

INDIAN CINEMATOGRAPH COMMITTEE

1927—1928

EVIDENCE

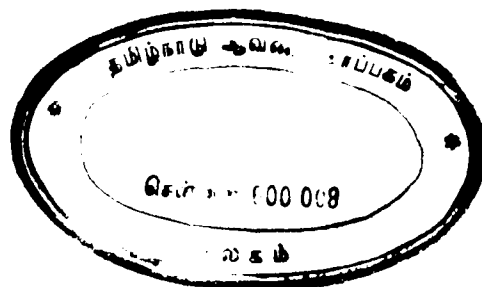
Volume III

Oral Evidence
of

Witnesses examined at Madras, Rangoon, Mandalay,
Calcutta (one witness), Jamshedpur, Nagpur and
Delhi, with their Written Statements.



CALCUTTA: GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CENTRAL PUBLICATION BRANCH
1928



NW2 'N271

N28-357

Government of India Publications are obtainable from the Government of
India Central Publication Branch, 3, Government Place, West,
Calcutta, and from the following Agents :—

EUROPE.

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR INDIA, 42, GROSVENOR GARDENS, LONDON, S. W. 1.
And at all Booksellers.

INDIA AND CEYLON : Provincial Book Depôts.

MADRAS:—Superintendent, Government Press, Mount Road, Madras.
BOMBAY:—Superintendent, Government Book Depôt, Town Hall, Bombay.
SINDH:—Library attached to the Office of the Commissioner in Sind, Karachi.
BENGAL:—Bengal Secretariat Book Depôt, Writers' Buildings, Room No. 1, Ground Floor, Calcutta.
UNITED PROVINCES OF AGRA AND OUDH:—Superintendent of Government Press, United Provinces of
Agra and Oudh, Allahabad.
PUNJAB:—Superintendent, Government Printing, Punjab, Lahore.
BURMA:—Superintendent, Government Printing, Burma, Rangoon.
CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BHERAR:—Superintendent, Government Printing, Central Provinces, Nagpur.
ASSAM:—Superintendent, Assam Secretariat Press, Shillong.
BIHAR AND ORISSA:—Superintendent, Government Printing, Bihar and Orissa, P. O. Gultarbagh, Patna.
COORG:—Office of the Chief Commissioner of Coorg, Bangalore.
NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE:—Manager, Government Printing and Stationery, Peshawar.

Thacker Spink & Co., Calcutta and Simla.
W. Newman & Co., Ltd., Calcutta.
R. Cambay & Co., Calcutta.
S. K. Lahiri & Co., Calcutta.
The Indian School Supply Depôt, 309, Bow Bazar
Street, Calcutta.
Butterworth & Co. (India), Ltd., Calcutta.
Rai M. C. Sarcar Bahadur & Sons, 90-2A, Harrison
Road, Calcutta.
Standard Literature Company, Limited, Calcutta.
Association Press, Calcutta.
Chukerverthy, Chatterjee & Co., Ltd., 13, College
Square, Calcutta.
The Book Company, Calcutta.
James Murray & Co., 12, Government Place,
Calcutta. (For Meteorological Publications only).
Ray Chaudhury & Co., 68-5, Ashutosh Mukerji
Road, Calcutta.
The Oriental Publishing House, 34, Cornwallis
Street, Calcutta.
Scientific Publishing Co., 9, Taltolla Lane, Calcutta.
Chatterjee & Co., 201, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.
B. C. Basak, Esq., Proprietor, Albert Library, Dacca.
Mittra Brothers, Rajshahi.
Higginbothams, Madras.
P. R. Rama Iyer & Co., Madras.
Rochouse and Sons, Madras.
G. A. Nateson & Co., Publishers, George Town,
Madras.
Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.
Bright & Co., Trivandrum.
The Booklover's Resort, Taluk, Trivandrum, South
India.
E. M. Gopalakrishna Kone, Pudumandapam, Madras.
Vijapur & Co., Vizagapatam.
Thacker & Co., Ltd., Bombay.
D. B. Taraporevala, Sons & Co., Bombay.
Sunder Pandurang, Bombay.
Ran Chandra Govind & Sons, Kalbadevi Road,
Bombay.
N. M. Tripathi & Co., Booksellers, Princess Street,
Kalbadevi Road, Bombay.
New & Secondhand Bookshop, Kalbadevi Road,
Bombay.
Mrs. Radhabai Atmaram Sagoo, Kalbadevi Road,
Bombay.
A. H. Wheeler & Co., Allahabad, Calcutta and
Bombay.
Proprietor, New Kitabkhana, Poona.
The Manager, Oriental Book Supplying Agency, 15,
Bhukrawar, Poona City.
Rama Krishna Bros., Opposite Vishrambag, Poona
City.
S. P. Bookstall, 21, Budhwar, Poona.
Mangaldas & Sons, Booksellers and Publishers,
Bhaga Talao, Surat.
E. B. Unadikar & Co., The Bharat Book Depôt,
Dharwar.

The Standard Bookstall, Karachi, Quetta, Delhi,
Munree and Rawalpindi.
The Karachi Book Depôt, Elphinstone Street, Camp,
Karachi.
The English Bookstall, Karachi.
The Standard Bookstall, Quetta.
J. P. Mahotra & Co., Quetta.
J. Ray & Sons, 43 K. & L. Edwardes Road, Rawal-
pindi and Munree.
The Standard Book Depôt, Lahore, Nainital,
Mussoorie, Dalhousie, Ambala Cantonment and
Delhi.
N. B. Mathur, Supdt., Nazir Kannon Hind Press,
Allahabad.
The North India Christian Tract and Book Society,
18, Clive Road, Allahabad.
Ran Dayal Agarwala, 184, Katra, Allahabad.
The Indian Army Book Depôt, Juhl, Cawnpore.
Manager, Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow.
The Upper India Publishing House, Ltd., Literature
Palace, Ammuddaula Park, Lucknow.
Rai Sahib M. Gulab Singh & Sons, Mudd-i-Am-
Press, Lahore and Allahabad.
Rama Krishna & Sons, Booksellers, Anarkali, Lahore.
Puri Brothers, Booksellers and Publishers, Kacheri
Road, Lahore.
The Bhak School Bookshop, Lahore.
The Standard Bookstall, Lahore.
The Proprietor, Punjab Sanskrit Book Depôt,
Sahidmitha Street, Lahore.
The Insurance Publicity Co., Ltd., Lahore.
The Punjab Religious Book Society, Lahore.
Manager of the Imperial Book Depôt, 63, Chaudal
Chowk Street, Delhi.
Fono Book Agency, New Delhi.
Oxford Book and Stationery Company, Delhi.
Supdt., American Baptist Mission Press, Rangoon.
The Modern Publishing House, Ltd., 30, Phayre
Street, Rangoon.
Burma Book Club, Ltd., Rangoon.
Manager, The "Hitavada," Nagpur.
Bhisey Brothers, Booksellers and Stationers, Sita-
baidi, Nagpur.
S. C. Talukdar, Proprietor, Students & Co., Cooh
Behar.
The Manager, Ceylon Observer, Colombo.
The Manager, The Indian Book Shop, Benares City.
The Srivilliputtur Co-operative Trading Union, Ltd.,
Srivilliputtur (S. I. R.).
Raghunath Prasad & Sons, Patna City.
K. P. Mathur, Emporium, Patna.
Kandari Emporium, Guzri, Patna City.
Bastakarya Sahasr, Sahakari, Ltd., Baroda.
The Hyderabad Book Depôt, Chaderghat, Hydera-
bad (Deccan).

EVIDENCE.

Volume III.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	QUESTIONNAIRE	PAGE.
	ORAL EVIDENCE OF WITNESSES AND THEIR WRITTEN STATEMENTS	ix—xii 1—1015

No.	Names.	Designation.	PAGES.	
			Written Statement.	Oral Evidence.
		MADRAS.		
1	Mr. R. G. Grieve	Acting Director of Public Instruction.	1	1--11
2	The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Muhammad Bazi-ullah Sahib Bahadur.	Director of Industries	11--12	12--20
3	Mr. F. Ware	Acting Veterinary Adviser to the Govt. of Madras.	20	20--24
4	Mr. E. T. H. Stevenson	Dy. Inspector General of Police.	24--26	26--38
5	Mr. E. J. B. Greenwood	Electrical Inspector to The Govt. of Madras.	38--40	40--51
6	Mr. H. F. Travers Phillips	Commissioner of Police	51--53	56--65
7	Mr. H. F. Travers Phillips Lt. H. H. Cox Khan Sahib Md. Zindah Sahib Bahadur Mr. A. K. Krishnaswami Ayyar.	The Madras Board of Film Censors.	81 53 54--56 ..	65--81
8	Miss I. H. Lowe	Dy. Directress of Public Instruction.	82--83	83--87
9	Mr. A. Rama Rao	District Educational Officer, Chingleput.	88	89--94
10	Mr. P. T. Kumaraswami Chettiyar.	Councillor, Corporation of Madras.	..	94--99
11	Mr. J. A. Thomson	Secretary, Madras Club	99--101	101--102

33438

No.	Names.	Designation.	PAGES.	
			Written Statement.	Oral Evidence.
		MADRAS—contd.		
12	Lt.-Col. A. J. H. Russell	Director of Public Health	102-103	103-110
13	Mrs. D. Jinrajadasa	Vice-President, Indian Women's Association.	110-111	112-123
14	Miss D. de la Hay	Principal, Queen Mary's College for Women.	123-124	124-126
15	Diwan Bahadur P. Parankusam Nayudu.	Retired Deputy Commissioner of Police.	126-128	128-135
16	Mr. Raghupathi Prakasa	Film Producer	..	135-147
17	Mr. R. D. Anstead	Director of Agriculture	147-149	..
	Mr. G. R. Hilson	Acting Director of Agriculture.	..	149-155
18	Mr. F. H. Wilson	Official Assignee	..	155-160
19	Mrs. M. V. Chinnappa	Warden, Women Students' Medical College.	160-161	161-165
20	Dr. (Mrs.) A. R. Lakshmi Pathi.	Social Worker	165-166	167-170
21	Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahim Sahib Bahadur.	District Educational Officer, Coimbatore.	171-173	173-181
22	Mr. G. Sarvotham Rao	M. L. A.	181-184	185-192
23	Mr. T. S. Nataraja Pillai	High Court Vakil and Councillor, Corporation of Madras.	192-195	195-198
24	Dr. A. L. Narayan	Prof. of Physics, Maharaja's College, Vizianagaram.	198-201	201-206
25	Mr. R. W. Ross	District Educational Officer, Madras.	206	206-210
26	Mr. C. V. Venkataramana Aiyangar.	M. L. C.	211-214	214-229
27	Rao Sahib N. R. Balakrishna Mudaliar.	Acting Superintendent, School of Arts and Crafts.	229-235	235-237
28	Rao Sahib P. Sambandam Mudaliar.	Judge, Small Cause Court, Madras.	238-240	240-244
29	Diwan Bahadur N. Ramachandra Pantulu Garu.	High Court Vakil, Ellore.	244-245	245-259

No.	Names.	Designation.	PAGES.	
			Written Statement.	Oral Evidence.
		MADRAS—contd.		
30	..	Agent, Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway.	259-261	..
	Mr. R. W. Moss	Deputy Agent, Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway.	..	261-267
31	Mr. Mahmud Schammad Sahib Bahadur.	M. L. C.	..	267-271
32	Mr. J. K. Metherell	Secretary and Treasurer, European Association, Madras.	271-273	..
	Mr. A. A. Hayles	Representative, European Association, Madras.	..	273-282
33	Dr. K. S. Viswanathan	Assistant Professor of Hygiene, Medical College.	282-283	283-284
34	Mr. A. Narayanan.	Manager, A. Narayanan & Co., Film Renters, Madras.	284-292	292-316
35	Mr. S. K. Vasagam	Manager, Kinema Central Madras.	316-317	317-318
36	Mr. J. A. David	Cinematographer	318-321 and 332	322-331
37	Mr. G. A. Isaac	English Assistant, Voorhees College, Vellore.	..	332-337
38	Mr. S. Devashankar Aiyar	Amateur Cinematographer.	337-344	345-354
39	Rev. W. A. Hobson	Representative, Anglo-Indian Association, Madras.	..	354-357
40	Mr. T. H. Hutton	Sole Proprietor, The Peninsula Film Service, Madras.	357-359	359-374
41	Mr. N. R. Desai	Manager, Universal Pictures Corporation, Madras.	..	375-378
42	Mr. C. H. Venkatachalapathi.	Press Reporter, Daily Express, Madras.	..	378-383
43	Mr. K. V. Acharya	Film Producer, Mysore	383-391	391-412

No.	Names.	Designation.	Pages.	
			Written Statement.	Oral Evidence.
		MANDALAY <i>contd.</i>		
77	Mr. G. Tranter	Inspector, Police Supplies Office, Mandalay.	..	684-687
78	Mr. Ahmed Khan	Inspector, C. I. D., Mandalay.	..	687-690
79	U. Ba Pe	Manager, Globe Cinema Hall.	..	690-698
80	Mr. Iyer	Proprietor, Thibaw Cinema Hall.	..	698-702
81	U. Kyaw Yan	Retired Inspector of Schools.	..	702-706
82	Rev. H. V. Shepherd	Principal, High School.	706-707	707-712
83	Mr. J. M. C. Bawa	Municipal Commissioner, Mandalay.	..	712-716
84	Mr. J. S. Augustine	Master, Skelly High School, Mandalay.	..	716-717
85	Mr. J. H. D. Wilkinson	Editor, "Upper Burma Gazette."	..	717-719
		RANGOON.		
86	U. Dwe	Secretary, Myoma National Schools Committee.	..	719-723
87	Mr. W. L. Keough	Manager, "The Rangoon Evening Post."	..	723-727
88	Mr. Md. Ebrahim	Engine and Boiler Merchant, Rangoon.	..	727-729
89	Mr. Khin Maung Gyi	Bar-at-Law	..	729-734
90	Mr. E. A. Fernandez	Film Exhibitor	..	734-743
91	Mr. S. A. Rashid	Secretary, Rangoon Social Service League.	..	743-746
92	Dr. P. A. Nair	Medical Practitioner	..	747-748
		CALCUTTA.		
93	Sir Charles McLeod	Managing Director, McLeod & Co., Calcutta (on behalf of the British Social Hygiene Association).	749-753	753-758

No.	Names.	Designation.	Pages.	
			Written Statement.	Oral Evidence.
		JAMSHEDPUR.		
94	Mr. P. K. Madan	Sales Department, Tata Iron and Steel Works, Tatanagar.	759-763	763-778
		NAGPUR.		
95	Mr. A. C. Armstrong	Deputy Inspector General of Police, Crime and Railways.	..	779-785
96	Mr. F. J. Plymen	Director of Agriculture	..	785-791
97	Mr. C. M. Trivedi	Director of Industries	..	791-797
98	Mr. R. H. Beckett	Director of Public Instruction.	797-799	799-803
99	Lt. Col. H. G. Stiles Webb	Director of Public Health	..	803-805
100	Mr. J. L. Mott	Secretary, Y. M. C. A., Nagpur.	..	805-808
101	Rao Bahadur K. V. Brahma	Pleader, Amraoti	809-810	810-817
102	Mr. S. D. Ranadive	Pleader, Amraoti	817-820	820-827
103	Mr. P. B. Kale	Proprietor, Buldi Picture House.	827-831	832-841
104	Mr. C. B. Parekh	President, Civil Station Sub-Committee, Nagpur.	841-844	844-846
105	Mr. V. S. Venkataraman	Editor, "Hitavada," Nagpur.	..	846-850
106	Mr. S. M. Hasan	Guardian to Raja Azamshah, Nagpur.	850-851	851-855
107	Mr. B. V. R. Rao	Manager, The Craddock Cinema.	..	855-861
108	Mr. S. N. Pawangadker	Representative, Maharashtra Film Co., Kolhapur.	862-863	863-868
		DELHI.		
109	Mr. D. G. Phalke	Film Producer	..	869-885
110	Mr. Md. Faiyaz Khan	Zemindar of Agra and Ex-M. L. A.	..	885-893
111	Mr. Badri Prasad Mathur	Teacher	..	893-900

No.	Names.	Designation.	PAGES.	
			Written Statement.	Oral Evidence.
		DELHI—contd.		
112	Mr. P. L. Orle . . .	Senior Superintendent of Police.	..	900-903
113	Lt.-Col. G. D. Franklin	Civil Surgeon and Chief Medical Officer, Delhi.	..	903-905
114	Lt.-Col. H. E. Stanger Leathes.	Health Officer, Notified Area, Delhi.	..	906-908
115	Dr. K. S. Sethna . . .	Health Officer, Delhi Municipality.	..	908-910
116	Mr. A. C. Khanna . . .	Journalist	..	910-914
117	Mr. Md. Aminuddin . . . Rai Bahadur Paras Das	} Representatives of the Delhi Social Service League	914-916	916-921
118	Mr. H. A. Sams . . .			
		Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs.	921-923	923-930
119	Col. J. H. F. Lakin . . .	Representing Army Headquarters.	930-935	935-945
120	Lala Rang Beharilal . . .	Advocate, M. L. A. . . .	..	945-953
121	Mr. Raghubir Singh . . .	Educationalist	..	953-957
122	Sir John Marshall . . .	Director General of Archaeology.	..	957-960
123	Rev. J. C. Chatterjee . . .	Principal, St. Stephen's High School, Delhi and M. L. A.	..	960-965
124	Mr. Abdur Rahman . . .	Advocate	..	966-968
125	Mr. S. Wahazuddin . . .	Scenario-Writer	..	968-972
126	Mr. B. D. Gupta . . .	Manager, Regimental and Club Cinemas, Delhi.	..	972-977
127	Mr. B. Das	M. L. A.	..	977-982
128	Mr. N. C. Kelkar	M. L. A.	..	983-987
129	Mr. J. P. Mathur	Proprietor, Photo Service Co.	..	987-993
130	Kumar Ganganand Sinha . . .	M. L. A.	..	993-995
131	Mr. K. V. Rangaswamy Ayyangar.	M. L. A.	..	995-997
132	Mr. Himansu Rai	Actor and Director	..	998-1015

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 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 a deficiency?

17. Do you consider that sufficient capital in India is or will be forthcoming 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 out-look 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 civilization 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 "Childrens' 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 Board 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?

NOTE.

In the case of those whose names are marked with an asterisk the record of oral evidence was not corrected by the witness.

9

MADRAS.

**Written Statement of Mr. R. G. GRIEVE, M.A., F.R.G.S., Acting
Director of Public Instruction, Madras, dated the 12th November
1927.**

In regard to many of the points raised in the questionnaire I am not competent to express any opinion, involving as they do technical matters of which I have no knowledge. I shall therefore confine myself to the following specific points in the questionnaire:—

GENERAL.

2. (a) In Madras the educated classes do not in any large numbers frequent cinemas. This is particularly true as regards women. The audience consists mainly of what may be termed lower middle classes, and the type of films ordinarily shown does not appear to appeal to educated Indians.

PART I.

14 and 20. (a) There is great room for an increased use of the cinema for educational purposes. There is some demand for such films in this presidency, but so far it has been only a very limited demand. If in the future adult education is developed, it seems probable that this demand will increase. Some expenditure from provincial funds will be required, but it does not seem probable that this need be any very large sum if portable cinemas can be used which could be transferred from school to school. Moreover educational films are in their nature less expensive to produce than dramatic films as there are no salaries to be paid for performers. Nature supplies the necessary materials.

In this connection and with reference to the questions regarding censorship and control, besides the negative aspect of censorship some positive action is required. It would be desirable to have some Board in which there would be liaison between the trade and educationalists. I may illustrate my meaning by a reference to experience in England where it has been found that geographical films intended for educational purposes have been produced with a merely scenic representation, and it is felt that if there had been prior consultation with educationalists films could have been produced which would have admitted of an interpretation, and not a mere picture of natural or physical phenomena.

At the same time there is no doubt that the negative aspect of censorship is exceedingly necessary. The questions asked in 27 (a) of Part II can most certainly be answered in the affirmative. In general the films presented in this presidency are meretricious, vulgar or melodramatic. It seems to me certain that such films misrepresent western civilisation and lower it in the eyes of Indians. Consequently any action which would tend to exclude such films and to encourage a better type of film is to be encouraged.

Oral Evidence of Mr. R. G. GRIEVE, M.A., F.R.G.S., Acting Director of Public Instruction, Madras, on Thursday, the 5th January 1928.

Chairman: You are the Director of Public Instruction?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you go to the cinema much yourself?

A. No, not often.

Q. Have you used the cinema at all in this province for educational purposes?

A. Practically not at all.

Q. Do you use magic lantern slides?

A. Yes, they are very largely used.

Q. Both in the town and in the mofussil?

A. The District Educational Officers are supplied with lanterns and sets of slides. A number of schools in the mofussil have them.

Q. Where are they prepared, these slides?

A. They are nearly all imported from England, except that graduates under training are taught to make slides themselves.

Q. Are they very popular, are they very useful in supplementing education in schools and colleges?

A. Yes, I think they are.

Q. Do you use them also in high schools?

A. Yes.

Q. And also in the college department?

A. I do not know that they are used so much in colleges as in schools.

Q. What subjects do you generally include in the slides?

A. A variety of subjects, history, geography and a certain amount of natural science.

Q. I notice you believe in the cinema being used with advantage in supplementing education in schools and colleges.

A. Yes.

Q. You advocate slow motion films, do you not? Have you seen them used in England or anywhere else?

A. I saw a demonstration at Oxford of a portable cinematograph.

Q. Is there any movement here for mass education in our province, I mean educating the adults?

A. It has not developed much so far, but there is a beginning of it.

Q. I suppose your Government is keen on it?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think that the film can be used for that purpose very largely?

A. I think it can.

Q. Especially in matters of general education and agricultural and industrial methods, public health, etc.?

A. Certainly with regard to hygiene.

Q. Are you using magic lantern slides in your province for hygiene?

A. I think the Director of Public Health does give demonstrations.

Q. And where does he get the films or slides made for that purpose?

A. That I do not know.

Q. Do you think that the departments can co-operate in producing educational films for public utility purposes?

A. Yes. I do not see any reason why they should not.

Q. I suppose you are aware that many of these subjects can be dealt with for all-India purposes as also for provincial purposes?

A. That would be so.

Q. One question with which we are troubled is this. There are two matters connected with this production of films for educational purposes; one is whether it should be a central agency or should each provincial Government have its own agency for production of those films. The second question is whether you should leave it to private enterprise or whether Government should take the initiative in the matter. Have you bestowed any thought on that question?

A. I should say that it possibly might be better to have a central agency in regard to that, because if you can produce on a large scale and have a large market, you can do so more economically and supply more cheaply.

Q. One difficulty which has been suggested in that connection is this. As regards the class of people you have to deal with, they value a picture if it has a local surrounding about it rather than a surrounding with which they are not familiar. It is said that if you produce films which have a local surrounding they can be more easily understood by people of the locality.

A. There are certain things that are of interest and significance because they are familiar, but on the other hand, there are certain things that are strange to their environment which they can only understand through some pictorial or other description, and I think you want both.

Q. Do you think a central agency can produce the required sort of films provided the provinces also give their assistance in the shape of experts in order to give a local touch wherever it is needed, or should each provincial Government have its own agency?

A. I think the first alternative would be preferable.

Q. And more economical?

A. Yes.

Q. You say you are getting these magic lantern slides from England. Do you find that the pupils understand them all right, and do they find any difficulty for want of local surrounding?

A. I think they do not follow completely, and there may be particular slides which the teacher himself is not in a position to interpret thoroughly.

Q. How do you get over that difficulty?

A. We get over it as much as possible by giving lantern lectures at the training colleges to the teachers.

Q. In order to enable them to use the slides properly?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you tell us what amount is spent in this direction by the provincial Government?

A. It is not a large amount.

Q. Do you think the provincial Government will be able to find the necessary funds if education by means of films is also resorted to, or would you require any grant from the Central Government for that purpose?

A. I do not see why it should be very expensive.

Q. Would you have Government produce these films or would you leave it to private enterprise, giving them the necessary suggestions, to produce the films themselves?

A. I should prefer private enterprise.

Q. But have you got any such enterprise in your province?

A. There is one individual who has done something: he has got a certain number of films that he takes about and shows.

Q. Are they topical films or educational films?

A. Intended to be educational.

Q. What sort are they?

A. History, geography, etc.

Q. Films or slides?

A. Films.

Q. Did he show them on his own account, or on requisition from the Government?

A. He was on his own account.

Q. Has he succeeded in doing that at all? Who is he?

A. I cannot remember the name for the moment. I can send it to you. He came to see me and asked me to get him engagements.

Q. This is the first time we hear of production of educational films. Is it a recent attempt?

A. Yes, quite recent.

Q. I suppose you are aware that it is not a commercial proposition for a private agency to produce educational films?

A. No, I should think it was not.

Q. It can only be a side show to a studio if at all. Do you think you can depend upon the private agency to produce the films which you require to be shown for mass education or for supplementing education in schools?

A. It is really difficult for me to give an opinion on that.

Q. Because you would like to consider that point?

A. It will have to be done on a very large scale.

Q. But you think it is essential that Government should embark upon this sort of education of the people?

A. I think it is certainly very desirable.

Q. I suppose you agree, in a country where illiteracy is so widespread, that adult education by means of films can play a very large part in removing ignorance in regard to various matters?

A. Yes.

Q. What I should like to have your opinion about is whether provincial Governments should pool their resources together, or should each provincial Government be left to itself to make what effort it can? Which do you think is better?

A. I think the pooling of resources might be very helpful.

Q. Do they hold conferences of Ministers now-a-days? There used to be some conference of educational officers before. Have they followed it up?

A. There is to be one in Delhi this month.

Q. Was this subject at any time considered in these conferences?

A. It is not on the agenda.

Q. Was it at any time considered?

A. I do not think so. I know the committee on it in England.

Q. You mean the Imperial Conference?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you seen the proceedings of that conference recently? They do not seem to attach the same importance to the film as a means of education. If you have not seen the proceedings I won't trouble you about it.

A. I have seen them but not recently.

Q. You seem to think that the importance of the film as a means of adult education or as a means of supplementing education is over-estimated. Do the students go to the cinema much?

A. A considerable number, yes.

Q. Those who live in hostels—have they to take permission before they go to the cinema? I think they have got some fixed hours within which they have to return?

A. I think they have in most of the hostels.

Q. Who is the man who is likely to give us information about the student population? Will Mr. Ranganadhan help us?

A. Yes. He is in charge of the Victoria Hostel which is one of the biggest hostels in Madras.

Q. Have you in your experience any reason to think that the students get affected either for good or for bad by going to the cinema? We have

been told in other provinces that impressionable youths are likely to be affected by seeing, specially, social dramas depicted on the screen.

A. I should rather doubt their having much effect that way. They get a false impression, of course, of western civilisation.

Q. You mean they get an exaggerated impression or false impression?

A. False one.

Q. Even the student population—I mean college students?

A. The better they are educated the less the effect.

Q. Has it come to your notice that they do take such false impression with them or is it merely a guess on your part?

A. It is based on talking to people in colleges. That is their view.

Q. You mean people in charge of students in colleges?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think that such classes of films should be excluded altogether?

A. Not necessarily.

Q. Of course, you recognise that a certain amount of romance is necessary in order to make the film attractive; it cannot be the ordinary every day humdrum life depicted on the screen that will attract a crowd?

A. Quite so.

Q. Do you really think that students do not understand that it is merely romance that they see on the screen? Do you think that they understand it to be part of the ordinary life of the west?

A. I think the less educated portion of the audience think so.

Q. I suppose they read novels and see the illustrated papers like "Play", and do you think they get a false impression by seeing those papers? Take, for instance, "The Play and the Studio" and such other papers, where nudity plays a large part.

A. I am not prepared to say; I do not know.

Q. Do you think that stricter censorship is needed in that direction? Is that your considered view having regard to the likelihood of the effect on the trade itself?

A. Not essentially needed.

Q. It is a very difficult thing to deal with that problem. Are Indian films very popular with students?

A. There have not been many down here, but those that have come, I understand, are quite popular and promising.

Q. That is the evidence in other places, but I do not know how far they are getting popular in your part of the country.

A. They are not very common still.

Mr. Neogy: I want to understand the position of educational films strictly so-called, that is to say, those relating to history, geography and natural science. What proportion of films on these subjects will have to be imported from abroad in any scheme of education through the films?

A. I do not know of any agency that produces them on a large scale in India at present.

Q. I am thinking of the subjects. There may be subjects on which you can at present produce films in India and there may be other subjects on which you cannot produce films in India. What proportion of such films would have to be imported in any case?

A. Films to illustrate history will have to be largely imported, some relating to geographical phenomena, or again in natural science, some.

Q. I take it that Indian history and the geography of India are subjects that can lend themselves to treatment locally?

A. That would be so.

Q. And so far as natural science, the geography of the world, and history of other places are concerned, you will have to depend upon foreign supply?

A. Yes.

Q. And I take it that it would constitute a considerable proportion?

A. Yes.

Q. The character and standard of films must differ in the case of students in the high schools and in the colleges?

A. Yes.

Q. And then again with regard to the mass of the people?

A. Yes.

Q. And as for the necessity of having a local setting, that necessity would not be so great in the case of the advanced students as in the case of the lower class students and the mass of the people. Is not that so?

A. Yes.

Q. Then, again, there will be certain subjects which will have to be treated on an all-India basis, the history of India, for instance, and the geography of India. These are subjects that can be treated in a central studio, but there may be subjects which will have to be manufactured locally in order to give the necessary local colouring, is it not so?

A. Yes.

Q. And to that extent you would require some local institution to take up the manufacture?

A. You would have to have some facilities, but whether there should be an institute or not I do not know.

Q. They will have to be taken locally whoever may take them, is it not so?

A. Yes.

Q. You mentioned a particular manufacturer of educational films who approached you for some assistance. What sort of assistance did he ask for?

A. He wanted engagements at colleges and schools.

Q. For exhibiting films or for producing films on behalf of Government?

A. To exhibit films of his own. Where he got the films from I cannot say.

Q. Did he give you any list of subjects on which he has produced any films?

A. Yes. He did give a list. I will try and find it.

Chairman: Kindly send it, as also the name of the gentleman who approached you.

Mr. Neogy: Did he ask for an engagement for the exhibition of those films in colleges or in schools?

A. Both.

Q. You have not seen any of those productions?

A. No.

Q. Is this question under the consideration of your Government just now, with regard to that particular proposal?

A. No.

Q. With regard to sex life as depicted on the screen, we have been told by some of the witnesses that the luxurious standard of life generally shown in Western films may have more mischievous results on the adolescent population than sex life, that is to say, it may lead to discontent and so on. Have you heard of any such complaint?

A. I have not heard any.

Mr. Coatsman: I should like to understand as clearly as possible the exact scope for the use of the cinema in education in this province and what possibilities there are of using it. You agree of course that the cinema is a valuable educational instrument?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you thinking of using it in all the different grades of education from college down to the primary school? If you had the money and so on for the purpose, would you use it in all the grades?

A. I think its usefulness will be limited in elementary education, and that it will be more useful in secondary.

Q. And most useful of all in colleges?

A. I should say that its main use would be in secondary schools.

Q. You think that at its very best the cinema can only be an adjunct to the other instruments of education, because it cannot replace all teaching?

A. No, it cannot replace teaching; it can only be an adjunct.

Q. Do you agree that it can only be an adjunct in certain subjects?

A. Its use would be very much more limited in some subjects than in others.

Q. I take it that the one object of education is to open the mind of the pupil. That is the main object, at any rate?

A. Yes, of course in the beginning.

Q. Would the cinema be of any good as an aid to what we call teaching the art of thought?

A. I think so because one element in thought is the formation of images and for such formation of images the cinema would naturally be a great help.

Q. As far as I remember the resolution passed by the Imperial Education Conference on this point, the experts in the Conference thought that the real scope of the cinema was to impart actual information?

A. I thought they also said that the object of imparting information should be the interpretation of nature, explaining the different natural phenomena, and so on.

Q. But can it explain the natural phenomena?

A. Yes, with the help of the teacher.

Q. Do you agree that the cinema can never be a substitute for the oral teaching of the teacher, although in certain things it can be amplified by the teacher?

A. I think we must have a teacher any way.

Q. Even if you use the cinema fairly extensively in schools, you cannot reduce the teaching staff?

A. No.

Q. To come now to the possibility of using it in the schools, do you think it is promising in the middle schools?

A. In the middle and in the high schools.

Q. Could you say off-hand how many of them there are in this province? I mean secondary schools?

A. There are a little over 500.

Q. Scattered all over the province, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the population of the smallest town which can support a high school or a secondary school?

A. I cannot give a proper answer to that. It often depends on a rich zamindar being in a small place who may want to have a school in his own name in that place.

Q. Then I take it that you have secondary school even in small places where some public-spirited man supports it?

A. Yes.

Q. I notice that in your answer to Part I you say that some expenditure from provincial funds will be required "but it does not seem probable that

this need be any very large sum if portable cinemas can be used which could be transferred from school to school". Would you regard the portable cinemas going from one school to another as a satisfactory arrangement?

A. It is not an ideal one, no doubt; but it is very much cheaper than each school having its own cinemas.

Q. Then for your 500 schools you will need a good number of cinemas in order to give each school a satisfactory number of demonstrations in one year?

A. Yes, a fairly good number.

Q. Therefore it is better that each school has a cinema of its own?

A. I do not think it is financially possible.

Q. As an educationist of experience, would you say that the number of portable cinemas going from school to school with the consequent long intervals between two successive shows in one school will be worth the money involved? You will have to meet the overhead charges, you must have demonstrators, expense on machinery, etc. Have you reached the point in this province where you can take money out of the ordinary instruments of education and put it into this admittedly incomplete use of the cinema?

A. I think in the larger centres it would be worth doing. I do not think it would be worth it in the more remote mufassal centres.

Q. Anyway, if you were to spend any money now on the use of cinemas in schools, I take it that you would have to take it from some other educational instrument?

A. I do not think it is possible, unless we get additional funds.

Q. What I want to know is this. Would you be prepared to take money out of your educational funds and put it into buying cinemas and paying men to operate them?

A. If it is to the exclusion of some existing services, I say no.

Mr. Green: A proposal has been made that imported educational films should be exempted from the customs duty that they have to pay. Does that proposal commend itself to you?

A. As other educational apparatus has to pay customs duty, I do not see why an exception should be made in this particular case.

Q. If an exception were made, would you be prepared to advise which films were of educational value?

A. I think it would be difficult.

Colonel Crawford: You say in your written answer to the questionnaire: "There is great room for an increased use of the cinema for educative purposes". Are you referring only to the cinema in schools or do you take any wider aspect?

A. Not merely in schools.

Q. Generally the cinema has considerable educative value?

A. Yes.

Q. Particularly when you come down to the question of adult education?

A. Yes.

Q. Your opinion is that we cannot in a moment provide for adult education from the funds available?

A. Yes.

Q. But with the use of the cinema, is it a cheap method of commencing to tackle the problem of adult education?

A. I do not think it will be the cheapest way. But for the removal of illiteracy and teaching people to a certain extent in particular subjects, we can utilise the cinema.

Q. For instance, we have heard that in Assam films are being shown to the tea garden coolies of local weddings and other occurrences and that

they are asking for films showing other countries. From that point of view, do you think the cinema is likely to have any beneficial effect?

A. Yes, in such cases, it would have.

Q. Are you generally in favour of visual instruction?

A. Yes.

Q. I think the Chairman asked a question regarding the amount you are now spending on visual instruction?

A. I cannot give the figure off-hand.

Q. Would you be disposed to give a portion of your existing funds for this purpose?

A. Yes, but not a large portion.

Q. Do you definitely think that a portion of whatever money is available might be spent on this visual instruction?

A. Yes.

Q. With reference to the question regarding censorship, you say: "besides the negative aspect of censorship some positive action is required". Can you give me an idea as to why you think the censorship is not positive?

A. I was thinking more particularly of educational films, when I said that.

Q. Take the ordinary entertainment film. Do you think it will be possible to have an aesthetic sub-committee of the censors board to classify certain films according to fineness of standard or good moral tone, etc., with a view to give them some preference? Is that practical?

A. I would not be prepared to favour it myself; there may be difficulties in the way.

Q. Practical difficulties in finding proper men for the purpose?

A. I think so.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You have just mentioned that you are in favour of visual instruction. What steps have you so far taken in your department?

A. The main step has been the provision and use of lanterns and slides, of pictures and other illustrated matter.

Q. Have you any Deputy Inspectors of Visual Instruction here just as we have in Bombay?

A. Not for this purpose alone.

Q. Would you care to have one, just as we have in Bombay?

A. If there was a lot more money available, we might have one.

Q. How much have you got now in your budget for this purpose?

A. I do not remember the exact figure. The amount varies; in one year we may get a good number of lantern slides and the expenditure will be large in that year, but the next year it may be less. I shall try to send the figures for the past three years.

Q. Do you think if you want more money, the Legislative Council will be able to give you that amount?

A. I cannot say that.

Q. Have you ever asked the Government for more money for this particular purpose?

A. We have asked them for money on certain occasions for lantern slides, but not for films.

Q. Can you suggest any means by which funds can be raised for the purpose? Can we have something like the amusement tax we have in Bombay and Bengal? Would you advocate such a tax in the Presidency of Madras, so that the amount realised may be utilised purely for the encouragement of this industry?

A. I think we must first of all get the necessary money.

Q. Would you like to have any kind of tax for the purpose?

A. I am not in a position to say whether additional taxation is necessary for this purpose.

Q. Then, you think your Government will give the money without fresh taxation?

A. I do not know whether they will give the money or not.

Q. You have a Text-book Committee, I suppose, to guide you?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you like to have a similar committee for the purpose of giving advice to those who are producing films?

A. I think I should wait for the findings of this Committee.

Q. To help this industry, do you think it would be a good thing to send students abroad, giving them scholarships?

A. I do not know anything about the technique, and I am not competent to give an opinion thereon.

Q. Do you think it will be a good thing to have a class purely for this industry in any of your colleges of science or schools of art, say for training people in photography, etc.?

A. No.

Q. Would you like to introduce such a thing if the Government gives you money?

A. I think there are more urgent needs than this.

Q. Would you prefer films to lantern slides?

A. I should like to have both.

Q. Would you like this cinema to be a means of instruction in the class-room?

A. Yes.

Chairman: If you had slow motion films, don't you think that it would be more effective than the magic lantern slides?

A. Slides are intended for illustrating literature or views, and by means of the picture the teacher will be able to explain things.

Q. So, the intention is that the picture should remain in position for some time?

A. Yes.

Q. Cannot the same object be achieved by having slow motion films?

A. Not always; and it is a question of expense.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You have got a list of subjects on which the educational cinema films are available?

A. I am going to try and find a list of those subjects, as desired by the Chairman.

Q. Do you suggest any other subjects on which the films should be made, besides History and Geography?

A. I think films might be useful in connection with Natural Science, Botany or Hygiene.

Q. Have you ever tried to get films of this nature from Lahore, Karachi and other places where they are available?

A. No.

Q. Have you seen the hand-bills and posters of the cinema theatres?

A. Yes, I have seen them from time to time.

Q. In some of them have you seen embracing scenes and kissing scenes? If such hand-bills are distributed in the colleges and schools, I suppose you will stop them?

A. I would leave it to the Principal to decide whether it is necessary to stop them or not.

*Q. What is your own opinion? How would you instruct the Principal?

A. I do not know that I would interfere.

Q. But they are things which ought to be censored. Is it not? Do you think the posters and circulars which you see circulated among the people require censoring?

A. I doubt if it is necessary to do so.

Q. If you have a cinema board here, do you think men of quality will come forward to offer their services as members of that board, I mean educated people?

A. I do not see why they should not.

Q. On a less remuneration than we give them generally?

A. I cannot say that. Anyhow, I think they will come forward.

Q. Do you think the promising boys from the schools and colleges will come forward to take up the work of actors?

A. They would, if they could get a livelihood out of it.

Q. We have found in several provinces that there is difficulty about the language of titles on the films. Have you seen films with titles in English alone or in Tamil also?

A. I have seen them in Tamil.

Q. In any other language?

A. No. I do not remember to have seen them in any other language.

Q. What should be done, if the film produced in Madras is to be used all over India?

A. It will have to be translated into different vernaculars.

Chairman: But don't you think two languages will suffice, Tamil and Telugu, in this Presidency?

A. They would not be understood on the West Coast or in South Kanara.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you think the municipalities and local boards will come to your assistance for this purpose? Their funds are limited?

A. They would take it up only to a very limited extent.

Q. Have you approached them?

A. There has been correspondence but we have not actually done much yet.

Colonel Crawford: What is the number of vernaculars in Madras?

A. Six; Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kanarese, Urdu and Oriya.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: I think it will solve the difficulty if the people take to Hindustani?

A. English is much more known here.

Written Statement of the Honourable Khan Bahadur MUHAMMAD BAZLULLAH SAHIB BAHADUR, C.I.E., O.B.E., Director of Industries, Madras.

1. No. I have no special knowledge or connection with the industry and I am afraid I shall be able to contribute very little that will be of value to the Committee.

PART I.

3. The films more popular with educated Indians are those that depict Western life and civilisation and Western literature. Illiterate Indian audiences like films depicting adventure, comic shows and Indian mythology.

4 and 5. Films depicting Indian life are not readily available. Of the Cinemas in Madras, there are only two or three that occasionally exhibit Indian life and mythology.

6. (a) Yes.

A. Probably to send for experts here would be more economical and more advantageous also, I think. Now that I think of it, it will be perhaps more useful to get experts here who will be able to help private enterprise.

Q. I suppose you do some propaganda work in the Industries Department in the shape of exhibiting machines and modern methods, specially in handloom weaving, and also in some of these industrial methods, dyeing, etc.?

A. Yes.

Q. Now do you think you can use the film for making the propaganda which you are now carrying on more effective?

A. I don't think there is much scope for that; but at the same time exhibition of these films in schools, industrial schools particularly, will have a certain amount of educative value. We can use some portable apparatus.

Q. Are you in charge of labour also?

A. No.

Q. You believe then in using the film for educational purposes generally?

A. Yes.

Q. And also in your own department?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you use at all any visual instruction in your department?

A. No, not yet.

Q. Now you have got an Industries Loan Act here?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it availed of much?

A. Yes, to a certain extent. I cannot say that it has been availed of to the extent that we expected.

Q. Why is that?

A. I believe it is on account of the fact that the provisions are not sufficiently elastic and liberal to be availed of by small industries.

Q. You say here the film industry has not taken root on account of lack of enterprise and lack of capital. Do you think if the terms of your Industries Loans Act were more liberal that would help?

A. I do not think—in the case of a large industry like the film industry—there is need for modification of the provisions of the Act. As it stands, the Act is sufficiently liberal for the purpose.

Q. I do not know what you mean by saying it is a large industry.

A. I mean it is not a cottage industry.

Q. What is the term by which the money is to be repaid now?

A. 20 years is the maximum.

Q. And the rate of interest?

A. 6½ per cent.

Q. 20 years by instalments?

A. Yes.

Q. Half-yearly or yearly?

A. Yearly.

Q. Even that you say is not much availed of?

A. Not by cottage industries.

Q. Supposing a film producer applied for a loan, can you use the Act for that purpose?

A. Yes, if he furnishes adequate security.

Q. What sort of security?

A. The loan is a charge on the entire assets of the business.

Q. Supposing he invested in machinery, would you take that?

A. Yes.

Q. On what percentage do you take security?

A. The whole assets of the business is mortgaged to the Government, and we advance loans to the extent of 50 per cent. of the net value of the assets.

Q. I suppose the Act has not been availed of to any extent?

A. Not to the extent that was expected.

Q. Do you think in our province there is sufficient scope for the industry to come into existence?

A. Not just yet.

Q. Why?

A. At present I do not think so, from our experience of similar industries—for instance of the experience we have had of the paper making industry; this industry is a fairly big industry similar to the paper-making industry.

Q. Do you think so really?

A. I do think so.

Q. Of course paper has got to face competition on a very large scale.

A. Even here there is competition with foreign productions, unless you protect the industry by heavy protective duties. But it is only after the industry has taken a hold, that we can think of protecting a local industry. At present, as I have said in my written statement, there is no object in interfering with the duty because at present it is only by the import of foreign films that we can make the industry popular.

Q. What would you do now to foster the growth of the industry?

A. It is a question of time, a few years more will make it better appreciated and then people will take to it. Private enterprise should be helped as much as possible.

Q. By bounties?

A. By subsidies. The Industries Act enables the Government to give subsidies also.

Q. So you would encourage the giving of subsidies?

A. Yes, to private enterprise.

Q. Would you confine it only to films of an educational value or to entertainment films also?

A. Entertainment films also?

Q. Would you subsidise these by giving bounties?

A. Yes.

Q. And you think it is necessary to do it?

A. I will not say "necessary", because you have got along so long without it. It will be useful.

Q. I suppose you recognise that the industry if developed on proper lines will relieve unemployment in the middle classes to a large extent.

A. Yes.

Q. Actors and actresses will be wanted. Education has spread widely in our Province. Do you think there will be any difficulty in getting actors and actresses?

A. I think in the beginning there will be difficulty.

Q. I mean don't you think amateur acting is now making great progress in our Province? Almost every district centre has got an amateur theatrical company.

A. Yes, but probably in certain departments, for instance for the production of educational films or industrial films, you will find it difficult to get the required number of actors and actresses. For ordinary entertainment films, dramas, etc., you may get a number of actors and actresses.

Q. If these can be a paying proposition, don't you think people will take to film acting?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Now what else do you suggest? You suggest scholarships; if it is possible you prefer experts being sent for; and you also think subsidies should be given to establish the film industry in the country. Do you advocate any other steps?

A. I cannot suggest any others.

Q. Now from your experience, of course you were in charge of the Corporation for a long time, from your experience of the cinema here, do you think it has a good effect or a bad effect on the people?

A. I think it has a good effect on the whole.

Q. Do you think there is any tendency to demoralise our people by the cinema?

A. I don't think so.

Q. On the whole you think the films shown here have satisfactory effect?

A. I think so.

Q. You think the censorship as now done is adequate?

A. I think so.

Q. In your opinion any drastic censorship of the emotional aspects of life is likely to affect the trade; you should not interfere too much?

A. No.

Q. Because they are necessary in order to keep up the show?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Is it true that Muhammadans are prohibited from attending cinemas by their religion? We were told at some place that Muhammadans are so prohibited.

Chairman: That was a stray statement made in Karachi.

A. Not that I know of.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Have you ever seen some films like "The Thief of Bagdad" or "The Sheikh" and others?

A. No, I have not.

Q. Have you ever seen that the *Namaz* (muslim prayers) have not been faithfully reproduced by Western films.

A. I have not noticed.

Q. If such films are there, they should be corrected?

A. They ought to be corrected.

Q. I mean if their *Namaz* is not faithfully reproduced Muhammadans won't like it; is it not a mockery and ought it not to be corrected?

A. Yes.

Q. As regards the point about tariff which you have just mentioned "in order to assist producing companies", don't you think the duty on raw materials should be reduced or removed? You said "to wait"; but there are already so many producing companies in India.

A. I don't know if there are many. I thought they were only in Bombay and Calcutta.

Q. There are many; do you think the duty on raw materials ought to be reduced or removed?

A. Yes, the duty on raw materials might be reduced but not on films.

Q. How many producing companies are there now in Madras?

A. None.

Chairman: I saw the Congress film made here.

A. That was by Mr. Venkaiah's son. He is the only man who has been doing anything in this line.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Have you ever tried to promote such companies?

A. No, I am sorry to say we have had none. I believe in private enterprise taking up this industry, but as I have said already, private enterprise is lacking.

Q. If private enterprise is not available, at least you can give it a push.

A. You mean, we should pioneer the industry? We have not taken any steps so far in that direction.

Q. Well, have you any suggestions to make for getting the co-operation of the trade in the matter of the censorship?

A. No, I have not.

Q. Do you think there ought to be representatives of the trade on the censorship Board?

A. I cannot say. I don't think so. I don't think it advisable to have a representative of the trade on the Board.

Q. May I know the reasons?

A. Because of the obvious interest they will have in regard to the films to be censored.

Q. If there are 15 or 10 members the trade representative will be in a minority, and the Board will have the views of the trade?

A. If you take care to see that the majority is non-tradesman then there will be no harm in a representative of the trade being there.

Colonel Crawford: Do you visit the cinema often?

A. Very rarely.

Q. I notice you have made certain comments on the social aspect of the film. I was wondering whether they were from your actual experience. n answer to 24.

A. They are not based on my personal observation.

Mr. Green: I only want to ask a few questions on your reply to our question No. 34. You consider that provincial boards of censors are necessary because the habits and customs of various provinces differ.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know how many films actually are censored in Madras?

A. I have no idea.

Q. Last official year there were only 24 films out of a total number 1,700 examined in India.

A. I do not know.

Q. Will you tell me how many theatres there are in Madras?

A. About 7 or 8.

Q. Obviously then those theatres must have shown films that were not censored by the Madras Board.

A. I cannot say.

Q. I put it to you that in the case of imported films there are not likely to be any very great provincial differences.

A. No, I don't think so. Very rarely, in the case of imported films.

Q. Therefore once a central censorship could satisfactorily censor all imported films, I take it your difficulty is only applicable to local films? It will be troublesome to send such films to Bombay or Calcutta from Madras?

A. Yes.

Q. If some method were achieved of getting over the difficulty by giving power to a small committee here or to a special officer like the District Magistrate to give licences for topical films and locally produced films, I take it your objection to a Central Board will be less?

A. Yes.

Q. The Central Board would deal with all imported films?

A. You propose to do away with Provincial Boards?

Q. Yes, as regards imported films. My point is that you do very little censoring here and most films shown here must have been censored at Bombay or Calcutta.

A. But I think a Board will be better than any individual officer.

Q. I am not sticking to that; so long as there is some arrangement to pass local films locally.

A. In regard to imported films, there is no harm in the course suggested.

Mr. Coatsman: Your main interest of course is in the development of cottage industries?

A. No, in all industries, cottage industries as well as big industries.

Q. But when I said your main interest, I meant the sums that you dispose of, that you can lend, are not big enough really to help a big industry like the steel industry.

A. Oh yes.

Q. Your financial assistance is mainly to cottage industries.

A. Oh no. With regard to a paper mill we gave a loan to the extent of nearly 6 lakhs.

Q. What happened to it?

A. It is not working at present for various reasons.

Q. Well, of course, as our Chairman said, the paper industry is up against big world competition.

A. Yes, in spite of that, I think the failure of this mill is not due to competition but to dissensions among the shareholders.

Q. Well, the point I wanted to get at is this, exactly what importance do you attach to the development of the cinema industry in this country?

A. I think it is as important as any other large industry.

Q. Why?

A. I do not exactly follow you.

Q. What I mean is you can take an industry like the steel industry. Obviously.....

A. That is a more essential industry than the film producing industry.

Q. Or cotton spinning or handloom weaving in cottages.

A. Yes, they are all essential industries. This is only necessary in the sense of giving some employment to the unemployed.

Chairman: I suppose you know that more than 2 crores of rupees are sent outside the country for films?

A. Yes. By essential industry, I mean essential for the well being of the people, for the economic development of the people. It is not in that sense an essential industry like hand spinning or hand weaving.

Mr. Coatsman: Well, when you say it would give employment to a number of people is that an answer you have just given to the chairman this morning or have you ever thought of it in that way before.

A. You cannot deny that it gives employment to actors and actresses.

Q. Of course you cannot, but the point I want is this. Already a fair number of people are getting employment not only in producing but in exhibiting—the whole staff of a theatre from the operating manager to the durwan and so on.

A. Yes.

Q. And then you have got to assume what the scope for the production of Indian films is. You have got to look at the number of films, see how many feet come into the country in the year, and then think how much additional employment will be given. The point I want to get at is this. It is quite obvious that if Government is going to subsidise the film industry, it will have to be a heavy subsidy.

A. Yes.

Q. Well now if you employ that large sum of money in other ways would you not get more employment?

A. I have already said that this is not an essential industry. The money can be more profitably used on more essential industries.

Chairman: Don't you think that the film is not only a source of amusement but a source of instruction and propaganda of your ideas and your goods, that the film plays a very large part in advertising foreign goods and foreign ideas? The film has got its value also in that way, apart from the question of employment?

A. It has. I mean to say the industry is not so very essential for the economic development of the country as the steel industry or the handloom industry.

Q. I quite agree.

Mr. Coatsman: Of course I am alive to the great desirability of developing the Indian film industry, and one way that has occurred to me is the increased production of what we call "topical" films. You see the production of these films requires no outlay on studios and so on; and I should like your opinion about the popularity of these topical films. Do you think that if an adequate supply of films showing the daily incidents all over India were available, they would be popular?

A. I think so.

Q. People would like them?

A. I think so.

Q. Do you think that in view of the smallness of the resources employed by existing film producing companies in this country and the difficulty of attracting public money to the industry, do you think it would be a promising development if the existing film producing companies went in more for producing topical pictures?

A. I cannot say. *Primâ facie*, it seems so.

Q. And their popularity would tend to give them a market?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: You have stated you are in favour of experts being brought out from abroad on short term contract for teaching our people the technique of film production.

A. Yes.

Q. Have you any experience of such experts in your department? Have you ever brought out experts in any other branch?

A. Not on short term contracts. We have got experts—the leather expert, the textile expert; we have several experts in our department.

Q. Is their main function to teach people the art or to manufacture the articles.

A. They are engaged in research and also instruction. The leather expert for instances devotes himself to research as well as instruction. He is in Government service.

Q. Permanently?

A. Permanently.

Q. Brought out from abroad?

A. Brought out from abroad.

Q. A witness told us in Calcutta that his experience of an expert in film production was not very happy and that that particular expert would not teach all the tricks of the trade and had to be sent away. Do you entertain any such apprehensions?

A. I have no reason to entertain any such apprehensions. We could resort to both methods, sending our students abroad and getting out experts here.

Q. You would have a combination of both?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Do you remember the case of a French woman who was brought out somewhere here for teaching dress making about 5 years ago?

A. I don't remember.

Mr. Neogy: Would you attach some importance to our people seeing the studios actually at work in other countries where this industry has made very great developments?

A. Yes.

Q. Supposing the Local Government and also the Government of India were to adopt a definite policy of carrying on publicity through the agency of the film in the Departments of Education, Industries, Public Health, Co-operation and so on, don't you think that private enterprise might be forthcoming to produce such publicity films for Government?

A. I don't think there would be sufficient demand.

Q. Supposing Government were to have a definite policy and they were to embark on the manufacture of such films?

A. It will be only one method of advertisement.

Q. I am not thinking of advertisement at all. Supposing Government were to give the contracts for the manufacture of such films as they required for the purpose of carrying on publicity in certain Departments, don't you think that that would be a sufficient encouragement to private enterprise to come forward and undertake the work on behalf of Government?

A. I cannot say.

Q. Now with regard to your observation on the social aspects of the cinema, you have said you have no personal experience; but may I take it that your observations are based upon discussions and talks that you have had with people who are expected to know these things?

A. Yes, it is my personal opinion.

**Written Statement of Mr. F. WARE, Esq., F.R.C.V.S., I.V.S.,
Acting Veterinary Adviser to the Government of Madras, dated
the 23rd November 1927.**

I am interested only to a slight extent in the Film Industry and desire to make a few remarks only under question 14.

I am strongly of the opinion that the use of films would be by far the best way of bringing to the notice of the public the activities of the Veterinary Department and I have been making enquiries for some time past regarding the acquisition of suitable films for the purpose. I am told that these are obtainable in America and some European countries, but films prepared in this country would obviously be of greater attraction. The answer to the second part of question 14 is therefore in the affirmative, and the answer to the question whether the film industry in this country would be helped is also in the affirmative, provided the machinery for making such films as I require exists.

Oral Evidence of Mr. F. WARE, F.R.C.V.S., I.V.S., Acting Veterinary Adviser to Government of Madras, on Thursday, the 8th January 1928.

Chairman: Mr. Ware, you are the Veterinary Adviser to the Government of Madras?

A. Yes.

Q. And you strongly hold the view that the use of the film would be by far the best means of bringing to the notice of the public the activities of your Department?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you ever tried in that way?

A. I have not.

Q. Or anybody else in your department?

A. In this country? As far as I know, they have not yet.

Q. Do you use slides at all? Do you do any propaganda work?

A. We don't do very much, I am afraid, at the present moment but we are now taking it up and Government have recently sanctioned lanterns and lantern slides for us, but I am anxious to go further than that and try and get cinema films.

Q. You would like to have them made here?

A. Yes, I want to have them made in this country so as to use our own diseases and our own animals.

Q. Now for that purpose you think an All-India institution would be good or a provincial institute?

A. From our point of view an All-India institution would do perfectly well. We could hardly keep a provincial institution going ourselves, of course.

Q. And it would be reduplicating expenditure if you had each province going in for a film production of its own. You think in this direction an All-India institution would be more advisable?

A. Yes, from our point of view I think it would.

Q. All the provinces can co-operate in producing the necessary sets of films?

A. Quite.

Q. And an All-India distributing agency can manage this means of educating?

A. It would suit the Veterinary Department perfectly well.

Q. I suppose you have not tried to get any film from any foreign country for this purpose?

A. I have just come back from leave as a matter of fact. I did make inquiries from the Empire Marketing Board in London and I am told veterinary films are now procurable in France and Germany.

Q. But do you think you can use them in this country with effect?

A. Well, one could use them simply in lieu of anything better. I would rather have local films, naturally.

Q. You would like to have local settings.

A. Most certainly.

Q. The cattle here and the diseases are somewhat peculiar?

A. Yes, they are quite different from those in Europe.

Q. I suppose a lot of ignorance prevails in the country among the agricultural population dealing with cattle?

A. In dealing with cattle diseases. I am particularly interested in cattle disease.

Q. And you think you can educate the people very effectively by means of the film?

A. I think it is our best chance of doing so.

Q. And you think public money should be spent in that direction?

A. Certainly.

Q. Would you advocate a Government studio for producing these films or would you merely subsidise private agencies for producing them?

A. We should not require very many films. I take it a Government studio only for producing veterinary films would not be the best way. The expenditure would not be justified. But the Government studio might take on the preparation of films for other departments, such as agriculture, medical, public health, industries, and so on.

Q. I want to know whether you think you can get the proper sort of films produced for your province if you entrusted the work to a private agency and gave the necessary instruction.

A. I take it we, as a department, would have to find the setting and the characters.

Q. So you think it will be more useful if you had a Government studio in order to produce these films. You would prefer a Government studio?

A. It really does not make any difference because the Veterinary Department would be concerned only in finding suitable scenes. It is only a question as to whether it would be better to have a Government studio for the preparation of the films or a private agency, and that is a question I am not in a position to answer.

Q. I only want to know from the point of view of effect, whether you think that a private agency will be able to produce the effect you want?

A. I don't see any reason why they should not. It is generally held that private agencies are more efficient than Government concerns. They are certainly less costly.

Q. But if all the departments were to combine to produce the films needed you would prefer a Government studio?

A. I would not say, I prefer a Government studio: I have an entirely open mind in the matter.

Q. Do you think the people are insufficiently informed? There was some doubt cast upon the utility of films in educating the masses in these matters. What is your opinion? Do you think you will be able to get the people to follow your demonstrations on the screen.

A. It needs a film very carefully prepared, of course, and that is where the film experts would come in.

Q. And in the preparation of the plot and the material. You don't mind the technique?

A. And the text as well. I have seen agricultural films that have been prepared in this country by Mr. Dawson of the G. I. P. Railway. He promised, as a matter of fact, to prepare one for me some two years ago, but I have not approached him further in the matter as I have been away. But his agricultural film I thought was very good indeed. I certainly think they would catch the eye and imagination of the masses, and if we could have a veterinary one prepared on these lines I think it would do a lot of good.

Q. You think it would not be money wasted?

A. Certainly not.

Q. Now I always thought that the activities of your department and the results obtained by your department and the agricultural department were not made sufficiently known to the public. I mean this means of propagating the ideas which you obtain would be most beneficial to the country?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Supposing a Government studio were established for this purpose, where would you advocate it should be established?

A. An All-India studio?

Q. Yes. At Pusa?

A. I don't see why it should go to Pusa any more than anywhere else. The work is not all going to be done there. Some will be done in the field and in the villages, and I think it would be more satisfactory to have the

studio in some place like Bombay or Calcutta, for the actual preparation of the films.

Q. I see. You would take the photographs here in local surroundings and send them for developing and printing to a studio like that? Do you think that each province should prepare its own films in that manner?

A. Well, I said just now that, as far as we are concerned, if an All-India film was prepared in the Punjab it would do perfectly well down here.

Q. For diseases?

A. Oh, yes, for diseases are more or less the same.

Q. So, even if a film is prepared in the setting of one province, in the surroundings of one province, you think they would be useful?

A. I think so.

Q. Supposing a film were produced, do you think the difference in the matter of dress of the agriculturist and probably the nature of the cattle, would it make any difference in making the idea interesting?

A. I don't think so. As long as it is an Indian setting I don't think it matters as regards the province.

Q. Whether it is Madras or Punjabi dress, it does not matter?

A. All the cattle are humped.

Q. So I see you have great faith in this method of education?

A. I have great hope.

Q. And would you advise the Government to spend money in this direction?

A. Yes, I have already done so.

Q. And do you hope to get your programme through?

A. It has been turned down once.

Q. So you would advise this committee to recommend to Government that steps of that sort should be taken.

A. Certainly.

Mr. Neogy: Just one question. You don't seem to attach any great value to local setting for your pictures. We were told in some other provinces that if the surroundings are quite different from what the people are accustomed to see and if there is also a good deal of difference in the local customs in the matter of dress and so on, then the attention of the audience is likely to be engaged more by the peculiarities of dress and other things than by the lesson which is sought to be imparted. Do you agree with that view?

A. I would not go so far as to say that, but of course, if I could have pictures entirely of local setting, I would prefer them. But what I feel about it is that we don't require many of these films and it would make it too expensive if each province said it must have its own films made.

Q. You would have to give detailed technical instructions to those who may produce the films. It may be a Government agency or it may be a private agency, but there must be a technical veterinary expert to give instruction. On whom would you depend for that? Would you depend on the Government of India expert for doing the thing for you? Would you be prepared to accept any film produced under the guidance of the Government of India expert or would you like to have a say yourself in regard to the selection of the subject and the method of treatment?

A. Well, of course, if it is an All-India studio, it would rest with the Government of India to say whether they require our help or not, if they are coming down to Madras. But I should rather expect them to invite our co-operation and I should then be quite willing to give it and depute some one for the purpose.

Q. That is to say, the veterinary experts of all the various provinces should be consulted for the purpose and a sort of common agreement arrived at with regard to the subject and methods of treatment before any such film could be produced.

A. Yes.

Mr. Coatman: I have just one question. Your proposals to spend money were turned down by the Finance Department. Well, now, if at any future time your proposals are accepted, what sort of outlay would you propose?

A. I can only tell you in answer to that, that, as I said just now, I saw Mr. Dawson in this matter two years ago and he told me that he could produce a film for me for about Rs. 3,000. And I have taken that figure as my basis. I have not yet got down to details.

Q. How many films would you want?

A. This was, of course, one film for Rs. 3,000, and if that were to succeed I would look forward to collecting 5 or 6 films in the course of a few years.

Q. Do you think 5 or 6 would be enough?

A. I think 5 or 6 long films would suit our purpose. We know of only 5 or 6 really troublesome diseases in this province at the present time.

Q. Then what about breeding?

A. We don't touch breeding in the Madras Presidency. It is an agricultural subject.

Colonel Crawford: You have an All-India Veterinary Conference?

A. Only very rarely. We have not had one since 1923.

Q. Presumably some such conference would be necessary if you were going to produce a series of films. I suppose diseases are not a provincial subject?

A. No, they are not. They are All-India. It would help us very much, as a matter of fact, as a Veterinary Department, if you brought that matter up, because we have no representative with the Government of India and we sometimes ask for an All-India Conference and it is turned down simply for lack of backing in the Government of India.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: In order that the masses may understand the films, in what language would you have the captions and titles for these films?

A. Well, I suppose we should have to employ a large number of different languages. In Madras, Tamil and Telugu would certainly be necessary.

Q. Along with the English titles?

A. Yes, I should say so.

Q. What are the activities of your department that would help the masses, of which you want films made?

A. The cure and prevention of disease in all domestic animals, not only cattle, but horses, sheep, dogs, poultry and even elephants in this Presidency.

Q. Government have refused your demand. Are you going to approach them again?

A. Yes.

Q. You will approach them until you are satisfied?

A. Until I get it.

Written Statement of Mr. E. T. H. STEVENSON, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, C. I. D., and Eastern Range, dated the 1st December 1927.

1. Nil.

2. (a) (1) Popular with the educated classes.

(2) Popular with the illiterates. There is an increase in attendance on both sides.

(b) The average cinema audience in Madras consists of all classes such as mill hands and labourers of various other industries particularly the Beedi industry. Students of various grades largely attend cinemas,

(c) Children under 14 rarely attend and when they do, usually with their parents. The adolescents class mainly includes students who as stated above attend largely.

PART I.

3. Sensational films, i.e., those depicting spectacular deeds, love intrigues, and detective feats are the most popular.

4. No. Cinemas are often sparsely attended as exhibitors find the price of high class films prohibitive.

5. Indian films are available but usually of a poor class compared with Western films and are not popular unless of a good class. Hence Indian films as a class are less profitable than Western films. The Ramayana and Mahabharatha and very few others are the main exceptions.

6. (a) If this class could be brought up to the standard of Western films, they would perhaps be more popular.

(b) (1) Films depicting Indian History and Literature.

(2) Mythical films and Indian love stories.

7. Really suitable films for Indian and British troops are rarely shown. Under suitable I include, fighting films and those depicting scenes of modern military life.

8. (a) Not satisfactory.

(b) This is due to the high price of good class films.

9. Exhibitors generally complain of the high price of good films and of existing monopolies.

10 and 11. Nil.

12. There is no Amusement Tax in Madras.

13. Nil.

14. These films would no doubt be useful for educational purposes and if available would be freely made use of by the Educational authorities.

15. In some respects, yes. Films depicting Indian life, scenery, etc., owing to its variegated nature would be popular both in India and the West.

16. I should certainly think not. Government aid and supervision would be the chief remedy and propaganda among the Indian Capitalists.

17. Yes, provided there is sufficient propaganda as noted under 16.

18. Vide 16.

19. Nil.

20. This is a large administrative question.

21. I think this matter could be profitably taken up by the Departments of Development and Industries. A Government monopoly and censorship would remove several evils.

22. From patriotic and commercial stand points my reply is in the affirmative.

23. Films of the nature specified would undoubtedly be beneficial from an Empire point of view.

PART II.

24. (a) Many of the films now exhibited give a wrong idea of Western life from which the Indian audiences are apt to generalise and form the opinion that Westerners, generally, are immoral and debauched.

(b) A large number of the films now exhibited have this tendency.

(c) Films depicting extravagant love scenes and Western night life and exploits of Western criminals. These would be generally harmful to all classes for the reasons given above.

(d) (1) and (2) No.

(e) Probably yes, but has not been gone into.

25-26. Yes,

- (b) Such instances are rare.
27. (a) Yes. Please *vide* my replies above.
(b) Not to my knowledge.
28. (a) I should say not owing to the few who attend
(b) Adolescents.
(1) Films of love and Western night life and criminal exploits.
(2) They give an exaggerated and distorted view of Western life.
29. With proper censorship no. I don't think there would be a sufficient demand for films that might come under this category.
30. Unnecessary, owing to the very small number who attend and usually with their parents. If necessary elsewhere, I would fix the age limit at 12.
31. Yes.
32. No, for reasons given above, viz., that certain undesirable films are still exhibited.
33. (a), (b), (c) No. If reasonably carried out.
34. (a) (1) I am in favour of a Central Board, as one standard could be fixed for the whole of India and the result would be a *bona fide* and efficient censoring.
(2) I should say this would not affect the trade.
(3) All religious susceptibilities should be safeguarded and local interests.
(4) Probably Bombay being the main port of ingress.
(b) and (c) Provincial Boards only necessary to see that the orders of the Central Board are carried out and to convey suggestions to the Central Board such as local needs and interests.
(d) This is a commercial question to be decided by the Trade and Government.
35. (a) and (b) This does not arise in view of what I have said above.
36. (a) I have no acquaintance with this.
(b) All films should be examined by the Central Board and I should not think it should be found difficult to obtain suitable members.
37. (a) Yes.
(b) No.
38. Not that, I am aware of.
39. Not to my knowledge.
40. Yes, and I think this could be done by the Local Board. Posters are generally constructed to attract the public and sometimes depict members of the caste in inadequate clothing or in undesirable attitudes or environments.
41. Not appreciably.
42. Trade may also be represented in the Central Board.
43. There should be a strict control over export and import especially the latter to prevent smuggling. The Customs authorities should pay special attention to this.
44. By propaganda.
45. (a) Yes, to the extent of adequate censorship and to prevent conditions prevailing in America becoming prevalent in India.
(b) Yes.

Oral Evidence of Mr. E. T. H. STEVENSON, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Eastern Range, and C. I. D., Madras, on Thursday, the 5th January 1928.

Chairman: You are now in the head office as Deputy Inspector General of Police?

A. Yes.

- Q. You know the districts as well?
A. Yes. I tour throughout the Presidency.
- Q. Are there many travelling cinemas in this province?
A. Not many.
- Q. Have you got any list of these travelling cinemas here?
A. I have not personally.
- Q. Who is likely to have one?
A. I should think the Commissioner of Police should have one; he is the President of the Censor Board.
- Q. He tells me he has not got them. What is the city with the lowest population which has got permanent cinemas?
A. I do not think it goes on a question of population. It is a question of whether it pays or not.
- Q. But what population will be paying?
A. Anywhere where you have got a large student population.
- Q. You think it is the student centres that attract cinemas?
A. I think so.
- Q. Are the cinemas growing in number?
A. I think they are.
- Q. And in popularity?
A. It all depends upon the pieces.
- Q. Are many Indian films shown in this province?
A. Not many.
- Q. Where do the Indian films which are shown, come from?
A. From Naaik near Bombay, I think.
- Q. Do you get any Bengal films at all here?
A. Not to my knowledge.
- Q. These Bombay films, are they popular with the Indian public?
A. That depends upon the subject. Religious films, films such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are popular.
- Q. What other Indian films are shown?
A. They are mostly on religious subjects.
- Q. Are there any social drama Indian films shown here?
A. Not to my knowledge.
- Q. Indian films shown here are mostly of mythological or religious interest?
A. Yes.
- Q. You say in your statement that Indian films as a class are less profitable than Western films. Is that based on any enquiry that you made?
A. Judging from the audiences, and also from the fact that not many are shown. If they were popular they would be shown in larger numbers, as a business proposition.
- Q. The evidence we have had in other provinces was that Indian films were more paying to the exhibitor and I was surprised to see this statement of yours that they are less profitable in our province.
A. My statement is based on the fact that if they were profitable more would be shown.
- Q. But such as are shown—do they attract crowded houses?
A. Certainly.
- Q. Are there any cinemas in the city which are exclusively confined to western films, or do they all show both western and Indian films?

A. All of them occasionally show Indian films. But I am doubtful about two, the Wellington and the Elphinstone.

Q. My recollection is that they do show Indian films sometimes. Of course, in Bombay and Calcutta certain cinemas are exclusively confined to western films but I do not think that is so in our province?

A. I do not think so.

Q. For such objection as there may be to western films, do you think one remedy will be to encourage the growth of Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. Most of the audiences are Indian?

A. Certain films are very largely attended by Europeans. There was one film the other day, "Tarzan of the Apes," and the upper seats were crowded with European ladies and others with their children.

Q. But ordinarily speaking, I suppose the bulk of the audience is Indian?

A. Yes.

Q. And they would like to see Indian pictures, Indian surroundings?

A. I should think so.

Q. Do you know whether any effort is seriously made to produce Indian films in our province?

A. Not that I know of.

Q. Can you tell us why it is that Indian films are not produced? What is the difficulty about production?

A. I have been reading the evidence given by previous witnesses and I know nothing about it personally.....

Q. You have not gone into this subject?

A. No.

Q. There was an attempt, I do not know if you are aware of it, by one firm in Madras to make Indian films. I do not know if they have failed. The Venkiah people. I suppose you know nothing about it?

A. No.

Q. You think western films are cheaper than Indian films for the exhibitor?

A. From what some of the exhibitors told me.

Q. The class of films which are shown here ordinarily. I do not mean the very high class, but the ordinary class western films which are shown are cheaper than Indian films?

A. I think they are. The cost of production and everything else is less.

Q. You mean here?

A. No. Western films have all the advantages. Here they are handicapped in several ways.

Q. Have you any information as to whether exhibitors here complain of the costliness of western films?

A. In certain classes they do,—the higher class ones.

Q. What do you mean by the high class ones?

A. I was told so by the proprietor of the Wellington Cinema. I asked him why he had not exhibited certain films and he informed me that they are far too expensive.

Q. What were they which you had in mind?

A. I forget now for the moment, but his complaint was that the Madan people had a monopoly of it, and unless you were more or less in the ring you had to pay very expensively for them.

Q. That is the Wellington people?

A. Yes.

Q. Who are they?

A. The proprietor is a new man who has just taken it over.

Q. It means that a certain class of good films gets into the hands of Madans and he is not able to get them?

A. Yes, that is his complaint.

Q. I suppose he has not a ring of theatres himself and probably he is the owner of a solitary theatre?

A. I believe so.

Q. That often happens in a trade. When a man has got good enterprise and energy he is able to secure a good market?

A. Naturally I think.

Q. Not that the films are costly themselves, but that certain people get the monopoly to show them?

A. It is a question of monopoly. Might I mention in that connection that we have no theatre or other proper place for exhibiting films in Madras. Madans I think are paying rent for a plot of land in Madras and if anybody started to build a theatre they would build a theatre in opposition.

Q. You mean they compete successfully?

A. Yes.

Q. So you do not call that a monopoly, do you?

A. It is natural.

Q. Do you complain that Spencer and Co. have got a monopoly in oilman stores because they supply the best goods?

A. I do, from the consumer's point of view.

Q. But I think that is inevitable in any trade?

A. Yes.

Q. The pushing man always gets the advantage?

A. Yes.

Q. You say "the standard of Indian films if they can be brought up to the standard of western films—they would perhaps be more popular." You mean with the educated classes I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. You mean the standard in technique?

A. Yes.

Q. You do not want the moral standard of the west to be introduced into this country?

A. No. They are quite different.

Q. You do not advocate that they should be introduced in Indian films? I suppose people too would not like.....

A. It would not be true to their literature either.

Q. In answer to question No. 8 you say it is not satisfactory and then you say it is due to the high prices of good class films. I think you have the same thing in mind, the enterprise of Madans?

Q. Do you think an amusement tax would be popular here supposing that tax were devoted to the encouragement of Indian films being produced?

A. In what way popular? Would it affect audiences?

Q. Yes.

A. I do not think so.

Q. Do you think if a tax were introduced to be specifically appropriated for the purpose of encouraging the growth of Indian films—do you think it would meet with much opposition?

A. I should not think so.

Q. In answer to question No. 16 you say that Government aid and supervision would be the chief remedy and propaganda among capitalists. Will you kindly explain what you have in mind?

- A. The Publicity Board might take the question up.
- Q. You know the Publicity office was abolished in this province?
- A. Yes, I know.
- Q. You want a cinema board to be established?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And it will be a sort of advisory board to advise the industry and trade in that particular connection?
- A. Yes.
- Q. As to what sort of film should be produced and to encourage the growth of Indian films?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Would you advocate some special steps being taken to encourage the growth of Indian films, for instance, by giving subsidies, or reducing the duty on raw films and such other steps?
- A. My experience with regard to subsidies is, once you start giving subsidies nobody would do anything else.
- Q. There is not that enterprise shown when they depend upon others, that is your opinion?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What other aid do you think Government should give?
- A. They might have an official.....
- Q. An official sometimes may be a check.
- A. He ought not to be.
- Q. But that won't encourage the growth of the industry. What is the official to do?
- A. I believe you already have places where you produce Indian films. They could be supervised and he might see that good stuff is turned out.
- Q. You have no complaint against Indian films except as to the technique?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you advocate then that a Government expert in technique should be appointed?
- A. I do.
- Q. That is one way of aiding the industry so that the expert may be in a position to give advice and direction. You advocate the employment of Government experts in order to aid the industry?
- A. That would be the best way of aiding it.
- Q. Would you advocate scholarships being given to students to go abroad to study the technique?
- A. I think that would be a good way of aiding it.
- Q. And you say there should be propaganda among Indian capitalists. I suppose your belief is that once Government shows interest in the industry capital is bound to come?
- A. That is my idea.
- Q. That gives it the stamp of approval as it were, and capitalists are sure to come in?
- A. Yes.
- Q. As regards your answer to question No. 22 you say, "From the patriotic and commercial standpoint my reply is in the affirmative." I do not know if you have seen the proceedings of the Imperial Conference referred to in that question?
- A. No, I have not.
- Q. How is it a commercial advantage to India?

- A. It will improve trade.
- Q. Whose trade?
- A. The cinema trade, and also the cinema could be very well used for advertisements too—combine instruction with advertisement.
- Q. You mean advertising non-Indian goods?
- A. Not necessarily.
- Q. Then what is your idea?
- A. Films with regard to agriculture, agricultural methods.....
- Q. Educational methods? That is covered by the second part. Question No. 23 I think deals with that. Question No. 22 deals more with the entertainment class.
- A. I was looking at it more from the general point of view.
- Q. Spread of general knowledge and conditions. That can be done by mutual agreement between the various Governments?
- A. I should think so.
- Q. By exchange of films which are of educational value, but the question relates to entertainment films. Do you think it is of any advantage to India to embark on such a policy?
- A. I don't see why it is not. It is rather difficult.....
- Q. Look at it from the point of view of India. I quite see it may be of advantage from the point of view of the producers of non-Indian films, they will find a market for them here.
- A. Yes, but why should not Indian films be sent abroad?
- Q. You know England pretty well and also Europe?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you think Indian films have any chance of being seen or patronised in England?
- A. Certainly.
- Q. Have you seen any Indian films shown in England or anywhere else?
- A. Not to my knowledge.
- Q. Do you think, even taking England, they would care to see Indian films?
- A. They do care to see films from any part of the world, different scenery, different habits. This country is full of a different class of things from what you get in England.
- Q. I suppose unless you are satisfied that the Indian films are likely to have an equal advantage in the non-Indian markets you would not advocate a policy of merely introducing other films here, unless it is on a reciprocal basis and of advantage to the country. May I take it that that would be your view?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Coming to question No. 24, you apparently think that the Indian audiences are apt to generalise and form the opinion that westerners generally are immoral and debauched.
- A. I have personally had an instance of that.
- Q. One instance?
- A. Well, I have heard from other people too. About this instance, I have overheard people say, this is what they do in the English clubs,—these cabaret scenes. Also they do not understand. Take the question of Lady Willingdon trying to introduce dancing in the Lady Willingdon Club. It failed. It is on the same principle as that.
- Q. On that ground you do not want to stop dancing in our country?
- A. No, but they do not understand. The idea is that the people who indulge in dancing are of.....

Q. I know. You put it on the same footing?

A. Yes.

Q. As seeing,—for instance, these western companies come here, revues and so on.

A. The ordinary Indian audience does not attend that, not to the same extent, and if they do attend, it is the educated classes who do understand.

Q. They do misunderstand that also when they see it? Supposing they see mixed bathing at the Elliot's Beach, I suppose they do not understand it either?

A. I presume not.

Q. You do not want to stop it on that ground?

A. If you look at it like that, yes.

Q. You recognise that the film cannot deal with the ordinary every day life in order to be attractive?

A. Quite so, but I think cabaret scenes showing European women in questionable costume and in questionable condition is not desirable in any country, and particularly so in this country because they are apt to generalise.

Q. Does not the remedy lie with the people who produce such films?

A. Undoubtedly. It also lies with the censors who ought not to pass them.

Q. Do they censor such films in England? Do you think they should also censor them in England in the same way as you want it done here?

A. No, because it is misunderstood here.

Q. What sort of people you think misunderstand?

A. In this particular case it was some sepoys that I overheard saying.....

Q. I suppose you would have the same objection to scenes from Folies Bergeres being reproduced? You have seen the Folies Bergeres?

A. Yes.

Q. Some of the scenes there are witnessed by thousands of people every day and every night?

A. They are used to it there.

Q. Supposing they are reproduced here, do you think people will misunderstand western life?

A. Certainly.

Q. Then what is your remedy? You think they ought not to be introduced here at all?

A. They ought to be censored very freely.

Q. That is, you will shut out such scenes although they are witnessed every day in Paris by thousands of people from all parts of the world?

A. Yes.

Q. On what ground?

A. Because the class of audience is different, the class of life is different.

Q. You do not want to see the scenery which several thousands of people enjoy?

A. I am talking about scenery.

Q. I mean scenes. I suppose people go there and pay large sums of money to enjoy them and you do not want people here to see them on the screen?

A. Because they misunderstand it.

Q. What is the evidence that they misunderstand it?

A. I can give you one instance. Some people attended Government House. There were certain couples dancing and they misunderstood it. I heard remarks from educated Indians attending.

Q. So that it is not confined to.....

A. My remarks are based on the same principle.

Q. Therefore you would prevent Indians from seeing dancing even in Government Houses?

A. But the point of view is so different. It is all a question of point of view.

Q. What is the remedy for this?

A. To censor them.

Q. Only the films? But what about novels, what about picture places, what about illustrated magazines, what about actual life?

A. It is quite a different class who go in for that sort of thing. In the cinemas you get ignorant people, I call them ignorant.....

Q. You told us just now that even educated Indians in Government House parties.....

A. If an educated Indian misunderstand it, much more therefore will an uneducated Indian.

Q. But don't you think that the bulk of the people would take it merely as amusement?

A. I am afraid not from my knowledge of the country and the people.

Q. When I put to you these questions I do so in order to know on what you base the strength of your conviction. Except that you heard one Indian in the Government House making a remark like that and a sepoy making a remark.....

A. I have heard other people make the same remarks too generally.

Q. You think the remedy for that is stricter censorship?

A. I think so.

Q. Although you would not advocate such censorship in England?

A. No.

Q. You think it is all right in England? There is nothing immoral about the films, but your only fear is that it is likely to be misunderstood, that is your point?

A. Yes. And as regards immorality, there are different points of view. Some people might say a certain thing is immoral and others would not.

Q. Have you really seen any immoral films from your point of view?

A. I cannot say, I have.

Q. I refer to films which you consider immoral.

A. There may be some which might have been censored more carefully from the general point of view.

Q. Are there any films which are objectionable to the European audience in India?

A. I do not think so.

Q. Or any scenes in any film?

A. Not that I remember.

Q. Don't you think that scenes depicting extravagant love-making and exploits of western criminals are objectionable from the point of view of the European audience?

A. No.

Q. Then would you classify certain films as suitable only for western people in this country? In that case will not the censor have a difficult task to do, since he will have to cater to the taste of the different kinds of audience? How would you get over that difficulty?

A. There may be films which have not been censored at all, just like the one I mentioned just now.

Q. Don't you think that the cinema trade is likely to suffer if you adopt a strict censorship?

A. If you improve the Indian film and get a good type introduced, I do not think there will be much difficulty.

Q. But that won't satisfy the western audience?

A. The western audience is not very big in this place anyhow.

Q. In answer to question No. 24 (c), you say "probably yes" and again "has not been gone into". I may tell you we have examined the police in other provinces in connection with the question whether the cinema has been responsible for any increase of crime, and the answer in every province has definitely been "no". I suppose the same reply holds good here also?

A. I am sorry. It must be "probably no".

Q. You advocate a central board?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. Your object is that there should be uniformity in censorship?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you consider that members of the board should view the film or should only a paid officer of the board do so?

A. I think the members of the board should do that.

Q. The whole board cannot view the film?

A. No, I want only two or three members to view the film. That would be more satisfactory, in my opinion. It would also relieve responsibility.

Q. If general rules are laid down and if you have a small body of two or three people out of the 10 or 12 members forming a panel to view the film, do you think it would be a practical proposition?

A. I think so.

Q. You don't think that much harm will be done if the Madras Board is abolished?

A. I do not know very much about that.

Q. Don't you think there is much difference between the Bombay and the Madras boards?

A. I do not think so.

Q. You would therefore be satisfied if you have a central board for censoring all non-Indian films?

A. Yes, I will be satisfied.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you think it would be better to have a chief censor with an advisory board and deputy censors in Madras, Calcutta and other places, instead of the central board that you have mentioned?

A. If it is to be one chief censor with an advisory board in a central place, I would certainly prefer that.

Q. You think then it will be a great step forward?

A. Yes, that will prevent friction to a certain extent.

Q. Has it come to your notice that films whose rights have been purchased are shown here?

A. Not that I know of. I do not say it has not happened in Madras, but I say I do not know that.

Q. Do you know there are theatres run by Young Men's Christian Association for British troops?

A. I am talking in my written answer about the ordinary places where they show films in Madras.

Q. Are there any facilities for Indian troops?

A. Not that I know of.

Q. You have just mentioned about the monopoly of Madans. Would you advocate the starting of a big concern to break up the monopoly, either by

the Government or by the Indians in conjunction with some big concern from England?

A. That is more a question for the trade itself to decide.

Q. You think that Government should not take any steps in that direction?

A. It is purely a trade matter.

Q. Have you heard that Madans are selling their concern to some American firm?

A. I do not know.

Q. If a central board is started, in order to make it self-supporting, would you advocate that the examination fees which are now levied at Rs. 5 a thousand should be increased to Rs. 10?

A. I have not thought about it. I have not considered the subject at all.

Q. You know that fees are levied for examination of films?

A. Yes; but I have not had much to do with it.

Q. Where the amusement tax is levied, as in Bombay and Calcutta, they say that work in this direction is handicapped. There is no amusement tax here, but yet the industry has not progressed. What is the cause of this?

A. This is a benighted presidency.

Q. Is the Collector of Customs a member of the board here, or is any lady member?

A. I do not know anything about that.

Q. Would you advocate such people being on the board?

A. I have not thought about it; but there is no harm in having a lady member on the board.

Q. Is there any agency in Madras for selling British films?

A. I do not know.

Q. Will it be a good thing to encourage British films if there is an agency here?

A. Why not?

Q. You think then there ought to be an agency?

A. Yes.

Q. You have seen the British and American films?

A. Yes, I have.

Q. Do you think they are both of the same flavour, i.e., having the same bad or dangerous flavour?

A. It is very difficult to say that.

Q. I want to know which is better, American or British film?

A. There are good and bad points in both.

Q. But in comparison to American films, are British films better?

A. As a Britisher, I should think so.

Q. Have you ever heard of any complaint that these films are injurious to the eyes of children?

A. No.

Q. I refer to children between 6 and 10 years?

A. I do not know.

Q. As a police officer, do you get information of prohibited films from other provinces?

A. I have no concern with that department.

Colonel Crawford: I notice that you generally consider that the age of cinema-going children should be 12. Have you any practical suggestions as to how to prohibit children from attending the cinema? Is it a practical proposition?

A. Very few children now go to the cinema. When they do go, they go only with their guardians or friends.

Q. Do you think it will be difficult to provide practical measures?

A. Very few children go and it would be difficult to prohibit them.

Q. Do you think the present censorship is adequate?

A. I think it might be a bit stricter in places.

Q. In what particular places?

A. In Bombay, for instance, I believe films are being passed easily.

Q. What particular scenes do you suggest should be curtailed or cut out?

A. I think cabaret scenes may be cut out.

Q. As a police officer you must be aware of the communal troubles in Madras. In other provinces owing to communal reasons, they have had to prohibit some films?

A. I believe the local board also has had one or two such occasions.

Q. Is it not a handicap to the film industry?

A. It is so.

Q. Do you think it is necessary to consult the police officer in that behalf?

A. Yes, it will be wiser, I think.

Q. I notice you object to some of the posters now shown. Would you advocate poster censorship?

A. It is being done in Madras. The Commissioner of Police has objected to one or two, so he tells me. I asked him about this the other day. In the case of advertisements shown on the films, they have to be shown first to the Commissioner of Police.

Q. But the poster is not submitted to the censor?

A. I do not think so.

Q. It is purely a police action?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Under what power are these posters and advertisements sent for by the Commissioner of Police?

A. He does not send for them. It is a question of what he sees. He keeps a watch over them, that is all.

Q. Not under the obscene section, only under the Penal Code, I think?

A. He will explain to you all that.

Mr. Green: I think you told the Chairman that a central board at Bombay would be objected to?

A. I was talking more of the central board than of the Bombay Board as it now exists.

Q. I think you also said that you had not seen personally, any film in Madras showing the exploits of criminals?

A. No.

Q. Do you mean that Bombay is not very careful in the selection of films and consequently they are misunderstood by people?

A. Yes.

Q. As regards the central board, you want every film to be passed by two of the members of that board?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you given any thought to the suggestion whether that board should be a whole-time board?

A. A whole-time board would be better.

Q. Most of the work falling to it will be the nature of inspection and therefore you require an officer to attend to that work?

A. Yes. If we do want a board, it is better to have whole-time men.

Q. Have you considered whether local boards could not deal with locally produced films?

A. I think they might do so.

Mr. Coatsman: We have been asking representatives of other departments about the possibility of using the cinema for their work. Can you think of using the cinema for police work? I will mention one or two typical ways in which that can be done. Take the hue and cry notices in the police department which produce no result. As a rule, the descriptions are very sketchy and they cannot get efficient circulation. Supposing a few features are shown, say, of a man who suffers imprisonment for walking about, sitting down or looking over shoulders, etc., or of a man who is suspected of a very serious crime, you can show such films in every theatre in every province. Do you think it will be worth while spending money on that sort of thing?

A. I rather doubt it.

Q. Or I will give another instance. At a big fair where thousands of people congregate, would it be worth while showing by means of the film, matters of pick-pocketing, how to guard oneself against fire, and so on?

A. I think it would be dangerous to show pick-pocketing matters on the film because they might suggest the tendency. I do not think it will be useful from the police point of view.

Q. Take your police school. Could you not show to the students of the police school some of the methods of typical gangs or of outstanding criminal tribes?

A. I think it may be useful that way, i.e., in giving the *modus operandi*, etc.

Q. Would it be worth while at present spending any money on that?

A. It is very difficult to get money out of Government for anything. It would, of course, be useful if we get it, but that is doubtful.

Q. Assuming we could, would it be worthwhile?

A. I think it will be worthwhile, but now-a-days it is difficult to get money.

Mr. Neogy: Have you seen any Indian film yourself?

A. I have.

Q. Do the Europeans in this province go to see Indian films?

A. They do not very much go to see films here. They do attend certain outstanding films, but ordinarily the Europeans here never see the films.

Q. The European view seems to be that the technical standard of the Indian films is not good enough even for the purpose of attracting the better class Indians. That is what I gather from your written answer?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think that until the quality is vastly improved, there is any reasonable chance for these pictures to secure a market abroad?

A. I doubt it. There are one or two that have been very good, but I do not think they will have a good market elsewhere.

Q. Indian producers have told us that they find it very difficult to secure a market abroad. From that point of view, would Empire reciprocity be practical politics? Indian pictures will not succeed in finding a market abroad, but under that scheme certain non-Indian pictures will find a market in India. Will not that be the position more or less?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. From that point of view, it would not be to the interest of India to go in for that reciprocity scheme?

A. I am afraid I do not know very much about it.

Q. You said that the sepy classes misunderstand certain aspects?

A. I did not say sepy classes. I only gave an instance of what actually happened.

Q. Would you on that account prevent people of that class from going to Europe and seeing these things in actual life?

A. You have got to educate them.

Q. So till you educate them up to that standard, you would not take the risk?

A. Yes.

Q. Yet during the war a large number of sepoys were taken to Europe and they had then an opportunity of seeing these things in actual life?

A. But the circumstances were different. My whole point is that the ordinary man in the street is apt to generalise from what he sees.

Q. Have you seen many cabaret scenes in cinemas?

A. I have.

Q. Would you prevent dancing of a particular type being given in cinema theatres as a sort of variety show, i.e., actual dancing along with picture shows? We were told that in Calcutta one or two theatres do that. Would you prevent that sort of thing?

A. No. I only object to extremes, i.e., showing men or women under liquor or not properly clothed and so on. I will have no objection to moderate things being shown.

Q. I thought you would take exception even to certain dancing scenes?

A. That is not my point at all. What I say is that extremes should be prohibited.

**Written Statement of Mr. E. J. B. GREENWOOD, M.Sc., M.I.E.E.,
M.I.E. (India), Electrical Inspector to the Government of
Madras, dated the 7th December 1927.**

1. As Electrical Inspector to Government, I inspect all permanent and travelling cinemas in the Madras Presidency to see that they comply with the Local Rules under the Cinematograph Act, 1918. In December 1925 and with facilities arranged by the High Commissioner for India, London, I inspected several cinemas in London; in February 1926, I inspected a cinema in Paris.

At present there are about 43 permanent cinemas and 28 travelling cinemas working in the Presidency.

2. (a) Indians are keen attenders of cinemas; about 10-15 per cent. of an audience are of the literate-in-English class and the rest illiterate; but where Tamil films are shown probably half of the audience is literate. I base these observations on visits to cinemas throughout the Madras Presidency. I think the attendance increases slowly, say, 5 per cent. to 10 per cent. each year.

(b) About 10 per cent. are Mahomedans and the rest Hindus, Anglo-Indians and Europeans negligible.

(c) About 10 per cent. of an audience is under 14; but taking 18 as the upper limit of impressionable age and including those under 14, about 30 per cent. of an audience would be impressionable.

3. Indian religious films are more popular than Western films.

4. No. Most of the good Western and Indian films are charged such high rates of rent that only second quality—not only in moral worth but also in mechanical condition of the film—films are shown in the majority of cinemas.

5. Yes.

(a) Generally mediocre.

(b) Very.

(c) Ordinarily it is more profitable to show an Indian film:

Kohinoor, Madan and Hindustan films are successful Indian films.

6. (a) Yes.

(b) (1) Social dramas.

(2) Religious and films of thrilling nature.

7. No idea.

8. As far as production goes, I think, there is a vast field in India; any well-managed company could reap a big profit.

As regards distribution the good films command such exorbitant prices that the average cinema audience has to be content either with films of lower standard or old films with bad effect on eye-sight.

As regards exhibition the standard of safety is low compared with English standards; but as there has been no serious cinema fatality in this Presidency for the last 15 years and as the at present non-prosperous state of cinemadom would be adversely affected I do not recommend any further safety precautions. I find the existing rules for exits and to minimize eye-strain are not observed sufficiently at present. One hardship which travelling cinema shows have to contend with is the payment of two sets of license fees, one under the Cinematograph Act and the other under the Places of Public Resort Act.

9. Not obtainable readily at reasonable prices; there is a tendency to monopoly of the supply and exhibition of films.

10. No idea.

11. I do not know of any facilities for hirers to pre-view films.

12. No amusement tax in this Presidency.

13. No knowledge.

14. Yes; but only slightly. I think the demand would follow the initial supplies.

15. No knowledge.

16. I think there are enough for one or two companies and that when these companies are successful more persons will be found.

17. There is capital, but doubtful whether it will be forthcoming sufficient for film-production.

18. I do not think that an increased import duty on films would result in increased film-production in India.

19. No knowledge.

20. Nil, no expenditure is justifiable.

21. No justification to spend Government money on attempting thus to improve the cinema industry.

22. (a) Very little.

(b) Perhaps.

(c) I do not see how it would affect the standard of Western films shown in India.

No suggestion to make as to the methods.

23. To a great extent, but must be left to commercial enterprise.

24. (a) There are many films portraying murder, pocket-picking, drunkenness, robbery and crimes of violence.

(b) I have seen only one film of immoral tendencies.

Films depicting low morals such as excessive drinking, daring thefts, etc. It is harmful to the low and illiterate classes; it must induce to adopt similar methods.

(d) Not adequate.

(e) and (f) No knowledge.

25. Most decidedly.

26. See 38.
27. (a) Many American films do so misrepresent; I can only suggest that censorship should prevent films which misrepresent normal Western conditions from being approved.
- (b) No knowledge.
28. See 24 (a), (b) and (c).
29. I would prefer the opposite "Not to be exhibited to persons under 14 years of age".
30. Yes, say, under 14, for reasons see 24 (a), (b), (c).
31. Yes, sufficient.
32. Not satisfactory, in that unapproved films or films approved by an other Provincial Board of Censors and not suitable for the Province can be shown. No film should be shown by the ordinary cinema man unless he has taken it to the nearest police station and recorded there the certification number of the local Provincial Board; the police would consequently watch cinemas to ensure this registration.
33. No.
34. No, but I would discontinue the ruling that where a film is passed by one Provincial Board it can be exhibited throughout British India.
- (b), (c) No.
35. (a) I think so.
- (b) No, I think the quorum at present two out of five should be raised to four.
36. (a) No.
- (b) Certainly; sufficient will come forward if paid.
37. (a) No.
- (b) Yes, see 34.
38. Yes, several, one was "Civilization" passed in Burma and stopped by police after one or two days; another was "Pati Bhakti" passed in Bombay where a dance portion was afterwards cut out.
39. No.
40. No. None.
- 41-42. None.
43. (a) Yes, as between provinces.
- (b) See 34.
- (c) The Indian Customs and Post Office should divert all cinema films to the local Provincial Board of Censors.
44. To a great extent.
45. (a) and (b) Yes, for safety precautions only.

**Oral Evidence of Mr. E. J. B. GREENWOOD, M.Sc., M.I.E.E.,
M.I.E., Electrical Inspector to Government, Madras, on Thursday,
the 5th January 1928.**

Chairman: Your duties take you all over the Presidency, Mr. Gre.

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. Have you a list of the cinemas in the presidency, both permanent travelling?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you got to keep a list of them in your official duties?

A. Yes.

Q. I see you have mentioned the number here—43 permanent and 48 travelling cinemas.

A. I have a list here.

Q. Perhaps you could send us a copy later. What is the smallest town which has a permanent cinema—the population? I suppose that list would give us the population also?

A. No, but it can be added to it if you want.

Q. We shall be obliged if you can do that. Now these travelling cinemas, I suppose you see them yourself. Do you see the shows now and then—not the apparatus.

A. Rarely, only if I am camping in a place overnight.

Q. Sometimes you do?

A. Yes.

Q. What kind of films do they show, much used films?

A. That is what I have noticed particularly; dreadfully old films, split and cracked with the light piercing through. It must have a terrible effect on the eyesight, I should imagine—though I am not a medical man. It is most tiring to the eyes. I have left them after half an hour because I could not stand more.

Q. Where do they get their supplies from, these travelling cinemas?

A. I think in various towns such as Madura, Trichinopoly and Madras.

Q. Are there any agencies?

A. The owners buy up these old films. I think the regular companies sell them out when they have done many rounds and Chetties or such men buy them and simply lease them out from time to time; but they are out of general circulation in the better towns. It is the more distant remote touring companies that get hold of these old films.

Q. And the public see them because that is all they can get?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you any suggestions to make as to what can be done in order to prevent this?

A. Set a time-limit to the certificate. The certificate should be valid for 2 years or 3 years. Some films are 10 years old, dreadful things; and some have perhaps never been before the Board.

Q. It depends upon the number of occasions a film is used, not so much on the length of time.

A. Still they could come up and be viewed again for a small fee.

Q. Would you advise that after a certain time the film should be brought up for recertification in order to avoid this?

A. Most decidedly.

Q. Do you think these films are largely used?

A. I think the poorer and smaller cinema companies use them principally; they are the only films they can afford.

Q. Would you say a time limit of 5 years.

A. That is too long—3 years or 2 years would be enough.

Q. I suppose they cannot afford to pay the same fee; I suppose it must be done on a lesser fee?

A. Yes; I am not conversant with the fees of the Censor Board.

Q. You go to the cinema very often yourself?

A. Not so often perhaps, once in three weeks or something of that sort.

Q. But what is the sort of inspection you make of the cinemas—for what purpose do you inspect them?

A. To see the cinematograph equipment, the electric installation and the appliances—that is for Madras town; the police do the rest. For the

districts, I report to the District Magistrate, on other points such as exits, strength of balconies, staircases and things like that.

Q. And almost every cinema comes under your inspection?

A. Yes; no licence can be granted without my half certificate.

Q. What sort of licences have these travelling cinemas to take out?

A. One year is the maximum.

Q. And how many licences have they to take out. We heard a complaint in Calcutta that they have to take too many licences when they go from district to district. Is there the same practice here?

A. Yes. They produce my certificate as to the fitness of the apparatus and the District Magistrate is responsible for the condition of the building. I cannot chase them about and the Magistrate through his subordinate magistracy vouches for the building; a licence is issued for a particular building only, and not for a district.

Q. Do you think some system may be found. I see you also mention in your answer that the number of licences they have to take is 8—what do you suggest should be done?

A. I think one licence under the Cinematograph Act should be sufficient.

Q. And you think they are really, at present, suffering from a hardship?

A. Greatly.

Q. And probably it will induce them to show better films if you give facilities of this kind.

A. Yes; it will in a small way. They are certainly having a very thin time at present. They have never had a good time.

Q. Now have you any idea as to these cinemas. Are there cases where cinemas have closed down for want of encouragement?

A. Oh many cases, specially in the mofussil. They are out for 9 months or so and then they close; again some other person rigs up the old kit and starts once more.

Q. Is the cinema exhibiting trade in a flourishing condition?

A. Not at all. I see the same plant coming up for certification time after time with different owners.

Q. That shows it is not a paying proposition as it is.

A. Not at all.

Col. Crawford: Is that with reference to travelling cinemas?

A. Cinemas generally are not a paying proposition.

Mr. Neogy: Is the number of shows on the decrease generally?

A. No, I think it is on the increase.

Chairman: At the same time they are not paying?

A. Yes, not paying.

Q. Is not the cinema growing popular with the people?

A. Very slowly. If there is a good film, or if the man starts on and has a good series of films it pays; then he tries to recoup his primary extravagance and gets worse films and the thing peters out.

Q. So you think one should be careful in dealing with this trade?

A. Most certainly. I mention I think in this reply that I went over a number of cinemas in the London district with the London County Inspectors to see the state of affairs there and I reported to Government a number of technical points for safety. I made a general report of my visit to works and cinemas in Great Britain and my Government asked me to bring up each point separately. However I did not move further in the matter so far as cinemas were concerned.

Q. Because it might hurt the trade?

A. Yes. We have had no fatality: the present standard of safety cannot be insufficient.

Q. Do you think there is any difficulty in getting a proper supply of films for exhibitors?

A. Yes. The good films are high priced and they simply cannot afford them. There is no set standard of prices. If a film is popular, the man, after it has drawn crowds in one spot, puts up the price for the same film next time.

Q. But is the system prevailing here one of hiring out films; they hire out the films from the importer?

A. From these depots. There are 3 or 4 in Madras town.

Q. Are there many importers in Madras?

A. 3 or 4. There are many people hiring out films; I don't know the names of them. One is the Hindustan Co., and there is of course, Madan.

Q. And how many theatres are there in Madras city?

A. 9 I think, Sir.

Q. How many do Madan's own?

A. 3 to my knowledge.

Q. That is not an excessive number. And how many do they own in the province?

A. None, I think. None outside Madras town.

Q. Only in Madras town?

A. I think so.

Q. So all the others out of the 43 are owned by different people?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there any other circuit owning cinemas?

A. The Hindustan people I think have a small chain.

Q. So that all these are owned by different individuals and there is competition?

A. There is one company in the North. Ellore, where there are 3 or 5 in another group. It is difficult for me to know the owners because I deal with the managers. But they all start with a flourish together. And probably one letter asks me to inspect the group.

Q. So that you cannot say that in our province there is any monopoly in the exhibition side of the business?

A. No.

Q. There is fair competition?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there fair competition in the supply of films also? You say there are 3 or 4 agencies.

A. Yes.

Q. Is there a weekly change of programme in the city here?

A. Yes, weekly.

Q. Or bi-weekly?

A. Sometimes; it depends on the film.

Q. But ordinarily only a weekly change of programme?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you seen any Indian films?

A. Yes, a few.

Q. Are they getting popular with the Indian public?

A. I think they are popular.

Q. Are more of them shown in the mofussil? Do they show these Indian films at the travelling cinemas?

A. It would be enforceable and should be enforced.

Q. You want to prohibit children from going to that sort of thing?

A. Yes. It is up to the management to keep out small sized children who look like being under 14.

Q. Would you make them take risks. For instance it will be very difficult to decide whether a boy or a girl is 14 or 13.

A. Well, in time those films would disappear I suppose. A large number of films are for adults only.

Q. But you know in this country there is no provision for adults leaving their children at home. Perhaps you would be effectively preventing even parents from seeing those films?

A. I don't think so. The family here is not the self-contained unit it is, shall we say, in England. Relations live together. Some can go and others can look after the children.

Q. You think the joint family system will meet the difficulty?

A. Yes.

Q. Well, I am rather interested in your suggestion in 32. What is your idea? You say whenever a film goes to a new place you should take it to the nearest police station. Don't you think you are throwing too much of a burden on the trade?

A. It is only to ensure that every film has been through a local provincial board of censors.

Q. You think it necessary when once it is already censored by a responsible board that it should also be submitted to a local authority.

A. Cases have occurred. It is true there are not many of them.

Q. But is not this rather imposing too much of a burden on the trade. You think no film should be shown by the ordinary cinema man unless he has taken it to the nearest police station. And the police would consequently watch cinemas to ensure this?

A. I think the steps now taken to ensure that uncensored films are not shown are not adequate.

Q. I suppose you are aware that every film has on exhibition to show a certificate.

A. Yes, but whom to?

Q. Why should not the police watch these films. Why should you throw on the trade the necessity of showing it to the police.

A. Because I don't think there is any definite machinery at present. The police may amble in or not. It is nobody's duty in the morning at the opening night of a film to see to this; but if the film before being shown has a licensed number lodged at the nearest police station, there would be something very definite and it would take very little time.

Q. I suppose you know even in a district there are several police stations?

A. I say the nearest police station. It is only a matter of 20 minutes or so to take the box of films there and produce the numbers. I say there is no effective or definite machinery for seeing whether films exhibited are approved or unapproved.

Q. But don't you think it is a hardship on the trade, when once they have taken the trouble of getting a film certified by a central authority, to go to every police station near which they are going to exhibit it?

A. I think it is a matter of a few minutes or half an hour once or twice a week when a man changes his programme. It does not affect the trade at all.

Q. You throw him at the mercy of the local police?

A. You have only got to show the number. If you cannot show the number the film is obviously unapproved.

Q. Supposing he has a certificate with him at the place of exhibition.

A. He must show it at the start of the film.

Q. But apart from that I can understand his having the original certificate itself with him.

A. I think the film hirers send out nothing other than the film in its box.

Q. Probably it should be issued in duplicate.

A. It would be much better to show it in the film; a certificate can be kept standing and things of that sort.

Q. Your object being that the police may have an opportunity of seeing whether it is certified or not. Have you come across an uncertified film being shown?

A. Yes.

Q. Where was it?

A. In Ootacamund.

Mr. Green: Can you tell us what action was taken?

A. It was called the "Vice Trust". It had to do with the selling of girls—a sort of girl market.

Mr. Neogy: When was that?

A. About four years ago.

Mr. Green: Was any action taken?

A. None. It was hastily stopped.

Q. You know of course that action could have been taken?

A. Oh, yes.

Chairman: In what theatre was it shown?

A. In the Assembly Rooms. It was done openly.

Mr. Green: Was it a public exhibition?

A. People paid for it. The reason was the ordinary programme had failed. Something had gone wrong in the post, and the man hastily produced this from some source and at half time he, the lessee himself, suggested to one of the management that it was getting a bit thick and that it should be stopped. It was stopped and the money returned.

Chairman: It seems to have been a very exceptional case. You want every film to be censored in every province?

A. Yes.

Q. In all the 9 or 10 provinces in India you would have a film certified?

A. Perhaps it could be divided up into less than 9—North and South, East and West,—Bombay, Calcutta, Lahore and Madras.

Q. On payment of fees on every occasion?

A. Unless Government will stand the cost. I don't see why the trade should not.

Q. Are you aware that there have been very few cases within the last 6 or 7 years—less than a dozen—in which the provinces have differed?

A. I am not aware of that.

Q. If you were aware of that fact, would you advocate this thing?

A. I would not advocate it.

Mr. Neogy: You have said that you inspected several cinemas in London and Paris. What aspects of the question did you study?

A. More the fire safety, the exits, the appliances for controlling the lighting, the ventilation and so on.

Q. And you find the conditions in India in regard to these points satisfactory?

A. Well, of a much lower standard, but I hesitated to recommend improving the standard for fear of maiming the industry.

Col. Crawford: Do you think there are a number of these? What remedy would you suggest?

A. I don't think there can be any. The films are kept quietly in boxes until required by private parties. But I would say that there should be more definite machinery to see that the programme is of the right quality. I say there is none now.

Q. There is no normal inspection of films exhibited in the mofussil?

A. On the opening night somebody ought to be there.

Mr. Green: It has been impressed by all Governments at the suggestion of the Government of India, that District Magistrates should depute officers to see that films are not exhibited without a license.

Chairman: And in some places there are police officers entrusted with the duty. Probably not in our province.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You are the authority for licensing the theatres?

A. Half.

Q. Where do these licensing fees go to?

A. To the local treasury—general revenues.

Q. Not to the board of censors?

A. No. I should say definitely no.

Q. I believe, we were told in the Bengal Presidency that they go to the board of censors.

Mr. Green: No, no.

A. I should say, not here. The collector finds some head for it.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: It would be a good thing if it goes to the board of censors in order to encourage this industry or to strengthen the hands of the provincial boards.

A. To pay the fees for the members of the board and get a more numerous board. That is the only thing I can suggest.

Q. Can you tell me what is the amount you require for fees every year?

A. I do not know at all. They are never aggregated. They appear in all the 26 districts.

Q. You say in December 1925 you have inspected several cinemas in London and one in Paris. With what view? Was it that the films should be censored?

A. No, it had nothing to do with the films; but to see the technical safety of the operating rooms, the size of the exits, the ventilation of the place, the light control, fire appliances, everything practically but the film.

Q. As regards question No. 7 you say you have no idea about the films shown to the British or Indian troops. Do you license theatres of the Y. M. C. A. provided for British troops? I suppose they are not licensed.

A. Yes. There is one at Wellington.

Q. They are included in your list of 43?

A. I am not sure that it is in operation now. This list was prepared.

Q. Because the list which we got officially shows 28 theatres in Madras. You say 43. Probably some of these are the Y.M.C.A. shows.

A. I have not got a Y.M.C.A. one now.

Q. There are Y.M.C.A. cinemas now?

A. Only one in Wellington.

Q. It is not licensed?

A. It was not in October, when I prepared this list.

Q. There is only one that is not licensed?

A. I only know of one and that is not licensed. It was not licensed in October.

Q. As regards about not exhibiting to persons under 14 years of age, do you think for the sake of their eyes children of 6 or 8 should be altogether prohibited from seeing cinemas?

A. It is rather a medical matter. I do not think it could be good.

Q. There are children who go with their parents.

A. Yes.

Q. And we are told that the films generally are harmful things for the eyes of these children. What do you say from your own experience?

A. Films are not all old. Many of them are good and fairly new.

Q. With regard to 38-B, you say a sufficient number of people will come forward if paid. What fee do you suggest to pay to these people?—for the board?

A. Something like Rs. 10 for a couple of hours.

Q. But the present members do not get anything?

A. I think not. The service is honorary.

Q. You don't want any representative of the trade to be on the board? You don't advocate that in 42.

A. I gave no reply, Sir. I say, "Have no suggestions to make".

Q. It would be a good thing if there is a representative on the board?

A. I think so. Yes.

Q. 43-E. "The Indian Customs and Post Office should direct all cinema films". You mean as soon as they come they should go direct to the provincial board of censors?

A. Yes, so as to get better control.

Q. All of them? And from there they should be handed to the traders or exhibitors?

A. Yes, so as to control possibly unapproved films from circulating. To check the circulation.

Q. In 45 for safety precautions only you say they ought to be inspected?

A. Yes.

Q. What are the safety precautions you mean?

A. All film producing places.

Q. You mean indecent films?

A. Oh no. Fire and exits, fire principally.

Q. You have complained about the exit and all that too here.

A. That is about cinemas generally.

Q. You want the committee to take any steps in the matter or cannot the police authorities write to your Government here direct?

A. I think they can. The matter is being better attended to.

Chairman: As a matter of fact, have you not got authority where electrical power is used to go and inspect them in producing studios for instance?

A. Oh, I would. But there is no studio at present. But I have the power.

Written Statement of Mr. H. F. TRAVERS PHILLIPS, Commissioner of Police, Madras, and President, the Board of Censors, Madras, dated the 5th December 1927.

GENERAL.

2. (a) (i) Indians of the educated classes attend exhibitions of Historical and Mythological films.

(i) The illiterate classes are more in evidence when sensational films featuring well-known cinema actors and actresses are shown. In Madras City the popularity of the cinema is on the increase.

(b) Generally speaking all classes attend cinemas. Well-known western films will attract a fair number of Europeans while Indian pictures, as is only natural, will appeal only to an Indian audience.

(c) Children—not more than 5 per cent; impressionable adolescents—about 25 per cent.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. Spectacular films full of thrills and "stunts" and with a definite plot running through it.

4. Yes; as far as they can—handicapped by lack of good Indian-made films.

5. (a) only moderately so.

(b) Yes.

(c) Indian films naturally appeal to Indian audiences and Western ones to Europeans and Americans. "Gunsundari" (a Kohinoor film) is a typical example of a very popular Indian picture.

6. (a) They would appeal more to the educated Indians.

(b) (1) Historical—social—mythological.

(2) Mythological and any film with a pronounced plot and sensational incidents.

7. No difficulty.

Serials and amusing drama.

8. (a) and (b) I have no personal knowledge of the film-industry of India except that it seems to be in a state of backward infancy compared to Europe and America.

9. Yes, judging from advertisements and exhibition.

10 and 11. I have no firsthand information on these subjects.

12. It compels him to either raise his prices or exhibit cheaper films.

14. Yes. If sufficiently encouraged. If by "demand", "necessity" is meant, the answer is yes.

16. Judging from existing Indian productions, there appears to be the material available. Technique and ability can only be acquired by direct education in one of the famous Western studios by private enterprise or under assistance from Government.

17. Yes.

18. Yes. I would appoint an interested Advisory Board to ascertain the real needs of the industry and to report with definite recommendations as to the extent and nature of the relief or assistance that Government can give to it.

21. A State Monopoly of the kind suggested would absolutely cripple all private enterprise.

Existing censorship and public opinion are quite sufficient safeguards in themselves.

PART II.

Social aspects and control.

24. (a) On the whole. No.

(b) No.

(c) Films which in any way tend to incite or increase racial or communal hatred are harmful for obvious reasons to all classes.

(d) 1 and 2. Yes.

(e) No.

25. Not more so than the existing censorship can deal with.

26. (a) Sufficient care is taken now.

(b) Yes. The "Lord Buddha" was objected to by the Buddhist Community in, I think, Ceylon or Burma; so I heard.

27. (a) Yes. Stricter censorship is called for.

(b) No information.

28. Films depicting brutality by Western peoples, drunkenness, moral turpitude, murder, lust and the like should be specially scrutinized.

29. and 30. No.

31. Yes, with occasional inspections and enquiries in doubtful cases.

32. Yes; but very much depend on the composition of the Board of Censors.

33. It depends on the word "strict". A fair broadminded and reasonable censorship would do no harm. A narrow-minded and over sensitive censorship would result in all the three conditions stated.

34. Yes. I have reported on this and given my reasons in my letter No. 664/ Government 27, dated 20th July 1927 to the Secretary to Government, (Law Department), Madras.

35. (a) Yes.

(b) Not necessary in Madras but might be expedient in Bombay or where a sufficiently large number of films are censored to justify the employment of a whole time official.

36. (a) I think all examinations at which films are definitely passed for public exhibition should be made by the Board of Censors.

(b) Yes.

37. Yes.

38. Yes;—in other Provinces but not in this Presidency.

40. No, except such as are exhibited on the screen in cinemas. Public advertisements similarly shown at cinemas require scrutiny at times.

44. Public bodies could report anything really objectionable in any film to the Board of Censors.

The Press, as it is, advertises and comments on all exhibitions of any real merit.

45. This may be necessary if production of films in this country becomes at all extensive.

Written Statement of Lt. H. H. COX, Station Staff Officer, Fort St. George, and ex-officio Member of the Board of Censors, Madras, dated the 12th December 1927.

With reference to the questionnaire issued by the Indian Cinematograph Committee I forward remarks on question No. 7. I regret that I am hardly competent to answer the other questions as I have no special knowledge of the film industry.

With regard to question 7:—

British Troops.—There is no difficulty in obtaining suitable films.

The average English and American film exhibited in the better class cinemas is both suitable and popular.

Indian Troops.—My experience in Madras is that Indian Troops frequent the cinema very little, if at all, and it is therefore difficult to say what class of film would be suitable and popular.

**Written Statement of Khan Sahib MUHAMMAD ZINDAH SAHIB
BAHADUR, B.A., Revenue Officer, Corporation of Madras, and
Member of the Board of Censors, Madras, dated the 14th Decem-
ber 1927.**

INTRODUCTORY.

1. No.

GENERAL.

2. (a) As far as Madras is concerned I think the Cinema is frequented both by the educated as well as illiterate classes. The attendance increases with the kind of film exhibited. Historic films and Educational films are patronised by students to a very large degree. Emotional films appeal to the educated classes and thrilling or exciting films where there is a lot of fighting, dare-devil feats or comics attract the illiterate classes.

(b) I should think that an average cinema audience comprises of 20 per cent. students 50 per cent. educated classes and 30 per cent. illiterate classes. About 20 per cent. of the whole audience consists of ladies; 60 per cent. will be Hindus, 25 per cent. Muslims and 15 per cent. all others.

(c) About 15 per cent. consists of children under 14 and between 35 to 40 per cent. of adolescents.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. Indian audiences generally take great interest in religious films and National films. Films depicting stories from the great Indian Epics have attracted an unusually large number of Indians a greater proportion of whom are Indian ladies. Serials were once very popular especially those which contained a lot of fighting and excitement. War films also were very popular. Dramas especially if they do not contain any excitements even though they are masterpieces in other ways are not so popular. Certain film stars seem to have captivated the imaginations of the Indian public such as Douglas Fairbank, Harold Lloyd, Charlie Chaplin, Syd. Chaplin, Valentino, Pearl White, Mari Pickford, Pola Negri and a few others. Whenever these stars appear on the film there is generally a full house.

4. I think they are as far as practicable.

5. (a) and (b) I am afraid there is still a paucity of real Indian-produced films depicting true Indian life but such as are available are fairly good and popular.

(c) Until the quality improves I do not think it will be profitable to an exhibitor to show only Indian films. It is not every Indian film that is popular. Some such as "Light of Asia", "Krishna Leela" are very popular. The Kohinoor films exhibited at the Kinema Central are attracting a fairly decent audience.

6. It depends upon the actors and the scenario.

14. I am decidedly of opinion that it will help the growth of film industry in this country. There is a demand for it and the sooner it is done the better.

16. If there is anything which tries to stifle the growth of film industry in India it is the absence of good actors and actresses. This Industry has not yet attracted sufficient attention from the Indian capitalists. There is no training ground for aspirants to game in the film world. For centuries past it has been inculcated in the minds of the Indian youths of both sexes that it is not respectable to cultivate the art of singing or dancing in public. A stigma is cast upon the persons who adopt singing or dancing as a profession. The result is that this art has been lost to the respectable class of the Indian Society. It is just now that one finds on very rare occasions a respectable Indian Lady, generally a product of some women's college agreeing to sing outside her house in a limited society of her friends. Of real dancing nothing is known to the

average Indian woman. The art practised by the class which has adopted dancing as a profession is anything but appreciable. It is neither good nor appealing unless woman actors take their legitimate place on the stage and on the screen Indian drama or Indian film can never achieve that perfection which has nearly been attained in the West. As long as this want remains unsatisfied there is no hope of any successful enterprise in the film industry. Indian producers, Directors and Scenario writers can be trained by deputing suitable persons to the western countries to undergo necessary courses in recognised institutions. Elocution is taught in some educational institutions and is encouraged. I do not see why in colleges a special class should not be opened for training willing candidates in histrionic art. It has often been noticed that western men and women acting in Indian stories fail miserably in depicting the real Indian sentiment. They cannot be blamed because it is impossible for them to learn or know Indian manners and customs. There is also great need for learning the technique of the photographic art in the Cinema Industry. Trick photography or to use a vulgar but more expressive phrase "fake photography" plays a great part in western films. The thrills which so appeal to certain audiences, the impossible athletic feats and fierce driving and riding, the accidents and other scenes of some of the serials are the results of clever photography which is little known in this country. It is not merely in the less artistic but more expressive thrillers that this is used. In ordinary drama also it is often useful. But it is peculiarly needed in the historic and religious films. The mystery plays of the medieval ages are the religious films of to-day. In the film "The Ten Commandments" for instance as has already been stated religious films describing the ancient mythology of the Hindus are most popular specially among Indian ladies. There is no doubt a certain amount of art used in filming these scenes but one feels that with a better insight into western methods there could be a great improvement in this direction.

PART II.

Social Aspects and Control.

24. (a) and (b) No.

(c) In the case of children and adolescents I consider films in which there is great measure of sex suggestiveness as harmful.

(d) As far as Madras is concerned we do not get generally films which can exclusively be defined as sex films or Crime films.

(a) No.

25. No.

26. (a) I think so.

(b) "The Ten Commandments" evoked a good deal of annoyance and imitation amongst the Muslims in Madras. In depicting Eastern stories or religious scenes special care should be taken even at the captions of scenes and in the words expressed by the actors which are reproduced on the screen. Ignorance of the sentiment is the real cause of this transgression which sometimes causes offence to religious susceptibilities.

27. (a) I do not think that at the present day it can be said by anybody without fear of contradiction that the average educated man in this country does not know anything of western manners and customs of Society. The average western film exhibited in Madras does not contain anything which can be said to misrepresent western civilization. In fact it is the other way. We learn and see many things which the books which we read do not tell us. We get a real insight into the national life and character of the western people. It may be true to some extent that some western films are generally unintelligible to an uneducated Indian but it does not necessarily follow that the Indian is led to think low of the people whom he sees exhibited on the screen. Very often he does not also understand the scenes exhibited from Indian stories albeit the actors are Indians. At the manners and customs of the actors are unintelligible and their movements on the screen do not appeal to an uneducated Indian, he is undoubtedly appreciative of the scenes behind the actors. It would be an

beautiful palaces, loses his breathe at the traffic in the big cities of the west and is forced to admire the manner in which the houses are furnished. If there is any evil it is negligible. On the other hand the broad outlook of life, the wide range of subjects he sees on the film act as an educative factor. I can never agree to the proposition that any western film has a tendency to misrepresent western civilization or to lower it in the eyes of Indians.

(b) On the other hand, though I have no personal knowledge, it is possible that Indian civilization is likely to be misrepresented in the west by Indian films in which western men and women take part being exhibited to a public which knows nothing of Indian life and manners. The actors themselves are foreign to it and cannot be expected to represent true Indian life.

28. I have already expressed my opinion that films which are too suggestive of sex are harmful to children and adolescents.

29 and 30. Yes. I am in favour of certificate of film as 'For Adults Only' and prohibiting children below 15 from visiting Cinemas except for special children performances.

31. Yes.

32. Yes. Films which are passed by the Censors of other provinces are not censored in Madras. It is only films that are directly imported from America or locally produced films that are censored by the Madras Board. Films allowed in one Province and rejected in another are I believe censored here also before Exhibition.

33. (a), (b) and (c) I believe so.

34. No. I would retain the Provincial Board. There is no need for a Central Board.

35. (a) Yes.

(b) I have no objection.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. H. F. TRAVERS PHILLIPS, Commissioner of Police, Madras, on Friday, the 6th January 1928.**

Chairman: As Commissioner of Police do you depute any officer of your department to inspect the cinemas?

A. Yes, Inspectors.

Q. Inspector of each division?

A. No, but from the Intelligence Branch working in my office.

Q. It is part of his business to visit the cinemas?

A. Yes.

Q. And I suppose every time a new film is shown he invariably attends?

A. Anything that is new to Madras or is likely to raise any doubtful question as to its

Q. Do you know what is the practice in the districts, whether the police there have any special people on duty in the cinemas?

A. No. I think the District Magistrate is in charge.

Q. You have served in the mofussil?

A. Yes, but there were no cinemas when I served in the mofussil, I am afraid. It was some time ago.

Q. How old is the cinema show in Madras? When did the cinemas begin, do you know?

A. I have got some figures dating back to 1920.

Q. Before that there was no censorship?

A. Yes.

Q. But I believe there were some cinemas before 1920?

A. Yes.

Q. How many cinemas have sprung up since you came to Madras?

A. One, within the last two years. I have had an application for the opening of another one within the last three months. I have been asked to inspect the site and report.

Q. So that you say that the cinema is becoming popular, a growing habit with the people?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Have you any figures as to the attendance at cinemas?

A. I am afraid not.

Q. You cannot say how many in a hundred go to the cinema, as compared with the population?

A. No.

Q. Can we get figures at all for Madras?

A. I should think the cinema proprietors could give you an idea. That would be from their takings.

Q. Compared with the other parts of the world, I suppose the proportion of cinema goes to the population is very small here?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you have seen many Indian films?

A. I have not seen many, but I have seen a few, very few.

Q. Whenever you saw them did you find the house full?

A. The one I saw last—the house was very full. It was a very popular one. I happen to have the programme. I kept it for curiosity. The title is distinctly misleading, "Why Husbands go Astray". The film was one of the Kohinoor films, "Gunsundari". I went to see it particularly and I was impressed with it.

Q. We also saw it and we were impressed with it.

A. But the title was misleading. That was followed a fortnight later by one whose title was "Why Sons go Astray". That is really for attraction I think.

Q. These titles are more or less for attraction, for advertisement. Do you think a film like "Gunsundari" is likely to attract audiences in England?

A. Only probably out of curiosity to see scenes of Indian life, but not as an actual picture.

Q. Not as a commercial concern?

A. No.

Q. Did you think it is a fairly good specimen of Indian production?

A. I was attracted by it. I thought perhaps in certain parts the technique and photography did not compare very favourably with the western studio product, but I was very agreeably surprised to find that it reached the standard that it did.

Q. And you will be surprised to hear that the actress in that became one merely by looking at films.

A. Did she?

Q. And it was an Anglo-Indian girl who was the chief actress there.

A. Not Miss Mayer?

Q. Yes. In Calcutta also there were some good Anglo-Indian girls acting. We could hardly detect their Anglo-Indian character when they assumed Indian costume. Do you think there is much chance from your experience for the film industry to grow in this country?

A. I think if encouraged, yes.

Q. You think some sort of encouragement is needed?

A. Yes.

Q. And what encouragement would you suggest?

A. Private enterprise might be encouraged in every possible way including Government support.

Q. I suppose you would advocate that Indian producers should be given facilities for access to public places like the Museum, public roads, and places of historical interest?

A. Yes, and facilities to be given by Government servants too.

Q. Would you advocate any reduction of duty on raw films in order to encourage the growth of the industry?

A. I do not see why you should make an exception with regard to raw films if you do not make an exception in the case of other similar goods.

