(165) If a Magistrate considers that for genuine local reasons a film should not be exhibited in his district, he should exercise his statutory powers under section 7 (5) of the Act, but this power should not be lightly exercised. (¶ 269.)

(166) The posting of notices in cinema houses stating to whom complaints about films should be addressed might be made a condition of the licence. This might also encourage the formation of "Better Film" societies and like institutions. (¶ 270.)

*Obscene films.*

(167) The censorship has entirely prevented and will prevent the public exhibition of obscene films, and it is not the function of the censorship to deal with private exhibitions. There was no definite evidence that such films have been imported or produced. (¶ 271.)

*Provincial Advisory Boards.*

(168) The Provincial Governments, other than those of Bombay, Bengal and Burma, would be well advised to constitute small but representative bodies to advise them about all film matters. (¶ 272.)

(169) The members of such Advisory Boards should also make a point of visiting the cinemas in their area so that they may keep themselves in touch with the actual conditions. (¶ 272.)

*The Army.*

(170) The Committee do not think that the censorship can take Army needs into special consideration when certifying films. (¶ 273.)

(171) The Indian soldier's abstention is mainly due to economic causes, but it is also true that he has not facilities for seeing the cinema within his lines equal to those enjoyed by British soldiers. (¶ 274.)

(172) The private exhibitor should be encouraged by the military authorities to exhibit Indian films to the Indian troops. Facilities should be granted by the authorities for the exhibition to them of Indian films, e.g., by allowing the use of Government or regimental halls. (¶ 274.)

(173) It may be desirable for the military authorities to observe a stricter licensing system in cantonment areas for disciplinary reasons but they should not seek to make a financial profit out of such a restriction. (¶ 275.)

(174) Where there is a considerable civil population resident in a cantonment the authorities should not ordinarily refuse permission for new houses to be opened primarily for their patronage. (¶ 275.)

*Historical and archæological information.*

(175) Historical and archæological monographs covering different periods by selected independent writers would be undoubtedly useful to the trade, and the Central Bureau should, as soon as finances admit, budget for the production of the suggested monographs. (¶ 276.)

*The Indian States.*

(176) The Government of India should point out to the Indian States the advantages of collaboration both in respect of legislation and administration, and induce them to contribute towards the success of the Central Bureau organisation. (¶ 277.)

*Bars.*

(177) The question of the abolition of bars from cinema houses is a matter more for local authorities to deal with than for general legislation. It is confidently felt that the licensing authorities will prevent abuses and not permit the sale of cheap alcoholic drinks, such as country spirit and toddy. (¶ 279.)

*Smoking.*

(178) In some places, especially in Burma, smoking is permitted inside cinema halls. The halls are often not well ventilated and if the light on the screen is not very good, the clearness of the picture suffers. The exhibitors would be well advised to consider carefully whether such permission attracts more persons than it keeps away. (¶ 280.)

*The directions in which legislative action will be required.*

282. Our two main recommendations—namely, the creation of a Central Cinema Department and the centralisation of the machinery of censorship with provincial auxiliary agencies—will no doubt involve some radical changes, requiring re-arrangement of Provincial and Central subjects, amendment of the Devolution Rules and also legislative amendments and additions in the Indian Cinematograph Act and possibly other Acts.

The control of the cinematograph is now a Provincial Reserved subject, while legislation in regard to sanction of films for exhibition is to be made by the Indian Legislature.

Development of Industries is now a Provincial Transferred subject.

Our view, which we have developed in the various chapters, is that in the case of the cinema the principle underlying items 19 and 20 in the list of Central subjects applies. Both Control and Production ought to be made Central subjects and the agency of Provincial Governments should be invoked as largely as possible.

The Indian Cinematograph Act will have to be substantially amended. Power will have to be given to Provincial Governments to form advisory committees and to make appointments to

Provincial Boards when they are constituted. Provision for the creation of a Central Bureau and an Advisory Committee and a Central Censorship Board, for registration of films, protection of copyright in films, prescribing penalties for tampering with certified films and several other matters dealt with in the various chapters will have to be made.

The Tariff will also have to be amended. Legislation will be needed to impose the cess recommended.

It will have to be considered whether a single self-contained Act dealing with all aspects of the Cinema Trade and Industry including Production and Control will not be the most effective means of introducing the changes required.

Our intention here is merely to indicate the directions in which legislation will be needed. The subject will of course have to be examined later in detail by the legislative experts attached to the Government of India after it has been decided what steps should be taken.

*Financial results.*

283. As regards the financial results involved by our recommendations, while we accept the principle that the bulk of the burden should fall on the trade and industry, we also consider that the general revenues both Provincial and Central should share a portion thereof. In the first place there is the fact that a fairly large amount is raised from Customs duties on imported films, from Profession Tax and Income Tax paid by those in the trade. There are recoveries from License Fees. In the next place, the cinema is useful as an educative factor in the broad sense of the term. It is also useful to the public, enabling them to enjoy their leisure hours. There is also the factor that it is a case of aiding an industry which is bound to grow and become more and more popular, while the net deficiency to be met after all from the general revenues will not be large. A contribution to the extent of Rs. 5 lakhs per annum at the outside, from all the Governments put together, will be more than ample to keep the two central agencies we have recommended working efficiently, and when the trade and industry are sufficiently organised this contribution will cease to be necessary.

*

## CHAPTER X.

### Conclusion.

Repetition.

284. We have sketched in some detail our conclusions and recommendations on the various points which arose out of the reference to this Committee. The reference comprised three main heads but each main head involved a number of subsidiary issues. Some of the questions and considerations were common to several parts of the report, and as we were anxious to present each part in full a certain amount of repetition was unavoidable.

Official and non-official response.

285. We are glad to record that we received considerable assistance during the course of our enquiries from many quarters, especially from non-officials and non-official bodies, in almost all the provinces. Considerable interest was aroused in practically every province which we visited; in fact interest became greater as our enquiry progressed. We have already referred in a previous chapter to the interest taken in our enquiry by the various Provincial Governments. The only two provinces where the response, both official and non-official, must be considered to have been poor were the United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa.

We are deeply conscious of the difficulty of the questions with which we have been asked to deal and their vital importance to the future of the cinema trade and industry in the country. There are some aspects of the questions which required expert knowledge and it was not always adequately available. The circumstances in India have made it necessary for us to devise proposals to bring the State into far more intimate relations with this industrial enterprise than is perhaps the case in other parts of the British Empire. We have been strongly impressed by the earnest demands throughout India for the healthy progress and development of this industry more especially on the part of Indians and Indian public men. The press generally throughout the country helped us very largely in the course of our enquiries. All publicists, both European and Indian, Congressmen and non-Congressmen, came forward to assist the Committee with valuable suggestions. We have to express our obligations and we do so most freely to those ladies and gentlemen, both official and non-official, who helped us throughout. We are sanguine that the public will respond to any well-considered scheme which the Government may think fit to adopt and we submit our report in the earnest hope that our recommendations will, with the approval of the Government and the good-will of the trade and the public, help in some measure towards the betterment of the conditions of the cinema trade and industry in the country.

Acknowledgments.

286. It is our pleasant duty gratefully to acknowledge the generous hospitality which we received, especially from non-officials, everywhere, and from most of the Provincial Governments, throughout the course of our work. We also desire to express our thanks to the various Provincial Governments and Administrations for the assistance they rendered us in facilitating our enquiry and in gathering the requisite information, which was not easily obtainable. We are specially grateful to the Government of Burma for the arrangements they made for our tour there, which was more extended than in other provinces.

Particular mention must be made of the very heavy work we had to throw on the various Censorship Boards, more especially those of Bombay, Calcutta and Burma. We had to trouble them very often for figures and other information. All the Provincial Boards gave us wholehearted assistance both in furnishing figures and securing the attendance of witnesses.

We have now only to record our deep appreciation of the very valuable services of Mr. G. G. Hooper, our Secretary. He did not spare himself in the discharge of the very troublesome duties which he undertook. The Chairman especially desires to place on record his grateful appreciation of the very valuable assistance Mr. Hooper gave him right through. He had to work under pressure and against time.

T. RANGACHARI, *Chairman.*

EBRAHIM HAROON JAFFER,
J. D. CRAWFORD,*
K. C. NEOGY,
A. M. GREEN,*
J. COATMAN.*
} *Members.*

G. G. HOOPER,
*Secretary.*

* Subject to a Minute of Dissent.

## MINUTE OF DISSENT.

*Parts of Chapter IV only in question.*

We regret that we are unable to agree with the general argument underlying Chapter IV, and in particular with the recommendations regarding a quota for Indian films and the grant of financial aid at the expense of public funds. But though we cannot accept responsibility for anything in that Chapter, except those recommendations to which our specific assent is given either in that Chapter or in this minute, it will be seen that we are in complete sympathy with many of the recommendations contained in the Chapter. In fact we join in the definite recommendations contained therein except those we have referred to in this minute though we do not accept all the reasoning put forward.

*" Majority " and " Minority " misleading terms.*

2. We must first emphasise that though in Chapter IV the terms " Majority " and " Minority " are used, they are used in a very unusual sense. The Committee is in fact equally divided on the points at issue. We fully recognise that in such circumstances the view favoured by the Chairman should be presented in the body of the report, and the other view in a dissenting minute, but we feel that to describe three members out of a committee of six as a majority without qualification is to assign to that term a sense out of the ordinary.

*Indian films popular and profitable.*

3. Next we would point out that we are in every way as anxious as our colleagues to further the interests of the Indian film producing industry. The differences between us simply and solely result from differing appreciations of facts and figures. We are convinced that our colleagues have been misled by a failure to appreciate the true position of the industry. It is common ground between us that the demand for Indian films exceeds the supply, and that the production of Indian films such as are at present being produced is commercially profitable. This comes out very clearly in the evidence given before us in all parts of the country. Indian films command a better hire and yield better returns to the exhibitor than the ordinary run of imported films. This is not a question of opinion, but fact capable of demonstration by official figures. When we examined Mr. Stenson, Supervisor, Bombay Entertainments Duty Act, we asked him to extract from his registers the takings over a given period of some of the leading cinema houses exhibiting imported and Indian films. He did so and in a supplementary statement which is printed in the

evidence [and as Appendix L (2)] he showed that in the first half of the calendar year 1927, the three leading cinemas in Bombay which show only imported films realised between them Rs. 2,42,061 from their taxed seats, while the three leading cinemas which show only Indian films realised Rs. 2,83,581 from their taxed seats. The actual difference is of course greater than appears from this return, because it takes no account of the revenue from seats costing 4 annas or less, which are not taxed. The revenue from the 4 anna seats in cinemas showing imported films is inconsiderable, whereas the 4 and 3 anna seats in cinemas showing Indian films are normally crowded and yield a very considerable revenue. Further, the former class of cinemas are more expensive to run than the latter, as their patrons demand greater comforts and more expensive music. Consequently, the latter are clearly more remunerative than the former. The same applies in the other two key cities, Calcutta and Rangoon, in each of which we found indigenous films drawing far greater audiences than Western films, and enjoying longer runs, extending sometimes to many weeks on end. As the report points out, the film owner's main profits are made in the three key cities, and as indigenous films are so popular and remunerative in those cities it is easy to understand why their production is profitable and why they command so high a rent. This, and this only, is the reason why they are not more universally shown in other places. The up country cinema owners are crying out for Indian films, but often complain, especially those in the smaller cities, that they cannot pay the rent demanded by the producers. They can only obtain Indian films, at a rent which they can afford to pay, after the films have been exhibited for many weeks in the key cities. Indian films, just like imported films, have to filter down slowly from the bigger to the smaller cities, and the smallest cities may never be able to afford either the star Indian or imported film at all. No doubt as the stock of Indian films grows, the older productions will decline in rentable value and will come within the means of the smaller exhibitors. The benefit to the exhibitor in the lesser cities will be great. Few of these, even with a bi-weekly change of programme, can really fill their halls more than twice or thrice a week, say once for each programme of imported films, but if for three days they show imported, and for four days Indian films, they will tap two different audiences. Some exhibitors are doing this already, and many men would undoubtedly do so if the organization of the Trade, especially on the distribution side, were more efficient.

*Rapid growth of Indian production.*

4. But let us return to figures. Chapter IV of the report quotes figures of Indian production, but does not draw from them their clear lesson. Reference to Tables 9, 10 and 11 will show that the percentage of Indian to the total footage of films examined by the

Boards of Censors rose from 9·57 in 1921–22 to 14·92 in 1927–28, if Burma be excluded, and from 9·03 to 21·2 if Burma be included. In other words in six years the percentage rose by nearly 135 per cent while the total Indian footage examined rose from 461,868 to 1,336,525 in 11 months, say, 1,459,000 in the full year—or by no less than 216 per cent. It is impossible to exclude Burma from consideration, as our colleagues seem to demand, because Western films censored in India proper circulate freely in that province, as is instanced by the fact that Rangoon is one of the three key cities. The rate of increase in imported films was very much lower. Tables 9 and 10 at first sight indicate a fall in 1923–24 and in 1924–25, and then a rise till the 1922–23 figure was again reached in 1927–28. But in the earlier years the figures were swollen by the fact that the Boards issued many formal certificates for films which had been exhibited in the country before they started work. In Appendix F an attempt has been made to allow for this factor, and to work out the approximate lengths of exposed film actually imported from the year 1922–23 onwards. Here we have as guides the total length of film, raw and exposed, and the customs duty collected thereon from the year 1922–23 down to the year 1926–27, while in 1927–28 the figures actually differentiate between raw and exposed film. The figures of import and customs duty are official figures supplied by the Director-General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, and are derived from the customs returns. As duty throughout the years 1922–23 to 1926–27 was collected at the fixed rate of Rs. 37-8-0 per 1,000 feet of exposed film, and as this duty is nearly five times as heavy as the yield of the 15 per cent *ad valorem* duty on raw film, the approximate length of exposed film imported in each year is easy of ascertainment. The final footages of exposed film imported come in millions of feet to 6.79 in 1922-23, 5.75 in 1923–24, 6.25 in 1924–25, 7.66 in 1925–26, 9.77 in 1926–27 and on the basis of 11 months actuals 10.24 in 1927–28. The percentage of increase in five years is a little less than 51. But a further examination of the 1927–28 figures shows that 837,183 feet of exposed film did not pay duty on import, which means that it was film, either Indian or foreign, which had been in India before and was re-imported into India. The total must also include imports of non-standard film, such as those mentioned in paragraph 278 of Chapter VIII, imports which do not compete in any way with the Indian Industry and which form a recent trade development. It follows that the true percentage of increase is something less than 51. During the same five years the footage of indigenous film examined by the censors increased by nearly 116 per cent. Such an expansion is all the more remarkable, for it must be remembered that the period was one of great trade depression, when the raising of capital for any industrial enterprise was extremely difficult. Nor is this all. Indian films often have longer runs and are exhibited more times a day than imported films (vide Chapter II, paragraph 58), and it

therefore follows that indigenous films occupy a higher proportion of the total screen time than would appear from the figures already given.

*Government financial aid unnecessary and undesirable.*

5. In the light of all these facts we cannot understand how our colleagues can seriously maintain that Government should aid the industry financially or that a quota is necessary. To the quota system we have no objection in principle, and we should have joined our colleagues in recommending it had we considered it necessary or advantageous to the trade, and had we been able to work out a feasible scheme. We shall however show later that, circumstances being what they are, the imposition of a quota would definitely harm the industry. But we object most strongly on principle to the suggestion that Government should give public money on easy terms or on any terms to an industry which by no stretch of imagination can be regarded as a key industry. The film industry, despite its educational value, is predominantly and essentially an entertainment or luxury industry. If financial aid be given to the film industry, how many more deserving industries will not justly demand subsidies? Even were financial aid by Government necessary, and we are convinced that it is not, it is inconceivable that it should be granted without some measure of Government control. Such control is and must always be irksome to business undertakings, and we can imagine no industry to which Government control would prove a wetter blanket than the film industry, which has or should have a pronounced artistic and cultural side. Further, the industry is essentially an urban industry in India; generally speaking towns of less than 50,000 inhabitants cannot support a cinema hall, and travelling cinemas are few. If therefore Government accorded financial aid to the industry from general revenues, it would in effect be assisting urban interests at the expense of the general tax-payers, the great majority of whom are rural. Finally, if a producer or exhibitor has a good "business proposition," he will be able to raise money in the ordinary course; he will only approach Government if he is a man of straw or if his proposition does not commend itself to business men. To indulge in such speculation would indeed be a new and fantastic role for any responsible Government. Our colleagues merely beg the question when they seek to justify Government loans by citing the accepted policy of discriminating protection. This policy obviously cannot be invoked in aid of a luxury industry which without assistance has expanded rapidly and is earning good profits. Nor can we believe that our colleagues on deeper reflection would cite as an analogy Government loans for erecting buildings or purchasing motor-cars. Government grant such loans only to their own servants, recover the capital and interest by monthly deductions from their pay, and in addition have very tangible security in the car or building itself, which has to be mortgaged to Government.

*Existing demand for Indian films exceeds supply—the facts about "Sacrifice."*

6. To sum up this section of our argument, we repeat that the demand for Indian films exceeds the supply and that the producing industry has ample screen time at its disposal, of which it will in the natural course of events avail itself more fully as it develops. It is not prevented from finding a market for its wares in its own country, as was the case in England and other countries, owing to advance booking. If we believed that our colleagues' interpretation of the history of that excellent and truly Indian film "Sacrifice" were correct, and that its marketing in India was beset with difficulties, we should have agreed that a strong argument for action had been adduced. But our interpretation of the history of that film is very different. Its exhibition in Bombay yielded a remarkable financial return, and its makers then took the only print which they had made of it to Calcutta. They were not satisfied with the terms offered for it by Madan's but received a firm and satisfactory offer from the Globe Circuit, a circuit which, as our colleagues themselves point out, had not hitherto exhibited any Indian films. But the makers of the film, influenced in part at least by the encouragement and praise of some members of our committee, decided before showing it further in India to see whether they could tap the more extensive and remunerative markets of Europe. If they succeed, their profits will be great and their Indian market will still be open to them. They will also have demonstrated that India can produce films of universal appeal, and will have blazed the trail for the Indian industry. We applaud their enterprise and their patriotism.

*The producers' real problem—market, i.e., theatres.*

7. We will now proceed to state the real problem which in our opinion faces the Indian producer. Essentially it is the market problem. All over the world the amount of money that can be safely sunk in the production of a film is limited by the market open to the film and the revenue obtainable therefrom. The big American producers can spend immense sums on 'super feature' productions, because they are assured of a market in the thousands of theatres in their own country and in every country. Their insistence on 'universal appeal' is of course due to their desire for the largest possible market. The larger the market, the more widely spread are their overhead charges and in fact all their production costs. Consequently, the territorial rights in films of the highest quality, which cost huge sums to produce, can be purchased at reasonable prices, for the sum of the royalties paid for territorial rights in every part of the world is naturally a large figure. The values of the royalties must of course depend on the number and earning capacity of the theatres in each territory. The greater the potential earnings, the greater the royalties which the distributor

can and will pay. In other words in the film world market means theatres. This truism applies to India and to Indian producers with equal force. We agree with our colleagues that every practicable step should be taken to increase the number of cinema houses in India. Such an increase would mean greater profits for producers, and therefore better productions. At present Indian producers seldom spend more than Rs. 20,000 on a film; the average is probably hardly as much as Rs. 15,000. Popular and paying as these cheap films are, there is an admitted risk that their popularity will wane as Indian audiences become more sophisticated unless their quality is improved. Improvement of quality means some increase in expenditure, and increased expenditure connotes a wider market, that is, more theatres. By theatres, of course, we mean theatres with audiences.