Q. If at all, it must be a universal rule for all raw things required for industries?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your opinion about the quota system? Would you advocate quota system in this country such as has been adopted recently in England, that a certain proportion of the films to be shown in each theatre should be Indian films, say either in the week, or the month as a sort of compulsory arrangement.

A. I would leave it to private enterprise to produce films which would hold their own in competition with others.

Q. I thought in Madras we would not have that practical difficulty, because almost every cinema here shows Indian films, does it not?

A. At times.

Q. Even the most fashionable ones, where the Europeans resort, occasionally show Indian films?

A. Yes, on special occasions.

Q. And I thought therefore there would be no harm in such compulsion because it would be a sort of encouragement to the industry.

A. I think it would be rather hard to compel them to show something which would not attract a good audience or be a paying job.

Q. It will attract Indian audiences, there is no doubt about that.

A. No, not if it is a very bad one.

Q. What I have in mind at any rate is this, that films which are certified as suitable to come under a class, supposing you classify under Indian films, "Good for universal exhibition"?

A. I would not make it compulsory. I would leave it to the proprietors. I would encourage them to do it, but I would not compel them.

Q. You see they are very deficient in technique, photography and acting also. Which would you prefer, sending for an expert to train them in that or sending people abroad to learn?

A. Both. It will be easier from the Indian point of view. I think, to have an expert in the country, so that he may judge of local conditions, surroundings, and people, and at the same time, I think if Government gave the support and the necessary facilities by means of introduction and otherwise it would broaden the outlook of Indian film producers if they went to western countries and America and saw how they did things there.

Q. You think if some such steps were taken by Government it would attract capital, which is now shy, to this industry?

A. I do not see why it should not.

Q. Some sort of Government approval of that kind would be an encouragement in that connection?

A. Yes.

Q. As a police officer of considerable experience you do not think the cinema has any tendency to increase crime or criminal methods?

A. No, not in Madras.

Q. That is the universal testimony everywhere, although people, unthinking people, say so in the press. Those who are familiar with the police conditions are, all of them, unanimous—you may be glad to hear they agree with you. You make a reference to a letter which you wrote to Government on the 20th July 1927. I do not think we have got it. Have you got a copy of that?

A. Yes. This is my office copy.

Q. I suppose you don't mind our taking a copy of it?

A. Certainly not.

Q. You are generally satisfied with the moral tone of the films which are shown in the province?

A. Yes.

Q. And you are also generally satisfied, as a police officer, as to the adequacy of the censorship?

A. Yes. We have very little to do.

Q. As regards the censorship performed in other provinces—films which are exhibited either on a certificate from Bombay or from Bengal?

A. So far we have taken no exception.

Q. Or have you heard, as a police officer, of any complaint about the adequacy of the censorship, I mean officially?

A. No.

Q. Except what you see sometimes in the press after the appointment of this committee? Before the appointment of this committee, did you come across any complaint about the adequacy of the censorship?

A. Might I ask complaint in what form? I only heard that the censorship in some places is perhaps a little more strict than in others.

Q. Do you remember the Social Hygiene Delegation which came out here some time ago?

A. Yes.

Q. Did either the lady or the gentleman who formed the delegation meet you at all?

A. I met the lady. I do not recollect her name for the moment.

Q. Did she discuss the cinema with you at all?

A. Yes.

Q. Did she meet your Board?

A. No. She came to see me personally. She was chiefly interested in the subject of the prevention of venereal disease.

Q. Have you seen their report?

A. I do not think I have seen their report.

Q. (Report handed to witness). They say, "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". We have yet to discover from whom they got this information. We have tried it in every province.

A. I do not know where they got it in Madras. They did not get it from the Police Commissioner. You had an educationist yesterday being examined by you, the Director of Public Instruction.

Q. I forgot to ask him about it. They say also, "While in India the delegation found films which, owing to their generally suggestive nature, had been rejected by large cities in England, but were or had recently been in circulation in India and Burma". Have you come across any such case?

A. I have heard of one, but I have never come across any in this province.

Q. When you say you heard of one case, do you remember any particular instance?

A. It was a film called "The Red Rat" or something of that kind.

Q. "The Rat" or "The Triumph of the Rat"?

A. Yes, and that was banned I understand.

Q. We know about it.

A. Then they tried to introduce it, if I remember right, under another title.

Q. It was a case where there was a difference of opinion between Bombay and Bengal and we saw the film, and we were inclined to agree with the Bombay Board and not with the Bengal Board. That is the only case you heard of?

A. Yes. That is the only case I have heard of.

Q. It is not correct to say that it was rejected in England. Then they say, "The publicity material, handbills and posters used in connection with films are, in many cases, more indecent and suggestive than the films". Have you come across any such cases?

A. No, not in the case of handbills or posters. Since I have been here I took it upon myself to censor advertisement slides because they were dealing with certain sexual matters, certain cures for impotency and all sorts of things, which perhaps had better not be exhibited in the cinema. I made it a rule to have all those produced before me for censorship.

Q. Not in connection with films, but in connection with medicines?

A. Yes, medicines chiefly. As regards programmes, I have seen advance copies of every one before they are shown on the films.

Q. What is your opinion about them? Do you think they can come under censorship?

A. Handbills or posters—I do not think so, not at present.

Q. You do not think that the departure from decency is so large as to call for the censorship being introduced?

A. Not at present.

Q. You think the powers the police have now are . . .

A. Ample.

Q. We saw a poster outside the Wellington Theatre last night which was rather suggestive in "Kiss Me Again". Do you think there is any general ground for complaint in connection with posters?

A. I think we are not going very deep into the question, and in that case I am afraid there will be no end to censorship.

Q. You think we may overdo things?

A. I think as regards handbills and posters, anything beyond a certain line may be objectionable; but we must adopt a policy of give and take in such things. That is my opinion.

Q. In paragraph 10 of their report, the delegation also say: "The present laxity of the censorship in India attracts those films recognised as undesirable, and a larger proportion of the undesirable appear to be in circulation than in Great Britain". Is that your view?

A. No, not as regards Madras. I have no knowledge of the matter anywhere outside.

Q. You know the classes of films exhibited in England?

A. Yes.

Q. You do not think that a larger portion of the undesirable films are exhibited here than in England?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Did the lady consult you on any of these points?

A. She talked to me a great deal about it, i.e., on brothels, immorality, but she did not think it even worthwhile to go round and visit some of the brothels.

Q. You think that the existing censorship and public opinion are quite sufficient as against any abuses of the films?

A. I have said so.

Q. As a police officer of experience, you do not think that the films now in circulation in our province have any demoralising effect?

A. After censorship, no.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: In your letter to the Government you advocate a central censorship to be started. Do you mean a censor or a board of censors?

A. I want an authority in Bombay, not necessarily a board.

Q. You do not advocate a central board?

A. I advocate only a paid official assisted by an advisory board.

Q. I suppose the pay of this authority is to come from the central revenues?

A. I said that the trade might be assessed in order to give it a sense of responsibility.

Q. In what way is the trade to be assessed. Is it to be by increasing the fees for examination?

A. I have not given any serious thought to that point.

Q. Who are all the people to be assessed, the exhibitors or others also?

A. All interested in the film.

Q. May I know some of the schemes which you have in mind?

A. I have simply stated that an advisory board should ascertain the real needs of the industry and report their recommendations as to the extent and nature of the relief to be given.

Q. You want this committee to be created by the Government?

A. Yes, by the Government. I want a cinema advisory committee.

Q. Have you advised your own Government here like that?

A. I think I have suggested it.

Q. Besides what you have just mentioned, viz., that some help should be given to the cinema industry, I suppose you would like some technical education to be given in this line. Would you advocate some subsidies being given to the cinema producers?

A. Assistance and facilities for the production and improvement of films should be given by experts in India to the manufacturers of the films; but I think subsidies are not necessary.

Q. What is your view about the reduction of the import duty on raw films and second-hand films?

A. I do not see why it should be reduced.

Chairman: You would rather have every film intended for public exhibition examined by the board?

A. I would prefer films to be cut by a responsible board.

Q. I want to know whether you have in mind a board?

A. A board or an individual, assisted by a board, paid or otherwise would be quite sufficient. It need not be entirely one man. He will require assistance.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: I think the Electrical Engineer generally gives the licenses?

A. He certifies that a cinema as such is fit.

Q. In his evidence, he said yesterday: "No film should be shown by the ordinary cinema man unless he has taken it to the nearest police

station and recorded there a certificate", etc. Would you like this to be done?

A. All cinemas are licensed by me as Commissioner of Police.

Q. What have you to say about this procedure?

A. The Electrical Engineer simply advises regarding the lights, etc. I think it is better to leave the local authority in charge of issuing licenses and supervision.

Q. I think the police generally watch these shows?

A. Yes, the investigation department does that.

Col. Crawford: Do you think that children should be prevented from being allowed freely into the cinema theatres?

A. I do not think the cinema has any great effect on them. Whenever they are taken to the cinema, it is mostly because they cannot be let at home.

Q. As a police officer, are you satisfied with the existing powers for dealing with the films?

A. Quite.

Q. As regards posters, under what power do you censor them?

A. I do not do any actual censorship of either posters or handbill. I see in the handbills the programme and unless there is anything very bad or undesirable, I generally pass them on. If really there is anything flagrantly indecent, I will bring it to the notice of the proprietor and ask him to have it removed. If he fails to do that, I can then take action under the Police Act.

Q. Do you think the present powers are quite enough?

A. Quite enough.

Q. You do not think there will be any difficulty later on?

A. I do not think so. The existing powers are quite enough.

Q. I notice that you consider that censorship may be stricter. In what particular direction?

A. I think there is a lot of rubbish shown in some of these films, love making scenes, embracing scenes, woman-handling, etc., and all of them are not appreciated in India and at first sight are generally misconstrued. We must cut out these.

Q. As regards extravagant cabaret scenes?

A. I do not think there is very much serious attention paid to it here.

Q. What are the films imported into Madras and by whom were they imported originally?

A. I have here got a list of the nine films that we censored last year.

Mr. Green: You say you are satisfied with the existing powers. Does the Madras Police Act go further than the Penal Code?

A. I have sufficient powers under the Madras City Police Act. If necessary, I have also the Penal Code to fall back upon. But I have not seen anything obscene so far.

Q. I want to know something about the central board you suggest. You have said 'authority'. What do you mean by that?

A. The word does not necessarily mean 'individual' but what I mean is that there should be an authority with either a board or an advisory committee.

Q. What is the harm in having two or more stipendiary censors to see the films?

A. That would lead to differences of opinion. That was my idea in suggesting one man in authority assisted by an advisory board or committee. He would be an appellate authority in cases of differences of opinion. My

idea is to get that standard. The general standard should be set by the central authority leaving the local details to the local authorities.

Q. Have you worked out the details of your scheme?

A. I have not been asked to do that.

Q. There is no production of films in Madras?

A. No.

Q. A suggestion has been made to us that besides the central board, we can have some local boards to deal with the locally produced films?

A. I have no objection, but I think an exception should be made in the case of certain films. The local authority can well be the District Magistrate in the mofussil and the Commissioner of Police in Madras, I think. If there is a social or sexual film, for the sake of the universal standard, it should go to the central authority.

Q. I take it you would retain the existing powers of local authorities to suspend a film if they thought that it should not be exhibited, pending reference to the proper authority or the Government?

A. Certainly, I think such powers are necessary. I would however leave the final power to the central authority.

Mr. Coatsman: You say that you do not think the film has any effect on crime in this province. Have you noticed any social reactions of the film in the city of Madras? i.e., inducing any tendency in Indians to form dancing clubs or night clubs?

A. Not at present.

Mr. Neogy: Every cinema in the city of Madras has to send you a copy of its programme before it can show any film. Then you depute an officer to see that particular film exhibited and to report to you if there is anything objectionable in that?

A. It is not necessarily so strict as that. Some films which have been exhibited before may be exhibited again.

Q. But in the case of new films which have not been examined by the Board here, I believe you follow that rule?

A. Generally, yes.

Q. If there is anything objectionable in such films, you go and see it yourself and if necessary you also refer it to a sub-committee of the board?

A. No, I suspend it at once, pending full inspection by the whole board or a reference to the Government.

Q. On how many occasions in your experience was such action necessary to be taken?

A. None.

Q. So, even in regard to films which have been passed by other boards, you have had no cause for complaint. Can I take it like that?

A. The film that was objected to in Ceylon and elsewhere was not objected to here. It was suggested to me that it ought not to be shown here, but I consulted some gentlemen whom I considered were the best authority on the matter and I saw the film myself and then I took no action. It continued to be shown, and there was no further complaint.

Chairman: Was it "The Ten Commandments"?

A. It was "The Life of Buddha".

Mr. Neogy: In any case, in this power which you possess, there is an effective means of correcting any laxity on the part of any other Board of Censors?

A. Yes.

Q. On the whole you are satisfied with the censorship as it is in Madras?

A. Yes.

Q. You are not so much satisfied with the work which is done elsewhere?

A. I have received various letters from other boards saying that such and such films have been banned from their provinces. But generally I took no action thereon, and I used to view the films personally and satisfy myself.

Q. Was any such film sought to be exhibited in Madras after that?

A. I do not remember any such occasion.

Q. You also think that the present pictures have no demoralising effect upon the people?

A. Generally speaking, no.

Q. Yet you say that there is some amount of risk of certain classes of scenes or pictures being misunderstood. Don't you think that that view is exaggerated, having regard particularly to your answer that there is no demoralising effect, generally speaking?

A. It is a very difficult question to answer; because scenes and actions which may be of every day occurrence in one part of the country may have a totally different meaning in another part of the country; and if I belonged to a particular country and I saw a film by another race which would be somewhat repugnant to myself, I should possibly think that that other race was indulging in things which I should not countenance as a representative of my land.

Q. But you are not in a position to say that the censorship from that point of view is unsatisfactory at the present moment?

A. It might be improved or tightened up.

Q. So far as the Madras Board is concerned, it possesses the power of shutting out certain scenes; but so far as the work of the other boards is concerned, you, as the Commissioner of Police, have sufficient powers to control the exhibition of such pictures in Madras. But at the same time you said that stricter censorship was called for. It is up to you, I think, to do the needful?

A. I have done the needful by saying that there should be a central authority for the whole of India to set a uniform standard, to omit all rubbish and do such things.

Q. You don't like to exercise your special powers except in regard to any special local conditions, say of a communal or religious character?

A. No.

Q. Would you like to exercise any powers of control, or would you leave that to the central authority which you have in mind?

A. The standard to be set by the central authority would be far-reaching. It would consider not only sexual problems, but also communal: the interests and anything which may offend the susceptibilities of any one community.

Q. You would therefore approve of the Madras standard for adoption by the central authority?

A. I do not think so. I want to place before the committee another point. I think much more use may be made of the cinema for the circulation of information regarding traffic safety, traffic control and so on. With that view, I propose to introduce in the local cinemas such slides as I have brought down here. (Here the witness showed to the Members of the Committee a few specimens of the slides he had brought with him). If these slides are exhibited in all the cinemas, the people will receive instruction on how to cross the roads, etc. I think much might be done in the way of educating the people in the interests of their own personal safety. From the police point of view, it is also excellent. If approved by the authorities, I think more use can be made of the slides for the dissemination of this kind of information.

Chairman: You expect the Government to prepare and supply these films?

A. I think the cinema people themselves will do it. I should even think it possible to pay for the Guindy Races, for instance, were advertised on slides of this very description at this time of the year.

Q. ... expect any difficulties from the exhibitors to exhibit these films? ... think it should be made obligatory?

A. I think they would do it if they are merely asked.

Q. It is a very useful suggestion you are making. In fact I find the railway people are already preparing such films of safety first.

A. It is very necessary when traffic is increasing, and it appeals specially to me as the police officer in charge of it.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Just as you notify your prohibited films to the theatres here locally, do you give this information to the District Magistrates of the several districts here, or are you not the authority to do so.

A. I am the authority for the whole of the Presidency.

Q. Do you inform them?

A. I have not done so. I would do so if I thought the film was likely to be shown anywhere. It would be for me to do that.

*Oral Evidence of the Madras Board of Film Censors, on Friday, the 6th January 1928.

The following Members attended:—

1. Mr. H. F. Travers Phillips, Commissioner of Police, Madras City, *Ex-officio* President.
2. Lieutenant H. H. Cox, 1st Battalion, Queen's Own West Kent Regiment Station Staff Officer, Fort St. George, *Ex-officio* member.
3. Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur, Revenue Officer, Corporation of Madras.
4. M. R. Ry. A.K., Krishnaswami Ayyar Avl., M.A., L.T., Headmaster, P. S. High School, Mylapore.

Chairman: We will now take you gentlemen as members of the Board. I notice from the returns sent up by your Board that there has been a sudden fall in the number of films examined in Madras. In 1921-22 you had 568; but from 1922-23 there is a steady decline. It now comes to only 24 films in the year. Can you tell us, do you know why that fall has occurred?

Mr. Travers Phillips: In the first 2 years, 1921-22, a very large number was shown and I think it is generally agreed that there was a recertification of a very large number of existing films in the country at the time the censorship was established. It was a form of recertification.

Q. The Board was formed then? It does not mean that so many films were imported?

A. No, I don't think so. I think they were all in the country and it was a form of recertification.

Q. You have very little work to do on the Madras Board.

A. As a Board, yes.

Q. As a Board your work is practically nil. Unless the Board is retained for local productions do you see any harm in all the films to be exhibited here being censored either in Bombay or Bengal by a central authority.

A. Provided they deal with general topics or general themes, I see no objection; but if it is purely local or relative to local conditions which might be in conflict, then I think a local authority should express an opinion.

Q. But would you be content, as just now Mr. Green put it to you—I want the opinion of your Board, I don't know if you have considered it: there are two ways in which a local board might work. Apart from imported films, there may be local productions. Would you prefer such local productions to be examined by a local board of censors and to be certified, or would you advocate that they should be sent to a central authority also?

A. It would all depend on what they were and on what they; If they dealt with customs, manners etc., peculiar to Madras, the censoring I think should be done by a local authority.

Q. So you would advocate the retention of a local board at least for that purpose?

A. As an advisory board.

Q. Or as a censoring authority?

A. Or as a censoring authority.

Q. And you as a Board would not mind if all imported films were required to be certified for exhibition in India, even for Madras, either in Bombay or Bengal by a Central Board?

A. I have not consulted my Board about it but I think they will be in agreement with me.

Q. Having regard to the very small quantity of films which you get for censoring—very few films come here at all, only a few hundred feet really.

A. I should be prepared to accept the pass order of the central authority for anything of that sort for Madras.

Q. Khan Sahib, what is your view?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur: I think films suitable for one province may not be suitable for another. There should be a censorship board for each province.

Mr. Green: You only examined 24 films out of a total of 1,700 for all India. Most of the films exhibited in Madras therefore must have been censored elsewhere without any objection being taken to them.

Chairman: I see from your returns, Khan Sahib, that you have hardly,—that there has not been even a single occasion during the last 3 years in which you have cut out or rejected any films passed in another province.

Mr. Travers Phillips: There was one case this year, 1927-28. It is not included in the returns because the year had not closed. There was first of all the film assessment by two members of the Board and they suggested its rejection. The proprietor of that theatre appealed to Government and Government asked the whole Board to meet, as a Board, and re-examine the film. We met and re-examined the film as a Board and we cut out two objectionable portions and passed the rest.

Q. And that is the only occasion you exercised any power of rejection or cutting out?

A. With the exception of the one case we have mentioned. During the last 8 years there have been only two cases.

Q. Having regard to the fact that very few films come here for censoring and having regard to the fact also that no occasion has arisen except this solitary one in which you had to differ from another province, don't you think a censorship board here for foreign films is unnecessary?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur: I consider that even those things which are censored and passed in Bombay are objectionable in Madras.

Q. But you have never had an occasion to complain.

A. There is no room for it, there is no occasion for it. We are not supposed to oppose the views of other Boards.

Mr. Green: You have the right.

A. Not as an individual member.

Mr. Travers Phillips: As an individual member you could have brought it to the notice of the Board.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: The Board has never met?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur: We have never met.

Mr. Travers Phillips: Except on the one occasion when we had to censor "The Love Slave."

Chairman: Which shows that there is really no work for you to do so far as imported films are concerned. You may have a little work to do when local films are produced. But so far as non-Indian films are concerned there is very little work, and there will be no harm to the trade or the public by abolishing the authority of this Board for censoring foreign films?

Mr. Travers Phillips: Do you understand, Khan Sahib, that a film which affects local conditions in Madras would be referred to Madras before being finally passed.

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur: Generally speaking, I think the Madras local board should have as much power as possible. I am not in favour of a central board.

Chairman: But as it is now, you know a certificate given by one province is generally accepted by all the other provinces unless the local authority suspends it.

A. Once a Central Board passes it the local authority is handicapped.

Chairman: So you want every film to be passed for public exhibition by each province by its own board? You would advocate such a system?

A. Yes.

Q. Don't you think it would be a handicap to the trade to compel each film to go up for censorship in each and every province; there are 9 or 10 such provinces?

A. It cannot be helped.

Mr. Travers Phillips: And there is the expense to be considered.

Chairman: Would you compel them to pay Rs. 5 per thousand feet, seeing that the cinema habit is in its infancy in the country?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur: But it is growing. The trade should be prepared to face it.

Q. That means the public will have to pay.

A. Yes.

Q. And do you think that will encourage the growth of the industry.

A. Well, we are getting an amusement tax out of them. It might be preferable to do it this way.

Q. Is that the view taken by the other members of the Board?

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar: I agree with the President of our Board.

Q. And you, Lieutenant Cox?

Lt. Cox: I agree with the President.

Q. You would advocate an amendment of the law, Khan Sahib, that the certificate should circulate only in the province. Would you pursue it further. Supposing the conditions vary from district to district. Don't you think for instance that the West Coast differs from the East Coast.

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur: But as both the West Coast and the East Coast are in the Madras Presidency, we know much more about them than people in Bengal.

Q. You think there is no need to have a local authority from district to district?

A. That would be impossible.

Q. Take the Mahratta country, for instance, Poona, Belgaum. Take for instance the Ceded Districts. Take North Canara or South Canara. Bombay can certify for North Canara.

A. They do.

Q. Do you think there is much difference between North Canara and South Canara?

A. I have no experience of North Canara.

Q. But I suppose you remember they were part of the same province before. The whole of Canara formed part of the Bombay Province once.

A. My point is that we in Madras know much more of the districts than people in other parts of India.

Q. But do you think that knowledge is so essential in matters of censoring films, more or less broad matters of morality. If there are local conditions, don't you think the suspensory power which the local authority has is a sufficient safeguard?

A. Where is the occasion to use that power?

Q. The occasion is when the film is exhibited. At once the policeman says "This is an offensive thing." It is offensive having regard to a particular condition in a district. Supposing it was the time of the Moplah disturbance; then the local authority would at once step in and say "This is an occasion on which that film should not be exhibited." Don't you think that is a sufficient safeguard.

A. I think I should prefer a local board censoring films.

Q. Very well, I only wanted to put to you the various aspects of the question to consider. On the other hand, your suggestion involves additional expense and delay to the trade which will eventually fall on the people who have to pay for it.

A. If we want to enjoy that luxury we must pay for it.

Q. You consider the spread of knowledge by means of the film a luxury?

A. It is not merely spread of knowledge; it is more.

Q. But don't you think the poorer classes require some amusement? Don't you think this is the only amusement they get?

A. I don't believe that the poorer classes, as they are regarded, do go to the cinema; hardly any of the men working in the mills or the railways go there because they have not the time; they are discharged about 6 o'clock in the evening.

Q. But we were told that in the urban area the labouring classes, specially in the mills, do take advantage of the cinema.

A. I would challenge that in Madras.

Q. I notice here one statement, that it is mostly the labouring class and the all petty shop-keeper that go to the cinema most often.

A. I am talking of the labouring classes, not of the petty shopkeeper.

Q. You put down the cinema as a luxury altogether.

Mr. Travers Phillips: As the Corporation's Revenue Officer he wants to put a tax on it.

Chairman: Anyway that is your point. I take it the Board occasionally visit the cinemas, almost every one of you does?

A. Occasionally. Mr. Zindah, I know goes frequently.

Chairman: You, Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar?

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar: We don't visit under instruction from the President but merely from our own choice.

Q. And may I take it that you are all generally satisfied with the general moral tone of the pictures shown here?

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar: I would only make this observation in regard to the remark made about petty shopkeepers and labourers, the poorer classes, availing themselves of the cinema. They do so in far greater numbers than any other class of people. The film, as it obtains in the Madras Presidency at any rate, has a distinct tendency to aggravate the low standard of morality that is already there among these very classes, because very few films are there of the so-called educational or purely general knowledge kind. 97 per cent. of the films relate to either stirring love stories or detective stories or pure comedies. The comedies too only occupy about one-tenth of the time taken by the whole programme. Therefore there has been a distinct tendency on the part of these exhibitions to lower the already low state of morality and moral values. I don't know if there are any moral values at all. But the tendency of which I speak is very distinct and I want to lay some emphasis on this point because taking

that aspect alone into consideration, children of school-going age, say between 7 and 14 years

Q. We will deal with that separately. I want to know generally about adults; do you think films have a demoralising effect?

A. They have a tendency to aggravate.

Q. You would rather have that some of these films were more strictly censored.

A. Exactly. So far as the interests of those classes are concerned—the very classes for whom we seek to provide amusement.

Q. The difficulty will be that you cannot have films for a particular class.

A. The object I want to subserve is this. . .

Q. You believe that there is a tendency to demoralise a particular section of the audience? That is what I want to know. You think it has a demoralising effect on a particular section of the audience?

A. Yes.

Q. What sort of scenes have you in mind. The same scenes as the President mentioned—close hugging and kissing scenes?

A. Love stories as well as detective stories.

Q. You mean they have criminally suggestive ideas?

A. Highly suggestive.

Q. Do you think the criminal class frequent the cinemas very largely and learn anything from the cinema?

A. I cannot exactly speak for confirmed criminals.

Q. I mean those who have a tendency to commit crimes?

A. Those who cannot judge for themselves.

Q. You think the cinema has an effect on them.

A. Has an adverse effect, yes.

Q. Have you come across any instance of that sort?

A. I should say any number.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Probably they learn more of self-defence?

A. Yes, and offence too.

Chairman: What I should like to know is, is that your impression generally or is it based upon experience of the cinema going public?

A. Experience and information dinned into my ears more often than I like, by very reliable sources, information from people for whom I have great regard, many teachers and non-teachers also.

Mr. Travers Phillips: And parents?

A. And parents too.

Q. Of children in your school?

A. Not only in my school but in every part of the Presidency.

Chairman: You have felt it? There is a general feeling you think?

A. Yes. When I come to the children, I will speak about the parents also.

Q. You think the class of films shown in our province has a distinctly demoralising effect upon certain sections of the audience?

A. Yes.

Q. And in that view you think the censorship as now practised is not adequate.

A. With reference to that need it is not adequate.

Q. In fact that is the main function of censorship that the Board has to see to, that there is no demoralising effect; and you consider they have a demoralising effect?

A. Yes.

Q. Now will you give any particular suggestion. You are on the Board. What scenes would you have cut out if you had been passing the films. Can you give us any particular film which you have in mind as an example.

A. I shall make myself clearly understood by referring to Mr. Greenwood's statement yesterday. He said there was an exaggeration and even perversion in regard to the ideas entertained by people who see the films about Western civilisation and Western ideas.

Q. That is a different matter. A misconstruction of the life of other people is one thing; a demoralising effect on the man who sees it is a different thing.

A. Quite so. I am just trying to explain myself. Certain scenes are commonly taken to be the recognised or accepted standard by these people. What they see is understood to be what actually takes place. What is perhaps without sanction, even a thing actively disapproved of by society at large, may imperceptibly enter the minds of these people and thus have a tendency to demoralise them. They somehow think that scenes of the kind, certain details in the stages of love-making . . .

Q. Take close hugging and close kissing. Don't be afraid to use terms.

A. All these are taken to be matters which commonly obtain in such relations.

Q. All right, assume that. What is the next step. Does it demoralise the man who sees it.

A. It has a really adverse effect on the social order.

Q. Does he attempt to do so himself in his society?

A. Exactly, and with people with whom he has no concern.

Q. You mean it encourages illicit love-making.

A. It does, specially among very unsophisticated youths.

Q. Very well, that is a distinct point of view. You think this opinion of yours is shared very largely?

A. Yes, by parents and most teachers and particularly teachers of secondary and primary schools though not of colleges.

Q. Primary schools?

A. Yes, children between 7 and 9 are most impressionable, they are more easily spoilt than others. Their conversation on the playground or the conversation which they have while they have their walks—all this bears ample evidence to the adverse effect to which I refer.

Q. I suppose the cinema has been in existence in Madras for 10 years or a little more than that?

A. Yes.

Q. And from your knowledge—how many years have you been a teacher?

A. About 18 or 19 years I should say.

Q. All that time you have been in Madras?

A. Not all. For the last 4 years or more, but a large proportion of it I spent in Trichinopoly and Madura.

Q. Where also they have cinemas?

A. Yes.

Q. It is very interesting to hear your view.

A. And if you can catch hold of a few representative parents, average parents, I think they will bear testimony to my assertion. That is, parents of good children.

Q. But all the same it is remarkable. Have you seen any complaints in the press by parents? The press is rather vocal in our province.

A. It will not be long before the press also feels compelled to make reference to it. Probably it will be some years.

Q. They have not yet done so?

A. Because they have not yet been made aware of it.

Q. You hold teachers conferences, educational conferences, don't you?—almost annually if not bi-annually. Has this subject been discussed in your educational conferences.

A. I don't remember but this much I may say. We have teachers guilds and districts teachers guilds, and meetings of teachers' associations of individual schools and we have been actively considering this point and we are trying to remedy this state of affairs by providing amusements of a better kind in the school itself and giving frequent encouragement to people who satisfy the natural curiosity of children in that regard by having more of magic lantern lectures. Recently we had a touring exhibition by a film exhibitor and we availed ourselves of that.

Q. Is that the gentleman referred to by Miss De la Hay as having attempted to give a show in the girls' college. He proved a failure she says.

A. Very likely it was not successful. But boys in the lower primary schools can easily be attracted to such diversions.

Q. Now you frequently see the films. Don't you think they have an educative effect in opening their eyes by the immense crowds they see and the immense buildings and the life of well-ordered societies in the West.

A. Certainly it broadens their outlook.

Q. You would not discourage students and young people from going to the cinema?

A. Certainly not, provided they are under proper guidance.

Q. Provided these love scenes are cut out?

A. If every parent is there to give the necessary guidance,—I don't know if such an arrangement is possible.

Q. What is your suggestion?

A. It has an adverse effect on one section of the audience.

Q. What section?

A. The students, the labouring classes and the petty shopkeepers.

Q. Do you think the labouring classes and the petty shopkeepers try to fashion their lives after the West because they see life in the West on the screen?

A. It is artificial mimicry but carried to excess.

Q. But do you think they have either the means or the opportunity to adopt the life which they see on the screen?

A. I do not say that at all. This is my suggestion. The point is every odd moment they can snatch they indulge in imitations and they are very sincere but lamentable imitations.

Q. Will you mention an instance of imitation in the labouring class?

A. Well there is man A and woman B. Woman B is not the wife of man A. Such scenes can be seen occurring even in the shade of trees here in broad daylight. It is not an uncommon occurrence in Madras itself.

Q. But you don't mean to say illicit love-making began only after the introduction of the cinema here?

A. I know I can be easily cornered in that way. But this has a tendency to aggravate matters. It is an additional suggestion and has a distinct tendency to aggravate the evil by giving increased suggestion.

Q. Therefore you would advocate stricter censorship.

A. Of course observation will enable one to see whether the one has any connection with the other.

Q. You strongly believe in this notwithstanding my attempts to dislodge you from it. I wanted to test the strength of your conviction.

A. I do believe in that.

Q. And you think several people believe in that too?

A. Yes.

Q. Of course we cannot know these things and it is very good of you to be so outspoken. Is that also your experience Khan Sahib?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur : No.

Q. And you come in contact with people : I think specially in your present capacity as Revenue Officer of the Corporation you come in contact with all sorts of people and that is not your experience?

A. No.

Q. Nor have you heard such remarks made by responsible people on the spot?

A. Certainly not. My own personal experience is that the labouring class do not go to the cinema.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : You have the same facilities as the gentlemen who are engaged in public affairs to know more about students?

A. Generally we people who are unknown in any public capacity know more about certain persons.

Chairman : Do you also believe that there is an increase of crime due to the cinema?

A. I am not an authority on it.

Q. Or you don't think that there is an increase in the adoption of criminal methods as a result of the cinema?

A. No.

Q. It is only in sex life?

A. Yes, in the general social and moral life of the people there has been a slight change.

Q. I suppose you believe in the use of the film as a strong method of imparting education to the people?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. I suppose you are all anxious that the film should be introduced both in the primary schools and high schools?

A. Yes. In fact, the film should be used more extensively in the earlier ages of children.

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar : I would have educational films to be brought into vogue in schools not exactly as part of the curriculum, but only to supplement instruction.

Q. Do you think that Indian films are becoming popular?

A. Yes.

Q. Khan Sahib, you say that the illiterate class of people do not follow social dramas?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur : No.

Q. And it is in these social dramas that love-making scenes mostly appear?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it also your experience that these social dramas are not popular with the illiterate classes, and that they prefer action films?

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar : Certainly, that is my experience.

Q. Khan Sahib, you think that if there is any evil due to the cinema it is negligible, but on the other hand it broadens the outlook on life and that it acts as an educative factor, is that not so?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur : Yes.

Q. Do you share in that view, Mr. Ayyar?

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar : I would rather qualify my statement, and I won't go so far as all that.

Q. What is your opinion about children? Do you think they should be prohibited from going to the cinemas?

A. Not at all. You would make the situation much worse.

Q. Would you qualify that statement by saying that certain films should be marked as fit for adults only?

A. If it is practicable, it may be done.

Q. Do you think it is practicable to make such a classification of films?

A. I say, if it is practicable it might be done.

Q. I think you told us that it is not practicable?

Mr. Travers Phillips : I am not in favour of it.

Lieut. Cox : I think it would only tempt people more to go to such shows.

Q. Then you don't think there should be any prohibition with regard to children going to cinemas?

Lieut. Cox : I am hardly competent to express an opinion on it.

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur : If it is practicable to adopt any such thing, it might be done.

Q. Do you think, Khan Sahib, that in our country poor people don't go to the cinemas because they have to leave their children behind?

A. Only in the higher classes children are left behind.

Q. From your experience, do you think it is practicable to have such a rule that the management of the cinemas should not admit children under a certain age?

A. If it is possible, it might be done.

Q. Do you consider it practicable?

A. It may not be practicable.

Mr. Neogy : We were told in Calcutta that there is a practice there under which the Members of the Board see every new picture that is exhibited as Members of the Board, and if there is anything objectionable in it, they report the matter to the whole Board and the Board takes action. I suppose there is no such practice here?

Mr. Travers Phillips : No.

Q. If the members go to the picture shows at all, they do so in their individual capacity?

A. Unless they are specially requested to attend as Members of the Board.

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar : That is done before the picture is shown.

Q. I am thinking of pictures certified by other Boards and then exhibited here without being shown to you for censorship. And has any such member on any occasion drawn your attention, Mr. Phillips, to any objectionable film?

A. I don't recollect any such case during the last two years that I have been here.

Q. Khan Sahib gave me the impression that he does not approve of certain kinds of films certified by the Bombay Board. What kind of films have you in mind?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur : I am referring to films which are likely to offend the religious susceptibilities of certain communities. I am thinking more of the local prejudice.

Q. Have you come across any foreign film in which the local prejudices of Madras have been hurt?

A. For instance, in "The Ten Commandments", the opinion in Madras is very much against it, and some of them went even so far as to issue a religious writ. No action was taken by the Film Board here, nor was any action taken by the Local Government.

Q. But the matter must have been represented to the Local Government?

A. I do not know. I was not on the Board then.

Mr. Travers Phillips : We did not consider it sufficiently serious to take any notice.

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur : I went and saw the film myself.

Q. Did not the community affected make any representation to the Local Government?

Mr. Travers Phillips: They went in larger numbers!

Q. Here is a case in which it was certainly within the competence of the Local Government to remedy matters, and you say that the community affected or interested did not make any representation to the Local Government?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur: I only knew about it from the press reports and the agitation that was carried on here by some people by means of posters and so on.

Chairman: Did you not find it objectionable yourself personally?

A. No. In fact I was told that a certain portion of the film was cut out before it was shown here.

Mr. Travers Phillips: That is one of the reasons why I refused to interfere.

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur: The captions in certain films are very mischievous. For instance, in the love scene certain words are put into the mouth of an actor such as 'Come into the Garden of Mahommed'.

Q. Don't you think that in such cases it would be up to any Mahomedan representative on the Board of Censors to take exception?

A. You might expect that in Bengal and Bombay. I personally went and saw 'The Ten Commandments' film because the opposition was so great.

Mr. Neogy: Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar, were you ever in charge of any students' hostel?

A. Yes, for about 4½ years, but it was in a place where there was no cinema. It was a very safe place.

Q. Are you aware of any attempts made by any Headmasters or Principals or Teachers in charge of students' hostels to control the students in the matter of their attending cinemas or in making a selection of the subjects?

A. No, I am not aware of any such attempt. I would add this, however, that ordinarily any attempt on the part of heads of institutions in the direction suggested might have a tendency only to induce students to adopt dubious methods, because the cinemas are sometimes miles away, and the teachers and those in charge of the students are in the homes. With the result that the students cannot be controlled properly.

Q. If the evil was really so great, would not the educational authorities themselves try to exercise some sort of check on the students?

A. What I had in mind when I replied to the Chairman was that the press was so vocal in other respects, and so I don't know why it should not be equally vocal in this matter too. The section of the public affected is the parents of pupils who have not sufficiently known the ways of influencing the proper educational authorities. The majority of the parents are like that, and that is what I had in mind.

Q. Is it your experience then that the tendency towards immorality is on the increase in Madras?

A. The ideas and notions of morality are not improving; on the other hand, they are getting worse. That is all what I can say. I am speaking with reference to children between the ages of 7 and 17.

Q. You are in a position definitely to trace this to the influence of the cinema?

A. Amongst other things, certainly.

Q. Then you are not quite certain about the part played by the cinema in this matter?

A. I am quite certain that it has had a certain effect, but I can't say that the cinema alone has been responsible for it. It is of course a new factor which aggravates the existing position in certain quarters.

Q. You are in favour of classification of certain pictures as fit to be shown to adults only, if it is practicable?

Lcb

A. Yes.

Q. What is the age limit you would recommend?

A. About 17.

Q. You would have no objection to anybody above 17 seeing any picture passed by the censoring authorities for universal exhibition? You suggest that some amount of control should be exercised over boys between the ages of 7 and 17, and after that no control is needed?

A. Cinemas in India for adults may be open to boys above 17.

Q. You think that if there is any chance of mischief arising, it is greatest in the case of boys up to the age of 17?

A. Yes, because that is a pliable age. I would even make this suggestion that if it were at any time practicable in any country to adopt these two classifications, it will be all to the good of the people at large.

Q. And you suggest that this should be done by the educational and municipal authorities?

A. Not as a commercial proposition.

Chairman: The trade won't do it?

A. No, they cannot be expected to do it effectively.

Mr. Neogy: Have you seen many Indian social drama films?

A. I have seen a few.

Q. Have you any objection to take with reference to those films from the moral point of view?

A. No, none.

Chairman: Have you seen 'Gun Sundari'?

A. No.

Q. Have you seen 'The Nurse'?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you seen 'The Typist Girl'?

A. No.

Q. What do you think of 'The Nurse'? Do you think it is fairly good?

A. There is nothing seriously undesirable in it.

Mr. Neogy: Could you name any other Indian film which you have seen?

A. I have not seen many social drama films.

Mr. Green: I would like to ask the whole Board whether the Social Hygiene Delegation which visited this country had any talk with members of the Censorship Board here?

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar: I had occasion to listen to a lecture and to be present at a certain cinema show held under the auspices of the social hygiene movement.

Q. Did they ask you at all about the effect of the cinema in India? I don't want to know what the delegation said to you?

A. We had no consultation at all. At the time when the delegation was here, I was not a member of the Board at all.

Chairman: Do you know if they met any educational officers or headmasters or heads of institutions?

A. I can't say about others, but they did not meet me. I don't know if they met heads of any private institutions. To my knowledge, they did not.

Mr. Green: I find that some of you gentlemen feel that certain films are dangerous to certain sections of the people. Do you want the censorship to be levelled down to the lowest level and only to allow things to be shown on the screen that children of 10 and uneducated people might appreciate?

Mr. Travers Phillips: We want you to institute a happy mean, as broadminded as possible.

Q. I was considering chiefly what Khan sahib said?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindab Sahib Bahadur: My idea was that if it was reasonable to exclude children, I would have no objection to show any kind of film.

Q. At the same time you admit the difficulty of keeping children out, and therefore it is an evil that you have got to face?

A. Yes.

Q. As regards Mr. Ayyar's particular point, the danger to adolescents, he quoted examples of conversations. Is it not always the case that at the time of advent of puberty there is a certain amount of mental disturbance? Do you think that has been seriously affected by the cinema?

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar: I do think so. It is only one of the many factors.

Colonel Crawford: I would like to know what are the films imported through Madras, who imports them, and for what purpose are they imported?

Mr. Travers Phillips: The number of films examined in each of the last three years which had not previously been certified were 9, and in this last year they were 24. "Scouting in India" by the Indian Art and Craft Co., Madras; "The Indian National Congress at Coconada"; the Cinema Majestic produced a film regarding the municipal election: "Miracles of the Jungles" in 31 reels by Venkiah Bros; "Adventures of Tarzan" by the Peninsular Film Service. These were chiefly topical or animal films. Dodge Bros. of Addison & Co., produced a film describing the manufacture of cars. Most of these films were made locally.

Q. Am I right in thinking, Mr. Krishnaswamy Ayyar, that what is happening is possibly that young men are being encouraged to break away from existing customs and to adopt western customs?

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar: Undesirable as against desirable.

Q. The customs they are picking up from the films are the undesirable ones? Have you been to England or abroad?

A. No.

Q. Do you consider that the pictures shown in imported films are true to the life of the west?

A. I don't believe they are true, but unhappily they are taken to be true by most who ought to know much better. But they cannot be expected to know so much at a tender age, and we have not really devised proper measures to guide them in these matters.

Q. You mean if they were educated they would be able to see things in their true perspective?

A. Certainly, because it is the uneducated who far outweigh in the number that resorts to cinemas.

Q. Khan Sahib, you say the average scenes cannot be said to misrepresent western civilization and national character of the western life of the people. Have you yourself been to the west? Do you consider that the life displaced on the screen in the average American film is true to the life of the American?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindab Sahib Bahadur: Generally.

Q. Do you think the cabarets and the scenes shown of the cabarets are true as depicted on the screen?

A. They are only slum scenes.

Q. High society life?

A. High society life is never depicted in any objectionable light. Yet I do think that the Paris scenes in high society are true to the extent they are shown.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Mr. Travers Phillips, you seldom meet as a Board?

A. No, because we have nothing to do.

Q. Before you appeared before us I suppose you must have met as a Board?

467

A. No. I did not wish to bias the opinion of any member of the Board. The opinions expressed by the members are their own individual opinions. There was no police *zoolum* at all.

Q. Have you at least read our questionnaire and our terms of reference?

A. Yes, but the terms of reference were not supplied to us by the office though we have read them in the press.

Q. Your income for the last year was Rs. 402 and odd and the expenditure was Rs. 30?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose Rs. 30 does not include the fee of the members?

A. There will be no other expenditure because there is very little work done, and what little has to be done is done by the office of the President of the Board.

Q. Then you have nothing to pay to the members?

A. Nothing, except the real wages for inspection of films.

Q. Well, I understand that 9 films were examined by members last year, out of a total of 24. I want to know whether they were paid for the examination.

A. These figures may not be correct, but I remember that everyone who examined in an official capacity was paid.

Mr. Green: Are they paid fixed fees?

A. Rs. 5 per thousand feet.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Rs 10 for one and a half hours it is said here.

A. The rate is Rs. 5 per thousand feet now. Remuneration is at a given rate, at so much per foot.

Q. Read the letter addressed to the Government of India by you. It says "Rs. 10 for one and a half hours".

A. That is right. Anybody who has inspected any films and is due anything has been paid.

Q. So Rs. 30 were paid?

A. According to this figure. This may be a mistake. I will supply the correct figure.

Q. You are six members of the Board?

A. Yes.

Q. Only four have come to-day.

A. Two are absent. One gentleman has sent in a letter of apology stating that he was sick. I don't know where the other is.

Q. When were they nominated, may I know?

A. Their term is only for one year.

Q. Have they been reappointed?

A. A few of them have been reappointed, not all of them. It is the Khan Sahib's second term. It is Mr. Ayyar's first term.

Q. You came into existence in 1920?

A. The Commissioner of Police as President of the Board did in 1920.

Q. I want to know whether the present members are being renominated from the time of the existence of the board?

Chairman: No, the Khan Sahib is in his second term, Mr. Ayyar in his first.

A. That is the list of the members of the Board since 1920. It will show you who have been and who now are members of the board.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You have no paid officer subordinate to your board?

A. No, no paid officer. There are two *ex-officio* members, the President and the Station Staff Officer representing the military.

Q. The Government of your Presidency say to the Government of India that the Commissioner of Police deposes an inspector of police to see whether

a film was previously certified or not. That is what you do, I suppose, as Commissioner of Police?

A. That is what I mean by one of my intelligence department.

Q. You have come as Commissioner of Police, as a separate individual.

A. You have finished examining me as Commissioner of Police, you are now examining me as President of the Board.

Q. I want to know whether the inspector is paid by the President of the Board of Censors or by the Commissioner of Police. I understand there is no separate fund.

A. There is no separate fund. There is no Secretary. There has been so little work to do as President of the Board that the Commissioner of Police has been able to do it in that capacity.

Q. What are the qualifications of this inspector of police? Or is he changed every time?

A. No. He is a fixed member of my intelligence branch—a Muhammadan, or a Brahman or a non-Brahman. I have three inspectors, not one.

Q. What qualifications have they? What do they know of this industry?

A. What they have picked up by experience.

Q. Have they got any rules to go by?

A. Yes, broad principles.

Q. Have you laid down any rules?

A. Only oral instructions and commonsense.

Q. No fixed rules?

A. If a particular film affects Muhammadan interests I would send my Muhammadan inspector, if Brahman interests I would send my Brahman inspector.

Q. But you have no fixed rules as other provincial boards have for the guidance of their inspectors?

A. No, nothing in writing.

Q. When you send members from various points of view to inspect the films, what are these various points they have to go by?

A. If it is a film that affects Muhammadan interests, I would ask the Khan Sahib to go and I would go with him. If it was one purely dealing with European, sexual or social life, one of the European officers would go.

Q. But there is nothing laid down in writing anyway?

A. No hard and fast rule; only commonsense and the conditions required for the examination of each particular film.

Q. So the whole thing depends on the Inspector of police? He has to go in to them and report to you? And when he says that a film is good films is it?

A. Not necessarily. I can go and see it myself.

Q. Well, here it is. You clearly say that is what you do. If he reports it as objectionable the performance is at once stopped, and the matter is referred to one or more members of the board and their decision is given effect to. So, the whole thing depends on the inspector of police?

A. Primarily.

Q. If he says it is objectionable you take steps, if he says it is not objectionable you don't take steps.

A. I can take steps. I am not barred from doing so.

Q. But you have not done so.

A. Because there has been no cause for doing so up to now.

Q. Why is the Electrical Engineer not a member of the Board? Is there any co-operation between the two.

A. Yes, officially. His certificate from the technical point of view regarding electrical appliances of apparatus, safety of the building is necessary before I license the cinema.

Q. Why is he not a member of the board?

A. I don't think there is any need for him. He is a European member.

Q. Do you approve of the method of nomination or would you like to have an election of members to the board?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur: Nomination is quite all right.

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar: For the purpose the Madras board is serving, nomination is much simpler.

Q. You don't like election,—by the corporation or by the different bodies, Chambers of Commerce, and so on?

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar: Before I give a definite answer to that question I must know what sorts of interests are expected by the Government in the personnel of the Board.

Q. Have you reported anything about these 24 films which you have passed to the other provincial board?

Mr. Travers Phillips: Yes, at the time. As the film is passed, a report is sent to the other boards saying that such and such a film has been passed by me.

Q. Do you also tell the Collectors of your own districts?

A. No.

Q. How are they to know?

A. If the film appears in their districts they could make a reference to me.

Chairman: They carry a certificate.

A. I issue a certificate which they show anywhere where they exhibit the film. Without it they cannot exhibit.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You have advocated in your evidence that Government should appoint an advisory committee for the encouragement of this industry. I suppose the board has got the same view?

A. I have not consulted the board on that point. That is one of my personal opinions.

Q. But do the members agree to the same view, that the Government should have such an advisory committee?

Chairman: Probably it is better to inform them. Mr. Travers Phillips suggests that for facilitating the growth of the film industry in this country it is advisable that Government should have an advisory committee who will deal with this subject.

Members of the Board: We quite agree.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Will there be any difficulty or will there be any complaint if an entertainment tax is levied by Government on the cinemas in order to encourage the industry?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur: The corporation has resolved to levy such a tax.

Chairman: For what purpose?

A. To add to the revenue.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Not to encourage the industry?

A. No.

Chairman: You are a member of the corporation?

A. I am its revenue officer.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: The President of the corporation is not here today, otherwise I would have asked him to earmark it for this industry. He is a member of your Board. Have you seen these films which show Indians in shady colours? "The Great Circus Mystery" and others?

A. Not here. They may have come to Madras but we have not seen them. We don't remember them.

Q. Did you pass this film, "Bride 13," which was shown yesterday.

A. It came in from outside, from another province.

Q. What province?

A. I cannot tell you offhand.

Q. Would you care to see the film?

A. The title does not appeal to me. I would sooner go to sleep.

Chairman: It is a scene of cruelty.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: May I know what facilities British troops have for such entertainment?

Lieut. Cox: In a place like Madras there are no such facilities. They simply go as members of the public.

Q. No Y. M. C. A. cinemas?

A. Not in Madras. In big cantonment stations there might possibly be Y. M. C. A. cinemas or something of that sort.

Q. I want information from your own knowledge.

A. No, not to my knowledge. As far as I know, they cannot compete with outside cinemas.

Q. You have said in your statement that very few Indian troops go to the cinema.

A. I am not in the Indian army myself but I consulted an Indian army officer and that is what he told me.

Q. There are no cinemas in the canteens for their amusement?

A. No.

Q. Would you advocate that some such thing be done for Indian troops?

A. I am afraid I am not able to speak for Indian troops.

Q. Would it not be a good thing if such a thing were supplied by the Government?

A. Well, as I say I am not competent to give such an opinion. I am in the British service myself.

Q. Do your inspectors see the full film?

Mr. Travers Phillips: Yes.

Q. Are you sure?

A. Yes.

Q. Do they report to you?

A. They come and report to me afterwards.

Q. Have you got their reports?

A. They report verbally.

Q. And the reports of members who go to see films?

A. No, members have regular certificates filed in my office. A written report from each individual. Each member sends a written report.

Q. That is in 9 cases out of 24?

A. You have had 24, so the remainder 15 were seen by the inspector.

A. No. I am subject to correction.

Q. I have got it here—only 9 seen by the members.

A. Nine were those which had not been previously certified. Those that had not been certified anywhere in India before. They were new.

Mr. Green: When you said 24 films were examined we thought it meant examined for the purpose of giving certificates.

A. No, that is in para. 6. That is the total number of films examined since the institution of the board. Nine were examined by the members of

the board because they had not been previously certified in British India. That is 24 were the total number examined during the year and 15 of these had been previously certified.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You don't approve of the quota system?

A. No.

Q. There is an Act passed in England on that subject. You don't like that?

A. No. I don't know anything about the Act. But I am not in favour of the quota system.

Q. But if it is passed you would not like it?

A. I think it would be a pity to bring in compulsion.

Q. What is your view?

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur: I agree.

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar: I don't know the system.

Chairman: The thing is this: in order to encourage the growth of indigenous films in this country and to give them facilities for exhibition, each exhibitor should be compelled to show a certain length of Indian films during the week or during the month as the case may be, along with other things. Supposing 20,000 feet are shown in the week, 5,000 should be Indian. That will encourage the production of Indian films. That is the idea. Do you think you would advise the committee to recommend such a course?

Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar: Personally I do think that it would promote Indian institutions but on a matter of principle I would object to it.

Q. You do not want compulsion?

A. No.

Khan Sahib Muhammad Zindah Sahib Bahadur: There is one cinema in Madras showing only Indian films.

Q. That is a new cinema?

A. Yes. It is very popular.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Have you ever known that any film has been tampered with after certification?

Mr. Travers Phillips: Not to my knowledge.

Q. Can your inspector find that out in any way?

A. Only by asking, only if he has any reason to suspect or hears people saying: "Oh, they did not see that in Bombay".

Q. And if there are new people and they do not see that, he takes it that it is all right.

A. We have no means of checking the length of the film which would be the only way of ascertaining if there had been a cut or not.

Supplementary Statement of Mr. H. F. TRAVERS PHILLIPS, President of the Madras Board of Film Censors.

I was asked yesterday during the course of my evidence as to why only Rs. 30 (thirty) was shown as remuneration to members of the Madras Board of Film Censors for 1926-1927 for inspection of nine films.

Of the nine films inspected between April 1926 and March 1927, one was of the Goschen-Portal Wedding which, as President of the Local Censor Board, I inspected by myself and no fee was levied.

For the remaining eight films, a sum of Rs. 30 plus Rs. 75=Rs. 105 was paid to members, but only the former figure (Rs. 30) was shown in my statement for the financial year of 1926-1927. The balance was drawn and paid out in the following financial year (1927-1928) the figures for which were not shown.

This accounts for the apparent mistake.

Written Statement of Miss I. H. LOWE, Deputy Directress of Public Instruction, Madras, dated the 18th November 1927.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. No.

GENERAL.

2. I have no definite knowledge which could be given in answer to (a), (b) and (c).

If such figures would be of use, it could be ascertained what is the percentage of girls in Secondary Schools and Colleges who attend Cinemas, and the average number of attendances made each year.

With regard to the attendance of Indian women and girls at cinemas, I have very little personal knowledge of cinemas in India but from what I have seen, it appears that in Madras, women and girls only attend very rarely. At most there are about a dozen present sitting either in the part of the cinema which is roped off for the purpose or behind the purdah if there is one. To all intents and purposes the Indian female audience is negligible. The position with regard to Anglo-Indian girls is, however, different; they attend cinemas freely if they can afford to do so. Figures could be obtained if necessary on the lines suggested in the 1st paragraph under this heading for Indian and Anglo-Indian girls separately.

It is not likely that Indian women will attend the cinema in Madras in any number for many years since a very great development in women's education will be necessary before the general antipathy of the Indian women to appearing in public places is overcome.

PART I.

14, 21, 22 (b), 23. All bear on the educational aspect of cinema films.

As far as I know there is only one man in Madras who exhibits educational films but a demonstration which was attempted by him at the Lady Willingdon Government Training College for Women was not a success since after training to adjust the apparatus for $\frac{1}{2}$ of an hour unsuccessfully, the students and pupils had to be dismissed so that they might be sure of reaching home before dark. I believe he has also attempted one other unsuccessful demonstration.

Whether an increased use of the cinema for educational purposes, etc. would help the growth of the film industry I cannot say, but it is certain that it would prove a very valuable means of educating Indian women. Women who would not think of attending a cinematograph show or any other meeting given in a public hall, because to do so is contrary to accepted Hindu custom, have no hesitation in coming to gatherings held in girls' schools, and gatherings such as parents' days or entertainments for women only are always extremely well attended when held in such institutions. The type of film suitable for such audiences needs very careful consideration since a large number of the audience would be illiterate and untrained in habits of concentration and observation. A lecturer who could direct the attention of the audience would be necessary when showing propaganda or educational films.

For juvenile, as distinct from adult education, films would prove invaluable, more especially in girls' schools where the pupils come from the seclusion of sheltered homes and are extraordinarily limited in experiences other than those relating to their immediate family life. In addition therefore to the use to which the cinema can be put in schools in Great Britain, namely to the teaching of nature study, geography, science and scientific industrial processes which shall illustrate the actual lessons taught in these subjects [vide the Report of the Committee on the Use of the Cinematograph in Education published in 1924 under auspices of the Imperial Education Conference, paragraph 21 (b) and (f)], there is distinct scope in Indian girls' schools from the point of view of general education for the showing of more general films to large classes or to the school as a whole.

In the production of such films there are many important points which have to be considered if the demand for them is to be sufficient to make their production economically practical.

(a) Elimination of the danger of fire—special provision against fire should be required in schools when films are shown.

(b) Illumination—electricity as a source of illumination is available only in a few centres in the Madras Presidency.

(c) Suitability of screens—for class purposes daylight screens are much more useful but films of a general nature might equally well be shown in the dark. In this case however there arises the problem of darkening an Indian school hall with its many doors, without unduly reducing ventilation and the number of emergency exits—in all cases films shown either to women or girls will have to be shown during the daylight to enable the audience to reach home before dark.

(d) For the more strictly educational type of film it should be possible to stop it, back it or re-wind it, if necessary. Full details are given as to the requirements which must be satisfied by films made for educational purposes in the report to which reference has been made already.

Part I, Question 14, it is asked whether there is a demand for much. There is probably little or none at present, but demand could be stimulated by advertisement if there was any possibility of fulfilling it.

PART II.

Answers to 28 could be collected, if desired, from the heads and teachers of girls' schools.

Oral Evidence of Miss I. H. LOWE, Deputy Directress of Public Instruction, Madras, on Friday, the 6th January 1928.

Chairman: As Deputy Directress of Public Instruction I suppose your jurisdiction extends throughout the Presidency?

A. Yes.

Q. And you tour throughout the province?

A. Not very much. I am mainly an adviser to the Director who does most of the touring.

Q. You think that the film can be used with advantage in schools?

A. The proper kind of film. But I think the report of the Cinema Committee that was held in connection with the Imperial Conference gives all the points that have to be kept in view in producing films for school use.

Q. From what we saw of the proceedings of the Imperial Conference they seem rather to underrate the importance of the film as an educational factor.

A. I think they were looking at it from one point of view. The educational use of the film seems to be twofold, it may either be illustrative of an ordinary school course, in which case you want a particular type of film that this Committee had in mind—but they can also be used for general education, especially in connection with adult education, in which case a less technical type of film would be useful, anything that tended to increase general knowledge or widen interest would be useful.

Q. Having regard to the conditions in this country, don't you think that the film can be used very largely for spreading knowledge among the illiterate people—for adult education?

A. Yes. I think it would be very useful among the women, but there are many technical difficulties with regard to lighting and so on which do not exist of course in other countries.

Q. You mean lighting for the purpose of projection?

A. Yes. Also, of course, the film needs to be shown by some one qualified to show it, but there are not available women's institutions or teachers who

could deal with a thing like that. There may be men but there are not women.

Q. You think even for the purpose of exhibition you should have women?

A. I would prefer it if it were possible, but certainly we need an expert.

Q. The expert need not necessarily be a woman?

A. No, not in Hindu gatherings.

Q. In our province there is not so much of the *purdah* system as there is in other parts of India?

A. Only among Muhammadans.

Q. Have you seen any of the educational films produced in Germany or in France?

A. No.

Q. Do you think that films should be produced in this country so as to be effective and attractive to people here?

A. It depends so much on the type of film. The subject that I have specialised myself in is geography. Films used in geographical courses, of course, must be taken in the country that is being dealt with. Films of that type could be taken in India, but films designed for general educational purposes certain types could be . . .

Q. You can use foreign films for that purpose?

A. Yes.

Q. And where they require local setting they will have to be manufactured here?

A. Yes.

Q. You can use foreign films in subjects which are of a general interest?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you have not got a supply of those films in your department?

A. No.

Q. And you would advocate a supply of those films and along with that the necessary facilities for exhibiting them?

A. It depends entirely on the cost. In the present stage of women's education we need practically all the money available for the ordinary development of education of the school girls, and I, personally, would not recommend a very large expenditure on films.

Q. You mean you won't divert any funds which you have got now for that purpose?

A. No. The funds are very scanty really as they are.

Q. But you consider money spent in that direction would be well spent?

A. Provided it was not taken away from what I consider to be the more important part of women's education.

Q. If an additional amount could be found and spent on this purpose you would consider that well spent?

A. Yes.

Q. Especially among women and girls?

A. Provided, of course, as I say, that conditions suitable for showing films are also there.

Q. Do you think you can minimise the cost by having centres where girls could meet. You do not want facilities in each school?

A. Our schools are so few that it would practically come to that. I would not recommend showing them in elementary schools as a rule. It will be in secondary schools, and we have not yet one secondary school at the headquarters of each district. There are some districts which have a few more, while there are others which have not even one, and it would practically come to the exhibition of the film in each school.

Q. You think an apparatus would be required for each school?

A. I imagine a travelling outfit would be more economical.

Q. Do you think one travelling outfit for the whole province would do for girls' schools alone?

A. It depends again on what type of film you are showing and how often you will show. For instance, for adult educations we are doing practically nothing with regard to that on the women's side at present. If it is to be developed, it seems to me that the most natural way of developing it would be in connection with women's clubs which are growing in many places now.

Q. There are not many yet?

A. They are very few, but they would be the natural organisation I think.

Q. But don't you think, as you say in your written statement, the Indian women can be induced to go more easily to girls' schools and colleges where such exhibitions are held?

A. Yes.

Q. So that you need not have a separate staff or separate travelling apparatus for adult education. Wherever there is a girls' school you can have exhibition also there?

A. Yes.

Q. In fact, you will attract more people if you hold such exhibitions in girls' schools?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. Is there any effort on the part of the Department to supplement ordinary education by visual instruction in our province?

A. I am not quite sure exactly what is meant by that.

Q. That is to say, use of the magic lantern and slides?

A. Slides and lanterns are provided in each district in charge of the Inspectress.

Q. Are they using them now largely?

A. I imagine very little, the difficulty being again lighting and lack of technical knowledge as to how to get over the difficulties of lighting.

Q. So that you would have training being given in the training college?

A. I do think that if any exhibition is to be satisfactory it must be done by trained operators, as far as women are concerned, of course.

Q. But what is your suggestion to get over that difficulty?

A. I think if films are shown for educational purposes it will have to be done by a man specially trained for that purpose, who could erect the apparatus and overcome local difficulties and show the films,—he must have technical knowledge.

Q. Would you advocate a special class being opened for giving that training in any of the schools?

A. I do not think it is a training that can be given in schools. I think it is a technical matter.

Q. You think Government should employ experts if possible . . .

A. Personally I think it should be an outside enterprise that should be allowed to use the schools under certain conditions for showing particular films and so on.

Q. There is no production of educational films, as such, in our province or in the country for the matter of that?

A. No.

Q. First of all educational films have to be produced?

A. Yes.

Q. And private enterprise is very poor even in regard to entertainment films?

A. Yes.

Q. And much more in educational films?

A. Yes.

Q. Don't you think that production of educational films should be undertaken by Government?

A. Not as an activity of the Education Department, I should think.

Q. Some department or other should undertake it?

A. I do not know about other departments, but it would not be the province of the Education Department.

Q. It is they who can give good guidance as to what sort of film should be produced.

A. They can give advice as to the type of film, what may be included in the film and so on, but I do not think they should deal with the actual production of the film.

Q. The production may be either by a private agency or by a Government agency?

A. Possibly.

Q. But the ideas will have to be given by the Education Department?

A. Yes. I think some sort of arrangement like this might be useful. Supposing there is a firm which wishes to produce educational films, it can go to the Education Department for suggestions; co-operation of that type would be practicable.

Q. Can you depend upon such agencies now, things being what they are in our country? Do you think private agencies will undertake it at all?

A. I am afraid I have no opinion about it.

Q. Anyway, you consider that the use of films in girls' schools and also for the purpose of women's education is essential?

A. I do not think I would use the word 'essential'. I would use the word "useful".

Q. The spread of knowledge is also essential?

A. Yes, but I do not know that I should say that the film is essential. I would rather use the word "useful".

Q. But do you think you can reach the masses of the people in any other way?

A. I do think there is much that can be imparted to illiterate persons through the film, which could not be done as well in other ways.

Q. The point which I wish to get at is this. Do you consider that public funds should be spent for that purpose, for the spread of knowledge through the film?

A. That I am not prepared to say. I only think that the educational funds in the women's branch should not be given for that purpose.

Q. You do not want to divert the funds?

A. Yes. I feel there are more important branches than this.

Q. If additional funds can be found—you think they should be found?

A. Yes.

Q. You have just handed me this. This is the man you have in mind when you say there is only one man touring with an educational cinema. You have not seen the films yourself?

A. No.

Q. What sort of educational films does he produce? I suppose you have no idea?

A. The list on the back gives you an idea of the subjects. They are designed to rouse general interest and impart general knowledge.

Q. They look more like foreign films.

A. Some of them are I think.

Q. (Reads list). All these things seem to have been produced abroad and not in this country. This is the only man who is now trying to introduce these?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know he is really touring about with these educational films?

A. I think so.

Q. And he seeks assistance from schools and colleges I believe?

A. Yes. He applies to the heads of the institutions and they arrange for him.

Q. He has not done so to your knowledge in any girls' school?

A. Oh, yes. I think so. It was only reported to me,—I have not verified it,—that he has given successful shows in some of the girls' institutions.

Q. You advocate the use of the film in nature study, geography, science, and scientific and industrial processes. Don't you think also it would be useful to show on the film life in girls' schools, for instance, in the west?

A. I would include films showing conditions of life in other countries, among the geographical ones.

Q. They would receive a lot of enlightenment from seeing how girls are educated in other countries?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose very few girls now go to the cinema?

A. Very few Indian girls. Only very advanced girls, very highly educated girls attend the cinemas often, but the ordinary educated girls do not as a rule.

Q. Even the womenfolk go very seldom unless the film is of mythological or some such interest?

A. Yes, some special show they might attend.

Q. In which there is some mythological or religious interest?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You go to see the cinemas often?

A. Very seldom.

Q. You have seen the cinemas?

A. I have.

Q. To attract respectable ladies to take part in the cinema what means would you suggest?

A. I think one of the difficulties against women attending the cinema is the natural disinclination of Indian women to appear—it is not related to the cinema itself but many Hindu women have a natural reluctance to go to any public affair.

Q. Even the advanced, educated classes?

A. The very advanced are free, but the majority are reluctant to attend any show in a public place.

Q. But in private places?

A. To the girls' schools, of course, they will come very freely, even orthodox women.

Q. Do you favour the cinema as a means of instruction in the class room?

A. I think it is helpful as an adjunct to teaching and as a form of illustration.

Q. As a means of instructions?

A. As supplementary, yes.

Q. Do you think the cinema is better than the magic lantern, or do you favour the magic lantern?

A. I think the cinema does more than can be shown by a magic lantern.

Q. You do not favour the magic lantern?

A. I think it has its use, but I think there is greater value in the movement as shown in the cinema.

Written Statement of M. R. Ry. A. RAMA RAO AVL., B.A., I.E.S.,
District Educational Officer, Chingleput District, dated the 23rd
December 1927.

2. (a) Attendance at cinemas is largely on the increase among the younger generation and among the illiterate classes. This is particularly noticeable in the bigger towns of the Madras Presidency.

3. With the lower orders films showing blood and thunder and hairbreadth escapes, etc., in serials are popular. With the Indian educated classes at one time stories from the Indian Puranas, etc., were popular. But on account of the poor acting and sameness of the stories acted their popularity is waning. Good American or English films particularly if they are associated or based on stories from English literature and drama are still popular with the educated Indian classes.

5. (c) At one time Indian films roused a great deal of enthusiasm. I believe in the earlier stages of the Cinema Industry such films as "The Birth of Sri Krishna," etc., must have proved extremely profitable to the exhibitors.

6. From the class of films exhibited I should think that the film industry is still in the infancy in India. Some time back I saw in Madras a film entitled "The Life of Buddha". This was a good film fairly well acted and the scenes, dresses, etc., were evidently thought out by men of culture. This was exhibited in a second class theatre and I cannot say that it attracted much attention. When I saw it most of the seats were empty and the box office receipts must have been disappointing. On the other hand good English films in an eastern setting are extremely popular, e.g., "The Thief of Bagdad".

14. At present in India the cinema is made very little use of for educational purposes, whereas I understand that in the State of Baroda there is a regular department of the Government which makes use of the cinema for adult education. I consider that the cinema would be a very useful adjunct for the realistic teaching of English Literature, English and Indian History, Geography, Agriculture, Public Health, etc. I consider that the Department of Instruction in every province should maintain a library of films on all the above subjects and a few sets of projectors and that such films should be made available to all schools for a nominal payment.

20. (a) The proposal outlined in (14) above would involve expenditure from Government funds. Such expenditure would be fully justified.

(b) The cost may be met from the funds placed at the disposal of the Educational Department in the case of films to be shown in schools. With regard to films on Agriculture, Public Health, etc., the cost may be borne by the respective departments.

21. While the State can certainly undertake the production of films of Agriculture, Public Health, Industries, etc., I am very doubtful of the Government successfully undertaking the management of the film industry as a monopoly.

22. I consider that India should participate in such a policy and grant aid to film producing agencies in India for the production of films showing Indian industries and manufactures, films showing scenes from Indian life, etc., the latter not from Miss Mayo's point of view.

29. If there is proper censorship I do not think this should be necessary. Usually parents like to attend the cinema with all their young ones. When the parents are of the opinion that their children would not benefit from film they are not likely to take them. The matter may well be left to the discretion of parents, besides it would be difficult to enforce any such rule.

Oral Evidence of M. R. Ry. A. RAMA RAO AVL., B.A., I.E.S.,
District Educational Officer, Chingleput District, on Friday, the
6th January 1928.

Chairman: Mr. Rama Rao, you have got considerable experience in the Education Department?

A. Yes.

Q. You have been in the districts also and you are now in Chingleput?

A. Yes. I was Deputy Director in the Director's office for about 2 years.

Q. I suppose the cinema is not used in the Education Department now?

A. No, at present it is not used.

Q. What sort of visual instruction is given?

A. Occasionally you have these magic lantern shows arranged in some of the schools and many of our Deputy Inspectors have been supplied with magic lanterns. They are not supplied with slides. The slides are generally with the District Educational Officer and also with the Director of Public Instruction.

Q. Where do they get the slides from?

A. Generally they are ordered from England. There are two firms from whom they generally order them.

Q. On what subjects?

A. All sorts of subjects—history, English history specially, some in nature study, a little bit of elementary science, mostly geography and such things.

Q. You believe that the cinema will be a more efficient method of giving instruction in those subjects?

A. I certainly agree that it will be more useful.

Q. We had a view expressed by a gentleman from Allahabad who thought that there was no advantage in a moving picture in illustrating subjects. He wants the stationary picture and he believes that the stationary picture is more valuable than the cinema.

A. The cinema can do much more in different ways than what the slides can do. For example, I would say a student who has to study Shakespeare, no doubt he reads books. He reads Shakespeare as a text-book, but after all, a text-book is not very much appreciated by a student. He thinks he should read it because he has to read it. But put on the screen, for example, a play of Shakespeare. It would considerably add to the interest of the story to the student. Take "The Merchant of Venice", or "Hamlet", or some such thing, show the play to him on the screen. The text-book will receive an entirely different treatment. He will understand the thing, he will appreciate it much more.

Q. So you believe in the moving picture as a very efficient method of supplementing instruction in various branches?

A. I do believe, in fact, it will add to the interest, making the thing more realistic to the student who has to study the thing.

Q. Is our Government doing anything in the shape of adult education now?

A. To my mind the whole system of adult education, as at present conducted, requires a thorough overhauling.

Q. Is anything being done in that direction?

A. What we are at present doing in the matter of adult education is something like what is called the night schools. And the condition of some of the night schools is very, very unsatisfactory. You have a teacher there, for example, who has probably worked in a day school during the whole day and just to add a few rupees every month to his income he undertakes a night school, and probably many of the students who attend there are also day labourers or people who have done some work during the day and they are both are tired and they go and sit under a smoky oil lamp or some-

thing of that sort and attempt to learn; I should not be surprised that within 2 or 3 months the students who attend and desire to learn are tired and give up the thing, and probably then the teacher has to cook up his register or do something just to keep up the attendance.

Q. So that it is only nominal and not effective?

A. I should think so. Those who have learnt reading and writing in night schools form a very microscopic minority.

Q. Do you think you can use the cinema for that purpose?

A. Yes, I think so. The whole system of adult education should be recast. That is my idea. First of all, we should have some central organisation in Madras which will take up the question of adult education seriously, and then we should have some district organizations which would help in furthering the cause of adult education. The central organization in Madras should look to the supply of cinemas and maintain, if possible, a central library of films of different sorts and have a few sets of projectors also with them. These should be distributed to the various district organizations. In the district organizations also I think the present system of teaching reading, writing and arithmetic to the students who attend is not very effective. We should recast the whole system and if possible give the adult education classes a more interesting syllabus and connect them with something of our religious literature. For example, for an ideal night school, we should begin once or twice a week bearing either on general literature or on history, nature study or science, or on some of our puranic stories. Then we can get the help of those people who are residing in the towns or villages and get their co-operation for giving lectures in the night schools on subjects which may be of common interest.

Q. I suppose you would also include knowledge as to better methods of agriculture, public health, better industrial methods, etc.?

A. Yes; that is why I say there should be a central organization which should draw up the syllabus of the lectures, etc.

Q. So, your view is that there should be a central organization for the purpose of spreading better ideas?

A. I am speaking only from an educational point of view.

Q. You cannot run your central organization separately?

A. Certainly we would require the help of the Agricultural Department, the Veterinary Department and the Industries Department.

Q. That is a splendid idea, but who do you think should undertake it? Do you expect the Government to undertake it?

A. The Government should certainly undertake it and give us some help.

Q. You do not think private agency will spring forward to do this work or will it be efficient if it does spring?

A. I do not think it will be efficient. In fact, to start with, this should form part of the Education Department at least for a few years, and later on when it is well organized, perhaps we might hand it over to private agencies.

Q. With that object in view, have you considered the question whether these films which you have in mind should be produced by Government or private agencies with subsidies given by Government?

A. It is not possible for Government, I think, to produce all the films which require. My idea is that whatever Government undertakes, becomes generally stereotyped and no fresh outlook is brought into it.

Q. Then how do you think they should produce them?

A. The Government should aid the private agencies, and as far as possible, ask the private agencies to undertake the work.

Q. You think private agencies will come forward to take it up?

A. If the Government offers them aid towards the production of the film by giving some percentage of the cost of production and come to an agree-

ment with them as to the proportion which the Government should get by the sale of films, I think private agencies will certainly come forward; but that is a matter of detail.

Q. As an educational officer of experience, what is your opinion as to the effect of the cinema on the school-going population? Has it any demoralising effect on the students?

A. I cannot say so.

Q. You have been in places where cinemas are shown—not only in Madras, but in other parts of the Presidency?

A. I had several of my relations, young men, attending the cinemas. On the whole my impression is that it has a beneficial effect on them.

Q. This morning we had a headmaster of a high school here who told us distinctly that the cinema has a demoralising effect on the youths of this country. Do you at all apprehend that there is any such tendency?

A. I do not think so. Of course, in every grade of society, there may be some whose minds may probably be affected in that way.

Q. But you think the effect is so general or that we should take serious notice of it?

A. No. At the same time, I agree to censoring films.

Q. Do you think the films shown now, which you see ordinarily exhibited, are not objectionable in their tone?

A. I cannot distinctly express an opinion, as I only see films which are well-spoken of. I do not go to cinemas very often. I see only good films, especially those which are connected with English literature or puranic stories and such things.

Q. Have you seen Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. Are they very popular?

A. They were popular once; but I am afraid they are not so popular now. I think it is due to lack of enterprise.

Q. Your view is rather opposed to the experience in other provinces; but is it due to the lack of supply?

A. Some of the recent films which I saw struck me as being very poor.

Q. Have you seen social dramas?

A. I saw mostly puranic films.

Q. They are poor in what?

A. They are poor in technique, poor in acting, etc. They were more or less second-rate or third-rate plays acted on the stage.

Q. We find your experience is somewhat different from the experience in other parts. There they say there is a distinct improvement in the films?

A. It may be quite possible that latterly there has been some improvement. I have not seen films for the past year or year and a half. I got disgusted with them and I thought they were not worth seeing.

Q. For an educated man like you it may not appeal; but to the ordinary people, it may appeal very much?

A. I saw one film, "The Life of Buddha", last year. That was a very good one.

Q. Are you satisfied that the cinema has no baneful effect?

A. Perhaps in very exceptional cases; but generally I do not think it has any baneful effect.

Q. Have you any conference of provincial educational officers?

A. We are going to have one.

Q. Have the educational officers in this province considered the question of the use of the cinema and urged upon the Government the desirability of resorting to it?

A. No, not yet. We are going to have a conference towards the end of this month and one of the subjects to be discussed then is adult education, and I think this question will also come up.

Q. You think there is a consensus of opinion among educational officers that the use of the cinema in schools as a means of adult education should be resorted to?

A. We thought the thing was rather beyond our means. It is more a financial question.

Q. Do you think it is desirable and useful too?

A. Certainly.

Q. If funds can be found, you think it is desirable?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you advocate the levy of an amusement tax for the purpose of finding funds for this purpose?

A. I do not.

Q. If at all, do you think funds should be found from ordinary venues or from any special revenues?

A. I think it will be unpopular if we raise special taxes.

Q. Supposing the fund is ear-marked for the purpose of developing the film industry in this country, what is your opinion?

A. I find it difficult to express an opinion on that.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You know the corporations are levying some tax on cinemas now?

A. They are going to do so, I think.

Q. You think mass education by cinema can be begun by the corporations from the money they get?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you approached the Government on the subject of your own organisation?

A. No, not yet.

Q. Have you written to them?

A. I think in our conference we shall discuss it.

Q. You will approach the corporation and say that mass education should be taken up by them?

A. It will be out of my province.

Q. As regards Indian History, is there any danger in filming battles between Hindus and Muhammadans in the past generations? Are any precautions to be taken in the matter?

A. Yes; we must be very careful that racial hatred is not in any way increased. We have to bear that point in mind.

Q. If proper precautions are taken, I suppose there can be no danger in filming battles, like the battle of Panipat?

A. When I said 'history' I had in mind the lives of our great men. I had no idea of battles being filmed. It is quite possible that among our men much bad blood will be created by seeing battles in which one party has been shown to have been defeated.

Q. Have you seen the hand-bills in the theatres?

A. I have seen some of them.

Q. There are some kissing and embracing scenes. Do you think such scenes should be stopped from being distributed in colleges and schools?

A. I do not think so.

Q. You think they ought not to be censored at all?

A. At any rate I have not seen any great injury being done to young men by the circulation of hand-bills.

Q. But the hand-bills are generally seen even by those who do not go to the cinema. So they ought to be censored before being distributed?

A. I am not convinced that there is a need for doing so at present; because, I have not myself seen any such hand-bills which are likely to raise undesirable thoughts in our young men.

Q. You have not seen the cinema very often?

A. If there is a good film, I generally go.

Q. Have you seen Indian films?

A. Yes, I have seen several Indian films.

Q. There are also certain shaky films. Don't you think such films will harm the eyes of the children?

A. Yes, especially where the charges are low, and the boys and young people generally sit very close to the screen.

Q. Do you advocate that young children should be prohibited from going to the cinemas?

A. Children do not go by themselves. If I go, probably I may take my children but not otherwise. My children would never be allowed to go by themselves.

Q. So you think that good films only should be shown to the children?

A. I think so.

Q. Bad films should not be shown to them?

A. I believe that the censoring department will attend to the prohibition of bad films.

Q. In other words you say that performances for children should be separated from the other performances?

A. My impression is that it will be difficult to carry out such a separation. If there is a censoring department to cut out bad films, my idea is that any film can be shown to young children or old people.

Q. You may not take your children when the films are shaky. But what about the masses?

A. Yes, in the mufassal where the projecting apparatus is not very good, the case is much worse.

Q. In your statement you have said "If there is proper censorship". What do you think of the present censorship? Is it not proper?

A. I cannot say that. I do not think that conclusion necessarily follows. I have not seen all the films and so I am not able to pronounce a judgment on the point.

Q. Have you seen any film which you would not have passed yourself?

A. I have seen one or two American films in which an Indian was shown as a sort of crook. If I had been the censor, I would not have allowed them.

Q. In your statement you have said something about Baroda, i.e., as having a separate department for this purpose. What kind of department is that?

A. They call it the visual instruction department. The India Government publishes certain occasional reports, and one of the reports which I read dealt with this subject, 'Visual instruction in Baroda'.

Q. Are you sure that there is a department in Baroda for this purpose?

A. Yes; probably the Director of Public Instruction or the Education Secretariat here will be able to give you that information.

Q. In another place you say that the department of visual instruction in every province should maintain films. What do you mean by that?

A. I mean a collection of films, not the literature only, for circulation and distribution among the various schools.

Q. Would you get them from abroad?

A. Not from abroad alone, we can have even local ones. A few sets of apparatus also will be worth while.

Q. Do you think the Madras Government will do such a thing?

A. If they can get funds, I think they will do it. If the Committee lay special stress on this point, I think the Government will certainly do it.

**Oral Evidence of Mr. P. T. KUMARASWAMI CHETTIYAR, B.A.,
Councillor, Corporation of Madras, on Friday, the 6th January
1928.**

Chairman: You are one of the Councillors of the Corporation?

A. Yes.

Q. You go to the cinema much, Mr. Chettiyar?

A. Not much; I go occasionally.

Q. If you want to go, where do you go generally?

A. I go either to the Elphinstone or the Crown.

Q. The Crown is in the centre of the town?

A. It is very near my residence.

Q. Do they show both Western and Indian pictures in the Crown Cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you seen Indian pictures?

A. I have seen some of these mythological series.

Q. You have been seeing them both recently and for some years now?

A. Six or seven months ago I have seen one performance.

Q. You have seen our questionnaire?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the effect of the cinema on the people generally? Do you think it has a good effect?

A. It has some educative value.

Q. Do you think the outlook of the people is enlarged?

A. Not so much. Generally people go for sensational series.

Q. Ordinary people care more for sensational stuff such as falls, thrills, etc.?

A. Yes, and if it is an Indian series, most Indian people will go.

Q. Indian films are very popular?

A. Yes.

Q. You have noticed that carefully?

A. Yes.

Q. Do they get a good supply of Indian films? Are there any difficulties in getting them at all?

A. I am not aware of that. There is a film industry in Madras itself. There was one gentleman named Mr. Venkiah who was doing some work in that direction. I do not know whether he had any success in it.

Q. I suppose you know nothing about it?

A. I know nothing about the industry.

Q. Do you think there is any possibility of the film industry taking root in this province or in this city?

A. Unless there is a safeguard from foreign import of films, there will be some difficulty. I want protection against foreign films.

Q. Do you think foreign films come in so cheap?

A. They may stand in the way of the Indian films. We see that in a industries as well.

Q. But do you think the import of foreign films is acting as a deterrent to the production of Indian films?

A. It may act as a deterrent. I should like to point out one thing to the Committee. I was told there are some Indian films exhibited here and in western countries wherein the character of the Indians and the Chinese are depicted in a very abject style.

Mr. Green: Can you quote any instances?

A. "East of Suez" I was told so. I am not a regular cinema goer. I attend only occasionally. If they are so exhibited in western countries, I think they will leave a bad impression on the people there about the character and the modes of living of the Indians.

Chairman: Do you think any steps should be taken to encourage the growth of Indian films?

A. I think so. Whether it is possible or not is a question which should be discussed in detail.

Q. Supposing every exhibitor is compelled to show a certain length of Indian film during a week, do you think it will be appreciated by the public?

A. Certainly, I think so, provided they have got certain morals.

Q. Provided they are certified to be suitable by a board?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think that will act as a help to the growth of the industry?

A. I cannot say so. I am not certain whether the industry will flourish here.

Q. What are your doubts?

A. Firstly there should be safeguards against foreign imports. Secondly people have no confidence in the Government.

Q. They will have more confidence?

A. In the Government.

Q. In the Government—how do you mean?

A. For safeguarding their own industrial concerns?

Q. Will you please explain? I don't know what you have in mind.

A. I will give you a specific instance with regard to the match factory started in Madras. The factory was located in Travancore in a protected State and they had facilities from the Travancore Government. The company was floated here in Madras and wanted a certain capital about 50 or 60 thousand rupees on the strength of the State Aid to Industries Act.

Q. You mean they applied for a loan under the recent Act?

A. Yes, but on technical grounds the application for the loan was rejected. The application was referred to the Advocate General. The Advocate General's opinion was against giving a loan on the ground that the factory was located in Travancore, a protected State beyond the limits of British India. And so similar reasons do prevail with the Indian not to venture on these concerns.

Q. You think it is due to lack of Government encouragement; and you mention that as an instance, although it turned on a point of law. Whether the Act should be applied to such a case, that seems to have been the point.

A. Yes, it was a technical point. There is lack of encouragement from Government.

Q. You want Government to give some encouragement to the film industry?

A. Certainly.

Q. If you are assured of that, do you think capital will be forthcoming?

A. It may be forthcoming gradually, not all of a sudden.

Q. But you say Indian films are very popular. They must then be a paying concern?

A. Certainly.

Q. Then why do you want encouragement from Government?

A. The Indian films are not so very clear as the English films. I have seen some Indian films like "Harish Chandra" and other dramas exhibited in the cinemas. They were not so clear as the English films. If they are improved to the same extent as the English ones, I think they will have a better audience than they command now.

Q. Do you advocate any scholarships for Indian students to go abroad and learn the technique of the art?

A. I should prefer experts coming out from England, America and other parts to teach students here in Madras. By that procedure instead of educating one or two we may educate several children here.

Q. You would send for foreign experts to train people here in the technique of the thing.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think the Legislative Council, you are a member of the Legislative Council?

A. I am not.

Q. Do you think public opinion would support the expenditure of public funds for that purpose, Indian public opinion.

A. I think so.

Q. And you think it will be a legitimate use of public funds yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. Then in order to discourage the import of foreign films, would you increase the duty on foreign films? What is your suggestion?

A. I don't want any control from the Central Board. I want it to be controlled by the Tariff Board itself as it is now, just as other industries are being controlled by the Tariff Board. There should not be any deviation from the original procedure.

Q. You would leave it to the Tariff Board to decide whether the industry requires such help or not, so far as the tariff is concerned?

A. Yes.

Q. And what measures do you suggest that the Government should take?

A. I have no other suggestions to make.

Q. Now has the cinema any demoralising effect on the people?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Do you think the youth of the country by seeing these passionate love scenes are affected in an undesirable way?

A. There may be certain films which should not be exhibited to juveniles of 15 or younger ones; whereas they have no bearing on the adult population.

Q. Then do you want to classify certain films as not fit to be shown to children?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you prohibit children from going there?

A. Yes, to sex films, crime films and similar things.

Q. You say children under 15.

A. Yes, between 11 and 15 is an age of impression, and any impression made then will corrupt boy or a girl.

Q. Do you think the films now shown have that influence on these children?

A. There are very few such films, and practically speaking very few children attend.

Q. Then why do you advocate it? If there are very few children and very few such films, why do you advocate it?

A. If all children are to be given any education in cinema shows, then films should be prohibited and I would suggest also, just as in England and other parts, there should be slow motion films; if they are introduced here I think they will have some educative value for children.

Q. For educational purposes you would have slow motion pictures?

A. So that it may not affect the retina of their eyes.

Q. I think you are the manager of a high school.

A. A secondary school.

Q. You come in contact with students in that capacity?

A. Yes.

Q. This morning we heard from the headmaster of a high school that the cinema has a definitely bad effect on the students. Do you agree with that view?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Are you not in the Pachaippa Trust also?

A. I am.

Q. Which runs several schools; so you are in a position to know the student life in the town?

A. Yes.

Q. And you don't agree with that view.

A. I don't. And there are not enough cases to prove that it has a demoralising effect on the children.

Q. It is not a question of legal proof as in a court of law; but what the public opinion is.

A. Public opinion is also that.

Q. You think public opinion is under the impression that the cinema is productive of a bad effect on the student population.

A. Certainly there is such an impression among a minority; it is not a wholesale impression.

Q. It is not widespread or general?

A. No, not general.

Q. Some people may labour under that impression?

A. Yes.

Q. And do you think they are correct or wrong in that impression?

A. If all these exhibits are shown they may have a certain influence on the children.

Q. It is only a possibility?

A. Yes.

Q. You don't share that impression.

A. I don't.

Q. As a parent—you are almost the head of the family I think?

A. My children go rather often and they are not corrupted by these shows.

Q. Yours is a very large family I know, and you think it has no bearing; you as a responsible citizen of the town think that there is no general weakening or demoralising effect?

A. Yes, certainly. I don't know whether it affects the eye. That is the only thing we have to consider. But where the morals of the shows are concerned, I don't think it has any effect, except in rare cases.

Q. Do you know whether any films are imported into Madras? Do you know any people who are directly importing foreign films?

A. I am not aware of that. My line is quite different.

Q. I know. Has the Indian Merchants Chamber considered the questionnaire, do you know? Have they been meeting over this?

A. I don't know. I am not a member of the Merchants Chamber. I was blackballed there.

Q. I am quite surprised to hear that. Well is there anything else you want to tell the Committee?

A. No.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: In what languages are the titles of the films shown here?

A. English, Sanskrit.

Q. The titles of the films?

A. In English only.

Q. Have you seen them in Tamil also?

A. I don't remember, but I think I have seen some in Hindustani and English.

Q. Not Tamil?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Do the masses understand Hindustani?

A. They don't but by studying the pamphlet before witnessing the performance they know what is going on.

Q. What is the use of Hindustani then? There is no need of Hindustani, too, when the titles are given in English?

A. I don't think there is any need of it in Madras.

Q. Tamil is quite important?

A. If instead of English, Tamil is exhibited it would be better for Madras.

Q. You are a municipal councillor?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. A member of the Municipal Corporation here?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there any proposal of taxing the cinemas?

A. There is a proposal for levying an amusement tax.

Q. On cinemas?

A. On all amusements, as a whole,—on general concerns.

Q. Theatres, cinemas, races, all?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the amount they are charging?

A. They have not charged yet. It is yet in the initial stage. It is with the Taxation Finance Board.

Q. You know nothing about it yet?

A. No. The Government has sent in a certain table for levying the fee which ought to be considered by the Taxation Finance Board first and will be passed only in the budget session next month, when it will be considered.

Q. You as a councillor of this body, do you advocate the using of this money for the encouragement of this industry?

Chairman: Ear-marking it for this industry?

A. The levying of this tax on the industry will not affect the industry at all.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You are not in favour of it?

A. I am in favour of it, but it will not affect the industry at all.

Chairman: You haven't understood his question. What he wants to know is, supposing that money is ear-marked, the money collected from the amusement tax, for developing the Indian film industry.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: For instance, to pay the wages of that expert you recommend that we should bring out.

A. I understand. I cannot promise that.

Q. But you have recommended that there should be an expert brought from outside.

A. The Government should take that responsibility on its shoulders.

Q. You will not give it from the Corporation money?

A. That should be placed for some other purpose.

Q. Is it justifiable that the money from the amusement tax should be used for certain other purposes?

A. It is only for the improvement of civic matters.

Q. To fill up the coffers of the Corporation?

A. They have not got any money to fall back upon.

Q. Do you advocate any scholarships being given to these students from any fund?

A. I do not want scholarships to be awarded to people to go there. I want experts to come out here.

Q. Why? Is it because of the trade jealousies in America? They don't show their secrets to our students?

A. Because of the fact that two or three people going there will not be of any benefit to the trade in India.

Q. They can come back here and teach others. Even if you send two or three students there, they will learn something and teach it to thousands here.

A. But experts in other concerns here do nothing as there is no scope to utilise their knowledge here.

Q. You only reject this scheme because two or three people only can be sent out and not because trade secrets are not imparted to our students?

A. I am told that trade secrets are not even revealed to these Indians who go out there.

Q. I suppose the Indian film business is a very paying business. Would you yourself start one?

A. I am sorry I cannot venture on concerns which I do not understand.

Q. But you are giving evidence on the subject now. Is it without understanding or with understanding?

A. General impressions only.

Written Statement of Mr. J. A. THOMSON, Secretary, Madras Club, dated the 29th November 1927.

GENERAL.

2. (a) (1) To a great extent.

(2) To a very great extent.

(b) Europeans and Educated Indians in the Higher Classes. Soldiers, Anglo-Indians and middle class educated Indians in the two lower classes and labourers and illiterate classes in the last seats.

(c) Hardly 5 per cent.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. Comics. Detective Dramas like Serials and films containing stunts and surprises.

4. Yes, in this area.

5. Cannot say.

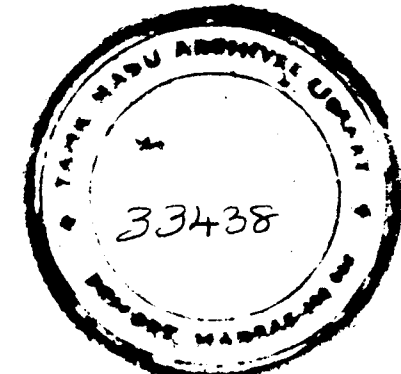
6. (a) I do not think so.
 (b) Cannot say.
 10. I do not know.
 11. I do not know.
 12. I do not know.
 14. Certainly to a very great extent. Yes.
 15. Conditions are favourable, if sufficiently backed by capital.
 16. I do not know.
 17. I do not know.
 18. Yes. By allowing private producers free access to Government Technical Institutes, workshops, Laboratories, etc., for purposes of taking films.
 19. I cannot say.
 20. (a) I cannot say.
 (b) I cannot say.
 21. I am not in a position to give an opinion.

PART II.

Social Aspects and Control.

24. (a) Certainly not.
 (b) Not to my knowledge.
 (c) I cannot say.
 (d) (1) and (2) Yes.
 (e) No.
 25. No.
 26. (a) I have no knowledge of films that do offend.
 27. (a) No. I cannot say. I cannot say. No.
 (b) No.
 28. (a) and (b) I do not think.
 29. Not in the present class of films shewn.
 30. No.
 31. Yes.
 32. Quite satisfactory.
 33. (a) Yes.
 (b) Yes.
 (c) Yes.
 34. (a) No.
 (1) The Provincial Board of each Presidency understand their requirements best.
 (2) Yes.
 (b) No, not necessary.
 35. (a) Quite.
 (b) Not necessary.

36. (a) Yes. I do not know.
 (b) I do not know.
 37. (a) Yes.
 (b) No.
 38. Yes, but I cannot give particulars.
 39. No.
 40. No. No.
 41. Yes.
 42. No.
 43. (a), (b) and (c) I do not know.
 44. By not patronising objectionable films.
 45. (a) and (b) I cannot say.



**Oral Evidence of Mr. J. A. THOMSON, Secretary, Madras Club, on
 Friday, the 6th January 1928.**

Chairman: Is the cinema very popular with your Club members?

A. Fairly popular.

Q. They go pretty often, you think?

A. Yes, they do.

Q. And you yourself, do you go?

A. Fairly often.

Q. And you are satisfied with the films generally. I see from your written statement you are satisfied generally with the moral tone of the films shown.

A. Yes, so far as I have seen them.

Q. There is no reason for complaint?

A. None whatever.

Q. Nor any reason to complain of the adequacy of the censorship as now practised throughout the province?

A. No.

Q. Do you think the cinema has any baneful effect upon any section of the public?

A. I don't think so.

Q. And you have a fairly large experience of the people of this country?

A. Yes, I have been 37 years in this country.

Q. In your answer to No. 18 you say that film production may be encouraged by Government allowing private producers free access to Government technical institutes, workshops, laboratories, etc., for taking films. You think it essential that that should be done?

A. I think so.

Q. In addition to that, would you advocate any subsidies or any financial aid by way of loans, long standing loans?

A. I think that is necessary too.

Q. Private enterprise is lacking in that direction?

A. It appears to be.

Q. And it has to be encouraged to come forward?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you think of the idea of introducing a quota system compelling every exhibitor to show a certain length of Indian film say in the week. I suppose you have seen the reports about the British quota system in order

to encourage the growth of the British film in England. Do you think a similar idea can be introduced here in India to encourage the growth of the Indian film?

A. I should think so.

Q. Do you think there is any necessity to keep a provincial board for Madras only. There are very few films that come here.

A. I think it is sufficient to have Bombay and Calcutta, as at present.

Q. That is quite enough?

A. Yes.

Q. Of course you yourself are satisfied as you have told us. Have you heard of any complaints about the character of the films shown here?

A. No, I have not.

Q. Did you come across the Social Hygiene Delegation when it visited this country last year?

A. I was not well at the time here.

Q. Mrs. Neville Rolfe—I suppose you never met her?

A. No.

Colonel Crawford: You are entirely satisfied with the existing censorship?

A. I am, from what I have seen.

Q. Do you go often to the films?

A. Well, I go about once a week.

Q. And you find nothing at fault with them at all?

A. I find nothing at fault, no.

Written Statement of Lieut.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., M.D., D.P.H., I.M.S., Director of Public Health, Madras, dated the 1st December 1927.

GENERAL.

2. (a) From experience of the limited number of picture houses in Madras City and in few mufassil stations in this Presidency, I think that the attendance of both educated and illiterate classes is considerable.

The picture-houses are without doubt becoming increasingly popular.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. I think the films which are most popular with Indian audiences are those which represent Indian conditions of life—ancient or modern—, especially those relating to History and Religion. It is probable that films relating to Agriculture, Industry and other aspects of public life might appeal to the audience, but it is impossible to give a definite opinion in this matter as few films relating thereto have been so far produced to my knowledge. The one or two occasions on which health films have been shown have indicated that the audience showed an intelligent and sustained interest in them.

4. I do not think that the exhibitors are catering adequately to Indian audiences, because as far as I know, cinema houses depend almost wholly on imported films, chiefly American.

5. I cannot say.

6. (a) Yes.

(b) (1) and (2) I should think that most of the subjects mentioned in would appeal equally well to both the illiterate and the educated classes.

8. (a) and (b) I cannot say.

14. To improve the condition of the country in the fields of agriculture, public health, etc., the exhibition of cinema films will probably become a powerful weapon. Considering the facilities and the enterprise available, Government Departments will probably in the first instance, have to arrange for the manufacture of films on their own subjects. This will itself be an incentive to private enterprise and the growth of the cinema industry in India, when it is found that such films are appreciated by the public and a demand exists for them. It will also afford an opportunity for training indigenous talent and thus be a means of promoting the industry.

Considering the audiences that we have had during the last few years at the exhibition of films on public health subjects in the picture houses in Madras City and the mufassal, I consider that there would be a good demand for such films.

20. (a) The suggestions made in reply to number 14 will certainly involve expenditure from Government funds, but I consider it would be reasonably justifiable, as expenditure on Public Health has in the past not been commensurate with its importance, and education in health matters is very backward.

(b) The imposition of an amusement tax may be one of the means of realising part of the expenditure involved in the proposal. This tax is in force in some European countries.

21. I cannot give any opinion.

PART II.

Social Aspects and Control.

24. On the whole, I do not think that the films exhibited in this country have any great demoralising effect upon the public.

29. It is only in the case of films representing certain aspects of health propaganda, e.g., Social Hygiene that there will be any necessity for certification restricting the audience to adults.

40. Although a certain amount of censoring may be required in the case of, say, indecent or undesirable advertisements, the censorship need not be applied in the case of health leaflets, posters and exhibits, etc., of Governmental agencies, Municipalities or local bodies or any other similar institutions as the materials prepared by them have undergone sufficient scrutiny by the experts in the departments concerned. It seems rather unnecessary for a Public Health Department to get permission of the Police before showing a health slide in a Cinema House.

Oral Evidence of Lieut.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., M.D., D.P.H., I.M.S., Director of Public Health, Madras, on Friday, the 6th January 1928.

Chairman: Col. Russell, do you remember the Social Hygiene Delegation which visited India last year? Did they meet you at all?

A. Oh, yes, they met us quite frequently.

Q. Have you seen their report?

A. I have seen parts of it. (At this stage a copy of their report was handed to the witness for perusal).

Q. Will you kindly read paras. 1, 3 and 10. We want to know where they got this information from?

A. I do not know anything about it. They never mentioned the subject to me.

Q. We have been trying to find out the source from where they got this information?

A. In any case, if they had asked me, I would not have agreed with those views. As far as my experience goes, things are quite different.

Q. Another question I should like to ask you is this. Do you think that the second hand films which are generally shown by the travelling cinemas have a harmful effect on the eyesight of the people? Do you think there is an extensive use of such second hand films?

A. I am not a cinema expert, but I think that an old film tends to quiver more than a new film, and I find myself sometimes it is a strain to watch a film of that kind. But I don't think that if you watch such a film for a short period it will have any permanent effect on the eyesight. I don't suppose that people in India go to cinemas so regularly and that films are so bad as to produce a permanent effect on their eyesight.

Q. Then again it was suggested that when children see some films in which action is shown, like a terrific fall from a huge height or a motor dropping from a high cliff, such things produce a bad effect on their nerves?

A. I don't think so. I think children generally love to see such things, because they will have no effect on a normal child.

Q. For instance, scenes in which a woman is being tortured or is held down a precipice, threatening to destroy her, do you think they will have an injurious effect on young children?

A. I personally don't think such scenes will have any permanent effect. They might alarm a child; they might have a temporary psychological effect; but I don't think they will have any permanent effect at all.

Q. We had a gentleman in Calcutta who called himself a psycho-analyst, and he said that such scenes are likely to produce a very harmful effect on young children?

A. I don't agree with that view at all.

Q. You are apparently satisfied with the general tone of the films shown in this country?

A. Yes, but my experience is not a very wide one. I don't think I have seen any very objectionable film in India.

Q. Have you seen any posters or handbills to which you think exception could be taken?

A. I am afraid I have never come across any such thing. They may be there, but I have never seen them.

Q. Now to come to the main point of your statement, for purposes of public health propaganda, you think the cinema should be used very largely?

A. I think it would be a very good thing to use the film to a much greater extent than now. In fact I have now asked the Government to give me a special grant for the manufacture of health films. I have a scheme on hand. We have got a propaganda section now in my office, and I want it to have films.

Q. Do you think magic lantern slides will do for it?

A. We have used magic lantern slides, coloured and plain slides, for the last seven years, and I am beginning to think that the ordinary Madras audience at least, is getting a little tired of lantern slides, and they would prefer something fresh and new. I certainly think that we can present a story in Public Health in a much more suitable form by the cinema than by magic lantern slides. I have two now, the scenarios for which we have prepared, and we are ready to get photographs taken when the Government give me a grant.

Q. In that connection do you think that the films produced by you will be useful for all India?

A. No, not at all. I am absolutely in disagreement with that. I personally think that a film for a Tamil audience will have to be different from

the one for a Telugu audience. We have found that by magic lantern slides; one which depicts a scene in a Telugu village is of very little use in a Tamil district. We have learned that lesson from actual experience.

Q. You think that for a lesson to be really effective, you must produce local conditions?

A. Yes, and most of the provinces have found that out because they are now making their own films.

Q. You don't think the establishment of a central studio will help you in producing such films?

A. Unless you take photographs locally I don't think the film will be of much use.

Q. For instance, Cholera is Cholera wherever it may be, whether in Bengal or Madras, and Malaria is Malaria whether in Bengal or U. P.?

A. Admittedly so, but the tanks and wells from which cholera is got in Madras are quite different in appearance from the wells and tanks in Bengal. Take for instance, latrines, in connection with hookworm, we find that if we take a photograph of a latrine in one part of India and show it in another part, the people don't know what it is. Even the type of houses in one part of the presidency don't appeal to people to another part of the same presidency. We take a photograph of a bad house in some part of the presidency, and people in another part don't realise what the picture is. I am very strong on that point; I don't care who produces the film, but if we get a man down here who is prepared to produce a film, I will give him a contract, and it is not necessary that the work should be done by Government.

Q. Do you think there are private agencies in Madras who can do the work that you want?

A. I have a man in mind who says he is willing to make a trial.

Q. I suppose you have not yet tried any such thing?

A. I have not got the money for it.

Q. I suppose you would advise this Committee to considerably stress and urge the use of films for public propaganda purposes?

A. One difficulty I can see is that you will find it a little difficult in out-of-the-way villages to produce the films unless you have got a very suitable form of portable machine, and I am not quite certain whether we have got a suitable machine yet. We have one or two in Madras now, imported from America, but I am not satisfied that they are just what we want although they are good in their way.

Q. Would you prefer a Government agency for producing your films or would you give the work to a private agency?

A. Health films will have to be produced under my supervision absolutely. I don't care what agency produces those films as long as they are produced under my supervision.

Mr. Neogy: And you say they should be exhibited by your Department?

A. I don't mind who exhibits them as long as they are exhibited here.

Chairman: I suppose you have got an agency for propaganda work?

A. We have got an agency all over the presidency, and I would exhibit the health films myself in the first place and then I would gladly give them to the outside public to show them in some theatres.

Q. Probably you will pay the private cinema owners for exhibiting them?

A. The intention is that we should pay to start with; but I personally don't see that there is going to be any very great market for public health films in India.

Q. I suppose all the different departments like the Agricultural Department, the Industries Department and the Education Department can co-operate in the matter of experts and in producing films?

A. I should be very glad to co-operate with all these departments if we could get the men to produce these films and also if we could get the necessary funds. There is no reason why one good photographer should not be able to produce the films for the various departments.

Q. In fact you suffer to-day a great deal because the knowledge that you get by your experiments cannot be sufficiently communicated to the people by means of films?

A. I am not quite prepared to support that statement, because we do a tremendous amount of propaganda work by means of lantern lectures and ordinary lectures. What I said was that I am inclined to think that the population, specially in towns and in large villages, are getting so accustomed to lantern lectures that they would like to have something fresh and new, in addition, to expand our propaganda work, I would like to have a series of health films on different subjects.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: On what subjects will you be able to produce films?

A. There are dozens of health subjects on Child Welfare work. We could produce one on Cholera. We have got a story on Cholera ready to be photographed.

Q. How much money have you asked for?

A. I have asked for Rs. 3,000 for one film, and we have got a man to agree to that sum.

Q. What is the length of that film?

A. I think it will be about 3,000 feet.

Q. How much does your department get for propaganda work?

A. I get Rs. 5,000.

Q. Can't you spare any sum from that amount for producing films?

A. If you think that we spend that sum in producing literature in six or seven different vernaculars and on various health subjects, then you will see how little there will be left for anything else.

Q. Have you ever tried to get films from other provinces?

A. I know that other provinces are prepared to sell their films. I asked the Director of Public Health, U. P., the other day, and he said he was prepared to sell me a film, but I don't think his film would be suitable for our province. I think it was on Cholera. It was called "Why die of Cholera". I saw it in Calcutta. He wanted to charge Rs. 800 for it. I said it was not suitable for us as it did not depict local scenes.

Q. Something is better than nothing, is it not?

A. I don't agree there.

Q. There was another film which they made "The Tragedy of Small-pox", and that would have been very useful to you?

A. Yes.

Q. When you produce these films, would you show them yourself or give them to private cinema owners to exhibit them for you?

A. I would do both.

Q. In that case would you pay anything to the cinema owners for exhibiting your films?

A. I should prefer them to show our films free.

Colonel Crawford: What exact arrangements do you propose to make to get your propaganda films taken in Madras?

A. I am afraid it is all in the dark still. We have asked Government for a grant, but I have not had a reply yet.

Q. Who is going to take the films for you? Is it somebody in India?

A. An Indian is quite prepared to undertake the work. Whether he has any experience in the matter or not, I really cannot tell you.

Q. Has he the facilities?

A. I think so.

Q. Do you think a propaganda film intended for Madras Presidency can be taken by a Central studio?

A. I do not know whether you are raising the same question which Mr. Rangachariar asked me before. I don't think that a central institute can produce films for the whole of India. That is my view. You must take scenes of local things, you must also take into account local idiosyncrasies and various other local matters otherwise the films will not appeal to the people at all. I saw one Bengal film the other day in Calcutta. Some of the scenes would have suited Madras, but other scenes were quite useless, and those other scenes would have to be taken specially for Madras. Portions of the scenes might do for the whole of India, but other parts would not do at all; and where you use large numbers of people, you must show local people. That is my opinion. I have had considerable experience of Madras people, and that is my considered view, and I think I am right.

Mr. Green: On the question of local conditions, will your films require to be different for the east coast here from those required for the Malabar coast?

A. Yes.

Q. Possibly different also for the north-east and south-west?

A. We do have lantern slides like that.

Q. You said that certain scenes would be the same for all India?

A. I said that certain parts of the film would be the same for all India.

Q. That suggests that a central institution for producing these films can supply the framework into which you could fit the local scenes?

A. I quite agree there. I was thinking for instance of a malaria film. There are various things that might come into it which I imagine will be common to all India, I mean about the development of the mosquito and how it introduces malaria into the human system. As I said, considerable parts of the film would be quite suitable for the whole of India, but when you want to take a photograph of a house in which there is malaria, you must show a local house if the people are to understand. Local scenes might be taken locally and then they could be taken to the central studio for finishing and developing. After the framework has been prepared and local scenes have been got, they could be sent to the central institution. There is certain an advantage in having a central studio of that nature if you could produce the films cheaper.

Q. You say that a film of the kind that you contemplate would cost about Rs. 3,000 for 2,000 feet?

A. I am not quite sure.

Q. That means that the film would run only for about half an hour?

A. You could get a cinema house to show it as part of their programme.

Q. You don't contemplate exhibiting it yourself?

A. We could usually give them a film on cholera after a lecture on cholera, and after the lecture on cholera is over they may give their entertainment film.

Q. You are not sure whether the gentleman who offered to produce the film for you has sufficient experience?

A. I should think it very unlikely.

Q. Do you think the technique of the film will make much difference for your purposes?

A. I don't want to criticise the health films made in other parts of India, but I must say that I was not entirely satisfied with the films that I have seen. They are rather amateurish efforts.

Q. There are certain companies producing fairly good films in India, but they are so busy in producing entertainment films that naturally they will

quote a high rate for Government work. Do you think that if Government themselves could produce films cheaper than private producers, it would be regarded as Government interference with ordinary trade?

A. I think personally that we will have to produce these films ourselves to start with, because it won't be a paying proposition in the commencement for private companies to make these films.

Mr. Coatman: You say you have asked the Government for money for making these films. How much have you asked for?

A. I have asked for Rs. 3,000, just to make an experiment with one film, and to see how we could manage it.

Q. Have you formed an estimate of the amount of money you could usefully employ on films?

A. I do not get a quarter of the money that I could spend on propaganda material. I think I could give 10 or 12 subjects on which we could have separate public health propaganda films.

Q. An average length of 3,000 feet?

A. I don't know enough of films to know what 3,000 feet of film represents.

Q. They would show in three-quarters of an hour.

A. Yes, I think there are 10 or 12 subjects we could have.

Mr. Neogy: In your written statement you refer to certain instances in which public health films were exhibited in the picture houses in Madras city and they appear to have been very successful.

A. These were the two films that were first introduced into the country by the International Health Board, viz., the malaria film and the hook-worm film.

Q. And you succeeded in inducing the picture house owners to show them?

A. Oh, I have never had any difficulty in doing that.

Q. They were short length films that were shown along with other things, and they were very much appreciated?

A. Yes, very much, apparently.

Q. And you expect that cinema house owners would furnish similar facilities also for the Indian produced films of this particular kind.

A. I have no doubt that they will.

Q. On these occasions do you think that the ordinary people could follow the lesson that was sought to be imparted in spite of the fact that the surroundings and the setting were not familiar.

A. I remember quite well the first time they showed the hook-worm film in Madras: it was what one might call an educated audience, because the Governor was present and a large number of ladies and gentlemen of the educated class.

Chairman: Yes, I remember. And the whole thing was explained.

A. Even then, the part of the film showing a latrine was not understood and at least a dozen ladies asked, "What is that?" and had not the remotest idea of its nature.

Mr. Neogy: And the difficulty would be greater in the case of the rural population?

A. You can multiply that any time you like.

Q. Now, in another paragraph, you say that if the Government were to adopt a definite policy of film publicity, that would act as an incentive to private enterprise and lead to the growth of the cinema industry in India. I suppose you are thinking of entrusting Government work to private agencies for production?

A. Well, in addition to that, I was also thinking that there were half a dozen Government departments who might be producing films and that might give employment to one or more Indian companies.

Q. I see that. Now about the idea of the central studio. I thought that you wanted the production to be done absolutely under your control. How would you ensure that control if the film were to be produced for all India in a distant place?

A. I don't think that is what Mr. Green got out of me. The point he made was that for local scenes he would send down photographers and other people concerned and take scenes in Madras. These would have to be done under my supervision or the supervision of some one who was acquainted with public health conditions in the particular locality. Then that would go back to the central studio to be dealt with.

Q. Then you would depend absolutely on the central studio only in regard to the more or less technical and scientific aspects of the subject?

A. Well, "the scientific" so far as the film is concerned, not so far as the subject is concerned: that would be my business.

Q. But in any case these pictures must fit in with your scenery, those which you take in the central studio?

A. I think that could be easily arranged.

Q. Wouldn't that presuppose a sort of agreement between the different provincial health authorities as to the nature of these public health scenes which would have an all-India interest?

A. Yes, that might be a little difficult of course.

Q. Do you think that there may be any difference of opinion between the different public health authorities as regards these subjects?

A. As a general rule the public health films tell you the same story wherever they are written and I don't think that the public health departments would differ fundamentally.

Q. In any case you would expect the central authority to consult all the provincial authorities?

A. I would like that, as far as I am concerned at least.

Q. And what proportion do you think would such scenes form to the total length of all publicity films? Take the particular case that you have in hand just now.

A. The cholera one? Oh, at least 50 to 60 per cent. of it would have to be local.

Q. It might be more?

A. Yes.

Q. And the proportion would depend upon the subject?

A. One a little more, another a little less.

Q. Well, supposing we had an all-India studio under the control of the Government of India for the production of such publicity films. There is no knowing whether you would be able to secure the services of the experts just at the moment when you would require them, because there would be competing claims from other provinces. Would that increase your difficulties?

A. I don't think the difficulties could be more than they are at present.

Q. But you are not very particular as to which agency turns out your work?

A. I don't mind which agency it is so long as they do the work in the way that I want.

Q. And if you were satisfied with the work of the man you mentioned just now, you would have no reason for entrusting it to anyone else?

A. Certainly not. If I were satisfied I would give him a repeat order.

Q. You have seen publicity films produced in other provinces. Are you entirely satisfied with their photography?

A. Yes, that was very good. It was the construction of the film, the technical part of it, that I could see was not exactly what it ought to be.

Q. The direction and the scenario?

A. I might illustrate my point like this. In one of the films I saw,—I won't say which province it belonged to,—there seemed to be an unnecessary repetition of the same little bit of scene again and again, which, if it had been prepared by an expert, would never have occurred. Another point of criticism which I think was quite legitimate was that they tried to crowd too many things into one film. They made unnecessary diversions into other fields of public health, and so made on a sort of hotch-potch.

Q. So far as these defects are concerned, the fault may be of the departmental instructions?

A. I should say inexperience in the man who was directing the production of the film.

Q. And not any fault of the man who was in charge of the actual taking of the film? So you are satisfied with the photography?

A. That was, as far as I could see, very good.

Q. And you would be perfectly satisfied with that kind of work?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. And inasmuch as that photography was turned out by private agency, there is no reason for you to strive after any improvement, supposing that improvement could be secured by a Government agency?

A. I don't mind whether there is Government agency or not.

Q. And as soon as the departments concerned pick up the necessary experience, you think that these defects could be remedied?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you want a man who knows his job to construct the film story?

A. You see, Directors of Public Health are not cinema experts.

Q. Who did the scenario writing in your department?

A. My propaganda officer. We have been over it together.

Written Statement of Mrs. D. JINARAJADASA, Vice-President, Indian Women's Association, Madras.

The cinema has a great potentiality for good, which is not sufficiently realised at present. In India, it is very largely attended by the masses.

The cinema has two great potentialities, (1) for education; (2) for amusement.

Evils of Cinema in India.

A large number of the films shown depict the worst side of western life. Women often in them are subject to ill treatment and violence, and there are scenes in films where a woman has been hit by a man.

In many films, the women of the west are shown as either sirens or vampires, and if neither of these, as of the clinging vine type. Hardly ever is the western woman shown in her truest nature.

Women and men appear in the film embracing each other, and sometimes in suggestive attitudes. Sometimes, women almost unclothed are shown which in India, and other countries also, does not help a man to be self-controlled or pure minded.

The large percentage of films, which show scenes of murders, violence and crime, or which are suggestive of crime, are bad for boys, who not infrequently form an appreciable part of a cinema audience and lead them just for fun or mischief to imitate what they have seen.

Contempt for the East in Films.

In films where the oriental appears, he is usually shown as dishonourable, cruel and dishonest, except possibly in the case of servants. Nearly all western films, which bring in orientals, show a western contempt for the east. For instance, if a Chinaman is shown, he is nearly always a crook or a crafty and unscrupulous person, always trying to kidnap and seduce European women.

False Idea of Western Life.

Since the uneducated masses attend the cinema, they get an appalling idea of life in western countries. They cannot but be convinced that the two greatest attractions in western life are drink and sex gratification.

The posters advertising cinemas sometimes are distinctly pernicious, because of what they suggest. I saw one such poster recently in Madras.

I have been told that indecent films for private exhibition are being imported to India. I do not know whether there is any truth in this statement. Enquiries should be made.

Recommendations.

1. There should be women on the Board of Censors, and among them at least one Indian woman, who can judge of the effect of the films on the minds of Indian boys and girls.

2. All films, which show any race contempt, or bring the oriental religions into contempt, should be excluded. I have seen a film where a man prayed before the image of the Lord Buddha before he went out to commit a crime.

3. Films, which show degrading scenes of drink or sex, should be prohibited.

4. All films showing scenes of violence and crime should be completely barred from India.

On the other hand, encouragement should be given to films—

(1) Which are educational as showing how things are done. Films of various manufacturing and other processes are thoroughly suitable.

(2) Films, which show the life of animals, but where the animals are not killed as in hunting or sport, are also suitable. All films which show the life of animals should be shown slowly, so that people can clearly observe the movements of the animals.

(3) There should be more Indian films depicting Indian scenes in a real Indian atmosphere.

(4) Encouragement should be given to films which have some kind of a message to the people of an ethical nature. To fit in with Indian conditions, there is no reason why a film, for instance, of the famous South Indian Play of Mandanar should not be given with singing accompanying the film as shown. *Bajana* and film running together.

(5) There should be definitely certain days for children's films.

People go to cinema primarily for amusement, not for instruction and good amusing films are necessary. It is obvious that most people in a cinema appreciate heroism depicted in the films more than degradation. Wherever there is any noble deed, the audience applauds heartily. The natural tendency in the masses is to appreciate what is good and noble. But the masses can easily be degraded, and the worst called out of them by

***Oral Evidence of Mrs. DOROTHY JINARAJADASA, Vice-President,
Indian Women's Association, Madras, on Saturday, the 7th
January 1928.**

Chairman: Mrs. Jinarajadasa, the questions probably in which you will be most interested are Nos. 14, 24 and 27.

A. Yes, I think that is what I have touched on really in the notes that I have made.

Q. I don't think you need bother yourself about the industrial or the economic aspect.

A. Of course I know nothing about that. I have seen film places in Hollywood but that is all, only just going to see things, and from the outside mostly.

Q. And probably also you may be able to advise us on the question of the Indian actors and actresses.

A. Well, I can't say I am a very habitual attender of cinemas. I only go sometimes but when I have been, I have got some ideas on it.

Q. You belong to the Theosophical organisation?

A. Yes.

Q. As such you have travelled all over the world.

A. Nearly.

Q. Especially in the British Empire. You know most of the British Empire?

A. And America.

Q. Have you travelled in Japan?

A. No, nor in China.

Q. You belong to the Indian Women's Association here in Madras? You are one of the Vice-President?

A. I am Vice-President of the Indian Women's Association.

Q. And you take a very active interest in women's welfare in this country?

A. Yes.

Q. And you have constantly made representations to the legislature about social evils?

A. Yes, I have.

Q. And is the Indian Women's Association an active working body in Madras just now?

A. It is particularly active just now.

Q. You have had a women's conference.

A. We have had a series of meetings on the resolutions that we passed. Three meetings in Madras.

Q. You are one of the most active members of that organisation?

A. Well, I am thankful to say now the Hindu women are taking such an active part in it that we can begin to retire.

Q. Indian women in Madras are taking a live interest in social welfare?

A. Yes, very active.

Q. I am sorry you did not get a copy of the questionnaire. We sent it, I think, to Mr. Cousins.

A. Yes, I was away at the time and somehow or other it got lost.

Q. I don't know if you know whether they held a meeting about this—the Indian Women's Association?

A. No, I don't know.

Q. Now you have seen the cinemas in England and in America and in India, I take it?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think there is any difference in the standard of films shown? For instance take the pictures shown in England and those shown here in India. Do you think there is any difference in the standard of pictures?

A. I think sometimes the best films do not arrive here in India. Or I have not seen them. Of course, as I said, I am not a habitue of the cinema and I don't go very often, but when I do go, the films are of a second-rate character and some of the finest films that are shown in the west I don't think ever appear here. Some of them, of course, do.

Q. Can you mention one or two instances of what you consider the finest?

A. No, I really cannot. Because I don't go to the cinema sufficiently. I really know the worst points of the cinema. I think I am more prepared in my statement just to tell you what I think of the evils that are being done in India by the cinema and the harm that is being done.

Q. Of course, as a social worker your attention is more drawn to the evil than to the good points.

A. And I do not go enough to the cinema to know about the general average of films.

Q. But it is your general opinion, I see from your notes, that the western films as shown in this country have a tendency to demoralise.

A. Yes, I think as a rule western life, the very worst aspect of it is shown here in India and sometimes I wonder whatever kind of idea the masses of the people sitting down in the cheapest seats, what kind of idea they get of western life. They must think we are either hopelessly depraved or hopelessly mad, because they form their opinion of western life from what they see there.

Q. Don't you think you gather that impression more as a guess than from any conversations which you have had with Indians.

A. Of course, my conversations have been mostly with the more educated Indians and they seem to think that that is so, that unless an Indian had some personal knowledge of western people in their life they get a very curious idea of western life.

Q. So from conversation you also get that idea?

A. They also think it is the type of women that appears on the films that are shown here and the violence sometimes that is shown as done to women. A woman of the west is shown either as a siren or a vampire. The active part they take in national and reasonable life is not shown at all.

Q. Of course you recognise that the stage and the screen are intended merely to exaggerate certain aspects of life, otherwise they won't be attractive. It won't be a commercial proposition to exhibit merely the humdrum daily life of the nation.

A. But I think you can be amusing and interesting without being either vulgar or immoral or depraved. Particularly in India I think it is injurious for the people to see all these scenes of drinking and sex excitement.

Q. To which they are not accustomed? Do you think it has a tendency to make them vicious themselves?

A. Oh, most certainly.

Q. I mean you are not afraid so much of the impression they gather of the people in the west as of the effect produced on the life of the people here. That is what you have in mind?

A. Certainly it gives a very untrue idea of western life and then also you can tell from the way the audience behave that when they see a thing which excites them emotionally, scenes between men and women and drinking and racing and that kind of thing, you can tell from the kind of way they applaud or cheer that it is not having at all an elevating effect on them.

It does not help them to self-control or purity of mind. It debases them, this kind of thing, even if they don't understand exactly.

Q. If they see a dance hall you think the same impression would be produced on their mind?

A. I think it would be a worse impression in India because a scene like that does not exist in Indian life, men and women dancing together, and all that kind of thing is associated with immorality in the minds of people here and so they naturally think all these western people are immoral.

Q. Or if they see bathing on the beach?

A. You mean in actual fact?

Q. I mean in actual life.

A. Well, that is another matter.

Q. I suppose that produces the same effect.

A. Well, that I can't say. It is a different point.

Q. It is a different point. Only people don't look at it in the same way as they do at the cinema. But don't you think that also produces the same result in the minds of the Indian public?—When they see mixed bathing like that?

A. I should not think so; rather it does not produce that result any more than mixed bathing in a religious tank at festivals.

Q. But there men and women don't hold together.

A. However that is beside the point.

Q. You would cut out all such scenes where there is love-making or drinking?

A. Only where it is of a debasing character. But sometime you can make love and have an ennobling effect on the minds of the people. But there are these love-making scenes which are purely directed to stimulating the sex emotion and that kind of thing. That I think is harmful and pernicious: you can tell it too from the reaction on the audience.

Q. You see, the point of view which is pressed on one side is, "how is it then that in England and in other civilised countries these things are not taken exception to: why are they taken exception to only in India?"

A. I think that a certain number of people are taking exception to a great deal of films that are shown in the west.

Q. So you think they are equally demoralising in the west?

A. Even more in the east than in the west, because any Englishman or American who sees a film is able to relate that film to actual life. He knows what the life is and he can dissociate the film from real life. Here the masses of the people—I do not talk about the educated people—but the masses that attend the cinema, they are not able to dissociate the film from actual life.

Q. That is what many people have told us. You would not like, for instance, the every day amusement scenes which you have in Paris to be screened? I do not know if you see them when you go there. I have seen them in The Folies Bergeres and other places. I do not know if you have seen those places?

A. Yes. But I think it is not at all desirable to show them.

Q. Although thousands of people see them every day in Paris?

A. Yes, but why should we perpetuate those things?

Q. But then don't you think that people in this country should have an idea of the way in which people in the west amuse themselves?

A. I should show them things the western people do, that will help them. There are plenty of things in the west that are stimulating and helpful and amusing, and I believe the cinema needs to be amusing.

Q. Yes, but don't you think if you want to know a people, you must know their bad points as well as their good points?

A. I think it is as well for a certain number to know the worst side, but I do not see how it can be of any material use to the masses that live, for instance, in the back streets in Calcutta and Madras, to know the worst side of western life.

Q. You would advocate only the good side of a nation to be shown to other peoples?

A. Yes. That is why I do object very much to the worst side of Indian life being shown abroad. That is why I object to Miss Mayo's book very strongly.

Q. Although some portions of it may be true?

A. May be, but it is the Indian people's affair to put right their own bad customs.

Q. That remark of yours calls to my mind one remark which is often made. These films are not produced by the east. They are produced by the west, so that if there are any misrepresentations of the west, they are made by the westerner himself. Does not the remedy lie there, rather than censorship in this country?

A. It lies there as well, but we can in our own country keep out what we consider to be pernicious for the masses. Supposing there is a film taken showing animal sacrifice or phases of Indian life that are very undesirable, I object to these things being shown in a western show because it misrepresents the real true life of India. In the same way I object.

Q. I agree with you, you object to taking them out of the country. Similarly, they should object to taking them out of their country?

A. Yes. They could be shown in the country to which they belong.

Q. The duty of this country is to protect its people?

A. Yes.

Q. Simply because it happens to misrepresent any other nation, when it has no injurious effect on the people themselves, you do not think a country should take action?

A. Various films, such as Charlie Chaplin's and all kinds of things that are amusing—they do not happen in actual life, but I would certainly not keep them out of India, anything that is amusing and interesting, but only those pernicious and degrading class I would keep out.

Q. To that extent India ought to protect herself because it is pernicious to the people of the country?

A. Yes.

Q. And even if it does not actually produce the results, if it has a tendency to produce evil results, then the country should guard itself, that is your advice?

A. Yes.

Q. So that you do not put it from the point of view merely that it misrepresents the normal western life but on the ground that it is pernicious to the people of the country?

A. Yes.

Q. Of course, we all know you are a great friend of India, and so you think that it is not good from the point of view of Indian progress that such films should be shown in the country?

A. Yes.

Q. You think that stricter censorship is needed?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. You think the censorship as now observed is not adequate in that direction?

A. I do not know anything about the censorship.

Q. But judging from the pictures that you see?

A. Yes. I say at the bottom of the first page of my statement, "In films, where the oriental appears.....".

Q. I am coming to that later. I want to deal with it point by point. Have you seen many of the Indian pictures produced in the country?

A. Some of them.

Q. Do you think they will attract any audience in the west? What is the best picture you have seen which you appreciated very much?

A. I think "The Birth and Life of Shri Krishna".

Q. Do you think that will attract an audience in England?

A. I think one of two films would. It gives a real picture of the life of India and the life of the people.

Q. Will they have a commercial value?

A. I do not know about it, I could not say, but I should think the west would be interested in seeing a film of that sort.

Q. You refer to the fact that you have seen films where the oriental is shown in a bad light in the films shown in the west.

A. I have in mind one particular one, called "East of Suez." I thought that was a particularly unpleasant film. The Indian is represented as a dishonest, immoral, dishonourable kind of person, whose one idea is to kidnap and seduce European girls and so on.

Mr. Coatsman: When that film was last mentioned we tried to find out whether it was an American or an English production. Do you happen to remember?

A. No. I have no idea.

Chairman: If any film is produced in India, before it is taken out of the country would you advocate that it be shown to a proper authority before it is allowed to be exported out of the country—a film depicting Indian life?

A. I would only have films depicting Indian life that are showing the best side of India.

Q. Unless they are passed by a Board or a proper authority, you would not allow free taking of films or free export of films?

A. I think so. I have not really thought about it, but on the face of it it would seem to be a sensible idea.

Q. If it is produced in a country like Germany, England, or America, of course, it is a matter merely for political negotiations?

A. I suppose so.

Q. You cannot control production there, but we can control production of films here in our own country?

A. Yes, I should think so.

Q. Do you think there are many such pictures shown?

A. No. Where an Asiatic is depicted in America or England, he is generally depicted as a very unpleasant kind of person.

Q. It carries an impression about the country which is far from good. What about posters? Have you seen many posters which are objectionable?

A. There are some. I saw one yesterday that I thought was objectionable. It was rather curious, outside the Wellington Cinema in "Kiss Me Again." When I passed that way, my car was held up and I saw the picture of a woman with very little in the way of clothing. I happened to see at the moment a man coming up and looking at it and calling two or three friends of his to come and look at it. It obviously did not elevate their minds from the way they were looking at it. All the men passing that way during the course of the day will have a certain amount of downward push to their mentality. It must be harmful.

Q. You think there must be a way of checking the advertisement of such posters?

A. Yes, I think so. It is just as bad in the west as it is here. It needs reform there too.

Q. As regards these indecent films which you think are imported for private circulation.

A. That I absolutely know nothing about, but two or three people told me that really excessively indecent films are imported for private showing. I heard it in Bombay and somebody mentioned it to me here also. But I have no foundation for it except that somebody told me.

Q. I know the idea is prevalent on the Bombay side. I suppose the gentleman who mentioned it to you was also a Bombay gentleman?

A. Yes, or I had heard it in Bombay. I have no foundation for it myself.

Q. I did see a bit of a film like that on the Bombay side which was destroyed for fear of the police and they showed me a small portion. I suppose you have not seen the rules which are observed for censorship?

A. No.

Q. Many of the points which you have suggested as recommendations in your note, you will find, are already embodied in the rules which are observed by the Bombay Board of Censors for censoring films.

A. Are there Indian women on the Board of Censors?

Q. In the Punjab there is one, but I do not think there is one in Bombay.

A. I think they should be on every Board.

Q. I dare say they would reject many a scene, probably there may be a danger to the trade.

A. I would prefer to have a Board of women, but of course, I do not object to its being both men and women.

Q. The danger is they may be too prudish, the trade itself may disappear?

A. One does not want to be prudish, but I do not see why we should start with the idea that the people want to see things that are unpleasant. I do not think that the people are really half as bad as you make them out to be. Always in the cinema whenever there are unpleasant things or vulgar or degraded things shown, there is a sort of disapproval shown by the audience, especially when there is violence. But if there is any deed of heroism, anything noble done, when the villain is vanquished and the hero comes off all right because he has done right, there is always an applause of approval on the part of the audience. I believe that the mass of people would rather hear and see something that is decent and good and at the same time amusing.

Mr. Green: The contrast becomes more forcible if you have the good man and the villain, the noble and the ignoble, and so on?

A. I am only talking of a certain kind of film where you have a lady behaving in a disgusting, vulgar, drunken and immoral way. You do not go and see these things in ordinary life, but only on the film.

Chairman: Don't you think the trade is the best judge of what attracts the public?

A. No, certainly not.

Q. They know the commercial value of their own productions?

A. You can always get people to go and see things that are horrid. But they are just as ready and willing, in fact more so, to see things that are not so.

Q. Don't you think the troupes that come out—the revues and other things,—we saw one, "The Black Bottom Revue" in Calcutta,—and similar dramatic troupes come out. If girls appear least dressed, they think they are more attractive. That seems to be the way to attract audiences.

A. I think you rather do an injustice to human nature, because I think if you present them with a really good and amusing show in which the people are not clad up with clothes from head to foot, but anyhow ordinary, decently clad so as not to be suggestive and that kind of thing, I think people would...

Q. Why do they do it then?

A. I do not believe that the masses like immorality. If you supply them with that sort of thing you create the demand.

Q. What I am pointing out is this. If we adopt your advice we will have to stop these revue troupes coming out.

A. I think we could almost set an example to the world, that at least India wants to have things that are, not prudish and idiotic, but decent, not to do harm to the people. If they knew that India did not want that sort of thing, they would not supply it.

Q. But you see India is a very poor market compared with the 20,000 theatres which America alone has got. Your 250 theatres in India is hardly a quantity they need take into account at all.

A. The films that people of India would appreciate are the old Indian plays—the vast majority of them.

Q. Then you would encourage the growth of Indian films for that purpose?

A. Yes, certainly. I saw a Tamil play, called "The Nandasar," the Panchama saint. I think that could be shown as a film with *bhajana*.

Q. In order to put an end to this sort of western films you think that Government should take definite steps to encourage the growth of Indian films of that character?

A. Yes, *bhajana* and film running together simultaneously.

Q. So every effort in that direction should be made?

A. Most strongly made.

Q. By giving subsidies and otherwise?

A. Yes.

Q. That will be a remedy for the evil you see in the films now?

A. That is perfectly obvious from the very large audiences that go and see religious films.

Q. We were impressed with that everywhere—that large numbers of people went to see Indian films although their technique was very poor, in preference to seeing most perfect western films.

A. Yes, and enthusiastic applauses are always called up if the figure of Shri Krishna or anything like that comes on the screen.

Q. Even "Ali Baba and The Forty Thieves" has drawn crowded houses.

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You know that the Social Hygiene Delegation visited India sometime back?

Chairman: Did you meet them at all?

A. I was ill at the time, otherwise I should have met them. I met Mrs. Rolfe when I was in Europe last summer and we had several private conversations together.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you think if the sex portion is removed from the sex films, the orthodox people will visit the cinemas in greater numbers?

A. I do not know.

Q. Or do you think the cinema will have to be closed down?

A. I do not think the cinema will have to be closed down. People will continue to go to the cinema.

Q. Even without these scenes?

A. They will go in very much larger numbers, especially if you introduce Indian films and films with the old Indian stories, stories that are now

dramatised, and if you ran the film and the *bhajana* together I think you would have to enlarge your cinema houses.

Q. You have recommended a lady on the Board. Would you like representatives of the Vigilance Association and such other associations to be there?

A. Yes, probably that would be useful. So long as there are suitable ladies, it does not matter what organisations they belong to.

Q. Don't you think there is danger of the Censorship Board getting into the hands of cranks.

A. Not necessarily. It need not be from the Vigilance Association and things like that. But it could be free and independent women elected from the recreation clubs or something like that—any woman that is suitable and has understanding and knowledge.

Q. We were told yesterday by the President of the Censorship Board that there ought to be an advisory committee to advise Government for the encouragement of the cinema industry here. Do you think there ought to be a separate advisory Board, or do you suggest that the present Censorship Board should be enlarged.

A. I do not think I can answer that because I do not know anything about the Advisory Board.

Q. It is suggested that it should be created. There is none at present here.

A. I have not thought about it. I really do not know.

Q. Have you seen any films produced by the Christian missionaries in India?

A. No.

Q. Shown in England of an Indian character?

A. No, never, I have never heard of them. Are there any?

Chairman: There are some.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: We were told that the Indian is shown in a shady character for the sake of collecting money. That is what we were told in some places.

A. No. I have not come across missionary people, in fact, not at all.

Q. What help should Government give to encourage the film industry here? Have you thought it out?

A. No.

Q. Government ought to give some help?

A. I think Government ought to subsidise and give help particularly

Q. To give technical education too?

A. Yes, I think that would be quite useful. It is a very good industry to start in India.

Q. And facilities ought to be given for viewing public places?

A. Yes. Personally I would not have films glorifying war, but that is only a private opinion of my own.

Q. Do you think that respectable ladies will come forward as members of the Board without any remuneration?

A. Yes. There are plenty of women who are willing to do social service in India without remuneration.

Q. Do you think that any respectable lady will come forward to take part in the production of films as actresses?

A. Yes, I am sure. It would mean a certain amount of education of men as well, because sometimes men do not know how to behave when respectable ladies come. It will be quite possible particularly if a lady like Mrs. Kamala Chattopadhyaya is connected with it because she herself has already played in plays with her husband. You know her probably, and

you would need a lady of that type really to teach men how to behave because men are unaccustomed to act with ladies, and you would have a kind of ethical school for actors and actresses.

Colonel Crawford: I understand you do not visit cinemas very often?

A. No.

Q. Wherefrom then did you gather your impression that the films shown are rather bad? I am not saying I do not agree with you, but I wish to know wherefrom you gathered that impression.

A. I did not mean I do not go at all. I do not go twice a week always. If I go twice one week sometimes, I do not go at all for ten weeks, and so on.

Q. But your impressions are gathered from personal experience and also by talking with other people?

A. I do not talk very much about it with other people. From what I have seen myself.

Q. You say that a poster was objectionable. What action did you take on it?

A. Nothing. But I generally do take action, I am rather a nuisance in that way. I might have done something, but I thought as I was going to give evidence before this Committee to-day, I might mention it here. That is the action I have taken.

Q. In your conversations with Mrs. Rolfe did she bring up the question of cinema in India?

A. No, not at all. It was at the British Commonwealth League Conference that I met her and afterwards we were having tea with the Secretary. She wanted to bring up a resolution.

Chairman: Did she bring it up in conversation with you?

A. Only incidentally. Her resolution was disallowed and nothing more was done.

Colonel Crawford: The rules of censorship laid down practically cover everything that is of an objectionable nature. Of what particular scenes would you recommend that we should suggest a stricter censorship?

A. Particularly where they have scenes of men and women getting drunk and dancing about and throwing things about, things like that. Also where there are scenes of crime, where they show exactly how the criminal does the thing. These I have not come across at all in India but in America. I have known boys doing things they have seen in the cinema in America. Of course, that might be the tendency in India at any time. They have done things, they have sometimes committed crimes which led to murder. That is more the American boys' temperament.

Q. I gather you are strongly in favour of some effort to raise the standard of story depicted on the screen?

A. Yes.

Q. That you would like your censorship, in fact, not to be negative, but to be positive?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you any suggestions as to how that could be carried out in practice?

A. I have not thought about it.

Q. Would you say that it would be possible in practice to form an aesthetic sub-committee of your censorship board with a view to classifying films as of a particularly fine or good quality, with a view to giving preference to that type of film and gradually encouraging the greater production of that stamp of film. Do you think it would be practicable to form such a body?

A. I think so.

Q. In practice would there be such a difference of opinion among the members of the sub-committee that they would never come to a conclusion?

A. I think the sub-committee will have to be a carefully chosen body, who would work reasonably and harmoniously with each other.

Q. It is a question of opinion as to what is artistic and aesthetic.

A. Not only that, but you have got to keep in mind amusement.

Q. It must have an entertainment value or it won't pay. But you think that some such body would be useful?

A. I think that would be very useful if it could possibly be done.

Mr. Green: You told us that you feared the effect of the present class of films on the uneducated classes?

A. Yes.

Q. I take it the uneducated form a very considerable portion of the audience?

A. More or less uneducated.

Q. I take it that the effect on the fully educated is probably not very serious?

A. No, I should not think so. Not very serious.

Q. But there is an intermediate class—they are students or adolescents. We have had evidence that students form a very large part of the audience in many places in India. What about them? They are to a certain degree educated.

A. I think the films that we have been talking about can only have a bad effect on them. I think to show scenes of drunkenness or immorality cannot possibly have any good effect, particularly on an adolescent mind. Perhaps it has got a worse effect on the student than on the quite uneducated person, the coolie type of man who may go there.

Q. Do you really think it has a bad effect on the people?

A. I should say yes; especially in the case of the uneducated people and the adolescent boys. It stimulates their emotions.

Q. Is it your view that in certain cinemas shown in this part of the country, the audience is more keen on the story than anything else, so far as they understand the story?

A. Yes.

Q. Especially so in the case of those films which show that in the end good always triumphs?

A. Yes, if good triumphs in the end, there is a sort of satisfaction to the audience; but I think in the adolescent boy it stimulates the emotions, and it will do him much harm.

Q. Do you consider that the level of censorship should be such as to pass no films that are not thoroughly satisfactory from that point of view?

A. I suppose it would be well to do that.

Q. We get various kinds of films, and it will be hardly possible to exclude any particular film. How then are we to adjust the censorship?

A. Of course, there are not many which do harm to the children and boys.

Q. Can you exclude the boy entirely?

A. We cannot exclude him, but we can exclude the film. After all, there are not many films which will do harm.

Q. What action can we take to prohibit such films?

A. If we exclude from India all undesirable films, and if the world come to know that India has excluded such and such films and there is no demand for them, there would not be much sale.

Chairman: There are about 30,000 theatres in the west while we have only about 250 theatres here of a mediocre kind?

A. But the whole empire will realise that India has realised that the films are undesirable; in fact there is already a movement in other countries in this direction, and I think such films will be excluded in other countries also.

Mr. Green: There is a proposal that there should be a central board of censorship for all imported films. Do you think that suitable men or women will work on such a board without remuneration?

A. No. It will mean that they will have to do a lot of inspection work. There must be full time paid workers, I think.

Mr. Coatman: You told us just now something about the effect of certain films on the adolescents, particularly the student class. Is there any general apprehension on the part of the parents of the students as to the effect of the films on their children?

A. The mothers do not generally see them, but if they do, certainly I think they will be horrified.

Q. Have any parents talked to you about the effects they have noticed on their children?

A. Quite a number of them have talked of the harm the film does in stimulating emotions in boys and giving them certain ideas of western life which are curious.

Q. Does your experience lead you to believe that any bad effect has been produced on the students and young people with whom you come in contact?

A. No; but from the way in which students talk about films, I think it leaves a curious impression on them as to the western life and leads to the idea that there is generally immorality of men and women in England and America.

Q. Do you think that the cheap American films now-a-days exhibited, depicting love scenes, etc., are a slow poison and that their effect might be cumulative?

A. I think so. It has certainly a pernicious effect on the youth of India.

Q. And you think that the sooner something is done to cut out the exaggerations the better?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. Apart from the effect of films on sexual emotions, have you any reason to believe that they foster a desire on the part of the Indian youth to imitate western institutions, such as dancing clubs and night clubs?

A. Yes, I should think so. They foster a curiosity as to what such institutions are and they desire to experience such things as they see.

Q. You think then that it is within the bounds of possibility that in the near future we may see a night club or a dancing club started in Madras?

A. Certainly.

Mr. Neogy: We have been discussing more or less the moral aspects of the western film. We have been told that the life of ease and luxury which is constantly depicted in the western films has also a demoralising effect on the youths which may be quite as deplorable as the effect produced by the sex films. Do you agree with that view?

A. It might; such things appeal to the youth very often.

Q. I speak of things which it may not be possible for the average Indian ever to realise in his own life?

A. I do not know whether such a thing can have any demoralising effect on him.

Q. Can it not have any effect on him, and lead to extravagance and discontent?

A. Yes. But I do not think the cinema is directly responsible for that. Long before the cinema was introduced here, people were trying to live up to a standard not consistent with their income, i.e., spending more than they could afford and so on. But that has nothing to do with the cinema, I think.

Q. Is there any tendency to denationalise the people here with the films depicting civilisations which are so different from our own?

A. That is why I strongly recommend Indian films.

Q. So you think the gradual replacement of the western films by Indian is the best remedy?

A. Yes; but I also think that it is good to show the other parts of the world as well. That may be of some educative value.

Q. Replacement to a certain degree of these objectionable films?

A. I don't say objectionable films. I only say I want more Indian films.

Q. As regards misrepresentation of Indian life in western films, have you any remedy to recommend?

A. Yes. We can have really good films made here of Indian life and let them go to the western countries.

**Written Statement of Miss D. de la HAY, M.A. (Oxon.), Principal,
Queen Mary's College for Women, Madras, dated the 22nd Nov-
ember 1927.**

INTRODUCTORY.

1. No special knowledge. I have discussed the matter with Indian and Anglo-Indian members of my staff and students.

2. At the Elphinstone Theatre, Madras.

(a), (1) A few attend often and a large number of men students attend very frequently.

(b) A large proportion of men students, cheapest tickets, mainly taken by illiterate classes.

(c) very few children under 14. But 2/3rd of the audience are adolescents.

PART I.

3. The most popular film I have seen here was "The Thief of Bagdad." Students of this college who rarely go out at all went to this film. I attribute its popularity to its being a first class film in an Eastern setting.

5. Indian-produced films are not at present popular, because they are generally badly set, and slow in action. They usually deal with religious stories which are depicted in a theatrical manner contrary to received tradition and association.

6. (a) Would be popular if well-done.

14. Good educational films are very desirable and would be patronised if the charge for admission was low.

PART II.

Social aspects and control.

24. (a) No. Opinion seems to be that Western films depicting so foreign a manner of life have no great influence on Indian Morals, that the stories are not taken seriously.

(b) No.

(d) Yes.

27. In my personal opinion the lower class of American films does misrepresent Western Civilisation and does lower it in the eyes of Indians, especially lowering their opinion of the Western woman. Indian friends whom I have consulted, however, do not agree with me in this. They consider that these films are not harmful for the same reason as that given in answer to No. 24. I have no suggestions to make on this point. The cinema is expected to provide excitement, and films dealing entirely with the virtuous lives of virtuous citizens would be exceedingly dull.

29. I do not think that films of the type that require certification are exhibited in this Province.

32. Yes.

Oral Evidence of Miss D. de la HAY, M.A. (Oxon.), Principal, Queen Mary's College for Women, Madras, on Saturday, the 7th January 1928.

Chairman: You are the Principal of the Queen Mary's College?

A. Yes.

Q. That college is growing popular and more and more pupils are seeking admission there?

A. We have not gone up in numbers of recent years. We are just going up again.

Q. Do you think girls see the cinema?

A. Not very much. I have about 200 resident students, and they go comparatively very little. Those that go most are the Anglo-Indian girls who live in Madras and go with their parents on week-ends.

Q. So, Indian girls do not frequent the cinema?

A. They go very little.

Q. Do you go to the cinema yourself much?

A. Not very often.

Q. When was the 'Thief of Baghdad' shown here?

A. About three or four years ago. That is the most popular film I have ever seen.

Q. Have you seen any Indian film, i.e., film produced in India?

A. I have not.

Q. So you cannot tell us what crowds they attract?

A. No.

Q. You are for patronising a number of educational films?

A. That would be a good thing, but what about the question of cost?—that is the most difficult point.

Q. But you think it will be desirable to supplement the education given in schools, especially to girls and women, by introducing the film also?

A. I suppose it could not be a regular part of the curriculum, but I think it would be helpful occasionally.

Q. We were told by the Deputy Director, yesterday that when shows like that are given, i.e., in the shape of magic lanterns or dramas, in schools and colleges, Indian women go there more freely than to a public show?

A. Certainly, yes.

Q. You think that the Government should spend money on producing educational films for that purpose?

A. I do not know.

Q. What I want to know is that, supposing public money is spent in that direction, will it be well spent?

A. I think so.

Q. Would you also hold that it is a necessary purpose? i.e., to impart education to people in the country by means of films?

A. It is not always necessary, but I think it will be helpful.

Q. Don't you think that films showing the geographical conditions, natural scenery, the standard of life of other countries, use of modern methods of agriculture and machinery and all that will go great way to remove ignorance in the country?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Of the women-folk especially?

A. Yes.

Q. In that way, you don't consider it essential to remove ignorance in the country?

A. I think it is.

Q. You are a great educationalist in our province. From your experience, will you advocate the use of films for these purposes?

A. If it is a really good film, I should make every effort to make my students go and attend it.

Q. You do not apprehend that the cinema has any other influence on the public?

A. I have not seen anything objectionable so far. Of course there are some scenes, like people in night clothes, and some American plays which are undignified.

Q. Don't you think they have any demoralising effect?

A. They are not such as to call for any notice, at any rate, not so far as I have seen.

Q. I suppose you see films pretty frequently?

A. I should say once a month.

Q. Have you heard it commented on by people with whom you come in contact that the cinema has got any bad influence?

A. I have been asking people since I was put down as a witness before this Committee, and generally speaking, they said no.

Q. You have not made any particular enquiries?

A. Yes. The general opinion is that it has not got any bad influence. One former student, now a teacher, said she thought passionate sex films were dangerous in the same way as novels of that description.

Q. You believe that if the cinema is to flourish, it has to live on excitement and amusement?

A. It has to.

Q. Otherwise it will refuse to attract people?

A. Yes; but it is not necessarily sex films that attract crowds. The films that have got much action in them, like 'Douglas Fairbanks' and others attract great crowds.

Q. You think the ordinary people generally prefer to see films which are full of thrills and action?

A. Yes.

Q. The only difficulty is about the students. You don't think they will leave any bad impression on them?

A. I think not.

Col. Crawford: Are you completely for the exclusion of the American films in India?

A. I think there are too many of these cheap American comedies that give a wrong impression of western civilisation. I was present at one of the gatherings in the Presidency College and one of the boys there made a tremendous trade against the Western women and I thought he drew such

ideals from the films. I feel that we cannot help getting wrong impressions from those American comedies.

Q. Have you any suggestion to make in order to remove that difficulty?

A. No.

Q. Do you think there is any method of encouraging the film industry here, say by way of check on some of the American films?

A. I think we can get a few more educational films.

Q. You said that we might consider the possibility of insisting on the exhibitor showing an educational film in every programme?

A. I won't say every programme. No doubt it may be tried; but could not an educational film, such as the Nature Study films one sees in England, be put in between the topical news and the main feature, instead of a cheap American comedy?

Q. Do you think we should make any definite recommendation regarding children attending the cinema?

A. No, they are few I think.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Did you see the "Thief of Bagdad" with the Mussulman students of your college?

A. No, I went by myself. None of my Muslim students go to the cinema.

Q. Are there many of them?

A. I have only five.

Q. Have you any cinema outfit in your own college?

A. No.

Q. Is it worth while having one?

A. I hardly think so.

Q. Is any amateur performance done by those students?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think any ladies will come in to take part in cinema acting?

A. Not at present, at any rate not the best type.

Q. Have you any suggestion to make, from an educational point of view, regarding educational films?

A. I do not know, because I have seen hardly any here and I did not happen to see many at home.

Q. Is it worth trying?

A. They do not come in at all.

Q. There are many in Lahore, Karachi and many other places?

A. But they never come here, so that I have had no opportunity to see them.

Q. You can send for them?

A. It is a question of money always.

Q. If you have an outfit of this kind, it will be very useful to the students of your college. It will save you also a lot of trouble?

A. Possibly.

**Written Statement of Diwan Bahadur P. PARANKUSAM NAYUDU,
I.S.O., Retired Deputy Commissioner of Police, Madras.**

1. Yes. To a certain extent. While I was acting Commissioner of Police for a number of months, I was the President of the Board of Censoring Films. In Madras in Pathe Cinema Mr. manufactured a number of Indian Films, such as Bhishma's Vow, etc. They were very popular. But the industry had to meet with failure on account of lack of financial help.

2. (a) My experience refers to the Madras City.

(1) One-third of the educated classes and their ladies and

(2) Two-thirds of the non-educated classes frequent the cinema.

(b) In the area of the City in which labour classes reside, the audience consists mainly of them.

(c) A very small percentage such as 10 per cent. will be children under 14 years of age.

3. Films depicting scenes of Mahabharat, Ramayana and other Purans and especially stories of Bhakthas of Pandaripur and other religious places are most popular. Even the higher classes of people mostly ladies visit cinemas when such films are exhibited.

4. Probably so.

5. (a), (b), (c) Indian films produced locally such as Bhishma's Vow, Krishna Leela, Pathi Bhakti, etc., were of fairly good quality and were very popular.

6. (a) Yes.

(b) Films rousing the feelings of religious zeal and mortality are more appreciated by the educated classes whereas illiterate population are attracted by scenes of excitement, etc.

7. Nil.

8. (a), (b) The industry has suffered greatly for want of encouragement by Government or by public bodies, want of finance being the chief reason.

9. Good films would be available if competent young men specially chosen for the purpose are trained in the industry and made to carry on the manufacture of films under proper supervision. Yes. There is a monopoly of the supply and the exhibition of films by one or two companies of Calcutta and Bombay on whom the exhibitors have to depend for their supply.

10. Nil.

11. No. They have to depend upon the previous reputation which the film has obtained.

12—13. Nil.

14. Yes. With the encouragement that may be given by the Government, the film industry in this country must progress. There is demand but such films are not available.

15—16. Certainly. There are producers, etc., in the country who can produce really good films. The services of any good actor or actress from a foreign country may be utilised for this purpose. Indian States can supply very good material for processions, festivals, etc.

17. No, unless the Government can initiate in the production of good films and show to the exhibitors that it is a paying concern.

18. Private enterprises have proved a failure for lack of proper supervision and check in the administration of funds. Yes. Government will have to encourage the Industry and arrange for proper production and administration of funds.

19. I think films in this country are cheaper than those of the foreign countries.

20. (a), (b), (c) Yes. I think the expenditure would be justifiable considering the amount of good it might do to the country by promoting loyalty, mortality, and good citizenship. As this is a paying concern, I do not think the Government will eventually lose their money in the concern.

21. It is in my opinion not desirable. Each Province must have a central distributing Agency.

24. (a), (b), (c) Yes. American films showing acts of knaves jumping from great heights and using fire-arms for the purpose of escape have been copied in India by Criminal classes. Love scenes are also being copied by

young men so as to have demoralising effect in social life. Young boys take to the mischievous habit of smoking cigarettes, etc.

(d), (e), (f) In my experience one of the criminals jumped from a great height and committed crime in houses by scaling over house tops and jumping down wells. I do not think that there is adequate censorship in the films received from abroad so as to suit Indian requirements.

25. Yes.

26. (a) Yes.

28. Films had a bad effect on adolescents in trying to imitate smoking cigarettes, etc.

30. Yes. Children below 14 years should be prohibited from visiting cinemas when they exhibit love scenes, etc.

32. The present system of censorship is not satisfactory. There ought to be experienced whole-time censors.

34. (a) No. The Provincial Boards ought to continue as they would be in a position to judge of the local requirements. The Provincial Board should be at the Capital City of the Presidency.

35. (a) The present constitution of Provincial Boards is not satisfactory.

(b) I would prefer it.

36. (a) Examination by Inspectors can never be satisfactory.

(b) Yes.

38. Yes.

40. I do not consider it necessary.

41. Yes. In the case of films producing stories of devotees and other religious preachers.

45. (b) Yes.

I am of opinion that import of films from foreign countries exhibiting criminal acts and love scenes, etc., should be discouraged. Indian films which might promote loyalty, patriotism and devotion to God must be greatly encouraged. The Government has to establish at each capital city a film manufacturing concern and they have to finance it and show to the people that the concern is a profitable one and then to hand the industry over to several capitalists. But the Government must have a supervising control and effective check on the manufacture of films and their exhibition.

Oral Evidence of Diwan Bahadur P. PARANKUSAM NAYUDU,
I.S.O., Retired Deputy Commissioner of Police, Madras, on
Saturday, the 7th January 1928.

Chairman: Diwan Bahadur, all your life you have been a policeman?

A. For about 35 years, and in this city for about 15 years.

Q. You also acted as the Commissioner of Police?

A. Yes for a number of months.

Q. And you were Deputy Commissioner for a long time?

A. For 12 years.

Q. And you also served in the districts?

A. Yes, prior to this for about 20 years.

Q. I think we may say that you are fairly familiar with Indian life in the country?

A. I think so.

Q. Well we are anxious to get your views about the effect of the cinema on the public; we are perplexed about it as we get all sorts of evidence before us.

A. When I was Acting Commissioner of Police I was President of the Board of Censors and I have also visited now and then these exhibitions and also I have seen people who have attended such exhibitions; in a way it has a demoralising effect on youngsters and criminal classes of people; just as when there is any religious film exhibited, educated people, gentlemen and ladies frequent the cinema, but mostly the American films of excitement and love are visited by the labouring classes and the middle classes; and it has some effect on the criminal classes as to the way in which they should perpetrate crimes and effect escapes. I can quote you one instance. You know there was a gang of idlers in Madras called *Somberis*. One of them got on to the tower in front of the Law College. He at first got up 5 feet and then 10 feet and then went up to the top and practised to jump. Then he used to go on the tops of houses. You know Thambu Chetty Street in Georgetown. He would jump from one house-top to another and it was after very great difficulty that we were able to find out who was the criminal. Then I had police placed all round. He managed to escape because he could jump from one place to another; when the police was on one side, he jumped on the other side and escaped. Then at last one day we caught him with stolen property and we booked him. Then he came back from jail and attempted to remove some jewels from the persons of ladies and children. One night an alarm was raised, and the house was surrounded by the police. He got on to a temple wall 35 feet high, and jumped down from there. Luckily he dislocated his leg. He then got into a heap of rubbish and covered himself up. Then the police went about with a lantern but could not find him though they knew he was in the temple; because an alarm was raised and it was surrounded. At day-break an intelligent policeman shoved all this rubbish over and then the man came out. Then I asked him how he had managed to learn this. He told me the way by which he first practised it by attending the cinema. I got the impression that the criminals take to this sort of thing by seeing it in the cinema where they see people jumping from the tops of houses.

Q. You think it is due to the influence of the cinema; but may I put it to you—You know our Tanjore thieves; they used to jump from great heights long before the cinema came.

A. You must know the Madras people were not accustomed to these things. The *kallars* of Tanjore of course were experts in such things. I remember the old *alanquin* dacoits knew how to escape, and they would lift cattle up to great heights; but in Madras the people were not accustomed to it because they were afraid.

Mr. Coatman: All the Madras criminals come from Tanjore!

A. The people I referred to were an illiterate gang of *Somberis* of Madras.

Chairman: We in Tanjore knew this sort of thing long before the cinema came.

A. I could give a long account of the old days and how dacoities were committed. Cattle lifting was done in Tanjore by the *kallars*, but in Madras this was not familiar at all. But this fellow told me, because I asked him, that he used to attend the cinema. Criminals are very fond of attending the cinemas.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: This may have been an exceptional case.

Chairman: Diwan Bahadur, you may be interested to hear that you are the first policeman to think that the cinema has introduced crime or methods of crime.

A. It may be but I adhere to my statement because it is only after the cinema exhibitions, I have heard of escapes, dacoities with revolvers and fire-arms and escapes by murderers, abductions by motor cars, etc. All this has been learned by our people of course only after this. Just as a religious piece has a very good effect and people are carried away by it. Similarly these ignorant people think there is no harm in repeating or getting trained in that art. I am of that opinion although all my brother officers may be

of a different opinion. I still hold that this new kind of committing offences and escaping has been due to some films, American films, which have been exhibited in this city.

Q. Any way that is your view. You of course realise that modern ideas spread and people see in newspapers certain accounts of how Western groups act.

A. That may be so in Calcutta; but so far as Madras people are concerned, they are not educated and these undesirable films which depict criminal propensities or activities educate them.

Q. Then as regards the youth, you think these films have got a demoralising effect?

A. Yes, I can quote an instance. A young boy of mine, 4 years old, has been trying to take hold of a small stick and put it in his mouth, smoking with all his energy. I asked him what was the matter. Yesterday he said, he had seen someone smoking in the cinema. It would be bad for him to start smoking at that early age, so I removed it and said that it was a bad practice. But when he goes to school, I don't think I will be able to prevent it. Similarly these illiterate boys of the cooly classes imitate these things because they are not educated.

Q. How are you going to stop it? You cannot stop smoking on the films.

A. That has become a habit. Especially in the police department many young men who become gazetted officers smoke as if that is one of the accompaniments, or necessities of their office. I do not object to European gentlemen smoking. It is a matter of necessity with them but for our people smoking is quite unnecessary.

Q. But don't you think these things you so much deprecate are due more or less to modern conditions which are being introduced everywhere?

A. But we must discourage as far as possible these modern things. Of course you know what trouble we are landed in on account of the undesirable resolutions that are being passed in assemblies in these days; and all this is due to modern ideas. These modern ideas as a matter of fact should be curbed as far as it lies in the power of Government. If you allow modern things to go on, you don't know where the matter will end. So far as your committee is concerned, I would impress upon you that you should discourage as far as possible these modern introductions.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Only the bad ones, not the good ones? The good ones we must encourage?

A. You have not asked me about the good ones. I have been dealing with the subject from the criminal point of view and the demoralising point of view. It is those films with kissing scenes and love scenes with great excitement which have a demoralising effect upon labourers. Other films are very good and they should be encouraged. We must try to get something specially from England. Of course, English films are very sober in my opinion. We must try to discourage as far as possible those films which encourage these excitements, but we should not discourage the other because they are educative on many points.

Chairman: General knowledge?

A. Yes.

Q. But you don't object to good style of living being shown.

A. No. I would encourage that. As my predecessor has said, we must have a small cinema in every college where educational films can be exhibited during times of leisure or as a matter of recreation; and that would educate young children and give very good educative results.

Q. And also adult education?

A. Yes, if we could possibly have them, we should have cinemas in night classes for labourers. We already have some night schools and in such places we might have small cinemas where the labourers could be educated as to the kind of work they have to do and the kind of life they should

lead and what kind of life people in a similar trade in Bombay or Calcutta lead; and how they should not waste their time. All this would be of great value.

Q. You I suppose recognise that the cinema is more for amusement than for education?

A. It is so at present; it is more for amusement than for education.

Q. But do you think you can ever make education the primary object of the cinema?

A. I don't think you can have such a thing as was indicated when our friend there put a question that we should insist upon exhibitors having educational films.

Q. Say out of 8,000 feet, show 500 feet in the beginning or middle which will be of an educative kind.

A. In that sense I quite agree, because we already show advertisement films in these shows if they are paid for. Advertisement films are shown in this way. People do not attach great value to them and they expect something better. Anyhow we may have these educational films to a certain extent.

Q. Now I suppose you have seen Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. They are very popular?

A. They are very popular provided they are true pictures of Hindu mythology; the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and other Puranas. Even respectable ladies go and see these exhibitions. They are very popular provided they are well made. For instance, "Bhishma's Vow" was very popular and attended by many people.

Q. Can you tell us how is it films are not made in Madras?

A. There was a start made by very respectable people, but owing to lack of proper supervision over the administration of the funds and the manufacture of films, it was a failure. There are persons here who can manufacture films but there should be a very good controlling body over the finances and expenditure as well as the production of films.

Q. What do you mean by controlling body? You mean capital is shy in that respect?

A. No, the capital is simply paid into the hands of the producer.

Q. People who have no business knowledge or business training?

A. They have no business knowledge. In the case to which I have referred, the Venkiah Sons, they did not know how to spend the money; the money was wasted and the concern had to be wound up. That was because they had no good supervising body.

Q. If they had had a good business manager?

A. They would have made a successful concern of it.

Q. Do you think there is considerable scope for the film industry in our province?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think then that steps should be taken by Government in that direction?

A. Yes. My impression is that Government must first start the concern and show people and capitalists specially that it can be made a profitable concern.

Q. As they did in the case of the pencil factory, and the aluminium industry, for instance?

A. Yes. If only people get to know it is a paying concern, then they will come in but not till then, because our financiers do not want to embark on such ventures.

Q. So you think Government should pioneer this industry?

A. I think so, if they want to improve the loyalty and morality of the people they must take the lead in this matter.

Q. You think this is a very useful function which the Government can perform.

A. It will help the Government a great deal, specially with the masses who are perfectly ignorant of what is going on around them.

Q. So it will be money most usefully spent to pioneer this industry?

A. Yes.

Q. You attach great importance to educational films, as you just now mentioned?

A. Yes.

Q. The Government may start making these films themselves?

A. Yes, at first, and if they want to make money, I don't think educational films will give them much money but if they go in for amusement films also, that will pay.

Q. Provided they do not interfere with private industry—but of course in our province there is no private industry.

A. We can have money from Government or any local body.

Q. The Government should pioneer the industry or subsidise it?

A. Yes.

Q. Now you have very little work—have you not noticed when you were President—as a Board?

A. As a matter of fact the Censorship Board was a failure. It was not a success because there was very little work for it. I was one of them and spent an hour or two on the days we sat. But the inspecting officer must have complete control to see the thing completely. In my time there were four members, one a military officer, one a schoolmaster, one a policeman, and another person. We had to cut out some portions passed by other provinces. But that is not the way. We must have a whole-time man who can see everything himself and be responsible because he must be a person who must know the feelings of the people. In the case of a Board, like every committee it meets perfunctorily and again disperses after the usual hour because the school master for instance has to attend the school at ten o'clock. They cannot give as much time as a whole-time inspecting officer. But of course in Madras you have not much scope because only few films come in here and those films have already been passed by other provinces.

Q. So there is very little work. But you believe that wherever censorship is performed it would be better performed by well paid whole-time officer?

A. Yes, a full time officer who must have some experience of film manufacture.

Q. Experience of film manufacture—why?

A. If a film manufacturing Board or producing Board is started in every province, they will be able to check a film when it is being produced and not after everything is finished.

Q. You want to interfere during the process of production?

A. That would be more profitable.

Q. It may be but it would be interfering with the producers' work.

A. If the plot is already made, he can advise and suggest to the producer.

Q. Well would you advocate it in an advisory capacity during the process of production? Leaving it optional to the producer to consult the advisory board?

A. Yes and in addition to this officer who will be responsible for passing these films, I would even recommend an advisory board of non-officials who would also have some kind of check over the film production.

Q. And assist in the production?

A. Yes.

Q. You believe that Government should encourage the growth of this industry?

A. Without that, this industry will not thrive.

Q. Nor do you think the evils we complain of in Western films can be removed without adequate production of Indian films?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: For how long were you president of the board?

A. About 9 or 10 months—now and then—to fill up gaps.

Q. You had no occasion to read the instructions given to inspectors for examining these films?

A. I was not supplied with that.

Q. Not as President of the Board either?

A. No.

Q. The police inspector goes and inspects films. The Commissioner of Police mentioned that he deputed the police inspector to examine the films.

A. That is an innovation; it was not so in my time.

Q. It was mentioned by the Commissioner and by the Government of Madras that he deputed an inspector of police.

Chairman: Where a film is already passed in another province he goes and sees if it is certified and whether there is anything wrong with it.

A. That was not the practice when I was Commissioner of Police.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You had no occasion to send an inspector?

A. No.

Q. Who used to go and inspect films?

A. The Board used to inspect films in my time.

Q. There was no occasion for the Board during those 10 months to see any films?

A. A number of films were seen and certificates passed. They cut off certain portions.

Q. You say there are one or two monopolists who come in the way of encouragement of this industry.

A. Well, of course there is Madan's and some Calcutta firm—I don't know its name.

Q. What means do you suggest to break up this monopoly?

A. This is the only way: the Government must come in; because those people had the money and they knew the tricks of the trade and set up a monopoly.

Q. In what way can Government come in?

A. By financing, supervising and starting the industry on its legs.

Q. Giving subsidies to people?

A. Yes.

Q. On what security should the Government do so?

A. As a matter of fact they should only employ their own person to safeguard their interests.

Q. Actually they must themselves do the whole thing?

A. They must show the way at first.

Q. From where are these finances to come?

A. Well, of course the Government must budget for it.

Q. Should they levy an amusement tax. Are you in favour of an amusement tax for this purpose or any other tax?

A. I do not agree to any further tax being imposed upon the people, but there are so many ways.

Q. What ways? Can you suggest one or two?

A. This is money which you are going to get back and therefore I do not want that the people should be taxed. If we have an amusement tax, it will of course make the exhibitor lose and we want to encourage the industry by all means. Therefore we cannot have such a tax.

Q. They should take the money from their revenues?

A. Yes, and then they are going to get it back.

Q. In what way? By getting more revenue?

A. This is a kind of source of income. I say it will be a paying concern for the Government to take up this work.

Q. They will get in return some revenue?

A. And then give it up. They will show to the capitalist that it is a paying concern and then there will be hundreds of people coming in.

Q. Do you advocate a more representative Board of Censors here? You said there was an educational officer and all that - I didn't hear exactly what you said.

A. There was a schoolmaster and a military officer.

Q. You do not want a schoolmaster there?

A. As a matter of fact I want a practically experienced man who knows of course, all the requirements of the locality to be in charge.

Q. Then you want to exclude the police?

A. I do not want a policeman.

Q. Then who?

A. That is a thing Government has to see to.

Q. But suppose you had to select the Board, how would you do it?

A. I would take it from among persons who had some knowledge of the religious sentiments of the people, and the practical ways of the people, and of course with some experience in producing films.

Q. A representative of the trade also should be there?

A. Yes, because later on you have to hand over the business to that class.

Q. It should be a more representative Board?

A. Yes. These persons, I don't think, are of much use because they are being changed.

Q. But they can be re-elected.

A. No.

Q. There are some who are re-elected for 6 or 7 years.

A. I don't know, but the schoolmasters are changed and the military officers do not stop in a place because they also are changed.

Q. They only look after the military interests.

A. So it is practically useless because military things are not shown here.

Q. You don't mind if it is a more representative body of 15 or 16?

A. I don't mind, but it must be a small workable body.

Q. Besides censoring if they do the work of advising Government for encouraging the industry, you don't mind?

A. I advocate an advisory board.

Q. They should act as an advisory board also to Government?

A. To Government and to the producers.

Q. Do you want a separate advisory board or the same board to act as an advisory board also?

A. We don't want too many bodies, the same board can do the work.

Q. It should be more representative and also act in an advisory capacity?

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: Am I correct in thinking that you consider the Cinema in this province is a factor in encouraging the adoption of Western customs?

A. Not wholly but to a certain extent.

Q. And that your objection in the main is to the fact that it is encouraging the adoption of the wrong Western habits? That is your point?

A. Yes, Sir.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. RAGHUPATHI PRAKASA, on Saturday, the 7th January 1928.**

Chairman: I suppose your father was not able to come to-day?

A. Yes, he is unwell and so he could not come.

Q. You received your training in England?

A. Yes, I went to England to specialise in the cinema industry. I specialised in the whole industry from photography to directing I learnt there. I spent about a year in London.

Q. Had you any difficulty in learning the trade there, I mean in learning the technique of the trade? Did you go with any introduction?

A. I had some difficulty in getting into the studio there in the beginning. I had to act as a super in a film first and later on I got into touch with the producers. Of course, I had to pay a premium of £500.

Colonel Crawford: For how many years?

A. For one year.

Chairman: What studio was that?

A. Barkers' Motion Pictures Studio. I went there just after the war, sometime in 1919.

Q. Did you try to go to Germany or America?

A. I was on the continent, I was in Paris and Italy and Milan. I had gone to Pathe's studio. I spent a month or so there. Of course, I had my whole training in England first. I learnt there photography, directing, scenario-writing, in fact I learnt the entire branch of the industry while in England. I returned to India in 1920.

Q. Before that your father was running the cinemas here?

A. Yes, we had three cinemas here, the Gaiety, the Globe and the Crown Theatre.

Q. And after you returned from England you started your own studio?

A. Yes, ours was the only up-to-date studio at one time in the whole of India. We had glass roofs, laboratories and everything, just like the up-to-date studios in England.

Q. How much did you spend on that?

A. We spent about a lakh of rupees.

Q. How many films did you produce?

A. We produced four pictures. "Bhishma Vadan," "Gajendra Moksha," "Bhaktanandan" and "Samudra Mathanam." One film was about 8,000 feet long and the other three were about 6,000 feet long.

Q. Did you also produce any topical films?

A. We did produce some, but not of much importance; we wanted to start a news-reel in Madras.

Q. When did you close down your business?

A. We had our crash about 4 years ago.

Q. For how long did your studio run?

A. We had our studio running for about 4 or 5 years, but for want of capital and sufficient encouragement we could not get on. We wanted to float a limited liability concern, but we did not get sufficient encouragement from the public.

Q. Did you have a large staff?

A. We had about fifty artists. We wanted to start on a very large scale to compete with western films. Perhaps, we were too ambitious. We were the pioneers in film production on this side of India, but as I said, for lack of funds and sufficient encouragement, we had to close down our show.

Q. What was your monthly expenditure for running the staff and so on. I don't mean for running your theatres?

A. We used to spend about Rs. 2,500 only in our film production department. We did not suffer a loss in this department. On our first picture we spent about Rs. 12,000, and we made about Rs. 60,000 out of it, by taking it round the whole of India, Burma and Ceylon. We sent the picture to some places on a percentage basis and to some places on hire system.

Q. What percentage do you get for your pictures?

A. About 40 per cent. in some theatres and in some about 35 per cent.

Q. Did Madan show your pictures in those days?

A. We did try, but they would not show our pictures. He holds the monopoly in the cinema line here, and we could not approach him, because he offered us 30 or 25 per cent. in all the circuits of his theatres. We did try, but we could not get a booking in any of his theatres. In the course of next week or so, he may show one of my old pictures. We have still got our negatives; we still retain the ownership of these pictures.

Q. How long did you take to produce those films?

A. I took about a month or two. The whole thing is this. One man had financed the whole thing, and several other businesses had to be run. It was all a matter of money.

Q. You said that you spent about Rs. 12,000 and you got about Rs. 60,000 on it. Was it excluding interest on investment?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: Excluding or including?

A. Excluding.

Chairman: I suppose you would not have made a good profit on it if you took into account your interest on capital?

A. Yes.

Q. What about the other pictures you made?

A. They covered the production cost plus Rs. 10,000 on each picture. Therefore, our enterprise was not at all a loss in any way. But the thing is we had to spend a lot of money in the beginning, because we wanted to put up an up-to-date studio. Therefore to achieve our object while meeting other demands, we lost heavily.

Q. You finally had to go into insolvency?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you apply to Government for a loan under the recent Act?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. Once we had a talk with the Minister for Industries just after the Mopla rebellion. They wanted us to take a picture of the rebellion when Sir Charles Todhunter was here. He wanted us to take a scene of the Mopla country and Mopla rebellion. He said that Government would give us half the finances and the other half should be met by us. He also offered to pay our passage to England and the expenses of the Booth to be erected at the Wembley exhibition to show this film. But unfortunately we had not enough money then, and we asked Government to invest, but they did not agree. That was the only time we approached Government in the matter.

Q. Had you to use any public places for producing your pictures?

A. Yes, we did use public places, and we got access everywhere.

Q. What sort of actors and actresses did you have?

A. We had the local talent, but not of great ability. I got raw people and trained them, because there is a vast difference between stage acting and film acting.

Q. You are idle now and you don't do anything now on the production side?

A. I have got all the machinery and everything in working order, and it can be used at any moment.

Q. But your studio is destroyed?

A. Just a year ago we took the film of the wedding of Lord Goschen's daughter in Madras.

Q. But there was some complaint that it was not quite a success?

A. We had a lot of difficulty inside the banquetting hall. I wanted arc lights, while they gave us electric lights. There was not enough light of the kind that we wanted.

Q. What capital would you require to re-start your studio?

A. I think about Rs. 30,000 would be enough.

Q. How many pictures could you produce in a year if you were given the necessary funds to re-start your studio?

A. If we produce pictures in a hurry we could make about ten pictures in a year. But if you want good and genuine pictures, we should not be able to produce more than six pictures in a year.

Q. How much running expenditure would you require?

A. We can get on with, say, Rs. 10,000 as running expenditure.

Q. There is a great demand for Indian pictures, is there not?

A. Yes. There is a great demand for Indian pictures all over India, but our difficulty is finance.

Q. How much did you spend on the machinery, which you say is now in working order?

A. We have about Rs. 18,000 worth of machinery which we can give as security.

Q. I think the studio has been dismantled and the official assignee has taken possession and sold it, all the glass roofs and everything have been sold out by the official assignee.

A. Yes, because it was a joint business and all loss had to be borne by the whole concern.

Q. I suppose the three cinemas which you owned are being sold by the official assignee?

A. The Crown and the Gaiety theatres were sold to Madans about 8 months back, and we have leased the Globe theatre to Pathe Freres from to-day.

Q. What has happened to the staff which you trained?

A. They have all gone astray.

Q. It will take some time before you can re-establish yourself.

A. If I want to start film production I propose to get first amateur people and train them. There are any number of educated young men available for this purpose, and I propose to train some of them first and then put them on pictures. I was having a talk recently with one or two of my lawyer friends who are interested in this line. They suggested to me to float a company for showing stage dramas and for producing films as well so that the talent trained for the stage dramas might be utilised for the film.

Q. I suppose you are not involved in the insolvency, and the whole concerned belonged to your father.

A. Only my father is involved in it. I am not involved in it.

Q. Have you ever tried to produce educational films at all?

A. No, we were not approached in the matter.

Q. Suppose the Government departments wanted you to produce films for propaganda purposes, will you be able to make them for Government?

A. Yes, certainly, why not?

Q. That will be a help to you to restart your business?

A. Yes, in a way.

Q. Is there anything else you want to say that the Government should do in order to encourage the growth of the film industry in India?

A. I do not know whether Government would care to do it here, but in Australia I believe they have some studios controlled by the Government itself. Those studios are built and equipped by Government and then leased out to private enterprise. But I don't know if Government would care to do anything like that on this side.

Q. I don't know if it is done in Australia, but I know that in Canada they do such a thing. I saw some reference to it somewhere?

A. Studios are built and leased out there. Supposing my machinery is taken over by the official assignee and it is cleaned and put in order, it will be a good thing for Government because it will cost a good deal to buy new machinery.

Q. So that this is a good opportunity for Government to buy up your machinery from the Official Assignee if the Government have a mind to start a studio here?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. Will it be useful for producing propaganda films also?

A. Yes, because it contains cameras, drying drums, dishes, and everything. The whole equipment is there.

Q. Arc lights?

A. We don't use arc lights here.

Q. Don't you think it will be preferable to use arc lights?

A. In Madras they don't supply us current of 440 volts strength. I had an idea of using arc lights, but the municipal committee refused to supply us the necessary power. They said that if they gave us the power the other lights would not work.

Q. I don't remember seeing any of your films. Were they popular when they were shown?

A. Yes, they were.

Mr. Neogy: You had all your training abroad and you had no previous experience in this line here?

A. I knew only still photography and general cinema management.

Q. Did you learn anything from books here before going to England?

A. We had our own theatres, and I was inclined to take this line.

Q. Were you allowed to take part in the actual production of films while abroad, and in what capacity?

A. Just as a super. First I could not get access. But they wanted a big scene to be shot and it was a picture of a member of the Tattersy House. They wanted an Indian to play a certain part, I said I could do it all right, and so I put on a turban and played the part well.

Q. When you paid the premium what facilities did you get?

A. I was allowed everywhere without any objection. They did not actually teach me in the true sense of the term. The camera man was there and I had free access to every department. I had to keep my eyes and ears wide open. I had to pick up as much knowledge as I could by watching and asking them questions, and they would always very readily solve my difficulties. There are, of course, some cinema colleges in England, but they are not very much recognised by the trade.

Q. Why did you choose England of all places?

A. I wanted first to go to London and then proceed to America. At that time there was influenza there and I could not go there and my programme had to be cut short, otherwise I would have gone to California.

Q. Suppose instead of going to England you had an opportunity to get your training here under some foreign expert who might be brought out at Government expense, would you have preferred that sort of training to the training that you got abroad?

A. It is just like young men getting out of our colleges here and going to England. In order to get a wide knowledge of the industry one must go abroad.

Q. Would you combine the two, instruction here under an expert followed by a visit to the studios abroad?

A. Yes, that would be an ideal system. Even if we have good studios in this country, our young men will not be able to see those fine and up-to-date things which exist in foreign countries, and therefore it is very necessary that young men after a course of training here should visit foreign countries. There things are done on a very big scale and people can understand them better.

Chairman: Won't it be a handicap to see big things done there when you attempt to do them on a small scale here?

A. No, I don't think so.

Q. I have heard it said that people who go abroad see such big things on such a big scale that they are not able to bring their minds to bear upon producing things on a small scale?

A. I don't think there can be any trouble about it. I had that idea myself, but I knew that such big things could not be attempted here.

Mr. Neogy: Supposing we decided to bring out experts, how many experts do you think you will require? Does any individual in western countries generally undergo training in all the different branches?

A. They specialise in the different branches of the trade, I mean in photography, technique, and setting of scenario-writing. If you get down three experts for teaching the settings of scenes, directing and for photography it would be ample.

Q. But for scenario-writing in Indian subjects you would require a good acquaintance with Indian conditions of life, Indian literature and so on. How do you expect all that in a foreign expert?

A. I don't think so, because the technique is taught by a foreign expert, but the person who learns it is an Indian, and he visualises things for himself, he knows Indian history and so on, and he brings all those things on the screen. Practically I was taught scenario-writing by an Englishman who did not know anything about Indian history or literature. He only told me how the scenario is written. I first told him the story of Shakuntala. Many bookstalls in England have a copy of it. He read that story, and I prepared the scenario and showed it to him and he approved of it.

Q. So the story would have to be supplied to the teacher by the pupil?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you be able to dispense with the training in India under experts altogether and have training abroad exclusively?

A. That will take more time. If a man learns here and then proceeds to England, it will save time and expense too. The Universal Film Manufacturing Company in America are taking in apprentices on payment of premium, and they might be willing to take a few men who have some knowledge of the trade here.

Q. Have you ascertained how much they will charge to train young men?

A. I don't know exactly how much they will charge, but there is one gentleman in Bombay, Mr. Bhogilal Davey, who was trained by the Universal people. I paid £500 in England.

Q. Was that considered to be the normal rate of premium for the concern in which you were admitted?

A. They don't take in apprentices at all, but I was allowed somehow. There were no other apprentices there. There is, of course, a cinema college in England, but as I said, it is not at all recognised by the trade.

Q. You have seen some of the Indian productions here. What do you think of the technique of these films?

A. It is very backward.

Q. Have you seen some of the latest productions of the Kohinoor Film Co. in Bombay? Have you seen "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves"?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you find any gradual improvement in the technique of the Indian films?

A. There is some improvement in photography, but not in the threading of the story. The directing and the scenario are still very bad.

Q. How could you combine all these different branches in a particular person?

A. For instance, in my concern I was practically running the whole show, I was the director, I was the scenario-writer, and I had to develop the photos too, whereas in England and America there are special men for each branch of the industry and there is proper division of work. Each section has got its own expert who has specialised in the different branches. If we can form a company to produce good pictures with people specially trained in each of these departments, I think we can really make very good pictures here. Though, we say, that film production is not a secret in India, I must say it is still a secret.

Q. I take it that you have worked under some of the best experts. Do you think they would agree to come out to India if they were approached?

A. I don't know if the Government terms will attract them sufficiently. I don't think they would care to come out here even if you pay £100 a week.

Q. Do you think it would be worth our while to get the services of such men?

A. I don't think so. If you want experts from England or America, they won't care to come out here at all, but you can do one thing. You can admit apprentices in the several existing film concerns and after they have received the necessary training in film production in its various branches, you can send a few promising young men abroad to receive further training. If this course is followed, there won't be any need to import foreign experts. Unless you pay very prohibitive rates, really good experts would not care to come out to this country.

Mr. Coatsman: You mentioned the names of four films which you produced. Would you mind telling me the equivalent of those names in English?

A. "Bhishma Vadhan," that is Bhishma's Vow, "Gajendra Moksha," that is saving of an elephant, "Bhaktananda" and "Surya" that is the churning of the ocean and the origin of the sun. These pictures had a good sale. We have still got the negatives of those pictures. We sent them round to Burma and Ceylon, but not to Calcutta, because we could not manage there as Madans had a monopoly in Bengal. Once we were their rivals, and so they did not help us in exhibiting our pictures.

Q. In what part did they go best?

A. They went well in Bombay.

Q. How long were they running?

A. Our first picture ran for three weeks in the Cinema Majestic in Bombay.

Q. For how many years were they on?

A. I made four copies and even to-day some of the copies are still running. I have got some demand still for these pictures.

Q. Did you send them to places like Singapore or Siam?

A. No, because we could not get bookings. We tried to show these through a certain agent in Burma, but we could not get bookings. Of course, if one of our men had gone there with the films, we might have been able to

show our pictures. But we did not attempt it, as we were quite satisfied with what we got here. But after "The Light of Asia" was shown in England, we had some arrangement with the Embassy Film Company in London, and our first picture was considered to be a really nice picture. That was the opinion of many people who had seen it. They said the scenes should be a little more gorgeous and that if we could alter the picture we could run it in England.

Q. How many topicals did you produce?

A. Six.

Q. Do you remember the subjects?

A. The opening of the Royal Bath in Madras, the opening of the Willingdon bridge, the birthday celebration of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore, and the Portal-Goschen Wedding.

Q. Did you produce any of these to order?

A. At the time we started we wanted to do just like American Companies, we wanted to produce weekly a picture about Madras events and if they went well we wanted to establish a camera man in Bombay, Calcutta and elsewhere and get the events of the day. We wanted to get films taken there as well and to make news reels, but we failed in that enterprise and we dropped it.

Q. Didn't you get good returns?

A. Whatever we spent we got back, except for the Portal-Goschen wedding picture.

Q. Did you send any to England? —

A. This was the only one.

Q. You didn't send any others?

A. They are not marketable there.

Q. Do you consider that the technique of these topicals was good enough?

A. The thing is this: when we started we used to send the things to America; they wanted the exposure of the film to be done by us in India but not the developing. The actual exposure to go to America and they would let us know the result, whether they would take it or not. They don't want the thing to be developed here, as the technique will not be right. So we tried once with them, just sent a bit of it, and they thought our photography was quite good. We can do it. Afterwards it was dropped.

Q. From what you were saying to our chairman I gathered that your cinema business was mixed up with all your other interests.

A. Yes.

Q. In itself the production company was a success?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. You could not dissociate it from the other things.

A. No, we couldn't. Because the whole thing was part of our general interest.

Q. Well, it must have been pretty obvious to people in Madras that your cinema business was a success.

A. It was.

Q. And even then you could not get assistance?

A. We could not get people to back us. Unfortunately there is no enterprising concern. We approached some people.

Q. Did you approach any Europeans?

A. No, none.

Q. You didn't try Spencers?

A. No, we didn't try.

Q. How much money would have saved your cinema business?

A. We could not save our cinema business and drop out the rest. If we wanted to save, we would have had to save the whole thing.

Q. Well, have you got a chance now of restarting it?

A. We have got a chance of restarting if we could get the capital.

Q. How much money do you want to do it?

A. Rs. 30,000.

Q. That is not a very staggering amount.

A. But there is nobody of sufficient enterprise to come in. I have been doing nothing for the last two or three years. Only just doing odd jobs, topical work, things like that, and renting my old pictures.

Q. With your training and experience couldn't you get a job?

A. I know, I could have got one in Bombay, but somehow it was a question of prestige as most of the producers are known to me; they all practically started after my company; there were only 3 companies when I came out from England. And these three have got the old people and so I don't want to join any of those companies.

Q. Have you made any efforts recently to get capital?

A. Nothing more, because I thought it was impossible going round to people.

Chairman: His father had a good reputation.

A. We could not approach people because they would think things. They would not take a broad-minded view.

Mr. Coatman: Well, you are not known; couldn't you start on your own?

A. But where is the capital?

Q. You could not get anybody to back you?

A. No.

Q. Now you mentioned your staff— you had 50?

A. Yes.

Q. Were your actors entirely untrained when you first got them?

A. Yes, they didn't know anything.

Q. And you trained them?

A. Yes.

Q. Men and women?

A. Everyone.

Q. Did they pick up the work quickly?

A. Well, some were sharp and some were bad.

Q. Were there any of these people who, in your opinion, if they had proper opportunities such as they would have got in the west, would have developed into real stars?

A. Oh, yes, they would have.

Q. There may be people like that amongst them?

A. Oh, yes.

Chairman: I didn't ask you about the exhibition side. Are you familiar with it, with the difficulties of obtaining films in India?

A. Well, the difficulty is the prohibitive rates of these renters.

Q. Do you know anything yourself? Do you rent? Because Mr. Green may ask you about that.

A. Oh, yes.

Mr. Green: You said that your first film cost you Rs. 12,000 and it brought in Rs. 60,000. In what period of time?

A. In a year.

Q. Well, that is a very handsome profit.

A. It is.

Q. Have you ever put carefully audited or costed accounts before any financial friends?

A. We did when we were failing.

Q. I suppose the rumour got about and they wouldn't look at it.

A. They didn't look favourably on the accounts nor at us.

Q. Don't you think, as Mr. Coatman suggested, it might be worth while going to some other place? Bombay has a number of companies operating.

A. Yes, there are companies operating. But if I were to work in a company the difficulty would be that the ideas which I have got would not find scope, because they would be practically certain to do what they want.

Q. True, but don't you think good work always tells?

A. But even the producers to-day, the directors say, they have the same complaint which I have just heard; I have had a talk with the people and they say they cannot turn out their men.

Q. Is it a fact that in America and probably in England the industry is divided up into various sections? For instance, there are your directors, your camera men, your assistant camera men, etc. Well, is it not people like you who are going to assist the industry by entering the field here? Naturally it would be difficult for you after running your own show to serve under a director. But wouldn't it be a possible method of making money and so eventually starting your own company again?

A. But who do you think would join if I started a school?

Q. I don't want you to start a school.

Chairman: He wants you take employment in any of the companies in India.

A. Oh, that I could do.

Mr. Green: Make yourself known as a famous director, then surely you will get money.

A. Yes, I understand what you mean.

Q. I am looking forward to the development of the industry. I was wondering whether that would not be a more promising line than for everybody to remain sitting down in his own home town. For instance, you told us you could not get the electric power for arc lights. I understand you can in Bombay and probably in many other cities?

A. Very likely.

Q. And you will agree that for very good work you must have arc lights? That would appear to show that if there is no scope for a good company in Madras there may be in Bombay, simply because Madras has not the electric power which Bombay has?

A. Exactly. But unfortunately in Bombay the companies would not put up arc lights because they would still stick to their old studios.

Colonel Crawford: Was your failure in production in the cinema industry due to anything inherent in it or was it mixed up with the general insolvency?

A. It was not the failure of one concern. It was the failure of all.

Q. It was not the exhibition side or the production side of the cinema business, but outside business as well?

A. The exhibition side was a lot. Then we went into speculation business as well. The whole thing brought us down together.

Q. It was not only the cinema trade but outside business as well?

A. Yes.

Q. Because I understand you made 60,000 on one film which only cost you 12,000, and 10,000 profit on the other three.

A. The first one was a big picture. We spent a lot of money on it. Of course, we had the help of the State to produce these pictures.

Q. Now are you satisfied with the quality of these pictures?

A. Only of one picture.

Q. And what were your difficulties in the way of technique?

A. Well, the other pictures were rather cheap productions. We were not able to spend much on them.

Q. You were limited by finance?

A. And that is why I could not turn out what I wanted to.

Q. How does finance come into it?

A. For instance, I want to get a particular effect. The scenario-writer imagines a scene, which may cost Rs. 200. We must have a hall and he wants in the centre a crowd of about 200 artists. We cannot get 200 artists, but even if we could, they must be paid.

Q. I see now. You mean as regards setting elaborate scenes. Well, now, on the exhibition side, renters charge too high a rate for their pictures?

A. Yes, they do.

Q. Now, on what sort of basis would you rent your pictures?

A. On a fixed hire.

Q. Can you give us some idea of the rates charged?

A. At the time when we were renting our three theatres, we had a contract with the Universal and the charges were Rs. 15 a reel for a serial.

Q. Eight reels would be Rs. 120 a day?

A. No, for the week, or for bi-weekly changes, for 4 days. It is all the same whether the rent is for a day or a week. It is arranged that we pay so much for that week. And for first-run pictures they wanted Rs. 40 a reel. It was coming to a tremendous lot. And other exhibitors were willing to pay Rs. 50 a week.

Q. But you could not get the returns to make it worthwhile?

A. Those were prohibitive rates. Now the rates have come down.

Q. And the cinema is increasingly popular with the public?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, as regards your training in England, £500 is a big premium for any parent to have to pay in one year.

A. Well, we didn't mind it at the time.

Q. Well, you may get one or two parents to pay that. I don't think my father would care to pay £500 a year premium. Does it strike you that this is a difficulty in obtaining training abroad?

A. There is not much difficulty. Of course, in this case, if people are to be sent, arrangements could be made with companies on small premiums.

Q. That would be essential? Otherwise there would not be so much interest evinced in training abroad. The premiums must be reasonable?

A. Yes.

Q. What would you suggest as a reasonable type of premium?

A. About £100 a year.

Q. You had no other difficulties at all?

A. No, there were no difficulties in the studio. They gave me letters to go to any other studio in England.

Q. Did you find the cost of living high?

A. I used to spend about £10 a month.

Chairman: Was that enough?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: In your theatres did you show any western films also?

A. Yes, we always showed western films.

Q. Did you get them direct from America?

A. No, through local agents.

Q. Do you know anything about block booking? Were you compelled to buy inferior films at the same time as good ones?

A. Yes, sometimes we were forced to do that. I mean there may be one good picture followed by another two rotten ones.

Q. So they do practise block booking in Madras?

A. Yes. They compel you to take pictures.

Q. Supposing you start a production company, don't you think Madans will come in again? Unless you make up with Madans, it is not worthwhile.

A. But there may be an arrangement made with Madans, because although Madan's is the best list, still it is not inadequate.

Q. So you will have to seek the help of Madans?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Without his help it is not possible for you to run it successfully.

A. Only in Calcutta.

Q. Not in Bombay?

A. In Bombay there are several other theatres.

Q. How many theatres has he got in Madras?

A. In Madras he has got 3 theatres of his own, and one, the Wellington, is associated with him.

Q. So out of 8, there are 4 connected with Madans?

A. Yes.

Chairman: And until he bought the Crown and the Gaiety, he had only one.

A. Yes, the Elphinstone. It is only recently he has bought the others.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Isn't it cheaper to hire western films than to produce Indian films?

A. It is cheaper, but there is a greater demand for Indian pictures. Of course, western pictures are all right, but the demand is for the Indian ones.

Q. Well, to encourage the Indian films industry, do you think there is any need of legislation for protective measures to be taken by Government?

A. Well, already we have got enough import duties on western films.

Q. Yes, but to encourage Indian films.

A. Well, if you wish to encourage these and kill the others.....

Q. But you don't then necessarily ask that the Indian production should be encouraged?

A. They must be encouraged.

Q. You are interested both ways.

A. Well, the thing is we cannot make our theatres exclusively Indian. There are very few pictures and they cannot supply the demands of the 300 cinemas.

Q. I just ask you about Madans. Don't you think that production and theatre-building should go hand in hand?

A. Not necessarily.

Q. If you don't want to go to Madans, don't you think you will have to see to the theatre-building at the same time?

A. There is no necessity.

Q. You said you can get students to come up to your productions at a small remuneration?

A. Not remuneration. My idea was to get an amateur club formed.

Q. Free?

A. Just a club.

Q. Do you think many will come there?

A. Well, to-day there is a great craze mainly to learn the art. Later on they will want a remuneration. Now, in the beginning on the production side, I don't think it will require remuneration.

Q. And lady students?

- A. That is the difficulty. They may not come.
- Q. Don't you think you can get Anglo-Indian girls?
- A. Oh, yes. For one of my pictures I had a pure English lady.
- Q. Are they better than Indian actresses?
- A. Well, they are more bold in acting.
- Q. They charge more than Indian actresses?
- A. Practically the same. I don't think there is much difference.
- Q. You said your machinery was worth about Rs. 18,000. How much do you think it could be sold for now—about Rs. 5,000?
- A. That is about it.
- Q. Suppose some enterprising firm takes it up, you will be able to sell it for Rs. 5,000?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Will you be able to work with that enterprising company at a remuneration?
- A. Oh, yes, I will.
- Q. At what remuneration?
- A. I can't say.
- Q. Approximately? This may advertise you and they may ask you to come and join them probably, if you will be reasonable.
- A. Well, I don't know what to ask. I once had an offer to work in a company at Baroda for Rs. 600 a month.
- Q. In these 4 films you produced, were the captions in English or in any other languages too? You have seen "Ali Baba", it is in four languages.
- A. I put it like that. I had English, Hindi and Gujarati in Bombay; and then for the Madras Presidency I had English, Telugu and Tamil.
- Q. There was no Tamil in the picture we saw yesterday.
- A. Yes, that is because it is a Bombay production.
- Q. With the Tamil, were the things appreciated?
- A. Oh, yes.
- Q. They can understand the story?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Where do you get your raw films from?
- A. We get them from England, from the Eastman Kodak Co. We cannot make them here, because the climate in the first place does not facilitate the making of raw films. Furthermore, it requires a great deal of capital to do it.
- Q. Suppose the capital is found?
- A. But the demand is less.
- Q. Well, everyone wants it.
- A. But how many companies?
- Q. There are so many companies in Bombay and Calcutta?
- A. All told, how many?
- Q. About 20.
- A. It is not worth while doing it for the present.
- Q. At least Government should reduce the duty on raw films?
- A. There is not much duty to be levied on films? On other films, for instance, in positives there is enough duty on that. Four annas a foot or Rs. 37-8 per thousand feet.
- Q. Have you had any trouble with the censorship?
- A. Not much.
- Q. Is it a satisfactory board?

A. Up to now there has been no complaint. In the censoring business I would suggest one thing. Now a certificate is granted for a new print, and again if I make a new print of this, they insist that we should come up again before the board, so that the same certificate may be given on a payment of Rs. 30 for a six-reel drama.

Mr. Green: That is in Madras? I don't think that is the case in other parts of India.

A. They must believe in the producer or the renter that they won't put in new scenes.

Written Statement of Mr. R. D. ANSTEAD, M.A., C.I.E., Director of Agriculture, Madras, dated the 7th December 1927.

1. As the answer, so far as I am concerned, to question 1 of the questionnaire is in the negative, I fear I can contribute very little that will be of value to the committee.

PART II.

I may, however, perhaps be allowed to state my personal opinion, for what it is worth, on the general subject dealt with in Part II of the questionnaire. I cannot help thinking that many films exhibited in this country must have an injurious effect upon the public, especially that portion of the public which is uneducated and which has no first hand knowledge of Western life. I must confess that I am not a regular attendant at cinema halls, but I always feel that films which portray a theme centering round a plot in which the keeping of mistresses is involved with a lavish display of luxury and wealth, night clubs, drinking, dancing, etc., is lavishly displayed—and unfortunately such films appear to be very common—cannot avoid giving the class of audience to which I have referred a totally wrong impression of ordinary life in Europe and must tend to lower the respect which is due to the average European, or even educated Indian who has been educated abroad. If the audience gathers the idea that such films faithfully depict the normal conditions of society in Europe—and I see no reason why the uneducated audience should not come to that conclusion—then nothing but harm and misunderstanding can result. I should like to see all such classes of films rigorously debarred from being exhibited in India. I feel that they must have a demoralising effect and lead to quite wrong impressions being formed even by university students in India.

There is far too much of the "Sex" element in many of the films shown, a "Sex" element of a totally unnecessary nasty kind, and the plot of many big films centres round such themes and leaves a nasty taste in the mouth to my mind. This is merely a personal opinion—I have no evidence to back it and it must be taken for what it is worth.

25, 27a, 28. Holding this opinion my replies to questions Nos. 25, 27a and 28 are most decidedly in the affirmative. I have such a small knowledge of the subject and am so little interested personally in the cinema as a source of amusement that I am not in a position to offer any suggestions as to how the evil which I have indicated, and which I feel very strongly exists, can be remedied. I only feel convinced that it should be remedied.

14. With reference to question 14, I am of the decided opinion that the cinema could be used for educational purposes far more than it is used at present; not only in India but all over the world. Anyone who has seen an "Educational film" in England, or the cinema being used for lecturing purposes, cannot help but be struck with the enormous possibilities which it possesses. The "slow motion" film is of particular value for educational purpose, especially that which is arranged to stop at any particular point and become a lantern slide.

The difficulty lies, however, in the production of such films. They cannot be made by amateur photographers. A great deal of skill is required for

their production and expert cinematograph photographers are needed to produce such films if any real advantage is to be taken of this development of modern science from an educational point of view. All the films which I have seen taken by amateurs fail most lamentably. They do not show what they are intended to show. When a badly taken film is used for educational purposes there is a decided danger of it producing just the wrong impression, viz., that if the method advocated by the film is as bad as it looks it is a thing to be avoided.

I have recently been into this matter from an agricultural point of view. I believe that if really good films could be made by professionalists of agricultural improvements such as are advocated by Agricultural Departments they would be of the very highest value for propaganda purposes. But such films need most careful staging and acting. Results are obtained in the ordinary film by most expert staging and acting—highly skilled professional actors are employed and enormous sums are spent on staging to get the effects required. The same procedure must be adopted with educational films if they are to be of any value. They must be carefully thought out beforehand, carefully staged to get the required effects, and many of them will have to be "acted".

Let me take a very simple example to illustrate what I mean. The Agricultural Department is very anxious to introduce the use of an iron plough in the place of the country implement. The whole point of such a plough is that it turns and inverts the soil as it ploughs a furrow burying the weeds—in contrast to the country plough which merely scratches the soil. To illustrate this effect on a film much more is needed than mere pictures of oxen ploughing with the two kinds of plough. I visualise a film which will show the following points in a connected picture:—

- (1) Close up pictures of a country plough at work and the resulting cultivation done
- (2) Close up pictures of an iron plough.
- (3) A slow motion picture of both ploughs showing how the soil is moved and what happens to the weeds.
- (4) A slow motion picture showing the furrow cut by the iron plough, the soil turning over from the breast and burying the weeds.
- (5) Pictures of the parts of the iron plough—its fitting up, replacement of worn out parts, etc.
- (6) Picture of crops grown on land cultivated by the two ploughs, both general views, and close ups.
- (7) Pictures of these crops being harvested—with the resulting crops lying on the threshing floor.

"Captions" must be carefully thought out and these must be in the appropriated vernaculars as well as in English.

Existing films being shown by the Indian State Railways are of little or no value in the Madras Presidency, because they deal with subjects in which we are not interested or depict conditions with which we are not familiar and also the "Captions" are not in our vernaculars.

Educational films must be made to suit special localities. The ryot audience must at once recognise familiar surroundings and feel at home if they are to be impressed. Their familiar crops must be dealt with, the people and cattle, seen working in the pictures must be familiar types—both in dress and form. Then only are they likely to take notice and learn the desired lesson.

To produce such films on a large scale will take both time and money, but that is no reason why it should not be done and I am of the opinion that it would be worth while.

I would suggest that it is a matter for the Central Government to take up. As far as agriculture is concerned Pusa should employ an expert cinema photographer to make films and the Provinces should be able to borrow his services contributing towards the cost.

I believe I am correct in saying that films taken by amateurs at Pusa have not proved satisfactory and that steps are being taken to employ a professional in the near future.

I do not think that the ordinary film producing firms are likely to take up this work as such films are not likely to "pay" from the Cinema Company's point of view and their scope is necessarily limited to localised audiences and will be of no particular attraction to an average town audience which requires recreation and not education at its cinema halls.

Oral Evidence of Mr. G. R. HILSON, B.Sc., Acting Director of Agriculture, Madras, on Saturday, the 7th January 1928.

Chairman: You have seen Mr. Anstead's memorandum sent to this Committee.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you agree with those views generally?

A. On the whole, yes.

Q. Do you go to the cinema much?

A. Not very much. I do not have much opportunity at Coimbatore.

Q. Have you got a permanent cinema there?

A. Yes, there is one.

Q. You go there very seldom?

A. Very rarely. I have been there 2 or 3 times.

Q. Do they show any Indian films in Coimbatore?

A. Yes.

Q. And do they draw crowded houses?

A. I was at one. It was of a religious nature. I should not call the house crowded on that occasion.

Q. Was it a Bombay picture?

A. I could not tell you what the picture was, but the gist of the story was the persecuted daughter-in-law drowned herself in a well.....

Q. It was a story of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, a social drama?

A. Yes.

Q. There is not much religion in that?

A. Religion came in when she drowned herself in the well, Krishna came down and resuscitated her.

Q. They mixed up Krishna with it?

A. Yes.

Q. What did you think of it?

A. I thought the acting was very bad.

Q. And the photography?

A. Photography on the whole was good.

Q. I suppose the other pictures shown in Coimbatore are generally western films?

A. Yes. The other picture that remains in my memory was an educational film. As a matter of fact, it was staged by the Forest department, showing the methods of extricating timber from the American forests.

Q. That was an American film?

A. I think the film was brought over by the Forest Engineer who is an American.

Q. It was not an Indian setting?

A. No.

Q. It was a foreign setting?

A. All in America.

Q. Was it shown in a public place?

A. It was shown in a public hall.

Q. Was it a free show?

A. It was a long time ago. I think I paid to get in.

Q. Was it well attended?

A. It was full.

Q. Was it also attended by what you would call the uneducated classes, the ordinary ryot—I do not say the village ryot, but the middle class people?

A. Yes, there was a distinct body of that class.

Q. Were they able to follow it all right?

A. That I could not tell you.

Q. Had it vernacular captions or anything of that sort?

A. No.

Q. Probably it was more mechanical, it was self-explanatory?

A. It was to explain the use of tractors.

Q. I see Mr. Anstead is very keen on introducing the film for propaganda in the Agricultural department?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you agree with him in that?

A. On the whole, yes.

Q. Not only in the Agricultural Department, but also in the Veterinary, Industries, Public Health—in various departments the cinema can be used?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think a private agency could produce the sort of films which you require supposing you gave the expert guidance so far as the technical part of your department is concerned? Mr. Anstead apparently doubts that. He thinks that Government ought to produce them themselves. Do you think that would be a better and more efficient method of imparting the education you want to give?

A. I think on the whole it would. I do not say it is impossible for a private agency to do it.

Q. If a private agency could be had to do that you would prefer that?

A. I think I would.

Q. If it could be done efficiently?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you have never tried to produce a film in your department?

A. I saw the beginnings of a film made at Pusa by Dr. Hutchinson and it was not good.

Q. We had Mr. Hutchinson before us in Calcutta. Mr. Anstead points out in order to be really useful, certain number of points should be kept in view.

A. I think what he means is that you should be able to show the thing in slow motion to explain the details or stop it if necessary.

Q. Preferably it must be such as can be capable of being stopped for a time?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose on the whole you prefer the cinema to magic lantern slides as a means of spreading knowledge?

A. Yes.

Q. You are engaged in experimenting in cotton cultivation and introducing new methods?

A. My main job is to produce new strains.

Q. And I suppose in your sphere also there is plenty of scope for the use of the film.

A. There is plenty of scope for showing the methods of cultivation, and it could be used as a means of educating the people in the difficulties of this work and to show them the need for a considerable length of time being taken over the work.

Q. I suppose one of the difficulties which the trade in cotton has to meet with is the mixture of the various kinds?

A. Yes.

Q. You can show to the ryot the advantage of not doing it by means of the film?

A. I doubt that, because the disadvantage of mixing becomes most obvious when the cotton gets into the mill.

Q. Not in the plantations themselves? I thought they mixed up the seeds?

A. A certain amount of mixing of seeds goes on.

Mr. Green: Can you not show on the screen the financial effect of mixing?

Chairman: To show the ryot the advantages of not doing it, how the man who does it suffers and how the man who does not do it prospers?

A. Unfortunately the man does not suffer.

Q. Is it so? I did not know that.

A. You can show in some cases the difference in the actual stand on the field, but a mixed seed does not necessarily mean a bad crop.

Q. But does it not mean a bad price?

A. It means a bad price if found out.

Q. It is so difficult to find it out?

A. It depends entirely on the amount of the mixture.

Q. You cannot depend upon private enterprise to produce the films which you require?

A. I should not think so.

Q. Because they have no commercial value for an ordinary cinema show. Do you think that the cinema exhibitors should be compelled to show a certain length of such public utility films?

A. I do not know. I dislike compulsion.

Q. But if you want to popularise your ideas by means of the film, what is your suggestion as to how it should be done?

A. There is already a suggestion now before the Government, that we should fit up a caravan in which we should be able to show our films,—move about the country in that way. But whether a caravan is necessary or not—I should not think it is necessary in all cases. You can take the appliances.

Q. I suppose if you can have travelling trains to go about, that will be much better?

A. That is a question of the amount of railroads there are and how well your district is covered with railways. In some parts there is no railway.

Q. Any way the Government are thinking of doing something in that direction?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think that agricultural films,—I see Mr. Anstead refers to it,—can be produced in a central agency? Do you think it will be essential to introduce local settings in the film? For instance, would a film produced in Madras be useful in Bombay or Bengal, supposing an All-India agency undertook to produce films for agricultural propaganda?

A. All films would not be interchangeable, but some of them could be used in different parts of India.

Q. Some would be useful for all parts of India and some would have to be made locally?

A. Some would be of local value.

Q. So that a combination of a central studio with provincial studios attached would be a more effective method of dealing with the subject,—a central studio to produce those things which will be of common use and a local studio to reproduce local settings.

A. I have not gone into that side of the question. I suppose a studio is necessary in order to produce the film.

Q. The outdoor work can be done by the camera man but there is a certain amount of work done inside. You do not want an elaborate studio perhaps for the films, but still you would require printing, developing, editing and that work will have to be done in a studio. Anyway, that is a matter of detail and you have not thought about it.

A. I do not think my opinion on that matter is of much value.

Q. Do you think that your Government will provide you with sufficient funds for this propaganda work? Are you getting enough in that direction, as much as you think ought to be spent on a work of that sort?

A. For propaganda work? Personally I would rather see more money spent on research than propaganda at the present moment.

Q. What is the good of research if you do not tell the people the results of your research?

A. What is the good of propaganda if you have got nothing to tell the people?

Q. I take it you have obtained some results?

A. Well, yes.

Q. And those results—are they sufficiently known to the agriculturists?

A. The same results have been put before the agriculturist for a good long time and it is about time he had something fresh.

Q. I may tell you my view is that there is a lot which I saw as a result of your research which is not known to average ryot?

A. Such as may I ask?

Q. Take, for instance, the results of single seed planting.

A. When I came out here in 1910 they were talking about single seed planting and we have been doing it ever since.

Q. But I do not think the results have been communicated to the public to such an extent as they should have been.

A. As a matter of fact, it is not the single seed planting that matters much but it is the seed-rate in the seed bed that does matter.

Q. I saw in a Coimbatore farm they were able to produce a certain quantity of paddy with a certain seed they had. I do not think that is sufficiently known to the public.

A. You do not want it known to the public except that particular section of the public to whom it is of value.

Q. I mean the agriculturists generally.

A. not even the agriculturists generally, but only agriculturists in certain parts where that particular paddy is used.

Q. I do not know whether that is known at all—the quantity produced, the results obtained.

A. There is danger in too much propaganda you know. People get hold of results and they say, "this is a good thing and we might try it". The results are all right in the place where they have been produced, but not necessary all over.

Q. But can you not depend upon the department to give the necessary instructions and have the necessary safeguards?

A. But people can get hold of the seed without going to the department at all.

Q. So you do not believe much in propaganda?

believe in propaganda, but I also believe in having something to say and having enough things to keep on talking.

Q. Your point of view is more money should be spent also on research?

A. I think at the present moment that propaganda work is topheavy.

Q. There you and I may have to differ. Mr. Anstead's reply to question No. 14. He seems to believe from the trend of his statement that more propaganda is needed by means of the film in the agricultural department as well. That is the gist of his statement I thought.

A. If he means that the film can be used for that purpose, yes. If more use should be made of films of that kind for educating the agriculturist, yes, I quite agree.

Q. I take it your point of view is that you would not divert any money which is now used for research work, for propaganda. That is apparently what you want to impress on this Committee?

A. No. I would rather take up this attitude, that both should be developed equally, that one should not be allowed to develop at the expense of the other, and if there is any development in that way, it should be given to the research rather than to propaganda, because you are liable, in propaganda work, to run ahead of your results and find yourself with nothing to say. We are getting to that position now. It is a fact that the things which we have said for so long have still not been said in certain places. That is quite true.

Q. I suppose you agree that merely issuing leaflets and pamphlets on results of your research does not carry that instruction to the people which visual instruction can give?

A. The best instruction is to get the cultivator himself to do the thing.

Q. So the next best would be to make somebody else do the thing?

A. You really get things to move when you have got one man to do the thing.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Have you ever seen an agricultural film prepared by any Provincial Government?

A. The only one I have seen is that prepared by the G. I. P.

Q. Have you seen the cattle-breeding film of the G. I. P.?

A. I have not seen that.

Q. What other film have you seen?

A. I saw a film of certain implements used in the Central Provinces.

Q. Have you heard that the G. I. P. have got a very good film of cattle-breeding?

A. Yes, I have had a conversation with the gentleman who prepared it before he had prepared it.

Q. Will it be of any use in this Presidency, if it is shown here?

A. I do not know the film, I have not seen it.

Q. You said something about films to be prepared by the central organization at Pusa. Is your Government prepared to pay a contribution towards the preparation of films there?

A. I think you must ask that question of the Government.

Q. Are you prepared to recommend it yourself, or do you want that free without any payment?

A. From my point of view, if we get the film, I won't mind whether it is paid for or not. I think that is a matter for the Government to settle with the central body.

Mr. Coatman: What do you think is the absolutely best form of propaganda for your purpose?

A. The best form of propaganda is to have a good sound practical agricultural man who could go to the cultivator, talk to him, explain to him what should be done and induce him to try the method.

Q. Then the film would be an adjunct?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: You say there are subjects on which films of All-India interest could be produced at a central studio. Would you please name a few?

A. I do not think I said "All-India interest." I said films could be used in different parts of India. Take, for example, the cultivation of paddy, the different methods in use; rice is grown in Madras, Bombay and in other parts, and a film showing the differences between the crops in the various places would be useful.

Q. For that purpose, would it not be necessary to secure an agreement between the agricultural departments of the different provinces? The Bombay agricultural department may not take the same view on any particular point as the Madras department?

A. It is possible.

Q. So it would be rather difficult to find out the subjects which might be of universal interest until and unless the agricultural departments of the different provinces meet together and come to an agreement among themselves?

A. But the film that would be of use in any province would have to be made anyhow.

Q. In that case the initiative would have to be taken by you in the first instance. Then it would be for Bombay to see whether it could make use of it.

A. Yes.

Q. So it would not be possible for a central authority to produce a film in the hope that it might interest all the other provinces?

A. I do not know why it is not possible. A central authority, if it had the means, could make the films for any particular province and then they could show them in other places.

Q. Even then it would be necessary to have the concurrence of the different provincial authorities?

A. Naturally.

Q. You are now independent of the control of the Government of India?

A. Yes.

Q. So, that is another difficulty in the way?

A. Yes.

Q. In agricultural films, what proportion of the scenes in any film that you may have in mind would the outdoor scenes constitute as compared to the indoor scenes, i.e., scenes taken in the open air as compared to these taken indoors?

A. I think a very vast proportion should be taken in the open air.

Q. So that a first-class studio with effective lighting arrangements and so on will not be of much use to you?

A. I think quite a large proportion of the scenes to be taken should be taken in the open air.

Mr. Green: Do you know to what extent photographs are taken in the open air?

A. I do not know.

Mr. Neogy: Do you know it is possible to take outdoor photographs with the help of artificial scenes and surroundings? Would you prefer such a picture to one taken actually in the field?

A. I do not care very much where it is taken, as long as the man who sees it does not know.

Q. Supposing those pictures are taken in the studio, you will have to deceive the people to a certain extent? You will keep the real truth from the ryot in order that he may attach some importance to what you say. Sup-

posing you want to demonstrate the comparative merits of different kinds of manure with faked pictures taken inside a studio, and if that is known to the agriculturist later on, do you think he will attach any importance to your propaganda?

A. If he thinks it is worth it, he can get good information.

Q. Are you prepared to take this risk?

A. So far as that is concerned, I may say I can even make a film showing a certain thing which does not exist at all. I can say that I will show the difference between different seeds without having any seeds at all. As a matter of fact, the agriculturist must take it for what it is worth.

Q. You have seen some of the Indian films and you are generally satisfied with their photography?

A. I can recollect only one film which portrayed matters Indian and I think that the photography of it was good.

Q. If you get that kind of photography, you would be perfectly satisfied?

A. It is one matter to take a photograph in the interior of a house and it is quite another to take a photograph of something growing in a field. The only photograph of the latter type that I have seen is the one prepared by the G. I. P.

Oral Evidence of Mr. F. H. WILSON, Official Assignee, Madras, on Saturday, the 7th January 1928.

Chairman: We met Mr. Venkiah's son this morning and he told us some thing of the attempted production that was made.

A. I believe the films he produced were good films.

Q. They did bring a profit?

A. I believe so.

Q. These productions were mixed with a number of other things?

A. The production side belonged to a limited company called the "Star of the East Films" and that had nothing to do with the cinemas exactly. That company had failed before the cinemas failed. The Star of the East Film Company was a limited company. I don't think it successfully came into being. There were two films which they produced which were successful films, and even to-day they are being shown.

Q. We want to know what really was the cause of the failure?

A. As far as I could make out, the cause of the failure of the cinematograph business was partially the large amounts that had to be spent on building theatres, the amount of loan taken for the purpose and the consequent high rates of interest and partially the bad management and robbery on the part of the staff.

Q. Was the studio a separate property?

A. The studio was in the Globe Theatre compound.

Q. So it was not the property of the limited company?

A. No. The pictures taken were all the property of Mr. Venkiah and he tried to float the company after the pictures were taken.

Q. There is some part of the studio material available?

A. I have actually sold the building of the studio but not the cameras, etc. Even recently we have been taking some films.

Q. To whom do the negatives of the pictures belong?

A. They probably belong to the company; but the company being defunct, they are in my charge. The company was struck off the rolls and I took charge of them.

Q. Have you tried to revive the company as a producing concern having regard to the fact that the demand for Indian films is such as to make it a paying concern?

A. I have tried to the extent that I looked round for somebody who would finance any venture. In fact, one small picture which was produced is still running.

Q. After you took charge?

A. Yes. I permitted the use of the camera and I charged a rental for its use and for the use of the studio.

Q. What was the result of that production? Was it a topical?

A. I think it was a religious picture.

Q. Who produced it?

A. Mr. Venkiah's son. It was "Mohini Avatar".

Q. Has it been shown successfully?

A. Yes. It comes to 5,000 feet and with the titles about 6,000 feet.

Q. You are in charge of three theatres here?

A. Yes, the Gaiety, the Globe and the Crown. I took over charge in November 1924 and I ran the Crown up to the 31st July 1925 when I sold it to Madan Theatres, Ltd. I continued to run the Gaiety for some time, then I leased it to Madans and finally sold it to them. I am still running the Crown, but I have to-day made a lease of it to Pathes for one year.

Q. During the time you were running these theatres, did you find any difficulty in getting films for exhibition?

A. I found this difficulty; that all the good pictures belong to particular companies such as Madans and the Universal Picture Corporation—of course, the Indian pictures are generally given to the Indian theatres—and were given to a particular theatre and others could get them till afterwards. Generally we could not get any first run pictures from those companies. Similarly, most companies give the first rights to a particular theatre. I get the first rights of Pathes.

Q. You get first rights in certain pictures while the others get first rights in others?

A. Yes.

Q. That is a necessary element in the trade?

A. I think so; because in a town like Madras where cinemas are widely spread, it would do no harm to show a picture in Mount Road in one week and the same in Royapuram in the next week and both the cinemas may try it as first-run picture, and the audience will not overlap.

Q. May I take it then that you had practically no difficulty in running the theatres?

A. No difficulty. With a little trouble we can get over minor difficulties.

Q. Can you give us statistics regarding the approximate number of people who visit the theatres every day?

A. I cannot give you the exact details. But roughly, the visitors on Saturdays and Sundays are much larger than on any other day of the week. It will be on an average about 600 per day.

Q. There are nine theatres here?

A. Yes, altogether there are nine. Taking the whole week, we can put the average at 300 per show, but taking Saturdays and Sundays, it will be about 600 per theatre per show.

Q. I should like to have your view as to whether the films that are ordinarily shown have any demoralising effect on the people?

A. It is a difficult question to answer; but I think there are certain incidents in certain films which ought not to be shown.

Q. To any audience?

A. To an impressionable audience. There are many crook films which exhibit how easy it is to commit crime. I think those films do not do any good to anybody.

Q. You will not allow them to be shown anywhere?

A. That is difficult to say; because in practically all these films the object is to show that right triumphs over wrong, and if you have not got a wrong to be triumphed over, you lose an opportunity for right to triumph; you must have a villain for a hero. There are others where women are roughly handled; we often see that the villain treats the heroine roughly. I do not think such things will do any good; but so far as immorality in scenes are concerned, I do not think I have seen anything so far.

Q. You don't think there is anything in the sex side of the film?

A. I do not think there is anything harmful in that. I admit I do not approve of the general trend of films at all. I see they lead nowhere.

Q. They produce about 750 pictures a year, and of course human ingenuity is not large enough to always find good things. On the whole you are satisfied with the general tone of the films shown?

A. I would like to see some more educative films. At any rate, a portion of the programme may be slightly educative. Though it may not be labelled as such, it may be added on to the ordinary programme.

Q. Have you any measures to suggest in order to encourage the growth of Indian films? They are becoming more popular now, though they may not be of a good technique?

A. I have only seen Indian mythological pictures. I am told there is a growth of Indian social dramas and pictures of present-day life. I should say that there will be a much greater future for these things than for the mythological pictures which, after all, the audience may not like to see more than once.

Q. Do you see any difficulty in the way of Indian films being produced?

A. I should say the difficulty would be, as one sees, that these big companies all have enormous plants and enormous capital and the pictures they produce are usually at such enormous cost that unless there is some very big organisation started in India it would be very difficult for India to compete with anything of that type. But I think if other types, more simple things and certain descriptive films were produced in India of scenes in India of every-day life, they would be of use not only in India, between different parts of India, showing one part of India to another, but also outside.

Q. In regard to that you say you yourself have found some difficulty in doing the production of this kind of films.

A. Great difficulty, because people are so doubtful of the success of the films.

Q. Still we are satisfied from inquiries we have made that the Indian film is really a profitable concern; whether good, bad or indifferent, they attract better houses, give better results everywhere, having regard also to the experience of the Venkiah productions. Capital is shy and people do not come forward. With reference to that difficulty do you suggest that any measures should be taken by Government in order to popularise the growth of this industry in the country?

A. Well, I should say in the first place, part of the reason why capital is reluctant to come forward is want of confidence really in the producers and in the general steadiness of the actors and such matters as that. Not want of financial stability but want of business equipment on the part of the producer. If Government could open an experimental plant such as has been done in other departments in order to show that if the thing is properly run the business pays, I don't think there would be any difficulty in getting capital after that.

Q. Just as they did in the pencil factory?

A. Yes, or the Soap Works or the Chrome Leather which they started and placed on its feet.

Q. You think that would be a good undertaking on the part of Government?

A. Of course, I don't know whether Government would put money into such a thing, but I think that is the only way of encouraging the growth of it. Capital is shy now because they are not certain whether it will pay.

Mr. Green: I take it in that observation you refer to this part of India?

A. Yes. I know about no other part of India.

Chairman: Now, Mr. Wilson, what do you say to the imposition of an amusement tax, the proceeds of the tax to be earmarked for getting out experts to train people in production, photography and other things connected with the cinema?

A. I think it would be a good thing, provided the tax is not too heavy.

Q. We have no amusement tax in our province at present.

A. No.

Q. You don't think from your experience of running these shows, the trade will suffer much by the imposition of a fair and reasonable amusement tax?

A. From my experience of the classes who visit these shows, the illiterate classes, the same man will attend two or three times a week before he gets the real hang of a piece, because he cannot read the letter-press. If the price were increased so much as to put it beyond his means to go so often, that man will probably go only once and come away with a worse idea than he would have got before.

Q. Probably you are not aware that the amusement tax in Bombay and Calcutta is not imposed on the lowest class. Suppose the lower class was exempted?

A. Say, it is 2 annas in the rupee and you charge a man 1 instead of 1; I think it would not do any harm.

Q. Or if the 8 annas ticket is 10 annas?

A. So long as it does not touch the 2 and 4 anna classes; if these are exempted, I think, it will be all right.

Q. Now supposing you do not find a purchaser to take up these materials you have got, what is your intention with regard to them?

A. Well, I don't know. As a matter of fact, why I have been keeping them is that I have hopes that Mr. Venkiah and his son between them will revive that sort of business if they can get a financier behind them. Prakasan I understand is English educated. He spent several years in studio at home and understands the business. I have really been sort of leaving this over till the last thing I sell with the object of being able to start some syndicate which would buy it up from me at a reasonable price.

Chairman: Mr. Venkiah, have you anything to add to what Mr. Wilson has said. Have you seen our questionnaire?

A. (By Mr. Venkiah): Yes.

Q. From your experience of the trade, is there anything which you wish to add or to give information to the committee apart from the facts which we have elicited just now?

A. No. If you could get Indian pictures that would be a good thing.

Q. You think every effort should be made to get more Indian pictures?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: When you were liquidating, did you find any evidence that the cost of production had been fully worked out, the cost of producing the films?

A. You mean with regard to the pictures that the Venkiah family produced? I did not go into the cost. I can speak only of the cost of production of this one venture—I mean "Mohini Avatar".

Q. Can you tell us what it did come to approximately, say, per foot?

A. My recollection is the picture was about 6,000 feet and the cost was about Rs. 6,000. Roughly it worked out at a rupee a foot.

Q. Does that include all overhead charges or was it merely the cost of the material?

A. Merely the cost of the material, because I let them down very cheap so far as the cinema and the studio are concerned, and Prakasan gave his labour free. That was virtually the outside cost of the purchase of materials and the payment of the actors and the purchase of the dresses also. It was, of course, a simple piece.

Q. Can I take it that your view is that, given reasonably good business management, the exhibition of films is a paying concern?

A. Yes, there is no doubt that the exhibition of films is a paying concern.

Q. And you consider that the audience is increasing?

A. I should say so.

Q. Have you ever been approached in your capacity as an exhibitor by any other firm? Has any Bombay firm which produces films asked you to take their films?

A. Not beyond Pathe. Pathe is a Bombay firm.

Q. They don't produce. I ask that because some of them said they cannot get their films on the market.

A. I was never approached by them. If I want an Indian film I get it from an agency here, the Kohinoor.

Q. They have an agency here?

A. Either an agency here or some one here who deals with or acts for the agent in Calicut.

Q. But you have not actually exhibited any of the Bombay films here?

A. No.

Mr. Neogy: Two of your theatres have been sold to Madan's, Mr. Wilson?

A. Yes.

Q. One of them being previously leased to them?

A. Yes.

Q. Before selling these two theatres I suppose you advertised in the press asking for offers?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you get any other offers beyond Madan's?

A. Yes. For the Gaiety I got an offer through the Alliance Picture Corporation.

Q. And you found the terms offered by Madans more satisfactory, I take it?

A. Theirs was the best price.

Q. How did the terms compare? I will just tell you the reason why I am asking this question. We find Madan's occupy a pre-eminent position in the cinema world, and I want to understand the exact process by which they have been extending their ramifications, whether there is any unfair advantage being taken by them of their present position. Was there any very great difference between the price offered by them and by the other competitors?

A. I don't think so; no. So far as I know, why Madans can beat all other people is because they have got their own films behind them.

Q. What about the terms of the lease. You had other candidates also, I take it, for the lease?

A. Yes.

Q. And how did the terms compare between Madan's and the others?

A. Nothing very much. Madan's was the best offer, so I gave it to them.

Q. They were also the most reliable party perhaps?

A. Yes.

Q. Did Madan's also offer to take the Globe on lease?

A. I think I wrote to them and they made an offer which was not sufficiently attractive and I therefore dropped it. They said they did not want it. They had enough in Madras but if I wanted it, they would take it at such and such a price; so I dropped it.

Q. And you got a more satisfactory price from the others?

A. Yes.

Written Statement of Mrs. M. Y. CHINNAPPA, Warden, Women Students' Medical College, Madras.

GENERAL.

2. (a) The attendance of illiterate classes is on the increase.
- (b) Some educated Indians, very few Indian Women of the higher classes, and many from the illiterate classes.
- (c) The attendance of college students is on the increase.

PART I.

5. (b) I have heard it said by Indian young men that the Indian films were objectionable in some respects.

6. (a) I think so.

(b) (1) (2) From Indian national literature, history and mythology.

14. Yes. Undoubtedly. Particularly in Public Health, the cinema could be a great means of popularising the maxims of health. Maternity and Child Welfare Films would very easily command large audiences composed of women.

16. No. Training in both film production, and in acting. If necessary, in Western countries.

18. Yes. Government could offer to buy suitable films produced for Education in Public Health, Agriculture, or General Education in Schools.

20. The department concerned, Public Health, Agricultural, or Educational could buy the films for its own educative work, and the cost would thus be met from the funds of the department itself. The Public Health Department particularly could do a great deal of its propaganda work by means of the cinema.

PART II.

Social aspects and control.

24. Yes, those which portray degenerate social life in the West. I have heard it stated that "Nero" was not altogether the type of film beneficial to an Indian audience.

25. Yes, especially as regards the sex films.

26. (a) Yes.

27. (a) Yes, Western life is misrepresented often to an Indian audience through some of the films. It is a fact that Western films representing Western life are ordinarily unintelligible to uneducated Indians, and these are largely those that frequent cinemas. Therefore it is much better that for Indian audiences films representing what is best in Indian life, history and literature should be produced.

29. No. If a film is bad for children, I would say it is equally bad to the childish ignorant illiterate adults who largely frequent cinemas.

The educated discriminates between the worthwhile and other films and goes only to the former.

30. Yes. Below 15 years of age.

31. (a) Yes.

33. (a), (b), (c) I do not think so.

34. (a) No. Provincial Boards are necessary and should be maintained.

(b) Central Board may be in addition to the Provincial.

(c) The Central Board censors all films coming into India, and the Provincial for the province concerned.

(d) The cinema companies should contribute as it leads to the raising of their trade.

35. (b) Yes. The Advisory Board of non-officials should have representatives from all public bodies in the Presidency; particularly those which undertake educational, religious, social, or welfare work and the members of the Board should be invited to visit cinemas regularly, and give their free opinion on the films seen by them.

36. (a) No. Observation made by Mrs. Neville Rolfe has given many the impression that the censorship is inadequate.

(b) Yes, all films by the members of the Board. Yes, it would be necessary to have both men and women of suitable standing to devote time to this examination and they can also be found.

39. No. But I have heard some friends say that some of the films shown here may not have been allowed in America.

40. Yes. The Board should pass them.

44. By having their representatives on the Censorship Board, and by advertising and popularising the right kind of film.

45. (a) Yes, through its representatives on the Censorship Board.

(b) Yes.

*Oral Evidence of Mrs. M. Y. CHINNAPPA, Warden, Women Students' Medical College, Madras, on Saturday, the 7th January 1928.

Chairman: Have you given us a written statement? You have brought it with you.

A. Yes.

Q. Thank you. You are in charge of the Maternity and Child Welfare School?

A. I was in charge. I am just now on long leave and am now Warden of the Women Students of the Medical College.

Q. How long?

A. A year and 2 months. I am on leave from the Corporation.

Q. Who is looking after Child Welfare now?

A. The Senior Assistant Doctor is just acting. They have not been able to get a suitable hand although they have advertised.

Q. You are not giving it up yourself?

A. I have not decided one way or the other.

Q. And now, do you go to the cinema often?

A. No, not very often unless there is something I want to look at particularly because Indian women of my class seldom come unless there is something they particularly want to see.

Q. Of course it is not popular with Indian women.

A. No, certainly not with Indian ladies of the higher classes.

Q. Are Indian films popular with Indian women?

A. To some extent. I have taken an interest in this, because the nurses want to go and the students now are getting very keen to go, so I try to get information about what is going on, so that they may go to suitable films.

Q. And who decides what are suitable films?

A. Well, it is largely a question of what I think about it.

Q. How do you judge it?

A. From the opinion of people who have been and seen the film before.

Q. Not by the handbills and posters, but through other people who have seen the film?

A. There are some friends here who have seen a film perhaps in America or England and they usually tell me beforehand what they think about it.

Q. And you are able to get that information always?

A. Till now I cannot say the girls have gone so often that I have had to collect this information often.

Q. How often have you taken your wards?

A. The nurses have been very often. The girls have been about 3 or 4 times since the hostel was opened. I was not in charge till the hostel was opened last July.

Q. So since last July you have taken them 3 or 4 times?

A. Yes.

Q. What sort of films did you see?

A. One was "The Phantom Police". On that occasion I did not go with them. They went by themselves and I am not sure whether they should have gone or not. And Harold Lloyd.....

Q. You are not familiar with the literature of the subject, I can see.

A. No, I am not.

Q. Nor am I. Now have you seen any Indian films yourself?

A. No.

Q. I notice in answer to question No. 5 you say "I have heard it said by Indian young men that the Indian films were objectionable in some respects". What was it about?

A. I think they felt that the acting in Indian films was not what exactly took place in ordinary Indian life. I am not sure. This is what I heard from a gentleman who has a great deal to do with young Indian students.

Mr. Neogy: That it amounted to misrepresentation?

A. They did not feel comfortable about it.

Chairman: Was it a religious drama?

A. They did not specify, they were talking about Indian films in general and that is what he said.

Q. Not that he complained of the moral tone of the films?

A. That was not specifically mentioned, the moral tone; but perhaps what he meant was particularly that the scenes were not quite.....

Q. They were quite uncommon?

A. Uncommon in Indian life, yes.

Q. What they referred to you cannot tell us?

A. No.

Q. You believe that the film must be fully and very largely used for public health propaganda?

A. Yes, I think it is a great means of making known the laws of public health.

Q. Specially with the womenfolk?

A. Specially with the womenfolk. We have been trying very hard to get a Maternity and Child Welfare film for the National Baby Week this year but we could not get the actors. We thought we could depend on the students in the various colleges but even then it was not possible. Of course we did not give ourselves enough time. We began only about the end of November last. Anyhow we have given it up for the present. We hope to do it this year and get it out in time for the next Baby Week.

Q. How do you hope to produce the film?

A. There is a man here who two years ago prepared a film of the events of Baby Week quite on his own.

Q. Is it Ranga Iyer?

A. Yes. I had written out a story which I put up in posters—a Child Welfare Story—and he asked me whether I would help him to produce it as a film. I did not know much about the matter but I said I would help as far as I could with the acting, etc. For two years we heard nothing more, but this year the officer of public health, Dr. Subramanayam, asked me whether we could not do it and together we elaborate it further. It did not strike me he could do much; he needs a great deal of help, and we got struck where the acting came in. We were trying to get the best students in the colleges to come and help us at the time but the colleges closed for Christmas. They have only just reopened. I am not sure whether we can do much. I was talking to Dr. Balfour. She told me a film had been produced in Calcutta by Mrs. Bentley but that it was an immense task.

Q. Now, do you think Government should spend money in producing these things or getting them produced?

A. What I feel is that Government could help largely by buying these films if they are found suitable and worthwhile; because this man, Ranga Iyer, I don't know exactly what his actual capacity is in that direction.

Q. I have seen one or two of his films. He took a film of this last Madras Congress. He showed it to me and it seemed to be good.

A. Anyway he is enterprising.

Q. And you would much rather prefer that Government should buy these films?

A. If they could help like that it would be of great use. Nobody else would think of buying public health films.

Q. Of course a certain length can be shown at each cinema occasionally.

A. Certainly.

Q. In your answer to question No. 24 you speak of "Film which portray degenerate social life in the West". Is that a mere generalisation or is it that films are shown which portray degenerate social life?

A. I think so from the posters outside. There are one or two films I have seen. I have mentioned "Nero". I did not go to it but some friends, on whose opinion I rely a good deal, said it was not the sort of thing which would help Indians to form a good idea.

Q. What it depicted I suppose was a cruel man—Nero.

A. The other side of it, the moral side of it, was overdone.

Q. You have not seen it yourself so you cannot tell us. You have not seen anything to which you yourself took exception?

A. Nothing much. Perhaps something made me uncomfortable at the time but nothing specially out of the way struck me because I do not ordinarily go to films which I don't want to see.

Q. What was it you felt uncomfortable about?

A. Well, ordinarily in Indian life.....

Q. You mean those close hugging scenes—is that what you have in

A. Yes. I do not think they have the best effect on an ordinary Indian audience anyway.

Q. You would rather avoid them?

A. I think for their sakes we should. We might understand them but they do not.

Q. You have travelled in the West?

A. No.

Q. What is your opinion about children being prohibited from attending, children of say 10 or 9—prohibited altogether from attending cinemas?

A. Unless it is altogether an educational or amusing film I do not see the use of children getting into these crowded places. They gain nothing.

Q. Don't you think if you prohibit children, mothers too will be prevented from going?

A. Of course Indian mothers always take their children wherever they go. Yes, of course that is the point; but we do not want to encourage them to take their children wherever they go, whether it is good or bad for the children.

Q. What is the objection to children going there?

A. It is no use to them.

Q. It is not injurious?

A. What is not good I consider is harmful.

Q. We do many things which are not good. Not that you consider there is any injury to the children?

A. Well the ordinary crowd in a cinema audience which I have seen—I think their behaviour would certainly not have a very good influence on young children, if you are thinking of children of the upper classes whose mothers take them with them.

Q. I do not know what you have in mind.

A. Well, their jokes and laughter and smoking and things like that. Personally I would not take my child. That is what I feel about it, not unless it is something which will be useful to him.

Q. Something comic?

A. Yes. There was a children's film shown here some time ago.

Q. But do you think it is practicable to class films as for children only or as for adults only?

A. It would be good and we might leave it to the option of the parents to take their children or not. I should think they too feel that it is not altogether the place for children.

Q. Or would you advocate a provision that unless a child under 10 years is accompanied by its parent or guardian, it should not be permitted.

A. That should be absolutely necessary.

Q. But is it practicable?

A. I cannot talk with much practical knowledge of that because I have not seen children straying into cinemas like that.

Q. But have you seen many children going at all to the cinema?

A. No.

Q. Very few children go and very few children under 10 really go to the cinema?

A. I should think so.

Q. I notice here you say "If a film is bad for children I would say it is equally bad to the childish-ignorant illiterate adults who largely fre-

quent cinemas". So if children are prohibited, you would also prohibit the illiterate?

A. I do not mean it in that sense at all. What I meant was that if a film was considered harmful to children it is equally harmful to illiterate ignorant people.

Q. You think you should not make a distinction between children as such.

A. No, as far as the more ignorant class of people who go to the cinema are concerned, because they are just as ignorant as children.

Q. I suppose you do not know much of the censorship work?

A. No.

Q. Do you think both men and women should sit on the Censorship Board?

A. Oh yes. I have friends who have been to cinemas and been in America also. They have told me that perhaps films ought to be censored a little more strictly here than is done at present.

Written Statement of Dr. (Mrs.) A. R. LAKSHMI PATHI, B.A., Madras, dated the 17th December 1927.

From my experience of the working of cinemas in Madras and Bangalore, I am of opinion that the number of people among the educated classes, as also among the illiterate, who visit the pictures, is ever on the increase. In this country we find that children under the age of 14 do not generally go to pictures just as the children of that age do in the western countries, even though films of special interest are shown. I have seen in London and other continental cities that nearly 50 per cent. of the cinema audience consists of children between 10 and 14 when films of special interest and those which amuse them most are shown. As a rule here in India, cinemas are very popular with the students, especially when the plots for the films are taken from classical literature of the west. Also anything that is taken from current literature and the latest up-to-date information interests the students immensely. It must be admitted that the present films do not very much appeal to the masses because most of them that are exhibited are foreign films with a back-ground of Western social conditions. Films depicting Indian themes, Indian traditions and culture, particularly the religious ones and which are in accordance with the Indian temperament, extremely appeal to the religious instinct of the average cinema-goer in India. On important religious festival occasions when films of the kind of Krishna Janam, Krishna Lila and Keechaka Vadha, people throng to these shows because they feel that they are stories of Indian origin with which they are very familiar and which they can appreciate better. Such films with a highly moral purpose behind them cannot but help raising the moral standard of the public. I may also say that films specially taken out of Indian folklore, Sanskrit and vernacular dramas, are bound to have an extraordinary fascination for the masses.

The condition of the film industry in this country is not at all satisfactory, firstly because of the foreign competition, and secondly for want of state support. The best way in which the indigenous film industry could be encouraged and could hope to thrive is for the Government to lay duty on foreign films until the film industry of our own country is able to successfully compete with the foreign film companies. The obstacles to film industry in this country are capital and lack of enterprise. The Government should grant scholarships to science students and send them

to the Western countries for studying the manufacture of films. It should also subsidise or advance loans to those who are willing to start such business and also reduce the import duty on the articles used in the manufacture of films.

At present there is a great demand for educative films showing various kinds of industry such as milk industry, mining industry, and fruit industry, which have a practical value. Public Health films will have a great effect on the minds of the people when the horrors of bad sanitation and bad water-supply and the enormous death-rate resulting from infectious diseases and the rate of child and maternal mortality are graphically shown by means of statistics and illustrations.

In India there are excellent resources and facilities for the development and production of films. The beautiful mountain scenery in the Himalayas and in Kashmere, and the beautiful forests and the rivers in India will provide ample material for cinema films. If India could succeed in her film industry and succeed in exporting a large number of Indian films, depicting her beauty, her manners, customs, civilisation of the high standard of her art, I am sure, they will clear away many of the wrong impressions created by people like Miss Mayo. The religious stories would help in educating the materialistic West in the spiritual life of the East. But India has a great deal to learn through pictures about the great industrial and commercial life of the empire and its agricultural activities carried on with the help of the latest agricultural implements and contrivances. Such films are of immense educative value in view of the economic prosperity of India.

Very often the foreign films consist of stories of burglary and thefts committed by means of motor cars, flash lights and other modern scientific inventions which are used for wrongful purposes. They may have a baneful effect on the minds of the illiterate classes in particular in inducing them to do such things and acts of crime and violence which they would otherwise be ignorant of. It is the duty of the censorial committee to see such films are not allowed to be shown, as in my opinion, these films have had a great deal to do in recent years for the increase of crime and fraud. Until the masses are educated and are in a position to appreciate their educative value, and have the discretion to differentiate between right and wrong, it is not advisable to exhibit films which deal with organised robbery. Those films depicting Western social life which allow a great amount of freedom to young men and women and which gives them free scope to indulge in improper actions might in a way prove to be harmful to the young generation because young minds are easily susceptible to vices and bad influence. Therefore those films which contain certain vagaries and irregularities of social life should be avoided as far as possible. Children should be allowed to visit picture shows which are specially meant for them and such films as would amuse them.

I am not of opinion that the films of the British Commonwealth should receive any special encouragement to the exclusion of films of the other countries like France, Italy, Japan and America.

As regards the appointment of a Central Board to investigate and examine into the condition of film industry, a Board consisting of persons elected from different provinces should be formed and its office located in Bombay and the work of the Board will be to have a strict supervision over the films that are imported or exported, as the latter might contain misrepresentations about India and her people.

The films that are exhibited in India should, in addition to giving us full and efficient knowledge in all practical pursuits of life, prevent us from being denationalised, and should keep us in touch, in spirit as well as in form, with our ancient civilization and national characteristics. Picture shows of our national heroes and their achievements will greatly help to rouse and instil the spirit of patriotism and reverence for our country into the minds of the younger generation.

72

***Oral Evidence of Dr. (Mrs.) A. R. LAKSHMIPATHI, B.A.,
Madras, on Saturday, the 7th January 1928.**

Chairman: Dr. Lakhmipathi, we are thankful to you coming so early. I suppose you take an active interest in the Women's Association and also the Social Welfare Association?

A. Yes, and I am also connected with the Indian Social Reform League.

Q. You are generally in touch with the Indian public?

A. Not exactly with the Indian public, but only with the women's section of the Indian public. Of course, I come in contact with a large number of social workers who are in touch with the masses. I am also connected in a way with the Adi Dravida movement.

Q. Now, do you go to the cinemas much?

A. Not very much. I go now and then.

Q. Where do you go?

A. I generally go to the Elphinstone Theatre. I used to visit the Wellington cinema formerly, but the Elphinstone seems to be about the best and the most popular in the city and to which I find all people going.

Q. Do they show both Indian and Western films?

A. The Wellington shows more Indian films than the Elphinstone or the Gaiety.

Q. Have you seen many Indian films?

A. Not very many. I have seen the "Krishna Janam" and "Khamasa Vadha".

Q. Was it a Bombay production that you saw?

A. I think so, because they had Bombay dresses in the pictures.

Q. Was it very popular?

A. Yes. The house was very crowded. I found it was very popular with the lower middle classes. These films were screened on Ekadashi and Shivaratri days, and judging from the large numbers of people who used to throng to the theatre, I think those films were very popular, and the Company used to give three or four shows daily on those days.

Q. I notice that you attach great importance to the production of Indian films?

A. Yes, I do, because I want the indigenous industry to be encouraged to a very large extent. I am not very much in favour of the importation of foreign films. I want protection to be given to the indigenous industry, not merely to the cinema industry, but to all kinds of indigenous industries, and as part of that programme, I would like the Indian Film industry to be encouraged.

Q. You say you want to increase the duty on foreign films, but do you think that we are producing Indian films in sufficient quantities so as to impose a duty on foreign films?

A. That is the only way in which you can encourage the indigenous industry, i.e., both by State patronage and by a kind of protection. I would like a heavy duty to be put on those films which are likely to be detrimental to the taste of the public, I mean films which are likely to bring about harm to the public.

Q. How is the customs officer to decide the matter? How are you to classify the films on which a certain high rate of duty should be levied?

A. I think you could ask the Censor Board to do that, though it is not their function now.

Q. The censoring body can only see the film after it has been landed, and the customs duty has to be levied before the film is cleared from the docks. Do you think the Censor Board would be able to classify the films according

to your point of view, and put two rates of duty say 25 and 15 per cent.

A. But is not the invoice received in advance?

Q. But that won't classify the films. Of course, it is one way of discouraging the importation of foreign films by putting on a heavier duty?

A. But I don't think the method I have suggested is practicable.

Q. You have also suggested that scholarships should be awarded to students to go abroad to learn the technique connected with the film industry. Would you advocate that or you would advocate the sending for an expert from abroad to teach people here?

A. Besides sending students to foreign countries to get themselves trained and acquainted with the production, I would also advocate the opening out of special classes to teach the cinema industry.

Q. Do you think that girls belonging to fairly respectable families would come forward as actresses for the film?

A. Not at present.

Q. But you do think that things are improving and tending in that direction, and that in the course of a few years you may be able to get girls belonging to respectable families to come forward as actresses?

A. Of course, they will not come before the public.

Q. Film acting is not done in public.

A. But still they will be known, and they will object to being known as actresses or stars.

Q. They will be given stage names.

A. Any way they will be easily known and they would object to acting under such conditions. And I don't think girls or women of respectable families would care to come forward.

Q. Don't you think that is a difficulty in the way of Indian film production which you have so much at heart?

A. But you could get women of the lower strata from *Devadasis*, and for the present, I won't mind it.

Q. You are not so prudish as to exclude them altogether as some people would do?

A. If you want the film industry to be encouraged I don't mind such people being encouraged to come in.

Q. You would rather have them lifted out of their present surroundings and make them follow a respectable profession?

A. Yes.

Q. You think also the Government should advance loans to those who are willing to produce films?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you really think that the films now shown have a demoralising effect on the people?

A. No, I don't believe that the western films have got anything to do with demoralising the people, because the Indian public is already acquainted with the freedom that is allowed to the western men and women and therefore it is nothing strange to them. Further the social conditions in India are such that our people are not likely to adopt those conditions. I mean the conditions of life obtaining in the west, because men and women here are kept so far apart from each other that there is no opportunity for them to get into close contact.

Q. Will you please read your statement on page 3. You say there something of the freedom that is allowed to young men?

A. I mean in a way. It does not have a harmful effect upon the Indian public, but it might have a harmful effect on the youths, 'in a way' I said.

Q. You don't think there is much risk in that?

A. No. But I say that as far as possible such scenes should be avoided in the case of youths and young minds.

Q. Would you classify films then as fit to be shown for adults only or for people above a certain age. What do you mean by young men, up to what age?

A. I would exclude people under 18, and young men are supposed to be adults after 21. I would not allow people under 21 to see films in which sexual freedom is depicted.

Q. So that you are for classification of certain pictures as fit for people above 21, and when they are so classified, these young people should not be allowed to see those?

A. Yes, that is my view.

Q. So that you really fear that some of the films that you see are likely to have a harmful effect upon the youths of our country?

A. Yes, in a way.

Q. You are definitely of the opinion, I see, that the burglaries and thefts committed by means of motor cars and flash lights and other modern scientific inventions have a baneful effect on the minds of the mass of the people?

A. Yes, in a way because people cannot afford to commit burglaries or thefts by going about in motor cars; they are too poor to do it.

Q. But still you would like to modify your statement from what you have stated in your written statement?

A. Yes, I would. It has got some tendency in that direction and more care should be taken in censoring such films.

Q. You would like the association of women on the Censoring Board wherever it exists?

A. Yes, one-third of the members should be women.

Q. Do you think you will be able to get women of the requisite capacity and leisure to sit on these boards which may involve two or three hours' work every day in the week?

A. I think there are many women social workers who will be able to spare the time.

Q. Do you think that in Madras you will be able to get women of liberal knowledge and culture to do this sort of work?

A. I think so, and though you could not get one-third of the number still you can easily get 3 or 4 women to devote the necessary time to this kind of work.

Q. But if the work involves two or three hours every alternate day in the week you could not get them?

A. You could easily get one or two women if not more.

Q. You think that all non-Indian films should be treated alike? And no distinction should be made between British, American or Italian films?

A. Yes, so long as they are non-Indian films, whether they are of English or American origin or German, they should be treated alike.

Q. You are for the more extensive use of the educational films?

A. Yes, especially more health films should be shown, because the health and sanitation of our country is very poor, and so health films should be exhibited much more extensively.

Mr. Green: I was very interested in your written evidence and in particular in your statement that India could learn a lot through pictures about industrial and commercial life.

Chairman: You have travelled in the west?

A. Yes, I have been to the west.

Mr. Green: You don't want to shut out from India all knowledge of the west?

A. Oh, no.

Q. In fact, the beneficent aspects of western life you would like to see exhibited to India and brought home to India.

A. What do you mean by the "beneficent aspects"?

Q. As you said yourself, the agricultural activities, the great industrial and commercial life. I will go further and say the methods of building, sanitation, and so on.

A. Yes, especially the agricultural operations of America. They have advanced to such a great extent that I should like their agricultural operations, conducted according to the latest scientific inventions, to be shown here, so that the people might be acquainted with them.

Q. The point I am concerned with is, you are very much interested in social life, and I take it also in the education and advancement of Indian women. You would like to see their outlook broadened, I take it? You would like to see the greater emancipation of Indian women. Now do you consider the films such as you have mentioned will help forward that emancipation if Indian ladies can be brought to see them? I am referring to the particular kind of films the witness mentioned in her evidence.

A. I am afraid that won't help towards the emancipation of women.

Q. Well, I will take it a step further. The Chairman has already suggested that the films showing western life—I don't mean cheap films or nasty films, which we all object to—but nice and pleasant pictures, would not such pictures have the effect of broadening the outlook and leading to the emancipation of Indian women?

A. I think so, because the civilisation in the west has gone to such an extent that Indian women would do well to learn from them about cleanliness and so on.

Chairman: And the freedom with which they move about in the streets of London and how they are able to take care of themselves, their independence.

A. Yes, because as it is, women here in India want somebody to escort them wherever they go. That spirit of independence must be learned.

Mr. Green: I am glad you think so, because I myself think that there is great scope in the cinema in leading to the emancipation of women in this country. But I am faced with the same difficulty as you are, I think. You are, I think, very keen that the evil part of the foreign civilisation should not be imported and that you should not be denationalised. Which is more important, to get the broadening effect of seeing western life, or to risk the possibility of some Indians being denationalised?

A. I don't think knowing what western life is would denationalise the Indians.

Q. And you don't think the less creditable films which possibly exaggerate the less creditable side of western civilisation, you don't think that such films are having a serious effect in India?

A. No.

Mr. Neogy: Just one question. With regard to the discriminating rates of customs duty which you suggested, at the beginning of your statement, you recognise that there are practical difficulties that way. I would suggest another alternative to that and I would like to know whether that would meet the object you have in view. Supposing a uniform higher rate of duty were to be fixed, higher than the present one, to be paid by all the films coming in, and then a refund of a portion of that duty could be made on the recommendation of the Board of Censors to the importer in the case of the better class of films. You see the refund takes place after the examination by the censors and on their recommendation. Do you think that would meet with your object? Because in that way you could gradually discourage the importation of the undesirable class of films.

A. Yes, that seems to be a more practical solution of the problem. A refund to be made in the case of good films.

Written Statement of Khan Bahadur ABDUR RAHIM, Sahib Bahadur, B.A., L.T., District Educational Officer, Coimbatore District, dated the 30th December 1927.

1. I regret I cannot claim to possess any special knowledge of the Cinematograph Industry.

2. (a) (1) Of the educated classes, it is the mediocre strata that frequent the cinema.

(2) The illiterate classes also frequent this show, especially when flash light pictures are seen. Even villagers come to attend it after paying considerable cartage and railway fare. Those who come on court business invariably avail themselves of the cinema.

Area and place:—Coimbatore town and the area around the town.

(b) Audience:—

	per cent.
Highly educated	2
Mediocre strata of educated class	33
Illiterates	25
Children below 14	15
Boys 14 to 18	10
Women	15
	100

(c) Children under 14 15

PART I.

3. Either sensational or adventurous films such as the "Ten Million Dollars" or the Puranic stories like "Krishna Janam".

4. Yes, adequately in Coimbatore, mainly because the films are selected with care.

5. Yes, fairly available.

(a) Films are not always of good quality. They sometimes do not accurately represent the cultural side of life and habits of the people of the relevant historical period; for instance, the Kings and magnates of the period of Sri Rama appear like those of the nobles of Moghul period; such films need considerable revision.

(b) Yes.

(c) Phalke's—this is probably the only good class of Indian films; others, are not up to the mark and not liked.

6. (a) and (b) Views and tastes vary; all audiences do not necessarily prefer Indian films over western films.