*How to expand the home market.*

8. Now how is this wider market to be secured? There are several possibilities. In the first place, the cinema habit is growing slowly perhaps but surely. As has been shown in Chapter II, the number of cinema-houses has doubled since 1921. The habit has been created mainly by imported films, and as the indigenous film in the ordinary course of events filters down to the smaller mofussil theatres, the habit will undoubtedly be encouraged. Its growth will be further aided by the greater use of the film for public utility propaganda, by facilities being accorded for the exhibition of films of all kinds in public buildings, and by sympathetic encouragement of travelling cinemas, whatever be the nature of their exhibitions. Regarding these three points we are at one with our colleagues. But we are convinced that an expansion of the market must be secured primarily by the trade itself. God helps those that help themselves. Much greater enterprise could and should be shown by film producers and renters to extend their connections and to tap all available houses. In particular when Indian films have been exhibited in the key and larger cities, they should welcome smaller receipts from what may be termed the second or third run cities. They should even cheerfully arrange for runs which may yield them no financial profit at all, for by doing so they will be encouraging the growth of the cinema habit and sowing the seed of future profit. Again producers should organise themselves. The present situation is pitiable. There is a number of relatively petty concerns, most of which lack almost entirely expert knowledge of technical processes and of business methods. Few have more than one or two men with foreign experience—some have none and frequently as soon as a director or camera man has achieved any success, he breaks with his employer and founds a new concern. Real progress is impossible in these circumstances, and it is no wonder that capital fights shy of such producing concerns despite the admitted fact that, in the words of our colleagues, "Indian films however poor pay well." Some of the Indian films which we have seen

afford ample proof that there are in the ranks of the industry to-day a few men of ideas, of culture, and of dramatic instinct, and more than a few with no little technical ability on the photographic side. If they could be gathered together under an efficient business management, we are convinced that better films could be produced without any serious increase in expenditure and better profits made. Here is an opportunity for intelligent and enterprising businessmen, especially for those in Bombay, where a busy producing industry already exists and is crying aloud for proper finance and organisation. A public company—the present concerns are private ventures—formed preferably by a combination of existing producers with a Board of Directors which would command respect and an adequate capital would, in our judgment, have immense possibilities. We picture such a company speedily developing its activities, on the same lines as foreign companies have developed. It would interest itself not merely in producing, but in distributing and exhibiting. The latter functions might indeed be undertaken by allied or subsidiary companies, of which the distributing company would no doubt undertake the distribution of all kinds of films, foreign as well as Indian, and the exhibiting company would aim at forming circuits of cinemas, both by arrangement with existing houses and by the erection of new ones. Madan Theatres, Limited, in effect already constitute one such producing, distributing and exhibiting company, but this company developed from the other end, that is to say, the exhibition end. Our contemplated new company or companies would specialise on production, and would, *inter alia*, supply that healthy competition and diminish the risk of monopoly, to which allusion has been made in Chapter II. That a well-organised distributing company would supply a sorely needed want is admitted by our colleagues, and we do not doubt that they would equally welcome another exhibiting company or companies with finance sufficient to hire or erect cheap permanent cinemas in the many large towns which lack them, and quite possibly to organise, once or twice in the week, exhibition in towns where daily shows would not prove remunerative. Even in the United States of America, where the cinema habit is so remarkably developed, such "part-time" houses are common.

*Quota scheme unnecessary; it would depreciate quality of films.*

9. But before we expound further this constructive proposal, we must explain why we are compelled to oppose our colleagues' "modified quota scheme." At the beginning of this minute we gave facts and figures demonstrating how rapidly, despite trade depression, the Indian film-producing industry had grown, how considerable was the proportion of the available screen time that its products occupied, how little handicapped it was by advance and block booking, and how demand was in excess of supply. We have also demonstrated that if the industry is to advance

further, it must now concentrate on improving quality. Any artificial stimulus to production must infallibly tend to produce an exactly contrary effect. Our colleagues say that our fear that their quota scheme "will lead to the growth of mushroom concerns and the production of inferior films is not a serious one," because the "same fear was invariably mentioned whenever the quota system was proposed in any country." They cite the various countries which have adopted such a system, and make special play with England and Germany. Yet they admit the great difference between these countries and India. "In Great Britain," they say, "there are not those diversities of tastes nor of predilections of communities, but here, religions, communities and races meet on a common ground and as little as is possible should be done to disturb existing factors." Consequently, they propose for India a "modified" scheme, which they no doubt consider milder than the British scheme. Actually it is much more drastic. The British Statute provides an exhibitors' quota beginning at 5 per cent and rising to a maximum of 20 per cent after 7 years. Although Indian productions already occupy more than 20 per cent of the available screen time, our colleagues would impose on all exhibitors a quota rising 5 per cent every year until each theatre devotes 50 per cent of its screen time to indigenous films. The British Statute imposes a quota on renters, adjusted so that exhibitors may be able to hire a sufficiency of quota films from them. Our colleagues make no such provision. Most important of all, the British Statute [clause 32 (2)] lays down that where compliance with provisions as to quota is not commercially practicable by reason of the character or the excessive cost of the quota films available, non-compliance with those provisions shall be treated as due to reasons beyond the control of the rentor or exhibitor. Our Committee unanimously agreed that it would be impracticable in India to approve films for quota by a quality test, and our colleagues' scheme makes no provision for any price test. If they intend that the new committee, which they desire to be appointed to elaborate their skeleton scheme, should protect exhibitors from undue charges, as the British Statute protects them, we are convinced that their scheme will become a dead letter if the exhibitors are treated sympathetically, or an instrument of oppression, if the producers are favoured. But be that how it may, the absence of quality test makes assurance doubly sure that poor quality quota films will be hastily produced, and that the industry will go backwards instead of forwards. Again, we repeat that the demand for Indian films is already in excess of supply. Increase that demand by legislation, and what can possibly result save an increased output of inferior films? This happens even under the German 'Kontingent' scheme which our colleagues so greatly admire. In a recent article (25th April 1928) the *Pioneer* pointed out that the scheme had not worked out for the benefit of the German industry, and that cheap German films

are rushed through simply so that the company may get permission to import some star feature from Hollywood. Similarly, the *Berliner Tageblatt* of 25th November 1927 wrote:—"It is well known this practice (i.e., the Kontingent scheme) led to the manufacture of the so-called contingent films." In passing, we may note that according to a report from the Commercial Secretary to His Majesty's Legation at Berlin, forwarded to our Committee through the Indian Trade Commissioner, the conversations at Geneva regarding the abolition of import and export restrictions are likely to result in the abolition of the German licensing system for films in the second half of 1929.

*It would seriously harm exhibitors and thus restrict the producer's market.*

10. Our colleagues' scheme would thus encourage the production of inferior films, though they agree that improvement of quality is of first importance, and would confirm the present producers in the very weaknesses which they rightly deplore. If these producers gained thereby an immediate financial advantage, it could only be a flash in the pan. Inferior Indian films would alienate Indian audiences—we are agreed that this risk is already present—exhibitors would lose money, theatres would close down, and the existing market for Indian films would be restricted. This in turn would react on the producers, and the trade as a whole would receive a serious set-back. The plight of exhibitors catering mainly for European, Anglo-Indian, and the more advanced Indian audiences would be even worse. Our colleagues agree that the present quality of the average indigenous film is very poor. It cannot be expected to satisfy, still less can it be justly imposed on, cultured audiences. Consequently quota films when exhibited in this class of house will draw no audiences, and prove a dead loss to the exhibitor. A dead loss for $2\frac{1}{2}$ weeks of screen time in the year will hardly help an exhibitor; a loss for 26 weeks when the quota reaches 50 per cent will ruin him utterly. The result will be the *closing* of more theatres, though we are unanimously striving after the *opening* of more theatres. Our colleagues somewhat naively remark that "the exhibition side of the industry is in the hands of Indians, who have got the same national outlook as the producers themselves," and piously anticipate that they will willingly co-operate. We are compelled to point out that they have shut their eyes to the evidence of every exhibitor who was questioned on this very matter, despite the fact that this evidence was specially summarised and laid before the Committee. Thus Mr. Puri at Lahore said: "I am not in favour of a quota. . . . It is a question of bread and butter. If I am going to starve, I should not be able to do much for the country." Lala Kishen Chand said: "At Peshawar we cannot do without Western films because of the Muslim taste. The majority

of the audience are Muslims." Mr. Panchaoli of Karachi said: "If we showed only Indian pictures, we could not get any audience. I could not show a quota of Indian pictures. My cinemas would be empty." The Cinema Trade Association of Bombay declared "If Western showing cinemas showed Indian films, they would lose their audience," and gave an example. Mr. Rustomji Dorabji of Bombay said "No, it is impossible to work it," and explained in somewhat pungent language that the habits of the audience, if any, which would come to his cinema to see an Indian film were such that they would drive away audiences of better class Indians. Mr. Bilimoria, a Director of Madans, stated at Bombay: "The indigenous industry is thriving and does not require any Government assistance. If a quota is imposed, the exhibitor should have his choice between Indian and British pictures, because my audience would not like Indian pictures." At Calcutta Mr. J. J. Madan, Managing Director of the firm bearing his name, strenuously opposed any quota scheme. "The whole point," he said, "is that the European and Anglo-Indian public will not stand an Indian picture as it is made now." Our Chairman then asked "I suppose from national interest you will educate them?" The answer was "The only way to do that is to improve our standard and not to impose the quota system, because the Indian producer will take advantage of the quota and make inferior pictures." There speaks the expert, but our colleagues ignore him. No single exhibitor would have anything to do with the quota, and the only Indian distributor to whom it was mentioned, Messrs. Ramachandra & Co., Bombay, who distribute the Kohinoor films, said "If a quota is imposed Indian films will draw nothing in those theatres where they cater for Western tastes, and therefore *we* (i.e., the distributors and the producers) will get nothing."

*A practicable scheme not evolved by our colleagues.*

11. The evidence which we have quoted supports our argument through and through that not only is a quota unnecessary, but that it would definitely harm the Indian industry in all its branches. It is hardly necessary therefore to criticise further the "skeleton scheme" which our colleagues have put forward. It is indeed a skeleton, and those who put the bones together, despairing apparently of their own ability to clothe them with flesh and blood, can only suggest that a new committee should be appointed "to devise a tolerably workable scheme." We are not surprised at our colleagues' failure; from the start we expressed our doubts whether any one could produce a workable scheme. But we must point out that the scheme gives no adequate indication how or by what agencies a very complicated administrative measure is to be carried out or financed. To realise how complicated the administration of a quota must be, it is only necessary to refer to the English Statute and the regulations framed thereunder, and to study the duties imposed on producers, renters and exhibitors on the one

hand, and on the Board of Trade, the Advisory Committee and even the High Court of Judicature on the other. And, be it noted, the expenses of the administration are to be wholly borne by the trade. Are our colleagues ready to place a similar burden on the Indian trade?

Consider again the position of the travelling cinema under the scheme. From 1930 they are to be compelled to show at least 20 per cent of Indian films wherever they exhibit. Obviously they will have to buy outright copies of Indian films. How are they to pay for such expensive goods? The mere cost of making a print is about Rs. 1,000, and producers will certainly not sell prints till the film has been fully exploited in the permanent cinemas. And if and when they do sell they will naturally demand a profit on the transaction. The itinerant exhibitor is a small man with small finances, and he will be unable to obtain by hook or by crook the necessary quota of Indian films. In other words, our colleagues' scheme will drive him out of business, and this though elsewhere they emphasise that he should be in every way encouraged.

*Danger of retaliation.*

12. One final argument against our colleagues' scheme must be put. In discussing in Chapter VI the question of Imperial Preference for British films in India, we have emphasised the danger of estranging foreign countries, in particular, America. "If to-morrow America retaliated by stopping her supplies as she threatened to do to Hungary, the (Indian) film trade would cease to exist." If the grant of a modest preference might lead to such disastrous retaliation, what is there to prevent the imposition of an unnecessary and extravagant quota having a like effect?

*The need for co-ordination of effort.*

13. We will now return to our own proposals. We have pointed out that with more efficient organisation and more stable finance the Indian producing trade already has great opportunities, and we are confident that enterprising businessmen will not be driven by our colleagues' counsels of despair to neglect them. The Central Cinema Bureau, whose creation we all regard as the keystone of our report, will be there to help, inform and advise. Indeed we recommend that one of the first duties of the Bureau should be to strive by all the means in its power to induce the trade to come together and to organise itself. Then and then only will finance be available on reasonable terms. A strong public company or companies such as we contemplate will do more to place the industry on a sound basis than all the existing small concerns put together. Amalgamation, co-ordination of effort, avoidance of unnecessary overhead expenses, these have been the features of the growth of the great industry in America. The process is inevitable, and has to-day transcended national boundaries. It was, for example, American co-operation which saved the great German house,

U.F.A., from financial disaster, and the not distant future may well witness a film League of Nations, to regulate an art whose essence is to be international. If the Indian industry will only organise itself, there is no reason why it should not in due course take its place in a co-ordinated film world.

*Co-ordination of distribution.*

14. We are looking perhaps too far ahead; let us consider what co-ordination can do in the India of to-day. Take the question of distribution. A substantial public company would be a boon to producers and exhibitors alike. The exhibitor would have a businesslike and centralised agency whence to obtain programmes, instead of having to bargain with a number of small producing concerns. The producer would be able to concentrate on his proper role of production, and would sell the rights of his productions to the distributing firm. Before long the distributing company or companies would, as has happened in other countries, be actually financing the producers, and relieving them of the need of obtaining working capital on usurious terms. An expert American witness told us that distributing companies in his country will advance to approved producers, in return for certain rights in the completed film, 25 per cent of the estimated cost of production before the shooting begins, and a further 50 per cent on the delivery of the negative. For the remaining 25 per cent the producer normally has to wait until the profits from the exhibition of the picture begin to come in. "There", said the witness, "you have the scheme of distribution and co-operation among the smaller concerns." He added that there are banks which stand at the back of the distributing companies. We do not say that Indian banks are likely or would be wise to provide finance in this way, but we can see no reason why a successful producer who has obtained guarantees from a substantial distributing company, should not be able to discount those guarantees with banking or financial houses on reasonable terms. The mere saving in interest charges will enable him to spend more on his productions and thus improve them, while the sharing of the risk will prevent an occasional failure from crippling him.

*Co-ordination of production.*

15. Take again the question of production. A well-organised and substantial public company could regulate its programme so as to cut out much of the present wastage of time and effort. Instead of having one studio, it would have several. Instead of one director and one or two cameramen, it would have enough to direct and shoot several scenes at the same time. Its actors and actresses would not waste half their time in waiting for new sets to be erected. Its studios would not all be open to the air, so that the monsoon would not stop all work for at least a quarter of the year, and they would have artificial lighting to supplement, correct or cut out the sun. Work would proceed smoothly

and quickly, and the output would improve both in quality and quantity.

*Co-ordination of exhibition.*

16. What co-ordination can do on the exhibition side has been amply demonstrated by Madan Theatres, Limited, and the Globe Circuit. Circuits enable renters safely to pay royalties for expensive films, whether imported or indigenous, and are an essential part of a properly organised industry.

*The overseas market.*

17. Our colleagues have said all that need be said of that part of the overseas market which is immediately open to Indian films, namely, territories such as Ceylon and East Africa where there are considerable Indian populations. But they are somewhat doubtful whether the larger and more remunerative world market can be tapped for many years to come. We agree that the great majority of Indian films produced today have no chance whatever of being accepted by even a tenth-rate cinema in Europe or America. At the same time we are satisfied that Indian films *can* be produced which would attract audiences in foreign countries. There is no reason at all why films of universal appeal should not be made in India for the international market. They would differ from the cheaper films produced specifically for the Indian market, because, as we all agree, Western and Indian life and customs, in particular the expression of emotions, differ very markedly. The production of films for the international market will therefore necessitate the co-operation of India and the West. India will supply the actors, the scenery and before long most of the technical men; the West will supply guidance as to Western tastes. We do not mean that no purely Indian film can succeed outside India. We believe, for example, that "Sacrifice", the picture which we have already mentioned, stands no small chance of winning a place on the screens of Europe although its tragic ending may go against it. But that film differed from most Indian films in that it had a strong and original plot, was excellently acted, and intelligently and artistically directed. But until the Indian industry has made great strides, no ordinary film will attract non-Indian audiences.

*Co-operation between East and West.*

18. We agree, then, with our colleagues when they say that for the production of films which may appeal to the West "co-operation between Western artists and Eastern artists, and Western and Eastern businessmen is absolutely necessary." But we differ from them profoundly when in effect they go on to lay down conditions which will probably postpone such co-operation to the Greek Kalends. They demand that "the Indian interest shall predominate" and that Indians must be predominantly responsible for the production in every case. This is tantamount to directing the Indian industry to run before it can walk, and telling foreign producing interests that they must teach

the Indian producer how to produce, and yet be subject to the predominant control of their pupil. Teachers do not accept pupils on such terms. In any case international business can only flourish when there is free co-operation between the interested parties. We will illustrate what we mean by considering the cases of two films definitely intended for the international market.

*The "Light of Asia" and "Shiraz" indicate true method of co-operation.*

19. The "Light of Asia" was produced mainly with German co-operation. We are all agreed that it should have yielded valuable information as to the chances of an Indian subject on Western screens. But there were quarrels and mismanagement, especially in the marketing of the film, and in England advance booking prevented it being rented except after long delays, a fate that overtook British films also. A better test case will be available for study before long. While this Committee has been sitting, a combination of Indian, British and German interests have been engaged in making in India, for the international market, a film to be called "Shiraz." The subject is Indian, the original scenario was written by an Indian, the setting is Indian, the actors are Indian, the film is being shot in India, and the correct Indian colour is being supplied by an Indian, Mr. Himansu Rai. This is the gentleman who was intimately concerned with the production of the "Light of Asia." A study of his very interesting evidence will show that he is the real father of the film, that he is acting in it himself, and is largely responsible for its direction. It is true that there is no Indian capital behind the film, but that is Mr. Rai's misfortune, not his fault. He tried to obtain Indian capital, but failed. He was more fortunate in Europe, where he was able to find German and British film interests to back him. In fact, guarantees, in return for territorial rights of exhibition, were obtained exceeding the estimated cost of production. In other words, the producers are fully insured against financial failure. We do not suggest that Mr. Rai, merely on his reputation and by his personal efforts, could have raised the finance—the reputation and the status of the British Company which undertook the actual production was of course an important factor there—but we do suggest that had there been a reputable film company with sufficient financial backing in India, such a company as we hope to see before long, or even if individual Indian financiers or syndicates had elected to back Mr. Rai, a substantial portion of the capital, and *therefore the control*, would have been Indian. We entirely disagree with our colleagues' view that productions such as "Shiraz" should be discouraged. We regard the production as an invaluable experiment. If it succeeds it will demonstrate to India that Indian films can be made in India for the international market, encourage Indian financiers to put money into the industry, and expedite the formation of those public film companies which are so essential to the growth of the industry. Such companies would in future co-operate with foreign companies

in producing a limited number of films for the international market; the companies would thus gain valuable trade connections abroad, and their staff by their association with foreign experts would advance rapidly towards technical perfection and keep in touch with the latest developments in cinematography. With this added experience they could produce cheap but infinitely better films for the Indian market. The benefit to the Indian industry, in all its branches, would be incalculable.

*Control of non-Indian interests.*

20. We have indicated that foreign co-operation will not be easily obtainable if there are vexatious legal restrictions. At the same time we desire, as strongly as our colleagues, that there should be no foreign domination, and that truly Indian companies should control the Indian industry. Consequently we agree that Government should arm themselves with legislative powers if, and when, foreign domination becomes imminent or probable.

We agree also that foreign producers operating in India should be registered with the Central Bureau, just as Indian producers will be registered, and to prevent the possible growth of vested foreign interests, we think that the licences for foreign producers should be for specific productions or periods. Further than that we would not go at present. The Bureau will be there to keep in touch with all that is happening, and on the Bureau's advice, Government will be able at any time to step in and control developments which might harm the Indian industry.