7. I don't possess sufficient information on this point.

8. Indian firms producing films are very rare. Except Phalke's others are more or less failures. The firm of Venkia in Madras proved a failure. In fact there is not even one Madras firm producing films. All the Bombay ones are written in Hindi—which the audiences cannot read. If a Madras firm with Tamil as the key language produces popular films, then there would be good scope for such enterprise. All the Nayanars (Saiva Saints in Puranic) and Alvar's lives could be depicted. Portions of South Indian History like those of Vijayanagar Kings, Naik Kings of Madura could with advantage be depicted on screen.

9 to 11. My information is very limited.

12. One exhibitor told me that this tax is a handicap to his business since the running of the business is very costly unlike other trades. The fare of tickets cannot be easily raised to meet the tax.

13. I have no information.

14. Yes, There is demand.

15. The show companies are increasing, and all growing towns are constructing theatres for them. What they really want are facilities for getting films without much cost.

16. Yes. Capital is the only difficulty. It was "Capital" in Bombay that contributed to the produce of films there.

17. There is sufficient capital in the country, but its out-put is lacking; capital is less bold in Madras than in Bombay; inducement is needed.

18. Yes, some form of facilities to Indian industry—(1) tariff, (2) abolition of tax on cinema companies and (3) subsidy or grants-in-aid towards the case of cinema intended for educational purposes or in educational institutions.

19. I don't possess information.

20. Yes. Expenditure is justifiable especially as in the case of (18) *supra*.

21. A State agency seems desirable, and in that case the film industry should be as a "monopoly".

22. Yes.

(a) May or may not, but better education of the country will be secured.

(b) (c) Yes.

23. (a) To a considerable extent, subject however to adequate censorship.

PART II.

24. (a) There is a class of films which demoralise people.

(1) Those which depict murders and robberies, and ((2) Half naked shows.

(b) There has been circulation of such films.

(c) They are harmful to school-going boys. Sometimes harmful even to adult audience.

(d) The general impression is that censorship is inadequate.

(e) and (f) I have not been able to get reliable statistics.

25. Yes, certainly.

26. (a) Yes, certainly.

(b) The case of a film of the exhibition of the History of "Jesus Christ on the Cross" (exact words are not remembered).

27. (a) Films showing naked pictures or too much of criminality should exceedingly misrepresent western life.

28. "Sex films" and "Crime films": Apart from involving immoral results, films rapidly exhibited before the children should seriously affect the growth of the eye nerves of the children.

29 and 30. Yes. I would not allow children below the age of 10 to see the cinema, especially because the development of their nervous side is seriously affected.

31. (a) Yes.

32. Perhaps not quite satisfactory. This work needs wholly-paid Officers.

33. (a) No; all recreations should be consistent with moral conduct.

(b) May, but only to begin with.

(c) No.

40. (c) Yes; The same principle should be adopted as in the censoring of films.

44. Both can assist in this direction especially by criticising in newspapers.

45. (a) Yes. Films producing agencies should be registered and licensed and

(b) their studios periodically inspected.

***Oral Evidence of Khan Bahadur ABDUR RAHIM, Sahib Bahadur, B.A., L.T., District Educational Officer, Coimbatore District, on Monday, the 9th January 1928.**

Chairman: Khan Bahadur, you belong to the Education Department?

A. Yes.

Q. How long have you been in the department?

A. 18 years.

Q. And you are the district educational officer in the Coimbatore district?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you often go to the cinema?

A. Not very often. Occasionally.

Q. How long have you been in Coimbatore?

A. Seven months.

Q. And before that where were you?

A. In Vellore, for about a year and a half.

Q. Have they got any cinema at Vellore?

A. No, not at present.

Q. What is the population of Vellore? It is the district headquarters, is it not?

A. The population of Vellore is something like 60,000.

Q. It is a municipality under the district headquarters?

A. It is.

Q. Now, you have got a cinema at Coimbatore?

A. Yes.

Q. Permanent cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there also travelling cinemas touring in Coimbatore?

A. None. I have not seen any.

Q. You tour about the district?

A. I do.

Q. You have not come across any travelling cinemas?

A. No, I have not seen any.

Q. But I have heard there are some companies from Trichy that go about.

A. I have not heard anything of these travelling companies.

Q. Or anywhere else? Have you seen travelling cinemas?

A. No, not travelling cinemas.

Q. Now what is the seating capacity of the cinema in Coimbatore?

A. Something like 2,000.

Q. As big as that?

A. Well, Coimbatore is a big labour centre. There are quite a number of mills.

96

Q. It has a big urban labour population, both in the mills and attached to the agricultural and forest colleges?

A. Yes.

Q. And I suppose this class of people go more frequently to the cinema.

A. Yes. The educated people go in very limited numbers.

Q. The 2 anna and 4 anna class go more frequently. Have you got two anna tickets there?

A. Yes. There are rupee tickets also.

Q. Now don't you think you are overestimating the attendance of children below 14. You put it at so much as 15 per cent. The evidence we have had is that children under that age are very few indeed.

A. It is rather limited; but it so happens that parents carry the children with them, probably owing to the inconvenience of leaving them at home.

Q. Of course that is a guess: you have no data.

A. It is a rough estimate after observing these things.

Q. Now, do they show Indian films in Coimbatore?

A. Yes, I have seen them.

Q. Are they Bombay productions? Are any of the Madras productions shown there? The firm of Venkiah Bros. here produced three or four films.

A. I have heard of some some years ago, but none of late.

Q. How often have you attended when Indian pictures were shown?

A. Of late I have not. Probably during the last year I have seen three.

Q. On these three occasions, what sort of Indian films were shown?

A. One was American.

Q. I was asking about Indian films.

A. I have seen one Indian film relating to Puranic times.

Q. Are you referring to "Krishna Janam"?

A. No. It was about Sita selecting a bride.

Q. Was the theatre crowded?

A. Fully crowded.

Q. Much more than usual?

A. I suppose it was more than usual.

Q. On other occasions when you went what did western films draw?

A. Probably a little less.

Q. What subjects did the western films deal with? Were they serials or social dramas? I see you say here that the illiterate class frequent the shows specially for flashlight pictures. You mean fighting pictures?

A. Something like that.

Q. Do you know whether any of these social dramas where passionate love-making scenes are shown—are they shown there in Coimbatore?

A. I only went to the Sita's bride film because I thought it would be interesting.

Q. Oh, that is all right. There was nothing in that. I was thinking of western films where passionate love-making scenes appear. Are they shown at all in Coimbatore?

A. They are. But I don't usually go.

Q. Do you see posters at all there?

A. There are posters also.

Q. Have you had any occasion to complain about any of the posters? Did you see any objectionable posters?

A. I think some of them were objectionable.

Q. Can you tell us of any instance of what you consider objectionable?

A. I cannot remember exactly an instance.

Q. You simply saw them and thought no more of them? You never thought it worthwhile to make any complaint or comment about it?

A. I have not studied it in detail.

Q. It is not a question of detail. If you see posted in a public place a thing which you consider objectionable, then you would have taken action, wouldn't you, by informing the proper authorities?

A. If I had noticed anything really objectionable.

Q. There was nothing which you seriously took exception to?

A. No, that is not the point, please. I did feel that some of them were rather objectionable but I found there were people whose concern it was. I thought the proper authorities would take care of it themselves.

Q. I see. You did not think it worthwhile to complain or mention it. But suppose you wished to complain, do you know to whom you would have to go and make the complaint? I only want to know whether people really know where to go if they have a complaint to make.

A. To the Board of Censors, I imagine.

Q. There is no censoring authority in Coimbatore. I am only testing you to see if gentlemen like you know where to go. I don't complain of your not having taken action. I only want to know the difficulties. I don't in the least complain about your inattention. Don't think that the question is meant to cast a reflection upon you. Now you say the films are not always of good quality. You mean Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. The technique is poor?

A. Yes, and there is a want of accuracy. You see Moghul dress during the time of Rama, and anachronisms of dress and methods. That shows that educated people do not take part in this.

Q. Now did you see many students going to the cinema?

A. Yes, I have seen college students.

Q. On the occasions when you went, did you notice anything objectionable in the films?

A. I don't exactly remember. There were possibly certain portions that were not good for the boys.

Q. You don't remember the name of it?

A. No, I don't remember. I do not remember the name of it.

Q. What was the scene you have in mind?

A. It is something like the cleverness of theft and so on.

Q. Probably jumping from a high place or ascending a big storied building?

A. Yes.

Q. Thrilling feats you have in mind?

A. Yes.

Q. Your fear is that the boys might try and imitate those thrilling feats?

A. Yes.

Q. You suggest in your statement that the censorship is not adequate. Do you mean certain films are allowed to appear, or certain scenes are allowed to appear, which should not be allowed to appear? Is that your point?

A. Yes.

Q. You have mentioned thrilling feats. That is one thing. Is there anything else which you think should not have been allowed to appear?

A. I remember some years ago a woman appearing on the film being beaten. It was not the kind of thing that should be shown on the screen.

On another occasion, a man who ill-treated a woman should have been sent to jail. He got off.

Q. Instead of becoming the villain he became the hero?

A. Yes. He got over it.

Q. Those are the things which you have in mind?

A. A few impressions.

Q. What is your view as to children under the age of 10 going at all to the cinema?

A. I think before the age of ten they should not go to the cinema. Some arrangements should be made for them in educational institutions for educational teaching.

Q. You would prevent them from going?

A. Yes. It is very bad for their psychological development. The scenes come one after another in quick succession and they have to be observed very quickly and the various impressions must be made on the mind of the children very quickly.

Q. I suppose you know that means preventing mothers from going to the cinema. As you know, most of the people have to take their children with them if they go at all. Do you think it is a good thing? Which is the greater evil? Don't you think the film has got an educative value for the people? It broadens their outlook?

A. Yes.

Q. It makes them acquainted with conditions in other countries which they have no opportunity of visiting?

A. Yes.

Q. They see how other people live?

A. Yes. Not only in the British Empire.....

Q. Not only in the British Empire but all over the world. They get some knowledge of the outside world by going to the cinema. If we adopt your advice of not permitting children to go, don't you think you will be shutting out one means of education for the masses?

A. You can manage to keep the children with servants.

Q. How many can afford to keep servants?

A. Or they can arrange with friends in the next house to keep their children as a sort of mutual obligation.

Q. You would rather take that risk?

A. The first consideration should be the children.

Q. What about college youths between the ages of 15 and 20?

A. Even that, if it is worthwhile, if it is possible, I should like to have a kind of limitation.

Q. Don't you realise the practical difficulties of having such a prohibition?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you approve of an idea like this, the censorship board to classify films which are good, give them A class certificate as a sort of guide to parents and guardians,—that means high class which anybody can see,—and classify certain films under B class which means, "Let parents and guardians beware".

A. Classification is the best.

Q. Instead of having an absolute prohibition?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. I suppose the films which you say are objectionable are very few?

A. I cannot say that because I have not seen many.

Q. Not that every time you go you see an objectionable thing. It is very seldom you come across an objectionable thing?

A. From newspapers and posters on the road we sometimes get information.

Q. Do you think that objectionable films or objectionable scenes appear very often, or only rarely?

A. They are a fair number. This I say from the talks I have had.

Q. There is a feeling in the Indian community that the cinema going habit is not altogether for the good of the people?

A. It requires a little more stricter censorship.

Q. You think that stricter censorship is needed in passing films although you are unable to formulate the films? That is your impression?

A. Yes.

Q. And that impression is shared by a large number of people, by parents and guardians, and people of your stamp? From your conversations with people of your class you think that there is a general feeling of this sort?

A. Yes.

Q. Because some people come and tell us "there is nothing objectionable; the whole thing is very good and you need not bother about it; let it take care of itself." You do not agree with that?

A. No.

Q. You think there is something to look after?

A. I think so.

Q. As regards educational films, have you ever tried educational films to give visual instruction to students?

A. We have got magic lanterns. That is wholly for educational purposes.

Q. If you had moving films, you would prefer it?

A. Provided we get exactly similar things.

Q. That would have greater effect?

A. That would be more effective.

Q. Have you any system of adult education in your district? Is there anything actually doing?

A. We have got night schools with a little widening of the former syllabus, because we thought the former syllabus was not sufficient for certain purposes. We have got a little less of writing and more of talks and so on.

Q. You believe in mass education?

A. Yes.

Q. And you will take steps to widen their knowledge instead of merely giving them knowledge in the 3 R's?

A. Yes. We want to do more and more.

Q. Have you ever thought that films would be of use in that respect?

A. That is the difficulty. We have not got facilities in our hands.

Q. You feel the want of such an agency for imparting adult education?

A. Yes.

Q. And officers like you do feel the want of such an agency in order to impart education to the people?

A. Yes.

Q. And if Government could afford it, you would all press for being supplied with an agency of that sort?

A. Yes.

Q. Do Inspectors like you, do educational officers hold educational conferences?

A. Yes. Some of them are associations of private management.

Q. Have they ever pressed this aspect on the Government, the want of educational agencies of this sort in order to supplement the education of the people?

A. For instance, I can tell you that if we have more small libraries it would be useful.

Q. That is different. What we are now on is, whether you do feel the want there, whether people in charge of the education of the country feel the want of such agencies? That is what I want to know?

A. Yes.

Q. I see from your statement you think that it will be very good to encourage the growth of Indian films. You think that will be a wholesome method?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : You have said in answer to question No. 2 (b) that 15 per cent. of women attend the cinemas. Have you seen any Mussalman ladies there?

A. Practically I exclude Mussalman women from that. They do not come in there.

Q. There is no *purdah* arrangement made for them as they have in Calcutta and other places?

A. In Coimbatore there is not.

Q. Mussalman ladies do not attend the cinemas?

A. I have not seen any.

Q. Are there any *purdah* arrangements for Mussalman ladies—that is what I am asking?

A. I asked the manager himself and he told me that even if there were *purdah* arrangements they would not attend.

Q. Are Mussalmans prohibited by religion from seeing the cinemas?

A. The appearance of men or women is considered in certain circumstances not exactly consistent with the religion. For instance, a woman should not appear with certain portions of her body visible to men. With those limitations there is nothing objectionable.

Q. Is there any objection to producing films in Muhammadan religion or something like that, just as they have Hindu mythological films?

A. No.

Q. You have the Bhargat Khalifa, religious battles and things like that?

A. Some of them are certainly objectionable.

Q. There is no objection from the Mussalman point of view if religious films are produced on Muslim subjects?

A. If there is any portion of it which is considered . . .

Q. You say they should be produced subject to certain precautions?

A. Yes. Then there is no objection.

Q. Some of them were objected to by Mussalmans in some places. In order to avoid loss to the producing companies, do you think it would be better to see the story and the scenario in advance?

A. Yes. If the censorship doubt that there is something which will be unpleasant to any community, it should prevent its production.

Q. They should be censored before they are produced on the screen?

A. Yes.

Q. And you say that the Board should see to this?

A. Yes.

Q. You want to see the Board have more representatives as Mussalmans?

A. Yes. They should be separately represented, and there should be . . .

Q. And educational officers like you should be there?

98

A. Not me particularly, but a man of that type, and not necessarily one Mussalman, but at least two.

Q. But you want men who can understand history, religion and so on, instead of men who are not acquainted with them?

A. Yes, people who know something about religion and so on.

Q. You say in reply to question No. 8 (reads). Do you think that Tamil should be the only language?

A. The whole thing is printed in Hindi. In Coimbatore they do not know Hindi at all.

Q. Mussalmans would like to see it in Urdu?

A. Yes. But in the southern side people do not know Hindi at all.

Chairman : There is a movement for universal Hindi?

A. As it is, there are not very many who can follow it.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : As regards educational films, if there is no money in the Education Department, do you think that Government should levy a tax?

A. There are two points. We are going to utilise at some stage this cinematograph for mass education, and I think we should go on if possible without a tax.

Q. I want to know from where the money is to come, from the Education Department itself?

A. It is for the Government to decide. It is a question for the various Legislative Councils.

Q. In your statement you say that the exhibitors told you that this tax was a handicap to business. Business in the Madras Presidency?

A. I am talking of the general problem.

Q. Is there any tax in this presidency?

A. None.

Chairman : There was a proposal.

A. I am only talking of the general problem.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : You yourself think that it will be a handicap if an amusement tax is levied? Would you like a tax of this kind to be levied and earmarked for education?

A. If possible you can do it. Some arrangement could be made to have cinema training as a sort of adjunct to some college institutions.

Q. You would like to have a class in some college of science or school of arts?

A. Yes.

Q. Where this art can be taught to students?

A. There should not be any burden of this tax.

Chairman : I do not follow you. You would like a cinema apparatus to be attached to some of the colleges? Is that your point?

A. Yes.

Q. Sir Haroon is asking you as to how to find funds for that purpose. It must come out of the educational grant?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : In answer to question No. 18 you say this (reads). In primary and secondary education I know that half and one-third grant-in-aid is given to the schools. In the same manner you advocate this?

A. Yes.

Q. On what data will you give such grants? In the other case you have some basis because the educational institutions show you the accounts?

A. If there is a rule to say that if there is an item of expenditure on this in an educational institution they can get a subsidy or something like . . .

Q. I am not speaking of a subsidy. You are speaking here of grant-in-aid?

Chairman : Just as they give a grant for furniture, building and so on, you also want a grant for this?

A. Yes, subsidised expenditure.

Q. Do you think private management will embark upon this merely depending on a grant from Government?

A. For one thing, one or two big districts can combine and do it.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : Don't you think a State agency will be a handicap to the growth of the industry in India?

A. I am not quite sure.

Q. There will be competition of Government and no one will come forward then?

A. If there was some kind of co-operation between 3 or 4 districts, I do not think.

Chairman : You think that 4 or 5 or 6 institutions should combine and put up some circulating library of films and the necessary apparatus so that it may go round those institutions?

A. Yes. You asked about travelling cinemas. It would be something like this.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : In reply to question No. 22 you say that there ought to be some kind of assistance given for the Empire films. Do you advocate a quota system by which the empire films will be shown in the different cinemas here in India? Do you advocate a quota system?

A. I do not quite follow you.

Q. I leave it at that. You said that children under 10 years age should not be taken. Then you stated that if there are children's performances or films certified to be fit for being shown to children, they may be taken there?

A. Yes.

Q. I just want to know why you have recommended that they should be prohibited from going to the cinema. Is it because the cinema will affect their eyes?

A. It does affect their eyes.

Q. The eyes will be equally affected if you have children's performances?

A. But they could be properly arranged.

Q. You mean that proper precautions should be taken?

A. Yes.

Q. In reply to question No. 32, you deal with the Board of Censors. Do you recommend that there ought to be some advisory committees for such paid officials?

A. They could have advisers.

Q. Sometimes these officials do not follow the advice of their advisory committees. Do you recommend that the Board should be a non-official one?

A. The impression is they have additional work to do. If they are wholly paid for that, they will be more free to do the work.

Q. There are many honorary workers who have offered their services for the Board?

A. I should thank them for it.

Q. In that case you do not want paid officials?

A. I think there should be paid officials.

Q. In reply to question No. 45 you say "Yes." Why should they be registered?

A. My information was that there was not proper check of the studios and that is why I suggested it.

Colonel Crawford : As an educationist, you attach considerable importance to the general educative value of the cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. Therefore you would recommend general Government assistance for the expansion of the cinema in this country?

A. Yes.

Q. When you come down to the use of the cinema definitely for educational purposes you are in favour of the use of the cinema for visual instruction?

A. Yes.

Q. You attach importance to visual instruction in education?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you attach sufficient importance to it to say, "Out of my present funds available for education I will set aside a proportion for visual instruction by means of the film"?

A. It is worth while.

Q. Would you set aside a portion of your existing funds for education definitely for the purpose of visual instruction by means of the cinema?

A. I should like to.

Q. Even though your funds are limited for education to-day, you would still set aside a part of it?

A. Yes.

Q. A prominent member of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Duraisawmy Aiyangar, strongly opposed in the debate the reproduction of films of religious subjects. Would you subscribe to that view? Would you, as a Mussalman, have any objection to religious subjects being shown on the screen subject to certain limitations which you have pointed out?

A. No.

Written Statement of M. R. Ry. G. SARYOTHAM RAO AYARGAL, B.A., M.L.A.

1. I have no special knowledge of, or connection with, the Cinematograph Industry either in India or abroad.

2. (a) I can speak with some definiteness and personal knowledge only with reference to West Coast and Madras. I have found both the educated and uneducated classes of Indians taking much interest in these shows, the former, as might be naturally expected, regarding such shows not only as agreeable diversions but also as a means for widening their field of knowledge on the social and scientific advancement so much in evidence in modern life both in India and elsewhere, while the latter, in my opinion, treat most of these shows as a comparatively cheap means of recreation after the day's cares and worries. Speaking in general, I must say that cinemas, in the course of the last few years, have become a cheap and popular recreation amongst students and also among the poorer middle classes and labourers. Especially among the illiterate, the cinema is an attraction owing to the craze for easy sight-seeing and also to cheapness in regard to its gratification. It must be considered that attendance at cinemas, especially by students and people of the sort mentioned above, is steadily on the increase. This is particularly due to the fact that constant attendance lends to the formation of a habit not capable of being easily shaken off. The cinema managers also help to a certain extent the formation of this habit by offering prizes and attractions of all sorts and means, especially to students. I am also aware of there being on the West Coast Bioscope Companies travelling from place to place, which attract good attendances.

(b) As stated above, cheap recreation tends to attract the poorer middle classes as well as the labouring classes more largely than the richer ones, who can afford to have other forms of recreation. The switch-on of lights in the intervals shows generally that seats nearer the screen are crowded, while sometimes those higher up in the hall have scarcely any occupants.

(c) Roughly speaking 50 to 60 per cent. of the audience generally consists of children and adolescents

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. Films which depict episodes in the Puranas are naturally most popular with the illiterate classes of Indians as also persons of a religious temperament. On the other hand, persons with æsthetic sense and who are educated after the Western fashion appreciate films which depict perfect acting and realistic scenes, and these are generally foreign films, either American or British.

4. This depends upon the locality and also the capital which the company can command. For example, in Calicut we rarely see good films and a manager, who finds that they have been received well in other places, invariably raises the rates. Sometimes, even old and tattered films with portions cut off are exhibited.

5. (a), (b) and (c) Up-country companies try to get Indian-produced films as far as possible, but there are very few good films. But the man to whom attendance has become a habit takes them as they come. Certain Indian films attract bumper houses and are more profitable, especially during festivals. A Western film depicting good acting is not so well appreciated by the type of people who attend cinemas in up-country places. I have known Phalke's films having attracted constant attendance even when the film is the same that has been exhibited during the whole week, for example, Kaliya Mardan. Indian films with European actors are rarely a success, owing to the natural difference in temperament.

6. (a) I should think so, and with proper care in the manufacture of films and better actors, films of Indian life should appeal more to the ordinary Indian mentality than the prevalent Western films.

(b) Films depicting History and Mythology especially Puranas, should appeal all over India, whereas films of Indian life, topical Indian news, etc., will appeal only to particular classes and particular localities.

(1) Films depicting incidents of real life appeal more strongly to the educated classes than any others.

(2) As regards the illiterate classes, many among them seem to take a greater interest in films that keep their feelings at a high pitch at least for some time.

7. I have no adequate knowledge of this.

8. (a) I should think that, though considerable interest has been aroused in this country of late years in the matter of the Film Industry, there is still much scope for much further development.

9. I do not know.

10. I do not know.

11. I do not know.

12. No Amusement Tax is being levied in Calicut. The only effect that the levy of such a tax can produce will be to make the exhibitor charge higher rates. So such a tax must ultimately touch the pockets of the sight-seer.

13. I have no remarks to offer.

14. I should think that it is high time that steps are taken in this direction. Efforts so directed would largely help the growth of the Film Industry. I am certainly of opinion that there is a clear demand for such films.

15. Though it is desirable that there should be large-scale Film-producing industry in this country, I am not aware of any conditions that might be favourable to its development. I am inclined to think that there is a great potentiality for this country to become one of the principal factors in mass education of the future.

16. I have no clear idea on this matter. I should think that the Government and the leaders of public opinion in the country ought to offer necessary inducements and financial help, where needed, to such persons as are disposed to take up work of the kind.

17. I do not think that such capital is or will be forthcoming in this country. To my knowledge, even such a great enterprise as the Madan Theatres is scarcely a financial success. No dividends have yet been declared.

18. Yes. The Government should provide funds and there should be no interference.

19. I do not know.

20. (a) and (b) *Vide* answer to 18. I do not think that such public expenditure is unjustifiable, and funds may be found from the sources which meet the expenses of the Publicity Department.

21. There is undoubtedly need for improving the conditions of the Film Industry in all its aspects, but this must be done after inviting opinions of the present producers and such other leaders of public opinion in each province, who may be interested.

Films of the British Commonwealth.

22. To my mind, two important aspects, namely, the economic and the educative, have to be considered in regard to the Film Industry and its products. I am of opinion that India should not be tied down to any policy of Imperial Preference. She must be allowed a free hand to patronise the industry of all nations, so far as the films to be screened in India satisfy the aforesaid conditions as regards their economic and educative values. There must, therefore, be no discrimination made between nationalities, provided the films exhibited are not obscene or otherwise objectionable from the standpoint of national morality.

23. (a) I am of opinion that cinema pictures can be used to a very appreciable extent for making known such conditions, etc.

(b) It will be necessary to address the various Governments to appoint delegates, who should arrange to meet and discuss the *pros* and *cons* relative to the matter. Action may, therefore, be taken on their suggestions.

PART II.

Social aspects and control.

24. (a) to (f) I should think that, in a large majority of the films so far exhibited in this country, there has been nothing positively encouraging immorality or criminality. It must, however, be admitted that in some exceptional cases the films have been not free from blame. To prevent harm to juvenile morality, it must be conceded that censorship would be both useful and necessary. There are cases in which the obscenity, indecency or criminal aptitudes are so pronounced as suggestive to susceptible minds of imitating such conduct in their own lives. To prevent the possibility of such effect being produced on certain minds, it will be well to appoint persons of recognised social status as censors, excluding, however, officers of the Police Department, in other words, the C. I. D. I may suggest that eminent educationists, heads of religious institutions and the like of every important town may be appointed as censors for such places. I mean, however, no disparagement to members of the Police Department by suggesting their exclusion, my only reason for doing so being that law and order are not coeval with morality, much less synonymous.

25. I do not consider that there is any need for special consideration in this matter, on the ground that, in spite of differences, there is uniformity in regard to ideals.

26. (a) and (b) I know of no particular instance, but I should think that care must be taken to prevent communal tension or inflaming of religious feelings.

27. (a) and (b) A certain degree of misunderstanding or misrepresentation is inevitable. Otherwise, I should think there is nothing that calls for special consideration under the head.

28. There is nothing except in the case of films involving palpable criminal suggestiveness. Such films will, of course, be censored by the authorities proposed above.

29. This may be left to the censors to decide.

30. This may be left to the censors to decide.

31. Yes.

32. *Vide* answer to 24.

33. Yes.

34. (a), (b) and (c) Though I am for Local Boards, a single Central Board constituted as suggested in my answer to 24, may, however, be instituted for the whole country. It may be situated at Bombay.

(d) The Board or Boards should, in my opinion, be financed by the Government.

(e) A reasonable degree of control by the Government is desirable, and provision may be made by registering and licensing film-producing agencies.

35. *Vide* answer above.

36. (a) I think a change of personnel is necessary, as already indicated in my answer to 24.

(b) I think that gentlemen of suitable standing will be available either for Local Boards or the Central Board.

37. (a) and (b) It is on the possibilities of local opinion being an important factor in regard to particular films that I suggested the formation of Local Boards.

38. I have no personal knowledge.

39. I have no personal knowledge.

40. This may be decided either by the Local Boards or the Central Board.

41. Not very appreciable.

42. As the trade forms an interested party, its co-operation may be deemed desirable within a certain limit.

43. This may be left to the Central Board to decide.

44. They may certainly do it to a considerable extent, but much of this aspect of the question may be left to the discretion of the Central Board or Local Boards.

45. (a) and (b) A reasonable degree of control by the Government is desirable, and provision may be made by registering and licensing film-producing agencies.

General Remarks.—In such a vast country as India, with a large percentage of ignorant and illiterate people, the cinema has provided a long-felt want for practical mass education, at least such as could be desired by visualization of scenes in the public and private life of people in different parts of the world both civilized and uncivilized. Besides, there is great scope for enlarging the views of a conservative people on general aspects of life and advancement in civilization and refinements, and forming comparative estimates in relation to those in our own country. This sort of work is indeed highly desirable, and in the absence of such an institution as the cinema, the mass of the Indian people would probably have to wait for generations, nay, centuries, before Government or Local Bodies take adequate steps for mass education. It (the cinema) has, in my opinion, great potentialities as an educative agency, and everything reasonable must be done to encourage its advancement and general usefulness in India.

**Oral Evidence of M. R. Ry. G. SARYOTHAMA RAO AYARGAL,
B.A., M.L.A., on Monday, the 9th January 1928.**

Chairman : I suppose you are going to the cinemas very often?

A. Not very often.

Q. Where do you get the opportunity to go?

A. In many places, in Madras where I come very often and in Calicut also. We have a permanent cinema in the latter place and there are other wandering cinemas also in Malabar.

Q. I heard that there are about 20 travelling companies with headquarters at Trichur?

A. I think most of them belong to the same family.

Q. What districts do they generally go about?

A. I know of their having gone even to the East Coast once or twice. I also understand a lot of money has been made.

Q. What sort of films are generally used?

A. I have not come across any serials being shown, but I think they are generally short films, comics. I have also seen some biblical pictures.

Q. All western?

A. Most of them western.

Q. Do these travelling cinemas show any Indian film at all?

A. I have not come across any. They do not visit Calicut very often but they are going about the country where they are generally appreciated.

Q. How many cinemas have you got on the West Coast?

A. In South Kanara there is a keen competition between various permanent cinemas; I think there are at least three now in Mangalore.

Mr. Green : What is the population of Mangalore?

A. It is something less than 60,000.

Chairman : So they have three cinemas in Mangalore?

A. In almost the same street in Mangalore, we have two cinemas.

Q. They are going on successfully?

A. Not financially.

Q. But still there is a fair competition?

A. Yes, there is.

Q. They all belong to the same agency, but different people run it?

A. Yes.

Q. How long has the cinema been in existence in Calicut?

A. They had their fourth anniversary very recently I think.

Q. Do they show western films?

A. Yes, mostly; but their tendency is to bring in as far as possible Indian films also.

Q. Indian films from Bombay or Bengal side?

A. Practically Bombay side.

Q. Have you seen many of them?

A. I am not generally enamoured of Indian films. So, I have not been seeing them very often.

Q. But they are getting popular with the people, although not with educated people like you?

A. I think it is due to the advertising habit rather than to the excellence of the films.

Q. You are not satisfied with their photography, technique, etc.?

- A. No, I am not.
- Q. You demand a high value for your price, but apparently the people are satisfied with them?
- A. A certain class of people seem to be satisfied with them.
- Q. Would you like them improved?
- A. Certainly.
- Q. Instead of allowing the industry to drift for itself, you want definite steps to be taken in order to improve the class of films?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What is your suggestion in that respect? Do you think they deserve to be encouraged?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Encouraged by Government?
- A. I am always suspicious about Government encouragement.
- Q. Supposing we had our own Government; would you ask that Government to encourage the growth of Indian films?
- A. I should think so.
- Q. What steps would you advise Government to take?
- A. They must give as much encouragement as possible to indigenous industry.
- Q. What steps would you advocate?
- A. The most important thing is of course finance, and the Government ought to give the industry as much financial help as possible in the way of long-standing loans, cheap rates of interest, etc. I do not want grants to be given to the companies; on the other hand I would like loans to be given.
- Q. I suppose you are familiar with the State Aid to Industries Act in our province?
- A. So far as the industrial schools are concerned I am aware, but I do not think it can apply to the cinema, because it is more a trade affair.
- Q. You can aid this industry under this Act, say by giving loans?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you think the provisions are sufficiently liberal?
- A. They ought to be more liberal, I think.
- Q. If no man is coming forward, what is the good?
- A. I know one gentleman came forward once, but owing to lack of encouragement, he had to give up.
- Q. Who was this gentleman?
- A. Mr. Venkiah.
- Q. That is a different story altogether. But why is it that more people have not come forward to produce films? You say there are a lot of subjects to choose from in this province?
- A. Capital is not so easily forthcoming in India. It is very shy.
- Q. You think that if Government showed signs of sympathy with this industry, people would come forward?
- A. Of course it will take some time.
- Q. Would you advocate the Government pioneering in this direction, say by establishing studios, etc.?
- A. I am not in favour of the Government starting a studio by themselves. I would certainly like them to encourage private studios.
- Q. How do you want this encouragement? First of all you must have somebody to be encouraged?
- A. Even though it will take some time, private enterprise will certainly come forward if the Government show that they are prepared to encourage the industry.

- Q. What is it that you want the Government to do?
- A. They must give financial help and all other facilities.
- Q. There must be an application for financial help. Are they to advertise that if people come forward, they will give facilities?
- A. I think so. This industry must be included among the industries to which they give aid. I do not think at present it is included.
- Q. Do you think it is essential that it should be included?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You think there is a vast field for it in adult education?
- A. Yes. It is only in that light that I consider the whole affair. It has a great educative value, especially in India which is a vast country with large masses of people.
- Q. So you think public funds should be spent in order to encourage the growth of this industry?
- A. The spending of public funds thereon will be quite justifiable, I think.
- Q. Cannot that object be achieved by encouraging the import of foreign films? Why should the industry be encouraged in this country? Suppose you get good foreign films, why not give some bonuses to the companies?
- A. Just to avoid the drain of Indian money, it is more essential to develop Indian industry. The Indian films must, in a short time, be able to compete with the foreign market.
- Q. It will not be wise merely to depend upon foreign films?
- A. I would say "totally" upon foreign films.
- Q. Therefore you want more and more Indian films to be shown to the people?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Your feeling is that the films now shown, although they are not positively objectionable, have a tendency to be objectionable?
- A. From an æsthetic standpoint.
- Q. From a moral standpoint?
- A. That is a matter of opinion. What I may consider to be moral, another gentleman may consider to be immoral. I have nothing to say against the films now shown.
- Q. You seem to recognise that certain scenes or films do pass through which are objectionable?
- A. There are a few from both an educative standpoint and from a moral standpoint.
- Q. You suggest that the censorship board should be strengthened by the addition of persons of recognised social status?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do I understand you to say that every film must be inspected not only by a paid officer but by the members of the board themselves?
- A. Yes. I want every film to be inspected by two or more members of the Board.
- Q. I do not know if you are familiar with the figures; but in Bombay and Calcutta it may mean three or four hours' work for each member of the board at least on alternate days, if the work is to be done properly?
- A. Then increase the number of censors.
- Q. Do you think it will be desirable?
- A. I think that in Bombay, for instance, there may be at least forty or fifty people who will be in a position to judge films.
- Q. So you advocate a board such as that?
- A. Yes, because if some people do not have the time to do it, others may find time to do the work. Such a body may be necessary in Bombay and Calcutta, and it may not be necessary in any other small place.

Q. There are only four places where censor boards exist now, and of them the Madras board is doing very little work. The bulk of the work is being done in Bombay and Calcutta. Would you advocate such a large body as forty or fifty members here?

A. Of course they may not have to work all at one and the same time.

Q. Supposing you get a panel of members for each day, do you think you will get any uniform standard?

A. Although there may not be uniformity, there will be the least likelihood of undesirable films getting in.

Q. You advocate a strong Indian element in the censorship board?

A. I do.

Q. They will be the best judges of what is good for their own countrymen?

A. I think so.

Q. Do you think we will get sufficient men of culture and leisure to work say three or four hours a day for three days in the week, say with a reasonable remuneration?

A. I cannot say off-hand.

Q. You believe in the film as a very potent means of education of the masses?

A. I do.

Q. Is it on that ground that you justify public money being spent on this purpose?

A. Yes, on that ground also.

Mr. Neogy : You have been conducting a high school for some time?

A. I have always been a schoolmaster.

Q. For how long has that been?

A. For about twelve years now.

Q. Have the students of your school any opportunity to visit cinemas?

A. So many. At least in my place every effort is being made by the cinema company to give all sorts of advantages to schoolboys and teachers as well in order to induce them to go and see the shows.

Q. Do they resort to the theatres in large numbers?

A. I think about 30 per cent. of my schoolboys must be attending.

Q. Of what age?

A. On an average from 9 or 10 years, right up to 18 or 19.

Q. How do you know that so many of them go?

A. I have not had an opportunity to see; but I think they do go. I have also received some complaints sometimes that these students are being induced to go to the cinemas.

Q. You think the parents or guardians object to the cinema habit more on the financial ground?

A. Mostly.

Q. Not on the moral ground so much?

A. Very few object to it on moral ground.

Q. Had you any opportunity of observing the effect of the cinema habit on the boys of your school from the moral standpoint?

A. I have not tried it.

Q. I suppose you get a large number of hand-bills and illustrated posters of the usual kind?

A. Yes.

Q. Had you on any occasion to take exception to any of those things on moral grounds?

A. So far as the Calicut cinema is concerned, I have not.

Chairman : Does it suggest that you have seen that in other places?

A. My objection is purely on personal grounds. For example, the other day I saw in Madras about two weeks back a poster in which Savitri was shown in a peculiar kind of posture which Indian women are not accustomed to. That was rather crude.

Mr. Neogy : What do you consider to be the general effect of the cinema on the students?

A. So far as my boys are concerned, I think they forget the cinema scenes as soon as they leave the place. They go there more as a diversion. I have never heard of any boy caring to go back to see again anything that he saw in the cinema.

Q. You say it does not leave any permanent impression?

A. I do not think it leaves any very permanent impression. Of course in the case of certain passionate and love films, there may be a certain effect upon adolescent minds.

Q. Do you think the evil is so great as to call for any drastic measures?

A. I do not think so.

Q. You have mentioned that in certain cases obscenity is pronounced. Were they shown in your place?

A. No.

Q. What proportion do you think such obscene films would form to the total number of films?

A. A very small percentage.

Q. You know the censorship came into existence only a few years back. Did you see such films before or after that?

A. I have been seeing these things very often since the Elphinstone came into existence; but I cannot recollect when or where I saw the particular films.

Q. Can you recollect any recent instance?

A. No, I cannot.

Mr. Green : You are so much impressed with the educative effect of the cinema that you are prepared to spend funds on it?

A. Only on educative films.

Q. I thought you wanted the Government to give all assistance to this industry?

A. Only so far as the economic aspect of the question is concerned. So far as films are concerned, I would keep them separate.

Q. Is it your idea that assistance should be given to approved firms which would produce educational films?

A. I have said that it would be justifiable only on that ground.

Q. Would you advocate that Government should encourage the production of educative films, either make them themselves or give contracts for making them?

A. If only Government make a show of it, I think there may be many people who will come forward.

Q. Would you be prepared, as a legislator, to either propose or support with your vote the expenditure of public money in this way?

A. I think it will not be unjustifiable.

Q. Would you go to the extent of actually voting for it?

A. If there are three or four proposals along with this, I should think of giving preference to this. I would try to give the cinema as high a place as possible among the various demands.

Q. Are you aware that there is a flourishing concern in Bombay for the production of films?

A. I have seen some films manufactured by that company which I think are good. If the Government think they are good, they may help the company.

Q. You are not very keen on Government assistance?

A. No. If the industry is getting on satisfactorily, I may not like public money being spent on it. If the industry can show a clear profitable balance sheet, I think any money spent by the Government on it will be unjustifiable.

Q. But they seem to be realising a profit now?

A. Probably the films have been produced in bad studios or on bad material. I do not like the material of these Indian films. Probably they use such material because there are not sufficient funds at their disposal. Profit is not the basis on which the quality of the material produced can be judged.

Q. Indian films appeal mostly to the poor classes which come in large numbers. Therefore the return from such films cannot be very great, and consequently you will have to spend large funds on superior films?

A. Of course they must take a bit of socialism also into consideration and give the poor people some better films.

Colonel Crawford: In your written evidence you say that you disapprove of the extent to which the Police department is associated with censorship?

A. Especially the C. I. D.

Q. Under the Police Act the police may have to suspend from time to time some film on the ground of obscenity. Would you be opposed to the association of the police with the Board of Censors in a subordinate capacity?

A. I would not have any objection.

Q. You said that capital is shy and that is what we have discovered in our enquiry. We have had it suggested to us that with a view to retaining the Indian character of the film the majority of the directors must be Indians and that the majority of the capital should be Indian. With reference to the comments of the "Spectator" on the proposed film legislation in England, do you think you can agree with the policy enunciated here (reads)? We cannot get Indian capital as it is shy. Could you accept foreign capital? That is, if we cannot get Indian capital, which is shy, and we admit foreign capital, the majority of the directors being Indians and the company registered in India?

A. Of course if capital is shy in India foreign capital will come in of its own accord. I don't think any special measures are necessary.

Q. You would not tie it down,—the suggestion is that these companies must have a majority of Indian directors. That is one definite suggestion?

A. I am not very particular about a majority of Indian capital.

Q. But you would like to have Indian control generally. You think that will probably be enough?

A. Yes.

Q. Now then, supposing with a view to helping the industry we accept some of the suggestions made to us—either that raw materials should be admitted free of duty or that we should give them protection against the foreign film. I presume you would say that is a question for the Tariff Board and not for us?

A. I think so.

Q. Now in regard to the production of public utility films, public health films and so on, I presume you stand for the work being done by private agency?

A. As far as possible.

Q. And with due regard to economy?

A. Yes.

Q. Supposing we were to find that it might be more economical for Government to produce its public utility films itself, would you be opposed to the formation by the Government of a Central Studio for that purpose?

A. But I would not like the Government to enter into the film trade.

Q. I am not talking of the entertainment side?

A. If these films are intended only for public shows without payment and only for general utility, I don't think I shall have any objection.

Q. To that extent only? I quite agree. You are against Government trading?

A. I am against Government trading.

Q. It might be a convenient way of getting them at the start?

A. It may be.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: In your reply to question No. 34 you advocate local censorship boards and a Central Board?

A. I do.

Q. What do you mean by these local censorship boards?

A. The peculiar difficulty has been India is such a vast country. For example take my place, Malabar. So many things that you would consider as quite fit for the Madras Coast may not be at all fit for my place.

Q. But in the Madras Presidency itself?

A. Yes. Some religious films which you may consider in an enlightened place like Madras or Bangalore to be quite good and not at all affecting the public mind, suppose they were to be shown in the Moplah country might be quite misunderstood by illiterate people.

Q. Religious films in Madras may not be liked in Calicut?

A. Yes, there is some difference.

Chairman: Have you ever come across such a case?

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Can you give me an instance of that kind?

A. I cannot give an instance.

Chairman: Are you also aware of the power the District Magistrate has under the Act. Is that not a sufficient safeguard against the difficulty you mention?

A. But that can be done only after the exhibition of the film.

Q. True, but at that rate you would have to have a censorship board for every district?

A. If my suggestion in 24 is adopted, most of the difficulties for the District Magistrate will disappear.

Q. If there is a company which has produced a film, the company find it a great hardship to go about asking for certificates from these local boards in each and every district?

A. I don't say "each and every" district. I will modify what I say there. I don't mind a board say in Calicut, Bangalore, or Coimbatore—any central place may be selected for a central board for a number of places grouped together; but the main Central Board will be one Board for the whole of India.

Q. Even then the trade will find great difficulty in having to go from one place to another. In the case of the Central Board also, it will be very difficult for Madras people to go to Bombay or Calcutta or Delhi?

A. Such difficulties must absolutely exist and cannot be helped.

Chairman: You think these people should pay over and over again for censorship; if each film has to pass so many boards there is a delay of time and there is also additional expense for them?

A. Some methods must be found in regard to payments.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: The suggestion you have made is impracticable?

A. I do not say it is impracticable. It may be practicable with some difficulty.

Q. You will not say how we are to solve it?

A. By a Central Board, I mean one board at Bombay or Calcutta, which ever is convenient.

Q. These local boards may be advisory committees to the Collector—will that do?

A. I shall be satisfied with that.

Q. Like the local committees of the Excise Department in each district?

A. I will be satisfied with that.

Q. In your reply to 42, you speak of the need for the co-operation of the trade as being desirable within certain limits. In what way, may I know?

A. To find out exactly the demand.

Q. You want a representative of the trade on the board, do you mean that?

A. Not exactly that. I have not thought exactly what sort of co-operation is needed; but I don't want the Government to go against the trade in any respect.

Q. But in what way is the co-operation of the trade needed?

A. Supposing a market produces a certain kind of film which is considered by the public to be good, I don't want the Government to undertake or subsidise anyone as a competition against that.

Chairman: What he means is if the trade have any difficulties or suggestions to make, they should be consulted by the Censor Boards?

A. I am sorry I have not thought a good deal about that. I don't want the Government and the trade to clash. That is exactly what I mean.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: In your answer No. 17 you say something about Madans?

A. I am sorry there is a mistake in the last sentence. I wanted to correct it at the first opportunity. I say no dividends have yet been declared. Some small dividends have been declared.

Q. Have you seen their balance sheet?

A. No.

Q. You are not a shareholder?

A. I am interested in the concern but I cannot say I am a shareholder.

Mr. Neogy: How are you interested in it?

A. My uncle is the Manager of the Elphinstone Theatre here and has a lot of shares.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You have seen a lot of British and American films here. May I know what the percentage of British and of American films is?

A. That I cannot say.

Written Statement of Mr. T. S. NATARAJA PILLAI, B.A., B.L., Councillor, Corporation of Madras.

1. Indians of all classes, both literate and illiterate, frequent the cinemas in fairly large numbers. Cinema-going is highly on the increase. Ideas of western life which are easily imbibed by the Indian, specially ideas as to the way in which life is to be enjoyed, contribute greatly to the growing popularity of cinemas.

2. The composition of an audience mainly depends upon the locality in which the cinemas are situated. In Vepery, for example, the majority of visitors are Anglo-Indians. In other centres in Mint Street and Triplicane, the audience consists of Indians chiefly of the labouring and illiterate classes. Children under 14 years are very few. They do not generally attend cinemas and fathers are disinclined to take them to cinemas where they may have to answer very difficult and often delicate questions put by the youngsters. They form about 10 per cent. of the audience. Adolescents of impressionable age especially students visit the cinemas largely and frequently. They form the majority.

3. Among the illiterate classes and women, the most popular plays are those dealing with Indian mythology. The old groove in which they are accustomed to move and their sedate habits of life, incline them to the more staid and serious religious mythology. Among the illiterate, the pictures depicting hair breadth escapes and others of a melodramatic nature are popular. The educated classes prefer European films where the nationality of the actors, their habits of life and modes of dress and the greater scope that exists for the play of imagination contribute to make the films attractive. Those films which feature impossible incidents; those that are crowded with ludicrous incidents in which comicality plays the greater part are the most popular. Next in order come the plays dealing with love-intrigues and those dealing with Indian mythology.

4. Exhibitors have their fingers on the pulse of the audiences and they may be left to take care of themselves. They know when and where to exhibit special films. Generally there is too much catering and pondering to the tastes of audience. Indian films are generally and more frequently shown at all centres except at Mount Road. And even there the Indian films draw large crowds. The balance of profit will remain with Indian films showing stories from Indian mythology where the Gods of the Hindu Pantheon take the leading part. Apart from such, the Indian films depicting the social life of the Indians are not popular partly from the humdrum routine of Indian life which has no excitement about it and partly from the serious nature of the plots which give greater play to the philosophic side of Indian life which people who go to cinemas to spend two hours of hilarious merriment and relaxation from worry dislike. Further the great mistake of the Indians in allowing lady characters to be played by grown up men with shaven chins and moustaches which produce a ghastly effect on the screen adds to the unpopularity of their plays. The production of Indian companies which have actresses, Indian and Anglo-Indian, are preferred. Some films which portray the Indians in lower walks of life playing the part of serfs and villains who are sometimes whipped are disliked and the implications contained therein are resented. But fortunately these are very rare.

5. To assist the Industry I would suggest the establishment of some school or institution in which the various methods and technique are taught by Government or the opening of a Cinematograph Branch in the Electrical Department of the Government Trades School. Greater facilities and help may be given to producers such as help by policemen holding up traffic when the cinema operator is working. Scholarships may be given to young men to go to America or England. If help in the shape of subsidies are given people are not likely to take kindly to them in their present state of mind as everything done by Government is looked upon with distrust. Any grant of loan would argue some check or supervision by Government which is likely to be disliked as the producers will not have a free hand.

6. The Customs Tariff on imported films increase the cost of the film and the exhibitors are unwilling to exhibit those films as side shows. They keep the films back for a full show, so that they may realise the amount spent on them. It also affects the exhibitor in another way. The films are not sent up to the mofussal or suburban stations at cheap rates and so the films are held up and lie idle.

7. Cinema as a means of propagation of knowledge in matters of Health and Sanitation, Child Welfare, Scientific improvements in agriculture cannot be too highly valued. It does not matter whether there is any demand for such films or not. We must create demands. The Corporation is having an uphill work with reference to sanitation. It tries to instil into the minds of the citizens habits of sanitation so necessary to public health. But so far the lectures have fallen on deaf ears. If in addition to these lectures or in substitution of them, films showing the cleanliness of foreign streets, the methods by which rubbish from each house is removed, the care taken by foreign countries to prevent infection, the measures taken in child welfare are exhibited, they will go a great way in educating the masses in habits of

sanitation, etc., in which they are woefully wanting. The exhibition of scientific researches, and the difficulties which inventors undergo and the manner in which they overcome them will stimulate the young mind. Even commercially the methods by which horses are bred in foreign countries, fish are increased for export purposes, eggs are preserved for similar purposes are all of high utility. It is indeed a pity that such films which in the beginning of the industry were exhibited are become very rare. The Pathe Gazette is the only film which still perseveres in that kind of exhibition; but the Pathe films are no longer popular.

8. Legislation is necessary in this instance. Every Cinema show must be made to exhibit every day a certain number of educational films either approved by the Board or pointed out by them. They must be insisted upon as side shows and a certain time limit also must be fixed for them. Uniformity in this respect will not affect any exhibitor adversely.

9. The Indian mind—I speak of Madras specially—is sufficiently intelligent to adopt itself to any condition. There is no need to despair about the paucity of actors or of talent. The only help that Government can give is to lend money on the model of Agricultural loans for cinema producers.

10. I am against all kinds of monopoly in Industry. It will create enormous difficulties and no end of heart burning. State interference is inadvisable. I will let well alone. If films are to be produced to given standards, it will entail a stereo-typed production. Liberty of thought and imagination should not be curbed. Artistic and inspirational development should not be checked by an over-strict censorship. All that is necessary to do is to have a strict surveillance on indecent exhibitions and to see that actresses are sufficiently clothed and that the diaphanous material used by them is not over lavish.

11. Films like "Messalina" whose plot is based on Roman life at its worst, when the Roman Empire was declining to a fall, have a deleterious effect on young minds. I cannot condemn any class of films. Individual films like the one I mentioned are to be condemned. If poetic Justice plays a prominent part in cinema productions they may be passed. But unfortunately playwrights for cinemas are not particularly anxious to point a moral. Criminally suggestive films are not common now. Some people are inclined to think that the series of thefts which took place recently in Mylapore and Egmore were due to the suggestive films of the cinemas. But such people lose sight of the fact that the newspapers are more widely read now and daring acts of robbery and ingenuity in thefts which we read of so commonly, are better understood and appreciated. However, there is sufficient censorship with respect to this class.

12. Difficulty arises with respect to the sex films. The differences in social customs and outlook between the East and West are such that what would pass off without notice in the West is emphasised here and forms a kind of obsession on the young Indian mind. As the least freedom in such matters is forbidden to the Indian it is generally feared that the total absence of restraint exhibited in the films would lower the high moral standard of the Indian youth. But I cannot help observing that the Indian youth is kept too much in leading strings and the ordinary experience which he must gain in life is denied to him as parents have a wholesome terror and horror to give the youth any tips in such matters. While therefore I would say that there should be some special consideration in censorship in these matters, I would confine such censorship to matters already adverted to by me in para. 10. Films wounding religious susceptibilities are not found in this part of the land.

13. Certification of films for adults only will put adults in an uncomfortable position. It will at the same time create a hankering in young minds for forbidden things. Adults will feel that they are guilty of some indiscriminate in going to such shows. Further the definition of adults will involve great difficulties. What is the age limit to be fixed for adults? Are we to exclude persons below 25 or below 18? On the whole I am not for such certification.

Exclusive use of films for children would affect the trade. Insistence on such shows would hit the exhibitor hard. Generally such shows will be half full of quite young children who accompany the older ones. And as these will be admitted free, nearly half the hall would be occupied by children who do not pay. Older people will not attend such shows. The exhibitor will have no interest and such shows will be hurried through and defeat the very purpose for which they were intended. As I have already said a judicious intermingling of educative films should be insisted upon.

14. I would advocate a Central Board in addition to the Provincial Boards. What is approved by the Provincial Boards should without hesitation be approved by the Central Board, except as to matters on which the Central Board would be of opinion that they would wound religious susceptibilities in particular localities. In such cases the Central Board may use its discretion either to prohibit such films or to confine them to particular provinces or localities. Ordinarily the membership of the Boards should be honorary. Incidental expenses may be met by charging a small fee for passing films and getting the sanction of the Central Board. All films should be examined by the members of the Board themselves.

15. The Act must be amended so as to insist on better accommodation to the lowest class visitors. At present the Act provides only for measures for safety of persons. The benches should be provided with back seats. There must be better ventilation of the Halls. A kind of noxious vapour, augmented by smoking, hangs over the halls when the doors are shut. Funnels to let in purer air and to take away the vapour should be provided. The distance between the screen and the last class should be definitely fixed. Periodical examination of films should be provided in order to detect and delete old and faded films which affect the eyes injuriously. Every hall should be certified to hold only certain fixed number of persons and overcrowding should be made punishable. The power given under the present act to the Commissioner of Police to suspend films should be vested only in the Board.

Oral Evidence of Mr. T. S. NATARAJA PILLAI, High Court Yakkil, and Councillor of the Corporation of Madras, on Monday, the 9th January 1928.

Chairman: I don't think you have favoured us with a written statement?

A. I have brought one here. (He handed a copy to Chairman).

Q. I suppose you go to the cinema pretty often?

A. Fairly often.

Q. What cinemas do you go to—in the town?

A. In the town and Mount Road and Mint Street.

Q. Do you go to that Liberty cinema?

A. No.

Q. Or the Crown?

A. I go to the Crown, the Majestic, the Elphinstone, the Gaiety.

Q. Generally you are a frequent goer?

A. Yes.

Q. How long have you been going?

A. For about 10 years.

Q. Then you must have a fair knowledge of it. I have not seen your statement yet but what is your impression about the effect of the cinema on the public has it a good effect or a bad effect?

A. I would say that, on the whole, it has a deleterious effect on young minds.

Q. Judging broadly; I do not want you to go into particulars; you think young minds get affected by what they see on the screen?

A. I will not condemn any class of film. I have put it down in my statement like this: "Individual films like 'Messalina' ought to be condemned, but if poetic justice plays a prominent part in films they may be passed, but unfortunately playwrights for cinemas are not anxious to point a moral." Then I go on to speak of the difficulty arising from sex films, and the difference in social outlook between West and East.

Q. Of course you know under the censorship rules regard is had to these things. I don't know if you have seen those rules. The rules are very definite?

A. I have only seen the Act so far.

Q. There are rules made by the Bombay Government which are observed throughout, which are borrowed from the English rules. Now, they have regard to those aspects which you have mentioned and therefore I want to know whether in the films or scenes which you see, you think that a sufficient number still depart from those standards—is that your point of view?

A. Yes. I have said so in my statement.

Q. You think then that those rules are not observed?

A. They are not observed.

Q. The rules which you have in mind are not observed in those sex films, where passionate love scenes do appear, and you think they are injurious to young people, impressionable adolescents between the ages of 15 and 20?

A. Or 18, I should say.

Q. You think stricter censorship is called for?

A. I have said that very strict censorship might be bad.

Q. I quite see the difficulty in finding a happy mean. On the other hand, you realise the dangers of censorship both on amusement and on the trade?

A. Very often I go to see a picture simply because my boy went to see it, and I want to know what kind of film he is fond of and the effect it may have on him.

Q. Then are you generally satisfied with the censorship?

A. Sometimes I am not satisfied.

Mr. Neogy: How old is your boy?

A. He is just 18.

Chairman: Recognising the difficulty, probably you may be able to assist us. I will show you the rules which now govern the censorship. These are the rules which now guide inspectors and others who have to pass films?

A. They are fairly comprehensive.

Q. And I suppose all the points you have in mind are covered by those rules?

A. Yes, but it will depend on the kind of person the inspector is. If you have an inspector who is not well educated or if he is a low paid official, I fear that some of these will be more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

Q. Do you think, having read these rules, there are many cases of departure from them which have come under your notice?

A. If those rules came into existence in 1918 along with the Act, I should say that there is still room for stricter censorship.

Q. Still room for improvement?

A. Yes.

Q. But recently do you notice any tendency; you have been going there for the last ten years; do you notice there is any tendency towards improvement in the tone of the films?

A. I observe in one or two instances that the Madras police were rather prompt and asked the authorities to delete certain portions which offend public decency.

Q. But apart from that, in the general tone I mean of the recent films you have seen, do you see a change for the better?

A. No, I cannot say that I have noticed a change for the better.

Q. Can you tell us anything which you saw recently to which you would take exception?

A. Films like "Messalina," about which I have said that the plot is based on Roman life at its worst, have a deleterious effect on young minds.

Q. When was it you saw that?

A. About 2½ years ago; and I think it was repeated again last year.

Q. That is the only thing which struck you?

A. That and another, I think it was "Quo Vadis;" but there it was not so very bad.

Q. The only thing which left an impression on your mind was this film which you have mentioned?

A. Yes.

Q. Otherwise you are satisfied generally?

A. Yes.

Q. And you ask us to pay attention to the possibility of injury to the trade by advocating too strict a censorship?

A. That is what I say.

Q. And also interference with art and artistic developments—you think too much censorship is likely to interfere with the originality of the artist?

A. Yes.

Q. And your advice also is that the injury is not so great as to call for any drastic action?

A. Except on the lines I have indicated.

Q. Which you say are already covered by the rules which are now being observed?

A. Yes, but the rules, if they have existed for 3 or 4 years, I think they ought to be more strictly enforced. You want a more vigorous application of the rules.

Q. Would you suggest then that every film should be passed by 2 or more members of the Board?

A. I would say that every film must be passed by the Board itself.

Q. The whole Board?

A. The whole board.

Q. I am afraid, Mr. Pillai, you have not realised the magnitude of the work. Millions of feet have to be passed every year?

A. I was just hearing your observations to another gentleman who was sitting here but I thought in Madras there was very little work.

Q. Apart from Madras. We are now speaking generally. Millions of feet have to be passed. If one man were to do it or 5 men were to do it, it would take at least 5 to 5½ hours a day 6 days in the week?

A. But I have advocated having boards both provincial and central.

Q. But, as it is, the films which come into the country come through either Bombay or Calcutta; very little comes to Madras—an almost negligible quantity; and therefore in a place like Bombay or Calcutta it would require so much work to be done and if you say the whole Board must view each film, do you think you would get men to do it—to sit every day 4 to 5 hours?

A. In that case I would suggest having a panel such as we have in regard to Honorary Magistrates.

A. And you will not expect them to work more than 2 or 3 days a week, 2 hours a day at the most?

A. Yes.

Q. Anyway you believe in two or three or more members of the Board viewing the films for certification and not merely depending upon individuals, however highly placed they may be or however highly cultured?

A. Yes. I don't mean to cast any reflection on individuals.

Q. You think two or more heads better than one in a matter like this?

A. Yes, that is all.

Colonel Crawford: You do not think that with a large panel it would be necessary to have, if you are going to undertake this work of censorship, your standard of uniformity is likely to suffer? You get A. and B. to-day, C. and D. to-morrow and E. and F. the next day?

A. I don't mean to say that at all.

Q. You don't think the uniformity of censorship will suffer?

A. No, provided you have 3 persons sitting on the Board.

Q. You would not prefer for instance a couple of stipendiary censors,—men with adequate qualifications such as you described?

A. The difficulty with regard to stipendiary people is that they may be too amenable to influences.

Q. Surely it depends upon the salary paid and the standing of the man?

A. Yes, but in that case you will have to pay a very high salary, which in the present state of the finances of the country will not be advisable.

Q. What would you suggest is a suitable salary for a stipendiary officer of the qualifications you suggest?

A. In my statement I have said that all members must work honorarily.

Q. Assuming that honorary members are not possible—either they cannot give the time to the work or there are so many that your standard of uniformity is likely to suffer—if you are forced back on to the stipendiary censor as the only practicable method of doing the work, what salary do you think would be necessary to secure men of adequate integrity and qualifications?

A. I should say that an ordinary Deputy Collector's salary would do.

Mr. Green: The Inspector who does the work at Bombay gets a salary rising to Rs. 500 plus certain allowances and he is a gentleman with very good educational degrees and he has also travelled in the West. Isn't that exactly the type of officer that you do contemplate?

A. If I had not seen these rules and known that they have been in existence so many years, I should have thought that would be sufficient; but as it is . . .

Q. You think those rules are not sufficiently enforced?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you will agree that that may be a matter of opinion?

A. Of course ideas differ

Written Statement of Dr. A. L. NARAYAN, M.A., D.Sc., F.I.P.,
(Eng.), Professor of Physics, Maharaja's College, Vizianagram,
dated the 1st December 1937.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. No connection with the cinema industry either in India or abroad.

GENERAL

2. (a) Educated classes go rather rarely to the cinema while illiterate classes abound in the theatre and their attendance is on the increase.

(Rajahmundry, Cocanada, Vizagapatam.)

(b) Students and middle class form a third. Floating population and a large contingent of labourers form the rest.

(c) Children.—Very small proportion, only those that are compelled to accompany their parents.

Adolescents.—The pit consists of mostly of youths of ages ranging from 16—20 years.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. Films dealing with Indian subjects especially Puranic stories are popular; sometimes films like those of "Eddie Polo" are very much liked.

4. Judged by the number and variety of films they do so but they are not to the taste of the Indian audiences. The Mahomedan section of the audience always likes stir and sensation and they may therefore be said to like the generality of films. The milder part of the audience does not of course like a major portion of the films. If, nevertheless the latter attend the theatre it is more to satisfy a craving for amusement.

Educated public require more films of a social nature and the uneducated require correct version of Hindu mythology.

5. Judged by the paucity of such films exhibited I should think that such films are not easily available.

(a) Can't be compared with western production and require considerable improvement in technique.

(b) Yes, in spite of defects.

(c) Certainly more profitable to show an Indian film—Birth of Sri Krishna, Anasuya, Light of Asia, Nala and Damayanti, etc.

6. (a) Yes.

(b) (1) Historical films and other topical news of current interest like "Funeral of Das", "Funeral of Tilak", "Gandhi addressing meetings" and Durbar films.

(2) Stories from natural literature and mythology.

8. (a) No.

(b) Production.—(1) Insufficient capital and cheap apparatus.

(2) Scenerio writers not well versed in literature.

(3) English titles so bad as would spoil the effect of the film.

(4) Women must displace completely men playing the part of women.

(5) The public should be educated to the necessity of India taking her share in the film industry.

(6) The Government should take the lead and encourage the industry by sending students to foreign countries to study the art.

Distribution.—More liberal, patent laws.

9. I should think there is a tendency to monopoly.

11. No. We sadly lack in facilities for pre-viewing.

Suggestion.—A central board of film producers exhibiting their productions to exhibitors, periodically at one central place and publication of detailed synopsis of the pictures.

12. I do not consider it a handicap.

13. I do not propose any tax on the imported films. Healthy competition is necessary. Otherwise it will lead to importation of capital and actors from abroad.

New materials like sensitive films, finer chemicals, etc., should be imported without duty.

14. Certainly—our educational system requires our own films taken from a study of Indian life. There will be a demand when films are available

Every public institution however small must have its department of visual instruction.

15. Yes—India has all facilities for a great film industry—plenty of sunlight, variegated scenery (natural) cheap labour extensive open grounds.

16. There are men but they require a little western training—the latest films show a knowledge of technique.

17. It all depends upon the amount of enthusiasm and support given to the industry by Government.

18. Yes. By finding at least one cinema film producing concern partly financed by Government, with experienced western element in the production department and liberal tariff laws facilitating the importation of cinema materials and by awarding Government scholarships to students for studying the Art in foreign countries.

19. Cost of materials higher in India but compensated by cheap skilled labour. Further there is no need for high priced illuminating plants like mercury vapour lamps, etc., in India.

20. (a) Paragraph 18 requires Government support financially—considering the educational aspect of the country this expenditure is an item in the right direction and is certainly justifiable.

(b) From amusement taxes, educational cess, etc.

21. Yes. I agree only to the state control in regard to morals of the films. But the state should not be the monopoly. It would be better if the Indian producer, before photographing the film, should submit his plot or story to a Central Board consisting of representatives of each Province (the one suggested under paragraph 34) so that as far as possible the Provincial variations might be rounded off.

Films of the British Commonwealth.

22. Yes. We can get surer help.

23. (a) To a great extent.

(b) By means of conferences we can prevent misrepresentations of the life and manners of particular communities affected.

PART II.

Social Aspects and Control.

24. I do not consider that the film has a demoralising effect.

(b) No. It all depends upon the mentality of the audience.

(c) Films suggestive of the superiority of the white to the coloured races are objectionable in the extreme—young men in particular.

(d) I am in favour of greater censorship in the case of "Sex" films.

(e) No.

25. Absolutely no need. What is good to the West, is good to the East I think there should be no further censorship on the films released abroad.

27. (a) No. I do not think they are unintelligible.

28. No.

29. Does not arise?

30. No.

31. Yes. Provided the censor is not given large initiative.

32—35. I would strongly advocate a central board to be maintained by the Central Government and consisting of representatives of various Provinces—all non-officials—the secretary of which should be a full-time officer of the Central Government. The Secretary should have the experience of a wide travel, a decent idea regarding manners and customs of the people of the West and the East and a good knowledge of the mechanism.

For purposes of revenue and solely with this end in view a small duty should be levied on foreign films entering the country, which should be adequate to cover part of the expenses of maintaining the Central Board.

36. There is no need for further inspection by the Inspectors. I would rather suggest that a few qualified inspectors may be appointed mainly to see that the projection plant is alright and that the exhibitors do not injure the eye of the audience by bad focussing and other mechanical defects.

37. (a) Yes. There are.

***Oral Evidence of Dr. A. L. NARAYAN, M.A., D.Sc., F.I.P. (Eng.),
Professor of Physics, Maharaja's College, Vizianagram, on Monday, the 9th January 1928.**

(Chairman: You live in Vizianagram, Dr. Narayan?)

A. Yes.

Q. Are there any cinemas there?

A. There is one.

Q. Permanent?

A. Yes.

Q. Not any in Vizagapatam?

A. There is no permanent cinema in Vizagapatam.

Q. In what other parts of the district have you got permanent cinemas?

A. In Vizagapatam there used to be one permanent cinema but they closed it down.

Q. It did not pay?

A. It did not pay.

Q. And in Vizianagram, how long has this cinema been in existence?

A. For the last 4 or 5 years.

Q. Is it flourishing?

A. Yes my information is that it is paying. I asked the proprietor.

Q. And what is the population of Vizianagram?

A. About 50,000.

Q. And Vizagapatam?

A. Much more than that. It may be there is no cinema there because there is no enthusiasm.

Q. Or is it because there is a Vizianagram Raja?

A. That would not contribute to success or otherwise.

Q. Vizianagram is not a labour centre?

A. It may be because there is a large student population in Vizianagram. There is a first rate college there.

Mr. Neogy: What is the number of the students?

A. We have about 1,500 students; in the college classes alone about 500 students. That is only my surmise, of course.

Chairman: Now what sort of films are shown in Vizianagram.

A. Mostly they are showing films dealing with Puranic subjects.

Q. Are Indian films getting very popular there?

A. Yes.

Q. You mean more Indian films are shown than Western films?

A. Yes.

Q. The Western films shown are more of the fighting type, serials, I suppose?

A. Sometimes there are short dramas.

Q. Are they comic?

A. Sometimes comic.

Q. Are there many films shown there which contain passionate love-making scenes?

A. I don't think so.

Q. You think they form a small proportion?

A. They form a very small proportion. I don't think the films shown now produce any demoralising effect on the student population or on the people at large. I come in contact with the student population, and they form a large proportion of the audience.

Q. Vizianagram may be said to be a place where there is not much of a cultured population?

A. I think where there is a first grade college, I would put it quite the other way.

Q. You don't consider the students highly educated?

A. But they come from first grade colleges. They are also of an impressionable age, and yet I don't think the films shown now produce any demoralising effect on them. They simply go to cinemas for amusement or recreation, and the moment they come out of the theatre they forget what they have seen.

Q. You don't believe that any slow poison is being introduced into the cinema goers?

A. From my experience of the last 15 years I don't think that any such poison is being introduced. I myself occasionally go to cinemas. I have seen all sorts of films shown in Vizianagram, films featuring Eddi Polo, Charlie Chaplain and so on.

Q. Are the Indian films very popular with the student class?

A. Yes. They also like short dramas and novels, I mean English dramas.

Q. Do you get many of them?

A. No, because students alone contribute largely to the success of the cinema there.

Q. Do they like more thrills and such other scenes?

A. They are liked by a certain section of the audience.

Q. I suppose generally the uneducated classes prefer such things because they understand them better?

A. Yes, because they like to see sensation.

Q. Do you think that Indian films are replacing western films? Is a taste being created for Indian films?

A. I won't say Indian films are replacing western films, but the management find it more profitable to exhibit Indian films.

Q. Where do the Indian films come from?

A. I think they come mostly from Bombay. Kohinoor and other Indian films are generally shown in our place.

Q. Is there a local agent for those films in your place?

A. I think the proprietor sends for them from Bombay.

Q. Is the cinema open every day in the week?

A. Yes, and there are two shows a day.

Q. I suppose you are not satisfied with the quality of the Indian films which you see?

A. No, I am not, particularly so with regard to their technique, but the latest films show signs of improvement; their photography is better.

Q. Do you think that any measures should be taken by Government to encourage the growth of the Indian film industry?

A. Yes, as I have said in my statement, it is very desirable that the Government should encourage the growth of indigenous film industry.

Q. Although the productions may be poor for some time, they would still attract large crowds, and therefore the producers will be able to make a profit?

A. Yes.

Q. Then how do you justify your proposal that Government should help the industry?

A. So far as India is concerned—I am thinking not only of the cinema industry, but of every other indigenous industry,—I think that Government should come forward and take the initiative. As I have stated in my statement, if the Central Government were to form a company for producing films with western experts in the production department, it would serve as a model for private enterprise to copy.

Q. You don't think that it will be right for Government to look on and see bad stuff produced?

A. I don't think it will be good; on the other hand, Government should come forward and take the initiative, in the matter of producing films.

Q. Do you consider that this form of amusement is a necessity to the poor?

A. Yes, certainly. It cannot be regarded as a luxury; but it is a necessity.

Q. Is that the only form of amusement which poor people in your district get?

A. Yes, but in the mofussil places there are dramas staged from time to time, and they are also very popular.

Q. Is the cinema replacing dramas?

A. No, dramas are more popular than the cinema, but the cinema is undoubtedly growing. It is however said by people who know that dramas are not very flourishing.

Q. You think that all foreign films should be treated alike?

A. When I made the proposal regarding the formation of a Central Board of Censors, I stated that purely for purposes of revenue a small tax may be levied on all imported films, and not to give any kind of protection. I advocate the idea of a small tax, not as a protective measure but purely for revenue purposes to maintain the Central Board.

Q. If you levy a tax for keeping the censorship board, you say that some sort of differential treatment should be made in the case of British films. On what ground should that differential treatment be made? How does it profit India?

A. We may be mutually benefitted.

Q. What will India get out of preferential treatment?

A. I believe that we will want the assistance of the British Government to make the industry a success here.

Q. Do you mean the Home Government or the Secretary of State?

A. I don't draw much distinction between the Government here and at Home.

Q. You want some preference to be shown to British films. What I want to know is how would it be an advantage to India?

A. I think it might be a distinct advantage to India.

Q. Then you are not able to tell what advantage you expect by showing this preferential treatment to British films?

A. I cannot say more clearly than this,—I don't know if it is sentiment, but I can't say anything more clearly than what I have already stated.

Q. You think that the film has no demoralising effect at all, and you are clear on that point?

A. Yes. I don't think it has any demoralising effect either on the student class or on the general population. I also consider that the censorship exercised at present is quite adequate.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: In reply to question No. 4, you say that a large section of the Muhammadan audience always like stir and sensation. May I know what is the percentage of the Muhammadan population in Vizianagram?

A. That answer is the result of my experience in Madras and Bangalore, and I am told that about 40 to 50 per cent. of the audience are Muhammadans.

Q. With regard to scenario writers, you say that the people who do the work now are not well versed in literature, and those that are do not take part? Are they not taking part or they are not asked to take part?

A. I only see that they are not taking part, and I can't assign any reason for their indifference. I think they ought to take an active part in this industry.

Q. Do you think that women from respectable families will come forward to take part in film production?

A. I think so. At present there are very few women who take part in this industry, but more of them should come forward. My point is that unless these women displace the men in regard to women's parts, I don't think you could induce a larger number of women to come forward.

Q. Would you get the women from the undesirable class?

A. I don't think it need be from an undesirable class.

Q. You advocate the sending of boys to foreign countries. In what way?

A. By giving them scholarships.

Q. Do you think the foreign producing concerns will give away their trade secrets to our students when they go there? Or would you prefer to get out experts from abroad for training our students here?

A. I think if the Home Government is really anxious to do something in this direction, there should be no difficulty experienced by our students when they leave the country. In any case, I should prefer that our men should be sent abroad.

Q. We were told in Bombay by one Mr. Deware that he found great difficulty in getting access in some of the studios abroad?

A. I do not know much about it, I have no experience in this matter.

Q. You advocate that every institution should have a cinema attached to it. Have you got one in your institution?

A. We are trying to get one, as we believe it will do immense good. But the difficulty is that we may not be able to get good films. Therefore my proposal is that the Government should carry a stock of these educational films and distribute them to schools and colleges.

Q. Who is to produce those films, a Government agency or a private agency?

A. I am in favour of the Central Government forming a concern for film production, and one of their objects should be to produce educational films. The Provincial Governments should carry a stock of these films which could be lent out to educational institutions in the country. For instance, last week we witnessed an excellent film released by the General Electric Company in Calcutta, on X-Ray in the Indian Science Congress. That film was produced by the General Electric Company in America.

Q. You pay in reply to No. 20 something about an educational cess. Do you suggest a fresh tax?

A. If I have said so, it is a mistake. I am not in favour of an educational cess.

Q. You are also in favour of levying a small duty on foreign films entering the country. But you probably know there is already the 15 per cent. duty. Do you want to increase it to 30 per cent.?

A. I am not in favour of the duty that exists now nor do I want any special duty to be imposed. But I am in favour of levying a small duty purely for revenue purposes for maintaining the Central Board of Censors.

I don't want it to be imposed as a tariff, but merely as a source of revenue to maintain the central board, and not for any other purpose.

Q. Do you think that we should raise the examination fee from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 for 1,000 feet?

A. I don't think it would be advisable.

Mr. Coutman: You said in reply to the Chairman that the cinema is the only form of amusement for the masses?

A. He asked me my views so far as Vizianagram was concerned, and that is my view.

Q. I take it that when you said that you were thinking only of the town population and not of the population in the villages because in the villages there are hardly any cinemas?

A. I gave my reply with special reference to Vizianagram.

Q. But you will agree with me that the percentage of the total population of this presidency or of India which has an opportunity to attend the cinema is very small?

A. Yes.

Q. And that any extension of the opportunities for people to see cinemas depends on the commercial prospects of the exhibition side of the industry? You would not, for example, suggest that the Government should build theatres at their own expense?

A. No. The public bodies who are interested in doing extension work must undertake this work. I would not advocate it merely for purposes of amusement, but for educational purposes I would strongly urge on those public bodies which are doing extension work to show films of an educational value in the villages.

Q. Therefore when we talk about the cinema being the only form of amusement to the masses, you have got to use those words very carefully?

A. But I really think that some such amusement is very necessary.

Q. But I want to get at the commercial possibilities of the thing. As far as I can see, only a very microscopic proportion of the population of India will be in daily touch with the cinema, I mean the small proportion of the people which live in big towns?

A. But if there are travelling cinemas even the village people can see them.

Chairman: You believe that those prospects should be created?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: You have been an educationist for the last 15 years, and when you have made these statements about the evil effects of the cinema on the student population, may I know if you were employed all these years in Vizianagram?

A. Yes, but I frequently come in contact with student population in other parts of the country too.

Q. The student population that you come in contact with has the same opportunities to see cinemas as their compeers in Vizianagram?

A. Yes.

Q. You have supported the idea of Government starting a producing concern which might serve as a model for private producers. But the private producers in Bombay and Calcutta have stated before us that their main difficulty is, not that they do not know what ought to be done, but one of finance. Supposing Government were to start a model studio like that, how would that help the trade in solving their financial difficulties?

A. The moment the Government comes forward and take some interest in the industry, I am sure that much of the hidden wealth would be forthcoming.

Q. Supposing Government, themselves undertake to produce propaganda films, how would private capital be attracted to the industry?

A. The moment the Government starts one concern, I mean a model concern, private people will appreciate the advantages of the industry, and some of the zemindars and rich merchants will come forward and float their own concerns.

Chairman: You say that Government ought to do a lot of pioneering work first?

A. Yes, unless the Government takes the initiative in the matter, nothing can be done.

Written Statement of Mr. R. W. ROSS, B.A., District Educational Officer, Madras, dated the 4th January 1928.

I have the honour to state that I am unable to answer most of the questions in the questionnaire sent to me as I seldom visit the cinema. But from enquiries made I have formed certain impressions which may not be incorrect.

(1) Audiences consist of Indians and Europeans and as Europeans generally pay much more for their seats than do the Indians, there is a tendency on the part of Cinema Managers to cater for the European audience. As one manager explained to me it pays him better to have 20 Europeans in his audience rather than 200 Indians. The Indian audience consists of the educated and the uneducated. The educated audience is attracted by films dealing with serial stories both Indian and western. When such films are displayed the illiterate are not attracted by those dealing with western topics, but Indian topics make an appeal to them. There seems, however, to be a paucity of films on Indian topics with the result that Cinema Managers have to get films from the West and those films dealing with life in the Wild West in which there is plenty of action and adventure appear to be most popular with the uneducated. In many of these films a wrong idea is given to Indians of the actual state of society in the West. With the result that they imagine that promiscuous kissing, elopement, revenge, thieving and murder are everyday occurrences and the impression created is very unfortunate in a country where comparisons are frequently being made to the disparagement of the European. British ideals are frequently talked about but the cinema film does much to shatter the belief in the existence of such ideals. Much more care should be taken in the censorship of films and it does not appear desirable that the Censorship Committee should consist entirely of Indians as is the case at present in Madras.

(2) Another point to be considered is the extent to which the cinema can be used for Educational purposes in schools. At present the cinema is not regarded as an educative instrument. It provides pleasure and amusement; but if the right films were imported from England or were prepared in India it would be possible to display films dealing with History, Geography, Literature and Science and to ensure that school children acquired a new interest in these subjects by attending cinema demonstrations. Government might well be asked to contribute something towards this purpose either in the direction of paying for the films or of subsidising management who gave special demonstrations to school-going children. I do not believe that capital in India will be forthcoming for this purpose as it is not regarded as a paying concern and until Government support the scheme financially nothing will be done by private enterprise.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. R. W. ROSS, B.A., District Educational Officer, Madras, on Monday, the 9th January 1928.**

Chairman: I see you seem to be under the impression that the Madras Censor Board consists entirely of Indians. I suppose you are not aware

that the Commissioner of Police is the President, and there is an officer belonging to the army who is also a member of the Censor Board?

A. No, I am not aware of that, judging by what happens in the ordinary meetings. I believe three members attend, I don't think the Commissioner of Police is one of the three so far as I have heard. I know that the Board meets very seldom in Madras.

Q. In all other important ports like Bombay and Calcutta there is a fair proportion of Indians and Englishmen on the Censor Board?

A. I am speaking of Madras alone.

Q. In Madras too there is a fair proportion of Indians and Englishmen. Don't you think that the best judges of what is suitable for India are the Indians themselves?

A. Yes, but they do not always realise. I think, that some of the western films that are shown are inaccurate, while the Europeans on the Censorship Committee would realise it and would do something to prevent certain films being shown.

Q. I suppose you are aware of the fact that almost all the films which are exhibited in Madras are passed by the Bombay and Bengal Boards, and these Europeans form a larger proportion than Indians. I believe in Calcutta 6 out of 8 members on the Board are Europeans?

A. What I have said is from what I have seen on the screen. I had a conversation with some European friends, and they agree that we are shown up in a very bad light very often.

Q. If you are shown up in a bad light, it is done by your own people in England and the films are passed also by your own people, and the Indian has no hand in it. Don't you think the remedy really lies with those people who produce the films? Should not the appeal be made to those who produce these films abroad and who represent you so badly?

A. Surely, it is a commercial enterprise and people will show the films for which they will get audiences.

Q. But they get the films from your own country?

A. Is that not because the other films produced by them are not so popular with the audiences here?

Q. Surely you are aware of the fact that there are 40,000 theatres in the west and millions of people are attending the cinemas there, whereas in India there are only about 250 theatres and hardly half a million people go to cinemas. Don't you think that the films are produced for the markets of the west and not for India?

A. Yes, first of all the films are produced for the western market.

Q. And India is a negligible customer?

A. But it is a fact that the majority of the films used in this country come from the west, and therefore the exhibitors here have to get films from the west and the managers of the cinemas here get those western films which they know will be appreciated most by the masses here. It is mostly the masses that attend the cinemas in Madras rather than the educated people.

Q. You yourself say in your statement that the tendency on the part of the exhibitor is to cater for the European audience but he cares less for the Indian audience than for the European audience. That is what you say in paragraph 1, and that being so, the exhibitor here apparently caters for the European taste?

A. He does cater for the European taste. At the same time he also knows that he can get the illiterate Indians as his audience if he produces a certain kind of film.

Q. If the exhibitor pays more attention to European taste, how can you say that he sends for films to suit the illiterate Indian audience as well?

A. There is a certain section of Europeans that will see these western films and will not misjudge them, but the same films will be misjudged by the illiterate Indian audiences.

Q. Such sort of misunderstanding might arise even in connection with most innocent things which westerners do. For instance, their dances and balls are also liable to be misunderstood and misjudged?

A. Yes, they are.

Q. Take for instance the opera girls who come out to this country from time to time and give dancing performances. Don't you think that the people are apt to misjudge those things?

A. I should think so.

Q. On that ground will you stop them from coming to India?

A. I think for Indian audiences such dances are very objectionable.

Q. I quite see difficulty. The east and the west have to meet. But don't you think the real remedy lies in educating the people to appreciate properly those things which pass muster in England rather than to shut them out?

A. Yes.

Q. You would then advocate, I suppose, that what is passed by the Board of Censors on grounds of morality should not be considered morally bad by the Indian Board of Censors?

A. That is put in such a way that I should not like to answer yes or no.

Q. I mean morally is common to both countries, fundamental ideas?

A. There are a good many things which may be lawful but which are not expedient.

Q. But there cannot be many things which are moral in India and which are immoral in England or which are moral in England and immoral in India?

A. But, as is well known, people look at them from different points of view.

Q. Therefore, what is the remedy for these things? For instance, may I put it to you that years ago people looked down upon dancing much more than they do now-a-days. They got accustomed to it and appreciated it at its proper worth.

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. So, similarly, by the people getting familiar with these things, don't you think, so long as they are not objected to in the west, you need not object to them here on that ground unless they have a demoralising effect upon the people?

A. Well, I think, as I said, you may object to them on the ground that they are not giving a true idea of the general character of the British or western peoples.

Q. That is true. But are they not also committing that in the place in which they produce it?—that is the point with which I began. They are not giving a true idea themselves. They produce it primarily for exhibition in their own country or in England.

A. But there people know the actual state of things and they know that this is a romance and something divorced from the ordinary life of everyday. And they go there for amusement and they are content to see these things just as they are content to read novels where the unreal is often portrayed. But in a foreign country people don't judge the thing in the same light and what they see they imagine to be the actual state of things.

Q. So that you would advocate the exclusion of such things from this country?

A. Yes, or more care should be taken to lessen their number.

Q. On what ground?—that it is apt to be misjudged and therefore we should shut it out although it is not immoral in itself or indecent?

A. Yes, I think that is a correct statement.

Q. Now although it may not be a misrepresentation, although it may be a representation of certain phases of life, still you would shut it out because it is apt to be misjudged? Although it may not have a demoralising effect upon the people themselves?

A. Yes, I think that is quite true.

Q. But how would you justify it?

A. I would justify it on the ground that you should show films which would give amusement to the people.

Q. That is to say, the ordinary daily life of the people, if it is depicted on the screen, do you think people would go to see it? Don't you think it will have an injurious effect on the trade?

A. Yes, the uneducated audience will be small in number.

Q. And that means killing the trade which is in its infancy in the country. Are you prepared to take that risk?

A. There is a remedy. Provide something in its place.

Q. What is it you suggest?

A. The encouragement of Indian films.

Q. Anyway I am glad you mention it. Then in that case you think the best remedy for this is the encouragement of Indian films, although it may be an amusement and not necessity?

A. It is one remedy certainly.

Q. So from two points of view, the encouragement of the growth of Indian films is essential in this country?

A. Yes.

Q. And you would advocate Government taking definite steps in that direction?

A. It seems to be necessary on account of the lack of capital that is put into the cinema industry at present. It ought to be a commercial thing by itself without the help of Government but it is not so at present.

Q. That is sure to be provided if it is properly brought up. And you want Government to take steps in that direction? You would advocate it as a citizen?

A. Yes, I think for the benefit of India something of that kind is necessary.

Q. Now, you also believe that the films should be made more use of for educational purposes?

A. Certainly.

Q. On that point also you think Government money should be spent largely, much more than it is spent now?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: I quite sympathise with your desire to avoid misrepresentation. Now we have got definite evidence to show that the coloured people or the Asiatics or the Indians are very often misrepresented on the screen in England, by missionary bodies, sometimes by the professional film producers. What is your suggestion for remedying this evil?

A. I have not heard of this evil in England.

Q. You have not. But we have I may tell you that we have got definite evidence. You advocate that there should be a larger proportion of Europeans on the Indian boards of censors because the Indians cannot be depended upon always to look at the pictures from the proper angle of vision. Similarly would you advocate the addition of an Indian member to

the British board of censors for the purpose of preventing India being misrepresented on the screen in England?

A. If there is such misrepresentation, as you say there is evidence that is, I would certainly uphold that there should be an Indian on that committee to see that wrong things are not produced.

Mr. Coatsman: I would just like to get your attitude in this matter quite clear. Our patronage of certain types of films and our enjoyment of revues in which women participate is really a matter of convention more than anything else. I would like to make it quite clear by reminding you that from the very dawn of European art, artists have delighted to figure, to portray the nude. You remember the Greek statues, Venus de Milo and anything you like, and any famous artist, from Titian onwards. The whole thing is a matter of convention with us that does not appear to us to be in any way reprehensible. The portrayal of the nude and, normally speaking, the exhibition of the human body does not strike us as indecent. Our artistic tastes have been developed along certain lines and where people who have not had the same artistic humanity may see something immoral or reprehensible, we merely see the aesthetic side of it.

A. Yes.

Q. Well, the point I wish to get at is this. In India the artistic ideals are different from ours. And therefore what to us is not at all reprehensible, to the Indian mind may be reprehensible and I take it that is the only reason why you think that the introduction of films and revue companies and so on into this country is undesirable. It is really a matter of convention. Their convention is not our convention. What is all right to us may appear wrong to them.

A. Well, I was not really thinking of the type of film you have just referred to where the nude is portrayed.

Q. Oh no, not the nude. I was only relating that to our general artistic ideas. I take it that there is no idea at the back of your mind that the Indian audience are not fit to see this sort of thing or that they have not got the same moral fibre as the western audience. It is merely a matter of convention. Their conventions are different from ours and therefore what is all right for us may be misunderstood by them. I take it that is all that is in your mind?

A. That is all. They are accustomed to covering their body, for instance, with far more clothes as a rule than is often done in the west.

Chairman: Not in Malabar, for instance?

A. It is an exception there.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You consider the cinema is an educative instrument?

A. It can be made an educative instrument.

Q. It is so now?

A. No, I don't think it is so.

Q. In what way can it be made so?

A. By producing the type of film that is often done in England, where school children are sent to see things which they read about in history, geography or science books.

Q. Did you ever recommend such a thing to be undertaken by the Government?

A. I have never done so before.

Q. Do you intend doing so now?

A. If there is any chance of its being taken up, I would certainly.

Q. Do you think it is a more useful thing than a magic lantern?

A. Yes, I think the cinema would be better than the ordinary magic lantern.

Written Statement by Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AIYANGAR,
B.A., B.L., M.L.C., dated the 21st November 1927.

1. No.

2. (a) My experience relates chiefly to the city of Madras and to the town of Coimbatore.

The educated classes do not generally frequent cinemas except when pictures of special interest are shown such as those relating to science or industry or to Indian Epics.

It is the illiterate classes, or, rather, people who have no proper education worth the name, that attend the cinemas on a large scale and this attendance is increasing rapidly day by day.

(b) We may generally take that except in the case of special pictures the proportion may be taken as—

10 per cent. educated classes,

50 per cent. people connected with ordinary Indian shops,

25 per cent. ordinary labourers,

15 per cent. clerks in offices, etc.,

(c) There are not many children under 14 and their number may be taken as about 10 per cent. of the audience.

But the number of adolescents of impressionable age is large and my opinion is that about 40 per cent. of the audience consists of persons between 14 and 21.

3. There is no doubt that films showing the stories of a religious nature are very popular in India and even orthodox people who do not generally visit cinemas or dramas attend these shows. But unfortunately young persons below thirty have a liking to films which depict adventurous lines especially when there are pictures of women more or less nude in appearance.

4. There are only a few films depicting Indian lives and Indian stories and therefore the exhibitors generally take advantage of the craving of young persons and exhibit pictures showing adventures that are objectionable.

5. As I have said above the number of Indian films is not large.

(a) Fairly.

(b) Yes.

(c) Indian films are generally more profitable than western films. Some of the most popular Indian films I know are—

(1) Krishna Jananam,

(2) Lanka Dahanam,

(3) Ekadasi, etc.

6. (a) Undoubtedly so.

(b) Old epic stories will appeal to both to educated classes and others.

Scientific subjects, cities and forests and big industrial concerns will generally appeal to educated classes.

7. I do not know anything about this matter.

8. (a) No.

(b) As the cost of getting the loan of western films is cheap and as the Indian films are not able to meet the competitions, Indian film producers are at a disadvantage. Also public sympathy and capital are not very freely forthcoming in India to help the film producers and so the producers are not able to spend large sums of money on the industry and therefore

they are not able to distribute the films cheaply. I would suggest the following:—

- (1) ~~Some~~ severe restrictions should be placed on the import of foreign films unless they are of educational value useful to the country.
- (2) The Government should help the industry financially and otherwise. They may advance loans at cheap rates of interest and the Departments of Industries, Agriculture, etc., may help them in the production of films, and
- (3) The Railway authorities may permit the movement of these films on greatly reduced freights.

9. No.

Dearth of a large number of useful films.

I do not think that there is any regular monopoly. But the fact that the good films are costly prevents ordinary cinema owners, especially in rural parts, from being able to exhibit them.

10-12. I am not able to give any answer to this question.

13. Though I would like the tariff to be as high as possible I do not think that it will be sufficient to promote indigenous production. I am for reducing the tariff as low as possible for all materials connected with the making of films.

14. Certainly, yes.

There is a demand for them and people are anxious to get them.

15. Yes.

Unfortunately there is a feeling that the dramatic performances as they are at present, are not satisfactory and they do not appeal to the taste of play-goers and so the number of people attending the cinemas is growing rapidly day after day; thus, there is ample scope for producing Indian films and the conditions are very favourable at present.

16. I do not think that there is a sufficient number at present because the industry is not sufficiently paying. But they will be available on a large scale if prospects are made brighter by adopting my suggestions made in answers to various other questions.

17. Yes. If the public know that the Government are really prepared to help the industry and that there will be no undue competition from people outside the country, necessary funds will be flowing into the industry.

18. Yes.

I would repeat what I have said already. The main lines of Government encouragement should be (1) legislature to prevent foreign films from coming into the country excepting special films, (2) financial help by granting loans and subsidies and (3) co-operation of all Government departments with the people engaged in producing and exhibiting Indian films.

19. I do not know.

20. (a) Yes, to some extent. The expenditure will not only be justifiable but absolutely necessary.

(b) I do not recommend any. The national exchequer should consider this as a legitimate item of expenditure. But if any source can be thought of then I would suggest an increased entertainment tax.

21. I admit that a State Agency is necessary but its work should be limited to issuing licenses to manufacturers, distributors and exhibitors to use only films approved of by it and suggesting ways and means for helping the manufacture of suitable films in India and to permitting the import of special films of educational value. I do not approve the state monopoly over the film industry and I am even against the state having any direct financial interest in anything connected with the film industry.

22. I am not in favour of India's participation.

23. Under special licenses particular films showing the best characteristics and the most religious and spiritual lines may be imported and allowed to

be shown in India and the various Governments in the Empire may be requested to enable the Government of this country to do so. I believe that those Governments would be glad to give that co-operation and will also be glad to get for themselves good films from India also to be shown in their own countries.

24. (a) Yes.

(b) Yes.

(c) Both immoral and criminally suggestive films. They are harmful to young persons of both sexes by stimulating their passions and tendencies to commit crimes of a sensational character.

(d) I do not at all think that censorship as it has been exercised till now has had any good effect and so I should say that it is inadequate.

(e) I do consider that the tendency to commit crimes especially of a serious nature has gone up very much.

(f) I know of several cases. It is difficult to give instances because it may rouse feelings.

I may refer to one sensational case where it was alleged that a young man who was frequenting a cinema got a passion for a young woman of a different community, that they used to meet frequently in the cinema itself, that there was a plot to remove her in a sensational way and that when the relatives of the woman made this difficult a close relation was decoyed in a sensational way, taken in a car to some distance and murdered there in a curious way and that parts of his body were removed to several places and disposed of separately. He was sentenced to be hanged by the original court but acquitted on appeal. It is curious that this unfortunate young man was himself murdered later on in a brutal way and it is believed that some of the conspirators were lies quantum friends who used to accompany him to the cinema. There is no doubt that owing to the existence of some permanent cinemas in my own district of Coimbatore. Serious crimes have increased and to our great shame there were as many 131 murder cases registered in our district alone in the year 1926.

25. Yes, certainly.

26. (a) Special care should be taken.

(b) I do not know of any such particular film.

27. (a) I believe that there has been much misrepresentation and misunderstanding. I would strongly recommend that no film should be imported unless it is of much educative or scientific value or relates to scenes from old writings as those of Shakespeare, Milton, etc.

(b) I do not personally know of any films shown in Europe and America wrongly depicting Indian life but we read very often in newspapers about such films and the great harm done by them to India. I will not be surprised for instance if some films are manufactured showing some aspects of Indian life as mischievously depicted by Miss Mayo in her "Mother India." I have not heard of any such film produced in India.

28. Immoral and criminal films are doing much harm both to children and adolescent but chiefly to the latter.

29. I am not for such a thing as much harm might result to those who are illiterate and who possess a criminal or mischievous tendency.

30. Yes. Children below 15.

I may even go so far as to include adolescents up to 21 unless my suggestions regarding the film production and exhibitions are accepted.

31. Yes. If it is maintained in a strict and careful way.

32. I do not think it is satisfactory. A committee should be appointed consisting of a large number of leading persons from all communities and professions and they should be asked to grant licenses only after satisfying themselves about the moral standard of the story and about the clear dress and satisfactory behaviour of the actors on the stage.

33. I do not think so. The attendance would become large and the respectable classes would attend the cinemas more largely and the films will tend to improve the aesthetic taste and the moral and spiritual tone of the audiences.

24. (a) No.

(b) There may be a Central Board in addition to the Provincial Boards.

(c) Separate functions may be given to the central as against Provincial Boards. Thus the Central Board may be given the function of dealing with foreign films.

(d) The Central Board may be financed by the Central Government and the Provincial Boards by the Provincial Government.

35. (a) I would like the members to be practically mostly non-official with just a small number officials. Even in the case of non-officials the selection should be made very carefully and there should be representatives from different communities and professions. I would also like the number to be fairly large and to include representatives from the mofussal district also.

(b) No.

36. (a) I cannot say anything about the system. If there are such inspectors at all they should be well paid and educated and selected from other departments for good and honest work.

(b) I would suggest that all films should be examined by the members of the Board unless they relate to scientific and industrial subjects in which case a certificate from the heads of the departments or from the Central Board might be considered sufficient. I do not think that there is any likelihood of many films being manufactured in the near future and I believe the necessary number of members will be easily available.

37. (a) I do not think so. I would suggest that even the films passed by one Provincial Board may be generally examined by the other provincial boards as habits and tastes differ from province to province as it is sometimes the case even from district to district.

38—39. No.

40. I do not think that any restriction or censorship is necessary if my suggestions regarding the film manufacture are approved. I have seen some objectionable advertisements regarding appearances, etc. They are simply copies of some scenes in the show itself.

41. Unfortunately not.

42. I have no doubt that if once it is made well known that the censorship would be very strict, the manufacturers will always be glad to co-operate with the boards.

43. For imports, yes. For exports there should be no restriction especially if the films are properly manufactured.

44. If once the press and the public know that their opinions will count, they will be free in the expression of their opinions which will be very useful to the Boards in regulating their proceedings.

45. (a) The Government should do everything necessary to give effect to the resolutions of the Boards.

(b) Certainly, yes. This should extend to the film exhibiting agencies also.

**Oral Evidence of Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AIYANGAR, B.A.,
B.L., M.L.C., on Monday, the 9th January 1928.**

Chairman: You have got experience of the cinema by attending it?

A. Yes.

Q. Both in Madras and in Coimbatore?

A. Yes.

Q. In Coimbatore you have got a permanent cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. How long have you had it?

A. It must be there for nearly 12 years. I am not quite sure. But a pretty long time.

Q. Do they show Indian films there?

A. Occasionally.

Q. Not very often?

A. No.

Q. Why is it they do not show Indian films? They are very popular I suppose?

A. Yes, but they say they are very costly.

Q. It is costly to hire them? They have to pay more?

A. Yes.

Q. More costly than the western films?

A. Yes.

Q. Western films are cheaper?

A. Generally. Though even in their case they don't get the best films because I am told the best films are costly.

Q. And what is your opinion about western films that are shown in Coimbatore. Are they generally good in moral tone?

A. No, I think both in moral tone as well as from the point of view of health, though I have not made much of this point of health in my statement, they are very bad. By health I mean some of them are very old and some of them flicker.

Q. You mean they are much-used films.

A. Yes, or probably when the films were taken there was a shaking. I don't know the reason, but some of the films flicker.

Q. And you say the moral tone is bad?

A. Generally the films which I have seen and about which I have heard are not good.

Q. You take exception to them—on what ground? On the ground that they demoralise the audience?

A. To some extent, and also on the ground, to which I attach very much weight, that it gives a very wrong impression to the Indian public of western life.

Q. It has a misleading effect. In what respect do you think it misleads?

A. Well, in matters of love and theft, etc.

Q. In matters of relation between the sexes and crimes. It shows them up as very passionate people and given up to crime?

A. It depicts the whole English nation as criminals.

Q. You think that is the impression produced in the minds of the audience?

A. I think so.

Q. Of course you are a man of considerable experience and you know.

A. Yes. Also generally I come in contact with a large number of people in the district.

Q. But what opportunity have the people in the district to see the cinema?

A. Our cinema being the only one practically in the district, people generally attend it. Every man who goes to the district headquarters, goes to the courts and various other places of business, goes to the cinema.

Q. That is rather important. If a man of your position and experience feels like that, what do you think should be the remedy for that? I suppose you recognise that the cinema has got a very educative value?

A. Yes.

Q. It broadens their minds, and they get into touch with conditions which prevail in other parts of the world?

A. Yes, and I think it educates the man very well if the film is good.

Q. You do not expect that every film will be morally perfect?

A. I do not.

Q. I suppose you recognise the importance of the film is more on the amusement side and on the excitement side than a mere humdrum.....

A. Yes. I would certainly like such plays also to be a small percentage. I am not entirely for excluding them completely, but they may be coming off and on. Even in our Indian films there are some of these farces, etc., and I appreciate them very much.

Q. Apart from the misrepresentation which it may cause—that is not done here in this country, it is done in the west and merely shown here,—the more important thing from our point of view is, I take it, the effect it has on the people.

A. And therefore it is that I strongly feel that the present type of film is rather injurious because a large percentage of them are not good morally and are offensive.

Q. Apart from crime, do you think the young men who see the films get affected in sex life and it leads to irregular....

A. Yes, sex-life, and it leads also to offences. In our district especially, which is more sentimental,—our district unfortunately is the most criminal district, and as I have said in my statement, out of the 900 murders in 1926 in this presidency our district recorded 131. That is the latest report.

Q. You kill very easily. (Laughter.) And sometimes to spite your enemy you kill your aged mother or father.

A. Yes, with a view to bring up a false case. For an inch of land there will be murders. I only say, so far as this district is concerned, it has got an inflammable material.

Q. Do you think the film has got any influence on the criminal?

A. It has in some cases, and I give in my statement one instance where the police and everybody else traced the murder to that.

Q. I know you are referring to Subba Rao's case. I appeared for some of the accused in that case.

A. For or against? He murdered and then he was murdered.

Q. I was instrumental in getting him acquitted, I appeared along with Mr. Norton. But that was years ago?

A. Yes, 6 or 7 years ago.

Q. I think more than that. Before I entered the Assembly, and that was about 7 years ago.

A. I left the bar about 9 years ago. It was after I left the bar. He was murdered only about 3 or 4 years ago, and as I say, the people who were charged and who were supposed to be accomplices in that murder were people who were his companions in visiting the cinema.

Q. That is the only instance?

A. That is the one instance I have given, but there are others which I do not want to give,—especially of thefts.

Q. I suppose you are aware that the police people do not believe in that. In every part of the country the policeman does not believe except that Mr. Parankusam Naidu who mentioned one instance.....

A. Probably he is out of service.

Q. Yes.

A. That explains it.

Q. He alone believes that crime is due to the cinema.

A. Policemen still in service may hesitate to say that, it is quite possible.

Q. They do not believe it. However that is your belief?

A. Yes, that is my belief.

Q. Apparently you take a very severe view of the cinema?

A. No. I take a severe view of a large percentage of the films being of that sort. I am very strongly in favour of the cinema and the cinema industry being introduced much more in India.

Q. So you would substitute Indian films for the western films?

A. Generally speaking, but for films of educative value..

Q. As regards films of educative value you do not mind where they come from?

A. No. Once, for instance, Mr. Martin, the special Forest Officer, showed to members of Council and Government, including His Excellency, some films as to how trees were cut in America in a scientific way. Though there was much objection to the grant originally, after we saw it, most of us were all in favour of giving the grant.

Q. If you showed only such things, do you think the cinema would thrive?

A. Mix it with other things.

Q. Amusement should form the bulk?

A. Yes. I am only saying that educatively also they are useful, but so far as the finances are concerned, they must be mixed up with other things, and from my point of view financially Indian films will be much more paying.

Q. Although they are far from perfect in technique, in acting and all that?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it is necessary that Government should take steps to improve the film industry?

A. Yes.

Q. Although it may be a paying proposition now to show crude Indian pictures?

A. Many of our industries are profitable, but only when they are taken up in earnest.

Q. I may tell you,—probably you are not aware of it,—that in Bombay there are a few producing companies which may be said to be paying concerns, but they produce poor stuff. One of the difficulties which we feel in recommending Government aid in this matter is this. How are you justified in spending public money in aiding an industry which is paying already in a way?

A. I will explain. The fact that it is not being produced in large numbers is due to the fact that the Government does not encourage such films, and there is undue competition from outside imports. We have not got those film stars here as they have in England and America now, and it is chiefly due to the fact that the actors and actresses here are not paid sufficiently.

Q. The mere fact that poor stuff may be a paying concern is no excuse for Government's inaction because Government should be interested in seeing good stuff produced?

A. Quite so. I attribute the failure of these film making companies to a certain extent to the inaction of the Government.

Q. And as a public man you think that public funds should be spent in encouraging its growth?

A. Yes, public funds should necessarily be spent. As I say, it is a legitimate charge.

Q. Not only for educational purposes but also for amusement purposes?

A. Quite so.

Q. But how do you defend Government spending public funds for amusing the people?

A. I think it is the duty of Government as much as anybody else.
 Q. Just as they provide parks, public places of resort, and so on?
 A. Yes, and also to keep the people in good moods, to keep people of excitable tempers—unfortunately in my district people are of an excitable temper—rather to keep them in temper.

Q. It would keep them away from mischief?

A. Yes. Supposing there is a film depicting our own story, and there is another film depicting an English story, I am prepared to take a bet that a large number of the cinema-going public will attend the Indian film. A large number of such films will prevent these people from doing mischief.

Q. From resorting to crimes or conspiracies? The time they will spend in the cinema, they would probably spend in conspiracies, mischief and so on.

A. Mental development in that line. If a man has got a little tendency in that line this develops it.

Q. There is one point which also troubles us. The cinema-going public is such a small proportion, mostly in towns. How are you justified in spending monies raised all over the country for the benefit of only a handful of people who live in towns?

A. I can say, so far as my district is concerned, that I do not find the cinema-going public confined only to the town. They come there from throughout the district.

Q. They are such a small proportion of the population.

A. It may be so. But the number of criminals is always a small percentage of the population, still we are spending a lot of money in keeping the criminals in order.

Q. You will agree that the villager as such gets very little chance for any amusement?

A. Yes.

Q. And if you can encourage the growth of travelling cinemas you will be providing an amusement to the poor people who have no amusement at all?

A. Yes. And I may say that it is possible that these travelling cinemas may grow in number, and unless Government takes action at once to prevent these bad films being shown in travelling cinemas, the danger will be all the greater, because factions, murders and such like things will increase by seeing those bad films.

Q. So, on both grounds you advocate the spending of public money?

1. Yes.

Q. And you advocate that direct action on the part of Government is called for?

A. I would not ask the Government to take up any direct interest in the trade.

Q. But you want them to give bonuses, gratuities, scholarships, etc.?

A. Yes.

Q. You have enumerated them in your statement and I do not want to trouble you with details.

A. I will lay particular stress on this fact, that Government should do something to prohibit the import of foreign stuff.

Q. Do you think it is wise to prohibit the import of foreign films as that is the only source from which the film producer in this country can receive lessons as to what is good—technical lessons?

A. I do not know. The best thing will be to send him to foreign country to learn the art and come here. Simply with a view to making him learn the art of cinema; if you introduce foreign stuff here it would be rather dangerous.

Q. Is it your belief that the importation of cheap foreign films constitutes a menace to the growth of the film industry in this country?

A. My opinion is that that is the only reason why the number of Indian films has not grown in India. It may be a strong opinion. Poverty and other things of course stand in the way, but my impression is we hesitate always to take up new manufactures and new industries, and no one takes up new industries unless it proves profitable in the beginning, it does not matter what becomes of it later. We are shy.

Q. The main factors are your want of education, your shyness, your want of organising power—all these are factors which go to stand in the way of the development of industries in this country.

A. Yes, and added to that chiefly, as I say, foreign competition.

Q. Cheap foreign films?

A. Yes.

Q. In order to stop cheap foreign films from coming in would you advocate a heavier duty on certain classes of stuff?

A. I do not believe in these heavier duties.

Q. Then how would you prevent it?

A. Government may take powers—I think Government does possess powers already, or supposing Government does not possess powers, it may take powers to see that no film is imported without license. You proscribe books, you proscribe papers and so many other things.

Q. On what ground should the license be refused? You mean limiting the quantity?

A. Limiting the quality.

Q. That is what I was suggesting. Supposing the Censorship Board is given power to classify films into two classes, the superior one, A class, and the inferior stuff, the B class.

A. I would put the classification like this, the educative class and the non-educative class, because even if superior films come in, our people are likely to misunderstand. What is good in England may be misunderstood here—dancing and other things for instance.

Q. Supposing you made that classification, how would you treat them differently, what sort of differential treatment would you give?

A. Educative films.....

Q. Educative films alone should be imported?

A. Yes, whatever is of educative value.

Q. How is to be decided—to be of educative value?

A. Your Board can decide that.

Q. It is only after they come here we can decide. You think the trade will bring films here on the chance that the Board is going to pass them?

A. I do not think the Board should necessarily see them. They can see a transcript on paper of many of these things.

Q. After seeing the description and other things, the Board will issue notifications in the Gazette that such and such films will be permitted to be imported and then only they will be imported?

A. Yes. Probably a larger number of educative films will come into the country.

Q. If you confine your import merely to educative films, unless you are able to produce amusement films in the country in a large quantity, you will be depriving people of the benefit of the cinema?

A. I put it the other way. Unless you prohibit them you won't get a large number of Indian films. That may be for a few months, but you may say that all the films that are already imported into this country may be here for some time. They are a pretty large number and can go on circulating till then.

Q. Take, for instance, the film "Ben Hur". I do not know if you have seen it.

- A. I have not seen it.
- Q. One may hesitate to classify it as a purely educative film, but still it is a film which one would like to see.
- A. That depends upon temperament. You should only take the final result. It may be some things are harmless, but it is very difficult to classify.
- Q. It is elevating.
- A. Then that is educative.
- Q. So that you would define education in a very broad sense?
- A. Certainly.
- Q. Developing the artistic taste.....
- A. Yes, aesthetic taste and all those things. Whatever film is not likely to lead one to any bad ideas in any way, without any of these sex, nude appearances and all that- I think generally they will be of an educative value.
- Q. You are opposed to nudity of any kind?
- A. Certainly on the screen or on the stage.
- Q. You do not believe in the human form perfect?
- A. I do not believe in the human form perfect being shown publicly, except probably in art, in studios and other things. You must take human nature as it is.
- Q. So you take a strong line that some of these films which are exhibited have really a demoralising effect?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And you would exclude some of them and by that means encourage the growth of Indian films?
- A. Yes.
- Colonel Crawford: I have only one question. You say that the Indian industry is suffering from foreign competition?
- A. Yes. I think it is one of the chief reasons.
- Q. What leads you to that opinion?
- A. It is this way. I have talked to a number of cinema owners and also I have compared the rates generally. An English film can I think come here and compete on unequal terms so far as the rates are concerned.
- Chairman: When you say "English" you mean the western?
- A. Yes.
- Colonel Crawford: I rather gathered from the evidence that has been given that the returns secured from Indian films are infinitely higher than those secured from western films?
- A. Yes. I was saying that.
- Q. In fact I find to-day that the market wants more Indian films, they cannot get enough Indian films, and how is foreign competition affecting it?
- A. It is this way. If in the use of the Indian film a cinema man gets Rs. 5 from the cinema goers for instance, he has to pay Rs. 4 to the film owner. In the other case he may get Rs. 24 and pay one rupee.
- Q. Supposing he gets by showing a western film Rs. 2 from one man and by showing an Indian film he gets one rupee from a 1,000 men, which is the better proposition?
- A. If a man gets Rs. 3 and pays Rs. 14 out of that and another man gets Rs. 1,000 and pays Rs. 999 in one case he gets a rupee and a half and in the other one rupee.
- Mr. Green: He gets better profit on the Indian films.
- A. But he has to pay more.
- Q. His net profit.....
- A. It is not high.
- Q. Our information is that it is high.

- A. And also there is the fact that such films are very few in number.
- Colonel Crawford: At the moment they are not enough. I cannot see how foreign competition is affecting the industry.
- A. That is because the film makers believe that those western films are hired much more cheaply.
- Chairman: I suppose your answer is, if less films came there would be more production?
- A. Yes, there would necessarily be more production as a matter of necessity. I thought the question was, how is it that more Indian films are not manufactured as against western films. My answer is that generally.....
- Q. I suppose the exhibitor will place more orders for production of Indian films to take the place of the foreign films?
- A. Yes. Now I think the net income is not so much.
- Mr. Green: You say "you think"?
- A. Yes.
- Colonel Crawford: You have no particular knowledge of it?
- A. My knowledge is confined to what I have heard from the cinema owners and others.
- Q. You have no doubt about the popularity of Indian films?
- A. No.
- Q. And I presume the exhibitor has no doubt about the popularity of Indian films?
- A. I think so, but exhibitors complain rightly or wrongly that the net profit from exhibiting.....
- Q. His complaint is that the hire of the Indian film is expensive?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You are going to put up the hire price of the foreign films too?
- A. No. I want to make the hire of the Indian films cheaper by making a larger number of films. There are very few films now.
- Mr. Green: There are 13 companies in Bombay alone.
- A. 13 companies for 300 millions!
- Q. But there are 350 theatres only, which is a very small number.
- A. Because they do not find it more profitable.
- Colonel Crawford: I can give you the evidence of a gentleman who leased a theatre. When he showed a western film for four weeks his takings were Rs. 1,500, but when he was allowed to show an Indian film, for a week his takings were Rs. 3,500 for that particular month.
- A. It is possible in that particular case.
- Q. The showing of an Indian film is a definitely paying proposition.
- A. I do not think you are right in drawing a general conclusion. That might have been the first show of the film.
- Chairman: On the other hand I heard day before yesterday from exhibitors that when they showed Indian films it did not pay and therefore they were showing only western films—both the Crown Cinema and the Liberty people told us that.
- A. In that particular case which Colonel Crawford mentioned it may be that the film came fresh, and if they showed it probably for another month his gain would have been reduced.
- Q. Therefore you do not think it is safe to draw any general conclusion.
- A. In my district there is a cinema at Pollachi and the man was complaining that he was not getting anything from the show and he hires the building out as a godown in the groundnut season because he says he gets greater income by doing so than from the cinema shows.
- Mr. Green: I want to clear up one point. You told the Chairman you objected to nudity on the screen?

A. Yes, and on the stage also, I added.

Q. You talk about women appearing more or less nude on the screen. I do not think there is so much nudity on the screen as I have seen in real life in this Presidency. What is the difference between that and the nudity on the screen? Do you object to partial nudity in actual life?

Chairman: There is more nudity on the west coast than on the east coast.

A. I do not think there is so much nudity on the east coast as on the west coast.

Mr. Green: It is fairly pronounced here.

A. All that I say is that it is only those people who lead—the lower classes.....

Q. If a man sees a scantily clad woman—has that no effect on his mind?

A. No, because it is treated more or less as a common thing. It never attracts his attention. In the other case because somebody appears nude on the stage or screen he goes and probably takes advantage of it, and has time to think of kissing, etc.

Q. He never sees that in real life?

A. I do not think so, I have not yet seen one yet, but the impression on visiting a screen is that any man can kiss any woman. That impression may be very wrong, but it is the impression made.

Chairman: I am surprised to hear you say that.

Mr. Green: You suggest that censorship is inadequate with regard to crime films and you instanced a murder case. Is it possible to attribute to the cinema when you tell us that the final result was that the man was acquitted?

A. I consider the acquittal was wrong.

Q. You do not suggest that there were no murders in your district before the cinema came?

A. No. Because there were a number of murders therefore I object to increase in the murders. The propensity of the people is criminal.

Q. You are not suggesting that the cinema is responsible for all the murders?

A. No. I do not say that at all. I have been fighting with Government to stop liquor in my district because it adds to the number of murders.

Q. Does not the cinema, even though slightly immoral, tend to decrease the expenditure of money on liquor?

A. I do not know.

Mr. Coatsman: I was very interested in what you were saying about the duty of Government to subsidise the cinema industry. Of course, you know that the resources of Government are limited?

A. Yes, quite so. Limited for everything good.

Q. They are limited whether for good or for evil.

A. My own impression is they are not at all limited. The income that Government derives from the public is much larger than what they should legitimately get and what they should legitimately spend. That is my political view.

Q. Any way, however much Government takes from the public, its resources are limited?

A. Its resources are limited in the same way as every resource is limited.

Q. Even after the remission of the provincial contributions—what did Madras get?

A. About Rs. 348 lakhs. It is all being wasted.

Q. There are many claims upon that amount?

A. Yes.

Q. You have said a minute ago that Government ought to take less from the public?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you agree that that Rs. 348 lakhs should be utilised to remit provincial taxation?

A. All that I say is that a portion of it should have been used in reducing provincial taxation.

Q. Then Government income after that will be less than what it is now.

A. Yes, and expenditure also must be less, must be made less.

Q. What about extra expenditure on the cinema industry?

A. They can curtail expenditure on useless things and spend money on useful things.

Q. What do you call useless things?

A. Many. In the Council we have been objecting—you will find all that in the Council proceedings. Our party in the Council have been trying their best.....

Q. I have been reading not very long ago the report of the Retrenchment Committee which sat in this province about five years ago. They found it very difficult to suggest.....

A. Unfortunately the thing is they recommended several cuts, and even the cuts that were effected have now been washed off. Government are asking for grants for—reinstating those cuts. If the Committee recommended a cut of Rs. 50 lakhs, now Government are not only paying Rs. 50 lakhs but paying Rs. 50 lakhs more.

Q. At any rate you think you can reduce expenditure on certain subjects?

A. I believe that expenditure on this is much more necessary and reasonable than in other departments, and now that our Government has got Rs. 348 lakhs, they can very well spend—our ministers do not know how to spend money.

Q. Would you say that expenditure on subsidising the cinema industry is more important than expenditure on sanitation, education, public health, research into diseases and so on and so forth?

A. I do not.

Q. Have you ever sat down and considered how much ought to be spent by Government on the cinema industry?

A. My own idea is that Rs. 10 lakhs in this Presidency is more than sufficient.

Q. On what basis do you say that?

A. We have got about 25 districts and I put down Rs. 40,000 for each district.

Q. And how would you spend that money?

A. As I have stated, the most important thing is to give subsidies to the manufacturers. That is the most important point, I would say.

Q. And then?

A. That is the chief expenditure I would advocate.

Q. How would you choose your manufacturers to give subsidies to?

A. I do not think it will be very difficult at all. I suppose people who are already there.....

Q. Are there people already here?

A. In the country as a whole. I may say I am connected directly with the textile industry. My strong opinion is that once people know that Government takes an interest in the matter and subsidises, the film making companies will spring in numbers.

Q. That is all very well, that is a little too general for our purpose. I want to get at your idea because you have presumably thought over the matter.....

A. I have thought over this.

Q. Your idea is you would subsidise particular firms on conditions.....

A. I propose to give a guarantee of interest or dividend. Mysore is doing it for one of its railways.

Q. Railway is a different thing.

A. I am only giving it as an example.

Q. The Government of India used to give a guarantee of interest for railways in India.

A. Therefore you can easily choose the companies, and if the company is acceptable you will, say, give a guarantee for a few years of a minimum dividend.

Q. But how would you decide that a company was suitable?

A. I think you can easily do it with your own experts or inspectors. I do not think there will be any difficulty at all.

Q. You visualise the creation of a new department?

A. Only for supervision.

Q. On what criteria would you distribute the amounts?

A. I will lay down certain conditions and one of them will be that the company should have a western-trained man to make films, another will be that so much money should be invested in shares.

Q. There will be some amount of trouble?

A. I do not think so.

Q. Our evidence from end to end of India goes to show that the public will not come forward.

A. Only 'under the present circumstances'. Unless the Government puts restriction on the import, I do not think our people will put in money.

Q. If those conditions are fulfilled, I suppose you would agree that the Government must have a reasonable security too?

A. Where is the question of security at all. I do not want the Government to invest any money. I only refer to subsidy by way of guaranteeing dividend. If they find a company working well, then the Government may give subsidies.

Q. In Bombay and Calcutta there are a certain number of companies, but in Madras there are none; there are a good number of producing companies in this country and the Indian market is a small one. Don't you think in order to improve the quality of the productions of the Indian firms and also to make these firms more stable, there should be only a few companies?

A. I do not admit that the market is small.

Q. In America for instance there are about 20 producing firms and there is a good market there, whereas we have got here more producing firms than in America and with a tiny market. Don't you think that if these firms are to be put on a strong financial basis we should not be multiplying the number of firms, having regard to the tiny market here?

A. But there is no sufficient popularity probably because there is not a good supply of films.

Q. But the market is small?

A. Remove the cause of it and the effect will be good.

Q. There are about 350 theatres in this country and witness after witness in the trade, including exhibitors, has told us that a town in order to have a good theatre should have at least a population of 50,000. It has also been suggested to us that there should be travelling cinemas. But imagine the equipment, etc., that will be necessary?

A. They can carry their own tents just like the circus people.

Q. You can imagine that the returns will not be so very great compared with the expense of getting the cinema to go about the country?

A. My impression is that these travelling cinemas will be very much patronised.

Q. What possibility is there of the expansion of the market? For instance, in Punjab the population is mostly inaccessible.

Chairman: There are nearly 14,000,000 feet of foreign films imported into India and about 200,000 feet of Indian films are being produced. With that information you can now answer the question.

Mr. Coatsman: That is the present state of things, and if the capital of the existing companies is enlarged and if new companies are to be started, do you think there will be enough room for them in this market?

A. I think if the number of foreign films is reduced, the Indian companies will have always their hands full.

Q. You don't really say that you want to prohibit all foreign films?

A. I want to prohibit all, except those for educational purposes.

Q. That means you want foreign films?

A. Only a very small percentage.

Q. But every country wants foreign films also.

A. Of course every country wants to have its own films and India also wants to have her own films; but it may be necessary that she should have foreign films also, if required. I say it is best that she should make her own films.

Q. So you accept the position that the import of foreign films is desirable?

A. To a very small extent; probably ten per cent. of the present import will do.

Q. What would you do with foreign films which are historical?

A. They are all educative. I use the word 'educative' not in a narrow sense. In fact we would welcome such things as Shakespeare's dramas.

Q. You said that it is Government's duty to provide amusement for the people?

A. Yes, I say it is their duty.

Q. When you said that, you were thinking primarily of Government's duty to provide cinemas?

A. Not necessarily. I was thinking of all amusements. For instance, parks will be an amusement. In fact I have been advocating that Government should open tea-shops where there are liquor shops at present.

Q. Would you advocate that Government should distribute cricket balls and such things freely?

A. Government do it every day by contributing towards school expenses towards sports.

Q. When you say that it is Government's duty to provide amusement, in what way do you expect it to be provided? By actually building cinema houses or what?

A. So far as cinema is concerned, I will be quite satisfied with some subsidy.

Q. By "subsidy" you mean guaranteeing interest?

A. Not only that. Loans may be granted for instance.

Q. Would you advocate the opening of some amusement halls by the Government?

A. I would certainly prefer a subsidy being given to some association or some such thing.

Chairman: May I know why you shy at the suggestion that the Government should open amusement halls for public use?

A. I am always against Government itself taking part in such things.

Q. The Government may not run the cinema, they can merely build the halls?

A. They can lend them; but a private building is much cheaper than a Government building. The Government may well give a portion of the cost

to some association. In some places, there may not be cinema companies even to take up the buildings.

Mr. Coatman: Don't you think that if we start spending Government money on amusement halls, there will be some unscrupulous distinctions made in the matter of freely giving those cinema halls? Is it not a possibility?

A. We should never think of these possibilities when we deal with public things. I do not think our Ministers or our legislative councillors will be unscrupulous. We cannot, of course, legislate for the future. I think Government can help in two ways, by subsidies by way of guaranteeing dividend and by giving loans free of interest or on very little interest.

Q. Do you think in the present state of social development and beneficial services rendered by the Government, Government would be justified in spending money on this?

A. My impression is that it will be more justified in this case than in many other cases where Government are spending money. Why do you contribute a large sum of money to the Wembley Exhibition?

Mr. Coatman: Because we want to promote Indian industry, art, etc.

Mr. Aiyangar: There are so many other ways of doing it.

Q. Do you think your own Government which has a particular income, which you consider is not too high, would be justified in spending money on this?

A. Government will be much more justified in spending on the cinema which affects the welfare of the people than on any other thing.

Q. Do you think that is the soundest way of fostering the cinema industry?

A. One of the best ways.

Q. You don't think it will tend to enervate it?

A. I don't think so. It is one of the ways of encouraging it.

Q. My opinion is that there should be an amalgamation of the existing companies and I believe that if they do so they will have at their disposal sufficient capital and resources and also a good market. If you are going to multiply the producing firms in the present state of the market, you will be doing a disservice to the country?

A. I do not think so. I think I will be doing a great service; there will be greater temptation to produce more and more films. In my opinion, if the Government guarantees dividend, more capital will be coming in.

Q. Why should the Government guarantee dividend for such a thing as this? They can as well do it in the case of the cotton industry of Bombay?

A. I am also interested in the cotton industry; but the textile industry does not want to exclude foreign competition completely.

Chairman: You make a distinction between infant industries and industries which are well established?

A. Quite so.

Mr. Coatman: There are many conflicting claims between the different industries for Government subsidy. Do you regard this as the most important?

A. I think so because there is practically no other industry requiring such help.

Q. What about hand-weaving?

A. Hand-weaving does not want much help from the Government now, except perhaps an import duty on cloth.

Q. Why do you attach such an importance to this industry?

A. Because I think it is a new industry which is likely to rise very soon. For instance twenty years ago I had to ride a useless bicycle but to-day that industry has advanced very much, although there is not one cycle manufactory in India to-day.

Q. You put this in the same order of importance as the production of bicycles?

A. Probably it is much more important from a financial point of view. It may happen that ten years hence we may have a number of travelling cinemas going throughout the country just as the circus is now doing.

Q. Even if you multiply your consumption of films twice, do you think that the employment provided by that would be anything compared with that provided by the textile industry?

A. I do not say that the film industry alone should be helped. I only say this is one of the industries which should be helped very much. I do not of course want the Tariff Board to be closed at once.

Q. Then in what order of importance should this be placed as compared with the other industries?

A. There may be half a dozen other industries which may be equally important as the cinema industry.

Q. If there are going to be Government subsidies, why should they not be given in the case of others which are of greater national importance?

A. My own idea is: it may be that you cannot shut out all foreign films from India; it may be that this is not one of the necessities of life. Still, if you do not help this industry, there may be this difficulty, of the foreign films flooding the whole country.

Chairman: Should Government help be confined to this one thing? Should it not be evenly distributed?

A. I do not say so. There may be other industries which ought to be helped just like this.

Colonel Crawford: Would you suggest that this industry should go to the Tariff Board?

A. I thought your Committee had the same power as the Tariff Board. The Tariff Board deals with one question, but this Committee deals with all questions, including tariff.

Mr. Neogy: Will we be justified in considering this question of the cinema industry purely from the commercial aspect?

A. No.

Q. If you allow the continuous flooding of the country with western films, it may lead to denationalisation of the people which will be a great evil?

A. I do not consider the financial aspect as the most important; I consider that the moral aspect is the most important.

Q. Then you would place it in a class apart from other industries?

A. When I said that this should be one of the chief industries to be helped, I never thought that I would be understood as saying that no other industries should receive financial help.

Q. Therefore these comparisons might sometimes be misleading?

A. Quite so. We, witnesses, are in an unfortunate position.

Q. When you advocate protection for the film industry, you are not advocating spoon-feeding for all time?

A. No.

Q. What you advocate is that the industry should be helped to be put on its feet?

A. Yes, the subsidy need not be given for ever.

Q. It is a temporary make-shift?

A. Yes.

Q. You believe that some time later the trade would stand on its own legs?

A. It would be able to do so.

Q. And if there are banking facilities to be taken advantage of, the trade would certainly do it?

A. Quite so.

Q. Now, as to the question of the procedure of giving protection, you mentioned just now that you were on a committee which advises the Department of Industries in regard to the administration of the State Loans Act. Supposing Government adopted the policy of giving protection to this industry, that Committee might be depended upon to see that aid was given to desirable concerns, and otherwise to do the needful?

A. The suggestions I have made more or less come under the provisions of the Act.

Q. Therefore, if there were many applicants it would be for the Committee to decide to whom aid should be given?

A. Quite so. After all I do not expect such a flood of applications and one of the conditions is that money should be forthcoming.

Q. And even if an amalgamation of such concerns is found to be necessary, it will be for that Committee to bring that about by persuasion?

A. If possible.

Q. By pointing it out to the competing concerns that their chance of getting Government aid will be improved by amalgamation.

A. Yes. I don't know if the Madan Company is an amalgamation.

Q. No, it is a limited company.

A. Before it became a limited company, were there not two or three persons. I remember to have seen in the prospectus that originally there were a number of different people working in different places and these different people combined into one company.

Q. Now, when we are talking about Government doing this thing and that thing, perhaps you are thinking of the Provincial Government because it is the function of the Provincial Government?

A. I am not against the Central Government.

Q. But under the existing constitution it is the function of the Provincial Government?

A. Yes.

Q. And when you are making these statements you are making them as a member of the local legislature, with a full sense of your responsibility?

A. Yes, and knowing its limitations.

Q. Now about foreign competition. It was suggested that there is no foreign competition at the present moment so far as Indian films are concerned.

A. Who said that?

Q. I think such a suggestion was made by Colonel Crawford. I think Colonel Crawford suggested that the Indian industry did not suffer on account of foreign competition because the producers are already making a decent profit. Now we have had in evidence that a certain class of educated Indians do not patronise Indian pictures because of their poor quality and they always go to Western pictures.

A. I do not admit that. My own impression is educated people go to Indian films in spite of the fact that they are not of a good quality. With a good quality of film more will go.

Q. That is your impression but the evidence we got in Bombay and Northern India and Bengal was the other way and to that extent the Indian industry does suffer.

A. I have no doubt there is plenty of competition.

Q. Therefore, if means were found for improving their quality of Indian pictures, we could eliminate this particular element of competition?

A. Foreign competition, yes.

Q. Now then about the market being limited. The market so far has been flooded with foreign productions and the market has therefore been a market for foreign pictures, and if the market is limited, it is the market for foreign pictures that is limited?

A. Because there is a prejudice in many of our minds against foreign pictures.

Q. Have we any sufficient data to judge as to whether the market for Indian films is also similarly limited?

A. No. I say it is very great. My impression is it is very great. The supply is not sufficient to meet the demand.

Q. Now about the guaranteeing of dividends.

A. That is one way to subsidise.

Q. Reference has been made to the fact that the railways were built in India on a system of guarantee at one time. Well, would you be prepared to abide by whatever conditions and precautions Government took in that connection and to apply them in this case also?

A. Certainly. In fact there is at present a railway company in Mysore working under a guarantee system. I am a shareholder in that. Though only 4 per cent. is guaranteed there was no question of money forthcoming.

Colonel Crawford: If there is a demand from the Indian public for Western pictures are we still to prohibit the importation of Western pictures.

A. That question is very difficult to answer. There is a very big "If" in it.

Q. If there is a demand for foreign films will you allow them. Your real answer is "No". We should not allow a public demand to develop?

A. Except in particular cases, as I have said.

Q. Except in the case of educational films, etc.

A. That applies to all foreign imports.

Chairman: Particularly as he believes them to have a demoralising effect.

A. And also a very bad financial effect.

**Written Statement of M. R. Ry. RAO SAHIB N. R. BALAKRISHNA
MUDALIAR AVARGAL, Acting Superintendent, School of Arts
and Crafts, Madras, dated the 16th December 1927.**

INTRODUCTORY.

1. Yes. I am fairly acquainted with the working of the cinemas in this city which has to its credit about half a dozen cinema theatre exhibiting pictures of varied interest being the productions of India, England, America, Germany and France. A few years back a maiden venture was launched by some expert photographers of this city to film certain productions bearing a close interest to Indian tradition and one of those was "Savithri" which though not perfect was worth encouragement. The promoter of that film industry could not successfully develop his plans due to—

- (1) want of sufficient encouragement,
- (2) lack of real actors,
- (3) failure of financial prospects.

The first Indian production that was screened on a really efficient scale of admiration was "The birth of Shree Krishna" realised by Mr. Phalky of Northern India in the year 1918. This production has met with universal applause all over India especially in this Province and since then numerous enterprises have sprung up in this country but of late the theme of productions seems to have changed from historically religious plays to modern plots involving every day experience as well as depicting serious avocations that absorbed Indian community. Reviewing the present status with the past we find a marked improvement in our own productions and much credit goes to the untiring energy that is put forth by promoters of the Kohinoor Film Company which to-day stands as the primer film industry in India.

GENERAL.

2. (a), (i) and (ii) Cinemas are frequented more by educated classes than by the illiterate. The desire amongst the illiterate and low class people is equally great if not more. The desiring factor seems to be one of finance. The increase in attendance seem to be more in the case of poorer classes of people than the middle and richer classes. My answer refers only to the Madras Town.

(b) As far as Madras is concerned there are cinemas run by different companies each giving at least two performances every day. Almost all the theatres are packed to the full at each of the performances and especially when films depicting interesting detective or historical plots are exhibited the demand for their extension is very great. The average audience at each of the theatres may be put at about 500 at every performance and comprises of—

(i) Educated, 60 per cent.—

	Per cent.
Europeans	5
Anglo-Indians	10
Students	20
Ladies and children	15
Indians	10

(ii) Uneducated, 40 per cent.—

Coolies, hackney drivers, cooks, petty shop-keepers, ladies, etc.	40
---	----

(c) The proportion of children under 14 years or adolescents of impressionable age is between 5 to 10 per cent. and the proportion naturally increases when performances of educative value are exhibited.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. The higher and more refined class of Indians seem to prefer foreign films depicting love, adventure, education and films of standard novels and dramas. Indian women and men of the lower classes seem to like Indian films better especially those depicting puranic stories as it is easier for them to follow. There seems to be some religious sentiment in favour of these films. Some of the foreign film stars have established a name in the world of cinema that their films are attended by all classes alike. Indian acting on the screen seems to be very poor and are not appreciated by people of cultivated tastes.

4. Not adequate. The demand for the Indian film is very great especially among the common people. It is only in the cities and a few important towns that these cinematograph companies are situated and they are accessible only to people living in such towns and cities and their surroundings. The people in general of the mofussil places both small towns and villages have absolutely no access to these shows in spite of a few moving cinema companies. The inadequacy of uptodate Indian films which could compete with those of foreign manufacture is another handicap. They are not able to invest or spend large amounts of money on these by the purchases of uptodate materials nor are they able to get hold of proper actors and actresses and sceneries, etc., for the same reason. The required number of films are not produced and even amongst those produced there is a tendency to monopoly.

5. (a) No. Not to the extent to which they are required. They are not very readily available as the industry is in itself in an initial stage in India. A few only of those that are available are of a good quality and are very much appreciated.

(b) They are certainly very popular and will be more so if produced on the uptodate lines as adopted by the west.

(c) It is ordinarily more profitable to show Indian films in India than Western ones. Films of historical or religious nature depicting Indian life will attract the attention of the masses more than the films of foreign production as the masses are not able to understand the stories much less are acquainted with the manners and customs of the foreigners. Besides they would be very anxious to see their own films of national importance depicting about the greatness of the by-gone days in India, the life lead by our forefathers, how they were great and attracted the attention of foreign countries in respect of their ancient civilization, etc. The exhibitors by display of such national films may make a very good profit as they interest the masses much. The educated are not as many, and may not generally like the films of Indian production as it at present stands.

As far as Madras is concerned the following are a few of the films that were very successful and were exhibited for longer periods attracting larger audiences from various parts of South India:—

- (1) Sri Krishna Jananam.
- (2) Sri Krishna Leela.
- (3) Sati Anusooya.
- (4) Sati Sona Rani.
- (5) Pati Bhakti.
- (6) Prahlada.
- (7) Scenes from Ramayana, etc.

6. (a) and (b) Indian films with Indian actors cannot command sustained popularity as the refined Indians more like the foreign films which are more realistic, excellently enacted as compared to the poor acting on the Indian screens and many of them produced at a cost which it will be quite impossible in India.

Incidents showing ship-wreck, dangerous situations as by fire, wild animals, expert women swimmers in the seas, can never be depicted in India owing to the Indian's constitution and mentality.

(1) Incidents showing the above sentiments seem to appeal to the educated classes.

(2) Puranic films appeal to the illiterate classes, and the women better.

7. It is very often difficult to obtain films suitable for the troops, Indian and European in India. Films depicting the arrangements, movements, etc., of armies in battle fields, the manner in which wars were fought in former days, the improved methods of warfare adopted by the various countries at the previous wars, the scientific advancements made in that direction, the martial spirits shown by people of different countries at various times, sports, exercises and several other allied things, if exhibited would be of immense help to them. But unfortunately films of this nature are not forthcoming in sufficient numbers in India to enable them to know what all is going on in other parts of the British Empire and other advanced countries.

8. I am not in the least satisfied with the condition of the Industry in India in its production as the present condition seems to be in its infancy and the growth seems to be stunted and unhealthy from an artistic point of view. I have nothing to speak against the moral aspect of these films. I do not know about the distribution. Production and exhibition seem to go hand in hand.

(b) The main defects seem to be that the Indians have not studied and practised the art of acting for the screen. Their complexion is against them. Attractive women suitable for the screen seem to be very rare and even if available are very costly. In certain films of Indian manufacture depicting Indian plots European actors take part. These people are not able to adhere to the Indian ways of acting but introduce western modes thereby spoiling the beauty of the plot. Mixture of the manners and customs of the west and east in Indian films must be avoided. They should strictly adhere to Indian customs, manners, dresses, etc., that prevailed as far as possible to the time

to which the story belongs. This may be done with reference to the literature that may be available of past events.

9. (a) Not available.

(b) System of monopoly do exist. (Example) Madan theatres obtain sole rights for many of the Western films introduced in India.

12. By the imposition of the amusements tax, the exhibitors are forced to raise the value of the tickets of admission which may tell on the average attendance. The cheaper the charges that they demand the larger the profits they will be able to get as this will attract a large number of common people of very ordinary means. Thus the amusement tax is a handicap to the exhibitors.

13. The present tax on imported films affect the exhibitors to a great extent. The prices of the films manufactured in foreign countries is considerably high and as a consequence cinema companies with only a limited capital are unable to import direct the films produced in foreign countries. High customs duties on imported goods is a sort of encouragement to Indian producers of films to produce films of the best quality in India and sell them at cheaper prices. Films if manufactured in India may not cost as much as it would in other countries. But all the materials required for the industry have to be got from foreign countries. If the tariff in regard to films produced in foreign countries is increased and that on the materials imported, alone, is decreased it may do a considerable good towards the cheap production and distribution of films in India.

14. Most certainly. The 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 industry in this country considerably. There is a great demand for such films. India being mostly an agricultural country would be glad to know what is being done in the various parts of the country in regard to agriculture. So also, public health, daily changes and improvements that are being made in various parts of the country in respect of this most important subject. A Government agency would be more preferable as they are the only body who will be conversant with up-to-date and first hand accurate information on the subjects mentioned. The needs of the school going children will be known only to Government bodies who introduce frequent changes in educational matters.

15. Yes. The vast expense of the country, abundance of natural resources, suitable natural sceneries and places of resort, the interest evinced by the people in the cinemas by their attendances in larger numbers at cinema shows, the desire of the people to advance with the other nations of the world in every respect, all these go to show that the conditions in the country are quite favourable for the development of the industry in India.

16. No. There are very few available just at present. This deficiency can be remedied by deputing young and promising youths to foreign countries specially to study this art of film making in all its stages. Scholarships of sufficient value if offered would attract a good contingent of youngmen. And when they return after completing their training they should be given all the facilities to put their training into practice. Government may start the industry in the several parts of the country and turn out good films of educative value or Government may finance these young men sufficiently to start industries of their own and supervise them. Government may conduct them by themselves with the help of these trained young men in the first place and later on hand over the industry in sufficiently trained hands as was done in the case of the Pencil factory and the Soap factory of Calicut, etc.

Sufficient number of efficient men will certainly be available in India if only proper facilities are given to them.

17. Yes.

18. Yes. Government interference would certainly be an incentive and encouragement to private enterprise for film production. The Government can give to such enterprises sufficient finance as may be required, say on the lines of the co-operative basis. The Government must have their own special staff

to scrutinise the work of these agencies and to suggest ways and means. They may have a sort of control over these private enterprises so that there may not be any misuse of the moneys lent. They may suggest the nature of the films that could be produced and be a check over the activities of the private bodies.

19. The cost of film production in this country must certainly be cheaper than in other countries.

20. Yes. It is to a certain extent justifiable as this is one way of educating the general masses of the country. This will have far reaching good effects in the long run. Of course, in the present state of the finances of the country this expenditure is not quite justifiable.

(b) But if Government start this industry and conduct them themselves then the expenditure incurred in the industry may probably be covered by the profits that the exhibition of the films may bring.

21. This, I think, is suitable and I agree with the proposals.

Films of the British Commonwealth.

22. At this stage it is not good for India to take part in the policy suggested.

(a) This cannot assist the development of film industry, which at present, cannot compete with the foreign industry and any monopoly given to a single country will only tend to increase the cost of the films imported into India. Open competition in the film market and the consequent keeping down of the prices, alone will be of benefit to India.

(b) I do not think this will be achieved by this procedure alone. This can be achieved even otherwise.

(c) I do not think this can be done.

23. (a) and (b) This may be conducive to the desired end but this cannot be a sure means as very often things may be misrepresented on the films or misunderstood by the audience which may have far reaching results in the wrong direction.

PART II.

Social aspects and control.

24. (a) Films depicting crimes such as thefts, murders, etc., seem to educate the wrong doers to commit their crimes in a skilful manner to evade detection. This depends on the nature of the individuals. What is a good and interesting sight to an honest man is a good lesson at crime to a man criminally disposed. No hard and fast rules can be laid in this respect. There is difference between stories of crimes and detective novels and films of the same nature in that the former can be read only by the educated and refined classes and that the latter can be seen and understood by all. The result on the mind of a cultured man and one that seeks lesson at crimes is different.

(b) Most of the detective films are of this nature and they are generally shown and command good audience also.

(c) Vide answer to (a).

(d) (i) and (ii) The idea of sex films between the east and west seems to differ, while greater margin is allowed in the west it does not seem to be desirable in the east. Not quite sufficient if social and other customs of the west and east are concerned. More rigid censorship should be enforced in these directions.

(e) Yes. Crime has of late increased in many parts. Robbery, murders, etc., have increased a good deal. The illiterate and the low class people have got a tendency to practice what they see on the screen and commit crime, etc.

(f) Not known.

25. This may no doubt look desirable. But India has to learn a good deal from the west and the great distance between the two countries makes direct

contact impossible. The films bring the foreign countries to the Indian mind more vividly than books and teach the educated and the illiterate alike. So, such censorship seems to be undesirable.

26. (a) Certainly. The reasons are too obvious to be mentioned.

27. Yes. Films representing western life are generally unintelligible to the illiterate and uneducated audiences, are misunderstood by them and produce sometimes undesirable results. The films before produced before the public, if examined by a properly constituted body, would be more helpful.

(b) No.

28. (a) and (b) Yes. Children under 12 or 14 cannot fully appreciate certain romantic passages, acts of crime involving blood-shed and murder, may convey erroneous impression on them.

29. This may be desirable; at the same time this may result in undesirable curiosity and evasion on the part of those called "Children".

30. Yes. On account of the bad effects such attendance produce in the young unmatured brains. Children's performances are most beneficial in these cases. Children below the age of about 12 may be prohibited from attending. Apart from other bad effect of films, the constant attendance of youngsters may be detrimental to their eye sight and their health generally.

31. I do not think that censorship will be a safeguard against the misuse of the film.

32. There is no board in this province.

33. I think that strict censorship will interfere with the recreations of the people and will be the cause of results mentioned in (a), (b) and (c).

34. I think the provincial board of censors will be better as they alone can judge the propriety of the films in their jurisdiction. The Central Board seems to be unnecessary.

35. The present system seems to be satisfactory. A majority of non-officials in the Provincial Boards seems to be more satisfactory as they will be in a position to speak about the Indian or foreign films more freely.

(b) Any expenditure incurred in this behalf seems to be an unnecessary burden on the tax payers.

36. This does not seem to be satisfactory. The films must first be examined and passed for exhibition by a Board of Censors and must not be left to the individual tastes or opinions of inspectors. It will not be possible to keep them above temptation if they are entrusted with such a responsible work unless they are very highly paid and this seems to be unnecessary.

(b) Yes; Yes.

37. (a) I think the Provincial Board of the locality can prevent any abuse in this matter.

(b) Safeguards are quite necessary.

40. Censorship of the films will indirectly lead to proper issue of posters, etc., as nothing will be published in them which is not found in the films.

The police authorities should look to the decency or otherwise of the posters, hand bills, etc.

41. Yes.

42. No information.

43. I think there are no objectionable films shown in this country and stricter control seems to be unnecessary for reasons already given in the previous answers.

44. While much is said about the excellence of the films shown, I have not seen much by way of adverse criticisms of films shown in this country. The public taste seems to have a salutary effect on the films as bad films find few patronisers. When once a film is condemned by the 1st set of audience the fate of the film seems to be doomed.

45. (a) Yes. The moral aspect of the films must be under the strict control of the Government and access to responsible Government officials must be given for the inspection of films during the course of their production.

(b) This is quite necessary.

**Oral Evidence of M. R. Ry. Rao Sahib N. R. BALAKRISHNA
MUDALIAR AVERGAL, Acting Superintendent, School of Arts
and Crafts, Madras, on Monday, the 19th January 1928.**

Chairman: You have given us a very full written statement, Mr. Mudaliar. I suppose you are a frequenter of cinemas?

A. Yes, sometimes.

Q. And you are not satisfied at all with the condition of the industry in this country?

A. It is satisfactory more or less but we must develop it more.

Q. I mean the Indian film industry, you are not at all satisfied with its condition?

A. No.

Q. And you want something done?

A. Certainly.

Q. What is it you want done.

A. That is just as we see in Western things it ought to be encouraged.

Q. You want encouragement. In answer to question No. 18 you refer to the question of finances. What do you mean by saying "on a co-operative basis". "Government must have their own special staff and suggest ways and means."

A. We must be guided by them.

Q. You mean you want a cinema department to help and guide the industry?

A. Exactly. That is also what I mean.

Q. And also give some financial assistance?

A. Exactly.

Q. Do you think actors and actresses can be had in sufficient number?

A. We can have them.

Q. And do you advocate the giving of scholarships?

A. I do.

Q. For people to go abroad to learn? Or would you send for experts here to teach them.

A. Either method would do.

Q. You have no preference. You don't mind which?

A. No.

Q. In what respects do you want them to be trained? Do you think Indian producers require training?

A. They must go with some knowledge from here to cultivate their studies.

Q. And finish their technical training?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you see Indian films frequently?

A. I do.

Q. Are they very popular?

A. With illiterate people they are.

Q. Are they not popular also with all classes of Indian?

A. Some films are.

- Q. Although their technique may be poor?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What is it that is not popular with the educated classes?
- A. The dresses and the costumes they have here.
- Q. You mean they are not appropriate, they are anachronisms?
- A. Yes.
- Q. That shows people without sufficient knowledge of the technique of the industry produce these pictures?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And what is your suggestion for that? What should be done?
- A. Send people from here and let them have a good training abroad.
- Q. That is, good training for acting, directing, and photography?
- A. Yes.
- Q. But for this knowledge you must have educated people.
- A. Certainly you must.
- Q. On the other hand sending people abroad will not give them any idea of what is suitable in India.
- A. If they are first trained here before they go it will be all right.
- Q. Anyway you want better people to take an interest in the industry?
- A. Yes.
- Q. But would you place this as an important industry in which Government should take an interest in order to develop it?
- A. It ought to.
- Q. On what ground?
- A. If good films are made they will be popular. People will enjoy both the amusement and the profit.
- Q. You think the cinema is bound to spread?
- A. It will.
- Q. But what is the harm if only Western films come into this country and there are no Indian films at all?
- A. People who go to the cinemas here appreciate them much better.
- Q. I know they do. Why should you encourage the growth of Indian films when you get a large quantity of foreign pictures, when you can easily get foreign films?
- A. Indian films attract illiterate people who have not studied Western things.
- Q. But that is all for amusement. When you get amusement from importing Western pictures, why should you encourage the growth of the Indian industry?
- A. Because all the people will not be able to enjoy Western films. Indian films such as "Krishna Leela" and these things will be much more attractive to illiterate people.
- Q. You mean many people go to the theatre when Indian films are shown who do not go when Western films are shown; for such a class of people the Indian film is a necessity—that is your point of view?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And do you believe that the cinema is productive of good in the country?
- A. Oh yes.
- Q. You are generally satisfied with the censorship?
- A. Oh yes, it is all right.

127

- Q. You have not seen any objectionable films?
- A. Certainly not.
- Q. You do not think people are spoilt—take adolescents between the ages of 16 and 21—do they get spoilt by going to the cinema?
- A. I don't think so.
- Q. You do not share in the apprehension which some witnesses have told us about, that the people are getting spoilt by going to the cinema?
- A. Certainly not.
- Q. You don't think the pictures have a demoralising effect? Western films I mean.
- A. People of 16 years of age are able to understand everything.
- Q. They may understand it wrong—say, a film with passionate love-making scenes. You don't think they are affected by such things?
- A. Certainly not.
- Q. Or crime scenes?
- A. There is nothing in that. For instance, we see these Sherlock Holmes films.
- Q. So you don't think there is any reason to complain about the nature of the films shown?
- A. No.
- Colonel Crawford: I have a couple of questions. I notice you say that the higher and more refined class of Indians seem to prefer foreign films.
- A. They do. Even the lower class people do admire them.
- Q. Well, we have just had a gentleman who thought it was good for the country that we should exclude foreign films from India. Would you subscribe to the opinion?
- A. No. Certainly not.
- Q. In your answer to 22, on the subject of Empire films, you refer to open competition in the film market keeping down prices and thus being for the good of India. The majority of films coming into India are American and therefore one country has to some extent the monopoly of foreign film exhibition. How would you suggest that we could keep the competition open?
- A. We could have some more brought in from other countries.
- Q. By what method? By giving a quota to other countries?
- A. Yes.
- Chairman: Do you understand what is meant by a quota. The idea is this. It is a technical term recently come into existence in England to compel the producer to produce. Suppose 100 feet are shown of which 90 are American and 10 feet non-American. The idea is to compel every exhibitor to show 20 feet of British film, 20 feet French, 20 German, 20 American. Do you agree to such a course?
- A. No, I don't think so.
- Colonel Crawford: You suggest to us that we should keep the foreign market open to competition?
- A. I do say that.
- Q. Cannot you give us some practical method of doing it? Or do you leave it to us to find a practical method if we agree with you on the subject?
- A. As the Chairman said just now, it is open to every one to make them more popular.
- Q. They must compete on equal terms? They must try their best to come to the level of other countries, not by artificial aid?
- A. Yes.

Written Statement of Rao Sahib P. SAMBANDAM MUDALIAR,
Judge, Small Cause Court, Madras, dated the 6th December
1927.

1. I have no special knowledge or connection with Cinema Industry either in India or abroad.

2. (a) In my experience only a small proportion of the educated classes attend the cinemas in this part of India. I refer to the Madras Presidency. The majority of the people who attend the cinemas in this Presidency are by far the illiterate classes. I should like to add that this attendance is on the increase. Some years back, taking Madras itself into consideration, there were only one or two cinema shows; now there are more than a dozen, and the attendance is comparatively on the increasing scale in these cinemas.

(b) Speaking of Madras and the cinema shows which I saw in the Madras Presidency, whenever I went out, the composition of average cinema audience is as follows:—5 per cent. or less, educated classes sitting in the higher classes; 10 to 15 per cent. students and young men occupying the lower classes; the rest consisting of illiterate people mostly occupying the lowest class.

(4) Children under 4. I have found in my own experience very few of this class attending the cinemas. As regards adolescents of impressionable age, which I take it to mean between 15 and 22 or 25, whenever any film was put up which would attract them from the sex point of view they have attended in large numbers.

3. Speaking from my experience of Madras and the Madras Presidency, the films which attract most are Shakesperean productions for college students and educated classes; films which are based on well-known novels of the West also attract the educated Indian audience. As regards the illiterate people, films which exhibit Puranic stories like 'Harischandra', 'Savitri', etc., are very popular with the middle and lower classes. I should like to add that I have no experience of cinemas outside Madras Presidency.

4. I am not satisfied that exhibitors are catering adequately for Indian audiences. The reason seems to be that films depicting Indian national life or ancient Indian Puranas are costly to get up, whereas films from England and America can be hired out easily.

5. I have answered this partly in my answer to the last question. They are not as readily available as one would wish. As regards their quality, (a) I am not quite satisfied with their quality. I should prefer their quality to be raised very much (b) as regards their popularity they are undoubtedly popular. With reference to clause (c) I think it is more profitable to show Indian films than Western films unless it happens to be a Shakesperean production or one based upon a well-known drama or novel of the west. I can certainly cite examples of successful Indian films. "Harischandra" when it was exhibited in Madras had almost a phenomenal rush. "Lord Buddha" when it was shown in Madras was certainly more popular than many other films. From my own personal experience I can speak to the fact that when Indian films were exhibited there were larger percentage of Indian audiences than when purely American or English films depicting their national life were exhibited.

6. (a) I have not the slightest doubt that the answer to this should be in the affirmative.

(b) Of such films, to the educated classes, Historical films would certainly appeal more strongly. (2) to the illiterate populace, Puranic films in my opinion would appeal more strongly.

14. I certainly think so. At present so far as I know there is no demand for such films, but once the public concerned come to know that the supply is at hand at a reasonable cost, I think that the demand would come in.

15. Yes. My reason for thinking so are as follows:—There is certainly a large demand by the cinema going public for Indian films; and Indian films depicting Indian life can certainly be produced only amidst Indian scenery and with Indian actors. Alien actors put in Indian scenery certainly do not come up to the level of Indian actors in this respect, however talented they may be.

16. As to this question, I think there are sufficient actors and actresses in the country available; but not producers, or directors and scenario-writers of sufficient technical knowledge to put forth real and valuable films. I would suggest that one method of supplying this deficiency would be to send some persons who are interested and who have some technical knowledge in these matters, to England or America to get the necessary training.

17. My answer to this question is 'No'. I am afraid that in the present impoverished state of the country money on a sufficient large scale would not be forthcoming for the present, for good film production.

23. (a) I think this can be done to a very great extent.

24. (a) I think films depicting the "Scientific Robbery," if I may use an expression of the West, does produce a demoralising effect on the middle and lower classes. I think also films in which the feminine figure is made to appear more or less nude has also a demoralising effect upon persons of impressionable age.

(b) I do not think there is a general circulation of immoral or criminal suggestive films, but there are some films of this type which are exhibited in this part of the country which would come under this heading.

(c) As suggested in my answer to Question 24 (a) films treating about theft or robbery are certainly harmful. It is harmful to persons of the lower class to whom it makes known new methods of committing crime, if possible, without being detected. It is harmful in this way also: that when they find well dressed criminals acting in the way in which certain films depicting them is shown, it produces in their minds an impression that there is nothing wrong in it, that it is an art, as any other art, and that excellence in it might be achieved.

(d) I am not satisfied with the Censorship as regards both sex and crime films in this part of the country.

(e) I do not think that at present there has been any increase of crime in this presidency due to the cinema, but there is a strong impression in my mind that sooner or later the cinema methods of robbery and crime would come into vogue among the unemployed, and slightly educated classes, on account of the cinema.

As regards (f) I am afraid I cannot put it down in writing within the short space of this reply. If necessary I am prepared to give evidence on the point.

26. (a) Considering the present tension between the Hindu and Muslim communities, and the present signs of religious upheaval with reference to both these religions, I think it would be better if more care is taken in censoring films, likely to offend religious susceptibilities.

(b) I can give an example of films of this description referred to herein. I am speaking on this point from my own personal experience and that of some of my friends who saw a film of "Valli" produced in Madras some time back.

28. (b) I think films depicting a portion of the female body nude or so thinly covered as to appear nude has got a very bad effect upon adolescents I think it is harmful, because, it suggests libidinous thoughts in them.

29. I am certainly not in favour of certification of certain films for adults only, for the best of all reasons, that the moment a film is certified as being for adults only, it will make every youngster to strive his best to have a look at it. It is a case of the 'forbidden fruit' being made attractive to their minds.

30. I am in favour of prohibiting all children below a certain age, from visiting cinemas. The educative value of the cinemas is less upon them and

their eyes in my opinion are more easily affected on account of the strain they are put to. I would suggest the age of 10 as being the limit.

33. I do not think that a strict censorship would unreasonably interfere with the recreation of the people nor involve a falling in the attendance of cinemas, nor unduly interfere with the freedom required for artistic and inspirational development.

35. (b) I think a whole-time experienced well-paid officer as Censor at each centre, to be assisted by an Advisory Board of Non-officials, would be very preferable.

36. (b) I think that all the films should be examined by at least the majority of the Board. I think gentlemen of suitable standing will be available who would be prepared to devote sufficient time to the examination of the films if a reasonable remuneration is offered to them.

40. I certainly think that posters and hand bills and advertisements of cinema performances should also be censored. The easiest measure in my opinion is, that just as films are passed by the Censors, these posters, etc., should also be passed before publication. I have noticed a few advertisements which were objectionable. They were objectionable in my opinion in attempting to draw the minds of youngsters by showing certain portions of the bust of the female figure either naked or so thinly covered as to be visible.

45. (b) I think all film producing agencies, considering the great effect they have on the minds of the cinema audience, should be registered and licensed and that their studios should be periodically inspected to prevent any surreptitious production.

***Oral Evidence of Rao Sahib P. SAMBANDAM MUDALIAR, Judge,
Small Cause Court, Madras, on Monday, the 9th January 1928.**

Chairman: Well, Mr. Mudaliar, you are now a judge of the Petty Court.

A. Of the Small Cause Court.

Q. You have acted as Chief Presidency Magistrate?

A. Yes.

Q. You are one of the founders of Suguna Vilasa Sabha?

A. Yes, I am one of the founders.

Q. It is a very popular amateur dramatic institution?

A. I think people say so.

Q. And now you have been able to elevate the tone of the drama?

A. At least my friends say so.

Q. And you have been able to attract to the stage men of culture and education which before was not the case.

A. I think so.

Q. When you and I were young the drama was confined only to professional actors but now educated people have taken to it; not only here but all over the presidency sabhas like yours have sprung up.

A. Have been started on the same model, yes.

Q. Now there has been one difficulty which you have felt, namely, the difficulty of getting women to go on the stage?

A. That is so.

Q. Are you at all getting over or solving the difficulty in your province?

A. I think just recently an attempt has been made within the last month or so, in which some respectable women have appeared on the stage; but I don't think they have yet made a beginning.

Q. Do you think it will be possible to get them to act on the film. It is not acting in public.

A. I don't think it will be possible at present. That is my individual opinion. May I give the reason. I think first of all they have to be trained as actors and film acting I think requires special acting. It is not the ordinary acting of the stage and unless they have special training it is not possible for respectable family ladies to take it up.

Q. Would you advocate the establishment of special schools or classes attached to colleges for acting, photography and various other things required for the industry?

A. I don't think there is at present such a big demand as would necessitate or require a school of class being opened like that, but I am certain in course of time it will come to that; but probably, in my individual opinion, it may be some years, perhaps a quarter of a century, before we reach that stage.

Q. But you have to make a beginning before it is too late?

A. You may make a beginning but it will attract very few people at present.

Q. But don't you think there is a vast field for film acting in our country?

A. I have not the slightest doubt about it.

Q. For instance, there is our ancient history and even our modern history up to 500 or 400 years ago, specially in Southern India?

A. Oh, yes. I have not the slightest doubt it is a very vast field.

Q. And there has not been a strenuous attempt to open the trade.

A. No attempt to my knowledge.

Q. What are the reasons for that?

A. So far as the cinema is concerned it is a recent thing in India comparatively speaking and money has not been forthcoming. I am only giving you my individual opinion. I am only a student of these things. I am not a politician. I believe the country is too poor to start it on that scale on which it will be a paying concern as has been done in America or England. From what I have found it has not attracted that amount of capital which it ought to.

Q. That is one point which has to be remembered, specially when they speak of Western combines producing large quantities of films. Do you think such a thing is possible for years to come in our province?

A. I don't think so.

Q. You can only have small concerns?

A. Yes. It is no use aiming too high and falling below the mark.

Q. So you would encourage the growth of small concerns?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you think should be done. Do you think Government should do anything to develop the industry?

A. Help them as much as possible but not with money.

Q. How else?

A. Give them facilities. Suppose I want to have a film taken of the Legislative Council. When there is no legislative council going on they should allow me to come and take the film without the slightest objection.

Q. You mean give them facilities of access to public places?

A. Yes.

Q. And conveniences, such as the lending of troops?

A. On payment of fees enough to cover expenses.

Q. That is one of your points. Then what else? Do you think that will be enough to induce people to take up this business?

A. I am rather shy of asking Government to give money because unless I can show some means by which the Government can have money, I think I ought not to suggest it.

Q. That is your difficulty?

A. But if they can find it, they ought to help because it is a source of great educational value in my opinion and a thing that tends to increase the amenities of life.

Q. Apart from the educational point of view, do you believe in the cinema as being one of the amenities of the poor?

A. I have not the slightest doubt about it.

Q. In Madras at present, except the stage they have no other amenity.

A. Quite so.

Q. And the stage to which the low class of people resort is not a desirable form of recreation?

A. Not at all.

Q. While the cinema is perhaps a better place for them to resort to?

A. Far better. I have seen something of both and from my experience I can say that the cinema is far better.

Q. So that the middle and lower classes now get amusement in an objectionable form when they go to the stage, and on the otherhand they get better amusement and enlightenment in some respects from the cinema?

A. I think so, so far as I know there is no censor for the stage, but there is a censor for the cinema.

Q. And do you go to the cinema often?

A. I have been frequently.

Q. So that your opinion will be valuable.

A. I don't know that.

Q. Now do you think the cinema has any baneful effect on the public?

A. So far as the eye-sight of young persons is concerned I think it does have a baneful effect.

Q. Apart from that, I am more concerned, about your opinion of the moral effect of the cinema.

A. So far as certain films are concerned, which depict, as I said, robberies in the West in this way I mean, well dressed people putting on an appearance like that and committing crimes; that has got a bad effect upon the minds of the people, so far as I could see. My sincere conviction is that sooner or later it will develop their minds in the wrong direction. I sent you a written statement. The enquiry came with a covering letter from you, so I thought I should forward it to you and later on somebody in the office wrote to me and I said I wrote to the Dewan Bahadur.

Q. I am sure I handed it in, but I don't know how it was not circulated.

A. So far as sexual morality is concerned, some films are certainly objectionable, and I have seen many such films.

Q. What have you in mind?

A. My idea is anything which has been put in merely for the purpose of attracting by means of sex and which has no place in the film proper ought to be avoided. Take the film of "Savitri". I don't know where it was made, but I am referring to the film which I saw myself. There a heroine goes out, and she is supposed to choose her husband. I am not concerned with the puranic story at present. My point is there is no necessity for a heroine to have a bath in the river. The only thing which concerns her is to beg of Yama and get back her husband, and for that she is held up as the highest ideal of woman, and if any person wants to bless his daughter, he blesses her by saying "Be you Savitri". Therefore the idea of the heroine being made to take a bath has nothing to do with the plot, but it is merely for the purpose of attracting the cinema goers so that they may see a lady taking a bath. That sort of thing has been put in merely to attract the people from the sex point of view, and I would certainly object to it.

Q. I suppose you recognise that a certain amount of light life is needed?

A. Yes, but if they wanted it, they should have introduced a dance in the King's Court.

Q. Is it your objection that it spoils the story?

A. It takes away first of all the high ideal of a woman. If they had a dancing scene in her father's court, there would have been no objection.

Q. Then your objection is to the incongruity?

A. My point is that this new feature has been introduced merely for attracting persons who are sexually inclined.

Q. I don't think you have been to the west?

A. Unfortunately I have not been there.

Q. Supposing you want to reproduce some places of amusement or places of public resort in the west. They have to resort to producing such things?

A. Yes, but that would be true to life.

Q. I daresay you have seen some of the Opera dances?

A. I have seen almost all the Operas and I am a lover of them.

Q. Supposing they are produced on the film?

A. I would certainly object to such things being put on the screen, for this reason. There was an Opera Company which came here a short time ago in which two ladies clad themselves in absolute tights. But the suggestion is there, and at the end of the performance they threw away the silk they had worn, and they are supposed to jump into a flame. I really don't think it is art. Can you call it Art, if I may be permitted to ask a question?

Q. The artists think so?

A. I have been an amateur artist in my own humble way for the last thirty years, and I entirely disagree with those who hold that such sort of thing can be called art.

Q. You would object to certain classes of things even if they represent actual things?

A. Yes, certainly; for instance, the Malayalees keep their breasts open. Do you mean such things should be filmed, though they are true to life?

Q. It is a trade which lives upon amusing the people?

A. But the trade can get on without showing such things, because stories like "Harischandra" have always attracted the largest audiences. French plays like "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" have always attracted large crowds, and there is absolutely no suggestion of any kind in those films, in fact the heroine "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" is one of the ugliest figures in the film; but it has got its high educational value.

Q. You think therefore that stricter censorship is needed in the western films?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think you can get scenario writers for the Indian film?

A. There can't be any trouble about it.

Q. And you would advise that some steps should be taken by Government to encourage the growth of the indigenous film industry?

A. Yes, they can give scholarships and send young men abroad to England and America to learn the art. I don't attach much importance to people coming to India to teach the art. I think our students will be better taught abroad.

Colonel Crawford: You told the Chairman that you require stricter censorship and you said that many scenes are thrust in merely to attract the sexually inclined audience? How are you going to encourage the producer of to-day to depart from that practice and to give us better films? It is the producer who puts in those scenes presumably because he believes that the public wants such kind of films. Do you think the public want such films?

A. The public, in the sense that illiterate people are pleased by it and pay for it, want it, and in the sense that if you put a naked woman on the

stage it will attract the largest audience in the world, they would want such films, but not in the sense that an educated man would require to see such things.

Q. Have you any suggestions to make as to how we can encourage the production of a better type of film?

A. By stricter censorship and by stopping such films.

Q. And you think that negative censorship is sufficient?

A. I think so at present.

Q. Have you ever thought of the possibility of what I may call positive censorship? That is to say, the Censorship Board will form a sub-committee which would classify pictures; those having a good standard of story would be classed as A and those that did not have that standard would be classed as B?

A. I have already said that it is a case of forbidden fruit being sweeter. The moment you divide the films into A and B class, all those people who are of a lascivious nature would rush in to see those very films.

Q. I quite agree with you from that point of view. If you give preferential treatment to the showing of better class of pictures, would you not encourage the producer to make better pictures?

A. The best plan would be to prohibit the undesirable kind of films.

Q. But without destroying the trade you could not do it?

A. From my experience of the Madras presidency and Ceylon, the best audience do not care to see any such films.

Q. Presumably the exhibitor will show nothing but that type of picture if it were available?

A. One way of stopping the exhibition of such pictures is by exercising stricter censorship at the source.

Q. What will the trade do in the meantime?

A. I won't say that the trade will be killed. Only those producers who want to make a living by this kind of films will suffer.

Q. You think that there exist good pictures and that there is no need of showing poor pictures?

A. Yes, I think so. And as I said, it is only to attract a certain class of people that such films are shown, and nothing else, and such a thing should be stopped forthwith.

Written Statement of Diwan Bahadur M. RAMACHANDRA RAO PANTULU GARU, B.A., B.L., High Court Vakill, Ellore.

1. No.

2. (a) In the West Godavary, Krishna and East Godavary Districts both the educated and illiterate classes frequent the cinemas. The attendance of the illiterate classes is, in my opinion, on the increase, whenever Indian Puranic Films are exhibited.

(b) A large percentage belong to the labouring classes who for want of other suitable amusements resort to the cinemas in the evenings after their day's work. The attendance of women and children is also in the increase though a percentage cannot be fixed more especially if the film depicts Hindu religious life or story.

3 and 6. It is impossible to answer question No. 3 satisfactorily. I have no doubt, however, that films depicting Indian life and stories from national literature, history and mythology are popular with Indian audiences than the prevalent western films. The former films are popular with all classes of people. Films depicting history, social reforms and social life and industrial

245 131

and scientific developments would appeal more to the educated classes. The illiterate population like mythological and puranic films.

4. The Indian films are not available at the same rates as foreign films and there are enough of them. There are very few Indian Comical films.

5. The Indian films exhibited in these Districts are supplied from Bombay and of fairly good quality. I however like to see some films depicting south Indian life prepared and exhibited. There are not enough of Indian films available to successfully cater to Indian audiences.

8. I am not conversant with the details relating to the present condition of the Film Industry in India but I have no doubt that the industry is in need of expansion more especially in regard to the use of cinemas as an instrument of education and propaganda. We want in India a trained expert staff to guide the industry and financial backing to the industry.

11. No.

12. The amusement tax is not levied in the District.

14. Undoubtedly. There is some demand for films for adult education, public health and for educational purposes in schools. Even otherwise it is desirable to use the cinema for educational purposes and the State should take interest in the production of suitable Indian films.

15. I consider the conditions suitable but the present progress is very slow and the industry is in the first stages of development.

16. No, but with funds and the requisite training the necessary material can be produced.

17. At present there is not enough of capital in the industry but it will be forthcoming if some kind of State help for some time is guaranteed.

22. I am wholly against any preference to any foreign films whether British or otherwise.

Oral Evidence of Diwan Bahadur M. RAMACHANDRA RAO PAN- TULU GARU, B.A., B.L., High Court Vakill, Ellore, on Tuesday, the 10th January 1928.

Chairman: Do you see the cinema much?

A. Occasionally. I don't go there as a rule. Whenever there is a good film, I go.

Q. How do you make out whether there is a good film?

A. Well, from what we hear about it. For instance there is "The Life of Buddha." It is one of the very best films that I have seen. I had heard a great deal about it and seen the advertisements about it.

Q. Was it shown in the mofussil?

A. Oh yes, it was shown at Ellore.

Q. Was it much appreciated by the people?

A. I think so. It is a very good film. I was told it cost nearly two lakhs of rupees to produce it.

Mr. Neogy: Are you referring to "The Light of Asia" or "The Life of Buddha"? Was it a Bengal production or a Bombay production?

A. I think it was a Calcutta production. I was told the Maharaja of Jaipur and other people collaborated in the production of the film.

Q. That must have been "The Light of Asia," not "The Life of Buddha." Of course the subject is the same, but the title is different. It was produced by Bipin Chandra Pal's son and others.

A. Yes, I think that is the one.

Chairman: Now you have got a permanent cinema in Ellore?

A. Yes.

Q. How many cinemas have you got there?

A. Only one. There were two but on account of competition one went down and the other has survived.

Q. What is the population of Ellore?

A. Very nearly 50,000.

Q. How long has this been going on?

A. I think for 3 years, not less than 3 years.

Q. I suppose most of the films shown are cheap western films?

A. Yes, but most of the Indian films come from Bombay.

Q. But I mean the programme. Is it often, do you think, that Indian films are shown there?

A. There is a system of rotation, I think. They hire these films and they pass them on from Bezvada to Ellore and from Ellore to Rajamundry.

Q. So out of the 52 weeks, how many weeks do you think they show Indian pictures?

A. I cannot say that but it is not a very large output of Indian films.

Q. Western films form a very great part?

A. Undoubtedly they predominate.

Q. And they are mostly of the cheaper kind?

A. I think so.

Q. Do you get any first-class ones?

A. No, I don't think so. After all the owners of these theatres have to cater to the public and it depends on the public taste a good deal.

Q. I suppose more of the comic and the fighting type, fighting and adventure, thrills. That is what the people like.

A. Well, that is the present taste. It might alter later on.

Q. You think Indian films have got a field in the future?

A. Undoubtedly. A very great field I should think. The question of adult education mainly depends on the extension of the cinema and on the proper use of the cinema for educational propaganda purposes.

Q. So you believe in the film as a means of educating the masses in this country?

A. Oh yes, quite apart from the amusement part of it, as a means of spreading general knowledge in various branches of life. I have seen some of them in England.

Q. And you think it is desirable and necessary that definite steps should be taken to introduce it?

A. Oh yes, I endorse every statement made by the Director of Public Instruction, as reported in the press.

Q. You think public funds ought to be spent in either producing or sending for such films?

A. Yes, I think some assistance from public funds ought to be given, because so far as educational films are concerned, I don't think the general public would care very much for it. A trader is not likely to invest money in producing educational films and I believe the departments of public health, agriculture and education will have to collaborate in the production of films which will meet their requirements. From that point of view it is clear that some assistance from public funds would be necessary.

Q. Well, there is a point on which I would like to have your opinion; whether these films should be produced by government agency or should we subsidise private agencies to produce them.

A. It is not possible to say one thing or another just at present because it seems to me that unless government departments collaborate in the production of these films it is not possible to produce them. For this reason it seems to me that some assistance from government departments will be

necessary and experts will be necessary. As regards private enterprise, while I fully see the necessity of letting in private enterprise, I also see the difficulty of private enterprise succeeding by itself without considerable help from Government in the shape of what is required in the way of funds and expert advice.

Q. It has been suggested to us by a man who has been into it very carefully, a gentleman named Narayan, whose statement I read this morning, he advocates that the Government should establish studios with the technical outfit and technical assistance needed which may be lent out to producers both of educational and amusement films. Do you approve of that course?—That Government should establish a well-equipped studio for being used by producers whenever they need technical assistance. And also the facilities.

A. I think so. I think it seems to be a very reasonable suggestion.

Q. Do you think, having regard to the lack of enterprise in our province, such a pioneer effort on the part of the Government is necessary.

A. I know years ago Mr. Venkiah did his best in this matter; he spent a lot of money and sent his son to England—I met him there—but when he came back and started the business, the whole thing was a failure for want of proper technical advice and proper management. Looking specially to the educational side, I don't see why there should be any hesitation for the Government doing something in this direction.

Q. The only difficulty which one of my colleagues feels is that it is better to encourage private enterprise rather than that Government should embark upon a studio themselves.

A. As a principle that may be all right, but there are limitations even to that general rule.

Q. So you recognise that an industry of this sort in the present circumstances requires some amount of assistance from Government, and initiation?

A. I think so.

Q. All of us are wedded to the principle of encouraging private enterprise, as much as possible, but do you think this industry is of a nature where an exception may be made?

A. I think so. Especially in its bearing on education and propaganda. Of course I would not advocate that Government should spend public funds for the amusement of the people. That is purely a matter for private enterprise.

Q. There is one aspect, even as regards amusement. You yourself point out in your statement that the cinema is almost the only amusement these people have and don't you think amusement is also a necessity for the people of the country?

A. Well, you could bring that within the scope of state action. It is a very large question. There are so many other things for the state to take up at present besides the amusement of the people.

Q. But if the amusement takes a wrong direction, as in the shape of these cheap western films showing thrills and love scenes, don't you think it is the duty of Government to give it the right direction by encouraging the growth of proper films in the country, because the cinema is bound to spread.

A. Yes.

Q. And if you allow nearly 14 million feet of film to come into the country while only 2 hundred thousand feet are produced in the country, don't you think Government should take action to produce proper films?

A. I think so. I would certainly do it as a temporary measure.

Q. Till the industry establishes itself, you think Government action is needed?

A. Oh yes, I would certainly suggest that.

Q. Now do you think that the proper class of films is being shown to the public, I mean as regards its moral standard?

A. I think there is a class of films which is perhaps objectionable, which suggests crime, violence and things of that kind but it is very difficult to draw the line as to what is morality in India and what is morality in western countries.

Q. Do you think, especially these passionate love-making scenes and close-ups and other things, do you think it will have a deleterious effect upon the youth of our country?

A. Yes. But it is very difficult to express an opinion as to whether a particular film is harmful or not. It is a question of familiarising our people with the conditions of life elsewhere.

Q. But do you think that it is desirable to show some of the scenes depicted in the underworld life of Paris and other western parts to the people in this country?

A. No, I do not think it is desirable.

Q. Where people are shown drinking and dancing and so on. Do you think you should avoid such scenes although they may represent a certain aspect of western life, although it may not be open to complaint that it is misrepresentation really?

A. Quite. I think so, specially so far as children and young men are concerned, I would rather keep these films from them.

Q. You would advocate then a stricter censorship without excluding them altogether?

A. It is very difficult to exclude them, exceedingly difficult. Even a censor may go wrong. I would not interfere except when it is absolutely necessary.

Q. That is the difficulty. I don't know whether you have seen the rules given for the guidance of the censors?

A. No, I have not seen them.

Q. But you hold that some scenes do escape the censor which need not have been allowed to pass.

A. More especially in theatres where there is a college audience—in centres of education.

Q. But unfortunately they form the cities where the cultured people also live. Adult people who go take care of themselves. Take for instance a city like Madras or Trichinopoly.

A. It is a great difficulty no doubt.

Q. Do you think any purpose will be served by classifying pictures?—saying that such and such pictures are fit for universal exhibition and others not, so as to give a warning to principals of colleges and parents and guardians?

A. It won't be practical, I am afraid. You might lay down a rule but it won't be effective. It will be very difficult to carry out such regulations.

Q. On the whole, then, I take it you are generally satisfied with the censorship as it is now practised?

A. Well, I think so myself. I don't think there is anything seriously wrong.

Q. Except that you would advocate greater care being taken in excluding certain scenes?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you believe that the introduction of proper Indian films will itself be a remedy in that direction?

A. I think so. I think that would be the best remedy. If more and more Indian films of different kinds are produced and put into the market, it will alter the position considerably.

Q. Now from your experience of the mofussal, are many second-hand films being shown—that is used-up films?

A. There are some. The focus is not right, there is always a flicker.

Q. Compared with Madras? I suppose you have seen the cinemas in Madras? You have also seen the cinemas in the mofussal. Compared with the Madras shows, you think you get more used-up films?

A. More used-up western films.

Q. Of the cheaper kind? That is what I mean. Western films of the cheaper kind seem to flood the market, especially for these travelling cinemas.

A. There are no travelling cinemas as far as I know.

Q. Not in the northern districts?

A. I am not aware of any.

Q. But I hear in Ganjam they come from the Bengal side.

A. I am not aware of them.

Q. What are the towns in the northern circuit which have got permanent cinemas?

A. Rajamundry, Ellore, Bezvada, I believe Palcole, Amalapuram, and I believe Coconada has got one.

Q. Masulipatam has not got one?

A. I don't think so.

Q. And Vizianagram has got one?

A. Yes.

Q. Are they a paying proposition to patronise?

A. Provided there is no unhealthy competition between two cinemas, it pays these people.

Q. What do you think is the percentage of people who really go to the cinema—to the total population?

A. Any day?

Q. On a daily average. Have you ever thought about it? It not, don't bother.

A. No. But when there is a good film the house is full.

Q. But even when the house is full it means a very small percentage.

A. At Ellore it means seven to eight hundred out of nearly 40,000.

Q. 7 to 8 hundred is the largest attendance on the most popular days? Probably the seating capacity of the cinema is that?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the largest seating capacity you have seen in the mofussal?

A. It is about that.

Q. In all these places?

A. Yes. And then there are two performances sometimes.

Q. Now, there is one other matter on which I would like to have your opinion. I don't know if you have seen the proceedings of the last Imperial Conference about imperial preference—for empire produced films.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think that India should partake in that policy?

A. No.

Q. Your reason being?

A. Well, I don't see anything to be gained by any preference shown to any country. There must be some *quid pro quo*.

Q. Your point is that Indian films cannot be reciprocated.

A. No, not at all. Except some which are to our disadvantage, holding us up to ridicule.

Q. You think it will take a very long time for Indian films to reach the technique required?

A. And I don't think anybody in Europe is anxious to know anything about India.

Q. Well there may be some.

A. In that case when Indian films penetrate to other parts of the Empire it will be time to think of it.

Q. You think this is not the time for this?

A. No.

Q. What do you think?—that this whole question of imperial policy should be considered together?

A. Undoubtedly. A great deal has been said more than once in the Legislative Assembly.

Q. But supposing some reciprocal arrangement can be made with the various parts of the empire for the exchange of educational films?

A. Oh that I would advocate, undoubtedly.

Q. So long as the films are approved by the board of Indians who are sent out.

A. I would even say it is necessary to have films from other parts of the empire.

Q. For that reason you would advocate a mutual agreement between the governments.

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. And you certainly believe that Government should embark upon doing something to pioneer the film industry in this country?

A. Yes, that is my strong point. Something should be done. The Government of India and the provincial governments should act together and there are the district boards which have a large number of institutions under them.

Q. I suppose—if you have not thought it out you need not answer—as a particular question of principle have you any objection (I have already asked that question in another way) to Government producing the films which are needed for educational propaganda themselves?

A. I have already answered that question.

Q. Yes, you did. You don't think there should be any serious objection?

A. No, I don't see any objection at all. It is not a question of trade, it is really a question of education and of starting the industry.

Q. You are not competing with any private enterprise in this province?

A. Not at all. There is no likelihood of any competition in that direction.

Q. So far as our province is concerned.

A. So far as any province is concerned.

Q. In Bombay there are producers whose hands are full with producing scenes of their own, films dealing with social and mythological subjects. They are not able to comply with the demand. I know they are not able to produce enough.

A. And it is also doubtful whether it will pay them.

Q. Of course educational films will not pay by themselves. So in the peculiar circumstances of the film industry you consider that Government should pioneer in their improvement.

A. I think so.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: I suppose there are advisory committees for excise in your district?

A. Yes, there are.

Q. Would you like such advisory committees on the cinema in your own towns?

A. No, I don't advocate small committees in various towns to set up different standards of censorship. It is an exceedingly difficult question even for provincial boards I should think. But to set up advisory committees in mofussal towns would be to set up different standards.

Chairman: I thought your idea was a sort of advisory committee for the industry itself in the provincial headquarters?

Sir Haroon Jaffer: I think some gentleman yesterday came and advocated censorship boards for each district.

A. Certainly I would not advocate such a thing at all.

Q. You have said in your reply to 5, that you would like to see some films depicting South Indian scenes of life exhibited.

A. Yes.

Q. Would you suggest some subjects which the South Indian producing companies should take up?

A. Well, agriculture.

Q. Are there many subjects here?

A. As I tell you, agriculture, methods of agriculture are different in the different provinces. The social life is different also.

Chairman: Would you suggest say scenes of Vijianagar?

A. Oh yes, local and historical, or connected with the religious life of the people.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: I think it would be easy to find out scenario writers for this purpose?

A. I cannot say about actors. Certainly about the writers, I don't think there should be any difficulty. We have 4 or 5 vernacular languages in this Presidency and there are many eminent men who, with some amount of training, should be able to do it.

Q. Do you think these Indian films should have Indian titles besides English?

A. You mean in the vernaculars? Oh yes, certainly. I am decidedly in favour of that.

Q. In what language? There are 4 or 5 you say in the Madras Presidency?

A. Well, Tamil and Telugu are the main languages here.

Q. If these vernaculars are put in, the films will be more popular?

A. Yes. We now have films from Bombay where Hindi is used in the captions.

Q. You get Tamil captions?

A. No, not now.

Q. It would be a good thing if they put Tamil on it?

A. Oh yes, Tamil and Telugu are spoken by each of them 20 millions of people.

Q. Would these two do?

A. And Malayalam. Not Hindi, Marati or Gujarati now. We get these from Bombay, but we have translators now.

Chairman: Have you?—on the cinemas?

A. Oh yes. There is a man always standing there and explaining the film. He is a very clever fellow. He knows all about the story. Then as soon as one scene is on, he explains the whole thing in Telugu because everybody can't read what is on the film. He stands there throughout; he is a lecturer.

Q. We were told that such a man is a nuisance.

A. Not at all. He is paid Rs. 50.

Q. But it is a moving picture. How can he explain?

A. Yes, he does it.

Mr. Green: He translates the titles?

A. Yes.

Mr. Coatman: They used to do that in England, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Demonstrators they call them.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you think it will be a good thing to send people abroad by giving scholarships? Or to get experts from abroad to teach people here? Which will be the better thing?

A. Perhaps the best thing would be at the beginning to bring out experts until the industry is established. But these experts in the cinema are very costly. They demand fabulous sums.

Q. We were told there are people who would come forward from Germany and other places. You think it would be better to have experts from abroad?

A. Yes, but if the thing is so prohibitive to get these people, I think you might have to send people to get their training abroad.

Q. Will it be a good thing to have classes in training colleges, normal schools and all that?

A. I don't think so. I don't think it would work.

Chairman: For photography.

A. For photography I would certainly advocate it.

Q. And direction?

A. Yes, I saw some schools in England.

Q. Acting, direction and photography: these are the three items of special education needed.

A. It would have to be a special institution.

Q. Do you think that Government should adopt any protective measures to encourage the Indian industry by increasing the existing 15 per cent. duty to 30 per cent.?

A. Provided the industry is already established or if you see the beginnings of an industry in India, you might try some protective duty.

Q. Would you suggest any reduction in tariff on raw materials?

A. That would certainly be a better way than putting on a higher duty on films.

Q. How should the Government raise the money? Should they get it from the Education Department? They say they have no funds. Or would you advocate any fresh taxation, an entertainment tax or something of that kind?

A. I should not advocate an entertainment tax in the mofussal towns. Perhaps in large cities it might produce some revenue, but in the mofussal towns it won't produce anything at all.

Q. I thought the proposal in Madras is that the general revenues of the Corporation should be used.

A. I think so.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Should the money come from the Education Department?

A. It does not matter where it comes from, whether from the Education Department or from the general revenues.

Q. How do you justify that it should come from the general revenues?

A. It need not necessarily come from the general revenues. As I said, my special point is that for educational propaganda the cinema has got a great future, and the Government will be perfectly justified, if they are keen on mass education and adult education, to use the cinema as far as possible.

Q. If the industry prospers, there will be more revenue, will there not?

A. Of course, education must tend to something good. That is my point.

Q. Besides, the economic wealth of the country will not go abroad?

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: I note that you are very strongly in favour of educational films, and I think the Chairman pointed out to you that it is not a commercial proposition?

A. No, that won't be a commercial proposition at first.

Q. Of course, you would be in favour of giving the work to private enterprise with due regard to economy?

A. Yes.

Q. If we came to the conclusion that private enterprise would not at the moment be suitable, I suppose you would favour Government doing it?

A. Certainly.

Q. With your great knowledge of the Central Legislature, do you think there will be any very great objection to the formation of a central studio—not necessarily by the Government of India,—but supported by all the provinces and charged with the duty of making public utility films?

A. I don't see any objection to it.

Q. For that studio you could employ European experts who would probably provide you with the necessary training ground and inspiration to local producer?

A. Quite. I don't see why the Central Government and the Provincial Governments should not co-operate in a matter of this kind, and probably the Provincial Governments will ask the District Boards to co-operate with them. There is a great scope for educational films, and their bearing on education is so obvious that I don't think any Minister would raise objection to the scheme.

Q. That is on the educative side. Now, the general films are equally educative, are they not?

A. To some extent they are educative, because they will show the people of India the manners and customs of people of the other parts of the world, their streets, buildings, their communications and so on. From that point of view people here will get a kind of general education.

Q. I notice that you hold strong views about Preference. To-day for instance foreign films generally come from one country. Would you say that is our duty to see that the market should be open to all countries? Do you admit that the market is not open at present in India?

A. It is open now.

Chairman: What is meant is that a particular country monopolises the trade.

Colonel Crawford: I don't want to push the British film. I am putting it to you that from an educative point of view, you would try to draw films from every country, and were we to find a tendency on the part of any one country to monopolise and push their own films, would you consider it our duty to take steps?

A. The films are now imported from one country and there is no competition between different countries in the production of films. I don't know what we could do at all to change that state of things.

Q. You are aware of the quota system in England, and I presume you would adopt the same practice and say that no one country should have more than 50 per cent. of foreign films? In England this measure was definitely adopted to break the stronghold of any particular country?

A. So far as the special conditions of India are concerned, and specially with reference to educational films, I would draw upon all countries for films.

Q. I am talking of films of general educative value?

A. I don't see why we should not know as much of foreign countries as of the Empire.

Q. I quite agree with you. I am not trying to push the Empire films, but I am left with the impression that one country has the monopoly over every other country in the matter of supplying films and it is very difficult to break the monopoly?

A. Why should it not have a control over the market if it was enterprising enough to establish the industry before any others.

Q. I am asking you to look at the question entirely from the Indian point of view. We understand that Germany and England—I do not know about France and Italy—are all producing films to-day, and very few of them are shown here. Would you suggest that we should recommend the quota system in India regardless of the price and value of the films? What we want to find out is whether you would recommend us to examine the possible methods of providing an open market?

A. We will take another instance. Supposing we say that 15 per cent. of the British goods should come to India. How would that fit in with our present industrial conditions here. I am applying it to analogous industries.

Q. Then you would suggest that it is a sound thing to have a certain number of foreign films exhibited here?

A. If all the films are of the same price and of the same quality, and if they have the same purpose of educating the people.

Mr. Neagy: From that point of view you would not exclude Russian Soviet films?

A. No, I would not.

Colonel Crawford: As I said, I am not trying to push the films of any one country. I am suggesting that it seems quite possible that there is one particular country having control, and I should like to know if we could find some practical method of keeping the market open, and whether you would advise us to do so in the interests of India?

A. Consistently with the interests of India you can adopt a method of breaking any kind of monopoly. The first consideration should be India.

Q. I am not out to push British films. At the same time I want to keep the market open should we find that it is closed now?

A. Yes. From that point of view, no one country should have a monopoly in films.

Q. Now, I will take you for one moment on the question of censorship. I presume you agree that we should do all we can to keep the tone of the film as high as possible. Personally, at the moment I am not satisfied with the tone of the western films. Can you suggest any method of improving the standard of films by censorship?

A. It is an exceedingly difficult question to answer. Much will depend upon the personal element of the censors themselves.

Q. From your experience as a practical legislator would you agree to this. A suggestion has been made that there might be an aesthetic sub-committee of our censor Board to classify the better class of films as A, and the second best as B. That is to say, if they find that the story is excellent and the tone of the film is generally good, they would class it as A, but the films which would not come up to that standard would be classed as B. Suppose you have an entertainment tax, you might give a reduction of it or give a rebate on the tariff on film A or give a bonus to the exhibitor. I am trying to get at some method of encouraging a better standard of films?

A. The only way I would suggest would be to make your provincial and central Boards as efficient as possible.

Q. Do you think in practice they will be able to work harmoniously, or there will always be a difference of opinion amongst them?

A. Many people differ on artistic questions.

Q. You do not think it is a practical suggestion?

A. I do not think so. I do not think we should complicate matters by having another sub-committee for aesthetics. I do not think it would work in practice. Perhaps they might have on the Board somebody who would criticise these films from that aspect also.

Q. But you say that proposal is not a practical one?

A. No.

Q. What about the possibility of the Censorship Board issuing a synopsis of each film for publication, so that the public may judge whether they should go and see such a film or not?

A. Do you think that a large class of people would first of all read the synopsis and then attend the cinema?

Q. Supposing as films are released in India the criticism of the Board on the particular film is published in the papers, would you not be inclined, for instance, to bear in mind that the film "Ben Hur" has received very high praise and that you should go and see it when it comes to your province?

A. I am certain that the owners of theatres themselves will deal with the advertisement portion.

Q. But my whole object is to encourage an improvement in tone.

A. To get some kind of synopsis from the Board—and that has to be published in the press by whom, at whose expense?

Q. I think the press people would be prepared to take it up.

A. The press people would only be too glad to get something by way of advertisement. Somebody will have to advertise it. You might issue one, but how will it reach the persons who would resort to the cinema?

Q. Through the press?

A. The press won't do it for nothing.

Q. To-day they publish criticisms of plays for nothing as of news value?

A. Sometimes the representatives of the press are present at the performances and they write a paragraph in their papers about it.

Chairman: Always of a laudatory kind.

A. Yes, not critical at all.

Colonel Crawford: You do not think the papers will publish that criticism free?

A. I do not think they will do that, nor can you compel the owners of cinemas to publish it beforehand, so that it comes to this, that so far as the Board is concerned it will compile a synopsis and hand it over to these persons, and then what becomes of it? There is no method of compelling them to publish it unless at the expense of somebody or other.

Q. Do you think you can get their co-operation on the understanding that our idea is to raise the tone and encourage the production of better films?

A. I rather think it would be a large order, seeing that cinemas are running everyday and there is a change of programme every 3 or 4 days.

Chairman: What do you say about publication in the Government gazettes?

A. They are never read, I can tell you from long experience. The proceedings of municipalities published in the gazettes are never read, not even the Government of India Gazette.

Colonel Crawford: You do not think that there is any practical method by which you can encourage a higher tone in your films? You agree with me that if you could discover one it would be very desirable?

A. Yes, it is very desirable, and I think we have to rely a great deal upon the members of the Board. I cannot get out of that situation.

Q. That would be the machinery for doing it?

A. Yes.

Chairman: And public appreciation by attendance?

A. Yes, public appreciation, and public taste. Between these two I do not see any other practical method of exercising censorship. That is my difficulty.

Mr. Green: In reply to question No. 4 you say there are very few Indian commercial films. I take it that means that you think there is a market for commercial films?

A. I should think so. I should think anything that amuses the people will certainly have a market. Some of these comics from the west are not understood in this country. What is a matter of amusement elsewhere is not really understood unless we are fairly acquainted with the habits and customs of the people in the west. What may be comical there, will not be understood in this country.

Q. At any rate, not fully understood?

A. Oh, yes, not fully understood.

Q. Western comic films are appreciated a great deal?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you actually seen any Indian comic film?

A. I have not been able to come across any.

Chairman: Supposing your Thennalraman and other stories are reproduced on the screen?

A. Yes. Many of them would have a very good reception.

Mr. Green: I was going to suggest that. You think there would be a very large appeal and this is a possible expansion of the Indian film production which has hardly been touched.

A. It has not been touched at all.

Q. We have seen comic scenes in Indian films; we saw an extremely amusing Bengali actor being "shot" on the film. You say there is a big opening for it?

A. Undoubtedly, there is a considerable opening I should think.

Mr. Coutman: In your remarks under the heading of Empire films you talk about the percentage of films which must be Indian, and you say that the term "Indian" must be defined.

A. I am afraid I did not say that at all.

Q. I am sorry. I mistook you for another witness.

A. All I say is that I am wholly against any preference to any foreign films, whether British or otherwise.

Mr. Neogy: With regard to propaganda films for education, public health and other subjects, they relate to subjects belonging to the transferred departments, all of them?

A. Yes, mostly.

Q. Would you not allow the minister discretion in regard to the policy which he is going to adopt with reference to publicity, etc.?

A. I think so. I think he must have some voice in the matter.

Q. And you would not like the Government of India to dictate to the ministers in the provinces in regard to this kind of propaganda?

A. No, but I do not see any objection if certain general principles are laid down, not for adoption wholesale, but certain general principles enunciated for consideration.

Q. And it would be a matter for settlement at a voluntary conference between the different provincial authorities?

A. Yes. I am sure there might be a system of co-ordination.

Q. And therefore if we were to have any central studio for the purpose of production of these propaganda films, the Government of India could not be the proper authority to control it from that point of view?

A. I think they will have to consider what would be the best method of controlling such an institution. Perhaps the Government of India managing such an institution independently without any consultation with the provincial Governments might be objectionable, it is true.

Q. Even in that event it would be open to every provincial Government whether or not to indent upon that studio for their requirements.

A. Yes.

Q. And the Government of India must charge an economic price for films to be supplied to provincial Governments?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Should it necessarily charge an economic price?

A. Certainly not, nor even any price. Perhaps this may come under the devolution rules under the head of research or something like that. There is some head there under which it could be brought.

Mr. Neogy: I do not know. It has got to be looked into. Supposing a province like Bengal or Bombay finds that there are already a sufficient number of private agencies who may have been tried in this line by the Governments themselves and found satisfactory, and that these agencies might be entrusted with the work of production of such propaganda films, would you in that case tie down the provincial Governments not to give their orders to such private agencies but place their orders with the central studio?

A. No, not at all. I will certainly give discretion. If the conditions in any province are favourable for the establishment of a studio without any extraneous help I do not see why they should not do it. Even now it is, I think, within their competence to do so if they like.

Chairman: You say it should not be compulsory, but voluntary co-operation?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: Some of the provinces have already taken advantage of the existence of private studios in their provinces for the manufacture of some films, and the evidence that we have had is that they have proved satisfactory so far.

A. I see.

Q. So you are not going to make it compulsory

A. No, certainly not.

Q. for provinces to join this scheme?

A. No. Perhaps it is very necessary that there should be a certain amount of discretion in the matter.

Chairman: At any rate you will insist on each provincial Government doing something?

A. Yes. I am perfectly clear in my mind that the cinema and the radio have a great future in the matter of education.

Mr. Neogy: Now, I will draw your attention to the terms of reference to this Committee, which do not require us to pronounce our view with regard to the value of educational films and how best the Government should make use of them, the only relevant term of reference is whether film production should be encouraged. Do you think an elaborate enquiry and an elaborate recommendation for the purpose of setting up a central Government studio to manufacture propaganda films is quite relevant to our terms of reference?

A. Don't you think it is comprehensive enough? "The film industry" will include educational films. It does not necessarily limit you to any class of films.

Q. Does it include the idea of the Government of India running a studio for the purpose of production of educational films to the prejudice of private agencies?

A. What are the exact words?

Chairman: Reads terms of reference to the Committee. I do not think we have gone out of it.

Q. Does it not come under the latter part? There is nothing here to tie up with the Government.

A. I think Mr. Neogy has in mind some notes which were written in the

Mr. Neogy: Let us leave it at that. It is a question of opinion. In any case you would not like the Government of India or the provincial Governments to enter into competition with private trade?

A. As I have told you, where conditions are favourable for the establishment of private studios nothing need be done to discourage it. If, on the other hand, conditions are not favourable, more especially as I said, looking at it from the educational aspect of the matter, the provincial Government ought to do something by way of co-operation.

Chairman: By way of pioneering?

A. Yes. That is my view.

Mr. Neogy: Coming to the question as to whether you should have films from different parts of the world and for that purpose fix a quota for different countries, don't you think that we are already having too much of western life depicted on the screen?

A. I think so. Many of the films depict only life in the western countries that is true.

Q. And western life is more or less similar, whether it is America, or England, of course, subject to small differences?

A. Yes, there is a general similarity, quite true.

Q. And from that point of view, don't you think it would be more useful to have a larger quota, supposing we have a quota of non-western films, films for instance, manufactured in Japan, China, and there are films I am told manufactured to a certain extent in Egypt, it may be that Turkey may take up the manufacture of films.

A. I did not understand Colonel Crawford to limit it in that manner. I included all films which are non-Indian.

Q. Yes, and for fixing a quota for the different non-Indian countries would you attach a greater importance to the showing of Asiatic films having regard to the fact that we are already having a little too much of western films?

A. It is exceedingly difficult to answer that question. I do not know what is to be gained.

Q. Don't you think that it is necessary to bring about a better understanding with our neighbouring countries?

A. Yes, if we can do it.

Chairman: Do you think there should be any compulsion except in regard to Indian goods?

A. No, certainly not.

Mr. Neogy: If you had such a quota, don't you think it would be useful to have, for instance, some films on Russian life under the Soviet administration, from the educational point of view, again?

A. If it is an educational point of view, I would certainly welcome as much as possible of the existing state of government, of people, of a country to be shown on the screen.

Q. I am talking of the new experiment in government which is being carried on in Russia for instance.

Chairman: My friend, Mr. Neogy, wants the Soviet experiment to be shown in this country.

A. I do not see why any particular preference should be shown or any particular steps should be taken for that. I will put Russia on the same terms as any other country. If you ask me whether you are going to censor those films or prohibit their importation, I should not certainly advocate such a thing at all, but I would not go out of my way to bring it.

Q. "If they come, let them come provided they satisfy the rules of censorship?"

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: My point was the danger of monopoly of one country and I gathered you to say that you were against the monopoly of any country?

A. Yes, under those conditions I have mentioned, namely, first the interests of India.

Q. I am thinking entirely of the interests of India.

A. Quite. There are many things in which the British have a monopoly of Indian trade, for the matter of that.

Mr. Neogy: What is the exact danger that you are thinking of in the film industry?

A. I am not thinking of any danger at all.

Q. Supposing America occupies a predominant position or—As, say, a monopoly in India, what is the danger that you fear will arise from it?

A. I would not like to be entirely at the mercy of any one country.

Q. As a general principle?

A. Yes.

Q. No particular danger from monopoly in film industry?

A. If that country is going to throttle the growth of the indigenous industry by having a monopoly of the existing trade in films it would be a danger. It is only to that extent.

Q. Danger to the Indian trade?

A. Quite right. That is why I said, the interests of India first.

Q. Do you confine it only to the danger to the film industry?

A. No. As a general proposition. There are many industries where there is a practical monopoly in certain goods.

Chairman: What you say is this. Supposing the American films monopolise the field, you say they may spread American goods here, they may advertise and so on?

A. Undoubtedly.

Q. And it may compete with Indian goods by advertising cheap American ones?

A. That is why I have said you should consider the interests of India first.

Q. If they are likely to be injurious to the interest of India you will break that monopoly?

A. Certainly.

Q. Otherwise not?

A. No.

Mr. Neogy: And the substitution of American films by any other non-Indian films would be quite as bad?

A. Yes. It is all a question as to how far our interests are served by a change of the system.

Chairman: If American films show a low standard of life so as to demoralise the people?

A. That comes within the principles of censorship laid down by you.

Mr. Neogy: Substitution of American films by Indian films would be a better remedy than substitution by other non-Indian films?

A. Yes.

Written Statement of the Agent, Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway, dated the 9th December 1927.

I have no special knowledge of the Cinematograph Industry but have been investigating the question of instituting a Railway Travelling Cinema with the combined objects of providing entertainment, advertising points of

A. I believe that the G. I. P. Railway have been producing some.

Q. Do you think they are very few?

A. Yes, as far as I can make out I do not think they can spare them for others.

Q. You think that some efforts should be put forward in producing these films?

A. We propose to spend a certain amount of money ourselves in trying to produce some films. We may however want experts for arranging scenes, etc. Unless we co-operate with some departments of Government and between us spend a considerable amount of money, I do not see how satisfactory films are going to be produced.

Q. Don't you think for that purpose that if the Government had a central studio at one or more places where experts would be available, you could indent on their services?

A. Yes, provided we can get the experts to come down here.

Q. You want a local setting for your films?

A. Yes, I want a local atmosphere for the films.

Q. You think that Government should embark upon providing the necessary expert assistance, and they should also produce their own agricultural and public health films?

A. I would rather have it independently, separate from Government as far as possible, but I do not see what other agencies there are to undertake the work.

Q. Don't you think there is a reasonable chance of other agencies taking it up? If so, no doubt, the Government need not take it up?

A. The Government must be able to give some form of guarantee.

Q. Is it the guaranteeing of dividend that you have in your mind?

A. If there is a company formed with good experts, I think the Government might give some form of contract to them for a period of time.

Q. Guaranteeing a certain amount of patronage?

A. Yes, so as to assist the industry. I think the exact form in which there should be Government guarantee must depend on how far the people are prepared to invest funds.

Q. From your knowledge of the Madras Presidency do you think there are any firms here in a position to undertake the work?

A. I have not come across any.

Q. You think a good start ought to be made at once.

A. I think so.

Q. You are for making every cinema exhibit a certain amount of educational films along with their programme?

A. Yes, it would be a good thing if a certain amount of instructional films could be exhibited in every cinema.

Q. In answer to question No. 20, you say that a certain expenditure on the part of the Government is essential, and you think that expenditure would for the most part be re-couped by indirect benefits?

A. I think that by exhibiting agricultural or health films, and thus educating the people, the Government will be getting indirect benefits, and from that point of view it will be beneficial, to the people also.

Q. You believe that Indian films are popular?

A. I have not seen any Indian film, but from the information I have been able to get, I believe that the Indian film is much more popular than the imported film.

Q. It is difficult to get Indian films?

A. It seems to me more difficult to get the Indian film than to get the imported film.

140

Mr. Coatsman: Do you expect the cinema to bring you good returns along the railway?

A. We do not expect to earn additional net income from the cinema but we do expect that it would pay for itself. We expect some extra traffic by having these cinemas at way-side stations where people will go for the purpose.

Q. You think, commercially, you can make a profit?

A. We do not expect that it will give a profit.

Q. You do not do it from purely philanthropic motives?

A. No.

Q. Your idea is that if the public health department intends to cut down the expenses, this is one of the ways in which it can be done, i.e., by exhibiting health films and thereby educating the people in hygiene, etc?

A. The primary object is not to cut down the expenses; it is more important to make more and more health propaganda.

Q. You think it will cover the expenses, at any rate?

A. Yes.

Q. If you get profits, you think you can use them on extending the cinemas?

A. Provided we find that it is not an additional burden on the railway, we would extend it. The actual cinema however will be exhibited free. We hope to get extra pilgrims by exhibiting films showing places of pilgrimage and historical importance. We also hope to cut down our losses by educating our own staff as to how they should behave on particular occasions, despatch the materials, etc.

Q. I am very glad to hear that you are going to educate the people, and I think really that in a technical department the cinema can be used with advantage. It seems to me that if the railways can make any profit out of it, it would be quite legitimate and they can also extend the cinema work and thereby initiate a probably very fruitful development. Have you drawn up any regular scheme?

A. I have not drawn up any list. We want to get at one or two western films and one or two Indian films which will be educative.

Q. What additional expenditure are you thinking of incurring on this?

A. We have to fit out a carriage with the necessary apparatus for traffic up and down the line and hire the films and get the necessary staff.

Q. Have you made any estimate so far?

A. I am afraid I have not got it here. The main item is the question of taking films, which comes to about annas 8 as a foot, and I think the length comes to 4,000 or 5,000 ft. for an hour's entertainment. It takes about Rs. 2,000 to get one film.

Q. I take it that you are going to prepare your own films?

A. We have put in an estimate in the budget, of Rs. 10,000 for the purpose.

Q. Have you taken any steps to get your staff?

A. No, not yet.

Q. Are you thinking of putting somebody on special duty?

A. In the G. I. P. they have a Publicity Officer who looks after the work, but I would like to have a man who would undertake the whole production of films on selected subjects. We would have to discuss between ourselves how they should be exhibited, what form they should take and all that.

Q. The idea is to have a whole time officer?

A. We have no proposals at present for a publicity officer; the cinema is only a portion of the work.

Q. You have no such officer?

A. No.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you know Mr. Dawson, the Publicity Superintendent of the G. I. P.?

A. I have met him for a few minutes.

Q. Have you such a Superintendent in your own railway here?

A. No.

Q. You are thinking of having the cinema on your line?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you purchased any cinema apparatus so far?

A. We have purchased nothing up to date. We have obtained sanction to the scheme, but we have not proceeded with the purchase of plant yet.

Q. Sanction for the cinema apparatus or sanction for the money?

A. We have got sanction for spending money on the cinema.

Q. Do you know that there was a very interesting lecture by Mr. Dawson in England on "Cinema in India"?

A. I heard there was a lecture and I have read portions of the lecture.

Q. In the Imperial Institute, London, Kensington, London?

A. Yes.

Q. Now in the lecture he says at one place that in India they have audiences of from 6,000 to 30,000 people at a time, where these educational films can be seen without discomfort in the fresh air of a perfect tropical night and that there is nothing like these shows anywhere else in the world. I you attach much importance to such cinemas?

A. I think they afford very great opportunities.

Q. You agree with the views there?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. At another place he says in order to help Empire films British films are as much a necessity for the Empire as the control of the Suez Canal. You agree with that?

Chairman: It is a question of policy.

A. Well, I do think we require a certain proportion of films giving British ideas as compared with the American films which we get at present; and if films, entertainment films, are to have a real educational value then I think they must show the ideas and art and style of living of all countries in the world.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You know the G. I. P. Railway are showing these films on their Railway.

A. And also the Eastern Bengal and East Indian Railways.

Chairman: The North-Western too?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: In your reply to question No. 9, you say "I anticipate difficulty in obtaining the films I would like to get for a railway cinema". You are at this stage now that you have difficulty in finding cinema films. Is it true?

A. I do. The Eastern Bengal, the East Indian and the North-Western Railway are hiring a regular programme. There is no difficulty in doing that but I do not think that the films when obtained in that way are the films I would like to get. They are not altogether desirable films.

Q. When so many railways are getting films I think an enterprising company like yours can easily lay its hands on films of the right kind.

A. We are getting films. I can get exactly the same films that are exhibited by the G. I. P. though I think the G. I. P. are trying to negotiate get separate selections on special terms; but these films do not cover the whole ground that I would like to cover. They are short of instructional films and they are one sided in entertainment films.

Q. Is your special van for showing films ready yet?

A. No.

Q. When do you think everything will be in working order.

A. In two or three months. We could put it on the road in a month but I would rather take a little longer in getting ready and get more what I wanted.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. MAHMUD SCHAMNAD SAHIB BAHADUR, M.L.C., on Tuesday, the 10th January 1928.**

Chairman: You have been a member of the Assembly and you are now a member of the local Council?

A. Yes.

Q. You are familiar with the West Coast?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there many cinemas on the West Coast?

A. There are some in my district—two in South Canara.

Q. Both in Bangalore?

A. Yes.

Q. Anywhere else in the district?

A. No.

Q. Have you got any travelling cinemas going there?

A. No. They used to go, now they don't.

Q. What about the interior.

A. There is not much.

Q. Even at festivals?

A. They used to go formerly. Now there is a local company started, they don't go.

Q. Are there any travelling companies in Trichur?

A. They used to go formerly but now they don't.

Q. What is the seating capacity of these two theatres in Mangalore?

A. About 600 or 700 each.

Q. And are they open daily?

A. Yes.

Q. Giving two shows a day?

A. Yes and sometimes even three.

Q. Do they show Indian films there?

A. Yes.

Q. Very often or occasionally?

A. There is one company which generally shows only Indian films.

Q. One theatre shows only Indian films?

A. Generally.

Q. And the other one?

A. European and American films

Q. Are Indian films popular?

A. Yes.

Q. Where do they come from—from Bombay?

A. Yes.

Q. And have you seen them yourself?

A. Yes. I like them?

A. Yes.

Q. Does the audience like them?

A. Yes, the audience seems to like them very much.

Q. Not only religious and mythological pictures but also social dramas Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. Are they more crowded than Western films?

A. Yes. On particular days when they are exhibited the theatre is more crowded than on an ordinary day.

Q. Now what do you think is the effect of the cinema, of Western films, on the public? Have they a tendency to demoralise the people or anything of that sort?

A. Yes specially those films which show scenes of sexual passion and love scenes.

Q. Passionate love making scenes. You think they are very largely shown there?

A. Yes.

Q. A large proportion of the films shown there show these sorts of scenes?

A. They expect more youngsters to come in that way.

Q. I thought it was more fighting scenes that appealed to people ordinarily, scenes of *maru mari* with plenty of fighting.

A. During the European War people used to go in large numbers to see films showing actual scenes of fighting.

Q. But now do they not show more serials than dramas in that part?

A. They show serials also.

Q. And in serials there is more fighting, thrills, falling down hills and so on.

A. Such things in our part are not very popular.

Q. The student population go there very often?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. And have you got a large population of students in Mangalore?

A. Two colleges and 4 schools.

Q. What is your estimate, do you think the cinema has any bad effect on the people?

A. That is my opinion. It creates some impressions which are injurious to their future. That is my belief from what I have seen and from what I have heard.

Q. But is there anything objectionable. Is there any part of the films which you have seen, which you would yourself not have liked to see?

A. Well, I have seen them.

Q. I know. Have you gone back once you have seen them. Did you go back to see them again?

A. Generally I do not see the same thing again.

Q. But you see similar scenes.

A. Some are objectionable no doubt.

Q. If they were objectionable, what did you do—did you bring it to the notice of anybody that these objectionable things are being shown or done anything, either by way of interpellation in the Council or through the press or the District Magistrate.

A. No.

Q. You have not taken any such steps. Is it because you considered had no lasting effect? People go to the cinema and forget what they see. Is it on that ground that you took no action.

A. It is just beginning; it is not yet sufficiently

Q. Not yet sufficiently serious to take notice of in that way? Still you think there is a certain amount of objectionable matter coming through?

A. It will have some bad effect also on the ignorant.

Q. Do the Moplahs go very largely to the cinema?

A. Not very much. The schoolboys do go.

Q. Now, but the Moplah population, the agricultural population, of your Moplah schoolboys go.

A. Not the ordinary labourer or the middle class man?

A. They go on festival occasions.

Q. Do Indian films appeal to the Moplah population?

A. They don't make much difference.

Q. But do they go to Indian films more than to Western films?

A. If there were Indian films which depict some historical Muhammadan scenes I think they would go.

Q. Is there any such film?

A. No.

Q. Very well, such Indian films as are shown, are they popular?

A. With the students. The others, of course, are indifferent. They simply see the picture and don't appreciate it.

Q. What proportion of the population really go to the cinema? A very small proportion?

A. A very small proportion.

Q. Many people live in Mangalore and round about?

A. And in some towns like Kasargod.

Q. But do they come from Kasargod?

A. They do come for the cinema.

Q. Now you want a stricter censorship.

A. Yes, a stricter censorship.

Q. You found nothing objectionable in Indian films?

A. Nothing much.

Q. Would you like Indian films to be more largely exhibited? Do you advocate that Indian films should be more largely shown?

A. I would leave it to the liking of the people.

Q. But do you think it will be more popular if more Indian films were shown. Is there any difficulty in getting Indian films now?

A. There is not enough production of films in India or encouragement.

Q. What sort of encouragement would you advocate?

A. Without large capital and help from the Government or some sort of help, they cannot do it. Also there have been one or two failures.

Q. And therefore people are reluctant?

A. Yes.

Q. So what do you say should be done to encourage the growth of the industry?

A. I would suggest that Government should help them.

Q. In what way?

A. By giving some monetary help.

Q. You mean loans?

A. And also a certain percentage.

Q. Bonus you mean?

A. Yes.

Q. On productions?

A. Yes.

Q. Say if any company produces a certain length of approved films, you would give a certain bonus?

A. Yes, such a thing is necessary.

Q. And also cheap term loans?

A. Yes.

Q. What about experts, have you got the necessary experts for photography, direction and acting?

A. We have not got sufficient experts.

Q. Indian films are very weak in those respects?

A. Certainly.

Q. What do you advise in order to improve them?

A. Indians will have to be sent abroad.

Q. Scholarships should be given to deserving lads to go to learn the technique?

A. Yes.

Q. Or send for experts from abroad in order to train our people here—which would you prefer?

A. I think better send Indian lads abroad.

Q. So that they may see conditions there.

A. Yes that would be more advantageous to the country.

Q. And you think public money should be spent on that purpose?

A. Yes, it is essential.

Q. It is an amusement purpose, how do you say it is essential?

A. But it has an educative value also.

Q. You, as a legislator, are prepared to vote funds if it came to that?

A. Yes.

Q. And you think many legislators are of that opinion?

A. I think so.

Q. You think the public will welcome expenditure of this sort?

A. To a certain extent.

Q. Supposing it involved additional taxation?

A. I do not think people will agree to that.

Q. Suppose it involved the taking away of certain funds from certain aspects of education. If you want to encourage this would you advocate—supposing the budget provided 20 lakhs for education, would you take away 2 or 3 lakhs for purposes of cinema education and the production of cinema films?

A. It can be adjusted.

Q. Anyway you are not staggered by such a thing; you think such a way can be found?

A. Yes.

Q. By adjustment?

A. Yes.

Q. Supposing a certain tax were levied, an amusement tax say on foreign films, and the proceeds earmarked for the purpose of encouraging the growth of Indian films, what would your view be?

A. I would have no objection.

Q. That is to say, it will fall on the consumer; the theatre-goer will have to pay after all in the shape of a higher price for his ticket. Supposing so many feet of foreign films were exhibited, you would impose a tax for the purpose of developing the Indian industry. Of course, the exhibitor will throw it on the public.

A. Even then I do not mind.

Q. And you think public opinion will tolerate it?

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: Is there any objection to the reproduction of Muhammadan religious subjects on the film?

A. If they are approved by the committee which includes Muhammadans, it will be all right.

Q. If it is approved by the Muhammadans on the Board of Censors it will be quite all right?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Is it against Muslim religion to visit the cinema?

A. No, I don't think it is against religion.

Q. Is the cinema injurious to the eyes of young people,—harmful?

A. I think so. That is what I have heard. It has not in any way affected my eyes but I have heard it said.

Q. You think the present board is a representative one?

A. No.

Q. You advocate that it should be made more representative?

A. Yes.

Q. In its present condition it is not satisfactory.

Chairman: Which board? The Madras Board?

A. Generally, but the Madras Board is not doing much.

Q. Which Board are you talking about.

A. I say the Madras Board is not satisfactory.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You think it ought to be more representative?

A. Yes; and even generally about the other boards I have heard that they are not satisfactory.

Chairman: Why do you say the Madras Board is not satisfactory?

A. That is the general feeling.

Q. Can you tell us in what respect it is not satisfactory. What community is not represented on it? In what sense do you mean?

A. All communities are not represented and proper men are not put on it.

Q. You don't give them any work to do. You don't produce anything in Madras.

A. Yes, that is so also.

Written Statement of Mr. J. K. METHERELL, Secretary and Treasurer, European Association, Madras.

1. No.

2. (a) Madras. Attendance depends on the class of film. Indian pictures on scriptural themes and Western adventure films—Wild West—draw large numbers of educated Indians—generally the illiterate classes predominate.

(b) 30 per cent. Muslims, 40 per cent. Hindus, etc., 20 per cent. Indian Christians, and 10 per cent. Europeans and Anglo-Indians.

(c) Adults and adolescents.

3. Hindu scriptural films and comics.

4. No. The average small attendance prove this. The reason is probably the limitations of the block-booking system.

5. No, if we may judge by the character of the programmes.

(a) With few exceptions, such as have been shown are of poor quality.

(b) Yes, unless they are very poor.

(c) Depends on the quality. "Krishna Leela". This film drew such crowds that five performances were given daily.

6. (a) Yes.

(b) History and Mythology for Hindus of both classes.

8. (b) Though we cannot speak with any authority the quota system seems the only feasible system.

9. Yes—American producers have secured such a hold on the market that they can dictate terms and impose programmes.

10. Block system exists. The disadvantage to the public is it limits the choice of the exhibitor and leads to monotony of programmes and the exhibition of mediocre films.

11. South Indian cinemas are supplied from Calcutta. No previewing takes place here.

14. Yes. The demand would probably grow on such films being made available.

15. Yes. The climate, the history and the scenery are favourable.

17. Yes. Capital would be forthcoming if business were properly organised.

18. (1) Introduction of a quota system, (2) the grant of facilities for film—loan of buildings, police, troops, shops and like conveniences.

20. (b) No. If any expenses be involved—which we do not anticipate, such expense should be met from the proceeds of the duty on imported films.

21. We think this would be dangerous as it would be impossible to remove the State control above party influences. Cinemas might be used for party propaganda purposes.

23. (a) To a great extent by the screening of pictures showing scenes and life of the various Dominions.

(b) By an exchange of films of this character.

24. (a) Yes.

(b) No.

(c) Sensational films in which women are attacked with intention to violate them. Drunken scenes, excessive brutality. To all classes. By producing a wrong impression of Western life and creating a mistaken idea of the standards to be followed by would-be-smart folk.

(d) Generally adequate but fails to cover the incidents mentioned above in (C).

25. Yes.

26. (a) Yes.

(b) Yes. "The Virgin of Stamboul".

27. (a) See 24 (c) above. The average society and comic films shown in India do tend to misrepresent Western life by showing exaggerated views of the demoralisation and absurdities which the average Indian does not know how far to discount.

28. (b) Yes. See 24 (c) and 27 (a) above.

(1) Films which exaggerate criminal and social degeneration in the large cities.

(2) By giving a wrong impression of accepted codes of conduct in the West among smart folk.

31. (a) Yes.

32. On the whole. Yes.

33. (a) (b) No.

(c) Not if exercised by a cultured and experienced man.

34. (a) No.

(b) Yes.

(c) The Central or Local Government respectively should appoint the Board, which should be representative of the various communities and theatre interests. The Board should be independent of Government control once appointed.

(d) By a cess on films shown or a small cinema tax.

35. (a) Yes, if the present system be retained, but we would prefer (b) below.

(b) Yes.

37. (a) Yes.

(b) The existing safeguards seem adequate.

38. Yes. "The Virgin of Stamboul" referred to above is an instance. This was shown in North India without objection; other instances have occurred about which particulars may be obtained from the theatres.

40. Most decidedly. The posters on the whole, being coloured exaggerates sex extravagances.

It is difficult to recall instances, but the general impression is that the posters are far more provocative than the pictures themselves.

42. By appointing a member of the trade on the censorship Board.

44. By calling attention of the authorities to films considered to be undesirable and by advocating and organising a boycott of such films and of such theatres as persist in showing them, the various communal organisation could most effectively take action in these matters.

45. (a) No.

(b) Yes.

*Oral Evidence of Mr. A. A. HAYLES, Representative, European Association, Madras, on Tuesday, the 10th January 1928.

Chairman: You represent the European Association?

A. Yes.

Q. You have seen Mr. Metherell's statement. You approve of it?

A. Yes, on the whole.

Q. You agree that Hindu scriptural films and comics are most popular here?

A. I would have said that at one time but I am not sure now because it depends on the quality of the film exhibited.

Q. Have you seen any Indian films yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. Exhibited in Madras?

A. Yes.

Q. Do they show a tendency to improve?

A. I don't think so. They seem to be bringing no new ones down here. We seem to have got back "Krishna Janma". When it first came to Madras it drew a house of about 2 lakhs. Last time I went to see it the theatre was very nearly empty.

Q. Of course, because the same film was being re-shown.

A. Either the same film or a reproduction.

Q. The same production though?

A. Yes.

Q. You think that so far as Madras is concerned the popularity of the Indian film is getting less?

A. It depends on the quality.

Q. But what is the best thing you have seen, this year or last year?

A. I saw one last year, I forget the name. "Sati" I think it was but I am not sure. I was not impressed favourably with it. It was played on the stage and quite obviously screened from the theatre production.

Q. It was not very successful here?

A. Well, it seemed to draw a large house for the first three days. Of course, these films are shown on feast days.

Q. And then they are popular; people want to see something?

A. Yes.

Q. And on those days they draw crowded houses, but ordinarily as a sort of entertainment?

A. I don't think they would draw such a crowd ordinarily.

Q. Where did you see these Indian films?

A. I have seen them at the Gaiety, the Elphinstone and the Wellington.

Q. All their shows are only on religious days?

A. Yes, mostly on religious days.

Q. The Gaiety shows on ordinary days still, I think?

A. At one period the Gaiety gave Indian films as a consistent programme week after week. Then they dropped on to the ordinary Western film and finally on to the serial, because the Indian film did not pay them.

Q. That is very interesting. That is also what we heard from the proprietors of the Crown Cinema and the Liberty in town. They also said that Indian films would not draw, so they are now falling back on serials.

A. It is the fashion.

Q. That is quite different from other parts of India, where Indian films are replacing serials and Western films generally. You don't think that is the case in Madras?

A. Not so far. It may be due to the fact that we don't get the best Indian films down here.

Q. None is produced here and you have to get them from elsewhere.

A. And then when Indian films come down they come with Gujarati titles which of course is a drawback.

Q. But you think there is considerable scope for producing Indian films in our province?

A. I think so. I think we have the historical places and the legends for very good films.

Q. And also it is the province in which three great religious teachers flourished?

A. Yes.

Q. And in that way you can draw abundantly on religious life also?

A. I think so.

Q. What do you think are the difficulties? How is it that films are not produced in our province?

A. Lack of capital mainly, I think.

Q. And lack of enterprise also?

A. Not lack of enterprise because a very promising enterprise was begun here 4 years ago by Venkiah and his son was sent home and studied in Cricklewood and he also went to Hollywood, I think. He certainly came back--by talking to him one got the impression that he knew what he was talking about when he spoke about films. But as you know probably he started his concern and produced two quite good films and then petered out because they had not got enough money.

Q. Of course that was a peculiar case where they were mixed up with other matters as well and it is not safe to draw a conclusion from that.

A. One big advantage he had was that he had three big theatres in which he could place his films straight away.

Q. Quite true, but you think, you believe, that the introduction of the quota system will help the industry?

A. Well, it should help the industry but if it meant that any sort of film was going to be accepted . . .

Q. Subject to certain safeguards of course. Indian films where they are satisfactory, where they are of a reasonable standard, should be shown?

A. I should think it would be helpful then.

Q. And would you advocate a gradually increasing quota, not beginning with a large quota but going on increasing it periodically?

A. There should be a limit to the increase. We should still retain the choice to take the best films from any country.

Q. Oh, yes. What would be the maximum percentage you would give in course of time--say 50 per cent?

A. I would not say as much as 50 per cent. One-third. If this quota has a good effect in the course of years people would demand more and they would be given more.

Q. Probably you would limit that to a certain period?

A. No, because that would be very difficult.

Q. But you believe in such a system being introduced and you think it will be helpful to the growth of the industry?

A. I believe so.

Q. You also advocate, I see, the grant of facilities and access to public places, lending out public things and so on?

A. Every time.

Q. Probably you have in mind the troops and the police and other things.

A. All such facilities have been found necessary in the West.

Q. How would you get over the difficulty about the lack of expert knowledge in photography, direction, acting, etc.?

A. I would import experts.

Q. Would you prefer to import experts or to send students abroad?

A. I think importing experts is preferable because your expert would have to face the conditions under which the trained men would have to work.

Q. But on the other hand, students here would lack the opportunity of seeing things done on the spot and how the man directs a successful film.

A. I take it you can get that from the experts you import.

Q. But you will not be producing super films here, whereas if you went to Los Angeles or the place of production you would be able to see things done on the spot.

A. He could see things done under an organised system, that is true; but the question is whether he would be able to apply that knowledge to the conditions here.

Q. Probably he will come with bloated notions that he will be able to do things on a large scale unsuited to this country. You believe in small enterprises?

A. I think one ought to begin with small enterprises.

Q. And any assistance given should be for the growth of small enterprises.

A. I would not say that, because film making is obviously a very colossal concern if it can be made to pay. But I don't think, if you are going to begin, you should begin under the conditions, which obtain at present. If you send a man to Hollywood for study, he will have to come back and re-start here, because the conditions are entirely different.

Q. Then you think it would be more profitable to the industry if it were to send for experts and then later on, after they have trained a few students

here, the students who have finished their course here could be sent abroad to get a finishing touch?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it will be helpful to open classes in any school or colleges?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Supposing you send for experts. Do you also advocate, having regard to the fact that Government would have to produce a certain number of educational films, they should open a studio in which they could employ these experts?

A. I think it would be much better to subsidise one of the existing commercial concerns and get them to make the films you want. I saw a film the other day in the Globe theatre here which starts off with a story. It is an advertisement, but curiously enough it starts off with a story. I think an educational film in order to be effective would have to go on those lines, otherwise it would never draw a crowd. You must make it really attractive.

Q. I suppose you recognise that it won't be a paying proposition for a private concern to undertake the production of educational films?

A. No, and so I say there should be a subsidy given to one of the existing concerns which is already engaged in the industry.

Q. It can only undertake the production of educational films as a secondary thing, because it won't be a commercially paying proposition to them?

A. The two can go hand in hand.

Q. Having regard to the conditions in this province do you think there is any reasonable probability of the industry springing up here in the near future?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Having regard to the difficulties, won't you encourage the idea that Government should pioneer in that direction and give the concern later on to private enterprise? Is not public opinion in favour of such a thing as that?

A. Public opinion is also subject to so many influences.

Q. You would rather prefer that Government should encourage any private enterprise if it is possible. But if it is not practicable, you have no objection to Government pioneering in that direction. That, I take it, will be your general view?

A. I think if Government were to pioneer the industry it is hardly likely to be successful.

Q. Why? They have made the aluminium industry successful?

A. I am afraid it does not have an appeal to the political mind.

Q. Do you think that it is an urgent matter and that the Government should take it up at once?

A. I don't think so, so far as South India is concerned.

Q. Would you allow other countries to take root in this country? Don't you think it is better to nip the evil in the bud and develop the indigenous industry?

A. If prior investigation shows that the industry can be established here, it might be worth while to pursue the matter.

Q. I suppose you are aware that nearly 14 million feet of foreign films are imported into India and most of them also have their turn in Madras. They come round once in a way. Probably you don't get the same length, and not even 200,000 feet are produced in the country just now?

A. Everything will very largely depend upon the competitive price of the films.

Q. Indian films, we are told, although that may not be so in Madras, are generally very paying to the producer, and the indigenous production is so small that foreign films occupy a large part of the field. In fact, a number of

second-hand cheap films come to our country, and London seems to be the market where you could get these cheap and second-hand films in large quantities. Would you advocate the imposition of a heavy duty on second-hand films?

A. I don't think you should raise the price of the cinema indirectly.

Q. Would it not affect the growth of the indigenous industry?

A. You have to consider whether it would interfere with the amusement of the poor people.

Q. If more Indian films could be produced it would be more advantageous to the country?

A. I don't see any objection to the production of more Indian films if they are paying.

Q. But still, they don't produce on account of foreign competition?

A. Don't you think it is due to lack of capital?

Q. More capital will come in if you have less competition? If an importer is able to import cheap western films of very high technique, though the story may not be very good, he will not care to give orders for local production?

A. I would rather put it this way, that if an Indian film is a paying proposition and if enough films are not produced, it must be due to bad marketing or lack of capital to produce enough films. I would suggest that in that case the Government might give a repayable form of development loan so as to help those interested in the production side to produce more films. Apparently there does not seem to be any very heavy loss on making Indian films.

Q. Their quality is poor, and you have to improve the quality also, and there is no object in merely encouraging the growth of indigenous films as now produced?

A. I think you could do that if you have money Government can certainly help the industry by means of the development loan.

Q. That should be done in addition to the introduction of the quota system?

A. Yes, of course under proper safeguards,—I mean similar to the safeguards under which loans are granted to industries in this province under the State Aid to Industries Act.

Q. Have you any opinion about the moral effect of the western films?

A. I don't think it has much moral effect. But I would personally object to scenes of violence whether they are shown in an Indian film or in a western film.

Q. A taste has been created for the serials so that the Indian producer is trying to imitate the western producer in his productions?

A. I should say that the taste has not been created, but it has existed. I remember the first serial that came out here, and the house was literally packed to suffocation.

Q. You don't think that the cinema leaves any serious effects of such a character as to need drastic remedies or a change in the censorship?

A. I think the censorship looks after it all right.

Mr. Neogy: I am very glad that you favour Indian films. Do you find many other European gentlemen similarly going to see Indian films?

A. Yes. I have seen that almost all the upper class seats in the Elphinstone Theatre are occupied by European audiences.

Q. This must be peculiar to Madras, because in other places we were told that if we were to impose the quota system in respect of Indian films, the European and Anglo-Indian audience would drop off. That is one of the grounds on which objection is taken to the introduction of the quota system. You don't agree with that view I suppose?

A. I don't agree there. It depends upon the quality. I saw, recently, one of the Indian films which was apparently produced from the stage. I believe it was a Bombay production, and quite a number of Europeans went there. I saw it twice.

Q. With regard to the question of bringing out experts to India, do you really think that first class experts would care to come out to this country except on prohibitive terms?

A. I am afraid the prices of the film industry are very prohibitive from the eastern point of view, but unless you pay them handsomely, they won't care to come out. England had to pay tremendously in the beginning.

Q. We have been told that you can get good experts in Germany?

A. I don't see why you should go to America only for experts.

Q. Supposing the experts refused to come out on the salaries we offer, that is, it were not possible for the Government or the private producer to pay the salaries these experts might demand, what would you suggest in that case?

A. That makes a very difficult question.

Q. Will you be satisfied with indifferent experts or you would rather send Indians abroad to learn the industry?

A. I think you will find that the cost would be infinitesimally less if you were to import the experts here first instead of sending students abroad, because the conditions in India and abroad are totally different.

Q. Supposing we were to confine our choice of students to those who are already producing the films which you have seen and which you approve of, and supposing we sent out only such students for further training, would you approve of it?

A. I think they will have to learn something about the technique and other things which they can do better here under a man who knows the industry well. They will also have to face the problem of atmospheric conditions here before they can learn anything new abroad.

Q. The student will have picked up some experience here, and he is already acquainted with the local circumstances having been a producer in a small way. Don't you think it will help him?

A. I think the failure of the Indian films is mostly due to their inability to manage the light, and sooner or later it may be necessary in India to adopt things which are adopted in America, I mean artificial lights and so on. This is a question which can very well be answered by experts, and if one came out here, he would be able to tell you all about the difficulties of production.

Q. We have met young people who have gone abroad and learnt the art and have come back. They know what is actually required in the matter of artificial light, but they have not been able to put their experience into practice for want of facilities. We were told here the other day that the Electric Corporation here would not be able to supply the voltage required. In addition to this there are also the financial difficulties?

A. As I said, I would personally favour the idea of getting a man out from Home, a tip top man. I would even pay him heavily. You need not engage him in the studio. He can be brought out say on a year's agreement.

Q. In that case would you look to Government to get the services of such a man or you would expect the trade to do the needful?

A. If the trade is making a profit, as we have just been told, I don't see why it should not take the initiative in the matter.

Q. You could not depend upon the trade for getting out such an expensive man?

A. If the trade is not quite alive to its requirements, I am afraid we could do very little.

Q. In any case you would not like the Government to find the money?

A. I would much prefer the Government to grant loans on special terms.

Chairman: I suppose you would want each industry to send for an expert of its own?

A. I don't think it will be necessary. If the industry is going to live here, all the different branches of the industry must be amalgamated.

Mr. Coatsman: You favour the provision of loans by Government under adequate safeguards. What kind of safeguards?

A. They should see that the money is spent for the purpose for which it was advanced. For instance, if you were to give a loan for bringing out an expert, you must see that the money is spent for that very purpose. Government should also see that a periodical report is issued to show how the loan is utilised. There should be suitable banking facilities extended to this industry.

Q. You would agree to Government taking a bigger risk?

A. Yes, they will have to do it.

Q. Have you any comments to offer on the existing attitude of Indian banks towards the financing of infant industries like the cinema industry? Do you think that banks in this country are indifferent to infant industries?

A. I can't speak on that.

Q. I take it, of course, that the money to provide a loan will be found by Provincial Governments?

A. Mr. Rangachariar apparently has in mind the central scheme.

Q. If the central Government don't provide funds, the expense would have to be met either from additional taxation or from the existing taxation? Have you ever considered the scale on which Government should help the industry?

A. I should say that if you make up your mind to get out a really tip top man, it should not cost you more than Rs. 10,000 a month. He would come out for a year and then return. For that purpose you won't need extra taxation.

Q. That is only one item in the expenditure. Then you have to get down to questions like the erection of studios, equipment and so on?

A. That is why I say that if you get out an expert, he will be able to tell you the exact cost. If you want to put the industry on a proper footing, you must first have a plan prepared by an expert.

Q. You suggest that Government should grant loans under certain safeguards. What guarantee would you expect from the films to whom such loans would be granted?

A. The firms should give a joint guarantee. If the industry is not willing to repay the loan, then I don't think the Government can help it.

Q. Do you contemplate the Provincial Governments coming in to help the companies?

A. I suppose so. The industry should have a stimulus behind it.

Q. Have you ever examined a list of the films made in this country?

A. No.

Q. You know that a certain number of films are made here but the industry is mostly concentrated in Bombay. Again we find that each producing company is privately financed and naturally not on an extensive scale. However much the Government might assist them, there comes a point at which the Government help ceases. We may say they are inside the breakwater, and if they want to go beyond that, you have to get into the open sea. Do you think that a number of small companies privately financed can stand the world competition?

A. That is a matter for the experts to say when they have examined the situation. As we know, film production requires a tremendous amount of capital and the people you have got in mind have not got the capital.

Colonel Crawford: In reply to the Chairman you stated that if he had asked you a year ago about the popularity of the Indian film, you would have had no doubt about it, but you rather doubted it to-day, and you said that the question depended on the quota system. Could you expand your views?

A. There has been no improvement in the quality of the Indian film.

Q. By quality are you only thinking of the technique and photography?

A. The whole business of production, photography, screening, light and all the rest of it is bad. Most of the films that we get here deal with Puranic things.

Q. You are inclined to think that would fall on the public?

A. I would not say that exactly, because the Puranas contain a great deal of material but it requires tremendously different treatment. At present we have a tiny little box.

Q. It wants more modern treatment and possibly some exaggeration.

A. Oh, there would have to be exaggeration.

Chairman: You mean more cultured treatment?

A. Yes. And more actual modern treatment. The history of the thing would have to be looked at and modernised in various parts.

Colonel Crawford: Are you satisfied with the tone of the American films imported?

A. Not wholly, personally. I think there is a lot of rubbish.

Q. What is underneath the mind of the producers?

A. Well, to go to one subject, I say it is very largely boosting America. His main object is to show America in a good light and that is especially seen in the travel films rather more than in the actual social films.

Q. But I mean the entertainment films we get from America?

A. Well, the American producer does not regard India as a market. India is merely a side line. He produces for—I suppose most of the members of the committee know—what they call a Hick population—a population in the middle west of America. And that population demands a certain class of film, of which we have a parallel in the penny novelette, which truckles to the love of sensation of people whose life is singularly lacking in sensation.

Q. Do you think there is any harm?

A. Well, cumulatively it might be harmful. Actually it is very difficult to trace. In the long run people may grow, when they consistently see that class of film, to think that this is the real condition there.

Q. You think there is a certain amount of misrepresentation there?

A. Oh, it is undoubtedly misrepresentation of the ordinary everyday life. But as I say it is an exaggeration to meet the demand from a class of people whose lives are lived out in the wilds of the west, singularly happy and devoid of excitement.

Q. Is there any need for the censorship in this country to take this misrepresentation into consideration?

A. Well, I think the censorship ought to bear in mind, and I think the censorship do bear it in mind, where it is disastrous to the continuity of the film. But how far the censorship can come between that and stopping the whole supply of these films is another very difficult question.

Q. I see in your Association memorandum that they say the censorship is generally adequate but fails to cover the instances mentioned in (c), which are sensational films, women attacked with the intention of rape, violent and drunken debauchery, etc. Do you agree with that opinion?

A. Yes, I do agree. There are one or two minor directions in which the censorship might be tightened.

Q. Yes. But if you cut these things out you destroy the film.

A. It is a question as to whether you really ought to supply a class of films that contain absurd exaggerations, e.g., drinking saloon scenes, which we know are not typical of the country.

Q. One could not stop them without damaging the trade.

A. I am not thinking of the trade. I am thinking of the supply and finally lessening the amusement facilities of the lower class of people.

Q. Is there any practical method of encouraging a better tone?

A. You can only do that gradually as the tone of the people at home improves, and I think that is improving. The tone of the people in the middle west.

Q. General public opinion?

A. I think the general public opinion in the middle west is improving. I remember almost the first cinema films at home which were very much worse than anything we see now-a-days.

Q. You think it is simply a question of public opinion being educated to want something better?

A. A question of the time when a definite action should be taken. I think out here I have seen theatres absolutely empty for a thing like the Girl Left Home. I have seen the cheaper seats absolutely empty.

Q. I quite agree with you that very often the theatres are entirely empty when they show these films. Why do they show them?

A. They are tied to a certain number of films a year.

Q. Have you any suggestions?

A. The whole trouble is—probably you know we have had about five cinema committees sitting at home and they..... We shall have to pay higher prices for our films. It is a question of price. You could get good films here—we don't get the best as you probably know—you could get good films here if you could pay the price. So your block booking gives you one or two good films and a number of bad ones. And there is no way out of it except by raising the price. They could do it by raising the price. It is the same trouble at home.

Q. You could not give tariff preference to the best kind of films?

A. I don't see how you could get the tariff high enough.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: In your reply to question 34, you say that the board should be independent of government control. You mean to say that there should not be any police officials on the board?

A. To have government control there need not necessarily be police officials on the board. By Government control I mean, order to see a film here and follow certain principles there.

Q. Do you think the present board is sufficiently representative?

A. It seems to be as representative as anybody has asked for. There has never been a demand for an enlargement or improvement of it.

Q. I take it that these views were settled at a meeting of your Association?

A. We had a committee sitting on that.

Q. I find that you have not replied to 22 about "Imperial preference". I suppose you agree with the views of the Calcutta Association that they don't want imperial preference to be established?

A. Oh no. I said earlier in reply to Mr. Rangachariar that we should have freedom to take the best films from whichever market it comes.

Q. As regards your quota system, I find from this report here that Australia has produced only one feature film during the four months, September to December 1926. Don't you think if a quota system is introduced immediately, inferior films will be cast on India?

A. That is why I say you will have to have your safeguards. But they cannot be dumped except by Indians.

**Written Statement of Dr. K. S. VISWANATHAN, B.A., B.Sc.,
Assistant Professor of Hygiene, Medical College, Madras, dated
the 21st December 1927.**

GENERAL.

2. (a) In my experience in Madras city and a few stations in the mofussil, both the educated and the illiterate classes frequent cinemas in great numbers. The cinema, is, I think, becoming more and more popular.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. To the general Indian Public, the films which appeal most are those which represent Ancient Indian Culture. Those films which have a historic, religious or Puranic background are the most popular ones.

4. I am of opinion that exhibitors are not adequately catering for Indian audiences, because there do not exist a sufficient number of Indian films, the exhibitors having to depend mainly on imported films.

6. (a) Yes.

(b) The subjects mentioned in 6 (a) will, I think, appeal to both educated and illiterate classes. But this does not mean that foreign films should in any way be discouraged, as they are also of great educative value.

14. The use of the cinema for propaganda work in Public Health and Agricultural subjects is the most effective of all the methods of mass education. The essentials of Hygiene and Preventive medicine can be brought home to the public in a vivid manner as the motion picture lends life and interest to the subjects. Mere oral lectures and even lantern shows on Health subjects are not so much appreciated as the cinema, in the rural parts, on account of its novelty and realistic effect. I have found from my experience in demonstrating Health films to the public that people attend these shows in uncontrollably large numbers and evince sustained interest throughout the exhibition. It will be very desirable to have reels on subjects of general interest alternating with those about Public Health and other technical and educational subjects. This is specially important since the exhibition then becomes something very different from a sermon, and the comic and other films help a great deal to enliven the audience and keep up their interest in the educational films.

I am of opinion that the best method of doing Health propaganda is by the use of a small portable machine and suitable films. The Health Department of the Government should be entrusted with the task of making a beginning in this direction and giving necessary instructions for the production of suitable films by an agency, at Government expense. The Government will have to take the lead in the matter as no private enterprise will be forthcoming as the scheme is yet in its infancy. Once the usefulness and the consequent popularity of the films are demonstrated, private agencies will be sure to take up the lead on their own. Considering the backwardness of Public Health in our country and the advantages that can be gained by the diffusion of knowledge on the elements of Healthy living and the prevention of communicable diseases—a knowledge that ought to be the common knowledge of every individual, whether educated or not—it seems to be a duty of the Government to provide sufficient facilities and funds for the purpose and give the scheme a good start. The Local Boards in the Presidency will be sure to take up and continue the work at their own expense.

20. (a) and (b) In the initial stages the Government will have to finance and formulate a scheme of Health propaganda by the cinema, and further, make suitable films available. American films are available on various health subjects. These may be purchased in the first instance and then films may be manufactured locally on similar lines, but suited to the special conditions obtaining in our country.

As the scheme becomes more and more popular, the financial support of Government can be gradually withdrawn.

This expenditure is not only justifiable, but a legitimate one, as the need for mass education on the various problems of Public Health outweigh all other needs, considering the gross ignorance of the general public on these matters of vital importance.

The institution of an amusement tax may be tried to raise part of the funds necessary for the purpose.

***Oral Evidence of Dr. K. S. VISWANATHAN, B.A., B.Sc., Assistant
Professor of Hygiene, Medical College, Madras, on Tuesday, the
10th January 1928.**

Chairman: You are interested in public health propaganda and you think more of these films ought to be produced?

A. Yes.

Q. And you think the Government ought to start doing it because private enterprise is lacking in the early stages?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think that Government ought to start their own studios for that purpose?

A. I think so.

Q. You are quite definite on that point?—that it is Government's business to start?

A. Yes. And after some time the Government can hand it over to private agencies.

Q. And you think they are highly useful?

A. Yes.

Q. And you think educating people in that way will diminish mortality and diminish disease.

A. It will go a long way towards that.

Q. So that public money will be well spent?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: You say you have experience in demonstrating health by this means to the public? Were they Indian films?

A. No, they were foreign films.

Q. And you say there was a large audience?

A. Yes, especially during the times of the Health Week.

Q. Where was this?

A. In Salem district.

Q. Were they shown along with any entertainment films?

A. Not exactly entertainment films. There were films on agricultural subjects and some comic subjects, all mixed together.

Q. And people had not to pay any fees?

A. No, it was quite free. In one instance there were 5,000.

Q. Have you seen any Indian Public Health films?

A. No, I didn't know of their existence.

Q. Just a few have been produced in some other provinces. Now you say that the Health Department of the Government should be entrusted with the task of making a beginning in this direction and giving necessary instructions for the production of suitable films by an agency at government expense. That agency need not necessarily be a government agency?

A. No, only the Government must support it.

Q. Government must finance the production of such films?

A. That is what I mean.

Q. Have you gone up to Government with any definite proposals?

A. Not so far.

Q. And when you talk of Government financing such production, you mean the local government under which you have been working?

A. Yes.

Written Statement of Mr. A. NARAYANAN of Narayanan & Co., Film Renters, Madras, dated the 5th January 1928.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. My experience of Cinema Industry dates from 1921. I have been and am a Importer, Renter, Exhibitor, and Producer of Cinema Films.

GENERAL.

2. (a) My answer refers to the audience in the City of Madras and also of Calicut, Kumbakonam, Bangalore and Madurai where I was running cinemas (and am still connected at Madurai and Madras) and also to the various maffusil towns in the Madras Presidency where there are cinemas.

Indians of educated class rarely attend cinemas regularly. They prefer pictures of literary interest. Their attendance may be said to be slightly on the increase.

Semi-literate and middle class people frequent cinemas more often. The majority of any cinema audience consists of them.

Completely illiterate classes attend cinemas only very occasionally.

(b) When mythological Indian pictures are screened the composition of the audience is roughly as follows:—

25 per cent. ladies.

60 per cent. poorer classes, especially wage earners.

15 per cent. literate people.

When it is a serial then:—

70 per cent. wage earners.

20 per cent. middle class people.

10 per cent. rich and literate Gentries.

When it is a picturisation of a famous literary work or when it is a high class feature programme then:—

50 per cent. wage earners.

35 per cent. middle class people and students.

15 per cent. the rich and the literates.

(c) Children under fourteen rarely visit cinemas. The proportion will roughly be 5 per cent. There is however a large number of adolescents of impressionable age and the percentage of their attendance will be between 30 to 40 per cent.

PART I.

3. Hindu mythological films are most popular with our audience in the maffusil stations. In cities Indian social pictures depicting present day life are growing more popular than religious and mythological films.

4. Exhibitors are catering as best they could under the present circumstances; but there is a lot of improvement to be made on the following points:—

- (1) Presentation. (2) Subjects of popular appeal especially to the audience of the particular locality. (3) Practical Technical Knowledge of the Industry, machinery, etc. (4) Proper supply of suitable pictures in good condition. (5) Comforts to Patrons. (6) Local vernacular language.

5. Good Indian films are not as readily available as foreign films. Many are not of good technique and photography, but still some of them are very popular.

It is not so very profitable to run an Indian film as at first sight it appears to be. Generally it is more profitable to run an American film; but there have been a few rare cases of very successful Indian films which have drawn record business; especially Krishna-Janma and Prahlada of the Hindustan Film Company, Pathi-bakthi of Messrs. Madan Theatres Limited, Gulebakavali of the Kohinoor Film Company, and Aladdin of the Imperial Film Company.

6. (a) Certainly and for very obvious reasons. But to make them more popular it is absolutely essential that film producers should pay more serious thought and attention to details such as the correct delineation of dress and customs and manners and to follow closely the mythological version and introduce local vernacular titles to be easily understood in each province and should also pay attention to the adequate supply to exhibitor of proper advertising materials as is given by Foreign Companies by way of press sheets campaign book, Posters, Blocks, etc., for effective publicity.

(b) Educated classes will like society dramas and picturisation of famous literary works, and the illiterate or rather the semi-literate classes mythological subjects and easily followable stories with a good ending.

7. There are no Regimental Cinemas in Southern India except one in Wellington (Nilgiris). There was one at Bangalore but now it is not working. The British troops in Bangalore, Madras and Secunderabad generally visit only high class feature Theatres in their town. They prefer always sensational dramas and serials with a lot of fighting and boxing and thrills. The Indian troops rarely attend cinemas as they are generally out of bounds and cannot attend except with special permission. As regards suitability good Indian Mythological Films of which the subject is well-known, social pictures with a good moral; foreign pictures of the type of Damaged Goods and war features relating to the Heroic exploits of any famous soldier and pictures of these types will be both suitable and useful. However the question of availability of suitable films for troops do not raise in the absence of Regimental Cinemas. In this connection I would beg to point out, that a departmental Government organisation of the type now existing in United States of America will not only be profitable for the Government but also be of very great use to them.

8. (a) No. The present condition is not satisfactory but with time it is bound to improve but not so rapidly as in America, but only very slowly on account of the various obstacles.

(b) The most serious obstacle is the diversity of language. (1) A common language is the most important thing. An enforcement of compulsory education by Government and establishment of a common language for India will be of very great help. (2) Total prohibition throughout India will help the industry to a large extent. More money will be available for this simple and useful form of amusement, recreation and education. One of the main reasons for the great advance of America in Cinema Industry may be said to be the abolition of the free traffic in liquor so that wage earners and others could turn their attention to the useful recreation of attending cinemas. (3) An organisation like the Will Hays Organisation in America for the co-ordination of the various departments of Film Industry, which

will not only exercise a general control over Producers, Distributors and Exhibitors for the benefit of the industry and the safeguard of the interests of the industry in India and outside as is done by the cinema section of the Department of Commerce in United States of America by collecting Statistics, etc. The cinemas should also be popularised by special national weeks celebration with the co-operation of the Government and the municipal and local institutions and newspapers. The expenses of this organisation can be met by a compulsory contribution by the Renters, Producers and Exhibitors and by setting aside a portion of the amounts collected by way of entertainment tax or by a subsidy by the Government. Such an organisation is not only a necessity to the Government but is advantageous financially and to the general improvement of the trade of the country. (4) The creation of a greater Home Market by the erection of new cinemas by Government or by the Municipal and other local authorities and letting them out to private persons on reasonable rents. One of the main reasons for the dwindling in of the number of cinemas in these parts is the exorbitant rent paid to theatres. (5) The erection of Government Studios in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras at a cost each not exceeding 3 to 4 lakhs, which will facilitate even men of very limited means to direct their efforts towards the production of pictures. The initial investment can be realised within a period of seven to ten years as is the case with the Canadian Government Studio at Ottawa. These studios will not be a drain on the Government but will certainly be profitable concerns as Government departments themselves are making a lot of films now-a-days. Further, good scope will be given by the several Railways in making their advertisement films and the Health Departments will avail themselves of the opportunity for making plenty of propaganda films. Private Film Companies also will be only too glad to profit by Government Studios in their efforts at producing pictures. These studios or a Central Government Organisation must also have the publicity section so that Lithograph posters, blocks, slides and other publicities can be made cheaper there and supplied to the various cinemas by Producers. (6) There must be registration of Renters, Producers and Exhibitors with a small fee and it must be compulsory to all film renters, exhibitors and producers to submit to the new organisation half yearly or yearly returns showing in prescribed forms the various details of their business so that valuable statistics will be available both for the Government and the trading public. This is sure to come if a "quota" is introduced. There must also be a standard form of contract between the renters and exhibitors for the supply of films to avoid disputes; and any disputes that arise must be referred for arbitration in the first instance to the new Central Organisation.

9. Good Indian Films are not still readily obtainable for exhibitors at reasonable hires. The special reason for this is the shortsightedness of the producers in every way. On account of the very limited market the producers desire to realise their investment as quick as possible. Another reason is that producers do not endeavour to create a market outside India even at least in countries where there are a large number of Indians settled like Ceylon, East and South Africa, Penang, Straits Settlements, etc. Most of the film producing companies have no proper system of distribution. Very few Indian Films have had efficient distribution at all.

The exhibitors too are to be blamed for their not being able to get films at reasonable prices. On account of inexperienced people and people of very limited means starting cinemas and their bad handling of films by inefficient operators with rotten third rate machinery, the films are being spoiled in majority of cases. Further cinema owners do not show proper returns for films owing to improper advertisement and lack of publicity supplied by the producers and hence the producers demand more hires which the poorer mofussil cinemas cannot afford to pay and as a final result good films are not easily available.

There has been an attempt at monopoly; but it will not and cannot succeed owing to the peculiarities of this industry.

10. Block and Blind booking do exist to a very small extent. The industry has not so much advanced and there is not the keen competition to warrant the introduction of this system. This will come when there are more cinemas and keener competition. First Run or Key Theatres is an outcome of the former system and when the former is not visibly in existence this problem does not arise.

The chief advantage of block booking for a cinema owner is that he is relieved of the botheration and worry of arranging for pictures; as his programmes are supplied by the distributor for a fairly long period—The advantage to the Distributor is that though he might get a little less on some of his pictures he is assured of a run for all his pictures and he is assured of an income for all his pictures whether good, bad or indifferent, so that what he losses on individual big pictures he gains by his small pictures which otherwise would have to remain idle. But there is a main disadvantage to the cinema owner which is not a negligible factor. Inferior pictures will be shoved on him and he is forced to screen the same much against his will as without running them he will not get the big pictures. The public in turn are forced to see bad pictures along with good pictures.

Further this block system is detrimental to the industry in general in as much as it leads to stifling the growth of small independent producers and distributors who are the backbone of the industry and the growth of the system of block booking naturally leads to an attempt at monopoly and the whole industry falling into the hands of the very small number of Producer--Distributor--Exhibitor Group and if this is allowed to grow unchecked it is fraught with grave consequences to the trade, the public and even to Government.

11. Exhibitors here have no sufficient facilities for previewing films. There are no trade papers worth mentioning and with any effective exhibitor circulation. There is no trade show system as is prevalent in England and America. These will come as a natural growth on the increase of cinemas and the prosperity of the industry.