*Conclusion.*

21. In conclusion we must emphasise once more that we, like our colleagues, wish with all our hearts to see the Indian industry flourish and expand. It is only because we consider certain proposals made by our colleagues to be positively dangerous to the industry that we have been compelled to oppose them. We believe that the recommendations in which we are unanimous, especially the recommendation for the institution of a Central Cinema Bureau, and our own suggestions in this minute will afford the industry all the assistance which it requires. If any unforeseen development occurs, or if our anticipations are belied, we shall have no objection to the Bureau investigating further the possibilities of a quota scheme, or any other scheme for the benefit of the industry. In fact we shall welcome such an investigation. But we are confident that if the industry, with or without the assistance of the Bureau, will only organise itself on businesslike lines, it will never look back, and that even before the expiry of our colleagues' decade, at least 50 per cent of India's screen time will be occupied by Indian films.

A. M. GREEN.
J. D. CRAWFORD.
J. COATMAN.

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTE ON THE MINUTE OF DISSENT.

As regards this minute of dissent, without in any way discussing or arguing the points therein, as Chairman of the Committee I have to state certain facts and incidents so that this minute and the report may be duly appreciated.

1. Immediately after the recording of evidence was over in Delhi in the last week of February, the full Committee met for two afternoons on the 24th and 25th, in Mr. Coatman's room in the Assembly Chambers, in order to exchange views and impressions. The decisions reached there then were only provisional pending summing up and arrangement of materials so far gathered. The discussions were therefore adjourned to April 10th at Ootacamund.

2. At the April meetings the materials collected were considered and the meetings lasted till the 15th. Discussions were resumed on the points which arose one after the other and decisions were reached. All of them were unanimous except on two points, namely, imposition of quota for Indian films and financial aid to Indian productions. On these two points the Committee divided thus: three for and two against. Only five members were present at the April meetings, Colonel Crawford being unavoidably absent. The full Committee meeting was adjourned to May 4th, the interval to be used for drafting the report in ten chapters as outlined by the Chairman in a brief sketch, the chapters to embody the decisions reached on the various points under each head. The provisional decisions reached in Delhi were also confirmed at the April meetings, subject to such alterations as were indicated in the decisions then reached.

3. For the May meetings Chapters I to VIII which had been drafted were placed before the Committee. The meetings lasted from the 4th to 9th May inclusive. Colonel Crawford and Mr. Coatman were present for the first three days and left. Sir Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer was absent on these three days and rejoined only on the 7th, and continued to be present till the end, The rest were present throughout. All the chapters, including Chapter IV, were read. Several alterations and additions were made in the draft of that chapter also as in other chapters on the suggestion of all the members including the signatories to this minute of dissent. Without prejudice to their stating their points of view separately, if they so chose, all the signatories to this minute of dissent were present when contentious portions of Chapter IV were read and they all contributed to the altering and phrasing of portions thereof. Mr. Green was present at the reading of other portions and made valuable suggestions, most of which were accepted. I may emphasise that all this was, as stated already, without prejudice to their stating their case in their own way if they so chose on portions of Chapter IV.

4. It is claimed that "the general argument underlying Chapter IV" follows the general trend of decisions of the Committee in February and April, at which both Messrs. Green and Coatman, two of the signatories to this minute, were present and took active part. In fact all the definite recommendations embody decisions arrived at then. The other chapters also turn on the same general argument more or less. So far for paragraph 1 of this minute.

5. As regards paragraph 2, the facts are stated already. At the time the decisions were taken it was a majority decision. The fact that Colonel Crawford later on agrees with the two dissentients does not alter the fact, it is a majority decision—though it is a factor to be taken into account in weighing the value to be attached to the opinions. The Chairman is unable to understand or follow the complaint in paragraph 2 herein. Even in a body equally divided —a majority decision is reached by the Chairman's casting vote and that occasion did not arise in this case.

6. As regards the statements of what are claimed to be facts in paragraph 6 regarding "Sacrifice," it is only right to point out there is no evidence so far as the Chairman is able to see for the following statements occurring in the paragraph which are based on statements made to one or two members of the Committee: "Its exhibition in Bombay yielded a '*remarkable* financial return'." [We have since received figures from Bombay which are printed as Appendix I. (1).] They received a "*firm* and *satisfactory* offer from the Globe circuit." "But the makers of the film *influenced* partly at least by the encouragement and praise of some members of our Committee *decided* before showing it further in India to see whether they could tap the more extensive and remunerative markets of Europe." The Chairman had no such information given to him.

7. As regards paragraph 9, it has to be stated the majority scheme for quota does contemplate grant of exemptions on grounds of excessive cost also as in the British Act. They did not exclude this ground.

8. We are differing really on two or three points of detail, no doubt essential in themselves, but really are agreed on the bulk of the conclusions and recommendations in Chapter IV as will be seen on a careful reading of the whole report and the minute.

T. RANGACHARI.

## TABLE 1.

The number of cinema houses in existence in the different Provinces in each year from 1921 to 1927.

| Name of Province. | Population. | Number of cinemas existing in each year as reported by Provincial Governments during the enquiry. | | | | | | | Number of cinemas in 1927 as reported by Provincial Governments prior to the enquiry. | Number of cinemas in 1927 according to the Distribution List. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1921. | 1922. | 1923. | 1924. | 1925. | 1926. | 1927 | | Permanent. | Seasonal. |
| Bombay .. | 19,348,219 | 54 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 75 | 75 | 76 | 83 | 77 | .. |
| Bengal .. | 46,695,536 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 22 | 24 | 30 | 31 | 26 | 3 |
| Madras .. | 42,318,985 | 14 | 15 | 17 | 22 | 34 | 36 | 40 | 50 | 43 | 3 |
| United Provinces .. | 45,375,787 | 11 | 18 | 23 | 33 | 33 | 38 | 39 | 45 | 28 | 11 |
| Punjab .. | 20,685,024 | 14 | 24 | 21 | 21 | 29 | 32 | 35 | 28 | 22 | 14 |
| Central Provinces and Berar .. | 13,912,760 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 11 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 23 | 15 | .. |
| Bihar and Orissa .. | 34,002,189 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 12 | 12 | 13 | .. |
| Assam .. | 7,606,230 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 3 | .. |
| North-West Frontier .. | 2,251,340 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 10 | 1 |
| Delhi .. | 488,188 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Burma .. | 13,212,192 | 27 | 31 | 40 | 48 | 57 | 64 | 80 | 60 | 58 | 2 |
| Total .. | .. | 148 | 171 | 188 | 219 | 286 | 309 | 346 | 350 | 298 | 37 |
| In Cantonments not included in the above Provinces | | | | | | .. | | .. | .. | 11 | .. |
| | | | | | | | Total | .. | .. | 309 | .. |

*Explanation.*—Three versions of the 1927 figures are given above. Of these the figures taken from the Distribution List (printed in Volume IV of the Evidence) are probably the most nearly correct. Apart from permanent cinemas which are open all the year round there are also "seasonal" cinemas (generally in hill stations) which are open for part of the year only, and a number of halls where cinema exhibitions are occasionally given. It is possible that some of the last class may have been included in the earlier figures. There are also about 12 privately owned regimental cinemas which are not included in the above figures. The Distribution List is a list of the cinemas in India, showing the seating accommodation and other particulars, compiled from information collected by the Provincial Governments at the request of the Committee.

## Table 2.

Number of cinemas in the Provincial Capitals.

| Province. | Area in square miles. | Distribution of permanent cinemas. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | In Provincial Capitals. | In the rest of the Province. |
| Bombay .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | 123,621 | 20 | 57 |
| Bengal .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | 76,843 | 14 | 12 |
| Madras .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | 142,260 | 9 | 34 |
| United Provinces .. .. .. .. .. | 106,295 | 4 | 24 |
| Punjab .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | 99,846 | 6 | 16 |
| Central Provinces and Berar .. .. .. .. | 99,876 | 4 | 11 |
| Bihar and Orissa .. .. .. .. .. | 83,161 | 2 | 11 |
| Assam .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | 53,015 | 1 | 2 |
| North-West Frontier .. .. .. .. .. | 13,419 | 4 | 6 |
| Delhi .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | 593 | 3 | .. |
| Burma .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | 233,707 | 10 | 48 |
| Cantonment cinemas outside the above provinces. | .. | .. | 11 |
| | | 77 | 232 |

## Table 3.

Total seating accommodation in permanent cinemas.

| Province. | Seating accommodation. |
|---|---|
| Bombay .. .. .. .. | 51,941 |
| Bengal .. .. .. .. | 18,110 |
| Madras .. .. .. .. | 42,835 |
| United Provinces .. .. .. | 16,983 |
| Punjab .. .. .. .. | 10,305 |
| Central Provinces and Berar .. .. | 13,026 |
| Bihar and Orissa .. .. .. | 4,830 |
| Assam .. .. .. .. | 817 |
| North-West Frontier .. .. .. | 4,303 |
| Delhi .. .. .. .. .. | 2,400 |
| Burma .. .. .. .. | 48,305 |
| Cantonment cinemas outside the above provinces .. .. .. .. | 8,800 |
| Total .. | 222,655 |

*Explanation.*—In those cases in which the seating accommodation is not known it has been taken as 800 for the purpose of the above estimate.

## Table 4.

Number of towns in India with a population of (1) over 20,000 and (2) over 10,000.

(Figures taken from the 1921 Census Report.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Towns in British India (excluding Burma) with a population of— | |
| 100,000 or over | 29 |
| 50,000 to 100,000 | 43 |
| 20,000 to 50,000 | 158 |
| Towns in Burma with a population of— | |
| 100,000 or over | 2 |
| 50,000 to 100,000 | 1 |
| 20,000 to 50,000 | 5 |
| Towns in Indian States with a population of— | |
| 100,000 or over | 4 including 2 with cantonments. |
| 50,000 to 100,000 | 10 „ 4 „ |
| 20,000 to 50,000 | 36 „ 2 „ |
| Towns in the whole of India with a population of— | |
| 10,000 to 20,000 | 450 |

## Table 5.

Number of cinemas showing exclusively imported films.

| Province. | Number of cinemas which show | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Imported films exclusively. | Indian films exclusively. | Both. |
| Bombay | 19 | 4 | 53 |
| Bengal | 11 | .. | 13 |
| Madras | .. | .. | 32 |
| United Provinces | 6 | .. | 16 |
| Punjab | 9 | .. | 13 |
| Central Provinces and Berar | 1 | .. | 13 |
| Bihar and Orissa | 4 | .. | 7 |
| Assam | 2 | .. | 1 |
| North-West Frontier | 4 | .. | 3 |
| Delhi | .. | .. | 2 |
| Burma | 8 | 8 Burmese. 3 Indian. | 39 |
| Total | 64 | 15 | 192 |
| Total | 271 | | |

*Explanation.*—Out of 271 cinemas regarding which particulars were available, 64 have been reported as exhibiting imported films exclusively. There is no doubt that the correct figure is larger. Of the total of 309 cinemas 66 are in cantonments. There are several cinemas in each of the big cities which are devoted exclusively to imported films. Taking also into account hill stations and cinemas in certain European institutes and clubs the number which show imported films exclusively can scarcely be less than 100.

## Table 6.

The number of travelling cinemas in the different Provinces.

| Name of Province. | Number of travelling cinemas. |
|---|---|
| Bombay .. .. .. .. .. | 5 |
| Bengal .. .. .. .. .. | 36 |
| Madras .. .. .. .. .. | 26 |
| United Provinces .. .. .. .. | 4 |
| Punjab .. .. .. .. .. | 20 |
| Central Provinces and Berar .. .. .. | 9 |
| Bihar and Orissa .. .. .. .. | 6 |
| Assam .. .. .. .. .. | 5 |
| North-West Frontier .. .. .. | None. |
| Delhi .. .. .. .. .. | None. |
| Burma .. .. .. .. .. | 5 |
| Total .. | 116 |

*Explanation.*—The above figures were supplied by the Provincial Governments (except in the case of Madras), who, at the request of the Committee, made enquiries into the matter. The Madras figure was supplied by the Electrical Inspector. It is believed (vide paragraph 47 of the Report) that the total number of travelling cinemas given above is an overestimate. See also Table 7.

## Table 7.

The number of licences issued to travelling cinemas in the different Provinces in each year from 1921.

| Name of Province. | Number of licences issued to travelling cinemas in each year from 1921. | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1921. | 1922. | 1923. | 1924. | 1925. | 1926. | 1927. |
| Bombay .. .. .. .. | .. | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 15 | 19 |
| Bengal .. .. .. .. | .. | 11 | 7 | 20 | 58 | 71 | 152 |
| Madras .. .. .. .. | 13 | 23 | 26 | 23 | 31 | 47 | 63 |
| United Provinces .. .. .. | 2 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 17 | 18 | 34 |
| Punjab .. .. .. .. | 19 | 19 | 39 | 37 | 33 | 34 | 39 |
| Central Provinces and Berar .. | .. | 2 | 8 | 6 | 12 | 16 | 21 |
| Bihar and Orissa .. .. .. | 1 | .. | .. | 2 | 3 | 6 | 18 |
| Assam .. .. .. .. | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 8 |
| North-West Frontier .. .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Delhi .. .. .. .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Burma .. .. .. .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 13 |
| Total .. | 37 | 63 | 92 | 104 | 160 | 212 | 367 |

*Explanation.*—The above figures were furnished by the Provincial Governments and relate to the exhibition-licence which (in accordance with section 3 of the Cinematograph Act) must be obtained at each place where an exhibition is given by a travelling cinema. The figure of the licences issued in Burma prior to 1927 is not available. No information regarding the number of licences issued in the North-West Frontier Province and Delhi was obtainable. It was reported, however, that there were no travelling cinemas in those two Provinces.

## TABLE 8.

Table showing the number and footage of films examined by each Board in each year from 1921 onwards.

| Year. | Bombay. | | Bengal. | | Madras. | | Burma. | | Total. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number. | Footage. | Number. | Footage. | Number. | Footage. | Number. | Footage. | Number. | Footage. |
| 1921-22 .. | 646 | 2,365,608 | 781 | 1,692,905 | 19 | 45,838 | 316 | 1,007,817 | 1,762 | 5,112,168 |
| 1922-23 . | 814 | 2,901,810 | 514 | 1,329,312 | 8 | 21,250 | 709 | 1,738,734 | 2,045 | 5,991,136 |
| 1923-24 .. | 639 | 2,185,247 | 527 | 1,640,522 | 9 | 94,810 | 361 | 1,190,859 | 1,536 | 5,111,438 |
| 1924-25 .. | 790 | 2,633,349 | 409 | 1,469,464 | 5 | 3,100 | 114 | 673,191 | 1,353 | 4,779,104 |
| 1925-26 .. | 732 | 2,578,963 | 693 | 1,930,593 | 4 | 20,160 | 218 | 772,564 | 1,647 | 5,302,280 |
| 1926-27 .. | 902 | 3,508,094 | 679 | 2,276,345 | 9 | 22,465 | 126 | 859,316 | 1,716 | 6,666,220 |
| 1927-28 .. up to end of February 1928. | 883 | 3,322,564 | 663 | 1,842,938 | 8 | 44,037 | 142 | 1,084,230 | 1,696 | 6,293,769 |

1. *Explanation.*—These figures are of original certifications: they do not include films re-examined after having been certified in another province; in other words, the same film is not counted twice. There are however a few films which had been certified in one province and were subsequently put up for re-censoring owing to alteration of captions Also in the case of Pathé Gazettes one copy of the same film is often censored in Bombay and another in Calcutta. There is therefore some duplication here, the amount of which in the years 1925-26 and 1926-27 was as follows. From the Bombay footage 30,796 feet (in 1925-26) and 62,946 (in 1926-27) are to be deducted as representing duplicates of Pathé Gazettes which were examined by the Bengal Board also Further, from the Bengal footage 32,900 feet (in 1925-26) and 5,600 (in 1926-27) are to be deducted as representing duplicates of Pathé Gazettes already examined by the Bengal Board.

2. The Bombay and Bengal figures for 1921-22, 1922-23 and 1923-24 are abnormally large owing to the fact that when the Act came into force there were a large number of films in circulation which bore no certificate. These films were put up before the Boards for censorship and were given certificates at a nominal charge of Re. 1, often without examination. Enquiries made from the Boards to ascertain how many such films were certified yielded the following results:—

| Year. | Madras. | Bombay. | Rangoon. | Bengal. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1920-21 .. .. | 447 | .. | *136 | 56 |
| 1921-22 .. .. | 577 | 48 | 22 | (In subsequent |
| 1922-23 .. .. | 35 | 81 | 44 | years esti- |
| 1923-24 .. .. | 36 | 31 | 6 | mated at 340 |
| 1924-25 .. .. | 80 | 1 | 2 | in all.) |
| 1925-26 .. .. | 21 | 14 | 1 | |
| 1926-27 .. .. | 15 | 1 | .. | |

* These figures are for calendar years.

In the case of Bombay, and probably Bengal also, the number of such films certified in recent years forms only a negligible proportion of the films examined. But in Madras the majority of the films certified were of this nature In the case of Madras it has been possible to deduct these films, and this has been done, as otherwise the Madras figures would give a misleading impression of the work of the Madras Board. Another reason for abnormal figures in the earlier years is that there were a large number of films in stock which had not been certified. The figures supplied by the Burma Board and given above exclude those films which were given Re. 1 certificates, and it is understood that the abnormality in the case of Burma is due to the second reason mentioned.

## Table 9.

Analysis of films examined showing the percentage of Indian footage to the total footage examined by the Boards in India (excluding Burma) in each of the years from 1921 onwards.

| — | Bombay. | Bengal. | Madras. | Total. | Percentage of Indian to the total footage. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1921-22.* | | | | | |
| Number of Indian News films .. | 38 | 25 | .. | 63 | |
| Number of imported News films .. | 125 | 580 | .. | 705 | |
| Number of Indian Feature films .. | 45 | 16 | 2 | 63 | |
| Number of imported Feature films. | 438 | 180 | 17 | 615 | |
| Total number of Indian films .. | 83 | 41 | 2 | 126 | |
| Total number of imported films .. | 563 | 740 | 17 | 1,320 | |
| Total number of films examined .. | 646 | 781 | 19 | 1,446 | 9·57 |
| Footage of Indian News films .. | 38,490 | 22,350 | .. | 60,840 | |
| Footage of imported News films .. | 90,877 | 537,051 | .. | 627,928 | |
| Footage of Indian Feature films .. | 211,328 | 107,900 | 13,000 | 332,228 | |
| Footage of imported Feature films. | 2,024,913 | 1,025,604 | 32,838 | 3,083,355 | |
| Total footage of Indian films .. | 249,818 | 130,250 | 13,000 | 393,068 | |
| Total footage of imported films .. | 2,115,790 | 1,562,655 | 32,838 | 3,711,283 | |
| Total footage of films examined .. | 2,365,608 | 1,692,905 | 45,838 | 4,104,351 | |
| *1922-23.* | | | | | |
| Number of Indian News films .. | 30 | 23 | .. | 53 | |
| Number of imported News films .. | 201 | 360 | .. | 561 | |
| Number of Indian Feature films .. | 46 | 20 | 4 | 70 | |
| Number of imported Feature films. | 537 | 111 | 4 | 652 | |
| Total number of Indian films .. | 76 | 43 | 4 | 123 | |
| Total number of imported films .. | 738 | 471 | 4 | 1,213 | |
| Total number of films examined .. | 814 | 514 | 8 | 1,336 | 10·31 |
| Footage of Indian News films .. | 12,602 | 17,334 | .. | 29,936 | |
| Footage of imported News films .. | 147,545 | 346,333 | .. | 493,878 | |
| Footage of Indian Feature films .. | 277,001 | 114,354 | 17,250 | 408,605 | |
| Footage of imported Feature films. | 2,464,662 | 851,321 | 4,000 | 3,319,983 | |
| Total footage of Indian films .. | 289,603 | 131,688 | 17,250 | 438,541 | |
| Total footage of imported films .. | 2,612,207 | 1,197,654 | 4,000 | 3,813,861 | |
| Total footage of films examined .. | 2,901,810 | 1,329,342 | 21,250 | 4,252,402 | |
| *1923-24.* | | | | | |
| Number of Indian News films .. | 21 | 19 | .. | 40 | |
| Number of imported News films. | 161 | 331 | .. | 492 | |
| Number of Indian Feature films.. | 52 | 6 | 5 | 63 | |
| Number of imported Feature films. | 405 | 171 | 4 | 580 | |
| Total number of Indian films .. | 73 | 25 | 5 | 103 | |
| Total number of imported films .. | 566 | 502 | 4 | 1,072 | |
| Total number of films examined.. | 639 | 527 | 9 | 1,175 | 11·06 |
| Footage of Indian News films .. | 9,608 | 12,650 | .. | 22,258 | |
| Footage of imported News films. | 122,840 | 311,304 | .. | 434,144 | |
| Footage of Indian Feature films .. | 363,852 | 34,349 | 13,285 | 411,486 | |
| Footage of imported Feature films. | 1,688,947 | 1,282,219 | 81,525 | 3,052,691 | |
| Total footage of Indian films .. | 373,460 | 46,999 | 13,285 | 433,744 | |
| Total footage of imported films .. | 1,811,787 | 1,593,523 | 81,525 | 3,486,835 | |
| Total footage of films examined .. | 2,185,247 | 1,640,522 | 94,810 | 3,920,579 | |

TABLE 9—*contd.*

Analysis of films examined showing the percentage of Indian footage to the total footage examined by the Boards in India (excluding Burma) in each of the years from 1921 onwards—*contd.*

| — | Bombay. | Bengal. | Madras. | Total. | Percentage of Indian to the total footage. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1924-25.* | | | | | |
| Number of Indian News films .. | 12 | 18 | .. | 30 | |
| Number of imported News films. | 177 | 242 | .. | 419 | |
| Number of Indian Feature films | 55 | 11 | 4 | 70 | |
| Number of imported Feature films. | 546 | 138 | 1 | 685 | |
| Total number of Indian films .. | 67 | 29 | 4 | 100 | |
| Total number of imported films .. | 723 | 380 | 1 | 1,104 | |
| Total number of films examined .. | 790 | 409 | 5 | 1,204 | 11·83 |
| Footage of Indian News films .. | 6,873 | 17,300 | .. | 24,173 | |
| Footage of imported News films. | 142,883 | 223,667 | .. | 366,550 | |
| Footage of Indian Feature films .. | 381,585 | 78,000 | 2,100 | 461,685 | |
| Footage of imported Feature films. | 2,102,008 | 1,150,497 | 1,000 | 3,253,505 | |
| Total footage of Indian films .. | 388,458 | 95,300 | 2,100 | 485,858 | |
| Total footage of imported films .. | 2,244,891 | 1,374,164 | 1,000 | 3,620,055 | |
| Total footage of films examined .. | 2,633,349 | 1,469,464 | 3,100 | 4,105,913 | |
| *1925-26.* | | | | | |
| Number of Indian News films .. | 18 | 22 | .. | 40 | |
| Number of imported News films.. | 176 | 476 | .. | 652 | |
| Number of Indian Feature films.. | 94 | 14 | 3 | 111 | |
| Number of imported Feature films. | 444 | 181 | 1 | 626 | |
| Total number of Indian films .. | 112 | 36 | 3 | 151 | |
| Total number of imported films .. | 620 | 657 | 1 | 1,278 | |
| Total number of films examined .. | 732 | 693 | 4 | 1,429 | 16·05 |
| Footage of Indian News films .. | 11,448 | 20,934 | .. | 32,382 | |
| Footage of imported News films .. | 141,163 | 469,380 | .. | 610,543 | |
| Footage of Indian Feature films .. | 638,910 | 36,600 | 19,560 | 694,970 | |
| Footage of imported Feature films. | 1,787,442 | 1,403,779 | 600 | 3,191,821 | |
| Total footage of Indian films .. | 650,358 | 57,434 | 19,560 | 727,352 | |
| Total footage of imported films .. | 1,928,605 | 1,873,159 | 600 | 3,802,364 | |
| Total footage of films examined .. | 2,578,963 | 1,930,593 | 20,160 | 4,529,716 | |
| *1926-27.* | | | | | |
| Number of Indian News films .. | 24 | 29 | .. | 53 | |
| Number of imported News films .. | 218 | 436 | .. | 654 | |
| Number of Indian Feature films .. | 96 | 9 | 3 | 108 | |
| Number of imported Feature films. | 564 | 205 | 6 | 775 | |
| Total number of Indian films .. | 120 | 38 | 3 | 161 | |
| Total number of imported films .. | 782 | 641 | 6 | 1,429 | |
| Total number of films examined .. | 902 | 679 | 9 | 1,590 | 15·26 |
| Footage of Indian News films .. | 17,694 | 22,638 | .. | 40,327 | |
| Footage of imported News films.. | 184,594 | 418,837 | .. | 603,431 | |
| Footage of Indian Feature films .. | 756,722 | 80,428 | 9,000 | 846,150 | |
| Footage of imported Feature films. | 2,519,084 | 1,754,417 | 13,465 | 4,316,996 | |
| Total footage of Indian films .. | 774,416 | 103,061 | 9,000 | 886,477 | |
| Total footage of imported films .. | 2,733,678 | 2,173,284 | 13,465 | 4,920,427 | |
| Total footage of films examined .. | 3,508,094 | 2,276,345 | 22,465 | 5,806,904 | |

TABLE 9—*contd.*

Analysis of films examined showing the percentage of Indian footage to the total footage examined by the Boards in India (excluding Burma) in each of the years from 1921 onwards—*contd.*

| — | Bombay. | Bengal. | Madras. | Total. | Percentage of Indian to the total footage. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1927-28* (up to February 29th) | | | | | |
| Number of Indian News films .. | 31 | 26 | .. | 57 | |
| Number of imported News films .. | 402 | Not given. | .. | .. | |
| Number of Indian Feature films .. | 73 | 7 | 1 | 81 | |
| Number of imported Feature films. | 327 | Not given. | 7 | .. | |
| Total number of Indian films .. | 104 | 33 | 1 | 138 | |
| Total number of imported films .. | 779 | 630 | 7 | 1,416 | |
| Total number of films examined. | 883 | 663 | 8 | 1,554 | |
| Footage of Indian News films .. | 28,451 | 22,483 | .. | 50,934 | 11 92 |
| Footage of imported News films .. | 434,272 | 403,336 | .. | 837,608 | |
| Footage of Indian Feature films .. | 652,941 | 68,000 | 5,500 | 726,441 | |
| Footage of imported Feature films. | 2,206,900 | 1,349,119 | 38,537 | 3,594,556 | |
| Total footage of Indian films .. | 681,392 | 90,483 | 5,500 | 777,375 | |
| Total footage of imported films .. | 2,641,172 | 1,752,455 | 38,537 | 4,432,164 | |
| Total footage of films examined .. | 3,322,564 | 1,842,938 | 44,037 | 5,209,539 | |

*Note.*—There is a slight discrepancy in the figures relating to the number and footage of imported films examined by the Madras Board for the years 1921-22, 1922-23, 1924-25 and 1926-27 which could not be adjusted. The figures involved however are small, and the discrepancies are not material.

## Table 10.

The percentage of Burmese footage to the total footage examined in Burma.

| Year. | — | | Total. | Percentage of Burmese footage to total. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1921-22 | Number of Burmese News films | 5 | 15 | 6·82 |
| | Number of Burmese Feature films | 10 | | |
| | Number of Chinese films .. .. | .. | 301 | |
| | Number of other imported films | 301 | | |
| | Total number of films examined .. .. | | 316 | |
| | Footage of Burmese News films | 6,800 | 68,800 | |
| | Footage of Burmese Feature films | 62,000 | | |
| | Footage of Chinese films .. .. | .. | 939,017 | |
| | Footage of other imported films | 939,017 | | |
| | Total footage of films examined .. .. | | 1,007,817 | |
| 1922-23 | Number of Burmese News films | 12 | 45 | 13·68 |
| | Number of Burmese Feature films | 33 | | |
| | Number of Chinese films .. .. | .. | 664 | |
| | Number of other imported films | 664 | | |
| | Total number of films examined .. .. | | 709 | |
| | Footage of Burmese News films | 10,700 | 237,900 | |
| | Footage of Burmese Feature films | 227,200 | | |
| | Footage of Chinese films .. .. | .. | 1,500,834 | |
| | Footage of other imported films | 1,500,834 | | |
| | Total footage of films examined .. .. | | 1,738,734 | |
| 1923-24 | Number of Burmese News films | 9 | 31 | 21·17 |
| | Number of Burmese Feature films | 22 | | |
| | Number of Chinese films .. .. | .. | 330 | |
| | Number of other imported films | 330 | | |
| | Total number of films examined .. .. | | 361 | |
| | Footage of Burmese News films | 9,900 | 252,100 | |
| | Footage of Burmese Feature films | 242,200 | | |
| | Footage of Chinese films .. .. | .. | 938,759 | |
| | Footage of other imported films | 938,759 | | |
| | Total footage of films examined .. .. | | 1,190,859 | |
| 1924-25 | Number of Burmese News films | 14 | 40 | 45·11 |
| | Number of Burmese Feature films | 26 | | |
| | Number of Chinese films | 13 | 109 | |
| | Number of other imported films | 96 | | |
| | Total number of films examined .. .. | | 149 | |
| | Footage of Burmese News films | 14,800 | 303,700 | |
| | Footage of Burmese Feature films | 288,900 | | |
| | Footage of Chinese films | 80,375 | 369,491 | |
| | Footage of other imported films | 289,116 | | |
| | Total footage of films examined .. .. | | 673,191 | |
| 1925-26 | Number of Burmese News films | 9 | 43 | 55·09 |
| | Number of Burmese Feature films | 34 | | |
| | Number of Chinese films | 32 | 175 | |
| | Number of other imported films | 143 | | |
| | Total number of films examined .. .. | | 218 | |
| | Footage of Burmese News films | 9,600 | 425,600 | |
| | Footage of Burmese Feature films | 416,000 | | |
| | Footage of Chinese films | 162,337 | 346,934 | |
| | Footage of other imported films | 184,627 | | |
| | Total footage of films examined .. .. | | 772,564 | |

TABLE 10—*contd.*

The percentage of Burmese footage to the total footage examined in Burma—*contd.*

| Year. | —— | | Total. | Percentage of Burmese footage to total. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1926-27 | Number of Burmese News films | 17 | 64 | 65·02 |
| | Number of Burmese Feature films | 47 | | |
| | Number of Chinese films | 30 | 62 | |
| | Number of other imported films | 32 | | |
| | Total number of films examined .. .. | | 126 | |
| | Footage of Burmese News films | 12,100 | 561,100 | |
| | Footage of Burmese Feature films | 549,000 | | |
| | Footage of Chinese films | 230,016 | 298,216 | |
| | Footage of other imported films | 68,200 | | |
| | Total footage of films examined .. .. | | 859,316 | |
| 1927-28 (11 months). | Number of Burmese News films | 21 | 70 | 51·56 |
| | Number of Burmese Feature films | 49 | | |
| | Number of Chinese films | 41 | 72 | |
| | Number of other imported films | 31 | | |
| | Total number of films examined .. .. | | 142 | |
| | Footage of Burmese News films | 19,650 | 559,150 | |
| | Footage of Burmese Feature films | 539,500 | | |
| | Footage of Chinese films | 345,808 | 525,080 | |
| | Footage of other imported films | 179,272 | | |
| | Total footage of films examined .. .. | | 1,084,230 | |

*Note.*—No new Indian films are examined in Burma. Those Indian films examined have all been certified in India previously.

TABLE 11.

*Abstract.*

Percentage of Indian to total footage examined in India.

| | Percentage excluding Burma. | Percentage including Burma. |
|---|---|---|
| 1921-22 .. .. | 9·57 | 9·03 |
| 1922-23 .. .. | 10·31 | 11·3 |
| 1923-24 .. .. | 11·06 | 13·4 |
| 1924-25 .. .. | 11·83 | 16·5 |
| 1925-26 .. .. | 16·05 | 21·7 |
| 1926-27 .. .. | 15·26 | 21·6 |
| 1927-28 (11 months) .. | 14·92 | 21·2 |

*Note.*—By including Burma Burmese footage is included as Indian footage.

## Table 12.

The number, footage, and percentage of Indian feature films examined by the Boards (excluding Burma) in each year, with averages.

| — | Number of Indian feature films. | Number of imported feature films. | Total. | Percentage. | Footage of Indian feature films. | Footage of imported feature films. | Total. | Percentage. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1921-22 .. | 63 | 615 | 678 | 9·29 | 332,228 | 3,083,355 | 3,415,583 | 9·72 |
| 1922-23 .. | 70 | 652 | 722 | 9·69 | 408,605 | 3,319,983 | 3,728,588 | 10·97 |
| 1923-24 .. | 63 | 580 | 643 | 9·79 | 411,486 | 3,052,691 | 3,464,177 | 11·87 |
| 1924-25 .. | 70 | 685 | 755 | 9·27 | 461,685 | 3,253,505 | 3,715,190 | 12·42 |
| 1925-26 .. | 111 | 626 | 737 | 14·93 | 694,970 | 3,191,821 | 3,886,791 | 17·88 |
| 1926-27 .. | 108 | 775 | 883 | 12·23 | 846,150 | 4,316,996 | 5,163,146 | 16·38 |
| 1927-28 (11 months) .. | 81 | * 612 | * 693 | 11·68 | 726,441 | 3,594,556 | 4,320,997 | 16·81 |
| Total .. | 566 | 4,545 | 5,111 | 11·07 | 3,881,565 | 23,812,907 | 27,694,472 | 14·00 |
| Yearly average .. | 80·85 | 649·2 | 730·1 | .. | 554,509 | 3,401,844 | 3,956,353 | .. |

* These figures are approximate as the Bengal Board did not give the number of imported feature films.

## Table 13.

### The annual importation of cinema films into India.

| —— | 1922-23. | 1923-24. | 1924-25. | 1925-26. | 1926-27. | 1927-28 (up to 29th February 1928). |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | FT. | FT. | FT. | FT. | FT. | FT. |
| Bombay .. | 4,711,370 | 4,256,630 | 5,791,319 | 8,343,550 | 11,237,434 | 11,775,022 |
| Sind .. .. | 49,529 | 156,778 | 137,491 | 109,205 | 154,553 | 244,571 |
| Bengal .. .. | 962,159 | 1,342,019 | 2,485,852 | 4,651,468 | 5,001,294 | 5,443,278 |
| Madras .. .. | 59,940 | 264,652 | 445,711 | 273,828 | 329,732 | 578,517 |
| Burma .. .. | 1,527,431 | 1,181,576 | 584,387 | 539,148 | 776,651 | 1,627,260 |
| Total .. | 7,310,429 | 7,201,655 | 9,444,760 | 13,917,199 | 17,482,664 | 19,668,648 |
| | RS. | RS. | RS. | RS. | RS. | RS. |
| Total value to nearest thousand .. | 13,24,000 | 14,11,000 | 15,03,000 | 21,06,000 | 23,22,000 | 23,36,000 |
| Customs duty realized at 15 per cent .. | 2,55,935 | 2,25,407 | 2,60,709 | 3,54,265 | 4,22,854 | 4,01,705 |

### Statement showing separately the importation of raw and exposed films from 1st April 1927 to 29th February 1928.

| —— | Raw. | | Exposed. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Length | Value. | Length. | Value. |
| | FT. | RS. | FT. | RS. |
| Bombay .. .. .. .. | 7,724,085 | 3,66,606 | 4,050,937 | 3,77,091 |
| Sind .. .. .. .. .. | 1,391 | 164 | 243,180 | 32,813 |
| Bengal .. .. .. .. | 2,117,833 | 95,511 | 3,325,445 | 11,92,306 |
| Madras .. .. .. .. | 1,000 | 103 | 577,517 | 1,10,994 |
| Burma .. .. .. .. | 441,654 | 30,854 | 1,185,606 | 1,29,390 |
| | 10,285,963 | 4,93,238 | 9,382,685 | 1,842,594 |

*Explanation.*—The value given above is not the actual value but the valuation for customs purposes. Prior to 1922-23 figures of the importation of films were not recorded separately. Separate figures of the importation of raw and exposed films were recorded for the first time in 1927-28. Figures of the quantity of films imported from each country have not been printed, as the fact that a film is imported from a particular country is no indication of the country of origin (i.e. production) of the film.

## Table 14.

### Percentage of British and other non-American footage to total imported footage examined by the Boards.

| | 1925-26. | 1926-27. | 1927-28 (11 months). |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total imported footage examined by all Boards .. | 4,149,328 | 5,218,643 | 4,957,244 |
| Total American do. do. .. | 3,227,806 | 4,159,548 | .. |
| Non-American— | | | |
| British footage examined by all Boards .. | 310,142 | 387,624 | 434,186 |
| Other do. do. .. | 611,380 | 671,471 | .. |
| Percentage of British to total imported footage examined .. .. .. .. .. .. | 7·47 | 7·42 | 8·75 |
| Percentage of other non-American to total imported footage examined .. .. .. .. .. | 14·73 | 12·86 | .. |
| Percentage of American to total imported footage examined .. .. .. .. .. .. | 77·90 | 79·72 | .. |

*Analysis of British footage.*

| | 1925-26. | 1926-27. | 1927-28 (11 months). |
|---|---|---|---|
| News and Topical .. .. .. | 153,784 | 175,436 | 241,851 |
| Feature . .. .. .. | 156,358 | 212,188 | 192,335 |
| Total .. | 310,142 | 387,624 | 434,186 |

*Explanation.*—The figures for 1925-26 and 1926-27 have been extracted by us from the Boards' lists. The figures for 1927-28 were communicated by the Boards themselves.

The footage of duplicate copies of Pathe's Gazettes examined (vide Explanation in Table 8) have been deducted from the British footage for the years 1925-26 and 1926-27 to avoid counting the same film twice. As full information has not been available from some of the Boards for the year 1927-28 it has not been possible to make this adjustment for that year. The figures for the 11 months of 1927-28 should therefore be reduced by an amount which taking the average of the previous two years may be about 66,120. This would bring down the 1927-28 figure to 368,066 and the percentage to 7·42.

## Table 15.

### The output of British films and the extent to which they are exhibited in India and throughout the Empire.

(Except where otherwise indicated the figures are those supplied by His Majesty's Trade Commissioner in India.)

*Output in the United Kingdom—*

| | No. | Footage. |
|---|---|---|
| 1924 .. .. .. .. | 58 | 348,000 |
| 1925 .. .. .. .. | 34 | 204,000 |
| 1926 .. .. .. .. | 26 | 156,000 |
| 1927 .. .. .. .. | 48 | 288,000 |
| 1928 (estimated) .. .. .. | 85 | 510,000 |

*Explanation.*—There is no record of the actual footage. Column 3 shows the footage calculated at 6,000 feet per film. All the films mentioned above are feature films.

*Production in other parts of the Empire—*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| New Zealand .. | 1927 | 6 full length films (estimated). |
| Australia .. .. | 1926 | 14 full length films. |
| South Africa .. | 1928 | 6 full length films (estimated). |

*Explanation.*—These figures are taken from the statement made in the House of Commons on the 22nd March 1927 on behalf of Government.