12. Entertainments tax is a serious handicap to the exhibitor. It is a misnomer to think that the patron pays the tax and the exhibitor does not pay from his pocket. In America and in Canada they have realised the evil of this tax to the growth of the cinema industry and have repealed the same. It was first introduced as a war time measure and it has now been removed. The income from this source to the Government or the municipal bodies is very meagre and is not worth the trouble. Cinemas to-day are not so paying as they were before. The novelty has worn away. In Madras itself there has not been a growth in the number of cinemas but only a change in the management. Out of the nine cinemas four have changed hands owing to complete failure. Two are in the hands of the Official Assignee. To-day only two or three cinemas work profitably. Some barely meet their expenses and the others are working at a loss. 90 per cent. of the income of every cinema is derived from the lowest classes of admission, the two annas and four annas classes. The rich very rarely attend the cinemas. What little is left for a cinema owner after meeting the expenses is if to-day spent in improving the cinemas by affording better facilities to the patron, will go away for payment of the Entertainments Tax and the number of cinemas will gradually dwindle. Cinemas cannot thrive and improve unless a steadily increasing regular patronage is built up which will not be possible when the little money that is left for the improvement of the cinema is to be paid off as entertainments Tax. What the Government now gets by way of other taxes will also diminish with the decrease in the number of Cinemas.

A strenuous attempt is being made in England for the repeal of this tax and in the last Home Budget it was seriously proposed to remove this tax which ruins the most useful recreative and educative Industry. Film industry is a very useful one. It is the forerunner of trade, and in the best interests of the nation and her commerce and industries it should not be stifled. Moreover a tax based on income and not on profits is bad in

principle. Whether a Cinema owner works his cinema profitably or not he is made to pay and this is unjust.

13. The Present Customs Tariff of Cinema Films (Exposed Positives) is a loss to the Government and it hampers the growth and prosperity of the small cinemas. It is inequitable as a small Film Importer gets the worst of it whereas the Big Dealer goes scott-free. The cinemas in the mofussil depend for their regular programmes on cheap foreign serials usually supplied by importers of Second Hand Films. The man who imports a second hand serial has usually to pay £75 or about 350 Dollars (roughly Rs. 1,000) for the cost of the film and by way of duty he has to pay more than Rs. 1,000 nearly 100 per cent. and even more at times as duty is assessed on the length of the film. On the other hand a Big Firm which imports a 7 or 8 reel feature which generally costs from £300 to £400 and as the duty in this case also is based on the length of the film for an invoice value of nearly Rs. 4,000 to 5,000 he pays only Rs. 200 to 250 as duty whereas if it had been charged *ad valorem* he would have had to pay Rs. 400 to 500 calculating at 10 per cent. on the invoice value as is done now in Ceylon. By the adoption of the latter system the Government will derive more income, the inequity will be relieved and the small cinema owner will get his programmes cheaper and the defunct cinema will rise again.

14. An increased use of cinemas for educational purposes in schools will certainly help the growth of the industry as a taste for cinema will be created and there will be more persons employed in the industry. But how far this will be financially successful is doubtful. It is sure to provide work for many men. Except in schools for visual educational purposes there is no demand outside for these films.

15. Conditions are not very favourable for the growth of the industry on a large scale. There is no use of producing pictures when there are only 350 cinemas for the 350 millions of population, that is one cinema for every million of the population, whereas from a study of the table attached to this you will realise the huge difference between this country and the other countries, with regard to the proportion of the number of cinemas in relation to the population. Unless the number of cinemas is increased there is no scope for film industry on a large scale, though other factors such as talent, cheap labour, climatic conditions, scenery, etc., are very favourable.

16. There are not enough qualified men to produce competitive pictures of international exhibition value. Even if such pictures are produced they cannot be released in England, Germany or America the most lucrative of territories. India for the present must be content with the development of her home market and if her home market is enlarged by an addition to the number of cinemas then we can dictate to America or other foreign countries as Germany did to America with her Kontingent system till now and very lately only last month with her revocation of the Kontingent system and the introduction of a measure that only a total of 270 foreign pictures can be released in Germany for a year.

In 1921 the percentage of hires paid by cinemas for Indian Films was only 10 per cent., but to-day it has advanced to 40 per cent., and I feel confident that with the growth of time and better perfection all round the percentage will increase more and more, and the foreign films will have very limited market. The Government can help Indian Film Industry by deputing at least 3 young men in the first year who have already got experience to foreign countries to receive training in the three departments of the Industry, Production, Distribution and Exhibition.

17. Sufficient capital will not be easily forthcoming for this industry owing to the failures of some prominent men in each Presidency Town.

18. The introduction of the Quota System by which a certain percentage of films shown in Indian Cinemas must be Indian Films on the same lines as the British Films Bill recently passed in England, will be a great incentive for Production and also for Capital to come forth as is now the case in England where every film issue is oversubscribed and almost every new issue is at a premium. But this has its own drawbacks and they must

also be seriously considered lest the very object for which the legislation is passed is not frustrated.

19. Compared to other countries the cost of Film Production in India is low. But of late with the introduction of the Star system the cost of production is showing a decided tendency to go up, rather beyond proportion. While comparing with our limited home market and the poor returns the cost of production is not proportionately low as at first sight it looks.

20. My proposals involve an initial expense of about Rs. 30 lakhs.

Rs. 10 lakhs for three Government Studios.

Rs. 10 lakhs for building theatres.

Rs. 5 lakhs the interest on which will be the Government portion of the subsidy for the new organisation modelled on The Will Hays Organisation of United States of America, or a separate section, Department of Commerce.

Rs. 5 lakhs for scholarship and deputation expenses. Except the last two items of Rs. 5 lakhs each the first two items of Rs. 20 lakhs will not only bring in more interest than the rate at which the Government is able to raise the funds, but within a period of 7 to 10 years be redeemable and will be a source of profit to the Government in other ways also.

21. As regards sources from which this expenditure is to be met the Government can collect a fee of Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 on every reel of foreign film imported into the country or a fee from the exhibitor of one rupee for every reel of foreign film he exhibits on the screen.

22. The proposal in my opinion is unsound. Film Industry should not be made into a State Monopoly. There is no parallel to this in any other country except in Bolshevik Russia. But even they after 7 years of working have realised the unsoundness of it and are leaving the idea of propaganda for business for profits sake. A propaganda film will never be acceptable however artistically perfect it may be. It has been acclaimed that the Russian Film Potemkin is the most perfect film ever produced. Still it was a failure when screened in London, Berlin, Paris and New York only recently. The history of U. F. A. the biggest Film Company in Europe and its decline after the controlling interest was purchased by a few persons with monarchist tendencies will serve as another instance to prove that this industry must mainly be one of amusement and recreation and the introduction of propaganda will ruin it.

Films of the British Commonwealth.

22. It is desirable that India should participate in the policy outlined in the resolution of the Imperial Conference. It will certainly assist British Film industry by providing an outlet for their productions and in relieving England's unemployment problem to some extent.

But as regards improving the standards of western films shown in India, I am doubtful. There are as many English films as there are American which have all the supposed bad characteristics usually attributed to American films.

English Films are not produced with a view to make the Indian or the Dominion people understand Englishmen better. They are produced with a view to profit and films produced with any other aim in view apart from that of profit will be financially a failure and no English Film producing company at the present state of theirs will risk it.

Like Australia we may pass a legislation that 25 per cent. of the films shown in India must be Empire films of which 15 per cent. must be Indian films (provided we clearly define what constitutes an Indian Film).

23. (a) Like what they have done in Canada with the Seeing Canada series, a series of single reel films depicting the important places and events of importance in Canada, Indian Government can produce a similar series about ourselves and arrange for the mutual distribution of the Seeing Canada series in India and Indian series in Canada, and similar arrangements can

be made with other countries of the British Commonwealth on a reciprocal basis.

(b) The other Governments must be forced to release one picture of ours in their country for every picture of theirs that we release in this country.

PART II.

24. (a) Not so far as I am aware of.

(b) I do not think so.

(c) Films with a strong sex element and films dwelling too much on crime and especially the success of crime in the end in the story will leave a strong effect on young impressionable minds. But now-a-days owing to the agitation against American films in many countries for establishing a home industry, American producing companies pay very great care about the quality of pictures they export with the result that bad films rarely come here.

(d) Censorship is adequate both with regard to sex films and crime films. (Personal experience. Love Slave).

(e) Not so far as I know.

25. I think it is not necessary so far as India is concerned.

26. (a) Yes.

(b) The Virgin of Stamboul at Elphistone Theatre. It wounded the feelings of Mohammadans.

27. (a) Not so far as I know. The cinema generally is forgotten when man leaves the cinema and hence no undesirable results follow.

(b) Yes. The Missionaries Film photographed by Mr. Prakasa, Madras, and exhibited in England.

28. I do not think that any cinema film had a bad effect within my knowledge.

29. Yes, but difficult to be enforced.

30. Children are not to be prohibited from attending cinemas.

31. (a) Yes.

32. I am satisfied with the system of censorship now in Madras and my only complaint is against the unusually long time it takes to get the film examined by the censors and the issue of the Censor Certificate.

My suggestion is that there should be a common place, The Board of Censors Room with a Projector installed so that when a film is to be censored it can be taken there and on payment of a reasonable fee for the use of the machine the film can be shown to the censors. The cost of the installation will not exceed Rs. 1,000 and it can be easily realised within a short time. Further if a special officer of the Department is deputed to supervise and inspect the film the Government will make some money instead of not losing as they do at present. All films can be passed by the Inspector, or the Special Officer and in case of disputed films they can be referred to the Special Board of Honorary Censors. The fees of Rs. 5 a reel that we now pay for censoring will then be a source of profit to the Government. This will also help the trade as films will be censored quicker, and many films which are now sent to Bombay and Calcutta for being censored will then be censored in Madras.

33. (a)—(c) Yes.

34. No. It is advisable for the Provincial Boards to continue.

(1) Delay in sending film to be examined by the Central Board.

(2) Yes.

(3) and (4) A central Board may be constituted situated in Calcutta or Bombay as the Final Appellate authority from the decisions of the Provincial Boards and to decide whether a film is suitable for a particular Presidency or not.

(d) By a levy of a fee on films submitted for censoring.

35. (a) Not very satisfactory.

(b) Yes. The qualifications are that he must be well up in the tradekeep himself informed of the various films that are produced and imported, the list of films that are passed with 'A' and 'U' Certificates in England and in America, the opinion of the Better Films Committee in United States of America and England on the particular films submitted for censoring, and the latest films that are released in the leading countries by a study of the leading Trade Papers in the world, etc., and also possess a good knowledge of the practices of the trade in other countries.

36. (a) Yes.

36. (b) No. A bit difficult to get gentlemen of sufficient knowledge and suitable standing.

37. (a) Yes.

(b) I do not think, as the Commissioner of Police has got powers.

38. "Life of Lord Budha" in Burma.

39. Not to my knowledge.

40. No, I have not noticed any objectionable advertisement. Moreover recently the Commissioner of Police has passed an order that all slides and other advertisement matter shown on the screen must be submitted to him for approval with a view to prevent objectionable advertisements.

41. Yes. A good improvement.

42. When the trade itself is disorganised without organisation, the Government cannot expect much by way of co-operation unless the trade is organised.

43. (a) Yes.

(b) So that films do not pass uncensored.

(c) The present system by which every film that is imported and produced though they are copies of the same film must be examined by the Censors is unnecessary, and in cases where the same film is imported the certificate may be issued without examination on receiving the necessary fees.

44. The formation of Better Films Committee.

45. (a) No necessity if the new organisation is set up, as modelled on The Will Hays organisation.

(b) Preferable.

World's Distribution of Cinemas.

There are 551,056 cinemas in the world of which 20,500 are situated in the United States; more than the number in the whole of the Continent of Europe.

The British Empire with a population of 442,000,000 people, only possess 6,730 picture theatres, of which 3,760 are in Great Britain.

The distribution of picture theatres in the British Empire, as compared with the United States, is given as follows:—

	Population.	Theatre.	No. of persons per theatre.
United States	117,000,000	20,500	5,756
Great Britain and Ireland	47,000,000	3,760	12,500
Canada	9,000,000	1,000	99,000
Australia	6,800,000	1,500	4,533
India	320,000,000	320	1,000,000
South Africa	60,000,000	150	400,000

It will thus be seen that, averaging out the figures for the British Empire there are only 6,730 theatres serving 442,000,000 of persons, or one theatre for every 65,670 inhabitants.

Australian Record.

The remarkable fact emerges that the country with the largest number of theatres on the relative basis of population in Australia, where there is one theatre for every 4,533 of the population, as against every 5,756 persons in America.

Figures supplied by the department of Commerce in Washington give the following additional information concerning the distribution of picture theatres throughout the World:—

United States	20,500
Europe	19,778
Far East	3,692
Latin America	1,982
Africa	490
Near East	69

According to the film Year Book, in the Far East there are 1,781 theatres, of which Japan possesses 1,050.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. A. NARAYANAN of Narayanan & Co., Film Renters, Madras, on Tuesday, the 10th January 1928.**

Chairman: Mr. Narayan, you are settled in Madras?

A. Yes.

Q. And what you know of the film industry and trade is from experience acquired in Madras?

A. In Bombay and Madras.

Q. You were also in Bombay?

A. In 1920-22 I was in Bombay.

Q. What were you doing there?

A. I was manager of a concern, K. D. Bros. They were the biggest importers of films in India.

Q. Are they still working?

A. No, it failed and had liabilities of nearly 18 lakhs of rupees.

Q. And then you came to Madras? What is this Narayan and Co.?

A. Importers of films.

Q. How many partners are there?

A. I am the sole proprietor—owner and manager.

Q. Have you got any theatres of your own?

A. No, I am working. I was running a cinema myself in 1924-25 in Triplicane. It failed and now I am running it in partnership with another gentleman and it is now working well. The Cinema Popular, Triplicane High Road.

Q. There are 9 cinemas in the town?

A. Yes.

Q. Do they frequently change hands?

A. Of late they have done so very often. I am talking of 1924-27. There was the Empire Cinema—it changed hands about 3 or 4 times—in Broadway; it is closed now. There was an Empire Cinema in Davidson Street, just

opposite the University students' home. It has changed hands two or three times in the past two or three years. It is now closed.

Q. So there were ten cinemas.

A. No, there were 9. The addition of the Kinema Central brings it up to 9.

Q. How many years have you had these 9 cinemas here?

A. Since last year, there has been only 8 cinemas, till this Kinema Central was opened.

Q. What about the Empire?

A. It failed in 1925.

Q. So that there were 9 till 1925.

A. Yes.

Q. For how many years have 9 cinemas been in existence in Madras?

A. It is only six months that 9 cinemas have been in existence.

Q. But there were 9 in 1925. In 1926 it came down to 8. Now it has gone up again to 9. And you say all these cinemas are changing hands frequently?

A. Not exactly, very frequently. But not specially warned to continue a permanence of business just like Madans or Wellington.

Q. But why does it change hands? You say the Empire Cinema failed.

A. The Imperial Cinema, Triplicane, which I was running, failed.

Q. And you have now started it in Triplicane High Road and there are these three theatres of Venkiah which have gone into the hands of the official assignee.

A. The official assignee himself is conducting the cinema which he has leased from them.

Q. Then the other thing about this Crown cinema and the Liberty cinema. They have changed hands.

A. The Liberty has gone into the hands of the official assignee.

Q. Who does it belong to?

A. To Mr. P. K. Sarma. It went smash more than two years ago. The Receiver was conducting it. Now for the last two years the official assignee is conducting it. The Crown cinema went into the hands of the official assignee and he sold it for about a lakh and 50 thousand.

Q. I mean the same man has not been conducting a cinema in the same place for any length of time?

A. In most of these cases.

Q. What is the reason for that?

A. The difficulty was to get a proper supply of pictures. The second was the very high rentals which we had to pay in those days and the third thing—now there is a distinct change in the whole thing in Madras cinemas because of Madans trying to monopolise theatres in Madras, which has been a good thing for independent small people like ourselves. For instance, in Mount Road there were four different cinemas formerly, all of them were trying to get the best films and hire us—and each theatre was catering to the same kind of shows and serials were being shown at the Elphinstone, the Gaiety and the Wellington. But now, since Madans have taken over these three theatres, there is no competition that side and we are now in a very much better position. We can practically dictate to the producers to supply the pictures at any price we like. So if they want a film for Madras city they must come to us.

Q. You mean Indian producers?

A. Indian and English.

Q. You mean Madans' acquisition of the three theatres here has been an advantage to the small independent people in the trade.

- A. Yes, because if there had been three independent people, all of us would have been competing for the same pictures. It would have been a case of the survival of the fittest.
- Q. You mean to say these people had to part with the business in these cases because they were not able to make sufficient profit?
- A. I lost about Rs. 25,000 in one theatre.
- Q. How did you lose Rs. 25,000?
- A. Because daily we must get—we have an expenditure of Rs. 100. If any day we get less than Rs. 100, it is a loss. Every day there is a loss of Rs. 40 or so.
- Q. Did the theatre belong to you, or did you run it?
- A. I ran the theatre at an exorbitant rent. But now I have made a separate arrangement. I am getting it now on the percentage basis. Formerly I was paying Rs. 600 rent. Now, I get it on a 16 per cent. basis.
- Q. Now is this the case with other people also?
- A. This is unique. There is no such arrangement with other people.
- Q. In the other cases where Indian exhibitors do business, do they own the theatre or do they rent the theatre?
- A. It is always 90 per cent. rented theatres. And the rent is something abnormal. Out of all proportion to the comforts that are given and out of all proportion to the income that is earned.
- Q. You think, therefore, that the exhibitors are renting theatres at a profit?
- A. Yes. And, but for Madan's policy, it would be a question of many businesses in Madras going down.
- Q. If they take any and every picture for exhibition?
- A. If they take up the best pictures from outside instead of confining themselves to their own pictures.
- Q. But so far as western pictures are concerned, have they not entered into an exclusive contract with the best producers in the world?
- A. But Mandas' monopoly has not affected the trade except the renters. So far as the exhibitors are concerned, it has not affected us at all, nor affected any exhibitor in any part of India. It has only affected the renters, such as the Universal, Pathes, etc., these big people, because formerly they were able to supply the various theatres; there was competition but on account of these people acquiring these theatres, now there is no competition.
- Q. Therefore film renters have not been able to hire out their films at an advantage?
- A. Yes. So that the acquisition of theatres by Madans has fallen on the renters, not on the exhibitors. On the other hand, it is a boon for small Indian exhibitors. So far as I could understand, Madans' idea in trying to acquire theatres has been to force the hands of the Universal to purchase their theatres at a profit.
- Q. Now we want to know really what are the circumstances. You think that the chances are good for the exhibitor now to flourish hereafter in Madras?
- A. We cannot be quite sure of that. It all depends on local conditions.
- Q. Is there anyone who has really made a good profit as an exhibitor in the cinema business in Madras?—who has done good business?
- A. A fairly steady business we can mention is the Wellington. But we cannot take the present-day conditions. Formerly they were not making so much money as they are making now. Now, of course, every cinema is running profitably.
- Q. You are not losing in the way in which you used to?
- A. No.
- Q. Apart from this rental arrangement, does that hold good for cinemas which are paying fixed rent?

- A. The Liberty is paying Rs. 1,000 a month. The Kinema Central were ~~renting~~ our theatres.
- Q. I should like to know how long they have been exhibiting Indian films?
- A. In these three cinemas throughout the year they exhibit Indian films. The Majestic, Central, and our own Cinema Popular exhibit Indian pictures as a rule as part of their programme. And only during the rainy season, monsoon time, we put on serials.
- Q. In other seasons you put on only Indian pictures?
- A. Almost always. Except when we get some very good pictures. Then we know it will run at a profit and we put it on.
- Q. One is in Triplicane, one is in.....Street, and the other is in.....?
- A. The Majestic is in Main Street. It is close to the Crown. It was formerly called the Grand Theatre.
- Q. The Crown people told us when we visited it that they do not exhibit Indian films because they say they don't draw houses. So also the Liberty people. They say they don't rent Indian films.
- A. Well, there is a settled policy and programme for each theatre. The Liberty will draw a crowd only when they put on sensational serials. The Crown was getting good houses, but it has gone off because, so far as I can understand, they are not getting the proper kind of films which the audience in that locality want. The Majestic always get a steady house, whatever Indian films they put on, good, bad or indifferent, and if the Majestic puts on a serial and the Liberty puts on Indian films, both will suffer, because they have established a reputation for a particular kind of films and a particular set of audience go to them.
- Q. So the Crown and the Liberty do not show Indian films?
- A. The Crown shows Indian films but not exactly the type of films which will catch in Madras. They put on some Bengal pictures which were produced in Calcutta. It may run for 18 and 19 weeks in Calcutta but it cannot be expected to run so well in Madras.
- Q. Why is that?
- A. It is due to people in this place liking pictures with a local appeal.
- Q. You mean to say they prefer Bombay to Bengal?
- A. In Madras they prefer Bombay to Bengal. There is one Calcutta picture "Pati Bhakti" which has gone well in Madras. But these pictures are not much liked by the people as a rule.
- Q. Don't Madans show some Bengal productions?
- A. They showed Durga..... It has established a very good record in Calcutta but not here.
- Q. Of course, it has also been the evidence of some other people in other parts—do you think that Madras and Bombay are more similar in the matter of dress and other things?
- A. I think it is because Bombay pictures have been coming to Madras for a long while and people are more accustomed to them.
- Q. You mean Bombay films have established a reputation?
- A. They have produced pictures which have an appeal for southern India. They produce mythological pictures.....
- Q. Bengal pictures also deal with mythological subjects?
- A. Not much.
- Q. But there are some?
- A. They have got their "Krishna Avatar" and other pictures and they go well.
- Q. I thought you were making a difference.....
- A. I am talking of social pictures.
- Q. So far as mythological or religious pictures are concerned, Madras shows no preference either for Bombay or Bengal?

A. No, not much preference.

Q. But in the case of social dramas, Madras shows a preference for Bombay pictures?

A. Yes. Our industry is now advancing on the star system. Just as when they have stars like Norma Talmadge or Eddie Polo, people go in large numbers, so also when Miss Sulochana and stars of that type appear people go in large numbers.

Q. So that Bombay stars have got a name here?

A. Yes.

Q. I notice in your answer you refer to ladies being present—I suppose you refer to Indian ladies.

A. Yes.

Q. When mythological Indian pictures are shown, but they do not appear when other pictures are shown?

A. They are present, but only in a negligible number.

Q. But when mythological or religious subjects are shown they are present in large numbers?

A. Yes.

Q. Otherwise they do not get the benefit of cinema going?

A. They understand the story and so they go there, but in the case of the social pictures they do not understand the story.

Q. You have sent us a careful memorandum and you have followed facts and figures. Is there any material from which we can get the cinema-going population per day in India?

A. There is nothing at all now.

Q. There is no way of finding out in India to-day what the number of the cinema-going public is except where an amusement tax is levied perhaps?

A. Even then it is not possible unless the management of each cinema co-operates.

Q. The trade has got no index or figures to show you how many people attend the cinema? I see in the Film Gazette of America they say that 7 millions of people attend a day. Is there any way of finding out similar information for India?

A. It can be done if we insist.....

Q. You mean if some steps are taken, and I see you have suggested some steps being taken that every exhibitor furnishes a return?

A. It is to the interest of Government and the interest of the trade itself

Q. Every exhibitor should be under a license?

A. Yes.

Q. He is already under a license?

A. Yes, so far as it is a public place of amusement.

Q. You say that a condition should be imported in the license that he should furnish a half-yearly or a yearly return of attendance at his cinema. Is that your point?

A. If the entertainment tax is going to come he has got to furnish it.

Q. Even then you do not tax the 4 anna or 2 anna people. Owing to that in Bombay we were unable to get satisfactory figures of attendance.

A. He has got to fill up some form, just as we are sending our handbills and notices to the Commissioner of Police.....

Q. Is it possible to insist upon the exhibitor submitting returns?

A. It is a very easy affair and it would involve no hardship at all because it can be done like this. The tickets can be supplied by Government, instead of each people printing their tickets locally from some place.

Q. If he sends a return it is enough, I suppose, why should you get tickets printed by Government.

A. But what guarantee is there that the return are proper? Without proper statistics it will lead us to false conclusions.

Q. You have not travelled in America?

A. No.

Q. You do not know how they get their figures there?

A. No, but I can ascertain by writing to somebody there.

Q. That we can do ourselves. What is the average seating capacity of a theatre in India?

A. The trouble with regard to almost every theatre in Madras and almost every theatre in the mofussal, and the majority of theatres in India is this: they have not been constructed with a view to start a cinema there. They have all been drama theatres and they are now converted into cinemas.

Q. In fact, your Cinema Central was built for a public meeting hall and they have now converted it into a cinema.

A. Yes. If some have got a big capacity, even then people cannot see the pictures because of some pillars and beams standing in the middle.

Q. You have suggested in your memorandum that more theatres should be brought into existence preferably by Government and local authorities?

A. Yes.

Q. And they may be rented to exhibitors. Do you think it will be a paying proposition?

A. Yes. It is the first thing that must precede everything else, because there is no use of producing films and spoiling the industry itself as there are only 350 theatres out of which 90 belong to Madras and only a balance of 260 theatres are left. There are already producing companies in Bombay and Calcutta for these theatres and they can supply more pictures if there is more demand. Instead of putting money in the film industry or trying to develop it on a large scale we can quite well set apart a few lakhs of rupees and build some theatres in the mofussal and that will create a home market. And a home market is much more important for the Indian film industry or for any industry for the matter of that before we can think of other markets, because if we build more theatres there will be more production.

Q. If you build more theatres it will be an incentive to produce more films?

A. Yes.

Q. We have been told that it is no use attempting ambitious pictures?

A. No. In the mofussal you can build a more convenient theatre than any theatre in Madras and you can furnish it, and just as the department of Industries are giving small loans for pumping and boring, etc., similarly this money can be recovered in instalments, it won't be lost because it will be a sort of first mortgage on the property.

Mr. Green: Where are these theatres to be put up, in what kinds of cities?

A. It must be based on the population, on the trade of the particular place, on the floating population that comes and goes and so on.

Q. Can you say straight off, "here is a town in which you can put up a theatre"?

A. I can.

Q. How many?

A. I can tell you of southern India. A place like Trichinopoly which is the second biggest place in this Presidency did not have a cinema at all. One was only recently started.

Q. What is its population?

A. I do not remember. More than a lakh.

Chairman: Along with Srirangam it ought to be much more?

A. Yes. It is having a cinema only for the last 1½ months.

Mr. Green: It is not necessary for Government to build one there?

A. The Municipality there has put up a dramatic theatre and they are making very good money out of it. They invested about Rs. 35,000 on the building and they are getting a return of Rs. 1,000 a month.

Chairman: Do you know of any other municipalities which have gone in for theatre building?

A. No, except some public town halls, I am running a cinema in Madura and I have rented the town hall for that purpose.

Q. Are there any permanent cinemas in Madura?

A. Yes, there are 3 cinemas in Madura.

Q. You think more theatres are essential for the growth of the industry?

A. I consider that is the most important.

Q. And you do not want ambitious looking theatres?

A. No. For Rs. 10,000 you can put up a much better show than many of the cinemas which you have got in the Madras city itself. Government will be able to borrow at 4 or 5 per cent. and they can loan it at 9 per cent. and it will be a boon to the cinema people. I can tell you of instances of cinemas paying Rs. 600 and Rs. 700 who come and tell us, "Please give us your films cheap. I am losing and I may have to close down".

Q. You think they charge exorbitant prices?

A. Yes.

Q. You say that good Indian films are not readily available now, but if you increase the number of theatres it will be more difficult to get Indian films.

A. It will automatically adjust itself. Along with that, with the establishment of the three provincial studios which I have taken the liberty to suggest, it will be possible for a small man with a capital of Rs. 5,000 or Rs. 6,000 to produce a picture locally.

Q. You want Government to establish studios in three different places?

A. Yes.

Q. What will be the use of the studio? You think Government should produce their own propaganda films there?

A. The use of the studio will be like this. I am talking of the example of Canada. There is a Government studio at Ottawa in Canada.....

Q. Only one?

A. So far as I could understand, there is only one. There are a lot of these small companies, small people who cannot afford to invest in a studio themselves. They take their own actors, etc., there and produce their own pictures. Again, the Canadian Government is using their studio for producing pictures to develop trade, commerce, and also to attract travellers to go there by means of the "See Canada" series. They advertise their country in that way, and there will be a lot of these Government departments who want to make films. For instance, there is the health department. Mr. Raghavendra Rao supplied us with one reel of film given to him by the Rockefeller Institute in regard to the hookworm disease. We showed it in our cinema and it was very much appreciated.

Q. Such things can be produced in these studios?

A. Yes.

Q. Don't you think there will be chances of conflict and all that? Supposing Government want to produce films when other people want to?

A. It should be used by the public only after Government work is over.

Q. Where did you get all this information about Canada from? I have not been able to get at it.

A. We get it regularly in the trade papers and we are following it regularly. But for detailed information you are in a much better position than myself.

Q. You think the Canadian Government can supply us with that information?

A. Yes. From the balance sheet of that studio which is published in some of the trade papers it was found that it was working very profitably.

Q. Have you got it with you?

A. I may be able to find it, it will take some time.

Q. If you come across it please let us have particulars and we shall be obliged to you. You think Indian productions are lacking in many particulars which require improvement?

A. Yes.

Q. And the trade itself is not interested in improving it because they want quick returns as you put it?

A. Yes. With the growth of cinemas, the growth of tone in the industry and everything else will come.

Q. What do you advocate? You want people to be sent abroad to learn the art and then be available here.....

A. Learn the art—it is a question of the right sort of man being sent who will be able to learn the thing. With the few facilities that will be afforded to him, he must be clever enough to learn it.

Q. What do you suggest in order to improve the class of production?

A. It is the intensive application and desire of knowledge on the part of the man, no amount of spoon feeding will improve.

Q. You make a novel suggestion that there should be a cinema agency like the Will Hays organisation. That is a private organisation?

A. Yes.

Q. The trade itself is doing it?

A. Yes, but for India of course it is not like that. We can have, just as they have in New York, a cinema section in the department of Commerce for which the Government there contributed 300,000 dollars or so.

Q. You want a department of cinema to be attached to the Commerce department?

A. Yes.

Q. So that it may give guidance to the industry and the trade?

A. Yes. As a matter of fact, renters are not able to get a list of cinemas throughout India. If we want to have a mailing list we are unable to get one. I think the information is available with the Electrical Inspector to the Government, but if we write to him he does not reply.

Q. The trade does not know how many cinemas there are in India?

A. Yes.

Q. There is no information available for that purpose?

A. The information is available with the Electrical Inspector of the Government of every province.

Q. It is not available in a ready form?

A. Yes.

Q. We found difficulty also in getting information about it. You would require a cinema department attached to the Central Government?

A. Yes.

Q. With an advisory board?

A. Not much of advisory is necessary.

Q. What will be the functions of that department?

A. To safeguard the interests of the Indian film industry, to collect statistics about what is happening in other countries, the restrictions which other countries put on the exportation of Indian films, proper distribution of Government pictures which Government produce here and so on.

Q. It will co-ordinate the work of the trade and the Government activities in that direction, and it will guide its future?

A. Much better than a Government department would be a non-official organisation like the Will Hays organisation.

Q. Do you think it can come into existence?

A. Yes, it can come into existence with a start from the Government side first. That will guide public opinion.

Q. We are not in America where the citizens are conscious of their rights and duties.

A. On account of the agitation in other countries against American films, this Will Hays organisation has insisted that not one bad picture should go out of America.

Q. You say that organisation, after it has come into existence, is making an effort to improve productions in America?

A. Yes.

Q. It is responding to public criticism in other parts of the world?

A. Yes, and protecting the American film industry. There was some film called "The Temple of Shadow" or something of that kind, which was shown in Delhi. An Indian film company pirated certain portions of that film and introduced it in their own film. It was reported to America and they have taken action. No film can be produced without first submitting the scenario to them.

Q. Will you be content to leave it to the trade to get up that organisation or do you want Government to do it?

A. You give us the start.

Q. I can understand your suggestion that Government should start a cinema department in its Commerce department, but you seem to give it up and you want a private organisation.

A. There are advantages in a private organisation which are lacking in a Government department.

Q. Which is it you advocate?

A. My statement may be paradoxical, but I would like a private organisation, but if it is not possible under present conditions of trade because they do not co-operate and all that.....

Q. Probably you want Government guidance and a private board to be established by Government, that is your idea?

A. Probably.

Q. Private board to be established to advise on the cinema industry?

A. With an ultimate aim on the part of Government to leave it in the hands of a private organisation when the trade has understood its advantages.

Q. You want an advisory board with Government in the first instance to take action, or do you want Government to leave the whole execution of the policy to the private board?

A. Government can constitute an advisory board first, and then when the trade itself has understood the advantages of such an organisation Government will leave it to them.

Q. You have suggested many remedies as to how best to improve the film industry. I do not think I need trouble you. You say foreign films are very cheap?

A. Yes.

Q. Most of them are like that?

A. Yes.

Q. Very few costly films do come here?

A. They can afford to give it to us at any price they choose—even the most costly films.

Q. It is only extra profit to them?

A. Yes.

Q. And therefore you are able to get foreign films cheap?

A. Yes.

Q. That is your experience as an importer?

A. Yes.

Q. You yourself import and you say it is much cheaper to buy foreign films than to buy Indian films?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: You are not referring to special features?

A. Even special features are much cheaper than these costly Indian films.

Q. Like "Ben Hur"? Is that cheaper than Indian films?

A. Considering the cost of production of an Indian film in India, I think, it is much cheaper to import a film like "Ben Hur".

Chairman: The bulk of western films are much cheaper than Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. As a man who exhibits and imports?

A. As a man who produces films, as a man who imports films, who purchases from other people and sub-hires pictures for the Madras Presidency I say that.

Q. You are able to get western films, the bulk of them, at much cheaper rates than Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. I only want to know if there is unfair competition of western films with Indian productions. They are able to dump them here at cheaper prices?

A. They do not exactly compete with us like that. I cannot call it unfair competition.

Q. Then what do you call it? If foreign goods are had here cheaper than locally made goods, that is unfair competition?

A. They are not doing it purposely with a view to killing our industry.

Q. They may not do it purposely, but, however, that is the fact.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think that these cheap western films can be replaced by Indian films if they are properly produced?

A. Not completely.

Q. But to a fair extent?

A. Yes, they will replace them.

Q. And it will be to the advantage of the country?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. And much of the complaint now made about the demoralising effect of western films will disappear if that is done?

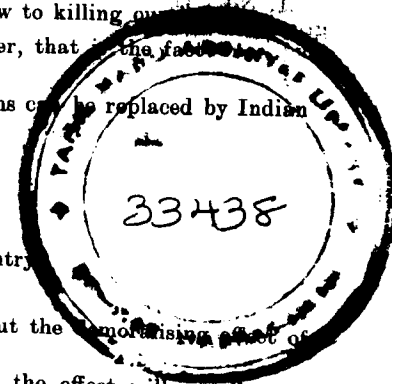
A. Yes, when the films themselves disappear, the effect will equally disappear. But I do not believe that western films demoralise.

Q. Those people who complain—they complain about these cheap classes of pictures.

A. I got to a cricket match and see Hobbs and Sutcliffe playing. Every spectator who is there cannot expect to become a Hobbs or a Sutcliffe. We forget all about the thing immediately after the match is over, because we have got our own worries to attend to. The cinema is purely for amusement and so long as you are in the cinema you see it and enjoy it and immediately you come out of it you forget it. Probably one or two people.....

Q. Just as you enjoy a good meal in the day and then forget it, so you enjoy a good cinema and then when you come out of it you forget it?

A. Yes, that is my impression.



303

4. It is not at all felt at present but this evil will be felt after 2 years. It is already being felt in Madras city with regard to the blind and block booking of Indian productions, because formerly only the Cinema Majestic

used to show Indian films. Now there are others. They are all trying to compete for Indian pictures, and there being so many competitors they will try to screw people.

Q. But if more producing companies come forward the difficulty will disappear.

A. Yes, it will disappear.

Q. So the remedy is to increase the number of producing companies.

A. Without prejudice to my first statement the first necessity for India is more theatres, more of a home market.

Q. Do you consider that the films now produced will be acceptable in the Straits Settlements and other places—Indian films?

A. Certainly. It has been tried and has been found practicable. In East Africa there are no theatres now. There is something like a close trust in South Africa and East Africa, but some of these Bhora merchants already settled in South Africa rent out these halls for a certain number of days, purchase pictures here and exhibit them there, which is found very successful. A good market has been found in South Africa but in Ceylon not one picture has so far been screened.

Q. Now you mention a fact which strikes me as new. You say "since 1921 Indian pictures have been averaging higher prices, from 10 per cent. to 40 per cent."

A. No, not that. I am talking of Southern India. If cinema owners were paying one lakh of rupees by way of film rental to these cinema producers, formerly only Rs. 1,000 used to go.....

Q. You do not mean in the rate.

A. No, just to show that Indian films are getting.

Mr. Neogy: And more costly.

A. I was not referring to the cost but to the Indian film producing companies rather than to

Chairman: Have you ever calculated what is by Indian companies in all India for one year?

A. It all comes under the...

Q. Inadequacy of figures?

A. Yes.

Q. You have no figures to give us?

A. Absolutely none, except what companies produce and what they release.

Q. Nor can you give us any figures which will show the Indian films that they have shown here in the Madras theatres so many thousand feet of Indian films and so many thousand feet foreign films. Can you give us that for your own theatre?

A. I can, provided the Commissioner of Police gives us some facilities. We have to give him every week a return of the number of films we are showing.

Q. Have you not got a copy?

A. No. Each cinema sends in its return regularly and the Commissioner of Police has got the figures, for every cinema. A man in the trade, if he sits down for a day or two will be able to compile these statements from the records kept by the Commissioner of Police.

Q. Can we get it from the Commissioner of Police?

A. Easily.

Q. Every cinema has to send in this information?

A. Yes. The Saturday before he screens a picture he has to send a copy of the synopsis, mentioning also which censor has passed it.

Q. The place of origin is also indicated there?

A. No.

Q. I mean a man in the trade will know.

A. Even the length of film is not mentioned, but a man in the trade will be able to tell from the certificate.

Q. I see you advocate the imposition of some duty on foreign films for the purpose of encouraging the growth of the Indian industry.

A. But there is a discrepancy with regard to the duty that is now being imposed on films in India. They are based on linear footage.

Q. I know. You have explained all that in your statement. You point out that cheap films have to pay more.

A. And the Government is the loser on account of the present arrangement. I can prove it by facts and figures. The Government loses by the present arrangement of charging on the length of the film irrespective of the cost of the film. As a matter of fact there are only two importers like us in Bombay, practically none in Calcutta, and perhaps another here. There are 4 or 5 importers of these second-hand films from England and from America and we pay for a picture about £75 or, roughly, a thousand rupees. We all, generally, do not purchase these films. We only rent out these films from England and America. When we return them to England or America to the original senders, we get a rebate of the duty. Suppose we pay a duty of Rs. 1,000. We get back Rs. 875 whenever we return a film to the country of origin. Therefore we actually pay Rs. 125 because we get that money back. But consider the case of big companies like the Universal, Pathe, Globe and the Madan circuit. For the cost of one of their films like "Ben Hur" they have to pay Rs. 20,000 with rights and one copy. On this they pay Rs. 200. It is a loss to the Government. If they were assessed on an *ad valorem* basis, as is done in Ceylon, it would be better for the Government.

Q. But how will the Government find out the value?

A. The Customs people are quite clever and they can find out.

Mr. Green: It is extremely difficult for the Customs to find the real value.

A. There is the invoice value.

Q. It does not show the royalty. It is impossible to get what a film is actually worth.

A. You can insist on their showing the royalty.

Chairman: Or you can insist on their filing an affidavit, because they have to register it for the copyright?

A. There have been some cases of infringement of copyright due to the fact that the copyright was entered into in America and not applicable to British citizens. These people have now learnt that they must register it with the Consul in Calcutta and in London, and when they have to register they have got to show the documents.

Mr. Green: But the document does not show what he is paying in royalties.

A. He can, of course, make an arrangement with the producer not to show the royalty; but there are his enemies in the trade who will expose him.

Q. The valuing of films will be a very difficult matter.

A. It is done now in Ceylon.

Q. It used to be done in India too, but we found it difficult to work.

Chairman: But you say on this uniform standard the Government loses—that is your opinion?

A. That is my opinion, but of course as a lawman I am not an authority on the subject. Even with regard to these raw films, I think, there must be a reduction in the duty in order to encourage the Indian film industry.

Q. You have advocated that, I know. Now, how many of these 320 or 350 theatres in India are really working every day?

A. Practically every cinema is working throughout the year. It is not like France where they rent a cinema for two days in the week or three days

in the week. Here in India practically every cinema runs throughout the year.

Q. We were told in Calcutta that about 60 or 70 do not work throughout the year.

A. Calcutta is a big place. In the suburbs of Calcutta there are some clubs where small people go and show these pictures, but they do not come within these 350.

Q. Where did you get this figure, 320 or 350?

A. I got it from the New York Year Book. I could guess what it is. When I was in a big company in Bombay we got enquiries from so many people all over India.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You say that the Commissioner of Police passed an order that slides and advertising matter to be shown on the screen should be shown to him for approval. Has anything been done in that direction?

A. Yes.

Q. Has any action been taken? Do people take these advertisements to the Police?

A. We have received a notice from the Commissioner of Police to submit these slides or trailers we show on the screen to him and get his permission to exhibit them.

Q. When did you receive such an order?

A. About three months ago.

Q. Has any action been taken on it?

A. I mean we go there and we register it and then come and show it on the screen.

Q. You say that many films are sent to Bombay and Calcutta for being censored. Are they sent from here?

A. Yes.

Q. How? I do not understand.

A. Because of the delay in getting them passed through the Madras Board of Censors. There is extraordinarily long delay.

Q. What is the real cause of the delay?

A. Well, we put in our application and it is not decided in the course of a week. It takes nearly a month from the time we apply.

Mr. Green: What is the reason of this great delay?

A. The reason is there is not a Secretary to the Board, there is no proper place where the film can be shown and all that. As a matter of fact we put in our application and it takes 4 days before it goes to the Commissioner of Police. We have got to go and ask the clerk to put in an urgent slip or else the Commissioner will not see it owing to pressure of other work. Then it takes another 4 days for him to intimate to us what the Board has decided and so on.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: But generally the police inspector goes to see the film.

A. No, in Madras it is quite different. That is why I am trying to impress on you the necessity of your doing your level best to help us in this matter.

Q. But, my dear friend, only 9 films have been inspected during the year. Why is there such a big complaint against the Board?

A. Our Censor Board has passed more than 15 or 20 films of our own films.

Chairman: You import direct to Madras?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Western films?

A. Yes.

Chairman: You mean you get them to Madras direct or in Bombay?

A. To Madras direct by post; some come with shipping documents. As a matter of fact we took a film of this Congress and we had to send it to

Calcutta to be censored. Another gentleman who submitted it to the Censor here has not got the Censor's certificate yet. We have got our certificate and the film has come back only to-day.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you know from your experience whether any pirated films come here?

A. There have been instances and complaints but we cannot be quite sure whether the people who say they have the rights have really got the rights. If they have really they must know how to protect them.

Q. But do such films come here?

A. They do come at times.

Q. Would you have legislation to stop it?

A. It would be good.

Q. Have you ever seen films showing Indians in shady colours?

A. I do not know of any myself but from what I have heard I gather that Mr. Prakashan, Venkiah's son, the only Madrassi who has been to England for this training—that gentleman produced a picture for some missionary and it was called "The Catechist of Killarney." It was shown in London and it showed Indians in a very bad light.

Q. So these missionaries do such things?

A. That is what I have heard.

Mr. Green: It was done by an Indian?

A. Yes, it was done by an Indian.

Mr. Neogy: Indians are made to do so many things.

A. He might not have seen the continuity. He might have done only the parts and another man put them together.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You say in your statement there ought to be one language for the whole of India.

A. I do not say there ought to be.

Q. I mean to solve the language difficulty; it would be better to have one language.

A. I mean if there is a common language it will very much facilitate the Indian film industry.

Q. Until that comes about, what do you suggest to solve the difficulty that now exists? There is the English language in the titles, sometimes you see Gujarati, Hindi and Urdu. How do you propose to meet the difficulty in the Madras Presidency where there are 5 languages?

A. If there were more theatres in Madras it would be possible to put Tamil and Telegu titles but that will come naturally in the natural course of things. Formerly we were not doing it but now we realise it would be better. When there are some more cinemas the extra cost of putting these vernacular titles will not matter. When we find it pays us we will put them in; but now it does not pay because for Southern India we have to have Telegu, Tamil and Malayalam, and for Ceylon we have put in Ceylonese titles. So we leave it as it is.

Q. Sometimes a film is rejected after it is produced. Do you think it advisable in order to save money and trouble that the stories and scenarios should be censored before production?

A. A producer can submit his story and his scenario but that does not count much. It is the actual incidents in the film itself that matter.

Q. But there may be many objectionable matters—something say of historical interest—to censor?

A. The Censor does not condemn a film wholesale. The Censor has instances in which a film has been condemned wholesale. The Censor has objected to some titles and some scenes and they ask us to cut out those portions, which we do.

Q. I know, but take the film about Shivaji. When it was produced the Muhammadans were very angry.

A. That man got into trouble because he did not know how to produce it.

Q. Now if the story had been shown beforehand, then this trouble would not have arisen.

A. For that if we have a "Better Films Committee" as they have in New York and other places, that will meet the difficulty. Scenarios are submitted before the Better Films Committee. If they approve of it, then when the film is finished the Committee are invited to the trade show and then they pass an opinion on it.

Chairman: What do they do, this Better Films Committee?

A. In England and the United States they come and see the film and they are invited whenever a film is shown and they pass their opinion on it. They recommend that certain things are good, and if a picture goes forth with their approval it is sure to be a success.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Now the ladies' parts in the production of a film are taken by some undesirable persons. What means should be adopted to have respectable ladies to take part in film production?

A. We cannot force them to come but with the growth of the film industry itself, better salaries will be offered and a better class of women will come forward.

Q. I mean should these undesirable ladies be prohibited from taking any part?

A. You cannot prohibit them from taking part. I can tell you in Bombay the Commissioner of Police passed a rule that these dancing girls and professional prostitutes should not appear on the stage and dance along with the picture; but still there are some who do appear.

Q. Because they are professional prostitutes?

A. They were prohibited by the Commissioner of Police in Bombay but still they are going on and we cannot make a distinction between this and that.

Colonel Crawford: You attach some importance to vernacular captions?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. We have not got to the state of a universal language in India yet or the problem would be solved, but would you object to a stipulation that no film should be shown in any province without the captions in the specific vernacular of that province, those laid down by the Government. You see here you might have 4 caption languages. Would you, as an exhibitor, object?

A. There cannot be any objection to any film coming in any language, but it is only for the benefit of the cinema owner. It is best for him if he puts it in the vernacular language, and if any renter offers him a picture the exhibitor will surely pay him a little higher price for that.

Q. You think as a matter of fact it will pay the producer if we force him to put on vernacular captions?

A. The producer must naturally do it in the next year or two when he finds it more advantageous. When there is more competition he will find it better to offer pictures with vernacular languages for captions.

Q. You would not do it by compulsion?

A. No, we will do it otherwise.

Q. Now, I notice you are strongly in favour of the organisation of the industry.

Q. Have you any suggestions to make as to how we can help in bringing that about? Have you any suggestions as to how Government could help in that?

A. Yes, Sir, with regard to organisation the Government can form a central, neutral, distributing agency and for better understanding of Indians in foreign places and of foreign people here in India they can arrange.....

Q. I don't think you have caught what I mean. No doubt the industry in India, on the production side and the distribution side and the exhibition side, could do a lot to help itself. If they could all come together into all organisation, they could improve their own position tremendously. Would you agree to that?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. Now, is there any suggestion you could make as to how Government could assist such a desirable result?

A. The Government can help by the formation of an unofficial body because these people will not come together by themselves. The Government can then have an advisory body and in that way this organisation can be achieved; the organisation will be in the interests of the trade itself and they will soon realise it.

Q. You would like every section of the trade licensed, and no licence given to a member who was not a member of the trade association?

A. There is not that sort of feeling for co-operation and all that and they do not realise the advantages of co-operation yet.

Q. I quite agree they do not, but how can Government assist to bring this about?

A. I have not got any concrete suggestions. They must realise it themselves in course of time.

Q. Do you think the trade will submit to some sort of special cess or taxation on itself for the purpose of improving its own industry—either put on as an entertainment tax or.....

A. I am afraid this industry is not in a position to bear much taxation.

Q. Taxation for its own development, not taxation for revenue purposes.

A. They must submit to it and they will agree to it, provided it is for the benefit of the trade itself in general.

Q. Do you think they will agree to a cess of some sort?

A. Yes.

Q. I am not quite certain whether your figures of duty are correct. You say the man who imports a second-hand picture pays £75—that is the cost of his picture, roughly Rs. 1,000; and by way of duty he has to pay—isn't it Rs. 37-8 per thousand feet? You get a serial for £75?

A. In America and England there are cinema owners who have got four or five theatres. They don't rent a picture. The producers don't make only one copy, but many copies are made. So these cinema owners are able to get hold of so many copies and show them in different theatres. Still the copies will be in perfect condition. We buy such copies through second-hand dealers.

Q. You are paying a duty on films of series of 5 programmes?

A. Yes. But we get our money back again.

Q. You say that the cheap film has to pay 100 per cent., but you are only quoting 30 reels, whereas in the case of the more expensive films you are only quoting 7 reels?

A. Yes, he has got to pay a royalty on even the cost of the print. Even if you work it out to 3 cents a foot, it will come to Rs. 700. If he pays 15 per cent. *ad valorem* duty, he will have to pay Rs. 200 on it.

Q. You say the man who imports a second-hand film will have to pay £75 for it or Rs. 1,000. Is that for a 30 reel serial film?

A. Yes.

Q. I believe you consider that the Indian market is very small for Indian productions?

A. Yes.

Q. And therefore a handicap to any very large development of the Indian industry?

A. Yes. The first task should be to increase the Home market. But we cannot expect a foreign market under the present conditions.

Q. Have you seen that recently steps have been taken to produce films of international value?

A. Yes, an attempt was made by "The Light of Asia," but apart from London, it has not been a success anywhere else. I saw the film myself. It is not so good as the others produced by the Indian companies. But because Their Majesties saw the film, it enjoyed some reputation. That film would not be allowed to be shown in Germany even if the producers offered to show it free of charge there. Why, the biggest pictures of Ufa are not allowed to run in New York.

Q. That is owing to the trade monopoly?

A. But so far as their value is concerned, they are quite as good as any other pictures. I may tell the Committee an English company is just now in India to film a particular novel by a Parsi lady. They have come over to Gwalior with special English actors and actresses. One or two of such pictures might go very well in foreign countries.

Q. Now, if that English company makes a success of it, it will get an international market, and it will undoubtedly give a lead to Indian producing companies to follow suit?

A. In what way will it help our industry here?

Q. Your film industry to-day is handicapped by the smallness of the Indian market, and you can't expand your market in a day?

A. My contention is that by an English company coming and producing films here it will not help the Indian industry in any way except perhaps that some actors or actresses might be employed for a certain length of time.

Q. I admit that the company may not be of any use to the Indian industry, but it is making an experiment in the big market, and if it can make a profit, there is nothing to prevent Indian concerns to embark on such schemes?

A. It will depend on the organization of the renters. The financial arrangement of a producing company is this. Before a film is produced, the producing company has to show to the bankers its agreement with the renter. The renter has got to be satisfied whether he can make money out of that film or not, otherwise he will have to pay out of his pocket.

Q. Now what should we do to get the Indian film industry into the international market?

A. Let us think of our Indian market first before thinking of the international market. There is no doubt that a small attempt has been made, and if properly organized, we might be able to make great headway.

Q. I think you stated that the Indian market for films is too small and that there are only about 350 cinemas in India. Your concrete suggestion is that we should recommend to Government to increase the number of cinemas. That is a matter of slow growth, and that can't be done in a day. In the meantime there is an international market, and if our Indian producers can get their films across into the international market, then he will be in a position to produce better films, because he has got his Indian market plus the new outlet in the international market. I suggest it to you that the experiment which is now made by that English company in Gwalior would show to the producer here how far their attempt would be successful. You said that this company is backed by the renters at Home, and without that backing of renters Indian films cannot go. How can we get over that difficulty? Let us for a moment take up the question of the Empire quota? Will that give us a footing in the international market?

A. There is some suggestion that in Australia 25 per cent. of the films shown there must be British Empire films, of which 15 per cent. must be

Australian films. So there is only 10 per cent. left to us. Out of that 10 per cent. again, there is England to compete with us, as also Canada. Therefore, we have got a remote chance. No doubt our industry will improve to a very small extent, but not to any appreciable extent for a long time to come. It is a very serious problem. You have got to consider the future also with regard to the quota system, and it is the definition of "Empire film" that gives so much trouble, and the same trouble will arise in India also. American companies will certainly open their studios in India on a rupee capital basis, because under the definition of Empire film any American film company can come here and take films. Most of the shares will be held by those people. Now we have the satisfaction of calling ourselves film producers in a small way, but after those people come, we will be reduced to the position of mere wage earners, because the little scenario that is produced by us will be purchased by them and the actors and actresses also will be taken over by them.

Chairman: Do you mean it will kill the industry as it is now?

A. I don't say it will kill the industry, but there is a potential danger as we have seen it in Canada with our own eyes. There they have opened big studios at a cost of over 30 million dollars. Americans have already come over to England to produce British Empire pictures.

Q. Is that an advantage or disadvantage if foreign companies start to produce Indian pictures here? Is that an advantage or disadvantage from a public point of view?

A. It cannot be an advantage in any way, because now there is a decided improvement in Indian pictures. Then again some people who have gone to England to learn the industry have returned and are trying to improve our pictures.

Q. Why should Americans come to India and defeat the Indian in his own country?

A. Because they have got a better market outside India; besides that, they have got better facilities for distribution of their films all over the world. Similarly, if we have got a better home market, we will also be able to dictate our own terms to others as Germany has done with her quota system.

Q. You talk of a Better Films committee. What would be the functions of that committee?

A. There is much talk about the demoralising effects of the western films on young and impressionable minds. Therefore, if there is a Committee of this character, it would be able to scrutinise the films in the first instance and decide whether a particular film is fit for public exhibition.

Q. Is it to be a Government Committee?

A. If it will be a non-official organization it will be very good. The object of that committee will be this. As soon as a film is produced, it must be shown to this committee and they should approve of it in the first instance. They should also make such suggestions as they think proper, and if the producers would not care to accept their suggestions, then the members of the committee should not append their signature to that film, and public opinion will so form itself that it will refuse to see such pictures which are not recommended or passed by the Committee. It has been an effective check so far in New York.

Mr. Green: Do I understand you to say that you do run Indian films and the demand for them is good?

A. Yes, I mean the demand from the cinema owners is good.

Q. Can you get enough Indian films to meet that demand?

A. Not very much. But there is a good market for good Indian films.

Q. You are very anxious to have more theatres and you go to the length of even saying that Government should spend considerable sums in erecting theatres. You have told us of one example where the Trichinopoly municipality has built a theatre at its own cost. Can you tell me how it was that

in a city with a population of over a lakh, no private individual came forward to erect a theatre?

A. There was a theatre there. It was run in the year 1921 but it failed. After that nobody came forward to restart that cinema. Messrs. Seshahai Bros. were running it.

Q. I take it that you would like to see a theatre in every city with a certain population?

A. It is not merely the population that is a criterion for the success of the cinema trade, but any place which can support the trade can run a cinema.

Q. If it is a trade question, why do you expect the Government to put down money to erect theatres?

A. In its own interest it will be a very paying proposition.

Q. Do you want Government to go in for trade?

A. It will be a good investment and they will be able to realise the capital invested in a few years' time.

Q. Would you favour Government investing money in other sources than films if they can get a better return?

A. Government could certainly invest money in a cinema theatre with a sure return. The investment will also be quite safe in that it will be on a building. For instance, if you rent out a theatre for dramas, you can get about Rs. 125 per night.

Q. Why does not a business man come forward and make the investment?

A. Private capitalists do come forward and offer money to build theatres, but they expect ruinous rates of interest which kill the industry.

Q. Do you think Government will be justified in spending 30 lakhs of rupees? Do you think any legislative body would sanction that expenditure?

A. If you really want to resuscitate the industry it will certainly be worth the while of the Government.

Q. Why should not Government sell ghee and flour and make a profit?

A. You can't bring in that analogy. Just as the Industries Department is helping the poor ryot by advancing loans, so the Government should come forward and help this industry.

Q. Then the cinema man can go to the Director of Industries and get a loan from Government under the State Aid to Industries Act?

A. But there are not many educated men who can take advantage of it. There are also certain difficulties in applying for a loan.

Chairman: You mean that if a Government is bent upon encouraging national industries it is its duty to do so at any cost?

A. It is not a loss to Government.

Mr. Green: Now, if you reduce the duty on second-hand films, would you not be increasing the competition which the Indian producer has to meet?

A. At present there are not a sufficient number of Indian films, and the cinema owners cannot afford to pay the high rents for Indian films, and as the popular taste is also for sensational subjects, I don't think there can be any competition if you reduce the duty on second-hand films. I may point out here that the taste for cinema was started with the thrilling serials. Now that taste is fast disappearing and the demand for serials also is fast disappearing.

Mr. Coatman: You said in reply to our Chairman that the acquisition of theatres by Madans had been advantageous to the small exhibitor, apparently because it reduced competition among these men?

A. Madans is not a competitor now after it has acquired three theatres. Madans' competition has of course affected the Indian film producers and other film renters, but it has not affected the exhibitor. The position is this. There are seven producers in America to-day. Three of them are under contract with Madans. But there are still four free with whom people can enter into contracts, so that Madans do not compete in that market.

Q. What pictures do you buy?

A. We put on only Indian pictures and some serials too.

Q. Now, you say that Bombay films are more popular than Bengal films, and I gathered from you that one of the reasons of the popularity of the Bombay films was that some of the Bombay stars are known here. What class or section of the audience know the Bombay stars?

A. All class of people know the Bombay stars.

Q. Even the labourers know them?

A. Yes.

Q. I do not remember to have seen any picture posters advertising Indian films. I think in Bombay I saw just one or two, but elsewhere I do not think I saw any.

A. This lithograph industry has not advanced in India at all, and such posters, I think will serve the opposite purpose for which they are intended, i.e., instead of attracting crowds, they will restrict them. The workmanship of these lithographs is very poor. Nowadays they are improving a little as compared with the position two years ago, and the size also is now very small. We have not yet got a 24 sheet poster.

Q. I remember some time ago having a casual conversation about cinema advertising matter, and I was told that many of the posters and hand-bills which advertise American films in this country are produced in Japan. Do you happen to know if this is true?

A. I do not believe there is any foundation in that statement, because almost all these blocks are made in India itself. They are not even imported from America. English posters are not even imported from America. English posters are not artistically perfect and only the American posters are good. No posters are coming from Japan.

Q. Why should not the posters be produced in India?

A. If a film producing company imports it, it will have an international market; but in India it will not have a big market. That is the difficulty.

Q. Do you yourself spend much on advertisement?

A. Generally we do not spend so much on advertisement as they do in England and other places.

Q. Do you advertise in newspapers?

A. Not much. Nobody reads newspapers in Madras; I mean the educated classes who read the newspapers do not generally attend the cinema. If there is an English classical novel or some such thing, then they will attend, otherwise they won't. As they do not generally come, we do not spend much money on advertisements in newspapers. Moreover, the newspapers charge only 12 annas per inch for other things, but the amusement rates are Rs. 3 an inch. We get most of our income, at least 90 per cent. only from the poorer classes.

Mr. Neogy: You don't accept the position that the cinema industry occupies the same position as the wheat or the ghee industry, for instance, do you?

A. If you take America, as an instance, I think, that this is in a much better position than wheat.

Q. Are you not aware that Government have not so far appointed any committee to enquire whether it is necessary to encourage the manufacture of flour or ghee?

A. I know they have not.

Q. Therefore the very fact that the Government have taken care to appoint this committee shows that they want to treat the cinema industry in a different footing from the others?

A. Yes.

Q. If the Government are going to dictate to the people that they cannot see certain films, is it not up to the people to say that they want a particular kind of pictures?

A. If the Government do that, I think, it will be a failure, because it is against the principles of the industry itself.

Q. Therefore don't you admit that when I find that a particular kind of picture which the people want is suffering from a disability, I am entitled to say "remove that disability" and encourage the Indian film industry?

A. Yes.

Q. It was suggested that the home market for the Indian film is limited and that your remedy is to open more theatres. It was assumed by Colonel Crawford that you could at once, without any loss of time, secure an international market whereas it would take some time for you to establish more theatres. Do you accept that proposition?

A. I do not.

Q. You have said in your statement that the quality of the Indian pictures is very poor, poor even for the purpose of the Indian market?

A. I have not said so in my statement.

Q. Is that your opinion?

A. It is improving, but it is not of such a quality as to warrant an international market.

Q. So it will take time to improve this film industry to such an extent as to enable it to secure an international market. Do you think it might take longer time for municipalities to build cinema halls in India than to improve the quality of Indian films?

A. I think it will be easier to build the theatres. Moreover, even if we produce films of international quality, I don't think they will find a market in England or America, because there are other curious arrangements behind.

Q. Then you say that even if you improve the quality, there is no chance of Indian films securing a foreign market?

A. Yes, that is my opinion.

Q. You suggest three Government studios in the three Presidency towns purely for encouraging the small producer?

A. Yes, because they are the backbone of the industry.

Q. As an amateur producer?

A. Not so, but as a man without means.

Q. That small producer then has not got the capital to run the business on a large scale?

A. He has capital for that but not for building theatres.

Q. But he has his own directors, his own actors and staff?

A. He can find money to get all these things but not for building theatres.

Q. That is, he has not got the means to establish a suitable concern of his own?

A. Yes.

Q. So, if you depend upon such a small producer, the chance for the establishment of the profession of film direction and film acting is likely to take a very long time, because you will try to pick out men from your own acquaintance whom you can engage or dismiss at any time?

A. The independent producer will always try to pick out only the most clever men in the line.

Q. Where is that man going to get the opportunity if there is no regular profession?

A. It is arguing in a vicious circle.

Q. You are probably thinking of those places where there has been no beginning yet. Bombay has got a number of studios?

A. There were a number of studios in Madras also but they have all been dismantled.

Q. What assurance will there be for those people of getting continuous employment if you are going to depend merely on the small producer?

A. So far as picture production is concerned, it is the director that brings cleverness in the actor.

Q. You do not believe in film acting as a profession?

A. I do not say so, because there will be small independent producers and employment will certainly be assured to these people.

Q. Supposing there is a Government studio in Madras, first of all the Government will have to manufacture their own films there?

A. Yes.

Q. If they do so, it does not necessarily mean that they should do so continuously one after another for a few months?

A. No.

Q. They can go on manufacturing with short intervals between any two pictures. How can you manufacture your pictures in the Government studio in that case?

A. We can hire a particular studio.

Q. Only if it is not otherwise occupied?

A. It will not be occupied always. We will require only the studio, the floor and the camera. The camera man may not be engaged right through.

Q. But his services will be available only when he is not engaged in Government work. There is no guarantee that he will be free for a month at a stretch. The other things also, i.e., the studio, the camera, etc., will be required by the Government for their work?

A. I do not think there will be so much Government work as to warrant the full engagement of these people throughout.

Q. How many organisations do you think can work side by side?

A. Two.

Q. There might be certain jealousies and there might also be some anxiety to keep some films secret from your competitor and if you resort to a public studio, certain details may be got scent of by your rival and he will try to benefit by the information?

A. These are all mere details of working and I do not think they are of such importance as to go against the usefulness of the organisation.

Q. Are you not exaggerating the utility of the Government studio for film production by the private producer?

A. That may be, but it is not such a serious thing. Even if there is any difficulty, we can overcome that.

Q. Then you are sure that you can always command the services of the actors and others just at the moment when the Government studio is vacant?

A. We can apply to the studio, they will give us a certain date and we can make use of it at the particular time. Moreover, such a course will be necessary only in the case of indoor scenes. The outdoor scenes are taken in the open air.

Q. Don't you require any artificial lighting arrangements for the production of outdoor scenes?

A. No. As a matter of fact such a studio was constructed in Madras, but it was a failure. Madras is very hot during ten months of the year and it is not necessary that we should have any artificial lighting arrangements here.

Q. You don't seem to attach any importance to artificial lighting arrangements?

A. Not at all, except perhaps for some special scenes.

Q. What is the staff that you contemplate for the Government studio?

A. One or two camera men, one or two dark room men and a general director, who will control finance and make other arrangements.

Q. You will have foreign experts there?

A. I do not believe they will teach really; we will have to learn everything ourselves.

Q. Where do you propose they should learn?

A. We can just try the experiments ourselves, make a series of attempts and find out what should be done.

Q. You do not believe in sending people to foreign countries for the purpose?

A. No. It is only a question of having a keen observation and making our own experiments. I do not think it is necessary to depute men for that.

Q. So you do not attach any importance to these studios from the point of view of affording facilities for teaching young men?

A. Not at all. The only utility is that there will be better facilities for the small producer, so that the cinemas which are not now having sufficient programmes may have them.

Written Statement of Mr. S. K. YASAGAM, Manager, Kinema Central, Madras, dated the 8th January 1928.

The above concern was started exclusively for the exhibition of Indian films, the patronage is fair, the demands for really good Indian films of social type is great. Pictures of the type of Kohinoor's *Why Husbands go Astray*, Imperial's *Allaudin* and *Ali Baba* did good business, but the rentals are too high. Producers and renters are so exacting in their demands and competition is very keen inasmuch the Exhibitor who pays the highest percentage gets the pick of the pictures regardless of the business, neighbourhood, and the drawing power of the Theatre. The Renters and Producers do not at all co-operate with the Exhibitors for building better business to mutual advantage, the advertising accessories to give full scope for the picture is inadequate. There is a great need for local vernacular titles to be introduced in the Indian films, it goes a long way to increased patronage.

The two-anna admissions are always fair, majority of the class being wage earners and children who visit Cinemas each evening more to be amused rather than for the type of pictures offered. The four and eight-anna admissions consist of merchants and students. Feminine audience come more in numbers while mythological pictures are exhibited.

Indian films have lately shown great improvement in technique, photography and acting, some of the films exhibited at Kinema Central, especially *Netaji* of Maharashtra Film Co., and *Muraliwalla* are quite on a par with foreign productions as regards the technique and photography. Anent *Miss De La Hey's* evidence on Indian films "Indian produced films are not at present popular because they are generally badly set and slow in action." This is a fallacy, it is plain *Miss Hey* has not seen one Indian film produced to-day excepting visiting *Elphinstone* Cinema to see pictures of *Douglas Fairbanks* in Eastern settings. The Commissioner of Police *Mr. Travers Phillips* who had the opportunity of seeing the much discussed *Kohinoor* film *Why Husbands go Astray* expressed it was simply wonderful. If only Indian producers get good financial backing and co-operation from the Government, surely Indian films will compete with the World's markets in entertainment value.

Indian films of social type deal with Indian social evils, i.e., child marriage, dowry systems, evils of foreign education and as such there is absolutely no harmful results in allowing children to see Cinemas, especially Indian films, as most of them tend to uplift the morality and expose the vices rampant in society. As for censoring, there should be a judicious selection on the Board, a lady member is most desirable, especially Indian.

There has been some misconceptions about eye troubles due to seeing Cinema pictures. Motion picture projection has recently been technically perfected and as such there is possibly no strain on the eye by seeing pictures on the screen. We have on the market latest models of Projectors that is now being installed in most of the Cinemas without any risk of fire or trouble in the breakdown.

Entertainment Tax.—The enforcement of this tax in Madras will be serious set back on the exhibition of Indian films, it will only cripple the Industry and tax the Exhibitor who is already paying a lot to the demands of the Producer-Renter, advertisements, upkeep, and besides other taxes of the Municipality and Government. The people want high class entertainment and a tax obviously interferes to a considerable extent with the fulfilment of this desire. Hence the amusement and educational value of motion pictures ought not to be taxed, it should be remitted everywhere in India. Cinema enterprise now-a-days is not profitable, they have to spend more in upkeepment, looking to the comforts of the patrons and what little is realised is not worth the trouble. Many Cinemas have failed due to this reason, high rentals of Theatre, hire of films and mismanagement. Total prohibition will certainly increase the patronage in Cinemas and the system of quota for exhibition of a certain percentage of Indian films in all Cinemas, the levying of duty on import of alien films will stimulate the home production.

Oral Evidence of Mr. S. K. YASAGAM, Manager, Kinema Central, Madras, on Tuesday, the 10th January 1928.

Chairman: I suppose you have just started the Kinema Central?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your experience?

A. I was in the Hindustan Cinema Film Company, Madras, also working in the Branch Office at Calcutta.

Q. Is it a Hiring or Importing Company?

A. A Renting and Producing concern.

Q. Where did you get your films?

A. Generally from Bombay.

Q. You know only about Indian films?

A. I know something about foreign films also.

Q. Are you exhibiting any foreign films?

A. We do sometimes.

Q. How many years' experience have you?

A. About two years as Exhibitor and 3 years as a Renter.

Q. From your knowledge, are Indian films growing popular.

A. Certainly.

Q. Do you think they don't show all these things in the Liberty Cinema which is in the heart of the town?

A. They do show Indian films, but it does not pay nor attracts, on account of the locality; only Serials of the sensation type go well in this Cinema. Further no decent sort of people go to this Cinema.

Q. Do you mean to say that the class of people there do not care to see Indian films even if they are mythological or historical?

A. The public are discriminating, they go only to the Cinema that provides the pick of the programmes i.e., first runs in Indian films, and especially the higher class do not only care for the type of pictures but the Theatre that caters.

Q. How many Indian films have you shown in the Kinema Central?

- A. All the Bombay pictures.
- Q. They are attracting good audiences?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What is the seating capacity?
- A. About 500 to 650.
- Q. Among the Indian films, which is it that had the longest run?
- A. Allaudin " and " Alli Baba," Imperial productions.
- Q. You had two weeks' run?
- A. Yes, that was the longest run.
- Q. Were those films shown in any other Theatre in Madras?
- A. " Allaudin " had a second run at Popular Cinema, Triplicane, for a week.
- Q. You find it difficult to get Indian films?
- A. Yes, the rates are exorbitant.
- Q. Have you ever taken Western films?
- A. Yes, they are cheaper than Indian films, but they do not attract the same audience as in the case of Indian films.
- Q. But you find it difficult to get Indian films?
- A. There is a good lot of competition.
- Q. But there is not enough production?
- A. There is, only the rates demanded are high because of the counter offers and competition.
- Q. Where do you get your Western films?
- A. Locally, from Universal, Pathe, Exhibitors Film Service.
- Q. Are they mostly Dramas?
- A. Yes, Oriental dramas, i.e., foreign productions with oriental themes and setting of the type of " Thousand and One Nights." They are the only films suitable to our locality.
- Q. You get oriental settings even in Western films?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Are you in a position to get what you want in Western films without much difficulty?
- A. There is no difficulty in getting foreign pictures.

**Written Statement of Mr. JOSEPH A. DAVID, Cinematographer,
Madras, dated the 7th January 1928.**

1. Yes. As a practicing Cinematographer I have actual experience of the taking of Motion Pictures and the subsequent processing. Further as an aspiring Motion Picture producer I have been keenly watching and carefully studying the development of the Motion Picture Industry both in India and abroad.

2. (a) Provided good plays are being shown educated classes frequent the Cinemas in large numbers so much so the theatres become too full to hold any more. Though there is a fair amount of attendance when pictures of average merit are shown, yet these attendances are not much as compared when feature plays are shown. Here I would add that Mythological and other plays of Indian life by our Indian producers do not bring in the educated class for they have come to look upon them as pictures even below the average as compared with American films. (2) Illiterate classes do not frequent the Cinema in large numbers when one night screen dramas are shown though when films like " Robin Hood " and " The Thief of Bagdad " are shown

they flock in large numbers—this because they come to know that some stunts and rough and tumble life would be pictured. When Serials particularly those depicting Cowboy life which do not call for much comprehension and which do not depend so much on titles for continuity the illiterate classes frequent in very large numbers crowding the lower classes of the theatres to capacity. Comparing with the popularity of the theatre some years back the attendance of both the educated and the illiterate classes has more than doubled. There were only four theatres in Madras then, but now there are nine, there would be more if men with money were interested. My answers refer to Madras.

(b) In the Elphinstone Picture Palace (Mount Road) where the showing of 7 or 8 reels one night screen dramas (differing from serials) is the rule, the average composition will be 20 per cent. rich class, 70 per cent. middle class and 10 per cent. poor class. In the other theatres there is an increase of the poor classes though even there the middle class leads.

(c) Children under 14 would be about 2 to 3 per cent.

Between 14 and 18—15 per cent.

Between 18 and 24—40 per cent.

Film Industry in India.

8. Photoplays (both serials and dramas) are more popular with Indian audiences in India than any other kind of news, review or educational films. A play that is serious yet with some comedy in it and one which at the same time has not much of complications but contains vigorous and dashy acting would go well with the majority of the people. There is a demand for good Indian films.

4. No. Because the majority of the Indian audiences prefer to see Indian films, but the Indian films now available are not good.

5. Yes.

(a) No. Though some of the films are from well-known stories yet they are not properly adapted to the screen, the acting is not all that could be done under the existing condition, the directing is bad and the Photography too far below the level.

(b) Some of them are popular mostly on account of the Religious and National interest and on account of the striking names of the story, which attracts the crowd.

(c) It is not ordinarily more profitable to show Indian film as will be seen when it is noted that the majority of the theatres in Madras very rarely exhibit Indian films. But under extraordinary circumstances Indian films are more profitable as in the case of " Pathi Bakthy " by Madan Theatres Limited, which hit the mark on account of its main title.

6. (a) Yes, if they were produced in the proper manner, equal to the Western standard at least and with a thought first to entertain and secondly to inform and educate the audience.

(b) (1) To the educated classes good Photoplays of stories either original, or adapted from the National literature, History and Mythology would appeal most strongly. The other kinds also but less strongly.

(2) To the illiterate population also, stories as stated in (b) 1 above would appeal most strongly.

8. (a) To-day emphatically no, nor will I ever be as one must be fastidious to push on and on.

(b) The main difficulties besetting the Industry is the lack of facilities for creating experts in all the branches of the business, the lack of facilities for obtaining correct information and the lack of facilities for the interchanging of ideas. My suggestion would be the formation of an " Indian Motion Picture Institute " either by the Government or by a joint action of producers, renters and exhibitors assisted or unassisted by the Government. Attached to this there must also be a " Film Information Bureau " and an " Association of Motion Picture Experts " with branches all over the country.

I would here add that going to foreign countries to learn Motion Picture Production is not necessary and even useless, because one is taught only superficially. Whereas, if one attempted to learn here in India alone he would go right to the bottom of the subject. Then again there is vast difference between the climatic and other conditions existing in India and elsewhere and one graduating in foreign countries has to unlearn a good deal. Learning things here would help Indians to stand on their own legs instead of depending on others.

9. Foreign films, yes. Indian films are also readily obtainable at reasonable prices but they are not good.

Carelessness in manufacture and haste to cash on their production is the cause of the poor quality turned out by our Indian producers. I hear that in some cases there is monopoly.

11. No. None.

13. Not having good Indian films equal to the foreign productions the exhibitors find themselves compelled to use foreign films and the customs tariff on imported films is an additional burden to the exhibitors. The present Customs tariff is not much useful for promoting the indigenous production of films, for, even with the tariff we find Indian produced films selling at a higher price than the foreign films. I think the cancelling of the tariff on all materials used in the Motion Picture Industry would now help in getting Indian films at low cost. This could be done as there is now no likelihood of any attempt being made to manufacture raw films in our country.

14. Certainly. There is an unasked demand. Educational authorities and other officials would gladly make use of such films as soon as they are available.

15. Yes. Our Indian people do not now look upon the Cinema as a novelty. Motion Pictures have come to stay. They afford the best form of recreation for the masses at low cost, at the same time capable of affording them useful education. There are hundreds of small towns in the interior where Cinema theatres of a suitable capacity could be opened. These would create a demand for a free and uninterrupted supply of good films (preferably Indian) which means that there would be a ready market for all the good films that could be produced in this country. If would-be large scale film producers could also open some such theatres they could more or less make themselves self-supporting. There is abundant material available for stories, sunlight is available throughout the year and on the whole our country is well suited for Motion Picture Production. Small difficulties which seem to exist could be very easily overcome.

16. At present there are only a few men with sufficient technical knowledge regarding the production of good Motion Pictures. But there are a good number of men with enterprise and resource and adaptability who could be trained for the Industry. In order to get the proper men I would suggest to the producing companies to join hands and advertise for national talent, hold a talent contest and having chosen men with the proper inborn talent train them up in a Motion Picture School to be opened in India itself. [See also my answer to question 8 (b).]

17. Yes.

18. I would only suggest to the Government to finance local boards to open ideal theatres in their respective locality.

19. Labour is cheap in India, but the laboratory cost is much. Therefore I think that the cost of film producing (I mean production equal to the foreign standard) will be equal or even less than that of other countries as the high labour cost there makes up for the high laboratory cost here in India.

20. Yes. Yes, Motion Pictures would entertain for the people's good and at the same time inform and educate them.

21. A state agency would be all right for the production of Educational films alone, but if the production of plays is taken up by the state there would be failure. As a steady production of Educational films alone would

involve large capital and great resource it would be well to leave the production of picture plays alone. State agency if adopted must not interfere and impair private enterprise and besides Indians must be employed in all departments.

22. No. Equal treatment should be meted out to all foreign films.

(a) No, it would not.

(b) No.

(c) No. None. Let us deal with foreign films according to their merit.

24. (a) No.

(b) No.

(c) Films in which crime, suicide, burglary, vulgarity and suggestion, mischief and immorality are the purpose of the story are harmful. It would be harmful to the uneducated classes. It would be harmful in that it would justify crime, and other things.

(d) (1) Yes, censorship is adequate.

(2) Yes, here also censorship is adequate.

(e) No.

25. No. I think that any special censorship would prevent us from understanding the Western outlook as it is.

26. (a) It is not necessary as we do not get such films.

27. (a) No. Yes. Not to my knowledge. Translation into the vernacular would help matters. The Government would do well if they directed their attention to the adoption of one widely known vernacular as a National language. This would simplify the matter of translation.

(b) No.

28. (a) and (b) No.

29. No.

30. Many children do not frequent the cinemas and those who do, not often.

31. To some extent.

32. Yes.

33. (a) and (b) Yes.

(c) Yes, emphatically.

34. (a) Yes.

(1) Because it would reduce expense (to the Government) to the minimum and it would save much trouble to the producers.

(2) It would not. Films could be sent carefully packed to the censors for certification where an expert should be employed to handle the films.

(3) It should contain men who would represent various schools of thought.

(4) In Bombay or somewhere centrally.

37. (a) Yes.

(b) No.

38 & 39. None.

40. Not necessary. None.

41. Long ago films have improved in their moral standard.

42. The censorship people would do well to let each film producer know as to what they (the censors) think objectionable. Then the productions would not be much out of the way and this would help the censors much.

43. (a) I do not think.

44. By some criticism regarding the story, direction, acting and the general make-up of the play or other film.

45. (a) Control would cripple freedom of action and would not be helping a rising Industry.

(b) Not necessary. Let them be treated as other businesses.

**Oral Evidence of Mr. JOSEPH A. DAVID, Cinematographer, on
Wednesday, the 11th January 1928.**

Chairman: You say you are a practising cinematographer. What do you mean by that?

A. I take motion pictures and live on it. Especially I take films for foreign countries, principally for the United States of America. I take pictures of news interest and send them to America.

Q. From India?

A. Yes, I take pictures in India and send them to the United States.

Q. When do you make your pictures. What do you do?

A. I send the negatives.

Q. You don't develop at all?

A. Some of it I develop. News films I don't develop. Review films I do develop.

Mr. Green: What do you call review films?

A. Review films are not news films. Films other than news films are called review films. Say something like views of Indian temples, scenes and so on.

Q. Something not exactly of educational value—you mean of pictorial value?

A. Yes. It may be of educational value also though to a lesser extent.

Chairman: You take topical scenes also?

A. Yes.

Q. And mostly you send the negatives home?

A. Very rarely I send undeveloped films. It is only when I send news films that I send them undeveloped. But when I send them topical films I have got to develop and send them the negatives and in some cases even positives.

Q. Where do you get them done?

A. In my own place. I have got a small laboratory.

Q. You have got all the necessary things required for the printing?

A. Yes.

Q. How long have you been doing that?

A. I have been studying the business for more than six years, but I have been practically engaged in it for four years.

Q. How many things are you able to send like that?

A. I am able to send at least one review film every month and one news films every two months.

Mr. Neogy: Of what length?

A. A review film is sent in one thousand feet length.

Sir H. Jaffer: Have you copies with you now?

A. No.

Q. Or a list of subjects you take?

A. Yes, I have got that.

Chairman: For the last four years you have been sending regularly? You make a revenue out of it?

A. Yes.

Q. Who are the people to whom you send?

A. The Pathe Exchange, International News Reel Corporation, and Fox Film Corporation.

Q. Do you know whether they are shown in the United States, in the ordinary programmes in the theatres?

A. Yes.

Q. You know that?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you seen any reviews of them?

A. No, to my knowledge nothing has come to India.

Q. How long have you been doing this?

A. For four years.

Q. Is it not commented upon in any of the newspapers there?

A. No, the news pictures that I send are not of very great interest.

Q. But who shows them there?

A. Pathe people specially. They have got their Pathe Gazette and they have got all other news films and topicals. They include mine along with the others.

Q. Who gives the titles?

A. Of course, I give them a summary of the news and they make their own titles.

Q. They edit them? Have you seen any such edited films of yours?

A. No, I have not.

Q. What they show there you don't know. You don't get any programme?

A. No.

Q. You simply sell them?

A. Yes.

Q. On what terms?

A. They pay me two dollars a foot for every foot of film accepted.

Q. Whether you have developed them or not?

A. For the news films they pay me 2 dollars a foot undeveloped. But they do not pay so much for the review films. It all depends on the value of the film. One dollar is the highest and 10 per cents is the lowest.

Q. You get between 50 cents, to one dollar for the review films which you develop and send?

A. Because more footage of review films are accepted at each time than news films. For instance they will accept only one hundred or two hundred feet of news films whereas review films will be accepted usually by the thousand.

Q. How many thousands have you sent altogether?

A. Up to now only about 3,000 feet of review films have been accepted.

Q. Out of how many that you sent?

A. Out of about 6,000 feet.

Q. Well, you are making a living out of that. Or are you also doing anything else?

A. That is my only business.

Q. You don't do any photography or anything?

A. No.

Q. Simply take the films and send them to the United States?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there any other people like you?

A. I have no idea. There are people who take films but I don't know anybody who sends films to the United States.

Mr. Green: You send only to the United States?

A. Yes, only to the United States.

Chairman: And to other places?

A. No.

Q. You have never tried England?

A. No, I have not tried England.

Q. Are there any people who send films like that to England?

A. I don't know. There used to be somebody before, I heard, but I don't know anybody now.

Q. Where did you learn film-taking?

A. Practically by myself, I read the theory of the subject myself and then I bought the necessary apparatus and worked them myself.

Q. How much have you invested?

A. Up to about Rs. 3,000, including books and apparatus.

Q. How much have you got out of it? Have you repaid yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. Repaid you the three thousand, and you are making some living out of it?

A. Yes.

Q. How is it you have not been getting information. Do you ask for information as to how your films fare there?—Whether they make use of it?

A. Even if we ask they won't supply the information. They are only interested in the marketing of the films themselves.

Q. I know but you have not heard whether your films are being exhibited there or not?

A. Once they pay me for the film they must exhibit it. Otherwise it won't pay them.

Sir H. Jaffer: Can you produce a list of the films sent now?

A. I have not the list with me just now.

Chairman: They have got the property of the negative?

A. Once I send it to them, and am paid, it becomes their property.

Q. What about the reviews?

A. Even for the review I send the negatives along with the positive, though rarely the positive.

Q. So you get 50 cents. to a dollar for the whole job. You cannot reprint.

A. Yes. I cannot reprint.

Q. So they are the owners? Pathes, International, and Fox. These three agencies.

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: Have you got a regular engagement with them?

A. No, whatever I send they see. If they accept it, they pay.

Q. How did they come to engage you. Don't their agents come out here?

A. No, I have not met anybody.

Chairman: Now, you say Indian films are getting popular in India?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you tried to show any of your films in the local cinemas?

A. No, because locally I have seen other people doing the business and it does not pay them so much. So I don't want to try this thing yet. Besides it requires more money to appeal to the local people.

Q. Are your films connected with any religious propaganda?

A. No, nothing of that sort.

Q. Do you take any films for Christian Missionaries?

A. No.

now people who take them for Christian Missionaries like that abroad?—

I don't know.

Does anyone see your films before you send them out?

No, nobody sees them.

You simply send them by post?

Yes.

And have you to take out a license for taking films?

Nothing.

For developing them?

Nothing.

Q. Suppose you don't use any electric energy in your place?

A. The ordinary electric supply, that is all.

Q. You are not dealing in any importing or renting or hiring of films?

A. No, I am not.

Q. You know nothing of the trade in that direction?

A. No.

Q. Is your interest in the cinema is that of a mere visitor so far as Indian cinemas are concerned?

A. No, I go mostly to cinemas to study the production and other things. My original idea was to become a producer but because of lack of finance and help I have just taken up this side of the industry. By and by I mean to have a regular company of my own.

Q. You hope to set up provided you get sufficient financial assistance?

A. Yes.

Q. Did they at all write to you expressing satisfaction with the way in which you had taken your pictures?

A. Yes.

Q. They have given you testimonials as to your good work?

A. Not exactly testimonials. They simply comment on the films. They say: your films are good. Send us some more.

Q. You have been encouraged to send more of them by these people?

A. Yes.

Q. You learnt this art by going and looking on at these film shows?

A. I go to pictures to study not exactly the photographic side of the thing but the acting side of it, the directing side of it and so on.

Q. You study the thing in order to understand the trade?

A. Yes, and to keep informed about latest developments.

Sir H. Jaffer: Did you make any films with any Indian chiefs?

A. No.

Q. For any private persons?

A. No. But some educational authorities have asked me to make films for them. I have given them my estimate, but they told me that they would write to the Government to get sufficient funds.

Q. No other private individuals or anybody?

A. No.

Chairman: What was your quotation in the case to which you referred?

A. One rupee a foot is what I wanted.

Sir H. Jaffer: You didn't send the Congress film, I suppose?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. You took the Congress film?

A. Yes.

Q. What have you done with it?

A. I sent it away undeveloped.

Q. How many feet?

A. About 200 feet.

Q. For the first day?

A. Not the first day only. The panoramic view and some the Congress.

Q. How much will you get from that company?

A. Rs. 6 a foot.

Q. That means you will get Rs. 1,200 for this?

A. That is if the whole of it is accepted.

Q. You are only paid for the length that is accepted. If know if they cut out anything?

A. They return the rejected parts to us.

Q. You say that local boards and municipalities should open

A. Yes, that would create a market and encourage more film production.

Q. Don't you think open air cinemas will be useful also—without building any other cinema houses?

A. No, I don't think so.

Q. The G. I. P. people show in their van, or something like that.

A. But when it is a matter of taking in people, you can't regulate the crowd.

Q. You can make a temporary compound.

A. You might be disturbed by people around and by lighted lamps nearby. When it is a matter of regular exhibiting, it will become a nuisance to control the crowd and disturbances.

Q. You say the censorship here is adequate?

A. Yes.

Q. How do you know this?

A. Because I did not see anything objectionable in anything I have seen on the screen.

Q. Your films were not censored at any time.

A. No.

Q. If you have no personal knowledge of this then how do you say that censorship is adequate?

A. Because at the same time I see films in the theatres, they are morally good which shows that censorship is adequate.

Q. That is all?

A. Yes.

Q. You are an advocate of a national language. What language would you yourself suggest to the Government to adopt?

A. I think Hindi is widely known. I would suggest Hindi.

Colonel Crawford: What percentage, as a rule, of these topical films which you send to America is accepted?

A. About 50 per cent.

Q. Is that scenery or news?

A. Both, about 50 per cent.

Q. Now, do you provide the caption for the films?

A. No, not exactly captions, but I give them the particulars of the subject and they make the captions themselves.

Q. Now your only market at the moment is the American market. Have you tried the English market?

A. No, I have not tried it.

Q. Are you thinking of trying?

A. I don't think so.

Q. I wanted to get your topics put in the British Empire topical would you go about it?

A. No idea.

Q. Among the Indian Trade Commissioner or

light of that.

Q. No other country at present?

A. I did not go and find out about England because my films were shown in England. Once it is accepted in the United States it will also be shown in England, because the Pathe people have branches all over the world. So also have the International people and the Fox people.

Q. Well, now, are your film accepted in Bombay? Or does it go to America first?

A. I send them direct to the head office in New York.

Q. And the only other subject you do is a certain amount of scenic.

A. Yes, temples and other things, and something about squirrels—pets and other things, particularly Indian pets. Animals, birds and others.

Q. Do you do much of that sort of thing?—What I call natural history and natural science?

A. Yes. Anything that will appeal to the American people. I study their magazines to see what will appeal to them and I try and satisfy their interest.

Chairman: It is very clever of you.

Colonel Crawford: But the prices for this sort of films are not at present very good. Have you tried any Indian jungle films?

A. No, I have not yet.

Q. You are making a satisfactory livelihood out of this business?

A. Not much, because I don't get much subjects. New subjects are very rare.

Q. Your activities are confined to the Madras Presidency?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Do you take films of festivals?

A. Yes, but all these festivals are almost the same. The grandest festivals are accepted. I sent lots of festival films but I noticed only the best festivals which could show something magnificent and large crowds and all that were accepted.

Q. Have you ever tried taking films of a car procession?

A. Even that..... Last year I sent some.

Q. And was that accepted?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: How did you get in touch with the New York people?

A. I took up a course in motion picture photography.

Q. Where was this?

A. In New York.

Q. How?

A. By correspondence. And they told me how to market films.

Q. And you found no difficulty in getting your films accepted?

A. No difficulty whatever.

Q. I see that you are in favour of a central board for censorship purposes. You don't contemplate that there will be any great difficulty in sending films there and getting them censored?

A. No, I don't.

Q. Now, it has been suggested that films made in India be submitted to the censor before they are exported in order to see that to India are not exported. How would that affect your business?

A. For instance, supposing I am undeveloped will I show it to the censors?

Q. That is the point. It is as is insisted on it will stop your business.

A. Yes, undoubtedly.

Q. Therefore, I take it, you would oppose that.

A. Yes.

Q. Or would it be possible to exempt news films from

A. Evidently not, because no one would know whether it was news or not, and in some cases I have been asked to submit the review films also undeveloped, (films other than news, even these films at times have to be submitted undeveloped).

Q. This would in effect entirely stop the trade in taking negative and sending them to foreign countries for development?

A. Yes, it would.

Q. It has been suggested that a Government studio would be of use to gentlemen like you. That is to say it has been suggested that a studio should be opened by Government in Bombay, Calcutta or Madras, and that this should be hired out to producers. Would it be any use to you if you had at your disposal here for hire a Government studio?

A. If the Government studio took up developing work it would be of use to me because I could take the picture and send it to them for developing. While developing I find it very difficult to maintain an even temperature of the solutions in the laboratory. In a regular studio they can keep the temperature uniform.

Q. Or it might be somewhere in the hills.

A. Even there the temperature varies. The temperature has to be kept at 65 degrees Fahr. for doing the best work.

Q. For your work you would only want a studio for such developing work?

A. Yes.

Q. But if a commercial company undertook developing films satisfactorily that would be equally good?

A. Yes, exactly.

Q. On the production side, a government studio would not help you? I will put it in another way. Supposing Government had a studio of their own somewhere to produce educational films—not feature films but educational, and public health films, and so on, with an expert staff, would that help you in any way? You could get advice from them and assistance.

A. I don't think so.

Chairman: Would it not develop your business in other directions, if you had a studio to which you could go? You could take other films and get known.

A. Yes, if I was permitted to make use of it.

Q. Would it not develop other kinds of business?

A. Yes, it would.

Q. If you had a studio to go to?

A. That is if the studio could allow me to work at a reasonable hire.

Q. Mr. Green: If it were available by hire with all the apparatus and so on, you might be able to produce feature films.

A. Yes.

Q. I think you said you intended to start this but had not the finance.

A. Exactly. And I require especially for motion picture dramas a better kind of equipment.

Q. Yes, I see your point, and if you could get these for hire, you could make use of them?

A. Yes.

Chairman: You can extend and enhance your business?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: But would it be any use to you if this studio were situated not in Madras but in Bombay or in Calcutta?

A. No. I don't think it would unless I go there.

Mr. Coatsman: Are we to understand this is your whole time job? This is the only work you do?

A. Yes, I live by this.

Q. Have you ever seen any of your own productions on the screen?

A. No, I have not.

Q. None of them are shown in India?

A. I have not seen any.

Q. When you began did you not have the negatives developed?

A. Yes.

Q. You did that at first?

A. Yes. I have got some negatives with me even now.

Q. But now you never trouble to develop any of them?

A. I do whenever necessary.

Q. Have you seen your films?

A. I have seen my films myself, but I have not seen them on the theatre screen. All this is supplied to the Pathe and other people.

Q. Apart from this question of Government studio and so on, and the possibility of your being able to make a picture, can you see any possibility of extending your present business?

A. Not at present, unless somebody with finance comes forward to co-operate with me.

Q. Would it pay you, for example, to go up to Delhi to take the opening of the Legislative Assembly and various other functions?

A. No, I do not think so. Besides, if I get out of the Madras presidency, I am afraid there will be other camera men doing similar work like myself in their respective locality.

Q. I can tell you there is not any.

Chairman: There are one or two in Lahore who can come down there.

Mr. Coatsman: Even if there was no competition you do not think it would pay you?

A. It will pay me if there is something like the Air Force display, something spectacular.

Chairman: If you film the opening of the Legislature by the Viceroy that would be popular?

A. I do not think that would be of any news value to the American people.

Mr. Coatsman: You do not think that pageants would be good enough?

A. They would be all right, and even here they must be spectacular, lavish and unique.

Sir Ibrahim Haroon Jaffer: Not the Indian Cinematograph Committee? It is not important?

A. No. It is important to India, but it may not be important to the Americans. American camera men may have an eye on the Cinema Committee here, but to the people (the masses) the picture itself would not be important.

Chairman: They won't want to look at us. (Laughter).

A. Because the picture has to appeal to the masses, and not to the men engaged in the industry.

Sir Ibrahim Haroon Jaffer: Do they know in America that there is a cinema committee sitting here in India?

A. They may know.

Chairman: They are on the watch.

Sir Ibrahim Haroon Jaffer: If you send a film of this Committee you will get more money?

A. My film must appeal to the people, not the men in the industry, or any particular individuals.

Chairman: They must have a screen value?

A. Yes.

Mr. Coatman: You mentioned a minute ago about Royal Air Force pageants. Had you thought of going up there to film them?

A. Yes, but I did not command enough of finance.

Q. That was the reason that decided you against it?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you say how much it will cost you?

A. At least about.....

Chairman: A third class return ticket to and from Delhi is about Rs. 100.

A. It will cost me about Rs. 500.

Mr. Coatman: That is your trouble?

A. Yes.

Q. If you could get hold of somebody to finance you you would be prepared to go about India and expand your business?

A. Yes.

Q. And you would take an assistant?

A. Yes, I must have an assistant.

Mr. Neogy: You do not seem to attach much importance to training in England? I mean sending men abroad to foreign countries. You say going to foreign countries to learn motion picture production is not necessary and even useless—that is what you say in your written statement.

A. Because the conditions in England are different from those in India.

Q. Then how do you expect people to learn the art?

A. We can get men from England or better still from the United States as the United States leads in motion picture production. I may here add that it would be very advantageous to have one expert from every leading country like United States of America, Germany, France, Russia and England. Then we can learn the different methods and evolve an original method.

Q. You want to get experts out here to teach?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Don't you think you will improve if you are sent for a six months' study?

A. No doubt I will improve, but if the Government were to take it up on a large scale, if they were to send other men besides myself, for the amount that they would invest in that way they could as well open an institute here. Again, if at all somebody goes from here, they would not be taught much and I have had talks with people who have gone to England and they say they are taught only superficially.

Mr. Neogy: But supposing people who are already in the line, who know something about this business were to be sent, don't you think they would derive benefit?

A. I do not think so. If at all we go to England, we have got to go to a studio to learn these things. And the studio people would not be interested in showing those things to us because they are busy people and they will only be caring for their own business and they may not take the trouble to explain things to us. Of course, if we stayed there for some 5 or 10 years, then we would be able to pick up business, but that is an impracticable thing I should say.

Q. Has there been any complaint from your patrons in America about the quality of the photography of your pictures?

A. No.

Chairman: He has received on the other hand approvals.

Mr. Neogy: You are not in favour of the State interfering with private enterprise, that is what you say?

A. Yes.

Q. And supposing we had Government studios and some private producers were to take advantage of those studios, might not they be competing on unequal terms with people who may have set up studios on their own account?

A. I do not think so.

Q. Do you think there is any great chance for the development of this industry if the number of smaller producers were to be increased?

A. There should be joint action on the part of all these small producers.

Q. That is to say, whatever is done should be done on as large a scale as possible in order to lead to success, that is your idea?

A. Even if there are smaller businesses working independently, all of them should join together and so far as marketing films and other things are concerned, they should combine to form a central organisation or corporation or league for mutual benefit.

Chairman: You mean they should organise themselves?

A. Yes. Join hands and work for mutual improvement.

Mr. Neogy: Have you ever tried to ascertain the chances for the amusement films produced in India to secure a market in America?

A. Yes. I have often communicated with some American people, but they have discouraged me from doing it, they have asked me not to send any amusement films, like dramas, stories, comics.

Q. They do not want them?

A. Not exactly, because if we want to market them they will have to be of high value photographically and otherwise. Besides, it is very difficult to market our films, especially these big pictures, such as 5 reels or 6 reels stories and comedies.

Q. You do not think they will have a market abroad?

A. They will have a market, but you will require large finance to push them there.

Supplementary Statement of Mr. JOSEPH A. DAVID, dated the 11th January 1928.

I am herein enclosing a list of the subjects filmed and sent to the United States and which were accepted.

List of Subjects filmed.

The Cocoa-nut Palm and its many uses.

A shy dame of the plant world—the touch-me-not tree.

The plucky fisherman of Chittagong—their successful arrival in Madras after being adrift for 3 days and covering about 1,000 miles.

Steady sure and persevering—the Indian Carver at work.

A glimpse of the greatness of the past,—the carvings at Mahabalipuram (Madrassa).

Indian pets:—

The bulbul.

The Mongoose.

The Indian Squirrel.

The Monkey.

Reception of the Apostle delegate to India.

Mr. Squirrel and his family—showing wild life with natural setting.

In memory of St. Thomas the apostle—scenes of small mount, St. Thomas' mount and Mylapore.

East or West every where the kiddies are same. (Child studies).

The Brahama Utsavam at Mylapore Madr: .

Muscle control not new to India—An Indian Physical culturist's demonstrations.

The land of temples—South India with its ancient temples.

The magic of the Paddy—South India's familiar food stuff (showing the growth of the plant from a grain of Paddy to the full plant in a few minutes,—time condensation work).

The 42nd Indian National Congress, Madras.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. GEORGE S. ISAAC, B.A., L.T., English Assistant, Voorhees College, Yellore, on Wednesday, the 11th January 1928.**

Chairman: You have not favoured us with a written statement?

A. I have been asked only to give oral evidence.

Q. Have you seen our questionnaire?

A. No.

Q. You stay in Vellore. How long have you been there?

A. I was a student at Vellore and I am now a teacher there.

Q. Have you got any permanent cinema in Vellore?

A. No, only touring cinemas come there.

Q. How often do they come?

A. Say twice a year, but they make a long stay of about three months at a time. Two years back they started a company and they were working for about six months or so. Then it was mismanaged and the money was misappropriated and so it had to be closed down.

175

Q. Is there a permanent building there?

A. Yes.

Q. Who built it?

A. Some residents of the town.

Q. What use is being made of that building now?

A. They use it for dramatic entertainments.

Q. Dramatic and other troupes which visit Vellore?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the population of Vellore?

A. 60,000.

Q. And when the travelling cinemas come do they use that building?

A. No. They bring tents of their own.

Q. Big tents?

A. Fairly big.

Q. How many people can be accommodated there?

A. About 1,000 people.

Q. Wherefrom do these travelling cinemas come?

A. There is only one company that I know of, and that is the Jos Electric Bioscope Company. Its headquarters are somewhere in Malabar.

Q. Trichur?

A. I do not know.

Q. What sort of films do they show? You go there when they come?

A. Yes.

Q. And they are popular when they come?

A. Popular when Indian films are shown. They show Indian films.

Q. Very much?

A. So far as my impression goes, they are not of a good order, as a work of art but still they are patronised very much.

Q. I suppose they bring also western films?

A. Yes.

Q. What sort of western films?

A. Sensational serials, adventurous.

Q. Thrills?

A. Yes.

Q. They are also popular?

A. Yes.

Q. And very little of social life? Do they show much of social life?

A. Not much, very little.

Q. So, those two things form the main items, Indian films and the serials?

A. Yes. One day we got up an entertainment for the students and we asked the man to show some films of an educational value.

Q. Had they any?

A. He showed occupations of women, forest scenes and some war pictures.

Chairman: I suppose as an educationist you believe in using the film as an educative factor?

A. Yes. I have come to plead for it. I have drawn up a scheme and I wish to present it to you.

Q. Do you think the film has got a great place in supplementing education given in schools?

A. Yes, also for health propaganda, adult education and several other matters. I do believe in it.

Q. Have you seen it done at all?

A. I have seen some of the films.

Q. Shown where?

A. Four or five years back I went to the Gaiety in Madras and there was a film shown about child welfare work in New York. The most interesting thing was that the child welfare centre was placed on board a ship and the mothers brought their children and left them in charge of the nurses there. The children were cared for when the mothers were working in the factories. The way in which they were washed and cleaned and were cared for appealed to me most, and I thought it would be of great use if we had such films under Indian conditions.

Q. Under Indian conditions, you think the washing system adopted in the west is suited to our country?

A. Of course habits differ.

Q. Our people cannot get the facilities say soap, towels, etc.?

A. But they can get soap nuts. Really we will have to create ideal conditions, take pictures of them and then present them to the people.

Q. So you think such films ought to be prepared?

A. Yes. I have great faith in the use of the film for mass education.

Q. You think the Government departments should busy themselves with it?

A. Yes; the health department and the education department and the agricultural department must combine together for this purpose.

Q. You are not concerned as to how they produce them but you only want such films to be produced?

A. Yes. I am not concerned with the politics of it, whether they produce them themselves or ask others to do so.

Q. But you want them to be produced urgently?

A. Yes.

Q. You think Government have already lost much time over it?

A. They have been sleeping over it.

Q. You think that the films shown in Vellore interest your students?

A. I do not believe they have any educational value.

Q. But do the students go to these cinemas?

A. They do, most of them. They come and tell me the story and I do not object to their going.

Q. You don't think there is anything which need be objected to in the films that are shown to them?

A. If I had seen, I would have drawn their attention to any particular thing, but I do not myself go very often.

Q. But so far you have not seen anything objectionable?

A. Not now. I think the tone of some of the films has improved now; but four years back I saw a horrible film. There was a lady seated behind at the Gaiety where it was shown and she shrieked.

Q. But what about the films shown in Vellore?

A. I think the moral tone of the films has improved considerably.

Q. You have not seen anything in Vellore so far which was objectionable?

A. No. The one that I saw in Madras was a struggle between a man and a woman and the man was forcing her, i.e., trying to outrage her modesty.

Q. What is wrong with that?

A. Such things will rouse the passions of men.

Q. But what happened afterwards?

A. It was closed before anything happened.

Q. But the woman was able to resist?

A. But it generally affects the imagination which is really a great evil.

Q. But if the man had been punished in the end, I think it would be all right?

A. I did not see the end.

Q. Supposing some such scene takes place in the public street, if that is necessary for the story, you will have to depict it?

A. I would hesitate a thousand times before doing it.

Q. Do you remember any other incident like this to which you would have taken objection?

A. No.

Q. I suppose whenever you come to Madras, which you do pretty frequently, you visit the cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. You do not consider the cinema has any baneful influence on the public?

A. Some three or four years back a case was reported in the Chief Presidency Magistrate's Court, Madras, when the accused attributed his committing the crime to what he learnt from the cinema.

Q. He might have said so because he wanted to extenuate his crime. But what is the general effect?

A. Generally I do not think it has any baneful influence.

Q. Do you use the magic lantern in your school?

A. We have a magic lantern outfit, but we do not use it very much.

Q. If you have films for use, how do you propose to use them?

A. The scheme that I support has the support of many people.

Q. Have you submitted it to the Government?

A. No. I have been interesting many people, educational officers and others with whom I come in contact, and the President of the Women's Medical School, in this scheme.

Q. You have got a copy of the scheme?

A. Yes. I consulted the Motor Engineer of Messrs. Addison & Co., and he has supplied me with a copy (handing over the copy).

Q. I suppose you also want to move the Health and Education departments?

A. Yes.

Q. How are you going to get the films?

A. We can get them from any stores.

Q. But you want Indian setting?

A. Yes.

Q. Therefore films will have to be taken here?

A. But there will be no harm in using some of the English films.

Q. Of course there are many of them which can be used with advantage. We saw some in Lahore. Have you worked out the cost of making films?

A. No.

Q. Have you made any enquiry about the cost?

A. No.

Q. Do you know whether any films are being taken in this country for propaganda purposes by missionaries from abroad?

A. I saw only one in Jhansi in the Central Provinces.

Q. Have you seen that film?

A. I have not seen it exhibited. I have seen only the reels.

Q. Where did you see it?

A. Two years back I was staying with a missionary for some time.

Q. I suppose he sent it home?

A. Yes, for the purpose of propaganda and collecting money.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: In order to encourage this industry, do you think there ought to be scholarships for boys going abroad?

A. Yes, students from our country should be sent abroad for training them in the art of making films.

Q. But they will be taught superficially. There may be some trade secrets which those people may not be prepared to give out?

A. I do not know the conditions in the West. If our boys are sent abroad and trained there, they can train others to prepare the films under Indian conditions.

Q. Do you think that for this purpose, something like an entertainment tax is necessary?

A. Yes, an amusement tax may be levied.

Q. And ear-marked for this purpose?

A. Yes. Some sort of educational cess may also be levied. For instance, the municipalities now levy an educational cess, and similarly a cess may be levied on the people, and a portable outfit may be used in the districts for mass education and health propaganda.

Q. Where should these boys be taught?

A. There must be a separate institution altogether.

Col. Crawford: You attach great importance to visual instruction?

A. Yes.

Q. In that case would you be prepared to spend a portion of the grant now made for education on visual instruction?

A. As it is, the education grant is insufficient.

Q. Having regard to that fact, do you consider that a portion of it should be spent on visual instruction say in the nature of films?

A. Yes.

Mr. Coatsman: I should like to know what sort of pictures, in your opinion, would be most acceptable to Indian audiences?

A. I am in favour of films of adventure, thrills and sensations; but I do not believe they do harm to the audience. It is only when they leave a sort of suggestion in the mind, that I would object.

Q. What about Indian films?

A. Indian films are of the same quality as the western films, but as a work of art, the Indian films are poor.

Q. What sort of subjects would you advocate?

A. I would prefer Hindu and Muhammadan stories and also novels. Just as they have English or American novels photographed, we could also have our dramas and novels photographed.

Q. That is, the same kind of pictures as are shewn now with the exaggerations cut out?

A. Yes.

Supplement to the Oral Evidence of Mr. GEORGE S. ISAAC.

In connection with the ideas of Mr. Isaac regarding travelling cinematograph outfits to tour towns and villages for health and educational purposes, the following scheme may be of interest to the Commission. It is possible to

construct a self-contained cinematograph outfit on say a 1 ton Dodge Graham chassis briefly as follows:—

A body is constructed on caravan lines to accommodate two persons—e.g., an operator and a lecturer. The body would provide sleeping accommodation and would in appearance and construction be somewhat similar to the Madras Corporation ambulances. In front of the radiator and mounted on the ends of the chassis frame is a platform on which is mounted a dynamo for the supply of electric current for the cinematograph. This can be driven in the case of a Dodge Graham direct from the end of the engine crankshaft—and is detachable if and when long journeys are undertaken. The Projector can be mounted on a separate table and can be stored in the vehicle when on the move.

A light and cheap type of chassis is not recommended for this work. It is considered advisable that at least a 1 ton capacity vehicle be utilized.

As regards cost of outfits, the following approximate figures may be of assistance:—

	Rs.
Chassis, complete	3,850
Body, about	1,100
Dynamo and fittings, about	700
Projector, about	500
TOTAL	6,150

The above figures are approximate as it is not known what size of projector and dynamo would be required.

Written Statement of Mr. S. DEVASANKAR AIYAR, Amateur Cinematographer, Madras, dated the 1st December 1927.

1. I have been an amateur Cinematographer for the past 13 years and am very much interested in Educational and Tropical films. As such, I have studied critically several pictures both Indian and Foreign. I want therefore to take the opportunity of placing before the Cinema Enquiry Committee my views on the subject and herein below they are set forth in brief.

The views expressed are not complete answers to all the questions raised in their different aspects, but they give in general a reply to several portions of them. The questionnaire as published has mixed up several necessarily different aspects under one common question and in the case of censorship, the different questions require perhaps more or less the same answer or the answers to the first part of the questionnaire will give a clue to the particular questions dealing with censorship.

My point is therefore that an answer "Yes" or "no" to a particular question will not carry a proper impression to the Committee. It is therefore necessary to frame several questions for different aspects of the subject, to get a correct view of opinions sought. This view ought to be a necessary preface, in my opinion, to any opinion to be expressed by any person.

2. (a), (b) and (c) My experience of the Cinema audience covers mostly Poona, Bombay and to some extent Madras as well.

The theatre going public may be classified into:—

- The artisans, the hawkers and the daily labourites;
- School boys and children up to 14 or 15 years.
- Educated men on poor salary and the lower middle class.
- The well to do class, grown up boys and students.
- The aristocratic public in big cities.

Of these above, the illiterate class, if ability to read and write any language is the only test, forms about 1/3rd or 1/4th of the front benches, the classes (a) and (b) above.

The proportion of the children under 15 years may be about 1/7th the ordinary attendance of the whole theatre.

Part I. Film Industry in India.

3. To answer this question one must go back into the history and development of the theatres and film production in India. Prior to 1915 the ordinary cinema programme consisted of say about 8,000 to 7,000 feet representing about 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 hours show comprising:—

- (a) A Scenic or Topical;
- (b) A Comic;
- (c) A drama in 3 to 4 thousand feet.

The supplies were mostly British, French, and Netherlands. (The Warwick pictures, the Lubin pictures, the Gaumont's, Pathe's and Nordisk's pictures). The supply was not enough and almost all the exhibitors, and especially the travelling exhibitor had to depend upon stock films, old and worn out—and even of these he had not a sufficient stock to rotate if he happened to stop at the same place for a month or so. The few film producers in India (hardly half a dozen) depended for their patronage upon a few orders from one or two foreign companies and a few Indian States.

About 1912-13, the first attempt at a supply of Indian dramas was made and all credit and praise is due to Mr. Phalke for effective and enduring films in this direction. With his limited and borrowed capital he found himself in financial difficulties. His mythological dramas were pure and free from moral objections from the Indian standpoint. He had, like others, to follow the usual programme of a Scenic, a Comic and the Drama as making a complete show. The Scenics as scenics, did not create much interest, but interest certainly clustered round the drama and a few trick films. Though renters were benefited by Mr. Phalke's films and his dramas, and they did begin to show reappearing life (for many theatres were on the declining condition), for want of sufficient number of new films of the kind and the inclination of the exhibitors for the then cheaper foreign films of very ordinary merit, there was a set back to Mr. Phalke's further attempts and his films also. As a matter of fact with all his persuasive efforts he could not find a buyer for his film "Krishnajanma" for less than three or four thousand rupees, though the present owners of that particular film have made a fortune out of that film alone. Sufficient interest had not yet been aroused then in the potentiality of the film story as a means of recreation or as a medium of expressing special human interests.

The honour of demonstrating the possibilities of the Cinema as a means of recreation, education and of producing a sustained interest in the stories presented on the screen and of bringing back to life and creating new cinema theatres, must be given to the Universal Co. of America. For the advent of their "Lucille Love" and "Trey of Hearts" was a turning point in the history of theatres as well as that of the film industry in India. Those two films forced on the attention of the public how, in exquisitely effective and varied ways, human interest could be depicted in an absorbing manner on the screen in living form, and a feverish interest could be aroused and sustained in the desire of the people for seeing a story continued on the screen for a number of weeks. Thus the serial film, visualising all sorts of life, domestic, social, official, and savage, human emotions such as fear, jealousy, love, tenderness for women, etc., came to be the order of the day. These foreign films showed how women can and will raise themselves against all obstacles insurmountable to man and overcome them. The serials were full of action, quick thinking, quick action, and thrilling deeds. Here then is the answer to the question as to what class of films are most popular, not only in India, but in the British Isles as well as the British Empire and the picture producing America. The popularity of these films is universal. They have grown

such interest even in the British Isles that the 4,000 theatres or so in Britain favour the American productions to their own if we are to believe the cry that has been going on in the newspaper. It is no wonder therefore, that the decaying theatres caught the wave of public feeling aroused by the serials and catered for them.

The fact still remains that in India interest in the Indian dramas were also growing. The serial films were no doubt to some extent guides in the delineation of the stories though the Indian producers did not catch the idea for some years. The aristocratic class who attend the theatre more for pleasure and whiling away time, are now coming back to prefer the single programme stories and the enthusiastic interest in serials have had their display in the last ten years. To my mind the interest will decline unless new themes are introduced and novel methods are displayed of describing the story. To view the same theme and the same methods has become a tiresome affair and it remains to be seen what new kinds of pictures will be made to please the public.

The Indian producers without any European training, have in the incredibly short period of about 10 years produced films of more or less uniform photographic quality, and fairly correctly delineated the stories they illustrated. In spite of the several technical defects, the Indian films have attracted large crowds, and it is a compliment to the Indian public, the illiterate especially (the front benches and the middle classes) that when two pictures are being run in adjacent theatres, the one showing a thrilling serial and the other running an Indian produced mythology or social drama, the attendance in the former were appreciably less than in the latter. Here then is the true clue to the Indian character and how far he will be spoiled or not by viewing foreign pictures. He is more readily attracted by his own mythological films than the mirth producing foreign film in which the acting is superior, the get up is more so.

Judging from the several pictures Indian, that have hitherto been produced, the Indian film cannot equal the excellence of the foreign comic, or the fineness of the foreign acting and interpretation of the story on the screen. The Indian films also show a marked want of prior thought. The defect is inherent in the Indian nature. Whereas the foreign actors act their every day life, the Indians have to act what they are not accustomed to. The Indian is naturally shy of acting in public what he does in the house. He is not accustomed to showing his softer domestic life before other people's gaze, not even in his home. This defect deprives the Indian drama of so much of delineation of personal character and traits. Western films reveal plenty of thought and experiments towards making a successful pleasure producing film. The public whom they have to cater for are of a different order from the Indian.

From the mere point of view of recreation, the Indian producers are not making any films at all nor are the exhibitors catering adequately for Indian audience.

The answer to question 6 is found in the above.

6. (a) Indian topicals and Indian News will be of interest provided scenes from different parts of India, varied in character and showing progress in all walks of life, are shown. A State made picture would not be popular if it showed only receptions and "At Homes" of Governors, which were the kinds of topicals in the earlier attempts at making news films. As an instance in point, I may cite the fate of the 8 or 10 thousand feet of film taken by European experts of the whole tour of his Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught in 1919. The film was produced by the Tatas with the money of the Tata Publicity Corporation at a cost of over 50,000. The pictures were said to be very good and such a film would have served a useful purpose as publicity picture at least in all schools. Madan theatres with their large circuit of theatres, and with some members of the Tata house on its syndicate would not book the film. It had to be passed on to the Universal Co. and what financial or educational success has attended that film.

7. I have no idea.

9. I am not quite satisfied. More films and on varied subjects are necessary. It is also a fact that all productions by Indian Companies do not go the round of the barely 200 cinemas or 250 cinemas in all India, Burma and Ceylon. Whether it is due to the costliness of the film or the fact that some exhibitors are not in a position to stick to their contractors, I cannot say. This question must well be answered by producers and exhibitors and distributors.

9. I cannot talk about the dramas. But suitable topicals, scenics and educational, in reasonable lengths, are not available. The fact also remains that scenics and topicals cannot be forced on the exhibitors. Competitive skill must be the basis of a demand for such pictures. The "Gaumont Gazette" has stopped circulation in India. The Pathe Gazette and the Pathe News are more or less a forced show but the quality of the pictures are certainly good and the titles are ever attractive. No Indian producer has exhibited such uniformly pleasing titles hitherto. The censor certificates are the worst examples of titles. The scenics and topicals if properly worked out, would form an excellent means of imparting general as well as particular instruction not only to students but to the public as well. And there is no limit to these pictures. Any Central or State controlled Board, if it cares to give prominence to education ought to keep a copy of such films in their circulation library or at least keep a list of such films together with some descriptive literature on the subject matter as also the addresses of the makers or publishers wherefrom they could be hired out by educational institutions.

10. Monopoly of supply and Block. My impression is that this exists and I can see no remedy out of it. It is purely a business arrangement.

11. Yes, as regards present conditions. There are no facilities, however, for educational films or machinery suited for educational exhibition apparatus which can be utilised for a 100 to 200 people.

12. Amusement tax is no doubt a handicap not only to the exhibitor but also to the people. I have come across a number of people who before the tax was introduced were regular visitors to the cinema but decreased the number of visits because of the tax. The tax was originally introduced, I think, for meeting the expenditure on the Censoring Board. I do not know if the collections now made in certain cities leave a surplus over censoring expenditure. In any case it ought either to be minimised or collected only in the cases of tickets costing over a rupee. In cases where private shows are given as in marriage parties or in schools there ought to be no collection.

13. The tariff is I understand about 25 per cent. of the foot value of the film calculated at annas four a foot. The tariff on educational films should be abolished altogether. The abolition of the tariff on the developing materials and the raw stock also should be helpful. The concession in these two cases will facilitate or stimulate the industry as well as the amateur.

14. Yes. But the educational and Agricultural films must be considered separately. The showing of educational films will stimulate the industry but the agricultural need not. Many people are ignorant of the possibilities of the educational cinema. Facilities must be given for its instruction. Both State and Private Agency must be usefully employed in this direction. The State Agency entirely will not work well. There will be neither interest nor popularity without the private man's interest. I would suggest a subsidised private Agency for each district, if possible, for making and showing suitable films in which the co-operation and advice of the Education Department and Government must be freely and readily given.

15. Taking of industrial, educational, agricultural and child welfare films, if conditions are favourable in advanced countries, it is more so in India, where the majority have not the means to travel and see things for themselves. New ideas must create an enquiring mind leading to the use of improvements. If improvements are to take place on western lines, there ought to be some effective means of showing the people what western methods are.

In this connection, there is no doubt ample scope for films to be made by Government or with Government help for the simple reason that they have at their command facilities which others do not have. Great irrigational

schemes and Engineering Works, the production of the mineral wealth of India for the student of Geology and the capitalist, the activities of the oil-field, the methods of obtaining forest produce and the customs of the people they are ruling over and so on. Whereas it should be the aim of Government to find out machinery for the cottage industries which are common in Europe which will both educate and enable villagers to occupy their spare time with advantage, the work of advertising big machinery for the big capitalists must be left to the makers of such machinery. If sewing machines costing Rs. 30 to 150 could keep a number of families and individuals going, a button making machinery, a chain making machine, celluloid dolls making outfit and so on ought to be available for the small capitalist. In this way articles of Japanese and German make which find a retail sale at the hawker's hand for a pie or two will also happen to be made as home industries here.

16. Not yet. Education by means of criticism in newspapers or special magazines dealing with cinema should be the means of effecting public opinion and improvement.

I would not suggest any help for the dramas. Subsidy for educational films is a potent means. My answer to this is already found in question-naire 14.

17. Capital. This question for a comparison must depend upon the extent of the circulation of the films. According to Mr. J. D. Williams, Director of British National pictures, there are 25,000 theatres in all the English speaking countries of the world of which 15,000 alone are in the United States America, and of the remaining 10,000, 4,000 are in Britain, Canada, Australia, and other parts of the Empire being only represented by 6,000. No wonder America has made enormous strides in film industry and invested huge capital with the products of which even Britain is fed in preference to her own if we are to believe the newspapers and the present cry for finding ways and means of patronizing British films. So to expect India to invest a comparatively large Capital does not arise for her barely 250 cinema theatres. But in my opinion there is sufficient capital in India for Indian films if all the theatres will encourage Indian films, but Indian films have to improve a thousand fold before they can dream of that happy situation. Their acting must improve. It is a pathetic sight to see a "Master of the Horse of a King's household priding upon his skill before the very Queen" finding it difficult to mount a horse not broken in for riding but for the cart and with hind legs knocking against each other. If capital is not forthcoming it is because the actions do not in any way compare with other films which are available.

19. Cost. The average cost of an Indian Drama of 6 to 7 thousand feet may be said to be Rs. 6 to 10 thousand it is possible for some films to be made at about half the sum. A good film may cost as much as Rs. 20,000 or Rs. 30,000 depending upon the actors, the property and the other expenditure on training and live stock. The above estimate of course presupposes the possession of suitable cameras, printers, exhibition and examining apparatus, etc.

Though I have no idea of the cost of foreign productions, their raw materials and machinery are much cheaper, and with the same property they turn out a number of stories so that the individual cost is reduced. But other items such as pay, etc., must be very high though not as much as the fabulous amounts which stars are credited with.

20. A state Agency may be of use only in producing educational and propaganda films showing what is being done in other countries and what has been achieved in this country and so on.

20. (b) For the educational films the expenditure will come from educational grants. In the days of the late Mr. Sharp, D.P.I., Bombay, some 13 or 14 years ago, he was reported to have spent as much as a lakh of rupees in the purchase of slides and stereoscopes for all the institutions under his control being a staunch believer in visual instruction and there is, I think, a special Deputy Inspector of schools handling that subject (Mr. Thore).

The main expenditure of making or supplying films and machinery for showing should be borne by Government. The total expenditure on this account will depend upon the extent of this help as also the kind of machinery used. Taking the 24 districts of Madras, for instance an initial expenditure of about Rs. 50,000 will be a fair start. For departmental purposes standard size films and machinery would be the best. There should be trained Mechanic or Operator for each machine supplied. Films and machinery and the Operator would be lent to institutions provided the salary of the Operator and the charges for lighting for the number of days the exhibition runs at a particular institution. But cost of the films must be borne by the Government. Government might also arrange a few free shows without any charge in lieu of a Visual Instruction Grant for the High Schools in the Presidency every year. Where schools are specially interested in Visual Instruction and are prepared to utilise moving picture in the class hours, suitable non-standard films such as the Pathe Baby or Kodak's small machinery films might be supplied as part of Visual Instruction grant, provided the schools will purchase the Showing machinery and the lighting outfit for same at their own expense, and keep a record of the shows given. These schools will thus have in a few years a vast library of educative films. The operators of Government machines will work under the orders of the District Educational Inspector. The services of such a trained mechanic should be available for Rs. 60 to Rs. 100 a month maximum to be attained in 20 years. No high paid officer is needed. The expenditure will thus be within the means of Government. The recurring expenditure on machinery and films need not be more than Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 thousand per year. The life of the machines may be put at between 7 and 10 years. Operators might be required to deposit a security if necessary.

21. In the first place there should be no monopoly by Government. Monopoly will kill the industry while the desire of the Government seems to be apparently to stimulate and improve it. The several points on which it is sought to create a central control by Government and monopoly by them do not arise. This is like Government rationing food to famine stricken population.

22. Forcing Empire films on exhibitors may not prove a success. Could Indian films of any kind be forced on the British or other parts of the Empire. If the best Empire pictures, with no titles or scenes showing the Indians to disadvantage are obtainable at competitive prices, many theatres might be willing to run them. Some of them might be made available for the educational authorities as outlined by me in 20 (b) above or in exchange for Indian films approved by the Censoring Board. In this connection it would be interesting to get a statistics of the number and theatres in which Indian made films, news, topical and all have had a kindly reception abroad. Equality of treatment should be the aim in coming to a decision. If lectures of Indian representatives sent abroad for studying conditions there illuminated their lectures by movies the effect would be greater. So, if people lecturing on India abroad used the cinema for good offices mutual education and mutual good-will will result.

22. I am against Imperial preference to British films alone.

(c) I cannot say.

23. (a) Please see 22 above.

(b) Similar facilities, inoffensive titles, omitting undesirable scenes must be mutually agreed to. Re: Financing I have no suggestion.

PART II.

Social Aspects.

24. (a) Serials showing fights and rowdyism, etc., are taken at the proper worth of the characters on the screen by the Indian public of all classes, allowances made and the story followed for mere fun. Whereas Social dramas showing gentlemen revelling in excesses are likely to demoralise the grown up

youths delighting in novels and romances and make them a little lax in sex relations. Even several novels do the same.

24. (b) No, so far as I am aware.

24. (c) I would not make a general statement but would wish that films embodying hold-ups in their story must invariably show the final defeat of such attempts.

(d) I have no idea of sex films.

(e) No.

25. No. We must know what the west is and what their outlook is or tends to be so that we may not fall in quicksands. Similarly our natural and general habits or customs must be seen by others without harmful inferential or suggestive titles.

26 and 27. I would first answer 27 (b). Some of the Italian firms produced films on a grand scale with Indian cast. They were good except the spirit of the story. The film "Budha" and "Daughter of the Ganges" are instances in point.

26. (b) Indians were no doubt dissatisfied. It was no use religious films being made without Indians possessing a real acquaintance with the stories. Foreign countries would do well to employ good class Indians on salaries equal to their own men, many will be found.

26. (a) No special care in censoring need be taken unless the offence is flagrant.

27. (a) I cannot say.

29. No. But I would insist on some mirth producing films in all the shows, which are very much appreciated by children.

31. Yes.

32. Yes. But I would suggest the inclusion of a retired Judge or Lawyer of repute and a film maker.

33. (a), (b), (c) Yes.

34. (a) No. A Central Board may give advice to Provincial Boards as to what class of subjects would prove harmful in particular Provinces, so that the Provincial Boards would inform the makers of films in their Provinces and the theatre management as to what class of films should be avoided either permanently or for short periods. I would only restrict this kind of censorship to films likely to create communal tension in areas predominantly populated by a particular class.

The Central Board's opinions will be communicated from time to time to Provincial Boards and the Provincial Boards should be relied upon to use their fair discretion. The Central Board may sit anywhere convenient to Government.

(d) The Boards would meet every week, and the remuneration per member might well be about Rs. 5 for each attendance, monthly salaries being allowed only to whole time staff. The remuneration ought not to be the attraction for the members of the Board. Interest in the subject ought to be the motive. Where a member absents himself for more than 3 sittings, another should be chosen in his place.

35. (a) I am not well acquainted with the Constitution of the Boards but I know of at least one instance where a person in receipt of a fairly decent salary and position trying to get into the Board for the sake of the remuneration. No need to say that his influence must have been used in various ways to get into the Board, and his views may as a consequence be not fair or judicial.

(b) A whole time Indian on Rs. 3 to Rs. 400 ought to be sufficient. He should be styled Secretary to the Board and would prepare and be ready with information on all points connected with films passed by the different Boards.

36. A broad outlook, genial disposition a desire for educational needs, and acquittance with the film making trade and process are essential to Inspectors. Augmenting the inspecting staff by the addition of an educationist and a film-maker is what I would suggest.

36. (b) My answer is the same as that to 34 (d). Suitable men will be available. We get very suitable men to sit as Honorary Presidency Magistrates from very well to do people both socially and financially. They receive no remuneration and are eager to attend the Courts every day if desired. An appointment like this will certainly carry a respectable status and Rs. 5 per sitting ought to be more than ample to meet the expenditure on hire of cars and a light tea and toast programme for those who will meet only for a few hours in the evenings.

37. (a) The present safeguards are enough.

38. There was one instance of an Indian film being passed in Bombay and prohibited in Madura. It is also seen from the evidence of one of the officers connected with censoring in Lahore that many Indian made films were prohibited in the Punjab and the exhibitors were ready in acquiescing in the desire of the censoring authority.

39. No.

40. There was an attempt to tax wall posters in Bombay on the ground that it interested with the beauty of the streets; No such fears need be entertained in my opinion.

41. The Indian made films have been always more than moral. I shall not be a party to blaming any foreign film exhibited in theatres as immoral from the foreign point of view. Social dramas of foreign make where the well-to-do class are shown indulging in excesses of any kind should not be frequently shown. An Indian who has received a good training at home is not, however, likely to go astray.

42. No. The exhibitors are generally for falling in with the views of the censoring Board.

43. No.

44. By free criticisms. A paragraph might be devoted by newspapers with every change of programme.

45. (a) I would not advocate any special control over film production. The registration fee for an educational film must be nominal and also the topical. There should be no unnecessary delay in registering such films.

(b) Studios and film producers would consider licensing as a block to improvement and stimulation of the trade. But studio where women are employed as actors might be registered and women Inspectors from welfare centres may visit such actress pretty frequently to study and report on the conditions of their life in the studios. Where flagrant misconduct is reported a restriction of some kind should be placed on that particular studio so long as women actresses are employed by them.

P. S.—While on this subject of License, I would like some restriction and control being placed on the theatres exhibiting films:—

1. Since people frequent the theatre for pleasure, recreation or as a pastime after a day's labour, the dinning noise of the Indian Cymbals (Jalra) or loud and harsh drums or the shrieking fiddle must be prohibited. A piano or similar soft music may be allowed. Noise and shrill tones interfere with the following of the story on the screen.

2. Selling of biscuits, lemons or drinks, etc., in the hall where space is usually crowded should be rigidly prohibited. This is becoming an increasing nuisance.

3. Unsteady pictures, either on account of worn-out machinery or unsuitable films or worn-out films must be tabooed altogether. Every exhibitor must be compelled to keep the running gear in good order.

Oral Evidence of Mr. S. DEVASHANKAR AIYAR, Amateur Cinematographer, on Wednesday, the 11th January 1928.

Chairman: You have been a close student of the cinema industry in this country?

A. Yes.

Q. You go to the cinema very often?

A. Not nowadays. I used to visit very often when I was in Bombay.

Q. Your settled conviction is that Indian films are getting more and more popular?

A. Yes.

Q. And every effort should be made to produce them?

A. Yes, in better style.

Q. You think the Indian films as now produced and shown are not good?

A. They are not equal to the British made ones, i.e., in the technique and the acting. In photography they are successful and they are sometimes better also.

Q. Do they show signs of improvement in acting?

A. Little, not much.

Q. What is your remedy?

A. Some of our actors must be sent to England or America or wherever convenient to study how the English and American films are made and how the acting is done there.

Q. Do you think that should be done by the Government or by the trade?

A. Both by the Government and the trade. The Trade by itself will not do it. If we want Indian settings for educational films, and there are not good studios here for the purpose, people from here may be sent abroad to learn the art. In that way Government can help. They should not encourage any particular company above. They may choose their own men and send them abroad.

Q. Do you make any pictures yourself? I suppose you do not?

A. Yes, I do. I have a working knowledge of the art.

Q. Have you any interest in any business concern of this sort?

A. I tried to interest myself. I sent a few films to Pathé News. I myself took them and sent them to the United States.

Q. Were they accepted?

A. That is the main difficulty. If I send 300 feet and they accept only 15 feet or so, it does not pay. I have now stopped sending and told them that I could not send them any films unless they took a definite length of pictures.

Q. When did you stop that?

A. I was sending films between 1921 and 1923, and then I stopped doing that.

Q. It did not pay you?

A. No.

Q. You were then busy otherwise?

A. But if this was paying, surely I would have left the other business.

Q. Where did you learn the art?

A. I learnt it myself. I was interested in visual instruction from my childhood. When I saw the Kinetograph pictures in Calcutta I thought I might also take up this subject and I did take it up definitely in 1914.

Q. Did you try to show any of the films which you took in India?

A. Yes. The first picture I made was that of the funeral procession of late Mr. Gokhale. I was then experimenting with films. One day at 6 o'clock I got information that Mr. Gokhale was dead. I had to hurry and had not a good outfit then, but I made my own makeshifts, ran to the theatre and took one or two scenes from the top of a theatre nearly 40 feet from level of the street which was then in a shade and many had their umbrellas open. So the picture was not as good as I would have liked it, but afterwards when I compared the scenes with other American films taken at height and distance I found that my photography was fairly good.

Q. What happened to it afterwards?

A. It was run in Poona for two weeks, in Sholapur for a week and then I paid for a week. I spent about Rs. 200 over it, but I got only Rs. 50.

Q. Why should it cost you Rs. 200?

A. It was only 100 feet. It was not enough and nobody would accept it and the subject would not be interesting unless I put some more scenes. I added the photograph of Mr. Gokhale.

Q. That was your only attempt?

A. Afterwards I took some scenes during the Sivaratni festival in Bombay and sent a few to Pathe News. They accepted only about 13 or 16 feet of one of the scenes being that of the Congress meetings at Chowpatli. Again during the Prince of Wales' visit, I bought some films from Viceroy and sent about 400 or 500 feet to a firm in America. I bought it at Rs. 100 about that but got Rs. 3; the whole thing was not however accepted. I accepted only about 160 feet and even for that I did not get my money about a year until I threatened them.

Q. We had the evidence of a young man in Madras this morning apparently doing well in this business of producing films for United consumption.

A. It might be that he is provided with up-to-date machinery, or is doing nothing else to do.

Q. You have no practical experience of the exhibition side or the business side?

A. I am not connected with either.

Q. You do not know the details, whether there is any contract?

A. I know some details from what I have heard from renters and makers.

Q. Do you think they find any difficulty in getting foreign films?

A. It used to be so, but I do not know the position now. In the beginning only a few people got films and when good films were imported there was competition. The man who paid the highest price had always the money. I may instance, Mr. Das of Benares who had a number of theatres and his control.

Q. Apparently your experience in these matters is rather ancient?

A. I have not had any experience for the last four or five years.

Q. What do you think will be the cost of production of an educational film?

A. I think Rs. 100 to Rs. 200 will be a fair estimate. It all depends on what kind of pictures you want.

Q. Supposing Government gave a contract, what do you think would be a reasonable price for ordinary scenes?

A. I would put it at Rs. 100 provided training and other expenses and distance are separately paid for.

Q. What is the profit that you will get out of it?

A. From 1 to 5 per cent. Sometimes there may be a waste of the whole. There is an element of chance in it.

Q. Are you satisfied with the general tone of the pictures shown now in the country?

A. Yes. There are one or two films foreign which I won't call objectionable but still they do not leave good impressions on the mind. For instance I am thinking of the film "Why husbands go astray".

Q. But generally you are satisfied?

A. Yes.

Q. Do they show signs of improvement?

A. I think so, yes.

Q. You think that in recent years there has been an attempt on the part of the trade to improve the tone and the acting and to remove the objectionable points?

A. Yes, I feel that the trade is responding to public opinion.

Chairman: Your statement is so full that I do not think I need trouble you further.

Mr. Neogy: Do you think that the Government should do anything for the purpose of encouraging the production of entertainment films of a better kind?

A. I don't think so. Government does not help the dramatic theatres which are run for entertainment.

Q. You are not an advocate of protection? You would not call this industry one which is worth protection at the hands of Government?

A. I cannot say that because after all we want to have more of Indian pictures and there are only a few people who put in their money and they are not for having all the improvements. They know their films can be improved and they have got enough money to improve them, but when the films they are at present showing can bring them money why should they spend more money. That is a business proposition. We cannot therefore depend upon them.

Q. Would you leave it to time to improve the industry?

A. There must be some initiative.

Q. On whose part?

A. On the part of Government. It is like this. The technique of the art cannot be learnt properly in India because we have not got up-to-date well-equipped studios here.

Q. What is your suggestion under that head?

A. People must be sent abroad to be trained as actors. That is the first thing.

Q. Not so much for photography?

A. No, if you have got a few electricians who can advise on the subject, practical people, that is all you want.

Q. Do you think there is much to be gained by a visit to foreign countries in regard to acting, having regard to the different modes of thought and expression as between India and the West?

A. If they see how the others do it.

Chairman: You mean exhibition of the various human passions, joy and excitement and all those things—they will learn there?

A. Yes, it must be learnt practically. Here people, however much you tell them, cannot do it. I saw a man acting the part of a woman in an Indian film. He was supposed to deliver a child. I was wondering how he would do it. He was an illiterate man. I was in a fix to know how he was going to get through this affair. He straightway went on the bed just for a few seconds and then the part was over.

Q. You are then satisfied with the quality of the photography of the present Indian films?

A. In the technical portion of it, it is the same kind of photography.

Chairman: And the colouring?

A. Colouring (tinting) is easily done. Many people do it. They have only got to dip the film in a bath of aniline colours and glycerine. But what is wanted is improvement in utilising the effects of light for night scenes, etc.

Mr. Neogy : And how do you propose to teach people this particular aspect of the thing?

A. It is not necessary that all people should be taught. Just as you now send scholars to England for economics and other subjects, you might send a few people for this purpose, but they need not be all highly educated. They must be people who are in the acting line or who want to take to acting as their profession.

Q. Who have got some experience of this industry?

A. Or raw people if they want to take to this line.

Q. That will satisfy you?

A. Yes.

Q. And for that only you look to Government for help?

A. Yes, and for educational films. It does not pay the ordinary producers to make educational films. They must be made by Government. There must be a good deal of encouragement given to them as they are as useful as any other kind of instruction.

Q. I was not quite able to understand what you meant under question 9 where you say that the Pathe Gazette and the Pathe News, are more or less a forced show?

A. The Pathe Gazette is really about 750 to a thousand feet. They say a reel is a thousand feet but it is often 700 or 800 feet. And Mr. Alex. Hague of Pathe's Bombay gets those films, one or two of every issue, and he sells them outside at Rs. 125. That is hearsay from reliable sources. The exhibitors won't buy them ordinarily but if they are to get a regular supply of good films from Pathe's—

Q. They must buy this also, that is the condition?

A. Yes. There are only two or three theatres that do it or a management that has got a number of theatres under it. It pays them then only. That shows that theatre-owners are not encouraging news films. I point that out to show that no encouragement is given by exhibitors to these News Gazettes. As much as possible they would like to stick to dramas.

Q. But do you think the audience like it?

A. Certainly the audience do like it. The photography portion is very good and the news portion too is very good.

Q. Then what interest is there for the exhibitor not to show a particular thing which is wanted by the audience?

A. This reel lasts for about 15 minutes, whereas the whole show is for an hour and a half, not 2 hours like here in Madras; so it is only a portion of the whole show, and he has to run the other film at a quicker rate.

Mr. Green : In your answer to No. 12 you seem to indicate that the amusement tax was put on by the Finance Advisory Board for meeting the expenses of the Censoring Board. Where did you get that idea?

A. It is my impression.

Q. In point of fact it is not the case. Also you say the tariff is 25 per cent. That is not correct. It is 15 per cent. Are you referring to the present time or some time ago?

A. I am referring to 1920-21. I had to pay that when my film was returned.

Chairman : When you sent your film abroad and it was rejected, the rejected film came back and you had to pay duty on that?

A. Yes. I could have avoided that by saying previously that some portions would be returned, but I did not think it worth while.

Mr. Green : You mean you could have informed the Indian Customs and registered it before it was sent, but you did not think it worth while?

A. Yes.

Q. Now in answer to question No. 24 you point out that certain films are likely to demoralise the grown up youths, make them a little lax in sex relations. You go on to say even novels do the same. By that do you mean that this is a thing we have got to face, we cannot help it?

A. It is like this. Recently I saw a film running in the Wellington. That was called "The Voice from the Minaret." There was too much of the divorce spirit there.

Q. My point is this. Granted that some of these films may have this effect, you point out that novels may have the same effect.

A. I have read one or two novels of that sort.

Chairman : Do you mean they are inevitable?

A. They are inevitable I think.

Mr. Green : They are inevitable but you are not very much disturbed?

A. I am not disturbed.

Q. I gather that you suggest there should be a Central Board of Censors as well as Provincial Boards. I am not quite clear how you intend that they should work. You indicate that the Provincial Boards should meet weekly and the members should receive remuneration at Rs. 5 a meeting for out of pocket expenses, but you also seem to suggest that the censors should see every film?

A. Yes.

Q. You realise they cannot possibly do all that work at one weekly meeting? Are you referring to Madras only?

A. I do not know the conditions in Madras.

Q. In Madras they hardly do any work?

A. In Bombay I have seen inspectors going to the cinema.

Q. They go in the first instance and report to the Board. Then if there is any possible objection, two members at least of the Board go and see the film before it is certified. But if they have to see every film the members of the Board will have to attend in Bombay some 3½ hours to 4 hours every day of the week?

A. There will be a rotation.

Q. You mean the film will not be seen by every member of the Board, but by, say, 2 members of the Board?

A. Some fixed majority or quorum.

Q. But unless you make your board very big even with a rota as you suggest, these gentlemen will have to attend fairly regularly?

A. Yes, and if they have got no interest in the thing I would not put them on the board.

Q. But in Bombay we were told that it was extremely unlikely that gentlemen with sufficient culture and education would be available. You might be able to get them to turn up once a week for an hour or so but they are expected to do 3 or 4 hours a day?

A. I think I may consider myself sufficiently cultured for this work. I don't know whether the public will think so too.

Q. Far be it from me to express an opinion. At the same time, may I ask what is your profession at present?

A. I am only a clerk in the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway for the past two years.

Q. As such I take it you have regular office hours and a full day's work?

A. More than a full day's work.

Q. May I ask how you would find time to assist a Board by visiting films several times a week for several hours, not at your convenience but at the convenience of other members of the board and the trade?

A. I have suggested the evenings for the purpose. It gives me pleasure. I would sacrifice my evening time.

Q. But would you not like to spend your evenings at home after returning from office?

A. I am a family man and not young enough to want to be always with my wife in the evenings. At other times, I never go out, I am always at home.

Q. But what time of the day do you propose to do this work?

A. In the evening.

Q. You see in the evening, unfortunately, the owners of cinemas are busy entertaining the public, therefore your censorship has to be done during ordinary office hours.

A. All the owners won't be going there.

Chairman: You have not understood the point. The cinemas will be occupied with public shows. Therefore for censoring you will have to arrange outside those hours, mostly in the morning?

A. Each film maker must have an exhibition apparatus. That does not cost much. The Kohinoor has one.

Chairman: What about foreign films?

A. It does not cost more than Rs. 1,000 to set up an ordinary machine.

Q. You say the Censorship Board should have a projecting apparatus of its own and a room of its own for these exhibitions?

A. That would be much better.

Mr. Green: You think there will be plenty of people of your standard who would welcome Rs. 5 a meeting on the Central Board?

A. My opinion is that no man should ask for any remuneration but we cannot compel a person to come. It is spending money out of his pocket. Everybody does not want to spend his own money.

Q. You mean plenty of people of your standing will come forward?

A. Plenty.

Q. But may I ask what your qualifications are? Have you travelled in the West?

A. I have lived in Calcutta, in Bombay and in Poona.

Q. Have you ever been outside India?

A. No.

Q. And have you an extensive knowledge of things Indian and foreign? What is your education?

A. I have studied for the B.A. I have not passed the B.A. Physical Science was my subject.

Colonel Crawford: In your written statement after recording the popularity of Indian films you go on to express the opinion that to your mind the interest and the popularity of these films will decline unless new themes are introduced and novel means of displaying the story are employed. And further on in your statement you seem to find some fault with the acting of Indian actors owing to their dislike to displaying, in public, domestic emotions. Is this a definite difficulty in the way of the Indian film?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think the Indian film must, as the Western film has done, display domestic emotions?

A. Yes, when you undertake to show to an audience what is actually taking place and you don't show it, what is the good of it?

Q. It won't attract because it is merely put on? Make-belief love scenes very soon tire when they see it is not true to the actual facts of love-making? Do you think the audience will tire of make-belief?

A. You see, it does not follow, so long as in the film you see the action is realistic, it might be make-belief or the actors might not actually feel what they are acting.

Q. Is your complaint that Indian acting to-day is not realistic?

A. Not much realistic; in many points they are not.

Q. And you fear that is a thing that will lead to a waning in the popularity of Indian films?

A. There I am not talking of Indian films. I am talking of serials and other foreign films. Indian films will improve and there will be more popularity for them. There is no question of lack of popularity as regards them.

Q. But I just want to make out this point. Do you consider that the acting in the Indian film has got to take on a more realistic aspect, has it got to be done on more realistic lines?

A. Yes, if it is to be more popular.

Q. In your answer to question 41, you seem to express the view that social dramas of foreign life, where the well-to-do class are shown as indulging in excesses of any kind should not be frequently shown. Is it your experience that they are too frequently shown to-day?

A. At least in Bombay in the West End Cinema.

Q. You think they are too frequently shown?

A. They were when I was there.

Q. You think they are generally harmful to the public.

A. I won't say harmful exactly. You don't quite follow.

Q. Would you recommend tighter censorship in this particular direction?

A. Yes, stricter censorship. I have been reading in the newspapers the evidence of witnesses and I understand the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta.....

Q. Don't worry about the Commissioner of Police. What is your opinion?

A. My opinion is that some stricter control must be made. Where scenes considered objectionable are only incidental they should not be of more than a short length. That is what I mean.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You are not in favour of the studios of film producers being licensed?

A. No.

Q. Why?

A. That will throw suspicion on them.

Q. You say it will act as a block to improvement?

A. Yes.

Q. Don't you think producers like you ought to be licensed in order that indecent or any other kind of films may not be produced by you?

A. You might make it that all films must be passed by the Censor.

Chairman: Before they are exported?

A. There is a difficulty there.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Did you get your films censored before you exported them?

A. No, the rule was not in operation there. We have to send the exposed negatives so that the developing might be done by the buyers. So far as news reels are concerned, when you send a film you may inform the customs authorities that you are sending such and such a film on the declaration. If they want to find out the nature of the film they can get information as to what kind of film was sent after development from the American Consul.

Chairman: Just to follow up that question, supposing for instance, films were produced here depicting things in order to support Miss Mayo's statements, what protection is there against the use of such films abroad, unless you censor the films before they are taken out of the country?

A. In a case of that kind where political questions arise.

Not political at all. There must be some machinery by which films taken in India should be exhibited to someone before they are sent out.

A. I do agree, but foreign people want films without being developed.

Q. I suppose you must stop it.

A. Well I am not concerned. It does not matter to me and I have not thought of that side of the matter.

Q. It is not a personal matter. Can you tell us of any practical difficulties in the way of that?

A. Yes, all people have not got facilities for developing.

Q. Supposing there were Government studios where opportunities for developing would be given,—what is your objection then?

A. I have no objection provided the film will not be misused by the people in the studio.

Mr. Neogy : In the studio? What do you mean?

A. I take a film here and send it to the Censorship Board in the official studio. They see the film and people there might copy it. I do not say it is done but there is a chance.

Chairman : But you can make it subject to safeguards.

A. Yes, subject to safeguards it might not matter.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : On what subjects have you produced films and sent to America? Have you got a list?

A. Only news films of Indian festivals and

Q. You can give us the list afterwards. None of them showed Indians in shady colours? Someone made something like that for the missionaries. Did you make it?

A. Certainly not.

Q. Suppose you prepare a film of about 10,000 feet and send it to America to get it completed and then bring it back here—how much will it cost?

A. They do not want educational or topical films of that length.

Q. No, No. On business principles. Any film that you take here like Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves,—supposing the whole thing is sent to America to be properly done there, and then brought back here—how much do you think it will cost?

A. I do not quite catch your question. May I put it in my own way?

Q. I mean the titles and everything are completed there?

Chairman : You see, the film is taken here and sent abroad for developing, printing, editing—how much will it cost?

A. I have no idea but when they send back developed films they put it at a certain value. It comes to about—I have not got the paper here, but I think they put it at about 12 annas a foot.

Q. Say a shilling.

A. It is better to take it in Indian currency. 12 annas a foot.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : That is to say, for 10,000 feet they will charge Rs. 7,500 at the rate of 12 annas a foot?

A. It is not like that. To my knowledge what they don't accept they send back.

Q. I don't want them to accept. Take it that I want to send mine.

A. I have no idea.

Q. You have said something about the worn-out machinery or worn-out films shown. Is there no inspection by the Inspector of Police or police staff?

A. I don't know if they do it.

Q. But haven't you seen them?

A. In Bombay, not in Madras.

Chairman : In Bombay city?

A. In Bombay city, in the West End Cinema and one or two other cinemas.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : There they show worn-out films?

A. Yes. In some films you see as if rain is falling and the whole film shakes. In America they do not accept even brand new films if they shake.

Q. Did you notice any objection from the inspector?

A. I don't know.

Q. In your presence nothing happened?

A. No.

Q. Don't you think these films are harmful to the eyes of the audience specially children?

A. They are.

Q. Then to such performances children ought not to go?

A. I won't say that. In the absence of anything else people must go. When a boy insists on going to a cinema he will go.

Q. Do you say such films ought not to be shown at all?

A. There may be a slight wear and tear. When a film shows a certain amount of defect—oscillation is the worst thing—then it must be stopped. Even brand new films might do that if the sprockets, the holes on the sides are not accurate.

Q. You have some experience of Poona?

A. Yes.

Q. A good deal of experience I suppose because you have put Poona first in your statement.

A. I was there for 6 years.

Q. There is only one cinema in the cantonment.

A. In the Cantonment there were two.

Q. Then you don't know much of Poona?

A. Not now.

Q. At that time also you didn't know much because in cantonment there was only one. The cantonment authorities will not allow anyone else to open a cinema there.

A. There might have been one.

Q. Is it true the Cantonment authorities won't allow any other cinemas?

A. I don't know that.

Q. You say in your statement, under 12, the entertainment tax was introduced for meeting the expenditure of the Censorship Board?

A. That is what I understood from the papers.

Q. As far as I know it was not earmarked but it was meant for the use of educational purposes.

A. My remembrance is otherwise. During the time the question of taxing was raised I was in Bombay and I formed my impression there.

Q. Not for the Censorship Board, that is not correct.

A. I am not sure.

Q. Now you also say that for private shows the collection of this tax is made.

A. Should not be made, that is what I said. There ought to be no collection. I do not mean there is a collection already. When I came to Madras I went round asking for educational films and I made enquiries whether such films could be shown at private residences and schools and I always got the reply they did not have educational films, and if it is a question of showing films in public and private residences I must make my own arrangements for showing them there.

Q. In your reply to No. 10 you say there is blind or block booking.

A. Yes.

Q. I understand that every big theatre is compelled to take a certain number of films?

A. I have no experience in the matter.

Q. There is a remedy, I think, if you recommend legislation?

A. Unless a film producer has got his own theatres, he has little or no chance of pushing them. I can't suggest any remedy.

Oral Evidence of the Rev. W. A. HOBSON, Representative of the Anglo-Indian Association, Madras, on Wednesday, the 11th January 1928.

Chairman: You represent the Anglo-Indian Association?

A. I am the President of the Association, and the Council of the Association asked me to appear before you in its behalf.

Q. I suppose you have not sent us any written statement?

A. I am afraid not, because we got your invitation only two days ago. We did not get the questionnaire, but I got a copy from a friend to-day and I have had no opportunity of looking at it carefully.

Q. I suppose you have been in Madras for a long time?

A. Yes, for the last four years. I am working as a priest in Vepery.

Q. I suppose you don't go to the cinema very often?

A. I go to the cinema rather frequently, at least once a week; I have also been to cinemas in Calcutta, where I come from; I have also seen pictures in Poona. Also during my vacations in England, I used to go every day; I have also been to cinemas in France.

Q. I am glad to hear that priests don't avoid the cinema?

A. Catholic priests do go.

Q. Where do you go in Madras?

A. I go to the Elphinstone Picture Palace. I have also been to the Wellington and the Gaiety and also once or twice to the Globe Theatre in Vepery.

Q. I suppose to these places where you generally go Anglo-Indians generally resort?

A. We have quite a large number of Anglo-Indians, men, women and children, going to the Globe, because it is closer to the Anglo-Indian population.

Q. I think in the Globe they usually show western films?

A. Yes. I have not seen any Indian films exhibited there or anywhere else. I have a vague idea, I saw one some years ago in Calcutta.

Q. The Gaiety now and then show Indian films?

A. I have not seen any. I won't say that I am not keen on Indian films, but I have not had an opportunity of seeing an Indian film here.

Q. Have you had any occasion to complain about the western films which you have seen?

A. Candidly never. I have heard people complain about some of them, but I have seen the very films about which complaints were made, and I can find nothing in them to complain about myself. Of course, I have found some films, films which used to feature Fatty Arbuckle, a famous character, a bit vulgar, but nothing indecent in them. There has been nothing to produce any bad effect on the people or anything which welfare workers could complain about.

Q. There are some exaggerations in life which are inevitable?

A. Quite, because you can't have anything without some exaggeration. You have it in books, in news and everywhere.

Q. You don't think that the Anglo-Indian community are learning anything objectionable from western films?

A. Not at all.

Q. On the other hand, I suppose you recognise they have a great educative value in broadening their outlook and showing them the conditions of life in other parts of the world?

A. Yes. I think the cinema is of great value from that point of view to a large number of Anglo-Indians who never get an opportunity of getting away even from their own native places. In other places like Calcutta, where the Anglo-Indian population is very large, I know that the four big cinemas there are absolutely packed with Anglo-Indians on Saturdays, and one main reason why they go there is because they get a glimpse of life which they never get an opportunity to see, otherwise in that way the cinema is a great asset to them.

Colonel Crawford: You have had experience of films exhibited in England and in India. Do you see any difference in the standards?

A. It seems to me that the films which come out to India are less interesting than the films which I saw in England. The films which I have seen in England have been most exciting and enjoyable. Those films I have never seen in India, and here we have to wait for months and months before getting any really interesting film. The films that we see here are inferior from the point of view of interest—I don't mean from the point of view of technique.

Q. Are you generally satisfied with the moral tone of the pictures?

A. Yes, but here and there you get a touch of vulgarity, and that you will get even in films featuring people like Charlie Chaplain and Harold Lloyd. I do not know if you could eliminate it, because apparently it is a part and parcel of the whole thing. Children enjoy it, though it makes the grown-ups somewhat uncomfortable sometimes. But as far as indecency is concerned, I have never seen it anywhere, even in Paris. In Marseilles which is supposed to be a particularly bad place for bad films, I did not see any indecent films. Possibly they existed, but I did not look for them. I have not seen downright indecency in any of the films which I have seen.

Mr. Green: When you said that you found the films exhibited in England were on the whole more interesting than those exhibited in India, can you suggest any reason?

A. I am afraid I could not explain that. Possibly it is very costly to get those films out here.

Q. I take it that the normal capacity of a cinema House in England is greater and the House is worth more and has larger crowds; presumably they can pay more and get better films?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you seen any good feature films in India?

A. About four months ago I saw "Beau Geste" and everybody enjoyed it. I have seen many good ones in Calcutta.

Q. The audiences don't pay sufficiently well?

A. No. One main reason why I think many Europeans and Anglo-Indians don't go to cinemas in Madras is that in some cinemas the music is horrible. Another complaint which a good many people make is that the managers of the theatres allow vendors of *pan* and *bidees* to come in and shout and make things rather uncomfortable, and many people feel this inconvenience. Some of these vendors shout too much.

Q. You say you are not afraid of demoralisation, and I take it that you welcome the cinema on the ground that it supplies a reasonable amount of amusement?

A. It supplies both amusement and pleasure, and it is also of high educational value as far as the Anglo-Indian community is concerned.

Q. If the cinema were not there, possibly your men and women would have taken to other less desirable forms of a c?

A. They would have got into mischief before I am strongly in favour of the cinema.

Q. And there is no particular way in which you can suggest any improvement?

A. There is one little suggestion I want to make, and it is this. In Calcutta in the Globe cinema, before we are shown the main drama, we are shown a short educational film. For example, last year when I was there I remembered they showed a film relating to the Cocogen industry, it was of course a short one. We go to the cinemas mainly for pleasure and we don't want to be educated there. But I think the cinema will be of great value to the Anglo-Indian community particularly if we had a short strictly educational film shown before the main drama appears. We like it very much, but we don't want that it should take the place of the real drama.

Q. You would like to see Topical Gazettes, I suppose?

A. They are of absorbing interest to an Anglo-Indian who has never left India. Possibly they are of interest to every educated Indian also and to the mass of the population. I don't suppose they would interest Europeans who go about a great deal, but they certainly interest the natives of India, both the Anglo-Indians and Indians.

Mr. Coatsman: You would like to see more films depicting the social conditions and the life and scenery of other parts of the Empire?

A. Certainly.

Q. And you think it will do good to your community?

A. It will broaden our minds considerably to know how other people live.

Mr. Neogy: The question that was put to you by Mr. Coatsman was whether you would like to see pictures depicting conditions of life in other parts of the Empire, and you said that it would broaden their minds to see how other people lived, i.e., you are not going to show any preference to the other parts of the Empire?

A. If you mean whether I prefer British films, I say emphatically No. I want to get the best films, and I don't mind where they come from.

Mr. Coatsman: What I wanted to know was whether there is any desire among members of your community to see particularly films showing conditions of life and so on in other parts of the British Empire?

A. Naturally there is that desire, because, although we are Natives of India, we are also largely British by culture and I think most of our people would like that immensely, but I have no particular preference for British films.

Q. If you are going to study other parts of the world and the people of the other parts of the world, you would prefer to begin with your own people?

A. Quite.

Mr. Neogy: You are at the same time against any preferential treatment?

A. Emphatically so, because I want to get the best films.

Q. You say you have not seen any Indian production, but have you heard the opinion expressed by any Anglo-Indian gentlemen or ladies who may have seen Indian pictures?

A. I am afraid not.

Q. Do you think that if a proportion of the Indian films were to be compulsorily shown in every Picture House, the number of Anglo-Indian audience at those shows would decrease?

A. It all depends on the kind of films. If you show films depicting scenes from Indian history, they are bound to make an appeal. If they were to

187

deal with ordinary life that we see everyday, the people may not very much care for them. You know what people are. In England they would very much like a film dealing with Indian scenery. I remember a film in which Miss Mary Pickford took part. A part of it dealt with India and people in England took a very keen interest in it.

Q. What about well known Indian novels?

A. Anything which takes you away from the ordinary life in India would make an appeal to people here. For example, I don't want to see a street in Madras shown with a man rushing along in a motor car, but possibly an Englishman coming out to this country for the first time might like to see it.

Q. You are aware of the existence of bars attached to cinema Houses? Would there be any very great objection from your community if they were abolished?

A. We are a very poor people on the whole, and I don't think many Anglo-Indians patronise the bars because they are very expensive things. Only the upper classes go to the bar during the interval, and they would certainly object to being deprived of the facility of getting their thirst quenched.

Q. What will be your attitude towards any such proposal?

A. You must not think that because I am a clergyman I am against the bar. I belong to a section of the Church which is quite broadminded about drink and smoking, and I would object to the bar being removed. Personally I am a teetotaler, but I would not like to deprive my fellow citizens of the right to have a drink.

Chairman: To your knowledge is the existence of the bar in a cinema much abused?

A. I don't think so. There is only an interval of 15 or 20 minutes, and I don't think they get more than a drink or two. It does not offer any temptation to my community or to poor people of any community.

Written Statement of Mr. THOS. H. HUFFTON, Sole Proprietor, The Peninsula Film Service, Madras, dated the 16th November 1927.

Introductory.—I have been in the Cinematograph field in India for nearly 20 years, and am fully acquainted with its work in all its branches. I am also acquainted as a purchaser of Foreign films, with something of the European market as well.

General.—2A. In Indian Presidencies I would say that both the illiterate and educated classes frequent the cinemas, and it must be considered that a film featuring such artists as Eddie Polo, Pearl White, etc., make a draw with all classes. It therefore largely depends on the nature of the film that a theatre shows. It must also be considered that now a days the most illiterate man understands a film just as good as the educated one or in fact better. A theatre only drops in its lower or illiterate classes when they exhibit films adopted from classical literature. This does not appeal to the illiterate man, and also to a great extent to the educated people except those who have an extreme fascination for such literary works.

In the mofussil towns in India, the cinemas are patronised mostly by the illiterate class and even there unless films to their taste are screened.

2C. 10 per cent. of children and 40 per cent. of adolescents.

Part 1.—(3) Indian films, American serials and extravagant dramas depicting good scenery, dances, bathing scenes and a beautiful cast of women.

(4) Exhibitors are catering for public but unfortunately the market cannot provide them with good pictures.

(6) Indian audiences would appreciate good Indian films equally, as good Western films.

(8) A. I am not at all satisfied with the present condition of the industry and the main troubles besetting it are the enormous taxes, and the censorship.

(13) The Customs tariff must be rectified. The duty levied is exorbitant, and no consideration is given whether the film is a second hand or new one imported. If this is reduced, it will help cent. per cent. to the growth of the industry and would be very advantageous to all concerned.

(16) I believe Indian producers have enough knowledge of the art, but due to them tightening down their capital the productions are not up to the mark.

(18) Yes, if Government could financially help there is no reason why private concerns cannot go ahead.

(19) The cost of film production in India is much lower where the actors and settings are concerned, but where the raw material and machinery, etc., come in they are much more than in European countries.

(22) to 23B. To put it all in a nutshell if the British Empire can give just as good films as America does, I do not see what is going to hinder an Indian film merchant to purchase the stock. It matters very little from where the film comes, provided it is good. If England produced the Thief of Bagdad, she would have had an equally successful run in India as the American film.

Part 2.—24A. to 26B. I am not in favour of the censorship in India. Films are unnecessarily banned as immoral. Such films have run successfully in England and the impression caused by banning such films is that England has not all the essence of morality that India possesses. I agree to the banning of such films that depict racial distinction, and such films like the Life of Buddha that effect the religious class.

29 to 30. I am not in favour of prohibiting children to a cinema show. On the other hand, I believe that children attending Cinematograph performances gain a lot of knowledge which makes an improvement in their lives.

31 to 33. I believe the censorship in India is very unsatisfactory. It has been a complete hindrance to the development of the industry. Films have been banned unnecessarily as immoral, and such films have not been considered as immoral by the British Board of Film Censors in England, nor by the board in America. Is it to be understood that England is so silly as not to understand what morality and immorality means in a film. I would object to the board in India interfering with the decision of the English Board, except in such cases where the religious principles of India are touched and where Indians undergo any ill-treatment or are disgraced as cowards.

34 to 36. It would be very inconvenient to the trade to have a Central Board of Censors for the simple reason that a Calcutta or Madras merchant would have endless trouble and worry along with much expense to send up his film to the Central Board if it is in Bombay for certification. To make it convenient, I would suggest that the present board should exist where they are with but one alteration, and that is a representative of each province should be a part of the members of every board. I would also suggest that the Board be comprised of gentlemen who are regular cinema goers, and who have a knowledge of Cinematography. In my opinion, I believe this is essential for very many reasons. A knowledge of production and of exhibition should be the qualifications of a member. He should also possess a fair knowledge of English. The whole board should be comprised of members who have a knowledge of each language according to the province he represents. This will save the trouble of undesirable titles.

37 to 38. As it stands, there is nothing to prevent a film passed by one board and yet objectionable in another province. There are very many films which of course, have been banned, after having been passed by other boards.

43. I don't think there is any necessity to control the import and export of films.

45. In Europe, Government does not exercise control over film producing departments, and in my opinion if producers are placed to any difficulty, it would mean that the industry will dwindle away, and the smaller companies would cease work if they have to labour under registration and licenses. I would suggest that Government makes no interference but gives a free hand and more encouragement to producers.

Oral Evidence of Mr. THOS. H. HUFFTON, Proprietor and Director of the Peninsula Film Service, on Wednesday, the 11th January 1928.

Chairman: Mr. Huffton, you are a resident of Madras?

A. Yes.

Q. You have been connected with the cinematograph industry for 20 years?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it on the exhibition side or the production side or are you an importer?

A. Both on the exhibition, the distribution, the production and the importing side.

Q. And how many films have you produced?

A. I have produced one film.

Q. Of what length?

A. 6,000 feet.

Q. What is the name of the film?

A. Matsya Avatar.

Q. And when did you produce it?

A. I released it last April.

Q. Was that your first production?

A. Yes.

Q. And it has taken well?

A. It has done two weeks at Madras, 2 weeks at Rangoon and it has been successful in all the other towns of the Presidency. The film has been sold to Madan Theatres, so far as the rights for Bengal and Burma are concerned.

Q. And you retain the rights for other places?

A. Bombay and Madras Presidency.

Q. Have you tried Ceylon and the Straits Settlement?

A. I am exploiting the Straits myself there.

Q. You mean you are making an attempt now?

A. Yes, my man is there now.

Q. Now I think you are the first Indian producer who is touching that market. What reports have you had of that?

A. It is a very good market. I have had offers for my films about 400 to 500 dollars a week which I could not get even in Madras.

Q. Exhibitors there have made the offer?

A. Yes, as hire alone. And the mofussil districts in the Straits, about two hundred dollars.

Q. Have you accepted those offers yet?

A. My man is waiting for better offers.

Mr. Neogy : What does that amount to in Indian money?

A. Re. 1-9 per dollar.

Chairman : Now let us compare that. What did you get here in Madras for your film? Did you hire it out?

A. No, I ran it on a percentage basis in the Madan theatres.

Q. And Ceylon, have you tried that yet?

A. No, I have not touched Ceylon yet.

Q. And Bombay?

A. No, I have not touched Bombay yet.

Q. Madans bought the right from you? May I know what it cost you to produce that film?

A. Roughly about Rs. 4,000, for a 6,000 feet film.

Q. And what did you get for the Bengal and Burma rights?

A. Rs. 2,500.

Q. And what did you realise in Madras?

A. Very near Rs. 1,500.

Q. So that your cost has been covered already?

A. Yes.

Q. And whatever you make hereafter will be your profit?

A. Yes.

Q. And you have not yet realised your interest?

A. And the price of my machinery.

Q. How much have you invested in your outfit?

A. Rs. 9,000.

Q. Which you are going to use for producing other pictures? This was in last April. Have you produced anything since?

A. No, we have not started anything yet. Because I want to start a very good production. I am accumulating capital for that. It requires a lot of capital.

Q. But can you not get banking facilities when you have been successful in an enterprise like that?

A. You have got to convince the bank and it is very hard in these days of uncertainty.

Q. You mean the ordinary bank. Have you tried the Imperial Bank?

A. The Imperial Bank has not trusted better men than myself. I don't think they would trust me. And furthermore, they have got a very bad opinion about the cinema people.

Mr. Coatsman : Have you tried them?

A. No, I have not tried them.

Chairman : You are afraid to approach them because you think your request will meet with a refusal?

A. Yes.

Mr. Coatsman : Have you tried any bank?

A. No.

Chairman : Now you hope to make some money and are waiting to produce your next picture?

A. Yes.

Q. Well, that is rather a difficulty. Unless you go on producing and turning over, how can you get on?

A. Well, I think producing good pictures is more profitable than producing rubbish.

Q. Quite right. If you had money you would have gone on with them. But what have you been doing meanwhile?

A. I have got other foreign films for exploitation, for exhibition and renting.

Q. You are doing cinema business in other directions, not producing?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that a paying concern—the other business?

A. Well, it is paying but it is rather risky as well. Sometimes you get into a big mess which you cannot get out of and that is due to the foreign people sending rotten films out here.

Q. And then you get second-hand films?

A. They say they are second-hand films but in good condition; but when they come out here they are not fit for even 6 or 7 runs.

Q. Are they American films?

A. Well, the American films are a little costly, the English films are a little cheap.

Q. We were told just the other way round. We were told that British-produced films were more costly?

A. No, the American films that we get through England are cheap.

Q. I understand it is London really which is responsible for flooding the Indian market with second-hand films. You mean American films got through England are cheaper?

A. Yes. But these films are no use, because they run right through the English market and then come here.

Q. After being shown in England they are shoved on here. And that makes your business less profitable?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you want to supply good films?

A. Everybody demands good films. And furthermore these pictures have become very bad, they cannot be exhibited.

Q. Who import these second-hand films from London?

A. I import them.

Q. You also import them? I suppose you are obliged to import because of the competition in the trade?

A. Otherwise I will have to close the business.

Q. Why don't you get more Indian films from Bombay and show them?

A. Well, Bombay people are not inclined to sell.

Q. You want to buy?

A. Yes, we want to buy but they have got their fancy prices of Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 15,000 which cannot be got here for another five or six years.

Q. So Indian films are costly when produced in Bombay and you are not able to produce your own films, as you would like to, because of financial difficulties. And you are able to get cheap foreign films and you say that is the reason why you have got all this stuff in the market?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, do you suggest then as an experienced man in the trade that some steps should be taken to prevent these second-hand films from coming into the country?

A. It would be better if steps were taken to prevent second-hand films but the thing is how are they going to be pronounced as very bad?

Q. These cheap films?

A. Well, some cheap films are good also.

Q. So you say there will be a practical difficulty?

A. Unless somebody sits down to examine the thing wholesale there, right through.

Q. Which of course won't suit the trade.

A. No.

Q. But supposing when the censorship board have examined the film, after that some means were found of giving a rebate to good films, do you think that would be a practical method? Do you understand what I mean? You see the films pay a certain duty. Every film has to go through the censorship board. The censorship board has an opportunity of seeing them. After seeing them, they will know whether they are second-hand films or not. They will know also whether certain films are really good or not. Supposing they certify that a rebate may be given on good films, do you think that will encourage the coming in of good films?

A. But what about the amount already paid to the owners of the films in London? How am I going to get that money back? Of course a rebate of the customs duty is quite all right, but the amount I have paid there as a deposit before purchasing the film has also to be considered.

Q. That will be there. Nobody will prevent you from exhibiting them. Only you will have to pay heavier duties on second-hand films.

A. Then I would be pressed to buy new films.

Q. Yes, good films.

A. Then I must have a very big capital for that.

Q. And do you think your patrons will be able to pay for that?

A. No. Nobody would pay a pie more than what they pay for a second-hand film.

Q. Then the exhibition side will suffer?

A. Both the exhibition side and the renting side will suffer.

Q. You think the cinema industry is not a paying concern now?

A. Well, if the cost of films goes down then it is a paying concern. But if they are made more costly, cinema exhibition will become a losing concern.

Q. As it is, is it a paying concern?

A. As it is, it is a losing thing on one side. The exhibitors are losing on one side.

Q. One would think so from the poor audiences they get.

A. They are showing the same things all through.

Q. Except on Saturdays and Sundays, what is the nature of the attendance on other days?

A. On other days, except on Saturdays and Sundays—(one performance not the second performance on Sunday—which is generally bad everywhere)—except on Saturdays and one performance on Sundays, the other performances are very poorly attended. And right through the week if the picture is shown over 7 days together, the attendance drops gradually unless the picture is a really very good one.

Q. Such pictures are very rare.

A. They are very rare. There is only one picture that really did very well in Madras. The Thief of Bagdad.

Q. But if you can get Indian pictures, the exhibitors will exhibit more Indian pictures?

A. As far as the mofussil towns are concerned.

Q. But what about the town of Madras?

A. Well here is a very mixed population. You will have to please the lot. Muhammadans do not want to see mythological pictures.

Q. What do you say to a system which would compel every exhibitor to show a certain length of Indian films. The quota system, such as they have adopted in England. Do you think we can adopt it in this country in order to encourage the growth of the Indian film industry?

A. Well, I don't think that would do any good, unless the whole performance is Indian you will not catch the Indian audiences. If it is only going to be a part of the programme, nobody is going to come.

Q. But if it is a 6,000 feet programme, 1,000 could be Indian?

A. People know what is 6,000 feet and so on. The balance is going to be something else. They don't want to see that something else. The ladies especially won't come to see merely a thousand feet, I mean the Indian ladies.

Q. But supposing any theatre like the Elphinstone or the Picture House or the Wellington, who showed 6,000 feet of a western film is compelled to show a thousand feet of an Indian film, passed as good, as fit for exhibition. Why do you say it will not go?

A. The ladies are the only ones who patronise Indian pictures and not the gentlemen. The gentlemen don't want to go and see all these mythological pictures. It is due to the force of the ladies that the Indian gentlemen go out. Because the Indian ladies want to go, with every lady there are 6 gentlemen going.

Q. So if you can force the women to go. I mean it will be an advantage to show Indian pictures?

A. They don't want to see one thousand feet. The ladies know the value of money more than the men.

Q. Indian pictures are popular with Indians?

A. Yes.

Q. But are they produced in sufficient quantities?

A. No.

Q. You want them to be produced in larger quantities?

A. Yes.

Q. And do you think they are likely to be produced in larger quantities without any effort on the part of the Government?

A. I think so.

Q. You think what?

A. That a larger quantity will come out in course of time.

Q. You don't think any steps should be taken by Government to encourage the growth of Indian films? You yourself say you are not able to produce them. You would be glad to produce but you have not got enough funds. Do you think there are several people like you, are there not?

A. There are very many.

Q. Most of the producers are in the same position. I suppose you are familiar with the producers in Bombay? They also complain there for lack of financial help or rather banking facilities?

A. Yes.

Q. Well, if that is so, don't you think some help should be given by the Government?

A. If the Government gives us financial help, there is no reason why we should not go ahead.

Q. That is your real difficulty, banking facilities. You don't want so much a gift as banking facilities. That is what is badly wanting in order to encourage the growth of the industry?

A. Yes.

Q. Now what are you going to do for scenario writers and actors and actresses?

A. Where scenario writers are concerned, I don't think we need any. We don't need to have one on the staff.

Q. You mean you can get supplies?

A. Yes. And we can approve of these scenarios. And when we begin to make about 5 or 6 purchases they will come in.

Q. Then as regards actors and actresses?

A. Well, as far as Madras is concerned, we will have to push very hard to get any.

Q. Actors you can get?

A. Yes, any amount of them. But actresses are the difficulty.

Q. Not even the class of people who are known as dancing girls?

A. Well, I think I can give you an instance, where an actress came to my office and volunteered to play for the film, and when I explained what a film was and what she was going to do she thought when she was being exhibited on the screen the whole of her body would become heated. What could I answer to that.

Q. She thought she was being thrown on the screen?

A. That everytime she was exhibited the electricity would pass through her body.

Q. That is only temporary ignorance.

A. Well, it will take some time to educate them.

Q. The difficulty is only with the actresses, so far as Madras is concerned?

A. Actors are many.

Q. Then what about the photography, the technique, and direction?

A. The photography is quite all right.

Q. Surely you don't compare with the second class films even of America and Germany in photography?

A. Well, they have got very big laboratories and facilities to carry on. But still some of the pictures can be matched along with the American pictures.

Q. Well, we have seen several but I don't think we share that opinion. Any way what would you advise? You think that people should be sent abroad to learn the technique of the profession?

A. I don't think that is absolutely necessary.

Q. How did you manage about your photography—for instance in the film which you produced?

A. My man got a correspondence course from America. This was a very good course. Practically he had to work here before he was certified. He had to understand everything.

Q. And he has acquired a certain diploma from them by correspondence course?

A. Yes, and he has had a very good course.

Q. Did he send them examples of his work?

A. Examples as many as they liked. And they approved of the negatives.

Q. I suppose it is a private institution?

A. No, it is the New York Institute of Photography.

Q. Are there many people taking instruction like that or is it only your man?

A. I think 5 or 6 people have already taken instruction from them in India.

Q. But you don't think that young men or people in the profession should be sent abroad?

A. I don't think they could learn anything there.

Q. Or supposing you sent for experts from abroad who can teach the people here technique, direction and photography?

A. Well that will be better. If they could come here and give a training to the people here.

Q. Do you think it is necessary that it should be done?

A. Not absolutely necessary. As things are I think they could pick up all that they require if they would go right round the studios of Bombay.

Q. Now you complain of the enormous tax which the industry bears. Do you mean the customs duties?

A. Yes.

Q. But still, you say you get these cheap films. Why should you not pay for them?

A. But Government is still losing another way. They are taxing us for second-hand films which we pay £10 for and they are taxing others for the same films new for which they pay £500, the same duty. They are only going by the length of the film and not the invoiced value.

Q. But it is so difficult to find real value.

A. Well, all other goods are taxed *ad valorem*.

Q. You would advocate the duty being levied on the cost of the film?

A. Yes. Then Government could make something. There are people who are paying £40,000 for the rights.

Q. But how are they to find that out?

A. Their documents prove it.

Q. You mean these things are generally done by correspondence and it could be easily found out from the documents.

A. Yes. Otherwise a man who pays £40,000 pays the same duty which I pay on £10.

Q. But you are not for giving any preference as between foreign films, whether they are British or otherwise?

A. No, I am not.

Q. You want the best goods wherever they come from? You see America has got a monopoly now, almost. About 90 per cent. of foreign films come from America. I see from the figures here given by the customs authorities, that in 1925-26 for instance 5,926,000 feet came from the British Empire and 7,791,000 feet from foreign countries. Does that mean that 5,926,000 feet got from the British Empire really represent British productions?

A. No.

Q. You mean probably American goods brought through London would come under that category?

A. Yes. American, Italian.

Q. And German?

A. Not many of German.

Q. American and Italian films go through London?

A. Yes.

Q. You are an importer, you know that when you import from London you import really American films—the bulk of them?

A. Yes, the bulk of them are American goods.

Q. So that is simply because they are said to come from the British Empire it does not mean they are British Empire goods?

A. No, it doesn't.

Q. Now you want the best goods wherever they are produced so far as foreign goods are concerned?

A. Yes.

Q. But don't you think there is a danger in one country controlling the amusement of another country?—having a monopoly of its amusement, say in the cinema? You go to the cinemas, you see only American manners, customs and ideas. Don't you think there is a danger of the country becoming Americanised in its ideas?

A. So far England has not become Americanised, although 90 per cent. of the films shown there are also American.

Q. You don't think there is any such danger?

A. No, I don't think so.

Q. Then there is another aspect also. Does not India want to see all countries—the habits and conditions of all countries? Why only of America. Should we not see the films of other countries that are brought?

A. It is not the films they want to see but the amusement.

Q. If other countries can produce amusement at the same rate they are very willing to take it, there is no objection to their coming in.

A. Italy has produced some good pictures.

Q. So you don't think there is any harm in any country other than India monopolising the industry?

A. No.

Q. So there is no harm done by any country other than India monopolising the industry here?

A. No.

Q. But I suppose you believe that Indian films should be encouraged to occupy the field?

A. It would become very stale if we had all Indian films.

Q. But a very big proportion of Indian films I suppose you would introduce in India?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it is desirable for this country to have 14 million feet of non-Indian films and only 200,000 feet of Indian films?

A. I would have something more than that.

Q. Only something more?

A. I would have more of Indian films. Of course, foreign films should not be stopped entirely.

Q. Is there a block system at all in the booking of pictures?

A. There is a system called the block system, but that does not affect the exhibitors very much. They do not suffer by it. They would wait till that party gives all the good pictures, and then cut away from them and go to another party. They generally play a double role and practise all sorts of trickery.

Q. If that man resorts to one method, these people resort to another?

A. They know how to get out of it.

Q. Do you think there is anything objectionable in the films coming from abroad, to the people of this country?

A. There is only one that is objectionable, and that is where they show Indians on the bad side.

Q. Do they show them?

A. There are some films, not very many films, but some films.

Q. Shown here in this country in which Indians are shown in a bad plight?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you mention any?

A. Most of the serials.....

Q. You mean where cruelty is practised?

A. Yes, coloured people.

Q. I noticed one film, *Bride 13*,—where extreme cruelty has to be practised they employ coloured men for that purpose?

A. Yes. For instance, where these jungle pictures are shown, you will always find Africans there. Of course, the Africans get the worse of it.

Q. Can you tell us whether really Indians of India have been depicted in a bad position in any of the films either produced in England or in America?

A. There was a film by the name of the Gods of Asia. It was a film produced in Italy and in that film an European girl and gentleman had to suffer a lot due to their going and destroying an idol in a temple. So far as the film was exhibited in Madras it did not cause any rupture, because people understood that this man had done the thing and he was dealt with harshly.

Q. I wish to know whether for doing dirty things they show an Indian for that purpose in western films.

A. I have not noticed. I have only got one instance where the Board of Censors in Madras had objected. In a serial called the Mysterious Pearl the Rajah of Kolpur embracing a British girl that scene was objected to. (Shows the certificate of the Board.)

It was objected to also in Bombay by the Bombay Board. The Madras Board simply followed the decision of the Bombay Board.

Mr. Green: You thought it ought to have been permitted?

A. I do not see myself any objection.

Q. Surely the reason is quite obvious, the Rajah of Kolhapur is a Ruling Chief of considerable standing and he would very much object to his name being used in that way.

A. Supposing an Indian girl was embraced by some European prince it would not have been objected to.

Mr. Coutman: Certainly, it would have been objected to.

A. What I meant to say was this, that it should be applicable both ways.

Chairman: It is more a personal reference, not a question of Indian or European. You want to avoid personalities. The Rajah of Kolhapur is a living person.

A. Yes, but it is not Kolhapur. It is Kolpur.

Q. It is some imaginary name?

A. Yes.

Q. But it is likely to mislead. If it was said the Rajah of Utopia, and if they had objected I could understand it, but this bears a close resemblance to the name of a living person and I think it is likely to be personal.

Mr. Neogy: Have you shown that picture here?

A. Yes. It is my film. I had to cut that portion out.

Chairman: You say that censorship in India is very unsatisfactory and that it is a complete hindrance to the development of the industry. You think that there is too strict censorship in this country?

A. Yes, it is rather too strict.

Q. What is good morally in England should be passed as good morally in India?

A. Yes.

Q. And unless there is some religious objection or some local objection, there should not be any further censorship in morality? That is your point of view?

A. Yes.

Q. Your point of view is that it looks as if India is more moral than England?

A. Yes, putting down England entirely.

Q. In fact, you know that several people came before us and urged that India should set an example to other parts of the world. Do you agree with that view?

A. I do not agree with that view.

Q. You think it is more prudishness than real morality?

A. Yes.

Q. Don't you think that there should be some control over production of films here which are exported abroad, that there should be some way of checking them before they are sent out?

A. From here? That is left to the Board of Censors in England.

Q. Supposing an Indian is depicted in the way Mother India depicts him and a film is taken and sent out, don't you think that this country should prevent such a film being sent abroad?

A. In what way does it harm by being shown abroad?

Q. Supposing you are shown as a nation of mere coolies, or you are shown as a people who do not pay regard to the other sex or treat them always cruelly or in a despicable way, do you think that should be allowed?

A. That is done in all countries. All countries have coolies, it is not only India that has got coolies.

Q. You do not mind?

A. No. When an European comes from abroad and comes into India he sees everything here and what is there to prevent him from making a film....

Q. There is a complaint, for instance, that the ordinary western film depicts the westerner in a very undesirable plight which is not the ordinary daily life of the bulk of the people.

A. Some western films of course depict the westerner.....

Q. But don't you think they have a right to complain that here people understand it as if all of them are leading that life?

A. They have got a right to complain, but those pictures are produced in England. They produce them themselves and we are not sending them anything from here.

Q. So you do not mind if the dark side of Indians' life is similarly depicted for exhibition abroad?

A. I do not mind it.

Q. Supposing a foreigner came here and took the bad side of our life for exhibition abroad would you object?

A. If we have got a bad side, we cannot object to it when things are bad. Truth must be known everywhere.

Q. Even in the ugliest part, although it is only one person living that life—supposing you have the Dumbachari who is the only man who led that life in a generation of 200 years, you say that life may be depicted abroad?

A. Yes.

Q. You do not mind it

A. Yes. We are all acquainted with Dumbachari's life in India.

Q. Supposing Dumbachari's life were depicted on the screen in England, and supposing they understood that all Madrasis are Dumbacharis do you think it is right?

A. I do not think they would be so ignorant as to understand it in that way.

Q. Do you think that people understand these things in the right atmosphere?

A. Yes, they all understand it.

Q. Whether it is in the east or in the west?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: To avoid loss to the trade do you think it would be a good thing to censor stories and scenarios before they are produced?

A. I think that will be very good. It will prevent loss to the producer. Just now I have got a plot but I am afraid to attempt on it because I fear it may be banned.

Chairman: The plot may be all right, but the picture may be bad. After you produce the picture it may have a bad effect?

A. Yes, so it would be very good if the scenario as well as the plot were both censored.

Q. It would not avoid the censoring of the film still? It will have to be censored?

A. Yes, it will have to be censored still.

Q. What is the advantage?

A. The producer would not spend all his money and then lose it.

Q. You think he would get some advice?

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: I would just take that point. I take it that the scenario is only the synopsis?

A. That is the way in which the film story is written.

Q. The producer can add his own touches even after the scenario had been seen and put his own interpretation of some act which may offend the susceptibilities of the censor?

A. Yes, it is quite possible.

Q. Is there anything to prevent you, say, from consulting the Censor Board as to the possibilities of your scenario being acceptable?

A. So far we have not been advised to do it.

Q. But I imagine they would not object if you did consult them.

A. I do not know, I cannot say.

Q. I want to pursue the production side of the film industry in India. What do you say about the Indian market? You produce a film. Does the Indian market give you an adequate return?

A. Yes.

Q. But do you not have to keep the cost of production below a certain figure in order to get that return?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you say is the maximum amount of money that you would spend on a picture and yet get an adequate return from the Indian market alone?

A. About Rs. 10,000.

Chairman: Maximum?

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: That is surely a very great disadvantage in the way of improving the quality of your films?

A. Yes.

Q. That is one disadvantage, the Indian market will not allow expenditure on production of films above a certain amount?

A. Yes.

Q. The actual market is controlled by the theatre owners?

A. Yes.

Q. So, if you sought a market outside India for showing your films it is only through the theatre owners that you have got to get contracts?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you suggest some collaboration between the foreign theatre owner and the Indian industry with a view to widening your market?

A. Yes, it would be better.

Q. Is that the probable line of development? Is that desirable?

A. Yes. The first start would be just as you say. It would be much better.

Q. If the Indian producer says "I must have a market if I have to produce a big film," he must have a market outside India as well and for that he will have to get into collaboration with theatre owners in the foreign market to agree to take his film so that he can produce a big film. That is the actual position?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: Can you tell me exactly how you got your experience in production?

A. I was first in the Electric Theatre which was first started.

Q. That was on the exhibition side?

A. Yes.

Q. How did you come to the production side?

A. I began about 19 years ago and from that time I took up with small machineries, toys and other things and then I produced small pictures and from that I got my experience.

Q. It was entirely from your own experiments?

A. Yes.

Q. And I presume you also learnt the technique of imported pictures?

A. Mostly from them.

Q. It was an employee of yours that took this correspondence course?

A. He is my brother-in-law. He is my partner. We are joint producers.

Q. What was the nature of the film you have introduced last year?

A. A mythological drama, Matsya Avatar.

Q. You told us that the cost of production was Rs. 4,000 for a film of 6,000 feet. I take it that is without overhead charges?

A. Yes.

Q. That does not include your own remuneration or your brother-in-law's, nor does it include interest on your capital?

A. No. If you put all that together, it will be Rs. 6,000.

Q. Have you a studio of your own?

A. No. All work is done outdoor.

Q. You do not use artificial lighting here?

A. No.

Q. Do you reflect light?

A. It is not necessary. Direct lighting.

Q. Including interior scenes? You build your scenery presumably with no roof on?

A. Yes.

Q. I was interested and a little disappointed in your answer to question No. 3, where you say, (reads). Do you think public taste is really so.....

A. From the way the cinemas are crowded we can frame our opinion.

Q. Does that apply to all types of audiences?

A. Everybody likes to see them.

Q. You are not regarding it in a bad sense?

A. No, certainly not.

Q. You mean it is aesthetic pleasure?

A. Yes.

Q. May I take you to the question of the tariff. At present I agree with you that the very cheap film pays exactly the same duty as the more expensive one. If you are going to reduce the duty on cheap film will it not damage you in your capacity as a producer, that is to say, its competition with Indian films would be more severe? It will make the imported film still cheaper.

Chairman: Supposing you pay £10 and you now pay a duty of another £10, if you reduce the duty to £1, whereas it now costs you £20 it will cost you only £11 and therefore it will be cheaper?

A. Yes.

Q. And therefore Indian production will suffer, the competition will be keener?

A. I do not know.

Mr. Green: You mean there is no competition between Indian films and foreign films?

A. There is no competition at all.

Q. Then the tariff rate, so far as Indian production is concerned, makes no difference whether it is high or low?

A. I cannot understand that.

Chairman: The fact that foreign films come in cheaper or can be made to come in cheaper does not affect the growth of the Indian industry, is that your point?

A. It will not affect. In fact we want more Indian pictures and more foreign pictures to keep the cinemas going.

Mr. Green: I think you are now speaking mostly as an exhibitor?

A. Yes, from the exhibitor's side.

Q. Does not your interest as exhibitor rather clash with your interest as producer?

A. No.

Q. You do not think so?

A. No.

Q. You have told us that the censorship is too strict and you gave us one example. Can you give any other examples of how it interfered?

A. What I say is that if it is strict on one side it must be strict on the other side also.

Q. Don't you think that the censorship would certainly cut out any representation of, say, the Prince of Wales, representation of any royalty...

A. He gets the worst of it. That portion also should have been cut out.

Q. I agree with you and I am surprised that the Censorship Board here did not ask you to change the name. You suggest that the existing boards should continue and that there should be a representative of each province on each board. Each board is to have representatives of nine provinces?

A. Yes.

Q. Who is to pay for these representatives?

A. From the censorship.

Q. You do not mind paying a higher rate of censorship fees?

A. Rather than having your film banned unnecessarily I would pay a higher fee.

Q. We have had evidence that the censorship fee of Rs. 5 per thousand feet must not be raised in any case because it would be penalising the industry. You think that in order to ensure a better certificate it would be worth paying more?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you go up to Rs. 10 a thousand feet?

A. It would not be unreasonable.

Q. The central point of your scheme is that all these provincial representatives should see every film?

A. Yes.

Q. So that they have got to be full time men?

A. Yes.

Q. They will have to be remunerated of course?

A. Yes.

Q. You are not frightened of the cost?

A. No.

Q. I do not quite understand your answers to Nos. 37 and 38.

A. Some of these films after being passed by one board are banned by another.

Q. You want the certificate to run all through India?

A. Once a certificate is granted there should be nothing to prevent that film from being run all over India.

Q. Would it not be more economical, instead of having a number of boards with provincial representatives from each province on each, to have one central board?

A. Where is that to be located?

Q. It would certainly not be located in Madras because it is not the centre of the industry. Probably Calcutta or Bombay.

A. I think Madras will be convenient. I would have to spend Rs. 500 to go and show my film in Calcutta. You will put me to a lot of inconvenience and trouble.

Q. You would rather pay a very higher censorship fee to stay at home and have your films censored here?

A. Yes.

Q. It will still not be certain that a film passed at Madras would not meet with objection, say, in Peshawar?

A. But we must provide for that. The producer should not be made to suffer. Once a film is passed it is passed for all India.

Q. Do you wish to take away the existing power of the local authorities to suspend a certificate? At present any district magistrate or commissioner of police in presidency towns can temporarily suspend a certificate pending decision by the local Government. Do you wish that power removed?

A. It must be removed when such a Board is appointed.

Q. Must there not be some reserve of power, take, for example, the possibility of a film offending a particular section of the community owing to purely local reasons?

A. It is for that purpose that I say that we should have such a board.

Q. A film may be all right in ordinary circumstances but it may be dangerous to exhibit it at a particular time and place, and must there not be some power left to the local authorities to suspend a certificate for the time being?

A. If trouble is going to be caused in a particular place, then it could be stopped temporarily until the trouble is over, but the exhibitor knows all that. He is not going to have trouble in his theatre. He will see that in advance. The local authorities may send a timely warning to the theatres.

Mr. Coatsman: Do you own theatres?

A. We do not hold any theatres, we do not rent any.

Q. You just import and distribute?

A. Yes.

Q. To whom?

A. To all the theatres in the Madras Presidency and Bombay Presidency, practically the whole of India.

Q. How many feet of films do you import in the year then?

A. About 360,000 feet.

Q. Do you get your films from the same place?

A. No, from various places. From London and America.

Q. Do you deal direct with producing companies?

A. Not with producing companies.

Q. Am I right in assuming that you deal normally with some agency which sells worn out and second hand films?

A. We do not deal with any agency, but with real film houses.

Q. Exhibiting houses?

A. No. Film dealers.

Q. Not producers?

A. No.

Q. Do your dealers get their films direct from the producers?

A. They get it from some second hand agencies.

Mr. Coatsman: All the films that you import are second hand ones?

A. Yes.

Q. I gather that a good portion of them are worn out?

A. Yes.

Q. What sort of theatres take these films from you?

A. Second class theatres.

Q. In fact, your firm is definitely an agency for importing second hand films, and I suppose they cost you very little?

A. Not very little. We buy all these second hand films outright. They are my own property. We send those films out to as many theatres as might want our films.

Q. What is the average cost of one of the films that you import?

A. If it is a good serial and if you are importing it from London, it would cost us about £150.

Q. By serials I suppose you mean all the parts of it?

A. I mean the whole lot. We import the whole serial which will be about 30,000 feet and for which we pay £150 if we get it from London, and if we get it from America it would cost us between 600 and 800 dollars.

Q. That means you pay just over a penny a foot?

A. Yes, but the duty here is very heavy.

Chairman: These American films cost a bit more, is it not?

A. But these second hand films don't last very long.

Mr. Neogy: You have already said that in the film that you produced, both the outdoor and the indoor scenes were taken in the open air. Are you in a position to tell us what proportion of the 4,000 feet represents indoor scenes actually taken in the open air?

A. The indoor scenes would represent about 800 to 1,000 feet and the balance would be outdoor scenes. It is cheaper to take outdoor scenes than the indoor scenes.

Q. And the scenario was written particularly with that end in view, i.e., to have as much as possible of the outdoor scenes. You said that you contemplate the production of a second film on a much larger scale. Do you propose to have your indoor scenes for that picture also taken in the open air?

A. Yes.

Q. You have no intention of setting up any studio or taking the help of any of the existing studios?

A. No.

Q. Don't you think it would make a good deal of difference if you took indoor pictures inside the studio?

A. It would make very little difference, that is my experience. If we want very bright pictures, we could diffuse the light by ordinary curtains.

Our studio means a small piece of ground and a lot of curtain cloth all round for diffusing the light.

Q. Do you think that India should be content to have an inexpensive standard like that for the production of her pictures or do you have an ambition of developing your own studio on the lines of more up to date studios in the west?

A. Developing on the lines of up to date studios will help us to make splendid pictures.

Q. But do you think that the present quality is good enough for the existing Indian market?

A. Yes.

Q. With regard to trying to have a foreign market, you would like to improve the quality of your pictures immensely if you intend to capture the foreign market and that would entail a much larger outlay?

A. Very much.

Q. And there is a much greater uncertainty in regard to the foreign market, is that not so?

A. Yes.

Q. You find it difficult to get the small capital needed for the purpose of producing your pictures exclusively for the Indian market, is that not so?

A. Yes.

Q. And if you were to have the foreign market also in view you would have to undertake a much larger expenditure?

A. Yes, it must be on the standard of those pictures, otherwise it would be criticised and thrown out of the theatres, and that is not a very easy affair.

Q. So, for the present, your idea is to confine your attention to the home market, is that not so?

A. Yes.

Q. With regard to the film "Raja of Kolpore," were you told the reasons exactly why certain scenes were cut out in that film apart from the reasons given in the certificate?

A. No reasons were given but we could understand what was meant by those who sat in judgment on the film.

Q. But then you say that the censorship authorities were not so very particular about the maintenance of the dignity of the Raja. Is that not so?

A. Yes.

Q. But they asked you to cut out certain portions on other grounds?

A. Yes.

Q. What makes you think so? Do you think that the objection was raised on political grounds, and they were not really particular about the maintenance of the dignity of any Raja or ruling chief as of a white girl?

A. I think it is so.

Q. Then you base your opinion upon the experience that you generally have about the censorship methods in this country?

Chairman: Is it on general suspicion?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: And also perhaps from the fact that equally objectionable scenes, i.e., scenes which would be equally objectionable from the point of view of the dignity of a ruling prince were allowed to stand?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Have you any other instance of this sort?

A. I have no other instance.

196

Oral Evidence of Mr. N. R. DESAI, B.A., Manager, Universal Pictures Corporation, Madras, on Wednesday, the 11th January 1928.

Chairman: You are the manager of the Universal Pictures Corporation in Madras?

A. Yes.

Q. To how many theatres do you supply your films?

A. To about 25 including Bangalore, Hyderabad, Travancore and Malabar.

Q. Have you got a list of the theatres in Madras province including those in Hyderabad?

A. Unfortunately I have not brought a copy of it.

Q. How many theatres are really working here?

A. About 40 in all are working daily. There are also so many travelling cinemas. But out of the so many only 40 permanent cinemas are working regularly and daily.

Q. Are there any in Kolar?

A. There used to be five, but now there are only 3 working.

Q. How long have you been in Madras?

A. This is my sixth year.

Q. How many cinemas were there in the province when you came here?

A. There were about 30. The travelling cinemas open and close almost every five or six months.

Q. Do they open new cinemas or they merely change hands?

A. For instance, if one permanent cinema is closed, then another one is opened in some other place. It is a very frequent occurrence here.

Q. What is it due to?

A. The places they select for opening cinemas are not big enough to maintain a cinema. They generally open cinemas in places having a population of 15,000 or 20,000 and naturally they don't pay.

Q. Are the cinemas a paying concern?

A. Not now-a-days. The exhibitors barely meet their expenses. The cinema population does not sufficiently patronise the trade.

Q. We have been advised that in order to encourage the growth of the Indian film industry more cinemas should be opened throughout the country not in same place but in other places. Do you think it will be a good thing?

A. I don't think so.

Q. If more cinemas were available people might take to producing to a much greater extent? As it is, the producers are not able to supply films to all the cinemas?

A. No.

Q. And yet you say cinemas are not paying. Why is it they get foreign films very cheap?

A. We make it a point to supply them cheap in order to keep them going. Even as it is, the cinemas are not a paying concern. We have had to reduce our rates by half during the last three years, otherwise most of the cinemas would have been closed, and because our American office is managing their branches in India we are able to cut down our rates to meet our customers.

Q. Is it remunerative?

A. No, but we are able to manage it, because we have not got to pay heavy prices for the pictures we import.

Q. I see you have written an illuminating article on the motion pictures in the *Hindu News*, and I suppose that represents your views more or less. It is a very informing article. Do you think there is a great possibility for Indian films?

A. I personally don't think much of the Indian films.

Q. Do you mean they are not good?

A. No.

Q. Do you think it is necessary to improve them?

A. It is necessary to improve them, but the chief trouble is in getting good actors and actresses.

Q. But surely if you make it popular and paying, don't you think it would be possible to get good actors and actresses later on?

A. I have had some experience in the line. I have many friends in Bombay who are in the producing industry, but decent people do not care to go in as actors and actresses.

Q. Do the exhibitors find any difficulty in getting the pictures they want?

A. No.

Q. Is there any monopoly in the hands of one preventing other people from getting the pictures?

A. Madans are importing most of the pictures, and it is difficult for others to get pictures. We supply the cinema owners all the pictures that we get.

Q. I suppose you are able to supply the needs of the owners here, and there are other agencies also, and Madans are not the only importers?

A. There are Pathes and the Globe Theatres who import their own pictures.

Q. Exhibitors don't find any difficulty in getting the films they want, but their chief difficulty is lack of patronage from the public, is that so?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose your opinion is that the cinema is all right, and that it has no moral demerit attaching to it, and you think the people are quite all right, and that those who go to the cinemas are not in any way affected?

A. My opinion is that the people by going to the cinemas have become better. I was in charge of the Liberty Cinema here as Receiver.

Q. How is it you show only serials in the Liberty Cinema?

A. Even Indian pictures don't pay. Most of our patrons on that side are Muhammadans, and they don't care much for Indian pictures, but in the Crown Theatre, the Indian pictures do pay.

Q. I suppose you have seen our questionnaire?

A. Yes.

Q. We had a full examination of your principal in Bombay. Is there anything you wish to suggest from your experience?

A. Some time back you were discussing the question of censoring Indian films. My idea is that scenarios ought to be submitted to the Board for censorship.

Q. But you must have experts on the Board?

A. Not necessarily. A scenario is supposed to contain everything about the film. All the details of the film have to be given in it, so that the Director has not to change anything.

Q. You mean that the Censorship Board can be enlarged as to contain persons who would offer advice to the producing concerns, do you advocate it?

A. Yes.

Q. Don't you think the scenario writers would object to it?

A. No.

Q. Do you think such a thing will be allowed? Do they do it in America in the Well Hay's organization?

A. They do it there. I believe the National Board of Review is going through all the serials there.

Col. Crawford: You say there are 40 cinemas working in this presidency. In how many theatres can you show any one of your particular films?

A. We can show a good film in almost all the theatres, because we get more than one copy.

Q. How many cinemas are there in Madras city?

A. There are nine cinemas here.

Q. Can you show that picture in every one of those nine theatres?

A. No. We used to show them in three places.

Q. Out of the 40 cinemas in the presidency, in how many cinemas can you show that one picture?

A. In ordinary places not more than twice.

Q. You say you supply your films to 25 theatres. You can't supply your films to all the theatres in the same place?

A. No, because we have to enter into a contract with these people, and they would not allow us to show those pictures to others until the expiry of the contract.

Q. Therefore, an Indian producer is faced with the same limitations, and he can only show his pictures in the Madras Presidency in 25 theatres?

A. In his case the limitation would be useful, because there are certain theatres which don't show Indian pictures at all. In Bangalore Cantonment there is no chance for Indian pictures.

Q. If you enforced a quota on every cinema to show Indian pictures, they would still be showing only a certain number of them?

A. Yes.

Q. Therefore out of the 350 cinemas in the whole of India they will not probably be able to show in more than 150 cinemas?

A. Exactly.

Q. Therefore, the market is strictly limited?

A. Yes.

Q. That fact limits the amount of money that producer can spend on the production of films if he is to get an adequate return?

A. Yes, he will have to spend at least Rs. 10,000 for producing one film.

Q. If you want to improve the quality of our Indian films, that is also very largely a matter of money?

A. Yes.

Q. You can go on as at present producing a low standard of film in point of quality, and you will still make a profit. You cannot get anything better because there is no market for the pictures, is that so?

A. At present we cannot get anything better than what we are getting.

Q. They spend the money but they cannot get an adequate return on it?

A. Not necessarily.

Q. We know that they have financial difficulties to face. Would you say that the cost of production of a picture should be limited to Rs. 10,000 or thereabout if you are to get an adequate return on your pictures, and yet the improvement of the quality of the films necessitates more money being spent on them. And if they spend more money and if they have only the Indian market open to them, they will not get an adequate return?

A. In America too they produce ordinary pictures, but once in a way they spend more money and get more. Similarly in India too if they

spend more, they will get a quicker return. Harold Lloyd and others have put in more money only once, and it pays them well, because such pictures can be shown for a number of days together in each place, and every day will bring in bigger box office receipts.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you supply your films to travelling cinemas?

A. Yes.

Q. How many travelling cinemas are there besides the 40 permanent cinemas you mentioned?

A. There are about 12 travelling cinemas. We supply them with our films. Some of them take films from us once in a way.

Q. Have you seen the film called "Bride No. 13"? To whom does it belong?

A. Originally it was imported by K. D. Bros.

Q. Where was it censored?

A. I have no idea, but I think the Alliance Trading Agency in Bombay is controlling it.

Q. Was it censored in Bombay or Madras?

A. I don't know that.

Q. There is no representative of the trade on the Board here?

A. No, but I think there should be one on the Board.

Q. We were told by Mr. Chunilal of your head office in Bombay that there should be an increase of import duty in order to help the Indian industry. When we asked your sub-agent in Calcutta about this point, he said that the import duty should be reduced? Have you got to say anything for Madras?

A. I think it ought to be reduced in the interests of the exhibitors.

Q. Is it in order to assist the American films?

A. In order to assist our exhibitors here.

Q. Therefore, the Indian industry will suffer. You want more American films than Indian films?

A. Only a limited number of American pictures come here.

Q. Then you agree with the views expressed by your Calcutta Agent?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, you send the money to America for your films? Have you ever been taxed by the Income-tax authorities?

A. That is being done in Bombay. Every week we remit our money to Bombay.

Q. In what way are they taxed? Is it on the profit?

A. They have got their own way of doing things. We actually lost last year, and in spite of that we were taxed Rs. 35,000.

Q. You don't supply any of your films to Madras?

A. Sometimes when they ask for our pictures we do supply them.

Q. I suppose second-hand copies and duplicate copies of the same film are also charged duty in the same way as new ones?

A. Yes. But the duty ought to be reduced on the second-hand films and duplicate copies.

Oral Evidence of Mr. C. H. VENKATACHALAPATHI, a Reporter of the "Daily Express," on Wednesday, the 11th January 1928,

Chairman: You are connected with the Daily Express?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. Do you go to the cinemas often?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. I suppose you go there as representing your paper?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you at all make any comments or criticism on the films that you see?

A. At times we do; we write weekly notes.

Q. Have you adversely commented any of the films which you have seen?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Your comments have all been laudatory I suppose? (Laughter).

Q. Supposing you wrote a really critical review, do you think your paper will publish it?

A. I don't think there is any chance of its being published.

Q. I suppose all the papers get advertisements here?

A. Yes.

Q. And they are all well paid?

A. Amusement advertisements have to be paid for much more than ordinary advertisements.

Q. Now, I should like to know your views, as you are a frequenter of the cinemas, and as a youngman interested in the future welfare of the country, do you think really there are any objectionable films shown?

A. No, I don't think they have any demoralising effect.

Q. Having regard to the interests of the people at large, you don't think that any objectionable films are shown in the country?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Are the Indian films getting more and more popular?

A. Yes, they attract larger crowds.

Q. Do you think the public would like to see more Indian films?

A. Yes, the people would like to see a larger number of Indian film depicting puranic stories.

Q. Do you think public opinion will tolerate more effort being put forth by Government in order to encourage the Indian industry?

A. I think so.

Mr. Coatsman: How old are you?

A. I am 26 years of age.

Q. What kind of pictures do you like to see?

A. I would like to see the western pictures which feature eminent stars like Harold Lloyd, Charlie Chaplain, Mary Pickford and others.

Q. In what subjects?

A. I would like pictures showing ordinary life.

Q. What do you mean by ordinary life?

A. I prefer the comic pictures.

Q. Well, now as a young man, do you really like to see these love pictures, this passionate kissing and close hugging?

A. I am not very much enamoured of such pictures?

Q. You are really not?

A. I am not.

Q. And when you see them, they leave no particular impression on you.

A. They don't leave any very lasting impression. The impression left on my mind is very fleeting.

Q. What impression do they leave on you?

A. It enlarges the general aspect of one's mind—that is all. It affords one an outlook on the high life of the west.

Q. May I ask what your education is?

A. I am a graduate of the Madras University—a B.A.

Q. In what subject?

A. History.

Q. And you think that these pictures, as you put it, enlarge your outlook on western life.

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. You regard them as portraying the usual conditions of western life?

A. At times there are exaggerations but so far as high life is concerned I think it is a true portrait that you get.

Q. What do you mean by high life?

A. You don't get the life in the slums. You get only society life.

Q. The films concentrate too much on expensive amusements—that is your point.

A. Yes.

Q. Well, you cannot call that ordinary life.

Chairman: He means that you don't think the bulk of the people are living in that way?

A. No, I don't think so.

Mr. Coatsman: What English novels have you read?

A. I have read almost all the modern novels by Hardy, Meredith and Conan Doyle.

Q. You have never read George Eliot?

A. Yes, I have read her Scenes from Clerical Life and Adam Bede.

Q. The Mill on the Floss?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think the Mill on the Floss would make a good film?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you like to see a film of that?

A. Yes.

Q. What about Dickens? Have you read any Dickens?

A. Yes, the Tale of Two Cities, Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, etc.

Q. Well, that is low life.

A. There is a film of Oliver Twist which I have seen with Jackie Coogan in the chief part.

Q. Did you like it?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: The Tale of two Cities too?

A. Yes.

Mr. Coatsman: Now to me it is extraordinarily interesting to have your views, as a young educated man, you would really prefer that kind of subject to these night scenes and dancing and so on.

A. Yes, I will.

Q. And I presume naturally you would like to see good historical films?

A. Yes. For example there is the film of Rudolf Valentino, The Son of the Sheikh. There you don't see any of this high life. It is only a desert romance, Valentino making love to some woman.

Q. That is purely imaginative?

A. It is.

Q. Such life as you see there is imaginative?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you seen any historical films?

A. I have seen The Hunchback of Notre Dame. I think it is semi-historical.

Q. Anyway it is a very fine film. Have you seen any others?

A. No, I don't remember.

Q. Any way if any historical films came here would you go to see them?

A. Certainly, specially such as depict the French Revolution and the fall of the Roman Empire. I have seen Nero. It is very interesting.

Q. It is a pity we cannot have more of this type of film.

Mr. Green: I am also very much interested to find how well read you are in the classical novels, if I may say so. I take it from these novels you obtain a fair mental picture of the conditions they represent?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. Now when you see films, do they confirm those impressions or do you find the films represent something apparently different?

A. I think they have a different effect from the novels.

Q. It did not altogether agree with your conception?

A. No.

Q. Now do you think your conception of western life is better now that you have seen the films, fuller and more complete?

A. I think I got a better conception from the novels than from the pictures.

Q. That is, I suppose, because you are,—you don't believe in the pictures altogether?

A. To a certain extent I do believe but ordinary life is depicted better in the novels than in the pictures.

Q. Why? Is it because you think the pictures do not represent life as well or as completely?

A. The pictures have to cater for a particular type of taste and this type is more influenced by an appeal to the higher aspects of life.

Q. You consider the people who make moving pictures are catering for the less educated audiences, not for people who have read good literature and appreciate good literature—is that your view?

A. Not for highly educated people but the average. They have to take care of the average sort of people, who attend the cinema.

Q. And the average would include a good many below the average as well as a good many above the average?

A. Yes.

Col. Crawford: Have you seen many Indian films?

A. I have seen a good many of them.

Q. What is your criticism of them?

A. I think on the technical side they are lacking. They are not so good as western films in photography, acting and so on.

Chairman: Acting includes direction?

A. Yes.

Col. Crawford: Have they enough life in them from your point of view?

A. Life? Not the boisterous life of the west.

Q. I do not mean exactly the boisterous life of the west. Is there enough movement, enough action?

A. The action is not so perfect as one would like to see.

Q. I am only trying to find out what you really think about Indian films and benefit by it. That is your criticism, there is not enough action in them? Do you think they will retain their popularity as at present produced?

A. They will.

Q. Even if their quality does not improve?

A. No, no, the quality must certainly be improved and I think in time the quality will be improved.

Q. But if it is not improved, it will lose its market?

A. Yes.

Q. Now would you care yourself to have only Indian films?

A. No, no. I don't like the film industry should be exclusively Indian.

Chairman: Would you like a large percentage of Indian films?

A. Certainly, but I would not advocate a policy of exclusion.

Col. Crawford: I presume you would like to see films from other countries?

A. Yes, I have seen English and American films.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You go to all the cinemas.

A. Not to all but I go to almost all of them.

Q. Whenever there are new films you go and criticise them.

A. Yes, I write some reviews.

Q. Do you pay?

A. At times I pay, at other times I get complimentary tickets.

Q. Free passes? You don't criticise adversely in such cases for fear of the passes being withdrawn?

Chairman: He has already explained.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Now do your newspapers publish hand-bills, circulars, etc., themselves?

A. Only the advertisements.

Q. Are hand-bills published locally?

A. They are published but not in newspaper presses. They are published in different presses.

Q. They don't come from America, they are published here?

A. I think so.

Q. You have seen embracing scenes and kissing scenes, sometimes in these hand-bills, have you not?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. They ought to be censored don't you think?

A. Certain posters of that kind certainly ought to be censored. For instance, the poster in front of the Wellington Cinema of "Kiss Me Again."

Q. What is wrong with it.

A. Yesterday, I went to see the picture and I didn't see any such scene as is depicted there.

Mr. Green: It is cheating the public to put it up? I won't put it that way.

Q. But did you like that poster? Was it a proper poster?

A. No. That is why I say it ought to be censored.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: As this industry progresses do you think young men from respectable families will join as actors?

A. At present they won't but when the people are given sufficient education I think they will come in larger numbers.

Q. You consider the Government ought to help this industry financially?

A. They ought to.

Q. And any money spent is justified?

A. Yes.

Col. Crawford: Do you consider the moral tone of the pictures you see satisfactory?

A. Yes I do.

Q. You see nothing objectionable anywhere?

A. I don't think so.

Written Statement of Mr. K. V. ACHARYA, Film Producer, The Mysore Pictures Corporation, Theatre Majestic,—Bangalore City.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. Yes,—I have been connected with "The Star of the East Films, Ltd.", Madras—now defunct, since its inception as one of the Managing Agents. I have a fair knowledge of the working of the film producing concerns in Madras and Bombay. Besides I have been associated with several Cinema Theatres in Madras Presidency. I have given much of my time to a special study of this subject.

GENERAL.

2. (a) Speaking for Madras Presidency, about ten per cent. each of the educated classes and of the illiterate classes are regular cinema goers in the cities of Madras, Bangalore and Madurai; and in other stations about two per cent. of the educated classes and five per cent. of the illiterate classes. In both the former and the latter, about fifty per cent. of the student population are cinema patrons.

(b) An average Cinema audience therefore consists of one-third educated class and two-third illiterate class.

When Western Serial Films are screened, the Mussalmans predominate according to the percentage of their population in the station.

When Indian Mythological Films are screened, the Indian ladies patronise the show in large numbers. These latter are scarcely in evidence for any other show.

When High class Western Serial Films are screened, a major portion of the Indian audience consists of the educated classes.

(c) Only about five per cent.; as parents in India usually discourage the attendance of their children at cinemas in the belief that it would affect their studies.

PART I.

3. With the educated Indian Cinema goer, high class Western Film is still popular as he usually complains against the quality of the average Indian production. But with the major portion of the Indian audiences, Films produced in India, depicting Indian life, in Indian setting with Indian themes are the most popular. The hold which western serials had on these latter class is fast losing ground in favour of Indian films.

4. No; because there is considerable difficulty felt still in getting really good films of even average merit. The demand in this case is far in excess of supply. Secondly, the exhibitors feel unable to pay the exorbitant sums demanded of them by the producers, especially so in the smaller stations, with the result that they have to screen those pictures after having been completely worn out and with pitiable results. My answer to Question 11, also operates as a cause.

5. The availability of Indian films is steadily on the increase.

(a) They are not always of good quality.

(b) The productions of a few leading companies like the Kohinoor Film Co., and the Imperial Film Co. of Bombay; of the Maharashtra Film Co.

Kothapur; and of the Madan Theatres, Ltd., of Calcutta are generally popular. Productions of other companies when they treat Mythological subjects attract crowded houses in the screening.

(c) It is the experience of every Cinema proprietor that it is more profitable to show Indian films except in the case of a few Cinemas which are actually situated in the European locality or vicinity, like Madras, Moun Road, Bangalore Cantonment and Wellington.

Some of the really successful Indian films are:—

Srikrishna Jamma and Kalia Mardan, of Hindustan Cinema Film

Gul-e-Bhakarali and Shirin Farhad, of Kohinoor Film Co.

Pati Bhakti of Madan Theatres, Ltd.

And latterly, films like Allaudin, Ali Baba and Sati Anusuya have attained a moderate success.

6. (a) Yes, very much.

(b) The educated classes are not concerned so much with the kind of the subject as with the treatment of the subject, the technique and the acting. Hence any film which is well got up attracts larger numbers of the educated classes. The film "Light of Asia" was very popular with them.

(c) On the contrary, the same film fell flat with the illiterate classes. These seem to require gorgeous and disproportionate settings and dresses, or plots with thrills, stunts and fightings in them—in fact they want wild adventure and romance.

7. I do not think so; but I would wish if a few films are produced and shown to the Indian troops exhibiting the valour and glory of the great Indian Heroes of the past. There is not even a single film of the type at present worth the name but the British troops have greater advantages in their national glory being portrayed and exhibited.

8. (a) No.

(b) Regarding Production; it is still in its embryonic stage. The right sort of people have not yet taken up to this art. Men with sincere love of the art, with wide culture, vast experience and with extensive imagination are required to promote and develop this industry. The several studios are not yet properly equipped and brought up-to-date. Bad stories, indifferent photography, untrue settings and post haste in completion are the order of the day. However, I am optimistic about the future. There has been evidence of late of an earnest beginning on the part of the producers to give a better account of themselves and the art is bound to improve with the increase refinement in taste and demand for a better class of pictures from the public.

Re-Distribution.—If under this heading, I may include the hire for the films, I shall have to state that the Distributors charge far too much for the films from the Cinema Theatres. They have not got the idea of "Live and let live". They live for themselves and do not care to concern themselves with the lot of the Cinema proprietors. I am afraid that the latter are squeezed by the producers and distributors, with the results that many Cinema Theatres change ownership too often or are closed. The noblest exception to this statement is "The Universal Pictures Corporation" whose agent in Bombay and the several local managers are very considerate to the Cinema owners.

Re-Exhibition.—Unfortunately, except in Madras and Bangalore, it is anything but desirable. Poorly constructed theatres, ill-ventilated and badly equipped, showing bad conditioned films are only too common.

All these three are revolving in a vicious circle, one acting and reacting on the other, with the result there is not such a rapid advance in this industry as it is bound to be and as it has grown in other parts of the world.

I would suggest the following remedies, should the Government desire earnestly to improve this industry:—

- (1) They should encourage any sound film producing concern which has a genuine desire to improve its productions, by financing such a company with liberal loans on quite a nominal interest. This will help such a concern without any burden to equip itself thoroughly with the latest innovations in the industry and bring out first rate productions.
- (2) With the help of the Government agency, fresh avenues of exploitation should be found in foreign markets like Japan, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Africa and other places where Indian subjects will be appreciated.
- (3) If such an expanded outlet be found, the producers can then without any loss of income reduce the hire charges for their films; and they and the distributors should then be prohibited from charging anything more than about thirty-five per cent. of the gross takings of any Cinema theatre for their pictures.
- (4) Every cinema theatre whether in big cities or mofussil stations should be constructed, equipped and ventilated according to the desired standard—just fit for any decent gentleman to go and sit there for an evening recreation.
- (5) The parcel tariff on Cinema films sent to the theatres for screening should be reduced and all other unduly heavy taxes and license, fees bearing on this industry should be removed, for some years.

9. My answer to Question 8 refers to this too.

Regarding Monopoly, there is only one firm "The Madan Theatres, Ltd." who are approaching anywhere near to the term. As regards their supply however they freely hire their films out to any station where they do not possess a theatre at the usual rates. Even in stations where they own theatres, other theatres are given a chance for a second or third run. But unfortunately they are not so liberal in their outlook in regard to Exhibition. They are following a suicidal policy against their own interests. It will be in the best interests of both the industry and themselves too if the gates of their fortifications in Bengal and in a less degree in Burma are thrown open.

10. With the exception in a small degree of what I have stated in regard to Madan Theatres, Ltd., the "Block" system as such does not operate in India. "First Run" and "Key Theatres" exist, but as the same is at present equitably arranged, there are no disadvantages visible so far. Neither does there seem to be any advantage except in securing early and immediate bookings for the releases.

11. Not at all.

Many a worthless film is thrust on the exhibitor and through him to the public. Some of these films are produced by inexperienced people with a smattering knowledge of the cranking of a camera, and are boomed however by religious subjects, attractive posters and showy booklets. In my opinion, allowing such productions to be screened in the public will react on public opinion about the quality and standard of Indian productions in general, and it ought to be discouraged. My answer to Question 44, may be acted as a remedy against this.

12. It is an acknowledged fact that the cinema is not as profitable a trade as it appears to be. Practically all the cinema theatre owners are heavily involved and run the shows sheerly for prestige. The argument that the tax falls only on the audience stands on looser grounds. The Government and the municipalities should realise that the cinema is the cheapest and absolutely the least harmful of all recreations. Any close observer will see that cinema takes people away from the drinking shops and brothels. I would say that even the most indirect cause which distracts people from such evil tendencies should be encouraged and not taxed upon. People who talk of the immoral

and evil influence of the cinemas do not possess imagination enough to perceive that without the same, there may be greater harm, and that at best it is the less harmful of the two. For these and other considerations, I would strongly appeal for the removal of all such taxes.

13. Due to the distinct and marked prepossession in favour of the Indian productions, the Customs Tariff on foreign films does not act either way on the Indian film industry. An increase or decrease on the same will neither encourage nor handicap the Indian industry. I would however lay my humble protest against any increase as it would fall on the exhibitor eventually. I shall strongly appeal for the removal of the Tariffs on imported raw films as the production cost would then be considerably lessened with much advantage to the development of the industry.

14. Many educational subjects, like History, Geography, Natural Sciences, Hygiene, Agriculture can undoubtedly be taught more effectively through films. But to be really useful, these subjects should be handled with great care and accuracy in production. The effort in this direction of Mr. Dawson, the Publicity Officer of the G. I. P. Railway, is highly laudable. He is, however, subject to the same disease that many another in the field is too often prone to. He thinks he knows too much already and would not ask for the co-operation in the actual production of the professional people. The result is that his most interesting subjects appeal only to those that have to stand the courtesy of the invitations to be present during the screening.

Such enterprise would assist the growth of the industry only if the Government would seek the co-operation of the private agencies in the matter, and if treated in an interesting and popular manner. The system would be a very great incentive indeed to public education in those subjects.

At present, however, there is no demand for such subjects as the films so far produced are dry. At the All-India Exhibition held at Mysore in October 1927, I was asked by the authorities to give a cinema show of such educational and scientific subjects and I found that even when the show was free and open to all, people were reluctant to see the pictures unless some comic or other interesting subjects were also exhibited along with them. I would suggest that, beginning with the Presidency cities, an attempt might be made to compel the cinemas to show the Educational films as and when available.

15. The following extract from a leading article in the "Times of India," dated 29th November 1926, will answer the question. I am completely in agreement with it. "Now, India is a land with rarely fine atmospheric, climatic and scenic advantages from the point of view of film production. Its professional actors have a natural gift of easy gesture which must be specially valuable for film acting. And in common with other eastern countries, India has a wealth of delectable folklore and fairy tales on which wonderful films could be made These would form the foundations of films which would fascinate cinema goers in all parts of the world."

I have only to add that in addition hereto, there is the advantage of more conducive natural light and cheaper cost of artistes and labour. Particularly, the Mysore State possesses highly variegated and excellent scenic beauty spots situated unlike in other places in close proximity to each other. And Bangalore possesses ideal weather conditions to suit film development.

16. The Indian producers, Directors, actors and actresses in some of the leading companies of Bombay and Calcutta are quite up to the mark and can safely be depended upon. But I would wish they are imbued with some originality, imagination and culture, which I am afraid they still lack, judging of course from their productions. Mr. Babu Rao of the Maharashtra Film Co. of Kolhapur possesses all the necessary qualifications. The Scenario writers as such do not at all exist. All the so-called social plots are a bad conglomeration of several western films woven at the spur of the moment round some exciting local event.

The Government will do well to grant a few scholarships to really deserving people who possess a natural gift and talent for this art and with the necessary qualification to go and study the art in America and England. They should also see that such scholarship holders do get the facilities in those places which may be required to learn this art thoroughly. Such people should be selected as far as possible from the existing film companies and should be asked to bind themselves to serve their several companies for a period of years after their training. The Government may also make use of such trained people for the production of educational and scientific subjects.

17. The public are very wary in regard to the business of film production ~~due to the many failures therein.~~ The Cinema film industry is a paying one, ~~and if proper persons start the enterprise I believe that the necessary capital will be forthcoming.~~

18. Legislative action by Government on the lines suggested in my answer to Question 8 may be taken with great advantages to the industry as a whole. I would also suggest that the Railways, Tramways the Army and the Navy be required to give all facilities to the film Companies, if required for particular scenes. I would particularly request that the Government induce the Railway authorities to grant one Advance Agent's Pass Free to every recognised film company; and whenever such company sends their staff from one place to another to take scenes at the advantageous spot they should be allowed one-third concession rates. This will help the companies to secure the most natural background at less expenditure. The advance agent has to move constantly from place to place to find the suitable spot according to the requirements of a particular picture.

19. The films in India are produced at considerably less cost than the average Western film. As the market and income for the Indian Companies is very limited, they have to curtail their expenditure to the utmost possible. Hence they cannot aspire to those highly realistic and costly settings of the western films. The artistes in India draw only a fraction of what their compatriots in the west do. An averagely good Indian production costs only about Rs. 15,000 while a corresponding production in the West will cost anywhere between five to fifty times as much.

20. (a) The proposals I have so far attempted to place before the committee do involve both a loss of income and an incurring of extra expenditure. With a full realisation of the other needs of the country, I must state that such expenditure is perfectly and legitimately justifiable.

Whether Government makes up their mind to assist the industry or not, there is a vast future and potentiality before it. The Cinema will slowly and steadily usurp the functions of the Press and the platform and is surely going to be the medium for instruction in several branches of knowledge and also for the reform of Society and moulding of morals and outlook. This powerful medium of influence may sometimes be used for evil too. With a judicious handling by the Government and with their co-operation, the industry can be expanded and placed on proper and sound footing to the immense advantage of both the Government and the public. The Government should have sufficient foresight to realise all these possibilities early and should not consider any expenditure in this direction as a waste.

(b) Only from the General Revenues.

21. I am sure that the Government are aware of their own inelasticity. Such a proposal therefore to get into an industry which is advancing by such rapid strides will defeat its own purpose.

But I very much sympathise with the several purposes, and the Government may profitably find other means of achieving those ends. In regard to censorship, I place my faith in my answer to Question 44.

22. No. The crushing arguments against the resolution in the British House of Commons cannot be lightly set aside. So long as the cinema theatres are left under private direction and not under Government control, the reciprocal advantage supposed to accrue to India is a myth. In any case it is impracticable.

203

23. (a) I do not think so.

(b) No; on the contrary I dare say she will be misunderstood. If Englishmen in India, once away from their own surroundings at home, could go so far as to state that some of the healthy and beautiful western films shown here are misunderstood in India, would it not stand to reason that the Indian customs and conditions will be similarly misunderstood there and lower them in the eyes of the Empire if the Indian films are shown in the colonies—especially so of the class and nature of present productions in India. But purely topical and scenic films will be of great value in making each country understand the other more thoroughly.

(c) Here again I would say it would stultify the healthy growth and development of the industry instead of improving the standard. It is only a fair competition that will inspire the producers to bring out a better class of pictures. They should win by sheer merit which I believe is not a difficult thing to achieve if they care to use a little pep and salt.

It is one thing to protect the industry of one country within her own territory by her own Government and another thing to foist special disadvantages on a few countries in favour of others. The empire fraternity cannot be felt and acted upon in pictures only. It should begin with flesh and blood, and the rest would naturally and automatically follow.

PART II.

Social Aspects and Control.

24. (a) No. The clamour that has been raised in regard to this matter is due, I believe to want of a clear perspective. If the murder by a person of his own master and king to usurp the throne, and the imprisonment by another of his father to succeed him and reign gloriously can pass off as good study in history for young boys, I fail to understand how trivial things in the cinema exhibition could have a demoralising or injurious effect on them and how the same could be so grossly exaggerated. It is safe to remember that no person has so far stated that any picture has had any injurious effect upon himself or his children or servants. The class of pictures are very carefully chosen by the importers and possess a clean atmosphere about them.

(b) There is no circulation of what can be called an immoral film. But I have seen one or two serials in which a few scenes might be strained to be "criminally suggestive."

(c) In regard to Indian films, a drinking saloon or a brothel is brought into a play without having any direct connection with the theme and often in such cases it has been left without proper treatment. Such scenes are unnecessary and absurd. They are not exactly harmful but I would discourage the introduction of any such scenes unless they are indispensable for the development of the plot and the story cannot go on otherwise. Sometimes a scene is copied from the western film which, since set in an unnatural atmosphere for the sake of thrill or stunt, looks grotesque and ugly.

In regard to western films the present releases aim at a high standard of morality and decency, and I would leave it at this. Some old films where wild romance and unnatural and impracticable criminal stunts were shown in exaggeration may be classed as undesirable.

(d) They have been adequate so far.

(e) No; one should draw very largely on his imagination to connect even remotely the Cinema with crime and unfortunately it is a fad with some people. Cleptomania is as old as Eve and exists since the world's creation.

25. No.

26. (a) Particular care should of course be taken in regard to religious susceptibilities, I would, however, have the censors to keep their hands off purely historical subjects even if there be some scenes of Hindu-Muslim fracas therein. So long as it is true in historical detail.

An exception may be made in the case of Punjab and Bengal, in such censoring regarding Western film I would not wish to see an Indian depicted as very shady simply because he is an Indian. Such tendency is sometimes common with a class of western producers. Such pictures may be banned.

(b) No.

27. (a) In my opinion. No, emphatically, for all the questions.

(b) There was one film exhibited in Germany which I read of in papers and another produced in Madras Presidency intended for foreign exploitation which certainly grossly misrepresented Indian civilisation and culture. The latter was produced at the instance of missionaries at Tindivanam, that they may be able to secure greater financial help from their home philanthropists.

28. (a) and (b) I do not think so.

29. No, it will not serve any useful purpose to do so.

30. No.

31. Yes.

32. As far as Madras Presidency is concerned, the censors had not many opportunities. The few occasions they had to exercise their judgment, they have done so satisfactorily. But regarding Bangalore Civil and Military Station, they have used their judgment rigorously and not unoften without appreciable meaning or reason.

33. (a) Yes, it will surely have such an adverse effect.

(b) It will naturally follow.

(c) Quite so, and will make the story flat and uninteresting with unhappy results.

34. (a) Yes.

(1) Because there will gradually develop a uniform system and standard of criterion which will become appreciable and intelligible to the trade instead of leaving it to the whims and fancies of individuals who have no time or scope to form any standard even for themselves.

(2) Not much, but it will be worth the little inconvenience which might be caused.

(3) I would suggest the following constitution of the Board:—

Minister in charge of Development	President.
Commissioner of Police	Deputy President

Members.

Deputy President, Legislative Council	Ex-officio.
Publicity officer of the Government of India	Ex-officio.
4 lady members nominated by the Government of India.	
6 other members preferably from the Press and trade nominated by the Government of India.	
2 members elected from each of the Legislative Councils.	
1 member nominated by each Provincial Government.	
One full timed officer as Secretary of the Board.	

The chorus shall be three for receiving and passing any film and for totalling any film five members should agree. This suggestion holds good if Bombay be made the Headquarters, if any other station be chosen, the officers *ex-officio* and may be changed according to the needs.

There shall be a full timed provincial Inspector in each of the provinces who shall be subject to the authority of the Central Board.

(4) Bombay will be the most convenient place from the Trade's point of view. Not only are the majority of the Indian film producing concerns stationed in Bombay or near thereto but even the majority of the importers

of the western films are also stationed there. More than sixty per cent. of the total application for censoring will come from Bombay. Hence its suitability. If it is not to be for any special reason or inconvenience, I shall suggest Delhi or Simla.

(b) I would advocate that the central board meet once every month in the first week. In all cases of urgency and necessity, the provincial Inspectors shall have the power of granting temporary certificates to run in one or more stations in their province till reasonable time and opportunity be granted to the importers and producers to have their films duly censored by a central committee. The central board will have the option of granting A or B certificate of the one declaring the film as fit for being screened in any part of British India and the one making it optional and subject to the opinion of the particular provincial Inspector according as the resolve. My suggestions if accepted will meet all the objections of those against the central board and will at the same time bring in many advantages.

(c) A reasonable charge may be fixed on the films to be censored and the Government may meet the deficit.

35. (a) The question in this case is not whether he is an official or non-official. It all depends on the breadth or narrowness of outlook in each case.

(b) Personally, I prefer the constitution of a Central Board.

36. (a) I learn that the present incumbent in Bombay is sufficiently qualified and is discharging his responsible work satisfactorily; I am further informed it was not so with regard to the previous incumbent. The chief qualification is a broad mindedness, a good understanding of human nature with its foibles, and free from prejudice and narrowness of outlook.

(b) Yes, I believe so. I know personally that many non-officials of high social standing were actually anxious to serve in the board.

37. (a) and (b) I would refer to my answer to Question 34 (b) which may ensure the necessary.

38. Yes. Bhakta Vidur by Kohinoor Film Co., Rasia Begum, Amar Sinha, Shah Jehan by Royal Art Studio, and host of western films

39. No.

40. I do not at all think so. I find that the greatest judgment and care is used in regard to such display. There has not been a single poster or hand-bill which calls for such interference I consider those who have remarked to the contrary as rank Puritans who will consign any picture of Ravi Varma to the flames. Such interference is not only uncalled for but will also be unwarranted. The Press Act possesses sufficient safeguards already.

41. Yes, a distinct taste for the better, with the increase of the attendance of the educated classes and the craving for a better class of picture from the public. I find that there is not yet any improvement in that direction from the Indian productions except from very few ones.

42. Yes, if it means the cinema trade. My suggestions are embodied in answer to Question 44.

43. (a) No.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

44. In regard to films, the Press is grievously deviating from its set path. While the press invariably praises, criticises or censures all public acts, public men and public policy with an admirable impartiality and understanding it fails to do so in the case of the exhibition of films. Any film that is advertised in a particular newspaper is sure of getting favourable comments thereon in that paper irrespective of its merits. Even in a cinema magazine started expressly to improve the art, I found that a particular producer who advertised therein got undue encomiums for his picture with the result that a large number of cinema owners hooked the film with bitter cost to themselves. Of course, curses on the magazine were not wanting but in each case it was too late. I desire very much that a strict impartiality and a fair judgment should be used in such reviews by the press.

204

My suggestion is that the Central Board of film Censors should start a cinema publicity magazine from its headquarters with the Secretary of the Board or the publicity officer of the Government of India as its Editor. As each film is censored they should state their independent opinion on the merit of each picture specifying about (1) the Plot, (2) the treatment of the subject, (3) the acting, (4) settings, (5) photography, and (6) any other remarks of interest which they may wish to make. The magazine should also publish any valuable articles from the public or people in the line. They may also publish extracts from foreign cinematograph. Journals and reviews, such a magazine will give a stimulus to the industry and healthy competition to turn out a better picture.

I believe such a magazine will be subscribed by every producer and cinema theatre owner. It will give the latter an impartial opinion about each picture so that he can form his own judgment as to its suitability or otherwise of such a production to his theatre. The magazine shall also be a good medium of advertisement, and I think, will pay for itself.

Besides by making known to the producers and cinema owners periodically as to why certain films or portions thereof were banned and offering constructive suggestions now and then, they will greatly assist in the standardization of the industry. The trade also shall have scope to give vent to their legitimate grievances with the surest chance of being considered by the authorities. Instead of the provincial commissioners communicating the names of the banned films to the theatre managers as at present resorted to the Board will issue the list directly through the magazine. This idea will also answer, in my opinion the issues raised in Questions 11, 21 and 42.

45. (a) The film producing companies should have a free hand in their internal management as it is most conducive to the development and growth of the industry. Except therefore what I have already suggested, I would not advocate any Government interference in film production.

(b) I am, however, in favour of registration and licensing of film producing agencies. In the interests of formation of sound and favourable public opinion on and faith in the trade generally and also to ensure a steady improvement in the standard of films, I would suggest that the Central Board enquire into the resources, the securing for employment of experts with practice in successful film production elsewhere and other incidental matters before it grants a license to produce. Individuals and companies should not be allowed to produce any film for public exploitation without such a license except topicals. Many of the mushroom companies and inexperienced individuals will then be out of the field and out of harm to the cinema theatre owners with their junks and a great impetus will be given to the industry by securing a clear and healthy atmosphere for the really sound concerns to develop and compete with each other to produce their best.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. K. V. ACHARYA, Film Producer, The Mysore Pictures Corporation, Bangalore, on Thursday, the 12th January 1928.**

Chairman: How many years have you been connected with the film trade or industry?

A. Since 1922.

Q. Are you still in that business?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. You are now in Bangalore city?

A. Yes.

Q. Who are running the theatre there?

A. No; the Mysore Pictures Corporation.

Q. What does it do?

A. It is just for the purpose of production of films. I have recently gone there.

Q. You are now producing films there?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. When was it incorporated?

A. It has not yet been incorporated; it is going to be shortly incorporated.

Q. Have you got the necessary financiers behind you?

A. Yes, I have already approached them and, probably under the patronage of the Mysore Government, I expect to do it. Of course, I have approached them unofficially.

Q. And you hope to start soon?

A. Quite soon, within a month or two.

Q. What is your experience in the line?

A. I was managing director of the Star of the East film. That is what Mr. Venkayya started.

Q. You were the managing director here?

A. I promoted the concern and I managed the affair.

Q. It was unfortunately a failure. We need not go into the reasons here.

A. I have already explained the reasons there in my statement.

Q. Yes, you have. Now had you any training before that?

A. Before I entered the business I stipulated with Mr. Venkayya that I must know the whole business from A. to Z. before I undertook to manage it. So I got trained under Mr. Prakassam.

Q. How long did that go on?

A. For barely six months.

Q. And they were able to produce 4 pictures in 6 months?

A. No; during these 6 months they were able to produce 3 pictures. I was his partner in the business.

Q. And are you interested in the exhibition side?

A. Yes, I was also managing the theatre here, in Madras.

Q. Apart from that are you interested in any exhibition in Bangalore or Mysore? I mean are you interested in any cinema?

A. Yes, Sir, I am interested in the Theatre Majestic.

Q. How?

A. The proprietor of the Majestic is my present partner.

Q. With whom you propose to start the concern?

A. Yes.

Q. How many theatres has he got?

A. He has got one theatre.

Q. That is, in Bangalore city?

A. Yes.

Q. How many theatres are there in Bangalore cantonment?

A. 4 theatres for Europeans and 2 theatres for Indians.

Q. Altogether there are 6 theatres in Bangalore cantonment?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. How do they get their films—where do they get them from?

A. Two of them have got contracts with the Universal Pictures Corporation, and one of them is Madan's own theatre. The other theatre belongs to the Globe Opera House. They have got their own film renting bureau at Calcutta.

Q. The others are independent?

A. The other two are only in Indian localities, they cater sometimes with Indian films and sometimes second or third run pictures which have been exhausted by those other theatres.

Q. What is that theatre round the corner near Sheshapatty Chaultri?

A. In the cantonment.

Q. No, in the city.

A. That is the Theatre Majestic. It was the first theatre started in Bangalore.

Q. How many years ago was it?

A. Nearly 8 years.

Q. And all these theatres in the cantonment, how old are they?

A. The Royal Opera House which is at present called the Globe Opera House is the oldest. It was started over 10 years ago.

Q. More than 10 years ago?

A. Yes. The others have been started since.

Q. I see. Is there any difficulty in these theatres getting a good supply of films?

A. Of course both the Indian and the European theatres do feel the difficulty.

Q. Difficulty in getting films?

A. In getting proper films: I mean to say, what they feel they would like to give to their audiences, they don't get.

Q. Is it because they cannot afford it?

A. Not at all. It is because there is a shortage of good films.

Q. I see from your statement that the bulk of the Indian audience care only for the thrilling serials.

A. I said, cared. It is a question of the past. Now they care more for Indian films.

Q. From serials their taste is being diverted to Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it is good that their tastes should be so diverted?

A. Yes.

Q. They cannot get a good supply of Indian films. Is there any theatre which runs only Indian films?

A. Most of those which cater for Indians run only Indian films.

Q. For instance, the Majestic runs only Indian pictures?

A. Yes, but side by side they run the serials of the Universal Pictures Corporation as a side programme. It is always a double programme, it is a mixed programme. It is only in the case in that theatre. The Select Picture Palace runs only Indian films.

Q. How many theatres in Bangalore, whether in the cantonment or in the city, run only Indian pictures?

A. Only two theatres.

Q. How many theatres run only western pictures?

A. 5 theatres.

Q. And there is only one theatre which runs both?

A. Two theatres show both.

Q. And the two theatres which run both are in Indian localities?

A. Yes.

Q. And the theatre which runs Indian pictures only is in the Indian locality?

A. Yes.

Q. So, those who run exclusively western pictures are all in European localities?

A. Quite so.

Q. Supposing a quota system were introduced compelling every theatre to exhibit a certain length of Indian films in order to encourage the growth of Indian films, say, once or twice a week, or a thousand feet in the week?

A. I am not at all in favour of any such compulsion. I might say it might inconvenience the audience. For example, an European who goes there, he would certainly not care to see an Indian film unless it is of the type of "The Light of Asia." "The Light of Asia" is very good and all Europeans including His Excellency came to see it.

Q. That is the only film I suppose which attracted a European audience?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there any other film?

A. There are one or two films which would certainly attract, but unfortunately they have not been properly advertised.

Q. How not properly advertised?

A. The Europeans have not been informed that it is a picture worth their seeing.

Q. How are they to be informed?

A. The same way by which "The Light of Asia" was advertised. The Light of Asia would have been nothing if it had not been properly boomed.

Q. It had a peculiar advertisement at that time in that their Majesties saw it.

A. I do not think that is the only reason why it succeeded.

Q. In what way do you advise it should be advertised?

A. Advertise in the English papers.

Q. You can only advertise them by showing them?

A. No. You can also by other means, for example, by giving the plot.

Q. Don't you think the best advertisement is by showing it in the theatre itself?

A. Quite so.

Q. And they are afraid to show Indian pictures?

A. Of the present standard, yes. I do think that Europeans would not care to see such films as are at present produced here, and you would be inflicting on them a waste of time by showing such films. I will say the same thing so far as Indians also are concerned.

Q. Do you think that there is any other picture except the Light of Asia among the Indian films which you have seen, which any theatre owner could exhibit in a European centre?

A. There is only one film which I would personally say that it will be worth while.....

Q. If you were a theatre owner you would take the risk?

A. I was a patron,—I place myself in the European's place—I would see Sinha-gad, which is a film produced by the Maharashtra Film Company.

Q. That is the other picture. Light of Asia and this picture are the only two which are suited to be seen by men like you?

A. As an educated man.

Q. I do not know whether you are educated or not, but we saw some Indian productions which we thought were good.

A. Quite so. For example, Sir P. C. Ray came to our institute and said: "How did you produce all this without the help of Europeans?" because he saw it for the first time. He does not compare it properly with western productions.

Q. What I want to know is whether the Indian films which are now shown have got a chance of a market in European quarters?

A. They have got a chance of a market provided they are produced with a little more care.

Q. In what respects?

A. Both in the acting, in the setting, and in photography.

Q. In all these directions it requires some improvement, or considerable improvement?

A. Some improvement only. That is, with a little more care—they are capable of producing pictures which will certainly go in other markets, but they do not for want of time. They do the whole thing in such a hurry.

Q. So you do not think they are so bad that there is no hope of improvement?

A. On the contrary, I say, they are perfectly good. My memorandum states that.

Q. And yet you say the exhibitors do not take the risk of showing them even once a week in their theatres where Europeans attend. That is what I am concerned about.

A. Personally it is my opinion that it is better that the audience is left to itself in the matter of taste.

Q. But that taste is developed, as you know, by what you show. By the serials coming in the audience acquired a taste for serials. Now you say that Indian films are coming in and that taste is being diverted, so that if you create a taste by showing only western films of a particular kind it is difficult to change it, is it not?

A. What I would suggest in this small matter is this. I would certainly accept your proposal if there are films worth being seen. The effect of the present ones would be a dead one.

Q. So you do not think that unless the Indian films are improved in quality in several directions it would be just to impose a quota on theatres which show only western films? That is your point of view?

A. Yes.

Q. From the point of view of the audience?

A. Yes.

Q. Supposing a mixed board were established to examine Indian films consisting of Colonel Crawford, myself and one or two others, to decide whether these are suitable for exhibition to European audiences, and they pass a film as fit for universal exhibition, would you then approve of a quota system for such films?

A. Yes.

Q. You will do that in order to encourage the growth of the Indian industry?

A. Yes.

Q. Your objection to the quota system in the first instance was merely with regard to the existing films?

A. Quality.

Q. That being safeguarded you have no objection to the quota system being introduced?

A. Not at all.

Q. In answer to question No. 7 you have suggested in the case of troops that there should be films exhibiting the valour and glory of the great Indian heroes of the past. You say: "There is not even a single film of the type at present worth the name but the British troops have greater advantages in their national glory being portrayed and exhibited." Who do you think should produce the films?

A. Any of the recognised good producers.

Q. They have not produced such things now?

A. No. In the first place they have not got facilities to produce.

Q. What facilities?

A. Production of that type is a very huge undertaking and they would require a lot of soldiers, sepoy, visiting forts, access to so many other things which at present belong to Government. They would like to have all these in order to give a good show.

Q. I suppose generally you are for Government giving facilities to producers in India for access to public places of resort, the lending of troops and other paraphernalia, etc.?

A. Yes, I have requested that specially in my memorandum.

Q. I want your opinion on this point. Should it be given indifferently to all and sundry who apply, whether they are foreigners or Indian? Supposing a foreign company, an American company, or a German company, or for the matter of that any non-Indian company which has no Indian management, come and want to take films of that sort?

A. I would answer that question in two parts if you please. Firstly, I am sorry to say that I am against any foreign company being given any facilities to produce pictures here for the simple reason that such competition will be very unfair in the present stage of Indian film production, and therefore I would discourage such an idea. Secondly, I am not perfectly sure that productions of those people will always be in the best interests of India because they may or may not show India at her best, in her true colours in such representations. They may take these scenes from here and show Indians in a grotesque manner as has been done up till now in American productions.

Q. But that can be safeguarded against by censoring them before they are sent out or before they are exhibited?

A. There should be a certain principle in your censoring. You cannot say because an Indian is depicted in a bad light you should censor it. I do not know the position which you are going to take up. There must be a principle.

Q. You say it must be confined to morality?

A. Not exactly to morality, but morality and taste. Simply because you find an Indian is shown in a very bad light in a particular European film I would not censor it. You cannot take up that position; I am afraid, I do not know. You know your position much better.

Q. That is all right. Therefore you would confine such patronage or privilege which Government can give, only to Indian concerns?

A. Yes.

Q. And you are strongly against such facilities and patronage as the Government can give being given to non-Indian concerns?

A. Yes.

Q. And you think that the giving of such facilities and patronage will interfere with the growth of the Indian industry here?

A. That is my position.

Q. There are a large number of Indian troops in Bangalore?

A. Yes.

Q. Can they get facilities for going to the cinema there?

A. My limited experience is I have not been seeing them as much as I ought to considering the number of troops at the station.

Q. I suppose in the cantonment itself they only show western pictures for which they do not care?

A. Yes, and even in the cities their attendance at cinemas which Indian films is very small.

Q. Is it out of bounds?

A. The Indian cinemas are unfortunately out of the bounds of troops.

Q. Indian troops?

A. I do not know, whether Indian troops or European troops.

207

Q. The Indian troops have really no opportunity for seeing films?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you advocate any cinema being run in the regiments as part of the regimental equipment?

A. If it would be worth while, if it would meet the cost of such exhibition, I have no objection.

Q. But British troops have got full facilities?

A. Yes, I see them of course very constantly.

Q. In fact, probably they are the chief patrons in the cantonment?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it would be advisable to remove the bar from the cinema wherever it is located?

A. As far as I am concerned, my opinion in the matter is that there is no connection between the two.

Q. Nobody says that there is any connection.

A. It does not matter whether there is a bar or there is no bar.

Q. It does not add to any evil influence of the cinema?

A. No.

Q. If there is evil influence it exists outside the bar?

A. As much whether it is outside or inside.

Q. You think then that the cinema has no evil influence at all?

A. That is the position that I have taken up in my memorandum.

Q. You think the moral tone of the films shown is all right?

A. Not certainly all right, but is tending to be all right, there is an attempt to be all right.

Q. You mean the moral tone is improving?

A. Yes, because the public themselves demand a better class of pictures.

Q. Do you mean the Indian public?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you mean to say that Indian public opinion expresses itself?

A. Yes, very much, in this way. In olden days if a film with a little of these small unworthy scenes which you are referring to was exhibited there would be a rush of Indian audience. To-day the same class of pictures does not attract any audience at all.

Q. You mean these passionate love-making scenes?

A. Yes.

Q. Neither to the educated nor to the illiterate are they attractive?

A. Yes.

Q. The illiterate people want fighting scenes or Indian dramas?

A. Yes.

Q. They do not care for the social dramas of the west?

A. Yes. Particularly where those love scenes and all that were exhibited there was a craving, but now there is no such craving.

Q. They have become familiar with that and they do not care for it?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: The novelty has worn off?

A. Yes.

Chairman: That is your experience?

A. Yes.

Q. What will be the percentage of western films which do exhibit now-days passionate love-making scenes?

A. About 5 per cent. At the same time I would request you to bear in mind that there is no story, there cannot be a story either in a film or in any other way without love or a touch of romance in it.

Q. I do not think you need elaborate that point, you may take it that we are also aware of it. However, those scenes to which some people take exception, where there is passionate love-making, or the underworld is exhibited, girls and men drinking together and dancing on the table, these cabaret scenes—in what percentage do they appear?

A. About 5 per cent.

Q. And all the 5 per cent. is not exhibited everywhere?

A. No.

Q. So that you say that those things are a negligible quantity?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you seen both British films and American films depicting social life? What is the British film which you know of, depicting social life?

A. Practically everyone. About 60 or 70 per cent. depict social life in one form or another.

Q. Is there much difference between the British production and the American production depicting social life, so that you can say one is more pure than the other?

A. No. I would just put it this way. The English film is more real to life. The American film is a little more exaggerated, there is a drawn out, and more interesting depiction of life.

Q. That is, why, perhaps, they have captured the world's market?

A. Yes.

Q. When you confine yourself to humdrum life the cinema will fail?

A. Yes.

Q. If you are true to life the cinema will cease to be an attraction?

A. Very naturally. It is the same as in a drama.

Q. The same thing as a novel? A novel is not very popular unless it goes beyond the daily life? Similarly with the cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. So if the cinema is to thrive you have to draw on imagination, much more than on real life? You do not mean to say that the public taste requires it?

A. I think it does.

Q. Otherwise you do not think the producers will be producing it?

A. Yes, nor will the audience see it.

Q. You think on the whole the cinema is not doing any mischief?

A. Yes.

Q. Either to the youths, boys or girls or.....

A. Even if it is, it is such a very, very small mischief that it is not perceptible at all.

Q. We have been told by people that a slow poison is being introduced into the country by the cinema going audience being inoculated with some sort of, say, for instance, contempt for western life.

A. I would say that such a thing does not exist in actuality, it only exists in discussions or mere talks.

Q. You do not think the cinema goer really thinks about what he has seen in the cinema? He sees the cinema and goes away and does not think about it afterwards?

A. It does not affect him at all, whether he be an adult or whether a child.

Q. It ceases to interest him?

A. Yes, the same thing as reading novels.

228

Q. It is not everybody that reads novels.

A. Even if one read Reynold's novels you cannot say that he gets spoiled.

Q. You don't say the reading of Reynold's novels does not spoil them?

A. It is a question of taste. Simply because a gentleman reads Reynold's novels he does not become bad.

Q. Are you an importer or do you deal with importers?

A. No.

Q. You do not supply or hire out films yourself?

A. I have been supplying our own films.

Q. But you have not produced any yet?

A. I have got experience in that line.

Q. Do you produce any topicals at all?

A. I have produced myself that Silver Jubilee Celebration of His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore. I had a demand for the negatives from America, but I declined to part with them.

Q. If they take them at all, they want them with negatives?

A. Yes.

Q. Will they take copies there and send you back the negatives?

A. What they do is they will send us copies whenever we want. They won't give the negatives back to me.

Q. Where do you propose to get them printed?

A. I have done everything myself already and I have screened it.

Q. In Bangalore?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you do for censoring productions there?

A. In the Mysore State? There is a Mysore Board of Film Censors who have censored up till now one single topical.

Q. Is there much complaint in Bangalore about the nature of films shown there, either in the press or otherwise?

A. No.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you know of any persons who produce private films for export to America?

A. Not to my knowledge.

Q. We were told yesterday that they did so and sent them to America with negatives. You do not know anything of this?

A. No. If you mean mere topicals, I know of a few topicals that have been taken here and sent to America. Some of my friends are doing it to-day in the case of topicals.

Q. How many?

A. 2 or 3 friends.

Q. In Bangalore city?

A. No.

Q. In Mysore?

A. No.

Q. You are not in favour of stricter censorship for export and import of films?

A. Not more than what it is now.

Q. You have complained that a missionary at Tindivanam made certain films and sent them abroad for the sake of money. Don't you think that such films ought to be censored before they are sent out?

A. I would very much relish such an idea.

Q. In that case what you state here should be corrected.

A. Censorship for exhibition in India is different from censorship of films for going abroad.

Q. We have mentioned in our questionnaire for import and export.

A. I did not go through your questionnaire properly.

Q. You think it ought to be done?

A. In the case of export of Indian films the negatives of which are sent out.

Q. You are in favour of a central board. You do not approve of provincial boards? You say there ought to be a provincial Inspector?

A. Yes.

Q. You do not approve of the provincial boards as they are?

A. No.

Q. The present board in Madras you think is unsatisfactory? It ought to be changed?

A. I did not exactly say unsatisfactory. If there is a central board the producers will understand the board and the board will understand the producers and there will be a standardisation of the films both in their production and also afterwards. But if there is a provincial board—I will just give you an example. The Bhakta Vidoor was censored in Bombay and it ran in the Bombay Presidency throughout. But when it came to the Madras Presidency it came to Madura and the District Magistrate arrested the proprietor of the cinema as if he were a thief and brought him up to Madras with the film. The Madras Censors Board objected to the picture probably for the reason that the District Magistrate asked them to censor it. The result was the Bombay Board wrote to the Madras Board to say that they did not know what was censored and these people wrote back to say they did not know what they censored, you might see the correspondence about it. There is no standard. There was no local objection and it was not censored at all for that purpose. They say it was undesirable.

Q. If the central board is located at Simla or Delhi, don't you think that those who produce Indian films here will be very much inconvenienced?

A. That is why I have suggested a remedy. I suggest that the provincial inspectors will have power to temporarily sanction a picture till such time as the film goes up to the central board and is passed by it.

Q. Before it is censored by the central board it can be shown with the certificate of the inspector?

A. Yes, the inspector in that province.

Q. Do you want any advisory board for that provincial inspector?

A. I do not think it is necessary.

Q. Just as you have in the Excise Department?

A. No. When the powers of the inspector are so circumscribed and limited there is no necessity for any further advisory board.

Q. You advocate that a reasonable charge may be fixed for the maintenance of the central board. At present they charge Rs. 5 per 1,000 feet. Do you advocate that that should be increased to Rs. 10. In England it is 20s. I think.