*Export of exposed films from the United Kingdom to other parts of the Empire.*

| | Positives. | |
|---|---|---|
| | 1925. | 1926. |
| British India .. .. | 596,686 | 726,222 |
| Irish Free State .. .. | 3,948,985 | 1,088,773 |
| Union of South Africa .. | 175,780 | 100,541 |
| Australia .. .. .. | 1,077,270 | 1,522,527 |
| Canada .. .. .. | 200,218 | 169,950 |
| Other British countries .. | 1,857,264 | 2,010,631 |
| Total .. | 7,856,203 | 5,618,644 |

| | Negatives. | |
|---|---|---|
| | 1925. | 1926. |
| British countries .. .. | 103,237 | 38,264 |

*Explanation.*—The particulars given relate to all films of standard width which have undergone a process of manufacture in the country and would apparently include positive films printed in the United Kingdom whatever the origin of the negative. Figures for the year 1927 have not yet been published.

*Exhibition of British films throughout the Empire.*

It is estimated that the percentage of the films shown which are of British production is as follows :—

| | |
|---|---|
| United Kingdom .. .. | 25 per cent in 1914, 10 per cent in 1923, 3 per cent in 1925, 2 per cent in 1926 and 5 per cent in 1927. |
| New Zealand .. .. | 10 per cent. |
| Australia .. .. .. | 8 per cent. |
| India .. .. .. | 5·9 per cent in 1925-26, 1926-27 and 1927-28. |
| Canada, South Africa, etc. .. | Proportion very small. |

*Explanation.*—(i) The United States of America offer about 800 feature films per annum furnishing 90 per cent or more of the films shown throughout the Empire. A few German and still fewer French films are also exhibited.

(ii) The Indian figure is the figure obtained by comparing the footage of British films examined by the Boards in India with the total footage so examined (after making the necessary adjustments in the case of those films which were examined twice).

*The number of feature films produced in the United Kingdom compared with the number of British feature films examined by the Boards in India.*

| Produced in the United Kingdom. | Examined in India. | |
|---|---|---|
| | Full length. | Short length (1,000 or under). |
| 34 (in 1925) .. .. | 20 * | 22 (in 1925-26). |
| 26 (in 1926) .. .. | 27 † | 34 (in 1926-27). |
| 48 (in 1927) .. .. | ‡ | 27 (in 1927-28). |

*Explanation.*—The figures in column 2 above for 1927-28 have been furnished by the Boards. Those for 1925-26 and 1926-27 have been extracted by us from the lists of films examined by the Boards.

* Including two films of 2,000 feet.
† Includes three films of about 2,500 feet.
‡ Length not known.

*Comparison of footage of films manufactured in the United Kingdom and exported to India with the footage of British films examined by the Boards in India.*

| Exported to India. | Examined by the Boards. |
|---|---|
| 596,686 (1925) .. .. | 310,142 (1925-26) |
| 726,222 (1926) .. .. | 387,624 (1926-27) |

*Explanation.*—The figures in column 1 are those supplied by H. M. Trade Commissioner; those in column 2 were extracted by us from the lists of films examined by the Boards. The difference between the footage imported and the footage examined would be the footage of copies imported, and the above figures indicate that on the average two copies of each film are imported.

We obtained from the leading importers in India figures of the total footage of British films imported by them in each year. According to this information the total British footage imported by them in 1925 was 604, 761. This approximates very closely to the figure of 596, 686 which, according to the United Kingdom records, was the amount of British film exported to India in that year. The difference is probably to be accounted for by the fact that one of the importers supplied figures for the financial year 1925-26 instead of the calendar year 1925.

## Table 16.

Table showing work involved in the censoring of films for the year 1926-27.

| — | Number of hours work required per annum. | | | | Number of hours work per month. | Number of hours work per week. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Indian films. | Imported films. | | Total. | Indian films. † | Imported films | | Total. |
| | | News. | Feature. | | | News. | Feature. | |
| Bombay .. | 193·60 | 46·14 | 637·27 | 877 | 16 | 1 | 12 | 16¾ |
| Bengal .. | 25·76 | 104·7 | 438·6 | 569 | 2 | 2 | 8½ | 10½ |
| Madras .. | 2·25 | .. | 3·36 | 5½ | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Burma .. | 140·27 | 74·55 * | | 214 | 11½ | 1½ | .. | 4 |

* It is not possible to differentiate between News and Feature films.

† In the case of Burma 'Indian films' means Burmese films.

*Explanation.*—The above calculation has been made by taking the footage of films examined at each of the censoring centres in 1926-27 and reckoning that 4,000 feet are examined in one hour, which is the usual rate of progress. Actually the total number of hours involved will be slightly larger as, in some cases, a film is examined twice, e.g. when after the primary examination it is referred to the Board. Moreover some films already certified by other Boards are re-examined. The figures for Madras are based on the footage given in Table 8, and shouldtbe understood with reference to the Explanation attached to that Table.

## Table 17.

## Income of the Boards, 1926-27.

| Provinces. | Actual income excluding Government grant, if any. | Examination fees. | | | Chinese. | Total examination fees. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Indian footage. | Imported footage. | | | |
| | | | News and Topical. | Feature. | | |
| | Rs. | Rs | Rs | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |
| Bombay .. .. | 19,720 | 3,872 | 923 | 12,745 | .. | 17,540 |
| Bengal .. .. | 14,762 | 515 | 2,094 | 8,772 | .. | 11,381 |
| Madras .. .. | 402 | 45 | .. | 112 | .. | 157 |
| Burma .. .. | 5,092 | 2,805 | 75 (approximate.) | 266 (approximate.) | 1,150 | 4,296 |
| All India Total. | 39,976 | 7,237 | 3,092 | 21,895 | 1,150 | 33,374 |

In column (2) are given the figures of the actual income of each Board (after deducting the Government grant, if any) as furnished by the Boards. The income of the Boards is derived mainly from the fees charged for the examination of films, but in some cases licensing fees are also credited to the Board. For particulars of the income or expenditure of each Board see replies to the questionnaire addressed to the Boards printed in Volume IV of the Evidence. The figures in the other columns are an approximation obtained by taking the actual footage examined by each Board and estimating the fees on the basis of Rs. 5 per 1,000 feet. Actually these figures should be slightly larger as the full fee of Rs. 5 is paid on odd lengths of less than 1,000 feet. There are also some miscellaneous receipts from the issue of duplicate copies, etc. These facts explain the difference between the figures in column (2) and those in the last column. In the case of Burma the income for the calendar year only was obtainable while the figure in the last column relates to the financial year.

## Table 18.

## Number and footage of films examined by members of the Boards from 1924-25 to 1927-28.

(The remainder were examined by Inspectors only.)

| | Total examined. | | Examined by members. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number. | Footage. | Number. | Footage. |
| Bombay— | | | | |
| 1924-25 .. .. .. .. | 790 | 2,633,349 | 32 | 250,215 |
| 1925-26 .. .. .. .. | 726 | 2,578,963 | 16 | 144,415 |
| 1926-27 .. .. .. .. | 902 | 3,508,094 | 45 | 305,557 |
| 1927-28 (up to 29th February 1928) .. | 883 | 3,322,564 | 39 | 273,707 |
| Bengal— | | | | |
| 1924-25 .. .. .. .. | 409 | 1,469,464 | 15 | 121,781 |
| 1925-26 .. .. .. .. | 693 | 1,930,593 | 24 | 183,237 |
| 1926-27 .. .. .. .. | 679 | 2,276,345 | 20 | 107,815 |
| 1927-28 (up to 29th February 1928) .. | 663 | 1,842,938 | 26 | 184,595 |
| Burma— | | | | |
| 1924-25 to 1927-28 .. .. .. .. | All films examined by the Board. | | | |
| Madras— | | | | |
| 1924-25 to 1927-28 .. .. .. .. | All films examined by Chairman or Members. | | | |

## Table 19.

Number of appeals from decisions of the Boards to Provincial Governments under section 7 (3) of the Cinematograph Act from 1924–25 to 1927–28.

| Province. | Number of appeals. | Result. |
|---|---|---|
| Bombay .. .. | Nil. | .. |
| Bengal .. .. | 1 in 1925–26 .. | Appeal admitted partially and 7½ reels were passed. The Provincial Government ordered reconsideration of the remainder which were passed with excisions. |
| | 1 in 1927–28 .. | Dismissed. |
| Madras .. .. | 1 in 1927–28 .. | Examined by full Board and passed. |
| Burma .. .. | 1 in 1924–25 .. | Dismissed. |

## Table 20.

Certificates suspended by the Boards under section 7 (4) of the Cinematograph Act from 1924–25 to 1927–28.

| | Number of certificates suspended. | Result. |
|---|---|---|
| Bombay— | | |
| 1924-25 .. | 2 | One uncertified. Order of suspension cancelled in five cases after excisions. |
| 1925-26 .. | 3 | |
| 1926-27 .. | 1 | |
| 1927-28 .. | 4 | One uncertified, and in three cases order of suspension cancelled, in one case after excisions. |
| Bengal— | | |
| 1924-25 .. | Nil. | Uncertified. |
| 1925-26 .. | 1 | |
| 1926-27 .. | Nil. | |
| 1927-28 .. | Nil. | |
| Burma— | | |
| 1924 .. | 2 | Uncertified. |
| 1925 .. | 1 | |
| 1926 .. | 4 | |
| 1927-28 .. | 2 | |
| Madras— | | |
| 1924-25 to 1927-28 .. .. | Nil. | |

## Table 21.

Number of films declared uncertified by each Provincial Government under sub-sections (6) and (7) of section 7 of the Cinematograph Act from 1924-25 to 1927-28.

| | |
|---|---|
| Bombay— | |
| 1924-25 | 3 |
| 1925-26 | 3 |
| 1926-27 | 1 |
| 1927-28 | 1 |
| Bengal— | |
| 1924-25 | 2 |
| 1925-26 | 1 |
| 1926-27 | Nil. |
| 1927-28 | Nil. |
| Burma— | |
| 1924 | 2 |
| 1925 | 1 |
| 1926 | 4 |
| 1927-28 | 2 |
| Madras— | |
| 1924-25 to 1927-28 | Nil. |
| Punjab— | |
| 1924-25 | 11 |
| 1925-26 | 8 |
| 1926-27 | 4 |
| 1927-28 | 13 |
| United Provinces— | |
| 1924-25 | 15 |
| 1925-26 | 3 |
| 1926-27 | 4 |
| 1927-28 | 7 |
| Central Provinces and Berar— | |
| 1924-25 | 12 |
| 1925-26 | 2 |
| 1926-27 | Nil. |
| 1927-28 | 5 |
| Bihar and Orissa— | |
| 1924-25 | 19 |
| 1925-26 | 4 |
| 1926-27 | 6 |
| 1927-28 | 8 |
| Assam— | |
| 1924 | 4 |
| 1925 | 1 |
| 1926 | 1 |
| 1927 | 1 |
| Delhi— | |
| 1924-25 | 16 |
| 1925-26 | 4 |
| 1926-27 | 6 |
| 1927-28 | 9 |

Note.—A list of the films uncertified, with the reasons and other particulars, is printed in Volume IV of the Evidence.

TABLE 22.

List of film-producing concerns in India and Burma.

*Bombay.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Aryan Cinema Film Company .. | Poona. |
| 2. | Excelsior Film Company .. | Tardeo, Bombay. |
| 3. | Hindustan Cinema Film Company .. .. .. .. | 125, Narayan Mansion, Girgaum Back Road, Bombay. |
| 4. | Imperial Film Company .. | Grant Road, Bombay. |
| 5. | Jagtap Pictures Corporation .. | Borivli. |
| 6. | Kohinoor Film Company .. | Dadar, Bombay. |
| 7. | Orient Pictures Corporation .. | Post Box 236, Bombay. |
| 8. | Saraswati Film Company .. | Care of Majestic Cinema, Girgaum, Bombay. |
| 9. | Saurashtra Films, Limited .. | Rajkot. |
| 10. | Sharda Film Company .. | Tardeo, Bombay. |
| 11. | Shree Krishna Film Company .. | Dadar, Bombay. |
| 12. | South India Film Company .. | Sholapur. |
| 13. | United Pictures Syndicate .. | Kirkee, Poona. |
| (14. | Maharashtra Film Company .. | Kolhapur.) |
| (15. | Lakshmi Pictures Company .. | Baroda.) |

*Bengal.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 16. | Aurora Cinema Company .. | 41, Kasi Mitter Ghat Street, Bagbazaar, Calcutta. |
| 17. | Eastern Film Syndicate .. .. | 14, Jaganath Dutt Street, Calcutta. |
| 18. | Indian Kinema Arts .. .. | 87, Dhuramtolla Street, Calcutta. |
| 19. | Madan Theatres, Limited .. | 5, Dhuramtolla Street, Calcutta. |

*Madras.*

No regular film-producing industry.

Messrs. Venkiah Brothers, Mount Road, Madras, and Mr. T. H. Huffton, 1/71, Swami Naicken Street, Chintadripet, Madras, are shown as film-producers, but are not producing now.

*Punjab.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 20. | The Punjab Film Company .. | The Mall, Lahore. |
| 21. | The New India Film Company .. | Empress Road, Lahore. |

*Delhi.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 22. | Great Eastern Film Corporation, Limited. | Chandni Chowk (Opposite Imperial Bank), Delhi. |
| 23. | Jagjit Film Company .. .. | Kashmiri Gate, Delhi. |

In the United Provinces, Central Provinces and Berar, Bihar and Orissa, Assam and the North-West Frontier Province there is no film-production.

*Burma* (*Rangoon*).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | London Art Photo Company .. | 73, Merchant Street, Rangoon. |
| 2. | Burmese Favourite Company .. | Sule Pagoda Road, Rangoon. |
| 3. | British Burma Film Company. | 56, 39th Street, Rangoon. |
| 4. | Star Film Booking Agency .. | 51-A, 37th Street, Rangoon. |
| 5. | Mahdok Film Company .. | 38, Creek Street, Rangoon. |
| 6. | Chitsaya Film Company .. | 35, 10th Street, Rangoon. |
| 7. | Samuels, Limited .. .. | 56/57, Sule Pagoda Road, Rangoon. |
| 8. | Burma Art Film Company .. | 34/35, 50th Street, Rangoon. |
| 9. | United Film Company .. .. | 58, Upper Pazundaung Road, Rangoon. |
| 10. | Burma Photoplays Company .. | 34/35, 50th Street, Rangoon. |
| 11. | Myomyanma Film Company .. | 274, 39th Street, Rangoon. |
| 12. | Genuine Film Company .. | Care of 51-A, 37th Street, Rangoon. |
| 13. | Zawtipala Film Company .. | Care of 51-A, 37th Street, Rangoon. |
| 14. | Aungbasae Film Company .. | 57, 39th Street, Rangoon. |
| 15. | Taing Lon Kyaw Film Company. | 30, Godwin Road, Rangoon. |
| 16. | Eastern Film Company .. | 25, 43rd Street, Rangoon. |
| 17. | New Burmania Film Company.. | Care of 51-A, 37th Street, Rangoon. |

## APPENDIX A.

### (1)

*Chairman's opening speech at the first meeting of the Committee on 18th October 1927.*

Now that we are about to formally begin our work as a Committee, may I take this opportunity of welcoming you and expressing my earnest desire for your friendly and hearty co-operation in the execution of the very difficult and delicate task that has been entrusted to us by the Government of India. Our task is rendered more difficult than it need have been by a certain amount of misunderstanding of the scope of the work of this Committee as also by an atmosphere of prejudice and unfounded suspicion which has been generated by that misunderstanding. You would have noticed that in the Press—especially in the Anglo-Indian section thereof—this Committee is referred to as the Film Censorship Committee. This is very unfortunate. In view of the recent strenuous movement in Great Britain to establish or re-establish the British film industry this name given to us has been the cause of some misunderstanding in the Indian Press, and statements have been freely made that we are being called on to find ways and means for tightening the censorship and thereby help the British industry against competitors from elsewhere, notably America.

Again, you would have noticed that this Committee is believed in some quarters to have been called into existence to find ways and means for keeping up the White man's and the Policeman's prestige and glamour in the eye of the Oriental. Again, this Committee is believed in certain quarters to be the indirect means adopted to slyly introduce the most vexed question of preference for British Empire goods. I have carefully perused the prior correspondence on the subject between the various Governments. Most of it you will yourselves see along with the note that was prepared under my direction and is being circulated to you. While it is true that private individuals and the Press have now and then made complaints or statements under each of those heads, I may assure the public that so far as I can judge from their utterances and writings (I cannot divine their inner minds if they have any), the Government of India have for their sole object in calling this Committee into existence the unbiassed examination of the persistent allegations as to laxity of censorship of films and the consequent evil effect of certain films upon the public, the finding of steps feasible to guide on sound lines the influence of the film, the finding of all possible steps to be taken to encourage the growth on proper lines of the indigenous film industry, especially in view of the value of the vast mass of material afforded by Indian history and Indian literature which should appeal to Indian audiences, and incidentally the consideration of the resolution of the Imperial Conference in regard to the exhibition within the Empire of films produced within the Empire passed on the report of the Economic Sub-Committee.

Now that other portions of the Empire, or rather the British Commonwealth of Nations, are busy taking steps for setting their house in order in regard to the film industry, the Government of India, I take it, consider the importance of this opportunity should not be missed for placing India on an equal footing as far as possible in the matter of the material for entertainment and education which the cinematograph provides, and it is earnestly to be hoped the public will not miss it either. Thus it will be seen that the enquiry we are undertaking is into "the film industry in all its aspects including its control by censorship." We are the Cinematograph Enquiry Committee and not the Film Censorship Committee alone. I have deemed it necessary to make this public utterance as I am sure all the members of the Committee are anxiously desirous of the hearty co-operation and assistance of every section of the public for the sound solution of the difficult problems with which we are faced. Our function is to examine the materials placed before us, and to make recommendations to the Government according to the best of our lights with due regard to the interests of India and the interests of India alone. It is unnecessary for me to emphasise the fact that the scope of our enquiry

is limited to these questions which I have indicated, and they are contained in the Government of India resolution appointing this Commitee. We are interpreting those terms in the Questionnaire which is now before you for consideration and, after your approval, we will issue it to the public. We have no other instructions either jointly or as individuals from the Government or from any high officials of the Government. Our guide is the terms of reference as embodied in the resolution. And, let me repeat, we are anxiously looking forward to an earnest co-operation from the public.

Now let us begin our work with love of country and in fear of God, but without fear or favour of man, official or non-official, and may God help us to come to sound conclusions.

(2)

*Circular letter addressed by the Chairman to various prominent people, dated 20th October* 1927.

I don't know if this Cinematograph Committee's work interests you at all. There are two or three matters which always struck me as important in connection with the film—a certain amount of demoralising influence had set in among our young folk, I thought, in consequence of the cinema, and new methods of committing crimes such as hold-up of trains and abductions by motor and other daring feats also followed the cinema. In all matters connected with our industrial progress we always begin to cry when it is too late—that is, after powerful vested interests had established themselves—and the consequence is we have to struggle against great odds in starting Indian concerns.

The cinema has come to stay and, although it is not a necessity nor a key industry, it is bound to spread. The rest of the world is busying itself in the matter. Should India alone keep quiet? There is plenty of talent among our young men and women. The film offers a good opening for educated young people of talent. Censorship is not unimportant. What a huge instrument for mass adult education the cinema affords! You will see from the Questionnaire which accompanies this, a wide field has been thrown open for thoughtful suggestions. My fear is our people may let this opportunity go by default. I shall be glad if you can take some interest and whip up the forces so that proper material may be placed before the Committee.

## APPENDIX B.

(See Chapter 1, paragraphs 19 and 20.)

### Indian Cinematograph Committee.

### QUESTIONNAIRE.

*Instructions.*

*If you are willing to answer any of the questions kindly send your reply as soon as possible to the Secretary, Indian Cinematograph Committee, whose address will be c/o Presidency Postmaster, Bombay (up to 18th November); and thereafter c/o Postmaster, General Post Office, Lahore (up to 30th November); and thereafter c/o Home Department, Delhi.*

*Introductory.*

1. Have you any special knowledge of, or connection with, the Cinematograph Industry either in India or abroad? If so, what?

*General.*

2. (*a*) In your experience to what extent do Indians (1) of the educated classes and (2) of the illiterate classes frequent cinemas? To what extent is such attendance on the increase? (Please explain to what place or area your answer refers).

(*b*) Can you give an idea of the composition of an average cinema audience in the locality of which you can speak?

(*c*) What proportion of the audience consists of children under 14 or adolescents of impressionable age?

### PART I.

*Film Industry in India.*

3. Have you any opinion as to what classes of films are the most popular with Indian audiences and generally in India?

4. Are the exhibitors catering adequately for Indian audiences? If not, what are the reasons?

5. Are Indian-produced films, depicting Indian life, readily available to exhibitors? If so,

(*a*) are they of good quality?

(*b*) are they popular?

(*c*) is it ordinarily less or more profitable to show an Indian than a Western film? Can you cite any examples of successful Indian films?

6. (*a*) Do you think that films of Indian life, topical Indian news, and scenes (with Indian actors) depicting stories from the national literature, history and mythology, would be more popular with Indian audiences than the prevalent Western films?

(*b*) Of such films, what kind would appeal most strongly

(1) to the educated classes,

(2) to the illiterate population?

7. Is difficulty experienced in obtaining suitable films for exhibition to the British and Indian Troops? If so, in what way exactly are the films unsuitable? What sort of films are both suitable and popular?

8. (*a*) Are you satisfied with the present condition of the Industry in this country in its several branches of production, distribution and exhibition?

(*b*) If you are not satisfied, what in your opinion are the main difficulties besetting the Industry and what means would you suggest for assisting it?

9. Are good films readily obtainable by exhibitors at reasonable prices? If not, is there any special reason for this?

Is there any monopoly or tendency to monopoly of the supply or exhibition of films?

10. Do the systems of "block" and "blind" booking and of "first run" or "key theatres" exist in India?

If so, explain the advantages and disadvantages thereof to the Trade and the Public?

11. Have the exhibitors in this country sufficient facilities for previewing films?

Have you any suggestions to make on this matter?

12. To what extent is the amusement tax (where it exists) a handicap to the exhibitor?

13. How does the present customs tariff on imported films affect the exhibitors? How far is it useful for promoting the indigenous production of films? What suggestions have you to make regarding the tariff generally on all materials connected with the film industry?

14. Do you consider that an increased use of the cinema for educational purposes in schools and for adult education in agriculture, public health, etc., by Government or other agencies would help the growth of the film industry in this country?

Is there any demand for such films?

15. Are conditions in this country favourable to the development of an Indian film-producing industry on a large scale?

What are the reasons for your opinion?

16. Do you consider that there are Indian producers, directors, actors, actresses and scenario-writers of sufficient technical knowledge, enterprise, resource and adaptability on whom the country can depend for a substantial output of films of real competitive exhibition value?

What measures would you suggest to supply any deficiency?

17. Do you consider that there are Indian producers, directors, actors, coming for film-production?

18. Do you consider that suitable Government action whether legislative or administrative may be an effective incentive and encouragement to private enterprise for film production? Can you suggest what suitable action can be taken by Government?

19. How does the cost of film-production in this country compare with that in other countries?

20. (*a*) Do any of your proposals involve expenditure from Government funds? If so, do you think that such expenditure is justifiable, having regard to the other needs of the country?

(*b*) Have you any suggestions to make regarding the sources from which such expenditure may be met?

21. What is your opinion regarding a proposal which has been made that to ensure the production and exhibition of films conforming to moral standards, to provide a centralised neutral distributing agency and furnish a fair market, and to inaugurate the use of teaching and propaganda films, and generally to improve the conditions of the film industry in all its aspects, including censorship, a State agency should be created to undertake the management of the film industry as a monopoly?

*Films of the British Commonwealth.*

22. Should India participate in the policy outlined in the resolution of the Imperial Conference to give some measure of encouragement to British Empire films, and if so, would such participation

(*a*) assist the development of her own film industry,
(*b*) assist in making herself better known and understood throughout the Empire and the world, and
(*c*) improve the standard of Western films shown in India?

Have you any suggestions as to the methods of putting such a policy into practice and the limitations if any?

23. (*a*) To what extent can cinema pictures be used for making known the conditions, resources and habits of the peoples, and the activities of the various Governments of the British Commonwealth of Nations to each other?

(*b*) What measures would you suggest for getting the various Governments to co-operate to this end?

## Part II.

*Social Aspects and Control.*

24. (*a*) Do you consider that any class of films exhibited in this country has a demoralising or otherwise injurious effect upon the public?

(*b*) Is there a general circulation of immoral or criminally suggestive films?

(*c*) In your opinion what class of film is harmful? To whom is it harmful? In what way is it harmful?

(*d*) Consider specifically whether censorship is adequate in the cases of

(1) "Sex" films,

(2) "Crime" films.

(*e*) Do you consider there has been any increase of crime in your province due to the cinema?

(*f*) Support your statements, wherever possible, by instances within your personal knowledge.

25. Do you consider that the differences in social customs and outlook between the West and the East necessitate special consideration in the censorship of films in this country?

26. (*a*) Should more care be taken in censoring films likely to offend religious susceptibilities?

(*b*) Can you give an example of any film which has offended the religious susceptibilities of any class of the community?

27. (*a*) Have any of the films exhibited in India a tendency to misrepresent Western civilisation or to lower it in the eyes of Indians? Is it a fact that films representing Western life are generally unintelligible to an uneducated Indian or are largely misunderstood by him? If so, do undesirable results follow from this? Have you any suggestions to make on this point?

(*b*) Do you know of any films exhibited abroad which have a tendency to misrepresent Indian civilisation? If so, were they produced in India?

28. Has any class of film shown in this country a bad effect on—

(*a*) children,

(*b*) adolescents.

If so—

(1) what class of film?

(2) in what way is it harmful?

29. Are you in favour of certification of certain films as "for adults only"?

30. Are you in favour of prohibiting all children below a certain age from visiting cinemas except for special "Children's performances"? If so, why? What age do you suggest?

31. (*a*) Do you consider that censorship is an effective method of guarding against misuse of the film?

32. Do you think that the present system of censorship in your province is satisfactory? If not, in what way is it defective? Can you suggest any improvement?

33. Would a strict censorship—

(*a*) interfere unreasonably with the recreations of the people?

(*b*) involve a falling off in the attendance at cinemas?

(*c*) unduly interfere with the freedom required for artistic and inspirational development?

34. (*a*) Do you advocate the replacement of the present Provincial Boards of Censors by a single Central Board?

(1) If so, why?

(2) Would this cause any inconvenience to the trade?

(3) How should such a Central Board be constituted?

(4) Where should it be situated?

(*b*) Or, would you advocate a Central Board in addition to the Provincial Boards?

(*c*) If you advocate a Central Board working either alone or with Provincial Boards, how would you regulate the relationship between the various Boards and the Central and Local Governments?

(*d*) How should such a Board or Boards be financed?

35. (*a*) Is the present constitution of the Provincial Boards (of which at least half the members must, under the law, be non-officials) satisfactory?

(*b*) Would you prefer a whole-time experienced well-paid officer as censor at each centre, to be assisted by an Advisory Board of non-officials?

36. (*a*) Do you think that the present system (prevailing at Bombay and Calcutta) under which films are ordinarily examined by inspectors subordinate to the Board is satisfactory? Are such inspectors sufficiently well qualified for the work? What sort of qualifications are essential?

(*b*) Or do you think that all films should be examined by members of the Board? If so, do you consider that gentlemen of suitable standing will be available who would be prepared to devote sufficient time to the examination of films for a reasonable remuneration?

37. (*a*) Are there adequate safeguards under the Act for preventing the exhibition of a film which may be objectionable locally although it has been passed by a Board in some other part of India?

(*b*) Do you consider that any safeguards are needed?

38. Do you know any instances of films which have been passed by a Board of Censors in one province and found objectionable in another province?

39. Have you come across any instances of pictures disapproved or banned from exhibition in the country of origin or in Great Britain being exhibited in India?

40. Should posters, handbills and advertisements of cinema performances also be censored? What measures would you suggest for such censorship without undue restriction on freedom?

Have you noticed any such advertisements which were objectionable? In what way were they objectionable?

41. Have you noticed any improvement in the moral standard of the films exhibited in India in recent years?

42. Have you any suggestions to make for getting the co-operation of the trade in the matter of the censorship?

43. (*a*) Is there need for a stricter control over the import and export of films?

(*b*) If so, why?

(*c*) What methods should be adopted for this purpose?

44. To what extent could public bodies and the Press assist in maintaining a good standard of films?

45. (*a*) Should some control be exercised by Government over film-production, and if so what should be the nature of such control?

(*b*) Should all film-producing agencies be registered and licensed, and their studios periodically inspected?

## APPENDIX C.

*Questionnaire addressed to the Boards of Censors through the Government of India and the Provincial Governments on 5th October 1927.*

1. (*a*) The names of the present members of the Bombay / Bengal / Madras / Rangoon Boards of Film Censors; their professions or occupations; and the body or association (if any) by which they are nominated.

(*b*) Name and profession or occupation of the Secretary.

2. (*a*) Total receipts and expenditure of the Board for each year since its institution.

(*b*) Were such receipts derived entirely from examination fees?

(*c*) Amounts of grants (if any) from Government in each year.

3. The rate of fees or allowances paid to members of the Board for attendance at meetings, examination of films or other purposes.

4. The staff maintained by the Board and their pay and allowances, (any special increase or reduction in the last three years should be noted).

5. A statement of the receipts and expenditure of the Board under different heads for each of the years 1924-25, 1925-26 and 1926-27.

6. (*a*) The total number of films examined in each year since the institution of the Board.

(*b*) In each year—
(1) how many were rejected?
(2) how many were cut?

7. In each of the last three years (up to 31st March 1927)—
(*a*) What was the total footage of films examined by the Board (including the Board's staff).

(*b*) How many films were examined by *members* of the Board and what was the footage so examined?

8. The number of films examined in each of the last three years which had not previously been certified in British India.

9. In each of the last three years—

(*a*) How many appeals were preferred under section 7 (3) (*a*) of the Cinematograph Act and with what results?

(*b*) How many certificates were suspended under section 7 (4) and what were the final orders?

10. The number of meetings of the Board during each of the last three years.

11. In each of the last three years how many films were declared uncertified by the local Government under sub-sections 6 and 7 of section 7 of the Cinematograph Act.

*Note.*—The replies to this Questionnaire are printed in Volume IV of the Evidence recorded by the Committee.

## APPENDIX D.

*Questionnaire to producing concerns with covering letter.*

(See Chapter I, paragraph 26.)

FRERE HALL,
*Karachi, the 22nd November* 1927.

DEAR SIR,

I am desired to request you to be good enough to supply me, in sealed covers, for the use of the Indian Cinematograph Committee, with the details regarding your company mentioned in the accompanying statement. The information furnished will be treated as strictly confidential for all purposes (including income-tax) and will be made available only to the Chairman and Members of the Committee.

Yours faithfully,

G. G. HOOPER,
*Secretary, Indian Cinematograph Committee.*

1. When was your company started?
2. How many partners are there?
3. With what capital did you begin?
4. How much money did you borrow and at what rate of interest?
5. What is your present capital?
6. What have been—
   (*a*) your total receipts, and
   (*b*) your net receipts, in each year?
7. How many films have you produced so far?
8. Please give a list of those films.
9. When was each exhibited?
10. What was its length in feet?
11. How many copies were made?
12. How long did it run?
13. Give a list of the members of your establishment, showing the name and caste of each, the wages he (or she) receives, and whether he is literate (in English and the vernacular).
14. Give a list of—
   (*a*) the stars, and
   (*b*) the scenario-writers, employed by your company, and
   (*c*) of the story-writers whose stories you have used.
15. Of your films—
   (*a*) how many have been totally banned,
   (*b*) how many partially excised, and
   (*c*) how many allowed with some alteration?

*Note.*—A subsequent letter was addressed to the producing concerns asking for certain of the above particulars in a simpler form.

## APPENDIX E.

(See Chapter I, paragraph 20.)

LIST OF FILM-PRODUCING STUDIOS VISITED.

*Bombay.*

1. Imperial Film Company.
2. Excelsior Film Company.
3. Sharda Film Company.
4. Kohinoor Film Company.
5. Krishna Film Company.

*Calcutta.*

6. Kinema Arts Studio.
7. Madan's Studio.
8. Eastern Film Syndicate.

*Rangoon.*

9. The British Burma Studio.
10. The London Art Studio.
11. Burma National Film Company Studio.
12. Burma Art Studio.

LIST OF CINEMAS VISITED AND FILMS SEEN.

| Cinema. | Film. | Indian or Imported. |
|---|---|---|
| | *Bombay.* | |
| Krishna Cinema ... | "At the Clang of Fetters" ... | Indian |
| Do. | "Sree Krishna Sudhama" ... | Indian |
| Majestic Cinema ... | "Tainted Virtue" ... ... | Indian |
| Universal Picture House ... ... | "Beware of Widows" ... ... | Imported |
| Opera House ... | "Sacrifice" ... ... ... | Indian |
| At the Pathé Office | "The Nurse" ... ... ... | Indian |
| Do. | "Gun Sundari" ... ... | Indian |
| At Railway Publicity Office ... ... | Railway Publicity Films | |
| | *Karachi.* | |
| Imperial Cinema ... | "Pleasure Mad" ... ... | Indian |
| | *Lahore.* | |
| At Mr. Patel's premises ... ... | Educational films (of Educational Pictures Corpn.) ... | Imported |
| Gaiety Theatre ... | "Laila Majnun" ... ... | Indian |
| | *Amritsar.* | |
| Crown Cinema ... | "Alladin" ... ... ... | Indian |
| Amrit Cinema ... | "The Birth of a Nation" ... | Imported |
| | *Peshawar.* | |
| Imperial Bioscope ... | "Bride No. 13" ... ... | Imported |
| Cinema de Paris ... | "Mons" ... ... ... | Imported |
| Empress Cinema ... | "The man who waited" ... | Imported |
| | *Rawalpindi.* | |
| Rose Cinema ... | "Sati Sardarba" ... ... | Indian |
| Lansdowne Cinema ... | "Fast and Furious" ... ... | Imported |
| | *Lucknow.* | |
| Prince of Wales Theatre ... ... | "Merry Widow" ... ... | Imported |
| Elphinstone Picture Palace ... ... | "His Majesty the American" ... | Imported |
| | *Calcutta.* | |
| Crown Cinema ... | "Durgesh-Nandini" ... ... | Indian |
| Empire Theatre ... | "Whirled into Happiness" ... | Imported |
| Empress Theatre ... | "Sankaracharya" ... ... | Indian |
| Globe Theatre ... | "The Triumph of the Rat" ... | Imported |
| Do. | "The Rat" ... ... ... | Imported |
| Do. ... | "The Beauty Prize" ... ... | Imported |
| Do. | "Tunney-Dempsey Boxing Match" ... ... ... | Imported |

| Cinema. | Film. | Indian or Imported. |
|---|---|---|
| | *Calcutta*—cont. | |
| Elphinstone Picture Palace ... ... | "The Only Woman" ... ... | Imported |
| At Kinema Arts Studio ... ... | "Incarnation" ... ... | Indian |
| At Madan's Office ... | "Variety" ... ... ... | Imported |
| Do. | Two reels of "Debdas" ... | Indian |
| | *Madras.* | |
| Wellington Cinema | "Bride No. 13" ... ... | Imported |
| Do. | "North of 36" ... ... | Imported |
| Do. | "Kiss me Again" ... ... | Imported |
| Globe Theatre ... | "Strong man" ... ... ... | Imported |
| Liberty Cinema ... | "Fire Fighter" ... ... | Imported |
| The Crown Theatre | "The Crook of Dreams" ... | Imported |
| Do. | "Fighting Marine" ... ... | Imported |
| Kinema Central ... | "Ali Baba and the Forty Robbers" ... ... ... | Indian |
| At Chairman's residence ... ... | Congress film ... ... ... | Indian |
| | *Rangoon.* | |
| Dagon Theatre ... | Burmese film ... ... ... | Burmese |
| Raphæl's Picture Palace ... ... | "A Rich Man's Daughter" (Chinese) ... ... ... | Imported |
| Excelsior Cinema ... | "Fast and Furious" ... ... | Imported |
| Elphinstone Cinema | "Ramayana" ... ... ... | Indian |
| Star Cinema ... | "Navadatmai" ... ... ... | Indian |
| Kinema de Paris ... | "The Nurse" ... ... ... | Indian |
| Globe Cinema ... | "The Beauty Prize" ... ... | Imported |
| Plaza ... ... | "Code of the Sea" ... ... | Imported |
| Do. | "Jackie Coogan in Trouble" ... | Imported |
| Olympia ... ... | "Cow Boy" ... ... ... | Imported |
| | *Maymyo.* | |
| Elphinstone Bioscope | "In the Palace of the King" ... | Imported |
| | *Mandalay.* | |
| Elphinstone Cinema | "The Barrier" ... ... ... | Imported |
| Do. | "Laughing at Danger" ... | Imported |
| Globe Cinema ... | Chinese film ... ... ... | Imported |
| The New Theebaw Cinema ... ... | Burmese film ... ... ... | Burmese |
| | *Myingyan.* | |
| Globe Cinema Picturedrome ... | (No performance) ... | — |
| | *Yenangyoung.* | |
| Apollo Cinema ... | (No performance) ... | — |
| | *Prome.* | |
| Two Cinemas ... | Two Burmese films ... ... | Burmese |
| | *Nagpur.* | |
| Baldi Picture Palace | "Murali Wala" ... ... | Indian |
| Do. | "The Answer of the Sea" ... | Imported |
| Craddock Cinema ... | "Bansari Bala" ... ... | Indian |
| | *Delhi.* | |
| Elphinstone Picture Palace ... ... | "Manhandled" ... ... | Imported |
| At Maiden's Hotel | Tata Constructional films ... | Indian |

LIST OF BANNED FILMS SEEN.

1. Five Nights.
2. The Scoundrel Monk.
3. The Triumph of the Rat.
(4. Variety.)
(5. A Rich Man's Daughter.)

*Note.*—Nos. 4 and 5 had not been banned but at the primary inspection had been reported to the Board for rejection and were *sub judice*.

## APPENDIX F.

[Vide paragraph 59.]

Tables prepared by Mr. A. M. Green, I.C.S., from which the approximate imports of (*a*) exposed and (*b*) raw films can be deduced for the years 1922–23 to 1926–27.

| —— | 1927–28 (11 months). | 1926–27. | 1925–26. | 1924–25. | 1923–24. | 1922–23. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Censorship figures— | | | | | | |
| Indian footage examined .. .. | 777,375 | 886,477 | 726,952 | 486,858 | 433,744 | 438,541 |
| Burman footage examined .. .. | 559,150 | 559,200 | 450,000 | 414,500 | 252,100 | 237,900 |
| Imported footage examined in India. | 4,432,164 | 4,920,427 | 3,802,164 | 3,619,305 | 3,486,855 | 3,810,861 |
| Imported footage examined in Burma .. .. | 525,080 | 300,116 | 322,564 | 258,691 | 938,759 | 1,500,834 |
| Total imported footage examined .. | 4,957,244 | 5,220,543 | 4,124,728 | 3,877,996 | 4,425,594 | 5,311,695 |
| Total footage examined .. .. | 6,293,769 | 6,666,220 | 5,301,280 | 4,778,354 | 5,111,448 | 5,988,136 |
| Director-General, Commercial Intelligence and Statistics figures— | | | | | | |
| Total footage imported, exposed and raw .. | 19,668,648 | 17,482,664 | 13,917,199 | 9,444,760 | 7,201,655 | 7,310,429 |
| Exposed film footage imported .. | 9,382,685 | 9,919,032 | 7,837,083 | 7,368,192 | 8,408,629 | 10,092,220 |
| | (I.e., 19 feet to every 10 feet of imported film examined by censor.) | (Approximate figure obtained by multiplying by 1·9 the total footage of imported films examined annually by the censors.) | | | | |
| Raw film footage imported .. | 10,285,963 | 7,563,632 | 6,080,116 | 2,076,568 | —703,026 | —3,781,191 |

*Explanation.*—Cinema films were not separately enumerated in the import returns until 1922–23, and no distinction was made between raw and exposed film till 1927–28. Consequently, we only have definite figures for the current year. Imported footage must exceed footage examined by the censors, because it includes extra copies of films. In 1927–28 19 feet were imported for every 10 feet examined by the censors. Applying the same proportion for previous years, the above table gives an *approximate* figure of actual footage of imported exposed films, and when deducted from total film imports, approximate figure of raw film imports. The figures from 1924–25 to 1926–27 must be reasonable, but the raw film imports for 1922–23 and 1923–24 show a negative quantity. This is almost certainly because the footage of imported films examined by the censors was swollen by films in the country years before the censorship came into force. Real imports must have been very much less. The above figures can however be checked in some measure by the duty figures, and by making an allowance for old films.

Thus in the basic year 1927–28, for which alone we have complete figures, duty on the eleven months' imports of raw film valued at Rs. 4,93,238 would at 15 per cent have yielded Rs. 73,985. The total duty actually collected on raw and exposed films was actually Rs. 4,01,705. Subtracting Rs. 73,985 from this sum, we find the duty on exposed films to have been Rs. 3,27,720. The rate of duty for the first nine months was Rs. 37–8–0 and the remaining two months Rs. 42–3–0, per 1,000 feet, the weighted average being Rs. 38·35. Dividing 3,27,720 by 38·35, we find that 8,545,502 feet of exposed film paid duty as against 9,382,685 imported. The balance of 837,183 feet can only have been imported free of duty on the ground of re-importation. The correct footage of new imports is therefore 8,545,502.

We will now correct the above table by deducting from the imported footage the amount of old films, as estimated from returns obtained from the Boards.

| —— | 1927-28 (11 months). | 1926-27. | 1925-26. | 1924-25. | 1923-24. | 1922-23. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Censorship figures— | | | | | | |
| Imported films examined .. | 4,957,244 | 5,220,543 | 4,124,728 | 3,877,996 | 4,425,594 | 5,311,695 |
| Deduct old films .. | .. | 80,000 | 180,000 | 415,000 | 715,000 | 1,650,000 |
| Net new imported films examined. | 4,957,244 | 5,140,543 | 3,944,728 | 3,462,996 | 3,710,594 | 3,661,695 |
| Director-General, Commercial Intelligence and Statistics figures - | | | | | | |
| Total footage imported, exposed and raw .. | 19,668,648 | 17,482,661 | 13,917,199 | 9,444,760 | 7,201,655 | 7,310,429 |
| Exposed film imported .. | 9,382,685 | 9,767,032 | 7,194,783 | 6,659,672 | 7,050,129 | 6,957,220 |
| (Including re-imports) .. | 837,183 | (Approximate figures obtained by multiplying total imported footage examined by, 1·9.) | | | | |
| Raw film imported. | 10,285,963 | 7,715,632 | 6,722,416 | 2,785,088 | 151,526 | 353,209 |

The figures for the four earlier years, however, would not yield the duty actually collected. In all these years exposed films paid Rs. 37-8-0 per 1,000 feet, and raw film 15 per cent *ad valorem*. In 1927-28, the average value of raw film was ·88 of an anna per foot. Assuming the value to have been 1 anna 6 pies in the three earlier years and slightly over an anna in 1925-26 (prices, we understand, have in fact been falling), we find that the following footages will approximately yield the duty actually collected on films raw and exposed :—

| —— | 1927-28 (11 months). | 1926-27. | 1925-26. | 1924-25. | 1923-24. | 1922-23. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exposed film imported, in feet .. .. | 9,382,685 | 9,767,032 | 7,661,000 | 6,250,000 | 5,750,000 | 6,790,000 |
| Duty on exposed films Rs. | 3,27,720 | 3,66,263 | 2,87,287 | 2,34,375 | 2,15,625 | 2,54,625 |
| Raw film imported, in feet .. .. .. | 10,285,963 | 7,715,632 | 6,258,199 | 3,194,760 | 1,451,655 | 520,429 |
| Duty on raw films. Rs. | 73,985 | 56,591 | 66,978 | 26,331 | 9,782 | 1,310 |
| Total imports in feet .. | 19,668,648 | 17,482,661 | 13,917,199 | 9,444,760 | 7,201,655 | 7,310,429 |
| Total duty collected Rs. | 4,01,705 | 4,22,854 | 3,54,265 | 2,60,709 | 2,25,407 | 2,55,935 |

These figures are only an approximation, but as they agree with the known figures of total footage imported and total duty collected, and as the increase in raw film imports follows a similar curve of increase to that of Indian film production, they would seem to be very fairly correct. The raw film figures for 1922-23, possibly those for 1923-24 also, are apparently too low, but this would only indicate that the Indian and Burman films censored in those years included a proportion of old films.

These results are exhibited more concisely in the following table :—

Table exhibiting the approximate imports of (*a*) exposed film and (*b*) raw film during the past six years.

| ——— | 1922–23. | 1923–24. | 1924–25. | 1925–26. | 1926–27. | 1927–28 (full year, based on eleven months' actuals). |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exposed film feet .. | 6,790,000 | 5,750,000 | 6,250,000 | 7,661,000 | 9,767,032 | 10,235,656 = increase over 1922–23 of nearly 51 per cent (or excluding re-imports 9,322,366). |
| Raw film feet .. | 520,129 | 1,151,655 | 3,191,760 | 6,258,199 | 7,715,632 | 11,221,054 |

*Explanation.*—Cinema films were not separately enumerated in the Import Trade Returns till the year 1922–23, and no distinction was made between raw and exposed film until the year 1927–28. The gross footage for the five earlier years has been so divided between raw and exposed that (i) the import duty on both together will yield the duty actually collected, (ii) the imports of raw film will increase in approximate proportion to the growth of indigenous production as evinced by the censorship figures, and (iii) the imports of exposed film will maintain the ratio established in 1927–28 between imports and foreign footage examined by the censorship.

*Note.*—At the time of printing the Report some changes were made in the Burma figures, on receipt of further information, and also some slight adjustments of the Madras figures. The above calculation is not however substantially affected.

## APPENDIX G.

### Suggestions to Inspectors of Films.

#### Bombay Board of Film Censors.

*General Principles.*

1. No generally and rigidly applicable rules of censorship can be laid down.

2. It is essential to be consistent but impossible to aim at strictly logical decisions.

3. Each film must be judged on its own merits.

4. Nothing should be approved which in the Inspector's honest opinion is calculated to demoralise an audience or any section of it.

5. The following kinds of films are liable to objection:—those which:

(*a*) Extenuate *crime*: or which familiarise young people with crime so as to make them conclude that theft, robbery and crimes of violence are normal incidents of ordinary life and not greatly to be reprobated: or which exhibit the actual methods by which thieves carry out their purposes and make the methods of crime the chief theme: or in which crime is the dominant feature of a serial and not merely an episode in the story.

(*b*) Undermine the teachings of *morality*, by showing vice in an attractive form even though retribution follow: or casting a *halo* or *glory* or *success* round heads of the vicious: or suggesting that a person is *morally justified in succumbing* to temptation in order to escape from bad circumstances or ungenial work: or bringing into contempt the institution of marriage: or suggesting abnormal sexual relations: or lowering the sacredness of the family ties.

(*c*) Exhibit indecorous *dress* or absolute *nudity* of the living (except infants; and small children); or nude statues or figures in suggestive positions.

(*d*) Bring into contempt *public characters acting as such*, *e.g.*, soldiers wearing H.M. uniform, Ministers of religion, Ministers of the Crown, Ambassadors and official representatives of foreign nations, judges, the police, civil servants of Government, etc.

(*e*) Are calculated to wound the susceptibilities of foreign nations or of members of any religion.

(*f*) Are calculated or possibly intended to foment social unrest and discontent: (*i.e.*, not scenes merely depicting realistically the hard conditions under which people live, but depicting the violence that results in an actual conflict between Capital and Labour).

(*g*) Are calculated to promote disaffection or resistance to Government or to promote a breach of law and order.

6. Inspectors should consider the impression likely to be made on an average audience in India, which includes a not inconsiderable proportion of illiterate people or those of immature judgment.

7. Inspectors should remember that a film may be in itself innocent yet dangerous because of the bad reputation of the book it reproduces, and that a book may be harmless but a film of it dangerous.

8. Inspectors should distinguish between errors of conduct caused by love, even guilty love, and those that result from the pursuit of lust.

9. Objections to films may be removed by the Board either (1) by modification or removal of titles and sub-titles or of the film narrative or description, or (2) by cutting out portions of films, or (3) by both.

10. Two Inspectors or the Secretary and one inspector should be present at the inspection of a film.

**The following is a list of film subjects that are likely to be objectionable: —**

(1) Indecorous, ambiguous and irreverent titles and sub-titles.
(2) **Cruelty to animals.**
(3) **The irreverent treatment of sacred subjects.**
(4) **Drunken scenes carried to excess.**
(5) **Vulgar accessories in the staging.**
(6) The *modus operandi* of criminals.
(7) **Cruelty to young infants and excessive cruelty and tortures to adults, especially women.**
(8) **Unnecessary exhibition of feminine underclothing.**
(9) **The exhibition of profuse bleeding.**
(10) Nude figures.
(11) Offensive vulgarity, and impropriety in conduct and dress.
(12) Indecorous dancing.
(13) Excessively passionate love scenes.
(14) Bathing scenes passing the limits of propriety.
(15) References to controversial politics.
(16) Relations of Capital and Labour.
(17) Scenes tending to disparage public characters and institutions.
(18) Realistic horrors of warfare.
(19) Scenes and incidents calculated in time of war to afford information to the enemy.
(20) Incidents having a tendency to disparage other nations.
(21) Scenes holding up the King's uniform to contempt or ridicule.
(22) Subjects dealing with India, in which British or Indian officers are seen in an odious light, and otherwise attempting to suggest the disloyalty of Native States or bringing into disrepute British prestige in the Empire.
(23) The exploitation of tragic incidents of the war.
(24) Gruesome murders and strangulation scenes.
(25) Executions.
(26) The drug habit, *e.g.*, opium, morphia, cocaine, etc.
(27) Subjects dealing with "White Slave" traffic.
(28) Subjects dealing with the premeditated seduction of girls.
(29) "First Night" scenes.
(30) Scenes suggestive of immorality.
(31) Indelicate sexual situations.
(32) Situations accentuating delicate marital relations.
(33) Men and women in bed together.
(34) Illicit sexual relationship.
(35) Prostitution and procuration.
(36) Incidents indicating the actual perpetration of criminal assaults on women.
(37) Scenes depicting the effect of venereal diseases, inherited or acquired.
(38) Incidents suggestive of incestuous relations.
(39) Themes and references relative to "race suicide."
(40) Confinements.
(41) Scenes laid in brothels.
(42) Materialisation of the conventional figure of any founder of religion.

## APPENDIX H.

*Note by the Chairman on "Copyright in Cinema films—Foreign films—Piracy in India—Prevention—Legislative requirements."*

(See Chapter IV, paragraph 185.)

The law of copyright in British India as codified in the Indian Copyright Act III of 1914 is for all material purposes the same as that of England, being governed substantially by the English Copyright Act of 1911, although the Native States in India are apparently not governed either by the Indian or English enactment.

The English Act of 1911 itself in the main reproduces the resolutions at the International Convention held in Berlin in 1908 in respect of copyright to which most of the greater powers were parties, the United States of America alone not being a party thereto.

The English Copyright Act of 1911 *prima facie* under section 37 comes into operation in respect of all British possessions on the dates mentioned therein. Under section 37 (2) (*d*) a proclamation was made on 31st October 1912 by the Government of India applying the Act to British India. Power is given to the legislatures of non-self-governing possessions to make any alterations in the Act and pass supplemental legislation (section 27). The self-governing Dominions under section 26 are authorised to repeal previous English Copyright statutes which had applied to them and pass their own laws. In exercise of the powers granted under section 29 the Indian Copyright Act of 1914 has been passed by the Indian legislature substantially adopting the English Act with a few variations.

The self-governing Dominions who by their representative considered the matter at the Colonial Conference in 1910 have all of them passed enactments, substantially adopting the English Act, the enactments by Australia and New Zealand alone enabling registration of copyrights and conferring additional safeguards and remedies in respect of infringements of copyright in favour of persons who so register.

To refer now to the relevant section in so far as cinema film copyright is concerned, under section 1 copyright subsists—

(*a*) in respect of every work published in the British Dominions;

(*b*) in respect of published works if the author was then a British subject or resident in the British Dominions.

Section 1 (3) defines publication as being confined to the issue of copies of the work and not to extend to the "performance of a dramatic work."

Section 1 (2) defines copyright as meaning the sole right to produce or reproduce any work . . . . . or to *perform the work in public* and by (*c*) in the case of an artistic work to convert into dramatic work by way of performance in public or otherwise, by (*d*) in the case of dramatic work *to make any record* . . . . . *cinematograph* film or other contrivance by means of which the work may be mechanically performed.

Section 35 defines—

a dramatic work as "including any cinematograph production where the arrangement or acting form or the combination of incidents represented give the work an original character";

*an artistic work* as including photographs;

*performance* as meaning any acoustic representation of a work and any visual representation of any dramatic action in a work including such a representation made by means of any mechanical instrument.

Section 2 (1) provides that copyright in a work may be infringed by any person who does anything the sole right to do which is by the Act conferred on the owner of the copyright.

Section 5 (1) defines who are the owners of copyright;

(2) provides for assignment in whole or part generally or subject to limitation in England or other British possessions of copyright;

(3) gives the assignee the same powers as the assignor in respect of the right assigned.

Section 29 enables the privileges and protection of copyright in British courts to be extended to foreigners under certain conditions.

A cinematographic film may be regarded as an original or derivative work or as a combination of the two. (Copinger on copyright, page 217.)

They may be—

(1) photographs of actual incidents in life;

(2) re-enacting of old scenes and taking photographs thereof;

(3) dramatising the novel, etc., of another and performing it in front of the camera;

(4) filming a piece as played at a theatre;

(5) filming a novel or plot newly written.

The right to make cinema films is a literary copyright appertaining to the ownership of copyright in a literary or dramatic work. (Copinger, page 218.)

The right to perform or exhibit the films is appurtenant to any dramatic work and is a performing right. (Copinger, page 219.)

The making of films and the public exhibition of films may themselves amount to infringements of some copyright or other in some other persons and a producer or manufacturer of films for exhibition must either own these kinds of copyrights himself or acquire the same by contract or assignment. The cinema film itself once made without infringing others' rights may be treated as an artistic or dramatic work in which copyright is clearly recognised by the Act though in different persons for different purposes.

Thus the writer of a plot which is filmed has a copyright in the work as a literary or dramatic production to which the right to make films is appurtenant. Section 1, sub-clause (2) (*d*).

Likewise the author of a dramatic work has "performing rights" as appurtenant thereto. Section 1 (2).

The cinema production if it is not a mere photograph of real incidents involves originality in the arrangement and since it amounts to a dramatic work within the meaning of section 35, it is entitled to protection.

It seems to follow that the Act does recognise copyright in films, though various interests therein may be owned by different persons.

The International Convention of 1908 by Article 14 protects authors of literary, scientific or artistic works by conferring on them the exclusive right of making cinema shows and where the cinema work is itself an original creation, "cinematograph productions shall be protected as literary or artistic works if by the arrangement of the acting form or the combinations of incidents represented the author has given the work a personal and original character." "Without prejudice to the rights of the author of the original work, the reproduction by cinematography of a literary, scientific or artistic work shall be protected as an original work." (Copinger, pages 287 and 410.)

The Indian Act, the Canadian Act (page 452, Copinger), the South African Act (page 508, Copinger), reproduce the English with few material changes. The Australian Act (page 474) and the New Zealand Act (page 485) while they recognise the same substantive rights confer ampler remedies in cases of infringements of copyrights.

The United States of America by the amendment of 1912 in their main Act of 1909 clearly and definitely recognise rights in "motion picture photo plays and motion pictures other than photo plays." (Sections 5 (1) (*m*) 11 and 24. Pages 528, 530 and 535, Copinger.)

A producer or manufacturer of films, it is therefore correct to say, may own or acquire by contract copyrights in the films which are entitled to protection under the English Act. The protection is clear as to British films. A cinema film as a dramatic work is entitled to copyright. A person who performs it without permission infringes the copyright and is liable to be proceeded against. For the purposes of considering how far copyrights of foreigners in foreign films such as American films are recognised by the English courts, it is necessary now to notice the definition of "publication" in the English Act, since there is no copyright in "unpublished works" of foreigners recognised in British Dominions.

Section 1 (3) thereof following as it does the definition given by the International Convention in Article 4 (page 402, Copinger) excludes the performance of a dramatic work as constituting publication. A cinema film can only be performed but not published. A cinema film is a dramatic work. The definition of the word in the American Act (pages 342 and 552, Copinger) is not different. How then can a dramatic work be *published*? Copinger says it is done "in the case of a dramatic and musical work by printing and publishing the libretto or the score." (Page 278.)

"Further protection may be gained for a dramatic film by publishing simultaneously in Great Britain and America a book or pamphlet containing a short description of the film, its plot and the arrangement of the scenes." (Page 223.)

"In order to protect the performing rights the plan is sometimes adopted of publishing in book form in England short descriptions of the films and the plot represented." (Page 27, note.)

Under the Act copyright in unpublished works can exist only if the owner of the copyright is a British subject or one resident in British Dominions unless, however, protection is afforded by Orders in Council passed under section 29. (Page 223.)

In dealing with this subject of "publication of films" Copinger observes: "A great number of American films are exhibited in England and as the United States of America is a country with which Great Britain has no international arrangement and which has obtained no Order in Council under section 29 of the Act, it follows that these films do not become entitled to copyright protection under the Act even though their first exhibition has taken place in England and the only way in which such copyright protection can be obtained is by first publishing them in England in some way or another. (Page 223.)

But Orders in Council do appear to have been made in respect of the United States of America though with reference only to clauses (*b*) and (*c*) of section 29. (See pages 439 and 440, Copinger.)

At page 24, the effect of this order Copinger states to be that notwithstanding such Order in Council "an American author may lose his copyright by fresh publication abroad," the reason being that protection has not been extended to clause (*a*) of section 29.

The question of "publication" in respect of foreign films is still therefore a matter of material importance. It is the first publication of the work in British Dominions that confers copyright.

After the abovementioned Order in Council in favour of an American subject, perhaps it may be contended there is a copyright recognised even in respect of unpublished works provided there has been no publication of the same in the United States of America (pages 24 and 440, Copinger) and provided also the copyright rules under the American Act have been complied with.

Copyright in films is acquired under the American Law by registration and deposit of film copies. (Vide sections 10 and 11 and pages 530 and 560 for directions and provisions for registration of films.) Where an American film proprietor becomes entitled to copyright under the English Act, it can be enforceable and recognised for practical purposes only if there has been no publication of the story in the United States of America; for if there has been publication it becomes a published work and copyright in it can subsist under the English Copyright Act only if the work is first published in the British Dominions.

The American films get protection in an English Court for their copyright under the existing laws by the use "of the device of first publishing the work in England in some way or other." This, therefore, is one method of obtaining protection available to the owner of a foreign film under the English Act.

In respect of piracy of copyright, the English Act provides the following remedies which are available in the case of cinematograph films in England and India (under the existing laws):—

(1) Section 5 confers the powers of granting damages and ordering accounts. This is on the footing that the infringement is a violation of a civil right and a tort.

(2) Section 11 makes it a criminal offence to make for sale, hire or distribute infringing copies. The Indian Act in section 7 makes similar provisions.

(3) Section 14 read with section 6 of the Indian Act enables the customs authorities to seize pirated copies at the instance of the persons aggrieved.

The Canadian and South African Acts confer the same remedies. The Australian and New Zealand Acts, sections 16 and 17 (pages 479 and 480), provide for additional remedies of a summary character but only in favour of persons who register their copyright, which is introduced as an optional proceeding in those States. Vide section 26, page 482, and section 38, page 584.

Section 15 imposes penalty on owners of theatres permitting performances in theatres infringing the right.

Section 16 enables a registration authority summarily at the instance of an aggrieved party to issue a search warrant and order seizure of pirated copies.

Section 17 empowers the owner of performing rights to forbid performance in infringement of his work and the infringer becomes liable to be prosecuted. It is a matter for consideration whether similar provisions may not be embodied by the Indian Legislature in the law relating to copyright or in that relating to films.

For all ordinary cases of piracy the provisions of the Indian Act appear ample and sufficient to protect the owners of films, British and foreign.

The piracy complained of by the Madan Theatres takes place under peculiar circumstances. It is stated that companies like Madan Theatres obtain from American companies the exclusive right of exhibition of films in particular provinces or in India as a whole. The importer is under the terms of his contract with the supplier to get as many positive copies of the film as he may require for exploitation. The complaint is that some other exhibitor in America who lawfully comes by the films wrongly takes duplicate copies of the films while in his possession and sells them to persons in India at cheap rates, thereby causing loss to legitimate importers from the rightful suppliers who alone it is said own the copyright in the films.

The English importers do not apparently suffer from the difficulties of the Indian importers. Their position in law, however, is the same as that of the Indian importers. No cases have arisen in England in which any such position has been considered. Apart from legislative provisions the importers must make suitable provisions in their contracts with their suppliers by which the latter must be made to indemnify the former against losses caused by the wrongful acts of persons who derived title from them originally. The supplier receives money for exclusive rights in which the importers are disturbed by the wrongful act of third persons and so regarded it is a case of breach of contract or inability to guarantee rights sold on the part of suppliers in respect of which the remedies under the ordinary law are open.

The English Cinematograph Act of 1927 by section 5 imposes the compulsory registration of films. A similar course may perhaps be adopted in this country. One other remedy may be suggested. In granting licenses or certificates to individual films for exhibition, necessary rules may be framed requiring the applicant to state—

(i) the title of the motion picture;
(ii) a description of the work sufficient to identify the same;
(iii) one or more photographs taken from each scene of the act or from sections of the picture;
(iv) the person from whom the right to exhibit has been obtained and the nature of the right.

Rules (i) to (iii) are requirements for registration of films under the American Act, page 561, which confer copyright. Similar conditions with the addition of No. (iv) may be required of Indian exhibitors in applying for license to exhibit.

These details ought to be ordinarily sufficient for the licensing authorities to find out if any pirated pictures are proposed to be exhibited and to refuse license or certificate therefor if it is found that the copy for which license

to exhibit is asked for is only a pirated copy. Power may by rules also be reserved for the authorities to revoke a license granted by mistake or misrepresentation.

These provisions ought to be sufficient to protect the importers against piracy of all kinds.

There is no special provision in the English Act for piracies of the kind complained of by Madan Theatres.

The American Act, page 534, provides certain remedies for infringement of copyright and there is nothing there particularly applicable to this form of piracy.

In addition to the remedies prescribed by the Act, the following measures may be adopted:—

(i) The suitability of applying sections 15, 16 and 17 of the Australian Act may be considered but they will not have any special effect in respect of foreign films. They are only additional protection against infringement of copyright.

(ii) Registration of films, and rules for requiring applicants to state particulars sufficient to detect piracy.

The safeguard of publication of story is available under the law as it stands and requires no legislative change therefor.

So far as Indian States are concerned; they are not governed either by the Indian or the English Act. Nor does it appear to be possible to extend the English Act to them by any Order in Council except as a foreign State under section 29. Sections 25, 27, and 28 do not refer to them. Section 28 refers only to protectorates. Section 37 (*a*) positively excludes all Indian States from the purview of the Act.

The only way to deal with piracy of films taking place in the Indian States would be to proceed under their laws relating to copyrights and films if any and if there are none the States must be approached to make laws affording protection to exhibitors and importers in British India.

3*rd May* 1928. T. RANGACHARIAR.

## APPENDIX I.

*Sir John Marshall's letter, dated the 12th April 1928, regarding the preparation of archæological and historical monographs for the purpose of film-production.*

(See Chapter VIII, paragraph 276.)

When I was examined by the Cinematograph Committee I was asked by the President to consider whether it would be possible for my department to prepare a series of memoirs on the ancient costumes, arms and antiquities of India, which could be used for the production of historic films. I have now had time to examine the proposal and beg to offer the following remarks on it:—

It would not be feasible for the Archæological Department to undertake the research work involved in the preparation of the suggested monographs, as our staff is already fully occupied with other and more pressing duties. On the other hand, it would not be economical for us to engage an extra staff for this purpose. The best plan in my estimation would be for my department to invite outside archæologists to write the proposed memoirs, offering them a lump sum for each memoir and placing at their disposal whatever materials and facilities we possess for the purpose. The memoirs to be undertaken could be conveniently arranged to cover the following periods, viz.:—

(1) The early period (300 B.C. to 1 A.D.) as represented by the antiquities of the Early Indian School.

(2) The period from 1 A.D. to 300 A.D. including—

(*a*) Indo-Greek Antiquities,

(*b*) Muttra Antiquities,

(*c*) Amaravati Antiquities.

(3) The Gupta period from the fourth to the end of the seventh century A.D.

(4) The Mediaeval period from the eighth to the twelfth century A.D.

(5) The pre-Mughal period from the twelfth to the sixteenth century A.D.

(6) The Mughal period from 1526 onwards.

Among the subjects with which each memoir would deal in separate sections would be architecture, the major and minor arts, furniture, conveyances, arms, implements, domestic utensils, costumes and ornaments, musical instruments, religious iconography and cult types, customs, manners, dancing and posturing, civil and religious ceremonial observances. The various sections would be freely illustrated both by photographs and drawings. The letter-press would be concise and designed especially to meet the needs of film producers with bibliographical references wherever necessary, thus enabling the producer to obtain fuller information, if required.

I estimate that each of these memoirs would take not less than a year to prepare, and I propose that a sum of Rs. 8,000 should be offered for each. Out of this sum the writer would be expected to provide for all the incidental expenses, including travelling and the services of a draftsman-photographer, which would be indispensable in connexion with the illustrations.

In the first place I would recommend that only one memoir, viz., that relating to the early period, should be undertaken on these lines, and that we should wait until it is completed before arranging for the remaining five, so that we may profit by the experience gained.

If the Cinema Committee is disposed to accept this scheme, I suggest that a sum of Rs. 8,000 should be provided as soon as may be practical for the first memoir, further provision for the other memoirs being made at a later stage.

For the publication of the memoirs no special provision will be made, as they will be issued by my department.

My department will be agreeable to supervise the preparation and publication of the memoirs.

## APPENDIX J.

*Report from the Director of the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau regarding the work of the Bureau.*

The Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau, as a branch of the Department of Trade and Commerce, was first organized in January 1917, for the purpose of augmenting other means for the world-wide dissemination of national publicity, the advertisement of the Dominion's resources, attractions and opportunities, and the encouragement of tourist and other trade and settlement through the medium of motion pictures and other pictorial matter, the importance of which, as an agency for this work, was then becoming internationally recognized. The Bureau also was established to provide a central plant in which all Federal Governmental motion and still photographic material could be produced at a considerable saving.

A small motion picture and photographic production plant was established at the outset, at a cost of roughly $25,000 or $30,000 for equipment, in a vacant Government block suitable for the purpose. The staff consisted of a director, several executives, a clerical staff and four or five photographers and laboratory workers.

With the growth in the motion picture industry to world-wide importance and the consequent growth in its value as a means of popular international appeal, education, publicity and advertising, the scope of the Bureau's efforts was steadily extended to keep pace.

From its small beginning the Bureau has developed steadily in all its ramifications until to-day the Canadian Government owns and operates what is probably the largest and most modernly equipped governmental institution of its kind in the world. The equipment, of the most modern type, represents a rough outlay of probably $50,000 or $60,000, not taking into consideration the building—a governmentally-owned block—in which it is housed, and it is anticipated that, in the not distant future, a specially designed plant, to include all the latest developments in the industry, will be erected to take care of the vastly increasing requirements and the rapidly extending developments of this field of endeavour.

The annual expenditures of the Government in this work are at present in the neighbourhood of $60,000, this amount including the salaries of some twenty experienced and expert executives and technicians employed in the Bureau. It is expected that this year the Government will appropriate a much larger amount for this work owing to the growth of the activities of the Bureau and the vastly increased volume of production.

As against this expenditure, the Bureau has been able, during the past four or five years, to secure an annual revenue of approximately $25,000 through the sale and theatrical circulation of films and the production of other photographic material. Thus the actual cost to the people of Canada annually has been not more than approximately $35,000.

This cost, however, is more than balanced by the enormous saving to the Government accomplished through the centralized production of motion pictures and other pictorial matter, used by all its departments, in its own plant at practically cost, to say nothing of better quality, greater efficiency and convenience and the saving of much time.

Furthermore, the Bureau has been able to obtain, through the medium of its pictorial productions, millions and millions of dollars worth of the finest type of publicity and advertising throughout the world.

The Bureau functions as follows:—

(1) As a central plant for the production of moving pictures, still photographs, lantern slides, transparencies, and other pictorial matter for all departments of the Federal Government and affiliated organizations.

(2) As the producer and distributor of a series of one and multiple-reel films, depicting the resources, life and conditions, basic industries, scenic, tourist and other attractions, historical and topical events, trade

and settlement opportunities, and other features, which are circulated widely throughout the world by practically every means and in practically every field in which the motion picture is used.

(3) To encourage and co-operate with private commercial motion picture enterprises in producing dramatic and other films within the Dominion, depicting Canadian life, scenery and other features.

(4) To advise and co-operate with all departments of the Federal Government in all matters pertaining to photography and photographic processes; to co-operate in the production of motion pictures and other photographic material of all kinds; to advise and arrange the purchase of special motion and still photographic material produced by outside enterprises for Governmental use; to advise and arrange for the purchase of photographic equipment.

(5) To undertake the production of scientific, technical and other special types of films and other photographic material required by departments of the Federal Government, drafting scenarios, undertaking field and studio work, editing, titling, etc., in this connection.

(6) To co-operate with the Provincial Governments, the railway and steamship lines and other similar organisations in the joint production and circulation of publicity, technical, advertising and other types of motion and still photographic material designed to encourage general trade, travel, and interest in the Dominion.

In connection with the above, in cases (1), (4), (5) and (6) the Bureau operates on a cost repayment basis, i.e., all work performed for departments, Provincial Governments and other public organisations is charged against them at cost of material and processing, plus living, travelling and other necessary expenditure in connection therewith and a small margin to cover overhead and depreciation.

As an example of the saving accomplished to departments and other organisations, the case of the production of motion pictures may be cited. The usual commercial charges for the production of a negative, its processing, and the supply of one print to purchaser in Canada ranges from $1.00 per foot to $5.00 per foot, depending on the nature of the work undertaken. On the cost repayment basis and centralised production under which the Bureau operates, this work is done by the Bureau at a cost of from between 15 cents to $1.50 per foot.

It may be of interest in connection with case (2) to give some idea of what is accomplished.

In the first place, the films are produced to have popular appeal and to contain no direct advertising or propaganda. They are photographed by our own staff in the field and made up, titled and processed in our own plant and are constructed so that their interest and technical quality are comparable in all respects to commercial productions of a like nature.

The distribution of them is handled, in the theatrical field, through commercial distributing concerns on a percentage basis for territorial rights or sold outright. At the present time we have secured circulation of them through some of the most important theatrical circuits in Canada, the United States, Great Britain, Australasia, South Africa, South America, France, Holland, the Scandinavian countries, and elsewhere. In all cases this distribution is revenue-producing.

In the non-theatrical field, circulation is achieved through the medium of educational institutions, visual education organisations, sporting, travel, welfare and other similar organisations, agents of the railways, steamship lines, and other organisation, Government trade commissioners, immigration agents and other Governmental representatives. This distribution is world-wide in character and, while it is generally necessary for us to assume the cost of supplying the films for this circulation and no revenue is derived therefrom, it is considered the most valuable circulation from an advertising standpoint, since the apeal is to specialised audiences.

We have at the present time in constant circulation throughout the world, in the theatrical field, upward of a million feet of films and, in the non-theatrical field, more than two million feet of films. We also take advantage of the new developments in the industry—the narrow-gauge films, 9 mm., 16 mm. and 28 mm., designed for personal use—which have been showing a most amazing expansion in the past year, by co-operating in the production of these types of films with commercial concerns handling

them. It is expected that, in the near future, due to the exceptional growth of this field, to enter into the active production of at least one type of these types of films on our own.

The staff of the Bureau consists of a Director, who is the chief executive; an Assistant, who handles routine matters, correspondence, etc.; a clerical staff; a film editor, who directs production work, edits and titles film, etc.; a Laboratory Superintendent, who supervises the work in the plant; a staff of cameramen, laboratory workers, artists and other technical artisans; a Supervisor, who directs the work of the still photographic division; a staff of still photographers and photographic workers; and a Stores Clerk and Librarian, who handles the purchase of material, the shipping of films, and other related work.

In addition, the Bureau has a number of correspondents in various parts of the country who undertake photographic work in their particular territory, on assignment, on a piece-work or footage basis.

As regards the questions in Captain Poussette's enquiry relative to the Bureau, it is difficult to give specific data due to the fact that the Bureau has been built up and enlarged both as to production facilities, equipment and staff, over a period of years.

It is my opinion that the capital cost of inaugurating an up-to-date plant and laboratory to undertake work similar to ours on approximately the same scale would be in the neighbourhood of $50,000 without taking into consideration the rental or purchase of a building suitable for housing such a plant, but including up-to-date motion picture and still photographic camera equipment, studio, laboratory and other equipment.

To operate with the most efficiency, least expense in the long run and to maintain the standard of quality that is paramount if good results are to be achieved, it seems to me that it would be advisable to erect a new plant specially for this work. The cost of such a building or reinforced concrete or some such similar fire-proof material would not, I think, exceed $15,000 if done on an economical basis.

The cost of maintenance, salaries, additional equipment, material and general contingencies, in other words, the recurring cost, is governed entirely by the scope and extent of activities. This Bureau operates annually on an appropriation of between $50,000 and $75,000.

It is my firm belief that, taking into consideration the revenue derived and saving accomplished by a centralised production for all Governmental activities of this nature, these savings and revenues will practically equal the cost of operation in due course and that eventually the only debit would be the first capital cost.

## APPENDIX K.

LIST OF TABLES, ABSTRACTS OF EVIDENCE, ETC., PREPARED AT MADRAS DURING THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE COMMITTEE.

*Statistical Tables.*

1. Number of cinema-houses in existence in the different provinces in each year from 1921 to 1927.

2. Total seating accommodation in permanent cinemas.

3. Number of towns with a population of (*i*) over 20,000 and (*ii*) over 10,000.

4. Number of cinemas showing exclusively imported films.

5. Number of travelling cinemas in the different provinces.

6. Number of licenses issued to travelling cinemas in the different provinces in each year from 1921.

7. Number and footage of films examined by each Board in each year from 1921 onwards.

8. Analysis of the films examined, showing the percentage of Indian footage to the total footage examined by the Boards in India (excluding Burma) in each of the years from 1921 onwards.

9. Percentage of Burmese footage to the total footage examined in Burma.

10. Abstract showing percentage of Indian to total footage examined in India, including and excluding Burma.

11. Annual importation of cinema films into India.

12. Percentage of British and other non-American footage to total imported footage examined by the Boards.

13. Work involved in the censoring of films for the year 1926-27.

14. Income of the Boards for 1926-27.

15. Distribution list of cinemas in British India with seating accommodation and other particulars.

*Summaries of Evidence, etc.*

1. Production.

2. Exhibition.

3. Distribution.

4. Machinery of censorship.

5. Entertainment tax.

6. Travelling cinemas.

7. Opinions of local Governments and heads of departments regarding the use of the cinema for educational and propaganda purposes.

8. What each province has actually done in using films for educational and propaganda purposes.

9. Children and the cinema.

10. Madans' alleged monopoly.

11. Misrepresentation of Indians on the film.

12. Misrepresentation of Western life on the film.

13. Opinions regarding the report of the Hygiene Delegation.

14. Arguments for and against the quota used in the Parliamentary debates on the Cinema Bill.

15. Draft of points for discussion at the report stage

## APPENDIX L.

SOME FIGURES OF RECEIPTS FROM INDIAN AND NON-INDIAN FILMS IN BOMBAY.

(1)

### Statement showing the Box office value in Bombay of three of the best non-Indian films and three of the best Indian films in 1927.

*Non-Indian Films*

| | | | | Rs. | A. | P. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ben-Hur | First week | Empire Cinema | | 16,349 | 12 | 0 |
| Do. | Second week | Do. | | 12,832 | 4 | 0 |
| Do. | Third ,, | Do | | 10,267 | 12 | 0 |
| Do. | Fourth ,, | Do. | | 7,593 | 4 | 0 |
| | | | | 47,043 | 0 | 0 |
| For Heaven's Sake | First week | Empire Cinema | | 12,238 | 2 | 0 |
| Do | Second week | Do. | | 4,433 | 8 | 0 |
| | | | | 16,671 | 10 | 0 |
| Beau Geste | First week | Excelsior Cinema | | 9,067 | 4 | 0 |
| Do. | Second week | Do. | | 4,114 | 12 | 0 |
| | | | | 13,182 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Total | | 76,896 | 10 | 0 |

*Indian Films.*

| | | | | Rs. | A. | P. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shirin Farhad | First week | Imperial Cinema | | 9,081 | 6 | 0 |
| Do. | Second week | Do. | | 6,348 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | 15,429 | 6 | 0 |
| Educated Wife | First week | Imperial Cinema | | 7,432 | 4 | 0 |
| Do. | Second week | Do. | | 5,682 | 2 | 0 |
| | | | | 13,114 | 6 | 0 |
| Sacrifice | First week | Imperial Cinema | | 7,352 | 2 | 0 |
| Do. | Second week | Do. | | 5,569 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | 12,921 | 2 | 0 |
| | | Total | | 41,464 | 14 | 0 |

(2)

| Cinemas showing Western films only from 1st January to 30th June 1927. | Receipts. | Cinemas showing Indian films only from 1st January to 30th June 1927. | Receipts. | Difference in favour of Indian films. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rs. A. | | Rs. A. | Rs. A. |
| 1. Empire Cinema .. | 88,147 13 | 1. Imperial Cinema .. | 1,03,773 14 | 15,626 1 |
| 2. Pathe Cinema .. | 79,429 15 | 2. Majestic Cinema .. | 97,964 0 | 18,534 1 |
| 3. Wellington Cinema .. .. | 74,483 6 | 3. Krishna Cinema .. | 81,843 0 | 7,359 10 |
| Total .. | 2,42,061 2 | Total .. | 2,83,580 14 | 41,519 12 |

The above figures, in statement (2), do not include tickets priced at four annas and under, which are not taxable.