A. The Indian cinema is suffering very much hardship already so that I am not very much in favour of increase in the charge.

Q. There should be no increase in the present charge?

A. No, because they are already suffering much hardship.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: This "Razia Begum" and other films that you mentioned were banned by some provinces. May I know the causes why they were banned?

A. I don't want to use a very strong word but it is mere whim. Because if there was any touch of Hindu-Muslim, it should have been banned in Bombay instead Madras.

Q. I want to know the causes? Tell me about "Razia Begum."

A. So far as the plot is concerned, it is a question of taste and whim. So far as these three are concerned, no reason can possibly be adduced. In other films that have been banned from one province to another, there have been particular causes, either local or otherwise.

Q. To avoid all this do you think these stories and scenarios ought to be censored beforehand, to avoid all this loss to the producer?

A. It will be a very good idea but it is not so much the scenario as the actual presentation that is at fault; so far as the censors are concerned, that is the position. It is not the mere story but the depicting of the story, the treatment of the story.

Q. But supposing Razia Begum was shown to be in love with a Hindu; if it was wrong, certainly the censors were justified in objecting.

A. I don't want to say anything about the censors, but such stories ought never to be censored. In my opinion, at least; I am very sorry to say. Because if it was history and if a student is allowed to read that subject in books, I cannot understand why it should not be seen actually on the screen. We are losing very beautiful stories on account of such little sentimental objections.

Q. Your answer to 32; you say the censor boards have used their judgment rigorously. Which censor board—Madras?

A. No, Bangalore. There is no censor board there but the original censor certificates of other places are always subject to the approval of the District Magistrate at Bangalore.

Chairman: Under what provision?

A. I don't know the provision at all but you have to give the original censor certificate.

Q. What do you have to do? Supposing you want to exhibit a film that has been passed in Bombay.

A. The gentleman has to get the original certificate granted by the board to the producer and he must give it to the District Magistrate before he passes the name in the handbills.

Q. Whose name in the handbills?

A. Before he advertises the film, or he must do so before he screens it.

Q. That is the cantonment area?

A. Yes.

Q. And no exhibitor can exhibit a film without going to the District Magistrate first?

A. Without sending that original censor certificate first.

Q. Is this the case in other places?

A. No, in no other place is it so.

Q. Is it under the cantonment rule?

A. I cannot enlighten you on that point. I may say furthermore that in any case even if you show a film, they can stop that.

Q. You mean suspend it?

A. Yes.

Q. What happens? Does anybody decide on it afterwards?

A. No, the exhibitor has to send back the film to the person from whom he got it.

Q. The Local Government does not decide anything? The Resident will be the Local Government?

A. Oh, no. There is nothing further done. I may tell you of an instance. For example "Watch Your Wife" was shown and it was similarly banned. A few days it was allowed to be screened.

Q. I suppose you have no experience yourself of this, no personal experience? But you think such things are banned. Are you sure? Are you

sure every film has to be shown to the District Magistrate before it can be shown in Bangalore?

A. What I said was that the original censor certificate has to be given and they can immediately screen it if the original certificate is granted to the District Magistrate or the Superintendent of Police or whichever authority. Then can screen it afterwards. But again it is always subject to their pleasure for the continuation of the screening. Even though it was already censored.

Q. Of course, they can suspend it under the Act if they find it objectionable.

A. They insist on seeing the original censor certificate.

Q. That is all that happens?

A. That is all.

Q. Not that he has to pass the film? A little while ago you stated that he has to put his initial or something on the certificate.

A. What I stated was that unless the original censor certificate had been sent to the police he could not screen the film.

Q. Oh, yes, that is only to satisfy them that it bears the necessary certificate.

A. In other places they don't insist on the original. The film itself carries a certificate. I mean rigorously for this reason that more films are banned after the screening, more films are suspended (if I may use the word) in Bangalore civil and military station than in any other town.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: How many have been banned during this year?

A. If you say during 1927, I would say about 20 to 25 films.

Chairman: They have been suspended on moral grounds?—not on any local grounds?

A. No, not on local grounds.

Q. Not because they were apt to excite communal feeling?

A. No, on purely moral grounds.

Q. He becomes a further censor?

A. Yes. If you want I can send you a list of such films.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: I think you had better send the list. Are there any producing companies in Mysore?

A. No, Sir. Mine is the first that has been started.

Q. That is all? You say that scholarships should be given to students going abroad?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you prefer scholarships to be given to students going abroad or that experts should be brought from abroad and teach them here? Don't you think that is the better thing?

A. No, Sir.

Q. Because if you send them abroad, they are taught superficially there, we are told, and they are not shown trade secrets.

Chairman: Have you been there at all, to the west?

A. No.

Q. Then, he is not likely to know. We have got so many witness to-day.

Colonel Crawford: May I take you to your answer to Question 8 regarding distribution. You say they have not an idea of live and let live. You consider that the future prosperity of the industry necessitates some combination of all interests in the industry?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you any suggestion as to how such a combination could be brought into being?

A. By themselves.

Q. It must be left to themselves. Government can help in no way?

A. The suggestion I have been making throughout is that Government should step in and do something in the matter, not directly but indirectly. I have given some suggestions.

Q. You think no direct action could be taken by the Government?

A. I don't care whether it is direct or indirect, but I have made certain definite suggestions.

Q. Your definite suggestion is that there has got to be more combination between the various interests in the industry, exhibition, renting and producing. The difficulty is—

Chairman: Excuse me, would you advocate the appointment of such an officer as a Registrar of Cinemas?

A. No, the Secretary of the Central Board of Films, I have suggested what in my opinion he should do. You have the theatre owners on the one side and the producers and distributors on the other side, and there should be a common medium.

Colonel Crawford: Your suggestion is therefore that, if there is a central board or censoring board, the secretary of that board might, as the Chairman suggested, be more or less a father to the trade?

A. You have to have a combination of all this.

Q. Now am I right in saying that the area for the exhibition of films is divided up into territories? And that the Indian territory consists of India, Ceylon and Burma?

A. Yes.

Q. And that in the Indian territory so composed, there are certain key cities in which it is essential that the producer shall be able to exhibit his picture if he is to get an adequate return on his exhibition?

A. Yes.

Q. May I suggest that these key cities are Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, Colombo and Rangoon?

A. Quite so.

Q. If any picture is excluded from being shown in those cities, it is not possible to get an adequate return on your production expenditure? Is that a fact?

A. It is not always a fact.

Q. You are a producer?

A. Yes.

Q. If you are barred for any reason from showing your film in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Colombo and Rangoon, you could not hope from the balance of the Indian market to secure an adequate return?

A. That is a fact.

Q. Well, now, surely for the prosperity of the producing industry it is necessary for them to come to a definite arrangement with renters and exhibitors?

A. Quite so.

Q. That is what is done in America, and that is a practice which should be established in India?

A. That is what I would very much like.

Q. Well, now, during your verbal evidence you said that Indian pictures must be produced with more care?

A. Yes.

Q. Now the Indian market consists of 350 cinemas. Of which you could not show your film in more possibly than 150?

A. Yes, that is the highest number.

Q. That leaves me with the impression that our Indian market is limited.

A. Yes.

Q. And that at the moment you cannot afford in a general instance to spend much more than Rs. 15,000 on a picture?

A. Yes, that is the maximum.

Q. And yet the improvement of the quality of your pictures demands expenditure of more money?

A. Yes.

Q. In America, for instance, they will spend as much as 500,000 dollars on a picture?

A. Yes.

Q. And it would not be an unreasonable sum to spend one lakh or even up to two lakhs on an Indian picture?

A. If it has to be better such an amount has to be spent.

Q. More has got to be spent than Rs. 15,000?

A. Yes, that is a fact.

Q. If, however, we spend more money on our Indian pictures, we cannot get our return owing to the fact that our market is limited?

A. Quite so.

Q. Now we are stuck at that position, that we cannot improve our quality because it means spending more money and if we spend more money we cannot get it back again because our market is limited.

A. Yes.

Q. A picture upon which you spent more money would possibly be approaching the quality suitable for foreign markets?

A. Yes.

Q. Proceeding on the practice which you say is necessary of an agreement between the renter, exhibitor and the producer, which you would like to see, if we are to go into the foreign market we must endeavour to effect some special arrangement between the Indian producers and the foreign exhibitors and producers. You have either got to do that or the Indian producer has to put his money into building his own theatres in every city.

A. And that is not possible.

Q. Therefore, we come down to this, that you have got to make some arrangement with the existing renters and producers?

A. Yes.

Q. And yet you say you want to discourage production by foreign companies in this country?

A. Yes.

Q. I quite understand your position. You are frightened and rightly so that such foreign companies in this country might kill the local industry.

A. They would wipe them off clean.

Q. But is there not a half-way house in which our Indian industry could come into agreement with the financiers of foreign theatres with a view to production of pictures suitable for the foreign market?

A. I certainly don't object to such an arrangement, if it can possibly be made.

Q. You want a provision, much as exists in England, that the control, that the majority of control, should remain Indian?

A. It is not exactly the majority. That is not my proposition at all. I am not fighting for control. I am fighting for development only.

Q. But wait a minute. You have left me with the impression from the series of questions I have asked you that our development above a certain standard necessitates our endeavouring to go outside to find bigger markets?

A. Yes.

Q. If we could develop bigger markets in India it might be enough. But we have got to go outside and for that our Indian producers must go into an arrangement with renters and exhibitors outside India.

A. Yes.

Q. I am suggesting to you, rather than actually discourage foreign companies from producing here (I agree that we should come to some arrangement whereby the Indian producer can get foreign finance into his show), that certain definite limitations should be set, and the limitation I suggest in order that the Indian film industry should not be ruined is that the control should be in Indian hands. Now do you see any particular objection to that from the point of view of the Indian industry?

A. I have absolutely no objection, but the difficulty will be, will the foreign financiers trust producers to produce the right type of films?

Chairman: You mean it is not a practicable proposition.

A. It might not be a practicable proposition. You cannot expect that big producing concerns, who after all are the only ones likely to be the financiers of the industry, would trust these people with their limited experience and knowledge to be able to produce at their cost films for their market.

Colonel Crawford: You mean if foreign companies helped to produce the films, they would insist on their own management?

A. They would insist on something more. They would insist on the whole thing being as much their own as possible, completely their own. Not only the actors, cameramen and so on, but everyone they would like to have their own. If such a thing is possible.

Q. In England they have been considering legislation regarding films in England, and I understand there is a suggestion there that in England it would be inadvisable to demand total British capital, and also that it would be undesirable to say that the whole of the producers and directors and everybody should be British. They say they would be content if a majority of the direction was in the hands of Britishers. I suggest that such a position in India would be desirable and would be adequate.

A. Quite, desirable and adequate.

Q. Am I correct?

A. I would certainly very much wish for a day when such a position is taken up between the western producers and the Indians. But what I say is that there might be difficulties.

Q. You doubt whether outside capital would come in under these terms?

A. Yes.

Q. If they won't come in, they won't come in, and we are done with it.

A. If they do come in, I shall be very pleased.

Q. Well, now, your suggestions for Government help, are (1) that they should give liberal loans to the industry on nominal interest?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you consider that the tax-payer is not entitled when lending his money to do so roughly on business terms? He may take some additional risks to what a Bank would take. You put it rather wide there. Nominal interest.

A. The tax-payer does not get interest for everything that the Government does. You cannot assume that for every expenditure.

Q. You have got to secure yourself to some extent.

Mr. Green: Why should he not make a free gift to you?

A. I would certainly welcome it.

Q. Would the tax-payer?

A. Yes, because the tax-payer gets as much advantage from it as I have. It is the development of the industry. To a very large extent it would

advance the general condition of the people; far more than by any other means.

Q. Well, you have got to convince us and Government and the tax-payer.

A. Very well. I have come here to convince you, if I can.

Colonel Crawford: Your second suggestion is development of markets in which there are Indian populations, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Africa, and so on. Is there any reason why the producer in India to-day cannot come to an arrangement with renters and exhibitors in these countries?

A. There are some difficulties.

Q. Then how is Government going to assist?

A. As a matter of fact, the market is absolutely gaping wide. Up to now Indian productions have only Ceylon, India, Burma as markets. I may give you an instance of films going to Penang and Singapore on the one side and East Africa on the other side. But it is better that Government should take some of these things under their supervision because there might be some difficulties in monetary and other dealings in regard to this arrangement which one country makes with another.

Chairman: You want a Trade Commissioner?

Colonel Crawford: The only recommendation we can make is that our Trade Commissioner should assist.

Chairman: We have no Trade Commissioner at all?

Colonel Crawford: He might be appointed.

A. Suppose a particular film has gone to that place. The Commissioner could order the representative of the Government that he might assist in these things by talking to the other theatres and to people.

Q. Well, now, in your fourth recommendation you seem to say that the standard of comfort in the existing cinemas in India is below public requirements?

A. Very much below. I am not referring to Presidency-towns at all.

Q. Even there it is. And you think Government action as regards the standard of comfort to be provided in such halls is desirable?

A. Very desirable, provided you show them the means whereby they won't lose by spending a few more rupees in construction.

Q. Your opinion is if the standard of comfort of the cinema was improved, they would get their return and the public would appreciate it.

A. In the first instance, very much more.

Chairman: Do you think the Indian public care so much for it?

A. I have received several complaints from the Indian public.

Q. Where, in Southern India?

A. I have requested them to come into my theatre and they have said: "Ask us to do anything but come into that wretched hole."

Colonel Crawford: And you think that is standing in the way of the cinema public?

A. The educated public.

Q. Now if I may take you to question No. 9. What do you exactly mean by "they are unfortunately not so liberal in regard to exhibition: they are following a suicidal policy"?

A. They are at present giving freely the films which they control and they produce for theatre proprietors, but they will not take in any film which is produced by the other Indian pictures to any of their theatres. That is what I mean. They completely ban every other production except what they produce and what they control. And very often they lose in these cinemas because they don't naturally possess enough good films to be screened every day.

Q. Well, now, in answer to question 10 you say the block system as such does not operate in India. Am I to understand from that that importing

importing western films are not faced with the block system from the producing companies of the west?

A. Except, of course, Madans Theatres. No, they don't.

Q. As regards Indian producing companies there is no block system?

A. No.

Q. But as regards the import of western pictures is there a block system in operation?

A. No.

Q. In answer to 13 you say "due to the distinct and marked prepossession in favour of Indian productions, the customs tariff on foreign films does not act....." Am I to understand therefore that between Indian and western productions there is no actual competition?

A. Not at present.

Q. Some exhibitors have informed us that competition does exist. For instance, the fact that the western film is cheaper enables him to get a cheap programme whereas the cost of the Indian picture owing to the limited market is rather high.

A. In my own experience, so far as Madras Presidency is concerned, the Indian picture pays every time.

Chairman: You have not exhibited yourself?

A. I am in touch practically with every exhibitor, as I have told you. I am in correspondence in several connections. It does not at all operate. For example, even the best of English films when it is screened it has its own days, it does not compete with any other. For example, in... Picture Palace, not even 10 yards from the Theatre Majestic they were screening Harold Lloyd's Freshman, and there was absolutely no competition because only the educated students went there, each had its own distinctive audience. There is no competition at all between the two, so far as I have studied the question.

Q. May I pursue the point. I suppose you are aware that nearly 15 million feet of foreign films come into the country and only 200,000 feet of Indian films are produced. You mean, if there is a lesser quantity of foreign films coming in and more Indian films produced, wouldn't that encourage the production of Indian films.

A. Indian films are already encouraged themselves.

Q. If they produce some 15 million feet that will be something?

A. Not in the 300 theatres which are now run. That is limited now and will be more in time. What I was saying is the demand is far more than the supply.

Colonel Crawford: Your view is that the demand for Indian films has not yet been satisfied by the producers?

A. Quite so. And excuse me, Sir, I would go to the further length of saying—I don't know whether I am in order—that apart from all these considerations, I would say that no film that is coming from other places should be particularly handicapped because that is only a matter of recreation. I would allow free scope to them.

Q. Now in your answer to 14 with regard to the production of films by the Publicity Officer of the railways, do I understand you to say that the efforts made are in your opinion amateurish?

A. Yes.

Q. Now go to your answer to No. 20, last line, you say "Government should have sufficient foresight to realise all these possibilities early as regards the potentialities of the screen." Don't you think the appointment of this committee justifies me in saying that the Government is alive to the position.

A. I will reserve my answer till I see your recommendations.

Q. Government are not responsible for our answer.

Chairman: He wants to see what you are going to recommend and what the Government are going to do on it.

Colonel Crawford: In answer to 22 you say "So long as cinema theatres are left under private direction and not under Government control the reciprocal advantage supposed to accrue to India is a myth." This is in regard to the British Empire question?

A. Yes.

Q. Am I to understand that if the cinema was under Government control there would be greater opportunities for Indian films in British Empire market, but so far as the control remains in private hands you have got competition and that would keep out Indian films?

A. I never meant that cinemas in India only should be under Government control.

Q. What you are really stating is that people at home fear competition and they are not going to have any competition and they would not give Indian pictures a chance, is that your point?

A. Yes.

Q. In answer to question (b), have you any suggestions to make as to production of Indian topical films for Empire exhibition? Who do you think would undertake such work?

A. There are some cameramen directors in Bombay, who have got western training in America, Germany, England and other places and who have got a proper idea and proper perspective of making topical films.

Q. You want to give the best impression possible of India outside?

A. Yes.

Q. I quite agree with you. Do you think the trade will undertake it?

A. It should be done by Government.

Q. Do you think it is a definite Government function to start with?

A. In the initial stages only. If a private organisation undertakes it at present, it has no chance of getting a market for such films.

Q. You have alluded to the fact that there is very often misrepresentation of Indian life in American films. Is it done for propaganda purposes?

A. I have seen propaganda purpose only in one or two.

Q. You have also said that in order to make a film successful you have to exaggerate life; in order to get a dramatic effect you have got to exaggerate life. For instance, most of the western films show only an exaggerated side of life? Is that so?

A. It is over-drawn rather than exaggerated. Exaggeration is too big a word. I object to the word exaggeration in my memorandum also.

Q. You feel that it is necessary for dramatic purposes to draw from what is not normal life, from abnormal life?

A. No. Again I am fighting over the word.

Q. I do not think I will worry you over it. You have got to draw from outside the normal life?

A. Yes, I would say from outside the normal life.

Q. Does not that tend to misrepresentation?

A. Not at all.

Q. Supposing you are producing an Indian film and you adopt methods which the west have adopted, you draw largely on the life of brothels.

A. I would very much relish that such things should be absolutely excluded. I have suggested that. What I want is fanciful life, the noble aspect of life.

Q. I notice you say that in some of the Indian films a drinking saloon or brothel is brought in without having any direct connection with the theme.

A. In 75 per cent. of the social stories that are produced in Bombay at present, unfortunately some scene or other is introduced either of a brothel

or a drinking saloon. I personally could not conceive why they introduced that at all.

Chairman: Can you name one Indian film where you saw it?

A. I will tell you in a minute.

Q. You said 75 per cent. of the pictures were like that and you cannot name one now?

A. In such an otherwise very good picture as "The Typist Girl" a scene is introduced.

* *Mr. Neogy:* You confine yourself only to Bombay?

A. Yes.

Chairman: I do not think the witness is right at all about Bombay.

Colonel Crawford: Your suggestion is that such a thing should be deleted by the Censors unless it forms an essential part of the story?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you say the same of western films?

A. So far as western films are concerned, their development of the plot and scenario writing is perfect. There is not one unnecessary scene there. Everything is connected with the plot.

Q. You do not make the same charge against the western films?

A. No.

Q. With regard to these films produced by the missionaries at Tindivanam, was there a definite misrepresentation, or did they simply take films of what I may call the shum life of India?

A. It is suggestive misrepresentation.

Q. The missionaries did it, as you suggest, to obtain money for their social work amongst the depressed classes?

A. Yes.

Q. Did they take actual pictures of the life of the depressed classes, or did they fake it?

A. No faking, except in one or two where they show them suffering and how they have relieved them from suffering.

Q. You do not say that actual life in India was misrepresented, rather that they concentrated on the shum life in India, on the poorer life of the Indians?

A. Yes.

Q. And that that is a misrepresentation in that they did not show the higher society life?

A. Yes.

Q. I notice you include in your constitution of the Board of Censors the Commissioner of Police as Deputy President. Do you think that should be the position of the Commissioner of Police in your Board of Censors?

A. Yes.

Q. You object to posters being censored.

A. Yes.

Q. Supposing a gentleman came and had a different opinion from you and said that some of the posters were unduly suggestive and censorship would be desirable in the public interest before they were exhibited, would it cause any inconvenience to submit them to censorship? At the time of submitting your film for censorship you can submit your posters for censorship also?

A. It will be very difficult.

Q. You have no experience in that line?

A. No, except in regard to my own productions.

Chairman: You have not done it?

A. I have done it in India.

Colonel Crawford: You are anxious that the Secretary of the Central Board, if such a board is constituted, should undertake the production of a review on behalf of the whole trade with a view to bringing about better co-operation and better feeling within the trade itself which is so necessary to its prosperity?

A. Yes.

Q. That is your definite suggestion?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: I only want to ask you about your suggestions for the constitution of a central board. You do not consider that it would be a serious handicap to producers and importers in different parts of India to have to submit all their films to one particular place, or you say that such inconvenience would be over-weighted by the benefits?

A. Quite so.

Q. You suggest a board that would, I reckon, consist of 26 or 27 members.

A. Roughly.

Q. You also suggest that every film should be seen either to start with or some time before it has received a final certificate, by a committee of not less than three of the members?

A. Yes.

Q. It means that you should have about 9 sub-committees capable of examining the films?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you reckoned how much work that would actually entail per member? I can give you the figures. The total amount of censorship work done last year, and we have it in evidence that it is increasing every year, amounted to 30 or 35 hours a week merely in inspecting films, not in going to the place to see the film, not in considering their report, not in re-examining films of which there is any doubt. That means to say that each of your 9 sub-committees and each of your members would have about 4 hours work one day in every week. The President of your suggested Board is the Minister in charge of Development?

A. If Bombay is the place of the central board. But if it is Delhi or Simla.....

Q. The amount of work will be the same whether the board is situated in Bombay or in Delhi. Do you consider that the Minister in charge of any department can spare 4 hours a week, and it will increase to 6 hours before long, for inspecting films? That will be his share of the work.

A. This constitution that I have drawn up was not particularly meant for mere seeing films. There are policies, for example, which have to be outlined by a board of that type.

Q. Would you be content therefore to have a board of the nature contemplated, but have the primary work of inspection done by stipendiary censors who will be qualified gentlemen, working under the Board, who would refer to them any films that they would be doubtful about?

A. Where they do not approve of such films, yes.

Q. That would commend itself to you?

A. Yes.

Q. Then the Board can operate?

A. Yes.

Q. Therefore they would not be called in very often?

A. That is my point.

Q. Mainly to settle all questions of policy?

A. Yes.

Q. You are not committed to this particular constitution, it is only a sketch?

A. Merely a sketch, simply because I have been asked I put it down.

Mr. Neogy: What capital do you propose to have for your concern?

A. Rs. 5 lakhs.

Q. Where do you hope to raise all this money?

A. Within Mysore territory.

Q. How much out of this amount do you propose to devote to the construction of a studio and its appurtenances?

A. One lakh for the present. If I instal arc lighting I propose to spend another lakh on it.

Q. And the rest would be working capital?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you asked for any help from the Mysore Government in this undertaking?

A. I would rather not express it in public.

Q. Where do you propose to recruit your staff from?

A. In the beginning I will have my what is called stars.....

Q. Let us begin with the technicians, the camera man, the director and others.

A. I will get them from Bombay in the early stages.

Q. All the technicians?

A. Yes.

Q. What about stars?

A. I will get them from Bombay in the initial stages till our own people are trained.

Q. And you propose to employ all your staff on a permanent basis, that is to say, give them a regular whole-time employment?

A. Yes.

Q. How many pictures do you expect to turn out every year with the help of such a studio?

A. About 10 pictures a year.

Q. That certainly is not the maximum capacity?

A. If I aim at a better class of production I must reduce the number of productions per year.

Q. And in selecting subjects would you pay particular attention to the tastes of Southern India, or would you try to cater for all India?

A. Personally, I would cater for the whole of India.

Q. Would it be possible for you to accomplish it in the beginning?

A. I have written scenarios for all my future productions because for some time I have been writing nothing else but scenarios.

Q. And you hope to make an appeal to the whole of India?

A. Yes.

Q. We are now considering the question of foreign capital. Supposing you had an assurance of foreign assistance in the matter of finance in your undertaking, what sort of control would you like to secure to yourself as a condition of such financial aid?

A. Complete charge so far as the story and the acting is concerned, and so far as finance is concerned, I will go shares with them in the management, because when a foreign syndicate or company assists me I would certainly give them such control to safeguard their interests as they may need.

Q. Your concern is going to be a limited company?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you insist on a majority of the directors being Indian too?

A. In my company?

Q. Yes. Supposing you were to have foreign capital?

215

A. Yes.

Q. You would insist on a majority of the directors being Indians?

A. Yes.

Q. And would you also expect a proportion of the capital to be subscribed by Indians?

A. I would like to have the major portion of my capital supplied by Indians.

Q. Would you set any limit beyond which you would not admit foreign capital for this purpose?

A. I have not thought about it.

Q. It was pointed out that foreign capital is not excluded in Great Britain under the scheme which they have just now adopted. Would that analogy be a safe guide for anybody in India for coming to a decision in this matter?

A. It cannot be called a safe analogy in this respect that the relation of foreign capital to Britain and that of foreign capital to India stand on a different footing entirely.

Q. So you would guard yourself against any possible dangers arising if such foreign capital were forthcoming?

A. Yes.

Q. And you would not simply be guided by British analogy in this matter?

A. No, not at all.

Written Statement of Mr. H. M. HOOD, I.C.S., Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Madras, dated the 6th January 1928.

1. No.

2. There are about half a dozen cinema theatres in Madras and a few in the larger mofussil towns. There are also a few travelling shows. In Madras I have visited two of the cinema on several occasions and observe that the more expensive seats are occupied almost exclusively by the European and Anglo-Indian communities. The cheaper seats are occupied almost exclusively by Indians.

I have no reason to suppose that the attendance is markedly increasing. The bulk of the audience is in the cheaper seats and appears to consist of people of the lower middle class in seats of priced about 8 annas. Coolies and other illiterate classes occupy the two anna seats.

Cinema theatres in Madras are seldom full and the percentage of the population attending cinema theatres must be very small.

There are very few children under 14 at cinemas. There seems to be some belief that it is bad for their eye-sight. The great bulk of the audience appears to be of adults.

3. No.

4. The cinema theatres are owned and managed by Indians. The bulk of their audiences are Indian. The audiences generally show appreciation of the films displayed, but of the films I have seen the "comics" seem to attract the largest audiences. I have seen no Indian plays screened.

5. I cannot say.

6. Indian Dramas based on history and legend would be more attractive to the educated classes, and oriental subjects well staged are undoubtedly popular, e.g., The Thief of Baghdad drew a crowded and enthusiastic audience.

8-13. I can offer no opinion.

14. The production of such films would help the growth of the film industry.

(b) There is a demand for such films by the departments concerned.

16. No.

Films required for propaganda or advertisement by Government Departments or others must be produced by special arrangements. They are not commercial propositions. I do not see that any special measures are necessary to provoke the increased production of films on a commercial scale. A large crowd of actors and producers cannot be created in a short time by a G. O. If it is considered necessary to cater more largely for the amusement and education of the public, the Government can put an officer on special duty for the purpose for 5 years. He will have to train his staff and then leave it to private enterprise assisted if necessary by the "State Aid to Industries Act." With present consumption of films in the Presidency it seems more than doubtful whether it would pay for many years to come. It is to be borne in mind that plays of purely Indian subjects produced by beginners would appeal to a limited number of audiences in South India. They would not have the vast scope provided by the innumerable picture palaces in Europe and America. But a company producing high grade films on Oriental subjects applicable to India generally might pay very well and foster the spread of cinema theatres in mofussil towns.

17. There is plenty of capital available if the necessary business and technical management can be found to give a reasonable return on that capital.

18. I do not see what legislative action is possible. The Government can appoint an expert to study the conditions, material and possible market and make a definite attempt at production. The risk of losing money seems considerable and it is doubtful whether private enterprise will face the risk.

19. I cannot say.

20. The Government practically cannot take any action without expenditure of public funds. It is for the authorities controlling the budget to decide the relative merits of various demands on the revenue.

21. State action might be necessary to give it an impetus. I see not the slightest necessity for the proposal on the grounds suggested. Competition produces the best films.

22. I do not see why it should not do so.

A Picture Palace does not exist on one class of pictures only. It must have variety. The existence of high class films of oriental subjects does not imply that cinemas will exhibit only these films and any impetus given to the production of better films in our country must react in others and by increased competition reduce the price of films. The supply at reasonable rates of good English films will undoubtedly stimulate interest in films and have a considerable value in indirect education and in broadening the outlook of its patrons.

It will improve the standard of Western films if it increases competition and interest. I believe the main reason why antique and inferior films are frequently exhibited in Madras is because they are cheap, the theatres are ill-patronised and unremunerative.

23. They can be used to a small extent. Improving pictures are dull and educative films unless very much disguised will not of themselves attract audiences. For the general public the purely informative film must be brief and interposed between something more attractive.

24. (a) No.

(b) No.

(c) A film is harmful if it—

(i) by its sensuality or suggestiveness excites sexual emotions,

(ii) canonises crime,

(iii) excites racial feelings.

(d) It is adequate.

(e) No.

26. (a) No.

(b) No.

27. (a) I have never seen any such films. I have seen films which were difficult to follow in their kaleidoscopic change of scene. An uneducated Indian would naturally find a greater difficulty. Some of the customs depicted would be strange to him, but the story is generally not difficult to follow and I do not see why it should be largely misunderstood.

(b) I have seen no such films.

28. Any evil results would come more from the bad ventilation than bad films.

29. No. Any such films should be banned altogether.

30. No.

31. Judging by results in Madras and by resumes of films which have been banned I should say that the censorship is effective.

32. Yes.

33. It depends on the degree of strictures.

34. (a) It would probably be better to have one Board because—

It would result in uniformity throughout India.

It would be possible to constitute a rather larger board thereby and thereby to eliminate personal idiosyncracies of view.

It would obviate the necessity for a number of boards all communicating to one another their views on particular films which they have banned.

It would obviate the possibility of one board objecting to film certified fit by another.

(3) It should have on it—

a policeman,

a clergyman,

a Hindu,

a Mussalman.

(4) In Bombay.

(b) I see no necessity for duplication.

(c) I would abolish the various boards and constitute a Central Board whose certificates would run throughout India.

(d) By Government. A small fee for certification may be charged.

35. (a) I consider is satisfactory.

36. I do not know.

37. I do not think there is any practical necessity.

38-39. No.

40. I do not think there is any need for censorship of this more than of other advertisements. The posters I presume go with the films and it would be a simple matter for the censors to view the posters when they see the films.

I have seen no objectionable posters.

41. No.

42. If the censorship is strict and impartial the trade will co-operate in that it will not waste money producing films which will not be passed.

Oral Evidence of Mr. H. M. HOOD, I.C.S., Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Madras, on Thursday, the 12th January 1928.

Chairman: As Registrar of Co-operative Societies you have considerable experience of the province and the interior of the province?

A. Yes. I travel up and down a good deal.

Q. And I take it you believe that the cinema can play a very large part in spreading general knowledge among the people?

A. I think it could. Yes, certainly.

Q. And especially in your propaganda work for village reconstruction and other things you would be helped a great deal if you had the cinema as an aid to your propaganda work?

A. Yes, I think it might help in some ways.

Q. I think you can get your co-operators in the province to take a more intelligent interest in their work if they see the results of co-operative work in other countries?

A. Yes. It is rather difficult to portray certain aspects of co-operative effort on the cinematograph; the credit side of it, relief of indebtedness does not lend itself to spectacular shows.

Q. I was thinking for instance of small farmers having a dairy of cows. A co-operative concern of that sort you can show, you can illustrate how they can combine, how they deliver milk, how milk is carried from place to place, how they do it in the different branches in Australia—don't you think that would spread knowledge?

A. It would be of considerable help.

Q. I mean not only in your department, but in the Industries department, in the Agriculture department, and in the Education department—in all these departments the cinema can play a very large part?

A. Yes, I think it could be used to advantage.

Q. Do you think you can depend upon private agencies to produce these films which are needed for the purpose in our province?

A. I do not think it is a matter for private enterprise because it does not seem to me that it would be a paying proposition.

Q. You think that Government should make some effort in that direction?

A. I think any production of that sort definitely for propaganda purposes would have to be subsidised in some form.

Q. Or perhaps Government itself may pioneer in that direction?

A. I think it will probably be more useful for Government to subsidise.

Q. Any way Government aid would be needed?

A. Yes.

Q. I have seen your memorandum and I do not think I have any more questions to ask you.

Mr. Neogy: Are you in touch with the activities of the departments of co-operative societies in other provinces with regard to publicity work?

A. Yes, to some extent. We get information of what they are doing. We know that in one or two provinces they have had films produced for that purpose.

Q. In the Punjab there was a film?

A. There is I believe one film in the Punjab. That is the only one I know of and we tried to get a full description of it but we have not entirely succeeded. A point has already been raised in that connection that it would not be of very much use to us unless it has been got up locally.

Q. You do not think it would be of much use unless it were produced locally?

A. I have not seen that film, but I am inclined to think that the film is a purely Punjab production and rural life and that sort of thing in the Punjab is quite different from our own in many aspects.

Q. You place great importance upon local setting?

A. Yes. I think local setting would be desirable to get the best results.

Mr. Green: One more question about local setting. If in the Punjab a successful co-operative film has been produced, in all probability, the plot,

the working out of the general scheme, the frame work, would be as effective in your province as in the Punjab?

A. Probably.

Q. It will be a question of re-dressing the play?

A. Yes.

Q. You have no objection to seeing the results of other peoples' work?

A. No. The material would probably be the same even if we produce our own film.

Q. You think that Government might well employ an expert for the purpose of considering the production of such propaganda films. I take it that that expert would present to all the different co-operative departments in the provinces his idea of the co-operative film—of the frame work again. Would you have any objection to that?

A. No.

Q. That I take it is your idea?

A. Yes.

Q. I think you heard the questions I put to the last witness in regard to the central board and its censorship?

A. Yes.

Q. I think what I suggested to him would fit in with your scheme?

A. I think so.

Written Statement of Mr. B. VENKATAPATIRAJU, C.I.E., High Court Yakil, Vizagapatam.

1. Excepting the study of literature on the subject and visiting cinema shows in several metropolitan and mofussil towns in India as well as abroad including Australia, New Zealand, America, Canada, England and Europe, I have no connection or special knowledge with film industry.

2. (a) Indians of the educated classes including students as well as illiterate masses both males and females frequent cinemas in large numbers just as many as would attend dramas or circuses throughout India but proportion is far less when compared to America or Europe. In America we are told five million attend daily but with triple the population about two lakhs of people attend daily in India. Poverty, not want of curiosity or love of pleasure, is the true cause for sparse attendance.

(b) Whenever Indian films depicting puranic scenes are presented large number including ladies and illiterate people as well as the educated attend. Whenever sensational shows or love scenes depicting the dark side of western life are presented proportion of the educated and student population would be greater. Even children under teens go with their parents to witness the shows.

(c) More than half the proportion of the audience generally consist of children and student population of all ages between five and twenty-five and most of them are adolescents of impressionable age.

3. Indian films representing puranic scenes are very popular with ladies and uneducated men. Sensational scenes, depicting love, fights, sports, processions and war are popular with students. Older section of the well-to-do classes patronise both.

4. No. The supply of Indian films of variety are wanting. The two essential factors for providing popular and good films, *efficient studios and sufficient finance* are wanting in India. There is no difficulty in choosing a plot or story which is to be acted out of abundant literature available in India. Oriental scenery, lovely spots, strong men and beautiful women, magnificent buildings, splendid natural scenery, capable artists and appreciative audience is not wanting. Abundant funds are required for every moving picture company should employ their own actors and actresses, artists, electricians,

217

carpenters, stage hands and great stock of costumes from the Emperors' robes to the poor man's rags, dresses for Queens and maids, masks, necessary furniture as well as trained animals, elephants, horses, camels and other animals besides powerful electric lights manufacturing implements necessary machinery and apparatus. Sometimes pictures have to be taken of mountain scenery, lakes, waterfalls, forests and even street scenes, processions, splendid buildings, bathing ghats and pilgrim centres, all these necessarily cost mint of money but in India excepting Mr. J. F. Madan and few others millionaire have not invested large funds in this industry. In America the biggest producers of the United States as stated by Mr. W. G. Faulkner formed into powerful corporations with the backing of wall street to avoid competition and to eliminate waste and they are building picture theatres in the United States as well as in Europe and similarly in Germany, Mr. Stinners, the German multi-millionaire greatly helped Film Industry. Germany is producing pictures on such a grand scale and at such low costs and with such technical excellence that British Firms are still going to Berlin to produce British Pictures. Unless the Government promotes, protects, and safeguards this industry it will not thrive in India. Even Britain ceased practically to be a producing centre owing to inability to obtain sufficient revenue from the picture theatres to pay for the costs of making the films. British concerns Mr. Faubner tells us are now buying American and German pictures.

5. Indian films depicting Indian life are available at great cost. Most of them are of good quality and very popular. It is less costly to show a western film on the screen as they can be had cheap than a film produced in India. Krishna's doing and Rama's life, Dasavatarns and several other Puranic stories are filmed in India.

6. (a) Indian films will be appreciated by Indian audiences provided they are excellently got up.

(b) Indian films depicting ancient greatness of India and beneficence of the rulers and prosperity of the people of by-gone ages as well as Puranic stories from Bharatam, Bhagavatam and Ramayanam will appeal strongly both to the educated and the uneducated.

7. Suitable films for the troops are Army manoeuvre, wars, battles both on the sea, land and air can be usefully added to other films. I cannot say what films would be objectionable to troops if not objectionable to the people unless on political grounds.

8. The present condition of the industry is not satisfactory. For production ample funds are necessary. In Germany with 200 film producing units in operation backed by the Dutzche bank they are combining and consolidating her forces with a gigantic organisation. Similarly in America they are merging into powerful corporations with the backing of American banks. Since 1923 when H. R. H. The Prince of Wales inaugurated British film weeks when British films should have preference on British screens. The British Empire film institute which is designed to promote the production and presentation of British films is also a clearing house for information. The members of the Institute complained that they had to put up with the works of Hollywood, too long had their children had the foreign point of view placed in front of their minds and they rely on the counter-propaganda to American film as they to fight against American "Strangle hold" as they say. America accepted the challenge and briskly working to subplant German and British films in British market. The British Government promised hearty support for the production of sound British films. The Films Bill was introduced in the Parliament for promoting the British enterprise. Sir A. C. Chatterjee on behalf of India stated that education of the masses by means of film in India is desirable and Government is anxious to secure that object. Vested interests who have long contracts either with German or American pictures naturally oppose.

The cost of distribution which consume large proportion of Revenue have to be reduced by joining forces instead of extending them by adopting wholesale buying and building of picture theatres in all important centres by the combination of several concerns. In London and in Canada many of the

picture theatres are American owned. Even in England the merging of the biggest distributing concerns is proceeding apace. Canada imports mostly American films. Just as Germany owns industrial concerns in Austria similarly America (U. S.) owns several industrial concerns in Canada. Even in Australia American grip is not slight. South Africa is in the hands of trust. India mostly imports American films. Competition between Britain, Germany and America is enabling to secure improved films at moderate cost in India. In India if Indian film production is to be encouraged the methods have to be adopted, namely, to impose additional import duty on foreign films or to tax specially average exhibition of foreign film on Indian screens. Entertainment tax to be abolished or reduced whenever Indian films are placed on the screen.

9. Good films are not readily obtainable because the production is less and the cost is rather high for Indian films and there is no backing of Imperial Bank or any other bank to the Indian production. I do not attach any importance to the cry of monopoly in these days of hard competition.

10. I do not know.

11. No. I think the supplies of films might be compelled by law to supply descriptive and photoprints of important scenes as they do for advertisement both for the exhibitors and the Boards to be constituted in India.

12. I believe the amusement tax is really a handicap to the exhibitor as it will add to the cost of the ticket and attendance would be smaller. Even in England entertainment tax was reduced.

13. Customs Tariff on imported films is helpful for the indigenous production of films. But no duty should be levied for some time to come for materials solely intended and guaranteed to be used for the production of films in India.

14. I think so. Moreover it will greatly help the people if proper films are secured. Yes, there will be demand.

15. Yes. India has culture of its own. Oriental background is splendid. Literature is abundant. Nature's beauty in India can be revealed in colour by photography. India is a world of its own. Labour is cheap. Artists plentiful. Actors and Actresses available comparatively at less cost. Clearness of the air and few cloudy days is greatly helpful for continuous work. Kinema colour or auto colour process invented by Dr. Smith reproduces beautiful flowers and fruits, different races costumed with varying tints can very well be reproduced in their natural colours to the great attraction of all. Though Kinema colour process is naturally expensive but very effective. But it demands a speed of 32 pictures a second instead of 16 as in the black and white method which naturally increases the cost of production as one thousand feet story will require two thousand film space by adopting colour process.

16. Yes. In these days of daily scientific improvement some may be trained in Germany or America and Government may grant scholarships for some years to come.

17. I am doubtful unless the Government prepares to give a bonus for a sound indigenous Indian film and the Indian Banks back up the industry.

18. Yes. Government can impose additional import duty on foreign films. Special tax may be levied whenever foreign films are presented on the screen. Bonus might be given for indigenous production of film. Reduced amusement tax at none at all on presentation of Indian films. Scholarships for men to be trained abroad. Materials specially required for this industry alone may be allowed to be imported free of duty. For educational purposes Government may give guarantee of help the cost of production be given or undertake taking of large use of their films for educational purposes.

19. I do not know. Even England was unable to cope with Germany or America. But India with special natural facilities and hearty support of Government can produce pictures at a cost which leaves margin of profit.

20. I think so. Out of vast expenditure of several crores useful and sometimes useless expenditure from the Indian point of view, ten lakhs grant

every year for a period of ten years will help the industry very much. India Government should provide this sum; whether any particular source of income can be earmarked for this purpose requires further scrutiny.

21. Utopians. I do not think it will succeed. There will possibly be a conflict with British Film industry. Moreover no Government have yet attempted and succeeded in such a venture.

22. Until and unless reciprocal advantage is practically shown giant and dwarf partnership will not be helpful. If preference is to be given to Empire films, Indian films should be given equal preference throughout the Empire with equal facilities for sale and exhibition without any restriction whatever excepting those restrictions applicable to their own films. If the Indian films are presented on the Empire screens outside India to any large extent I am sure preference can be given cheerfully to the Empire films. But as a matter of fact most of the British films are prepared in Germany and sold as British films just as glassware manufactured in Belgium are sold as British made by adding slight final touches with British trade mark printed on them. If equal rights and privileges are given I do not see any objection for the preference of Empire goods; when as we know even Indians are regarded as inferior creatures in the Empire, to expect Indian films will have fair opportunity for exhibition in the Dominions is unduly optimistic.

23. (a) In America, the value of United States citizenship is exhibited through their films either directly or indirectly. I doubt whether it can successfully be attempted in India. I realise the use and importance if all parts of the Empire are earnestly and sincerely disposed to understand the merits of one another and tolerate all defects and copy the virtues and give up prejudices. India even now can teach many virtues to the western nations if they realise wisdom came from the East and Christ was an Asiatic after all.

(b) Swaraj to India would bring about better relations and mutual helpfulness and united effort to consolidate the Empire for the glory of God and man and an example to all freedom loving nations. Man confined in chains can neither invoke respects and sympathy nor be helpful to strengthen the bonds of the Empire to one another in the face of incongruity of respective positions of India and other parts of the Empire.

24. Most of the foreign films depict Western life not at its best but at its worst namely crookedness in business and faithlessness in love and utter disregard of human life. From these the unwary draw the picture of the west as immoral, wicked and cruel set of people without any principles and their civilisation being only skin deep. These films have immense popularity in the countries of their origin which I have seen myself. They are not like word pictures given of the Eastern life by Miss Mayo untrue to life. If "Mother India" in the mouth of Miss Mayo filthy as it is it has given great pleasure and inward joy to many of the Britishers though some openly condemned it yet it shows how worst features of human conduct appeal when presented to the cultured West. None of these films were condemned outside India because materialistic mind now and then prefers to wallow in dirt or mentally live in vice. These sensational films secure crowded houses in India as Indians who hear from morn to evening the greatness of Western culture and civilisation while condemning even innocent pastime of Indian as crude and barbarous, naturally notice the difference in what westerners preach and what they practice and to have satisfaction after all that spiritualistic East is far better than the materialistic West. Europeans complain that these films lower the prestige of the Europeans in the eyes of Indian prestige if any, comes from just and sympathetic action and heroic efforts to help the weak out of their difficulties and if that is absent prestige cannot be reviewed by closing those films. When the film Green Goddess was presented in London showing an Indian Prince as a heastly sensualist and villain, none protested. Wherever Indian character is depicted except in rare cases as it is depicted as villains and moral retrogrades. At any rate dacoities, murders, thefts and indecent exposure can be prevented for the good of all. Regarding sex films I think dark corners should be exposed to get the cobwebs cleared either in the West or in the East.

(d) I think crime films can be censored.

(e) I do not think the crime in the Madras Presidency has anything to do with films. Most of the criminals never saw the films at all.

25. I do not see the necessity of differentiation.

26. (a) In places where religious differences exist it is better to avoid all causes of friction.

(b) There is no acute difference here.

27. (a) There is no question of misunderstanding but what they object is understanding of the true nature of the worst side of the western life.

(b) I have not come across any but I read that Indian were represented in blackest colours even in British films.

28. Crime films may have had effect on some youths.

29. I do not think so.

30. I do not advocate any restriction.

31. Censorship devoid of political considerations by representative bodies is useful.

32. I have not got intimate knowledge of existing censorship but I read in the papers some films were censored on the sole ground of European prestige.

33. Strict censorship might mean wholesale condemnation on any conceivable objection. If it means condemnation by unprejudiced body that a particular film is detrimental in the country's interest, I see no objection but broad lines should be fixed without leaving it to individual discretion. I am afraid censorship for a political purpose would interfere with the recreation of the people and involve falling of attendance and unduly interfere with the freedom of producers and audience.

34. (a) There should be a central board consisting of the representative elected by the Provincial Boards and few elected members of the Assembly and few nominated officials with clear non-official majority with Home Member or Law Member as President, and similarly Provincial Boards consisting of representative of Film Producers and Film Exhibitors and few elected members of the Provincial Council and few officials with clear non-official majority with Home and Law Members as President.

(b) Yes.

(c) I have answered above.

(d) Provincial and Imperial Governments should meet the expenditure of the respective Boards.

35. (a) Three-fourths of members should be non-officials.

(b) Secretary to each Board should be a full-time officer.

36. The Secretary is expected to do the preliminary work of examining the films and reporting the matter to the Board for permission or rejection as the majority decide.

37. If any film is objected locally the Board might examine and settle the question if the Secretary reports that it is a matter worth considering.

38-39. No.

40. I do not think so. The greater the advertisement the larger the scope for censorship.

41. I have not seen any particular improvement excepting some films are censored and not presented since.

42. Co-operation of the trade can be secured by inviting them to send their representatives to the Board.

43. I do not think so provided the films have been approved in the place of their origin else they may be examined by the Board.

44. Public Bodies and the Press may assist in offering free criticism on the films as well as on censorship which have to be taken note of by the Board.

45. Government should have no control over film production except on films produced for educational purposes at the instance of the Government and cost partly met by the Government.

All film producing agencies should be registered and licensed without throwing any obstacles in their way with a view that the Government may help them out of their difficulties financially or otherwise. If the Government do not propose to help them it is far better registration and licensing may be avoided as it would be additional handicap.

Oral Evidence of Mr. B. VENKATAPATIRAJU, C.I.E., High Court Yakil, Vizagapatam, on Thursday, the 12th January 1928.

Chairman: I just wish to mention to you that you are a little out of date in your figures for cinema attendance in the United States. It is 7 millions now and not 5 millions.

A. That was for 1925.

Q. I suppose you have no cinema in Vizagapatam itself? -

A. We have occasionally travelling cinemas.

Q. Had you at any time any permanent cinema there?

A. No.

Q. Where do they show their cinemas?

A. There are 3 or 4 theatre halls.

Q. Is drama in full swing there?

A. Only at times.

Q. What are these theatre halls used for at other times?

A. For public meetings.

Q. Surely you have not got many public meetings there?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Are these theatres private concerns?

A. Yes.

Q. Any of them put up by the Municipality?

A. Except one which is a town hall presented by the Maharajah of Bobbili.....

Q. Is that also used for cinema or theatre?

A. Yes.

Q. I notice in your answer that you attach great importance to promoting the film industry in this country. Supposing there is no cinema at all, what is the harm?

A. It is impossible to say that there could not be any cinema, just as you cannot say there cannot be any motor cars. It has become a necessity.

Q. And therefore more and more foreign films are bound to come in?

A. Yes.

Q. And you think that it is time that Government took steps to encourage the growth of Indian films for developing the taste of the people on right lines?

A. Not only the taste, but in order to carry out health propaganda and for mass education purposes, I think this will serve a very useful purpose.

Q. But apart from that, even as an amusement, do you think it is up to Government to step in early to do something to encourage the production of entertainment films also?

A. I do not think Government will be justified in pandering to the tastes of the people unless it is directly useful either in the matter of agriculture, or in the matter of health, or in the matter of industrial development or some such thing.

Q. You say, "unless Government promotes, protects and safeguards this industry it will not thrive in India". What is it you have in mind?

A. That is with reference to these things. Government must be prepared to contribute nearly half of the cost of production unless they themselves produce it.

Q. As regards entertainment films?

A. No.

Q. When you say that in your statement, you have in mind only educational films in a broad sense?

A. Educational films where Government help is wanted, but also to promote the indigenous industry they can protect it by imposing import duty or putting other taxes on foreign films.

Q. You want to make foreign films dearer in order to encourage the Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. That is the main recommendation you make?

A. Yes, apart from the Government undertaking to produce educational films.

Q. Either directly or indirectly?

A. I prefer indirectly.

Q. You think it is possible to get them indirectly in our province?

A. Yes.

Q. In Bombay they are already being produced?

A. We can get them from wherever they are produced.

Q. You do not believe in local setting?

A. Not so far as the educational films or public health films are concerned. Q. There is a great divergence of opinion as to whether local setting is needed or not. You don't think it will make much difference if the Bombay films on agriculture or public health are shown in this province?

A. If we want, we can take them from any place. I only want a central place for production.

Q. Local setting can be secured by taking films on the spot?

A. Yes, I want them to be produced somewhere. We must have already begun that work. It is rather getting late now.

Q. Would you advise the Committee to start in this direction at once?

A. I would request the Committee to strongly press the matter on the Government.

Q. You have travelled abroad very much. Do you think Indian films, if the technique is good and the subject is attractive, can have a market outside India?

A. If they are properly produced, I think for variety at least other countries would have our films.

Q. You mean a commercial market?

A. Yes, if they are properly produced.

Q. You think the western people will patronise Indian productions if they are properly produced?

A. Yes, just in the same way as an Indian lecturer attracts a large number of people in New York or any other place.

Q. Do you think Indian films will have such attraction, while competing with western films?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. We have been told that eastern subjects may not have an international market, i.e., outside India?

A. It all depends upon the way in which our articles are produced.

Q. In answer to Question No. 22 you say "Unless and until reciprocal advantage is practically shown, giant and dwarf partnership will not be helpful". Do you mean that India is a dwarf and the Empire is a giant?

A. Yes.

Q. That is to say India would not be able to produce things which will have an international market?

A. It will take some time before we can produce films and present them in a way which will suit the taste of the westerners.

Q. Supposing you are able to come to some such arrangement with the Empire, you think that will be an incentive to better production here?

A. Whatever it may be, so far as the colonies are concerned, when they do not tolerate the presence of Indians there, I do not think they may care for Indian films.

Q. Supposing we come to some arrangement by which England agrees to take 200,000 ft. a year, what is the objection to our agreeing to take 200,000 ft. of their films?

A. I will have no objection if there is reciprocal advantage.

Q. But you think that reciprocal advantage is not likely to grow under the present conditions?

A. Unless we produce better films, I do not think it will be fair for us to ask them to take them.

Q. Should we not attempt to capture an international market for Indian films?

A. Yes, we can attempt, but success depends mostly upon Government help?

Q. Supposing for instance you enter into an arrangement with any great British producer and also produce films here which will have an international value, do you think that will be a desirable arrangement?

A. There is nothing objectionable in such an arrangement: only Indian interests should be safeguarded.

Q. What are the Indian interests you would like to safeguard?

A. We do not want Indians to be shown anywhere outside India as barbarians.

Q. So far as production is concerned, what would be your safeguard?

A. I think our people should be trained for some time outside India: that is all a question of money.

Q. As regards the business itself in its various shapes, you would like it to be Indian, substantially?

A. At any rate, the majority should be Indian: I mean the majority of directors who dictate the policy, majority in the office, majority in the acting, etc.

Q. From your knowledge of students who go abroad, do you think that their deputation is really helpful? Do you think they will get the necessary knowledge in the various subjects in other countries?

A. In Germany they will surely allow our students to learn, and possibly also in America. But I am not quite so sure of America as of Germany. We can try sending some our students by giving scholarships.

Q. Do you think the cinema has any baneful influence of any sort on the public?

A. Not at all, excepting with reference to a few films which teach the facilities for committing offences. They can be very well avoided, but apart from that, there is no other objection.

Q. You think generally that the moral tone is good?

A. Such films in which the facilities for committing crime are shown may be avoided: otherwise I think the moral tone is generally all right.

Q. Do you go to the cinema much?

A. I go as often as I can spare time.

Colonel Crawford: We have been made to understand that the Indian production has not got enough market in India itself whereas the American production has a good home market and it has also got a good market all over the world. Supposing the present Indian production is doubled, do you think that would be a material advantage?

A. It would not be material; we will have to take other considerations into account. For instance, bonuses may be paid to the companies which produce the films, the Government can themselves take a large number of films which are educational, the import duty now levied on the articles that are required for this industry may also be removed, and there are many other ways in which facilities might be given.

Q. As an *ex-Member* of the Legislative Assembly, would you suggest that that function of protection to be given to this industry is one to be settled by the Tariff Board rather than by this Committee?

A. I think instead of the Tariff Board going through all the processes again, this Committee having gained considerable knowledge on the subject, can itself make recommendations as to the policy that should be adopted by the Government. I do not think the Tariff Board need interest itself in this matter, as we are already having this Committee for this purpose.

Mr. Green: Do you or do you not consider that the exhibition of the bad life of people which you refer to in your statement affects your young men and women?

A. I do not think they affect our young men. Generally for all amusements there must be something which will attract the crowd. If they are completely puritan, I do not think anybody will attend. I think there must be something sensational to attract the audience.

Q. You don't find any evil effect from the exhibition of these films?

A. If the films do not exhibit the facilities for committing offences, they can be shown.

Q. Does it not follow that if you want to put Indian films into the world market, you must also have something in them of the sensational type?

A. I think we must have it. I have no objection to our exhibiting even our faults. If we expose the dark corners, such exposure will remedy the defect, and the people who see them will also have to correct the mistakes.

Mr. Coatsman: In reply to the Chairman about the possibility of Indian films finding a market outside India, you said it all depended on Government help. Your exact words were "whether we succeed or not depends on Government help". What were you thinking of when you said that?

A. I never meant that what I said should be confined to the market alone. I wanted Government help for the protection and promotion of the indigenous industry. It is also necessary to securing reciprocal advantages.

Q. What sort of help are you looking for from the Government?

A. Instead of having some paper resolutions, we must see that we get equal facilities for Indian films in other countries as we give here for the Empire films.

Q. Am I to understand then that you believe that before Indian films can find a market outside India they must be considerably improved and that that improvement can only come with Government help?

A. Yes, that is my position.

Q. What sort of help do you want exactly?

A. I want first of all that the Government should send a few young men at Government expense to foreign lands for training, secondly they must give large funds to the industry in order to enable them to produce better and useful films.

Q. Do you want the Central Government to give large funds?

A. Yes.

Q. Why should the Central Government give large funds?

A. Because this is a matter which affects the whole of India. This is an indigenous industry and people are spending a lot of money over seeing these amusements. Moreover, I do not think any provincial Government is in a position to spend large amounts on this industry, and that is why I want the Central Government, who can well afford to spend some amount on this, to do so.

Q. On the amusements industry?

A. On the cinema industry. I want their money to be given mostly for educational, industrial and health purposes.

Q. You suggest large sums of money. Have you thought over it carefully? Can you give me an approximate figure which will satisfy you?

A. I think the Government should give Rs. 10 lakhs a year for a period of ten years.

Q. But are not educational films within the province of the Provincial Governments?

A. This is a matter which affects the whole of India and if the Government of India want to place this industry on a sound basis, I think nothing can prevent them from coming forward and helping it: they have already appointed this Committee for this purpose.

Q. For what purpose would you like the Rs. 10 lakhs to be given?

A. First of all, some amount should be spent on sending some boys to Germany or America for training. Secondly, some amount may be spent on promoting the industry by agreeing to take a large number of educational and public health films from the producing concerns and also giving them half the cost of production.

Q. How can the Central Government do that?

A. If the Central Government give the money, they can entrust the work and the amount to the Provincial Governments.

Q. Surely the Provincial Government will not be prepared to act as an agent for this purpose?

A. I do not think that any Provincial Government will object if the Government of India want to help the Provincial Government.

Q. I am afraid you are raising a big question of principle indeed?

A. I do not think it is a question of principle.

Q. You are raising a question which is going against all principles of Government?

A. I do not think so, because the Central Government have got the power, and they can do it.

Q. But the question of subsidy from the Government is an important one, and if the provinces are going to have subsidies, they must agree to take them on terms.

A. I do not say so. The Government of India might help the industry wherever it is started and if they could not employ their own agents, they could make the Provincial Governments look after the affair and see if the money is spent properly.

Q. I cannot quite understand your exact position—You say that the Central Government should spend money over the development of the cinema industry. That I understand. But you also say that the Central Government should spend money on the medical, education, health and other propaganda by means of the films. I say that these are all provincial subjects and the Provincial Governments would object to the Central Government interfering in these matters?

A. I am afraid I did not make myself clearly intelligible. Supposing the Central Government spend money on the preparation of certain good films, and they are kept ready for being utilised by the Provincial Governments, say in their educational institutions or in several times, and so on, then I say that they will be taken advantage of.

Q. That makes the position clearer. I think you said that you did not attach much importance to local setting?

A. Local setting need not be in a particular place, because any man can go to any place for taking pictures.

Q. Do you think that you could prepare more educational propaganda films which would be suitable for every province in India?

A. Yes, by sending men to appropriate places for taking photos. For instance, if you want to develop the paddy industry, any film on that will be helpful to all the provinces.

Q. I do not think you understand what I mean. If every Provincial Government is going to have its own propaganda films, it is better that each province has its own studio?

A. But there may be subjects common to almost all the provinces.

Q. Take the educational films. One can very well say that the educational problem, at any rate, primary education, here is totally different from what it is in the Punjab?

A. I do not think the three Rs. can be taught by the cinema. I think mass education can be secured only by imparting knowledge. I want propaganda work to be done, and that will be spreading certain ideas and points of view. The propaganda film would be devoted to showing the advantages of primary education, explaining how to get over difficulties in the way and so on.

Q. How are they to be prepared?

A. There are two ways; one is that the Government may themselves undertake to produce films.

Q. You do not advocate that course in your written statement?

A. No. But I say the Government may undertake to give bonuses in cases where useful films are produced: or the Government may undertake to bear half the cost of production, or they can undertake to take as many films as are produced by a particular firm at a particular cost. They must either guarantee to purchase the films themselves or they must subscribe towards the cost of production.

Mr. Neogy: I want to understand your scheme more definitely. The subjects with which the public utility department films will deal are subjects relating to the Transferred departments. You suggest that the Central Government should see to their manufacture, whether they themselves do it or get them done by private agencies. But the departmental experts in the various provinces may differ in regard to any particular method of propaganda or any particular material to be put into the film?

A. I do not think we need go into the details. I only want that the Central Government should spend money over this. They should help the industry and secure the necessary films which can be usefully employed for their purposes, i.e., agricultural, educational, health or other matters.

Q. I want to know what control you propose to give to the Transferred departments which are concerned with these various subjects, over the actual production of the films if the Central Government is to see that?

A. Of course the man who pays money should satisfy himself. If the Provincial Government is not going to pay the money, it cannot complain about the Central Government coming in.

Q. Let us take public health or any other department. You will require departmental experts for the production of these departmental films. Under your scheme, do you contemplate that the Government of India should have such expert officers attached to their producing unit for the purpose of giving the necessary expert advice? At present the Government of India have nothing to do with the Transferred departments at all.

A. Just as the Government of India are inviting Ministers now and then for having some consultation on particular transferred subjects, they can do the same thing in this case also and come to an agreement in regard to the policy, etc.

Q. You rely upon a sort of concrete agreement between all Provincial authorities on any particular subject?

A. Yes, that is my view, provided the Government of India are satisfied, because they give the money.

Q. Would you prefer the production to be entrusted to private agencies?

A. Yes.

Q. Supposing the Government of India set up a studio themselves, your objection will then be that the private producing agencies now existing will be faced with competition from Government.

A. My only point is that if the Government undertake it, they will have to spend double the amount that will be spent by a private agency and there will be much wasteful expenditure.

Written Statement of Mr. K. T. DALVI, B. Com., of the Popular Film Co., Bangalore, dated the 29th October 1927.

1. Yes, I have been long associated with the Cinematograph line. My first experience began with Messrs. K. D. & Bros., who at one time did the biggest importing and Film hiring business in India and controlled several Cinemas. I was then looking after the business of Messrs. The Cinema and Associated Industries, Bombay, who were successors to Messrs. K. D. & Bros. I was the General Manager of the Universal Agency and Trading Co., Ltd., who were film producers and distributors and now I am conducting the entire business of the Popular Film Company of Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Rangoon. I have most intimate knowledge of the Producing, distributing and Exhibition side of the Industry and can speak with authority on the business aspect of the Industry.

2. (a) This depends on different localities. As I have travelled for business all over India and have most intimate knowledge of all the Cinemas my experience is not restricted to one place. Generally speaking highly educated Indians like American films; also British to some extent. They do not visit Cinemas showing Indian films so much. Illiterate and half educated classes like to visit houses showing Indian films. Uneducated Mohamedans like Serials more. In short both educated and illiterate Indians visit Cinemas. This I have noticed both in big Cities and in small towns all over the country.

(b) In Bangalore City for instance where there is more literacy the percentage of educated classes will be more than 60. The Ratio of men to women will be 4:1 and of adults to children will be 10:1. In Bangalore City there are four Cinemas and nearly all are running Indian films with occasional exhibitions of American selected films.

(c) This will be ten per cent. of the total audience as stated above.

3. Yes, Indian films are most popular both the Indian people and generally in India also. Among Indian films Religious films are much more popular with the illiterate and half educated Indians and with Hindu ladies and children. Social and Historical Indian films with the better educated Indians. I have observed that of late even the educated Indians are going more and more for Indian films.

4. Yes, they are.

5. Yes,

(a) and (b) Yes.

(c) It is more profitable to show Indian films than Western films. This is true of big cities like Bombay and Calcutta as well as of the small towns. Compare Cinemas in Bangalore City with those of Bangalore Cantonment. The former are showing Indian films the latter exclusively Western Films. There are crowds going to see the Indian films, the running expenses of these Cinemas are lower and naturally they make more profits than the Cantonment Cinemas.

Among the successful Indian films may be mentioned the following:—

The well-known Light of Asia, the Telephone Girl of Kohinoor, Gunasundari of Kohinoor, Krishna Janma of Hindustan, Kalyan Khajina of Maharashtra, Allaudin of Imperial, and many others.

6. (a) Of course they are.

(b) The Social and Historical to the educated classes and Religious to the illiterate and half educated classes including women and children.

7. No, there are a lot of films available. The Troops like Western films. British troops do not see Indian films at all. Naturally. They like War films as well as films of particular stars like Reginald Denny of Universal, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Harold Lloyd, Richard Talmadge and other such stars. Such films are both suitable and popular.

8. (a) No one can be satisfied with any existing things as man always wants some improvement. There is much to be improved in the production and exhibition side of the Industry although the distribution is more advanced.

(b) *Producing side*:—Of course the Indians have picked up producing work without going to foreign countries but in a space of less than nine years they have advanced a good deal. Still we require more trained directors, Scenario writing, starts, etc.

Exhibition side:—Many of the picture houses are far from financially sound and they work under many disabilities. Their machines are not always good and the staff is generally not very honest. There are no associations among them like C.E.A. of England and they are not properly represented to the Authorities for want of intelligent persons among them.

9. Yes, they are obtainable. In fact the film market is flooded with Western films than are necessary. There is more need for Indian films than the supply but there is more supply of the Western films than the demand. Consequently Western films are offered at very low hire which harms the Indian film industry. There is no monopoly for films but for Theatres in cities the Madan Theatres Ltd. are the only firm who are concerning all Cinemas.

10. Yes, the system exists in India to some extent also. This will be made clear in the reply to the next question.

11. Exhibitors in this country have no sufficient facilities for the pre-viewing of films. The country is of big distances and there is no trade show system in India like England or America. The Exhibitors are not so advanced as to know the advantage of pre-viewing the films, and they resort to the blind booking system or rely on the reports of the films in the big towns or are guided by the advice of the film Renter or follow the advice of some useless magazines. But in spite of this they benefit where Indian pictures are concerned as all Indian pictures will go in the Theatre. He is sometime cheated in the case of Junk foreign films as regards bookings.

Exhibitors generally keep their eyes on Bombay and Calcutta Cinemas and know which films are successful in those places. Western films of the well-known stars like Harold Lloyd, Mary Pickford or Douglas Fairbanks have an all India market. Indian films have provincial markets. For instance a Bombay film will not be booked in Bengal, Burma or Bihar and a film produced in Calcutta has very little market on the Bombay side. Speaking from our own experience we may say that whereas we get Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 4,000 thousand hire for a film for one or two weeks run in Bombay for our Indian film, Calcutta Cinemas hardly give us more than Rs. 600 for the same film. This has to be taken into consideration by exhibitors while booking films as to their popularity in his province and the merit of the picture will not alone decide his choice.

The greatest handicap for Indian films is that they have a very limited market. No doubt Indian films are now going to East Africa (where we are soon opening an office ourselves) but in India they have got provincial markets. Indian films are not popular in Burma except Rangoon town. Of the Indian Provinces Punjab cares the least for Indian films.

My suggestions in this matter are producers should take out films which will have an all India market and not produce films of provincial legends or culture. There should be proper associations for producers and distributors and for Exhibitors. Trade shows should be arranged and the suppliers and Exhibitors should co-operate more than hitherto.

There are separate suppliers for Indian films and separate for Western films. Perhaps Madan Theatres Limited and the firm which I represent are the only suppliers who deal in both Indian and foreign films. What I mean to say that there are no associations by which the Indian Renters and Renters of Western films can come together and co-operate with each other.

12. I am of opinion that very few of the Independent Cinemas (as opposed to large Circuits like the Madans) are making real profits. The writer has personal knowledge of nearly all Cinemas in India when he is in daily touch with them in the capacity of a Renter and he has found that nearly all the Cinemas outside the big cities complain of bad business. The poor exhibitors are already labouring under many disabilities and the Amusement Tax wherever it exists adds to their miseries. The amusement tax is killing the exhibitors and the writer can challenge those who maintain that the picture houses are making big profits. Governments concerned should make thorough inquiries in this matter and remove the tax wherever the same is proving oppressive. The success of the Exhibitors is the success of the whole industry—including the Renters, Importers and producers of films and the sooner they are put on sounder footing the better for the Industry. The writer is glad to note that Sir Victor, the Industrial Magnet of Bombay, holds the same views as himself in this respect.

13. The Custom duty is not burdensome to the Exhibitors so much as the Tax. The Custom duty comes to Rs. 37-8-0 per thousand feet of films imported. That is on one film it comes to about Rs. 225 or so. One Western film may be had for as low a sum as Rs. 1,000 including the duty. One film may be hired to ten exhibitors and thus each of them has to bear the duty of about Rs. 22-5 by way of increased hire. *The duty is in no way a protection to the Indian film industry but the removal of the same will lighten the burden of the Exhibitor which is already very heavy.*

If the Government has any intention of helping the Film production in India this can be done by reducing the duty on raw films and photographic materials.

14. No. This is not a business proposition. There is no demand for Educational films in India. Exhibitors cannot show such films alone and even if they insert one reel of a Topical or Educational Film in their programme, they are unwilling to pay extra hire for the same. They want *Comics* as side films and not Educational films. Government will have to spend a lot to foster taste for educational films in India. They will no doubt educate the people as the value of the film as an educative agency is now established but it is doubtful whether such films will help the film industry in general.

15. Yes, the conditions are no doubt favourable but there are some difficulties to be overcome. First about the *Capital* unfortunately the film industry has not attracted the commercial magnets. They are shy to go in for this line because this line is not considered as quite decent in India and our business magnets are quite occupied with Cotton, Textile mills, or cloth business. But the success achieved by the recent producers will attract capital to this line.

What is needed to be done is the starting of big studios with Indian Capital, worked by Indians and engaging expert Directors, and Cameramen from America. These will be assisted by Indian Directors and scenario writers. The stars must be Indians. I had made the same suggestion to the British producers who cared for the Oriental market for films and there were some inquiries also but after that they were silent.

Films produced in India must be of an all India nature and not provincial. We can also aim at getting at East and South Africa, Malaya, Java and Fiji where there is an Indian population.

16. There are good "talents" in India in the line but they need a "brush" of Western help in the shape of Directors and Cameramen as suggested above.

17. Not until the prejudice is overcome.

18. Government should not interfere too much with the Industry. They can give incentive by removing the disabilities such as removing of the duty on Raw films and photographic materials, removal of the Amusement taxes, and not a too rigid but proper Censorship. Beyond this the Government should not interfere.

19. The cost compares favourably as the cost of production is low as far as the salaries of the stars and staff are concerned. But whereas America has a world market for films we have not even an all India market. I know from experience that a good Indian film can be produced in Rs. 10,000. If this is a Bombay production, Bombay presidency Cinemas give nearly Rs. 5,000, Southern India Rs. 4,000, rest of India and Africa, Rs. 3,000. This will require four positive copies in addition to the negative, and there will be a ten per cent. clear profit if cost of distribution is reduced to the minimum.

In America they spend as much as five lacs of rupees on each picture but in the United States alone they get the cost price of the film and the "royalties" which they sell to other countries is all their profit which may range to as much as cent. per cent. or more.

Some comparisons also are worth noting. Whereas in India there are about 100 Cinemas in the United States there are as many as ten thousand with high earning capacities.

20. (a) No.

(b) If the Government so desire they should introduce Educational films in the Schools, and Agricultural Exhibitions but in no way the film Industry should be taxed for the same. Such expenditure should be met by the Educational and Agricultural Departments out of their funds without further taxation.

21. No. The State should not interfere with the Legitimate freedom of the Trade beyond what is suggested so far re Custom duty, Amusement Tax, and proper censorship in the hands of proper persons.

22. This may be done as regards Customs duty as understood by Imperial preference. An artificial aid to British films will react on the Exhibitors and the Indian films Industry and make them worse than they are. I have made this clear in a challenge which I threw to Sir Chimanlal Setalwad of Bombay through the columns of the "Times of India", last year.

(a), (b), (c) No.

I can suggest another way in which British films may be encouraged in India. British troops like British films, with British Stars, like Reginald Denny and Betty Balfour. The Cantonment Authorities should run Picture Houses in the Cantonments in India and encourage the exhibition of British films to the troops. But with the Indian audiences British films have not much chances.

23. Such schemes cannot be business-like, unless the Governments concerned run such enterprises at their own expense. I have not much hopes about such schemes.

PART II.

Social Aspects and Control.

24. (a) Yes, to some extent Sex films have a bad effect upon the public.

(b) No. There is no general circulation but occasionally such films are coming to India.

(c) The Sex film with a touch of immorality is harmful to the younger members of the public of both sexes. They are likely to do particular harm to unmarried boys and girls of marriageable age.

(d) The rigidity of present censorship is quite adequate at present both for Sex and Crime films. I do not think crime films promote crimes. Sex films are more harmful than crime films.

(e) No, certainly not.

25. No. I do not think so. The same amount of rigidity of censorship should there be in India as it is in England for instance.

26. (a) No special care is required for such films unless the films are objected to by members of a particular sect or religion on reasonable grounds.

(b) No, I do not think any particular films have offended the feeling of the community or the other.

27. (a) The excessive Sex matter films are likely to misrepresent Western Civilisation in India. The films representing Western life are generally speaking unintelligible to an uneducated Indian and are misunderstood by him. This gives a bad impression to such people about the Westerners and their morals. This is true only in the case of Sex films. Proper censorship of imported films is the only solution for this.

(b) Of course practically no Indian films are going to the West. But the Oriental films produced in some countries in which the Indian or the Hindu is badly depicted. The Chinese are shown in the like manner in the Western films. This is undesirable as it gives a bad impression to the Westerners about India, and Indian civilisation.

28. No. I have no particular complaint regarding films having a bad effect on children. I maintain what I say about the Sex films which have a bad effect upon the bigger boys and girls and young widows.

29. No. Such water-tight certificates are not necessary. However I have to make later on my suggestion for a proper organisation of Censor Board in India.

30. No. I am quite against such undue interference with the amusement of the people. No such prohibition is necessary but I am proposing how the Central Board of Review of films should recommend films to different classes of audiences. This will serve as a guide both to the public and to the Exhibitors alike.

31. Yes, no doubt it is so. But censorship should be also accompanied by advice to the Trade and the public.

32. No, I am not satisfied with the present system and I am proposing my scheme later on.

33. (a), (b), (c) Yes.

34, 35, 36. I have much to say in this respect and I am therefore framing a combined answer to all these three questions in the form of a constructive proposal for your consideration and immediate attention:—

I suggest that there should be a Central Board for the Review and Censor of Motion Pictures and this should be at the headquarters of the Government of India and under the Home Department. There should be a paid whole Government Superintendent of the Board with a small clerical staff. The Board should be attached an advisory committee composed of members of the Legislative Assembly. There should be twelve members in this committee of which five should be officials and seven non-officials. This body should meet once in three months, review the work of the Board and advise it on which will promote the film Industry and at the same time try to give some amusement to the public. They should not lose sight of the recreational and artistic aspects of the films and should not be unduly harsh.

Application for review and censor of all imported films and those produced in India should be made to the Superintendent at Delhi or Simla. As for films to be produced in India the producers should, before taking the actual production on hand, intimate to the Board as to the film they are producing and send details of the story, stars, directors, etc. If the Board finds anything objectionable it will give a timely advice to the producer and to effect change in the story, etc. This is suggested because the system prevails at present is not good and the producers first produce the film their own way and then send it for censoring and if the certificate is refused they lose all the thousands spent on the film but if they first take

of the Board they will not be put to unnecessary hardship and also can present to the public a wholesome film.

The Superintendent of the Board must be an educated man experienced in the film line in India and must be aware of the difficulties of producers, exhibitors and distributors so that he will be in a position to advise them on production and there will be no Red Tape system as now prevails with the inexperienced Censor inspectors. The Superintendent will review all the films produced and imported and issue a monthly Bulletin which will be available to the Exhibitors and the public, giving his remarks on the films and also classifying them for adults, children, etc. But this should be in the form of advice to the public and the Exhibitors and the classification should not be enforced by law forbidding children to attend the shows for the adults or *vice versa*. The whole thing should be worked on the lines of the American National Board of Review of motion pictures of which the writer will give more information if so desired.

For actual censoring of the films there should be inspectors at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Rangoon and Karachi and these should be wholetime paid government men, with intimate knowledge of the film line in India. He should be helped by two non-official respectable citizens from each of the places mentioned and all these three will review a film. These two members will be appointed yearly by the Central Advisory Board. The Inspector with the help of these two advisors will review the film for which an application is made to the Central Board and will report to the Central Board and the Superintendent will issue the Certificate on their recommendation. If they disapprove a film an appeal can be made to review it to the Central Board and their decision will be final. The expenses of these establishments should be met by the fee for reviewing the films at the rate of Rs. 5 per thousand feet of films as now.

The work done by the present provincial Boards is not satisfactory. In Bombay and Calcutta it is better than Madras or Rangoon where the work of censoring is hopeless. The Central Board will be very helpful to the Trade, the public and act in the capacity of a guide, advisor and Censoring authority. This Board by the issue of its Magazine will connect the missing link between all sections of the Trade and the public. This Board will also keep in touch with the producers of England and the Empire and advise them as to what kind of films they should send to India.

I have advocated the appointment of an Inspector in Karachi because many films are being imported through Karachi and it is very inconvenient for the trade to send the films for reviewing to Bombay. Karachi will also serve the purpose of the Punjab traders.

Even the Superintendent can review films if they are first submitted to him and if the producers nearer to Delhi so desire.

Provincial Governments should not interfere with the work of censoring but they should have the power to ban the film if it is very objectionable to that particular province. The Provincial Governments should also give advice in the matter, and if so desired, of the two non-officials with each Inspector one should be nominated by the particular provincial Government.

I think I have made all points sufficiently clear but if any more information is desired it will be sent immediately.

37. (a) Yes.

(b) No more safeguards are needed.

38. There have been some such cases in the imported films but I do not know the names exactly. I think they were banned by the Punjab and Bengal Governments.

39. No.

40. No. Any restrictions on advertising matters will unduly interfere with the liberty of the trade.

I have not noticed any advertisements which were considered as objectionable.

41. Yes, I think the better class of American and other Western films are coming to India and even in the Indian films there is a marked improvement in this respect. (See "Gunsundari" the recent production of Kohinoor and compare it with the older films.)

42. Yes, the Superintendent should invite suggestions from the trade, know their difficulties and fully co-operate with them for the production and distribution of better class of films.

43. No, and if there are any the Central Board will remove them, when worse class of films will not be passed.

The export of films from India is negligible.

44. By assisting the Central Board with advice and suggestions.

45. The Government should not exercise control over production more than exercised by the Central Board. That is why I advocated that the film producers should submit information to the Superintendent before production of a film and he will correct them if he finds the production undesirable.

There is no registration and license of Studios required. The Studios will improve under a just and benevolent Central Board and take advantage of their advice.

Written Statement of the Film Renters of Bangalore City and Cantonment, dated the 10th January 1928.

We, the Renters of Indian and foreign films of Bangalore City and Cantonment beg to place before you our views regarding the difficulties that beset us in our work on this side of India.

We are almost daily receiving complaints of losses from our Exhibitors both in the Cities and in the smaller towns. The Cinemas have several grievances such as high freight on railway parcels, strictness of Police authorities, want of good machines and operators, high charges of electric currents supplied to the Cinemas or high cost of production of such current with Engines and dynamos where there is no supply for the town. All these make the exhibitors' burden heavier which is already heavy.

Fortunately there is no amusement tax in the Madras Presidency and Mysore State so far, but we hear that the authorities are contemplating of putting up such a Tax very soon. This will ruin the Exhibitors and the whole industry which is dependent on the Exhibitors. We therefore strongly oppose any proposals regarding additional taxation on an industry which is already on the verge of ruin.

We are of opinion that if the duty on Raw films and photographic materials is removed this will lighten the burden of the Exhibitor to some extent and help the Renters to push films more than hitherto.

We are opposed to the idea of introducing quota system for British films in India and shall be most willing to import more British films provided they come up to the rank of American films both in point of merit and price. We appreciate the idea of producing and distributing educational films in India concerning, agriculture, sanitation, hygiene, etc., to educate the masses, but we are afraid such films cannot be paying from the business point of view unless the Governments concerned are prepared to help the producers of such films.

We believe conditions in Bangalore are very favourable to film production and with a proper co-operation and help from the Indian and Mysore Government, studios can be started here very soon. Bangalore is an ideal place to be the Hollywood of India, where the climatic conditions, sunlight, cheap labour, fine scenarios, etc., are most favourable. It will be better if the Mysore Government takes an initiative in this matter. We believe there is no other place in India which is so favourably situated as Bangalore.

We strongly urge that all efforts should be made to put the Indian film Industry on a sounder basis and we hope a time will come when Indian films

will not only have an all India market but will be screened in the Theatres of the British Empire and the world at large.

These views will be put before you by Mr. K. T. Dalvi.

Oral Evidence of Mr. K. T. DALVI, B. Com., of the Popular Film Co., Bangalore, on Thursday, the 12th January 1928.

Chairman: You have always been in Bangalore?

A. I have been in Bangalore for the last year.

Q. And before that.

A. In Bombay and Ahmedabad.

Q. How many years' experience have you in this line?

A. I have nearly 7 years' experience in this line.

Q. Have you been in any producing concern yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. Which is that?

A. The Lakshmi Pictures Co.

Q. How long were you there?

A. For about a year.

Q. What part did you do there?

A. I was the business manager of the Lakshmi Pictures.

Q. And is it now working?

A. The studio is there but they have stopped producing for some time.

Q. How long?

A. Six months.

Q. Why is that, do you know?

A. The financier of this concern who is in Ahmedabad wanted to recover the money which he invested in the Lakshmi Pictures. When he saw he was getting some of the money, then now he is thinking of production again, and the studio has been removed from Bombay to Baroda.

Q. It is only a transfer of business?

A. Yes and the distribution of films is done by me in Bangalore.

Q. How many productions have they made?

A. 10 pictures.

Q. All doing well?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the average cost?

A. The average cost comes to about Rs. 10,000 per picture.

Q. As much as that—for what length?

A. 8 to 10 thousand feet in every film.

Q. What kind of pictures, social dramas or mythological films?

A. Some mythological and some social and one or two historical films.

Q. Ten pictures in what time?

A. In the course of one year.

Q. Are they all being screened now?

A. They are.

Q. Are any being shown in Bangalore?

A. Yes.

Q. Are they successful?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you recovering the cost of production?

A. No, it was with difficulty we recovered the cost of production.

Q. Why?

A. Because the market in India is a limited market.

Q. For Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. You mean all the theatres do not show, and the theatres are limited in number?

A. The theatres don't pay well.

Q. And the theatres are not a paying concern themselves?

A. Yes.

Q. But we have heard that Indian films when shown draw a larger house than Western films.

A. No, but compared with the cost of Indian films, we do not get an adequate return from the exhibitors.

Q. How much do you take?

A. We take as much as 50 per cent. for first run pictures.

Q. And you say that is not adequate?

A. No, it does not give us the cost of production in India.

Q. How many years time do you allow for recovering the cost of production?

A. 2 years.

Q. Have any of them had 2 years run now?

A. Some of them.

Q. Have they not repaid themselves?

A. They have.

Q. For a good picture for the first run you get 50 per cent., and for the second run?

A. For the second run we charge 40 per cent. and for the third run 30 to 35 per cent.

Q. That seems to be a good percentage.

A. Yes, but even then, the collections of the cinemas except in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Karachi, are not very good.

Q. So the 300 and odd cinemas now working in the country are not paying concerns?

A. No, except the few in the big cities.

Q. Others are merely being run?

A. Yes, I may also state that I am interested in foreign films and we are distributing the productions of the Columbia Pictures Corporation of America.

Q. And you say you are not able to get good rentals?

A. No.

Q. I suppose you are able to supply them cheap. Are you able to supply these foreign pictures cheap compared with Indian films?

A. Yes, comparing our import cost of these foreign films, we can supply them much cheaper than Indian films.

Q. How many times cheaper, do you know?

A. Our foreign film costs at the most about Rs. 2,000.

Q. For?

A. Per picture with exclusive rights for India, Burma and Ceylon.

Q. Pictures of 8,000 feet?

A. No, they are shorter in length.

Q. Indian films cost you more?

A. Because we have to produce them here and bear all the cost of production; whereas for foreign pictures we have to pay a certain royalty with

rights for India, Burma and Ceylon. We have to pay a certain royalty *plus* the cost of the film.

Q. And there are a larger number of places where Western pictures are run?

A. Do you mean in India? There are very few in which they can be shown. We generally show these pictures in the big cities and the cantonment towns.

Q. Which pictures do you mean?

A. Columbia (American) pictures. They are rarely shown in upcountry towns where they run exclusively Indian films.

Q. I thought travelling cinemas showed more Western films than Indian films.

A. They do show serials and some Western films of the type of Harold Lloyd and Douglas Fairbank's pictures.

Q. Therefore in the country, whether in the cities or villages, many more Western films are shown than Indian films?

A. No, it is just the contrary. In the smaller towns of the country they show more Indian films than Western films. It is only in the bigger cities and in the cantonment towns where they show Western films more.

Q. But what do the theatres in Bangalore, with which you are familiar, show?

A. There are 10 theatres in Bangalore and the cantonment.

Q. Of which 5 run exclusively Indian pictures?

A. Of which 6 run exclusively Indian pictures with some pictures of selected foreign producers. The 4 cinemas in the cantonment run exclusively Western pictures.

Q. But just now Mr. Acharya told us that only two of them ran Indian pictures exclusively, two of them showed both Indian and Western, and the rest Western pictures.

A. No. They are making an experiment for the past month or so. When they run short of Western pictures, they show Indian pictures. Formerly they were showing one Indian picture per week.

Q. Are they getting the Indian pictures freely without difficulty.

A. Yes, they are, because just as exhibitors are anxious to secure pictures, we are also anxious to book them the pictures.

Q. I know, but are Indian pictures readily available?

A. They are readily available.

Q. The supply keeps pace with the demand?

A. No, the demand is more than the supply but wherever they are asking for Indian pictures, Indian pictures are readily available.

Q. You speak in somewhat contradictory terms. You say they get it all right.

A. No. When you ask whether the distributors object to giving them, I say they are readily available.

Q. Distributors do not object but producers are not able to produce them—is that the idea?

A. No, whatever films producers have produced or are producing are readily available to exhibitors.

Q. Anyway you are quite clear that foreign films are much cheaper than Indian films for the exhibitor?

A. Yes. There is a statement from the Bangalore distributors to your Committee which they have asked me to submit to you.

(The statement was made over to the Chairman.)

Q. Now you want to place your Indian film industry on a sounder basis—that is what you want?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you suggest should be done?

A. I have suggested in my evidence that the Government can help in two ways—with regard to the Central Board of Censors and with regard to the customs duty.

Q. You want the customs duty to be removed or what?

A. As far as raw films and photographic materials are concerned, the duty should be removed.

Q. And then what about the Board?

A. I suggest there should be one Central Board for the whole of India.

Q. How does it affect the growth of Indian films? One Central Board will make it more difficult for Indian pictures.

A. No. At present there is no All-India market for Indian films. If there is a Central Board worked on the lines of the American National Board of Review it can foster an All-India market for Indian films.

Q. You want them to operate not only as advisors but as trade commissioners.

A. No, here is the information regarding the National Board of Review in America.

(Witness handed in a booklet and requested its return after it had been used.)

There is another booklet which the National Board of Review is issuing that serves as a guide to the exhibitors and the general public.

Q. Thank you, we will make use of it with your permission. So you think the Central Board can work in an advisory capacity, and not only do censoring work?

A. I have suggested that the Central Board should be situated in a convenient place, and that the actual work of censoring should be done by inspectors at Bombay, Karachi, Madras, Calcutta and Rangoon.

Q. Do you want a paid highly qualified staff of inspectors to do the censoring work?

A. Yes.

Q. And all points of doubt should be cleared by the Board itself?

A. Yes.

Q. And the Board itself to act as an advisory body on matters affecting the trade.

A. No, the Board should be assisted by an advisory body of the Legislative Assembly with 12 members on it.

Q. Then what is the Board to do?

A. The board will consist of a superintendent and he will be advised on matters of policy by an advisory board of the Assembly.

Q. What do legislative councillors know about it?

A. They can guide the superintendent.

Q. In what? Take for instance myself. I am a member of the Assembly, what do you expect me to do?

A. The advisory committee can assist in the policy of the Censor.

Q. You mean laying down general rules of censorship?

A. Yes.

Q. But I thought you meant advising on the trade. You are more qualified to advise on the trade than I am.

A. But I think the persons who represent the constituencies there are expected to know.

Colonel Crawford: May I pursue the question of the Indian market with you? I gather you consider that the Indian market is a limited market, a restricted market?

A. Yes.

Q. Would I be right in saying that there are 5 key cities in the Indian territory?

A. Yes.

Q. And really you must show in those 5 cities—I am trying to visualise the position of the Indian producing industry; don't think of anything else from the Indian producer's point of view the market is limited. I was just asking you whether they must not anyhow show in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Karachi and Rangoon? If they exclude those, the position will be even worse?

A. Yes.

Q. Some producers have told us that provided they can show their pictures in these five cities they may recover the cost of production.

A. No, it is very difficult.

Q. And their profit will come from the balance of the market.

A. No, as far as our experience goes, Calcutta, Rangoon and Madras—these three places give very little hire.

Q. That is for your Bombay produced films? Now don't you think the public can be educated out of their provincialism sufficiently to make Indian films from Bombay more popular, say, in Madras than they are now.

A. But the return from the picture houses in Calcutta or Madras is not so good as it is from the picture houses in Bombay and Karachi.

Q. What is the reason for that—a higher type of education on the Western side of India?

A. The fact is that the films produced are mostly of a provincial character and very little effort is made by the producers to produce films of an All-India character.

Q. The Indian market is limited; you cannot afford to spend too much on Indian pictures. You put it round about Rs. 10,000?

A. Yes.

Q. If you were to improve the quality of Indian pictures it does not necessitate a larger expenditure of money?

A. It does.

Q. And the moment we go to the larger expenditure the opportunity of getting our money back becomes more remote?

A. The Indian market is limited and unless we get the foreign market we cannot do anything.

Q. Now am I right in my supposition that the foreign market depends upon your coming into amicable relations with those controlling the theatres in those other countries?

A. Let me say that by foreign market I mean the greater Indian market such as East Africa or wherever Indians have emigrated.

Q. Well, let us take the foreign Indian market before we talk of the world market. Does not that depend on your coming to terms with the exhibitors in that foreign market?

A. Yes, but the Indian producers themselves can start offices or appoint agents in the greater Indian markets, such as East Africa and Malaya.

Q. I understand in America the finance for the production of films is a matter of arrangement between the producer and the owners of the American theatres and the renters, so before they produce their films they assure themselves of a market by some such arrangement with theatre owners. That is the position of the trade in America. Is that right?

A. No, there are trusts of the producers of pictures such as the United Artists, the First National, etc., and they are controlling a chain of theatres.

Q. They have made their market by controlling chains of theatres. Well now, if Indian producers had the money their obvious method would be to build theatres in these Indian foreign markets. You think that is not feasible at the present moment?

A. That is not possible.

Q. The only other alternative is to get into touch with the owners of theatres in the Indian foreign market. Am I correct in that?

A. No, but if the people in those places like our films and if we produce films suitable to the taste of the people in those places, the exhibitors in those places will take the films.

Q. You don't think any arrangement is necessary between producers and exhibitors?

A. There is no monopoly or tendency to monopoly.

Q. I am not talking of monopoly. You think all that is necessary is the establishment of producers' agencies in those territories?

A. In the territories to which Indians have emigrated such as East Africa and Malaya.

Q. That obviously is one method of extending our Indian market. Will that be adequate or have we still got to extend into the world market?

A. Of course that ambition is the greater ambition; and if we get the world market, Indian producers should consider themselves very fortunate.

Q. Well, what method have we to adopt to establish ourselves in that world market?

A. We shall have to start studios in India with experts and with stars who are known all over the world.

Q. Supposing we did produce these superfilms in India of the requisite quality, we yet could not get them on to the world market unless we had some agreement with the theatres of the world market? Is that right?

A. Yes.

Q. We want to come to some arrangement with them for the exhibition of our pictures?

A. But the theatres in foreign countries do not take Indian films because they are far below the standard.

Q. At present. You tell me at one time "I cannot afford more than Rs. 10,000 for one picture because my territory is not big enough, but if I have got to improve the quality of my picture I have got to spend much more".

A. We can recover that.

Q. Does not that mean that if we can only assure ourselves of that market, then we can spend our money on that market?

A. That is right.

Q. Well now I notice you say you are opposed to the quota system for British films. I presume you mean British Empire films?

A. British Empire films. I mean to say the films should be allowed to stand on their own merits without any legislative provision.

Q. All foreign films?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you found the monopoly of one foreign country, or a tendency to monopoly of one foreign country?

A. There is no monopoly or tendency to monopoly on the part of foreign producers in India.

Q. At present?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there any likelihood of it in the future?

A. I don't think so unless foreign producers, say in America, buy a chain of theatres in India; but even then there are independent exhibitors in the places where they will have these theatres.

Q. Sufficient to withstand a big combine like that? Sufficient to stand on their own legs?

A. Yes, because there is a monopoly in India on the part of one exhibitor at present, but even now independent exhibitors are withstanding this monopoly.

Q. I notice you recommend Bangalore as a suitable centre for an Indian Hollywood. Would you agree that it would be more or less desirable for all film producing studios in India to concentrate in one place?

A. Yes provided the place is suitable.

Q. The place will have to be climatically suitable? Am I correct in thinking that the site for that Hollywood will have to be close to some big city where you may be able to lay your hands on any article you want at a moment's notice?

A. Yes.

Q. And the probability is that your Hollywood will have to be close to some big city.

A. No, it is not like that. If we select any site in India and if we build up a Hollywood there, the other necessities that will be required, will come up there.

Q. Will concentrate there?

A. In America the studios were started in Hollywood first, and the rest collected there afterwards.

Q. I suggest to you that as you already have that concentration in Bombay it will probably continue there.

A. As far as I am aware two Bombay producers are thinking of starting two more studios in Bangalore because they find the cost of production will be cheaper in Bangalore.

Q. Have you the requisite electric current in Bangalore?

A. There is an electric current.

Q. Strong enough to work arc lamps, you think? Is the voltage high enough?

A. Yes, and I think the Mysore Government are also thinking of making some addition to the electric supply.

Q. Now just one other point. If we desire, as you suggest in the last paragraph of this letter, that the time should come when we will be able to show our films in the British Empire market and to the world at large, I presume we have got to be tactful and not to put these other people against us.

A. No. It is only a hope, if we come up to the standard.

Q. I have seen the report from an American producer which says that America herself is to blame for the fact that there is this opposition to her films throughout the world to-day, because she has not allowed any other country's films to come into America. If she had been only a little bit more generous, she would not have found all this opposition.

A. Perhaps you will allow me to quote from a speech made by Mr. Philip Snowden in the House of Commons.

Mr. Green: He is not a film producer.

Colonel Crawford: He is a politician.

Mr. Neogy: Is there any statement of fact made there?

A. Yes, he made this speech when the Film Bill was passed in the House of Commons.

Q. We are not concerned with the entire speech. Is there any statement on this particular point, whether America prohibits other countries from coming into America.

A. Not on that particular point; but he suggests that the revenue that is obtained by the British Government from the film industry, from the exhibitors in England, is due to American films, and that if America were to withdraw her supply of films, from Britain, it is not America that will suffer but the British Exchequer.

Colonel Crawford: You naturally have great admiration for Mr. Joe Brandt, the President of the Columbia Pictures Corporation. Let me just read to you the statement which he has made as a review of the European film position. He says that America is very much to blame for the opposition which has been aroused there, and he goes on to say "if he puts his back against the wall and will not tolerate the import of foreign films into the United States he will gain little". I only suggest to you, would you advise us to be tactful in our handling of this matter? Tactful if we desire at a future time to get our pictures taken elsewhere?

A. Tactful in what way?

Q. Well we should not offend susceptibilities if we can avoid it in our own interests. Do you think it is important to the Indian Industry that we should not by any action of ours prejudice the future of the industry?

A. Yes, we should be tactful in this matter.

Mr. Green: You have sketched very fully your suggestion for a central Board of review of motion pictures. To a certain extent I suppose it is based on the organisation in America?

A. I have not had any data for my suggestions.

Q. You are aware of the Will Hayes organisation there?

A. No.

Q. Well, Will Hayes is the man who runs the National Board of Review in America. Do you take it that that is a trade organisation, not a Government one?

A. Yes.

Q. You are also aware that there is a considerable and apparently growing body of opposition to it?

A. Their censorship is recognised by the exhibitors and the public.

Q. It is not an official censorship?

A. No, it is not.

Q. And their censorship certificate is not required by law?

A. No, it is only citizen organisation.

Q. I was thinking more of its effect in pushing the industry which you desire. As regards the actual censorship you want local inspectors at the five ports, each inspector to be accompanied by two non-officials. Are you contemplating that these non-officials should give their service in a voluntary capacity—entirely honorary?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you realise what that will mean, that in Bombay at present each non-official will have to attend inspecting films for 3½ hours every day?

A. Yes.

Q. And you really think that you can get two non-official gentlemen to do that?

A. I think so, we can get the men.

Q. The same two every time or a panel?

A. Either one at a time or two at a time.

Q. You have been in Bombay?

A. Yes, I was in Bombay.

Q. I have been in Bombay for some 10 years. On what do you base your idea that you will get qualified gentlemen of wide culture, understanding and education who would be able to do 3½ hours honorary work every day of the week right through the year?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. I admire your estimation of Bombay's public spirit!

A. I think it is not at all impossible to get good citizens in Bombay to do this sort of work.

Q. Can you suggest any names?

A. Yes, I can. Mr. C. D. Vaidya who is son of Solicitor Vaidya, can undertake this work.

Q. What is his profession?

A. In selecting Honorary men Government or the Board should select well-to-do people who have very little work to do generally.

Q. Do you know Mr. Vaidya very well, and do you think he will accept an Honorary position?

A. Certainly, he will accept his Honorary work. You should select people who have not to work for their livelihood and who have no other business.

Q. My experience is that those people are often more busy than other people? Does he never go to Mahableshwar, or to Europe?

A. In such cases you can substitute other people.

Mr. Neogy: You seem to lay great emphasis on the presence of stars of international importance in the production of any film, in case you expect to secure an international market for your film. Is that an essential condition?

A. In the beginning that will be essential, because there are certain stars in America and Germany who are known all over the world. If such stars are engaged in India, it is possible to get an all-world market for our films, but with our stars who are not known in other countries, it will be very difficult to introduce our films.

Q. You know that the well-known stars of America will demand fabulous salaries. Do you think it is practical politics to think of employing those stars in India for the purpose of producing an Indian play?

A. But if you are aiming at an international market, there is no risk in paying such fabulous salaries particularly when you are assured of your income.

Q. Do you think that the resources of the existing producing companies in India are sufficient for the purpose of undertaking this expenditure?

A. No. The capital will not be forthcoming unless the initiative is taken by some of our capitalists. I mean the existing studios are not in a position to start new studios or to expand their own studios on such a big scale, and unless the industrial magnates in India take some interest in this business, it is not possible to expect any improvement.

Written Statement of Mr. U. B. ROMESH RAO, of the Radha Picture Palace, Calicut, dated the 2nd December 1927.

1. I am keenly interested in the Cinema Industry of India. I am an Exhibitor and am managing the Radha Picture Palace, Calicut.

2. My experience of the Madras presidency is that the educated middle classes are the most regular Cinema-goers. The illiterates patronise Indian Films because they understand and appreciate the names and plots better than in English Films. Time was when Western Films depicting hair-raising stunts were very popular but they are since falling in the public estimation. Nowadays people as a whole appreciate short stories depicting the ordinary emotions and vicissitudes of Life.

(a) Not more than 10 per cent. of the people in the mofussil visit Cinemas and of this small percentage the educated middle classes comprise more than half while the remainder is made up of the masses and the landed gentry. The proportion of the masses is however on the increase.

(b) About 5 per cent. of the Cinema going population is made up of children under 14, but these little folk flock for Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd and other good comics as also for films showing Wild animals and fighting.

very Mythological, Puranic and Historical Films produced in India were very popular at the initial stage. The amazing and record-breaking popularity of the Krishna Janma is an instance in point, but these Films have no longer the same attraction for the people at large since their tastes are going beyond the elementary stage with regard to Films. This perhaps explains the almost mushroom-like growth of Social films picturizing the stories of famous Indian Novelists.

... may be set some excellent American Films which have attracted all kinds of people educated and uneducated whether in the cities or in the mofussil. Douglas Fairbank's 'The Thief of Baghdad' has beaten all records in recent Film history in its popularity with Indian audiences. In smaller municipal towns only Mythological Films are appreciated as for instance: Krishna Janma, Savitri, Kaliya Mardan, Harischandra, Lankadahanu, etc. In this respect the diversity of conditions all over India is a great handicap. Bombay Films for instance are not liked in Madras nor Bengal films in Bombay.

4. I do not believe that the exhibitors are catering adequately for Indian audiences. The reasons are numerous and can be stated only with reference to any particular locality. The Films produced in India are very costly and the Exhibitor is not induced to get them unless he is assured of their success. With the exception of a few mythological films the majority of Indian Films betray a most unfortunate looseness of construction. Plots are never compact; they are mostly long-drawn and even over-drawn. The acting is artificial and unnatural and only suited to the Indian stage. Photography is shocking and the titles are literally invisible, while the titles in English betray a disgraceful ignorance of grammar. The obvious result is that the audience is very much disappointed. In my opinion Films produced by the Imperial Film Company, the Kohinoor Film Company and the Madan Theatres Limited, are the only Films that at present represent a very fair standard in technique and plot construction. In a place like Madras, mythological films are not appreciated at the present day while even the mofussil stations are approaching this state.

5. Films depicting Indian Life are readily available but are costly to the exhibitor. The Indian Films are popular only with a section of the audience while some really good Indian Films are to the liking of all. Instances of good Indian Films are: Laxmi Film Company's Sati Seemanthini; Krishna Film Company's Keshavkant B. A.; Kohinoor Film Company's The Educated Wife; Excelsior Film Company's Leila Majnun; Madan Theatres's Krishnakanta's Will.

(c) Ordinarily Western Films are the most profitable since their hire is very much lower than for Indian Films. But there are instances when even Indian Films do pay. Examples—Phalke's Krishna Janma; Kohinoor's Gulebakavali; and Indrasabha.

6. (a) Topical Films of the type of Pathé Gazette and Universal Newsreel are almost unknown to Indian Producers. There is no doubt such films would be very popular if properly 'shot'. Films depicting stories from the National Literature, History and Mythology would certainly be more popular with Indian audiences than the prevalent Western Films if they are properly filmed with clever actors and actresses and thus made more impressionable.

(b) Social and Historical Films appeal to the educated classes. Mythological films appeal to the illiterates who besides appreciate fighting and breath-taking stunts.

7. I have no idea.

8. I am not satisfied with the present condition of the Industry for while Production takes place on a large scale, Distribution and Exhibition are both inadequate and disappointing. Production:—As regards Production no effort is made to make the Film impressionable and true to the original. Often vulgar and wholly inappropriate elements are introduced which mar even the virtues of the film. The Histrionic art is mercilessly murdered. The cast is

generally quite unsuited to the task allotted to it. The scenic effect of realism while the films themselves run to disproportionate length. Several films running to 8 and 9 reels might as well be shown in 4 without affecting the story. The Photography is shocking and imposes an undue strain even on normal eye-sight. Last but not least the titles in 3 or 4 languages are so crowded into a single space that it is impossible to read them. The Censors connection I might say that the titles are badly and defectively titled. In this Indian Films is very good. One more regrettable feature is Films and Madans pay no attention to the Comic aspect of Life. I have not so far come across any good Film comedy produced in India, but I see no reason why Birbul of the North and Tennaliraman of the South should not be sufficient inspiration for indigenous talent to produce its own modern Charlie Chaplins and Harold Lloyds in the near future.

Distribution.—The distribution is very inadequate. The industry is at present mostly confined to Bombay. The various concerns have no agencies in other presidencies with the result that the exhibitor has to get the films all the way from Bombay by paying heavy Railway freight and postal charges. The Distributor also suffers indirectly since the Film is unavoidably locked up in transit occupying sometimes a fortnight. The Railways and the Postal department might be induced to reduce the Freight on Films by at least 50 per cent. The Companies themselves should open agencies in all presidency towns. Some of the Film companies have recently opened their branches at Madras and Bangalore.

Exhibition.—Except in some companies and with some exhibitors trade honesty is unknown. Films in unrunnable and rotten condition are sent and an attempt is made to blackmail the exhibitor by accusing him of spoiling the Film. As against this some exhibitors have ill-fitted projectors and inefficient and ill-paid operators who run the Film to destruction. I do not know if in the interests of the producers some official control could be imposed on the exhibitors. If however this is done it would ensure smoother working of the industry. For instance a rule might be enforced that Sprocket wheels should be renewed every month. Cinema operators might be required to take out licenses after a small examination of their efficiency.

9. Good films are not readily obtainable at reasonable prices. Certain first class Western Films are all owned and controlled by Madans. The only unfortunate aspect of this monopoly is that the small exhibitor can never hope to get these beautiful films at the prohibitive rates quoted. How could an exhibitor of a small municipal town hope to get a Douglas Fairbanks picture for 7 days or less for the exorbitant rate of Rs. 750. I do not believe Legislation can prevent any such monopoly.

10. I have no idea.

11. No facilities exist in India for exhibitors to preview Films especially in mofussil stations. The Censor Board should monthly issue a Cinema Publicity Magazine incorporating the list of Films submitted to the Board and censored by it, as also the various remarks necessary to explain the expunging of particular portions from particular films. This kind of publicity will I think keep the Exhibitor always in touch with the latest releases as and when they are released.

12. The Governor of Madras has assented to the Entertainment Tax but it has yet to be enforced. Nevertheless I am strongly of opinion that this Tax will operate as a great handicap both to the middle-class Cinema-goer as also to the Exhibitor. The exhibitor does not stand to lose directly for he in his turn will impose the Tax on the patrons who will have to pay more than before. This taxation might be considered trifling in a metropolitan city like Madras but it will doubtless affect the middle-class section of the audience in the mofussil. I therefore suggest that tickets of the value of 8 annas and above be alone taxed and secondly that the tax be reduced in the case of the Cinema which has for long enjoyed the reputation of being the cheapest form of amusement in the world. A tax of half an-anna might be levied on 8 annas tickets

and the present rate maintained for tickets over this value . . . this being specially done in the case of the Cinema.

13. The existing Customs duty of 15 per cent. on imported Films is in my opinion not very high and might be retained but the duty on imported Raw Films should be reduced if not abolished as this would greatly help the Indian producer. The duty on all Cinema materials should be reduced such as Projectors, Carbons for the Arc lamp; Film Cameras, etc., etc.

14. The need for an extensive use of the Cinema in the villages and among the illiterates can never be too strongly emphasised. Russians have been the first to perceive the magnificent possibilities of the Film in mass adult educational work. I understand that in Russia the Cinema is an integral part of the educational system and is subsidized by the government. The Government of India might as well take a leaf from Russia in this matter: for instance in villages Health and Agricultural films would certainly be more effective than the Publicity leaflets issued by these departments at the present day, and which remain unread due to illiteracy. In addition to efforts in this direction by the Government I think it is highly necessary that private enterprise engaged in the production of such educative films should be subsidised.

15. Certainly. The conditions here are very favourable to the development of the Cinema trade on a large scale. The only handicap is the lack of expert opinion and proper guidance. India is certainly not behind any country in the world for historic forts, famous battlefields, picturesque sceneries, beautiful waterfalls, winding rivers, crowded cities and antiquated villages. Actors and actresses will no doubt be forthcoming from respectable families as the industry grows from more to more and takes its proper place in the useful institutions of the country.

16. At the present day it cannot be gainsaid 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 value. But it is very necessary that these unexplored talents should be developed on proper lines. I understand from a newspaper report that some of the American Universities provide courses of study in the art of Cinematography. Our Government might as well take a leaf from these. I am of opinion that the Government should provide special scholarships to competent men to study the technical side of this industry on the Continent and in America. The Government should open in every province Technical schools where instruction in scenario-writing, acting, etc., will be given.

17. Though at present almost all the Film concerns are private firms yet I do not think it would be difficult to get enough money to start film production on a large scale. But I should suggest that the Government should have some manner of control in a concern where huge sums have been invested. The State Aid to Industries Act of the Madras Presidency might be extended so as to help this Industry. The other provincial governments might introduce similar legislation in their own provinces.

18. The local and central governments should provide ample facilities to the Film producers by allowing them the use of Government Buildings, Armies, Dockyards, Ships, Museums, Zoos, Trams, Railways and such other things as are of great value to the producer, either without any charge or for a nominal fee.

19. I understand that an ordinary film produced in India requires about Rs. 10,000 which is the minimum. I have no idea as to the cost of film-production in foreign countries.

20. Yes: the Government should have its own Film producing department to produce Films of educative value on subjects of Public Health, Sanitation, Hygiene, Agriculture, etc., etc. These Films should be supplied free to the Exhibitors to be shown with their daily shows. If however private parties are willing to undertake the production of such Films they should be subsidised by the Government. But it must be remembered that it is not a paying proposition for private parties to produce such Films. The Exhibitor in his turn

cannot afford to show these Films alone. These Films may be placed at the disposal of the department which is concerned with the subject-matter of the particular Film. For instance if Plague breaks out in a town the Health department must be asked to supply to the local theatre its Film on Plague, to be shown with the daily programme. Special shows might be arranged for exhibition of this film alone: the exhibitors' actual working-expenses being met in this case by the Government. In course of time I think that these departments should be provided with a portable operating plant with which special shows might be given by the department itself at a moment's notice.

(b) I do not think the Government need resort to any fresh taxation to meet the expenses for the schemes detailed above. The cost may be met by the Entertainment Tax and the Health or Industries or Agricultural Departments as the case may be. Such an extensive use of the Cinema among the illiterates and the masses will surely increase the efficiency and educative value of the various departments.

21. A centralized neutral distributing agency might doubtless provide for the production and exhibition of good films conforming to moral standards but it is highly necessary that the use of teaching and propaganda films should be inaugurated by the Government. I am strongly opposed to the creation of a State agency undertaking the management of the Industry as a monopoly as this might not only discourage but stifle private enterprise altogether.

FILMS OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH.

22. I do not think India will voluntarily participate in the policy of the Imperial Conference Resolution to encourage the use of British Empire Films. The said resolution seems at best to be a cloak to induce exhibitors to foster the British Film Industry. I am strongly of opinion that Exhibitors in India will look to the quality of the Film and the reasonable hire at which it can be obtained rather than to the Brand. If therefore British Empire Films compare favourably with American Films in excellence and cost I am sure the Indian Exhibitor will of his own accord get British Empire Films. I submit that the Central Government will be ill-advised if they intend to introduce legislation for the purpose of enforcing the policy underlying the particular resolution of the Imperial Conference. Such legislation will cause resentment abroad and is bound to affect the trade in India as well.

(c) I do not see why British Empire Films should alone improve the standard of Western Films shown in India. I have not so far come across a single British Empire Film.

PART 2.

Social Aspects and Control.

24. Considered as a whole Western Films exhibited in this country are not in my opinion having any demoralizing effect on the people. It is my considered opinion that the Western Serials are unnecessarily and injuriously working on the nerves of the audiences by depicting hair-raising stunts. These serials have besides a tinge of criminality about them and might help to work up the imaginations of the masses. It is however a matter for psychologists and the police service to say whether these Films have any direct bearing on the commission of crime in the country. These serials may therefore be considered to have in them a general circulation of criminal suggestion.

(c) Criminally suggestive Films might add to the existing stealth, lawlessness and riots in the country. Films that are defectively photographed might affect the eye-sight of the audience and particularly of old men and children. The imagination of the people will be injuriously worked up if they see Immoral Films; by which I mean Films portraying men and women indulging in unrestrained and promiscuous love.

(d) I am of opinion that the existing Censorship is quite adequate in the case of Sex Films. Any further tampering with the Films will I think make them devoid of a sense of reality which alone makes them impressionable.

The Censorship with regard to Crime Films might however be made more stringent. Serials portraying the lawless methods of organised plunder by Bandits, daylight murders, Taxi-cab dacoities, Bank hold-ups, etc., etc., must be banned. Exception should be made in the case of Serials of enduring and endearing interest like "The Count of Monte Cristo", "Mathias Sandorf", etc.

(e) I do not think that there has been any increase in crime due to the Cinema.

(f) It is said, though I cannot vouch for it, that the Abkari sales have gone down slightly since a portion of the masses addicted to liquor are spending a little out of their drink budget for seeing the Cinema shows.

25. I do not think that any stricter Censorship is necessitated by the difference in outlook and social customs between the West and the East. On the other hand I believe that the Cinema is an effective means by which the peoples of the two hemispheres might learn to know each other better.

26. Yes; with special reference to the existing communal ferment in the country.

(b) Niranjan Pal's "The Light of Asia" which was exhibited before and appreciated by Their Majesties the King and Queen was banned in Burma as tending to wound the religious feelings of the Burmese. The wooing scene in this beautiful Film struck me as unnatural to and inconsistent with Indian or Burmese society, ancient, medieval or modern. Uneducated people will naturally misinterpret this altogether wrong representation, however unintentional it might have been on the part of the producers. I should think that the costumes of the women characters in this Film were also quite misleading. Custom and costumes were here at a strange variance. The abrupt ending of this Film was quite unsuited to the majesty and grandeur of the Great Lord Buddha. In my opinion the Film stopped just where its excellence ought to have begun.

Another instance is that of "Moon of Israel" which created a sensation among the Muslims of Delhi and had to be stopped after a day's screening.

27. Some of the Films exhibited in India do have a tendency to misrepresent Westerners in the eyes of Indians. The Immortal Rudolph Valentino's "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" is an instance in point. I submit that the producer was unduly harsh on the German nation and its Militarism in this Film. Some people even say that the Germans are here shown at their worst. This tendency is to be regretted in view of the efforts made for international peace and good-feeling after the Great War of 1914. I do not believe that the Western Films shown at present are unintelligible to the uneducated Indians and are usually misunderstood by him. My considered opinion is that the uneducated Indian understands and appreciates Western Films to a greater extent than most of the Indian Films exhibited here. Western Films besides maintain a very desirable standard of morality.

(b) I am of opinion that Indian Films for exhibition abroad should fully and adequately represent the culture and people of India. I suggest that there might be stricter censorship here for such films and that there might also be wise propaganda and advertisement abroad. I do not know of any Films exhibited abroad that had a tendency to misrepresent the people of India but I do believe that colossal ignorance exists elsewhere about India and her people. It should therefore be the aim of the Cinema Films produced in India to remove such ignorance.

28-29. Sex Films portraying promiscuous and unrestrained Love might be prohibited for children below 14 years, whose minds are yet impressionable. In the light of this some Films might be certified "For Adults Only".

30. I am against any such regulation of a wholesale character. Barring particular Films certified "for adults" only, I think that children should be conceded the freedom to attend all other Films. Boys and Girls below 10 years might however be allowed to attend only Special Childrens' Shows.

31. I have referred to this aspect in answering question 8. (a) Briefly I am of opinion that the Film operators should be licensed and that if possible

there should be periodical inspection of the Projector by qualified persons appointed by the Government. In addition I suggest that a Film Certificate should accompany every copy of a Film which is censored. This certificate should contain the date of release, the stations at which it has been exhibited and last but not least, *the number of times the particular copy has run*. I believe that a new copy of a Film will run about 150 times through the operating machine; which in other words means that a copy can be run roughly at about 15 stations after which it is rotten and unrunnable. The exhibitors should be asked to make the necessary entries in this Film certificate, as and when the particular Films are run. The Film renters on the other hand should be required to stop circulation of a copy after it has run 150 times (the exact figure can be fixed by a representative committee of Producers and Exhibitors). Any violation of this rule should be punished with forfeiture and fine. This is absolutely essential in the interests of the exhibitor and specially in view of the fact that several bogus concerns have sprung up which claim to deal in High Class Motion Pictures; which are in fact rotten and "pirated" copies of good Films. The Cinema Committee would do well to go into this matter at some length as my suggestions would doubtless ensure smooth working of the Exhibition aspect of the Industry.

32. There is a Provincial Board at Madras but one knows and hears so little of it that I do not know if it is functioning at all.

33. The question is very vague and one fails to understand what strict Censorship means. However any further tampering with Films than what is done by the present Board of Censors will undoubtedly rob Films of that sense of reality which alone gives it strength and excellence. Such strictness will I think stand in the way of the innocent amusement of the audience as a result of which there might be a fall in the attendance at Cinemas.

(c) There seems to be an impression in some quarters that Kissing and Dancing scenes should be absolutely banned. This is nonsense. There is no doubt a limit for everything. Enlightened men would not like to see on the screen women insufficiently clothed, men and women in indecent postures and scenes of Bacchanalian orgies which have a debasing influence on the audience. I should particularly suggest that Dancing scenes be retained as far as possible provided they are not shockingly obscene to the average man or woman. It is precisely at this stage of India's cultural growth that people here as well as in foreign countries should know that India has its own divine art of dancing. The Cinema affords a good scope and a strong impetus for a revival of this almost forgotten art. All exhibitors know that dancing scenes are extremely popular. In my own case, of about 100 Films containing Dancing scenes only 3 or 4 had objectionable postures and costumes in the Dancing scenes. The Cinema Board therefore without being unduly hard on the producer, should give encouragement for artistic and inspirational development.

34. (1), (2), (3), (4), (b), (c), (d) and 35. There is bound to be a sharp difference of opinion on the question of the Censor Board. I have therefore given this matter my careful consideration and am emphatically of opinion that a paid and fulltime Central Censor Board is the only practicable solution for India. Such a Board should be situated at Delhi, directly under the Central Government. Its personnel should be thoroughly representative. I believe that a Board of 9 Members will serve the purpose very well. The President of the Board should be an Indian Educationist of ripe experience and preferably one who has specialised in Psychology and has experience of Social work among the masses. The other members might be appointed thus:—2 Hindus; 2 Mohamadans; 1 European or Anglo-Indian; 1 person to represent the Exhibitors and nominated by them; 1 person to represent the Producers and nominated by them; 1 Cultured Lady to represent her Sex and if no Lady is forthcoming the Government to appoint another in this place. I am aware that if such a Board is to be constituted several public institutions will claim a seat on it. But I feel bound to sound a note of warning against any such indiscriminate representation. It was very regrettable that some of the Ladies in their evidence before the Cinema Committee at Bombay should condemn all indigenous and foreign Films in scathing terms since in their opinion such Films were demoralising. Such ill-considered criticism was in my opinion

altogether undeserved and perhaps due to an exaggerated picture of the existing pictures. If Films were to be produced to suit the fastidious tastes of these unkind critics there is no doubt that the Films thereafter will emerge out of the Censor Board in a bald and lifeless condition making them so unimpressible that exhibitors will be forced to close their Cinemas rather than court the indignant and legitimate dissatisfaction of their erstwhile patrons. In the same way members of the Temperance Association and other like institutions that work in narrow spheres would hamper the work of the Board by futile criticism. Educated and enlightened alone are the most suitable for the Board since well-considered judgment and impartial views may be reasonably expected from them. The Secretary of the Board should be in charge of the Board's Publicity. He should publish a monthly Cinema Gazette (also referred to in my answer to question 11) containing an account of the work done by the Board from time to time; the various releases and their brief descriptions; also general comments on the standard of films and on the expunging of particular portions from them. I have no doubt that both Exhibitors and Producers will extend their hearty co-operation to this Magazine if and when it is started. The Members of the Board should periodically visit studios and Cinemas to acquaint themselves with technicalities and working conditions. The Provincial Board should in my opinion be altogether abolished. In its place a paid officer known as the Censor of Entertainments may be appointed. I have suggested a wider jurisdiction for this officer since he may not have enough work to do by way of censoring Films alone, in other provinces except Bombay. His work must be that of supplying all information to exhibitors and producers and organisers of other entertainments. He may for instance help a Producer in obtaining the use of Government Buildings or Parks or Museums, etc. I further suggest that he should pay surprise visits to theatrical entertainments conducted by professionals who I am sorry to say in some cases do not scruple to indulge in very vulgar and obscene dialogues and gestures. This kind of check will I am sure improve the moral tone of our Professional entertainers. All Indian Films having provincial peculiarities should be specially mentioned in the Cinema Magazine and referred to the Provincial Censor who should thereupon enquire into the Film; assisted in the task by a non-official Board of advisers. He should act upon the recommendation of the Board in stopping circulation of any film or order the expunging of any portion of it if the Board opines that such Film or a portion of it is objectionable. The Public and the Press should co-operate with him in this matter. All Indian Films to be shown in his province should pass through him and the Film Certificate (vide answers to question 30) of the copy or copies of the Film should bear his seal and signature. Thereafter it may not be possible for an Exhibitor in the Madras Presidency to ignore the provincial authority and get Films direct from Bombay or Calcutta as is being done now. This kind of control is essential in the interests of the Exhibitors; while the Producers will be indirectly induced to open their agencies in every province where there is a provincial censor. The local producers should promptly report to the provincial officer when the copy (or copies) of a film has been withdrawn as being unfit for circulation. This must be strictly enforced in the interests of the Exhibitors. I may even go further and suggest that the Censor of Entertainments should pay surprise visits to the producers and check their stock of Films as also the nature of the Films themselves. I believe that Foreign films generally need not be recensored by the Provincial officer since it may be safe to hold that with respect to such Films Indian opinion as voiced forth by the Central Board is the same all over India.

36. I have no idea about the working of this scheme as it exists in Bombay or Calcutta. I believe that my answers to questions 34 and 35 deal extensively with this aspect.

37. I believe that the Police Officers are invested with some powers to censor Films. Madans "Pati Bhakti" was censored by the Bengal Board. During its exhibition in Madras in 1923 I understand that the Police interfered and cut off an obscene dance from it. In the scheme suggested by in the foregoing pages are worked out I believe that such safeguards are necessary.

38. Niranjan Pal's "The Light of Asia" was banned in Burma although it was censored by the Bombay Board of Censors.

39. I have no information on this question.

40. I do not think any censorship is necessary in the case of Posters and Handbills. It might however be required that such Posters and Handbills should be true to the original in the Films.

41. I am afraid the question implies too much about moral standards. I have not noticed any such change in the moral tone of Films exhibited in India.

42. Yes. By putting Producers, Exhibitors and Enlightened people on the Censor Board.

43. I do not think any stricter control is needed.

44. Public Bodies and the Press should be invited to comment on the standard of Films shown from time to time. What appears at present in newspapers is only a faithful reproduction of the advertising propaganda carried on by the Producers and the Exhibitors. The commercial should be disinterested and fair.

45. Censorship I think adequately answers this question. The Government should maintain its own Film Expert whose advice and assistance should be made available to the Public at large on payment of a nominal fee.

45. (b) I am of opinion that all Film producing agencies should be registered and licensed. In addition to this their studios and stock of Films must be periodically inspected.

Oral Evidence of Mr. U. B. ROMESH RAO, of the Radha Picture Palace, Calicut, on Thursday, the 12th January 1928.

Chairman: How long has this Radha Picture Palace been running?

A. It has been going on for the last three years.

Q. You began it or you took it from some one else?

A. We constructed it ourselves.

Q. Is it a partnership concern or a company?

A. It is a company, and the proprietors are Messrs. U. B. Dutt & Co. It is not a registered company; but it is a partnership concern.

Q. Was there any other theatre before you opened yours?

A. There were three theatres before we opened one, but they were all failures.

Q. Is there any other competing with you now?

A. No, we are the only concern now.

Q. What is the population of Calicut?

A. About 82,000.

Q. Where do you get your pictures from?

A. Mostly from Madras, and some from Bombay too.

Q. What pictures do you show, Indian or western?

A. We were showing Indian pictures formerly, particularly those dealing with mythological subjects. Then we were showing serials, and now we are showing short western dramas, and sometimes a few Indian pictures too.

Q. But you show very few Indian pictures now?

A. Yes, on account of the exorbitant hire we have to pay to the producers.

Q. Did the Indian pictures draw a large audience?

A. Formerly they used to.

Q. Did they begin to fall?

A. Yes, and now the attendance has fallen.

Q. Why was that? Was it because you were showing very monotonous films?

A. First we were showing American serials which generally contain a lot of thrills, adventures and all that, and they were very popular.

Q. You mean they were first popular?

A. First the Indian mythological pictures were popular, then the American serials began to be popular and now the social dramas are becoming popular.

Q. And now you are showing social dramas and you are showing Indian pictures only occasionally?

A. Yes.

Q. Are western dramas popular in Calicut?

A. Yes, to some extent they are.

Q. Which do you find the most paying portion of your business?

A. Some American pictures bring good receipts, and sometimes some Indian pictures too give us a good return.

Q. You change one from the other. Do you find the present arrangement a paying one, that is to say, changing one from the other?

A. Yes.

Q. You mean that the serials are getting unpopular?

A. Yes, to some extent.

Q. Why are the Indian pictures getting unpopular, is it because of the high charges you have to pay or because the people don't appreciate them?

A. Generally Indian pictures come from Bombay side, and they are not very popular in the Madras Presidency on account of their costumes and dresses.

Mr. Green: What languages do they use in the captions in the Bombay films?

A. They use about 3 or 4 languages, Hindi, Telugu and Bengalee.

Chairman: Sometimes they use the South Indian languages too?

A. Yes, sometimes you will find the captions in Tamil and Telugu, but those languages are not known to people in Malabar.

Q. You say you get your western pictures from Madras. From whom?

A. From the Universal Pictures Corporation. They have an office here, and also from Pathés.

Q. You don't find any difficulty in getting them?

A. No.

Q. Are they secondhand pictures?

A. No. These offices have got their own agencies in Madras, and they give us good films.

Q. What rent have you to pay them? Do you pay on a percentage basis?

A. We pay fixed hire, and that is generally much less than the hire for Indian pictures. It depends upon certain terms. If it is a costly film we have to pay Rs. 150 to Rs. 200, for a run of three or four days.

Q. That is for the highest?

A. No, not the highest.

Q. For how many weeks?

A. For 4 days or 2 days or 3 days.

Q. You have to pay Rs. 200 for the highest. Ordinarily how much do you pay?

A. It will be between Rs. 100 to Rs. 200. Rs. 100 is the least. Sometimes in dramas we get lower than that.

The minimum will be about 50? It varies from Rs. 50 to Rs. 200?

For special pictures like "The Thief of Bagdad" and other super pictures the price is exorbitant.

Q. What will you have to pay if you get an Indian picture. What is the least?

A. The least will be Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 per day. So that for four days it will be Rs. 160.

Q. And the highest?

A. It varies. For certain films like "The Light of Asia", they demanded Rs. 5,000 a week. But we never showed it and they gave it for Rs. 250 in Calicut. It was a failure all through.

Q. They demanded from you at first Rs. 5,000 and they exhibited it for Rs. 250? Now do you produce any films at all?

A. No, we don't produce.

Q. Is there anyone on the west coast who produces films?

A. No.

Q. Are there many travelling cinemas going to the west coast?

A. Yes, sometimes.

Q. Where do they get their films from?

A. Travelling cinemas have their own pictures. American serials, one or two features, a set of comics and now and then they get some Indian films from Madras.

Q. You don't think many children go to the cinema in that part?

A. No.

Q. Very few children go? Are you satisfied with the moral tone of the pictures shown there?

A. Yes.

Q. People don't complain?

A. No.

Q. You don't find any difficulty in getting films?

A. No, there is no difficulty.

Q. Are you compelled to take pictures you don't want?

A. No, there is no compulsion.

Q. There is no such thing as block booking in your case?

A. No.

Q. You know beforehand what you are getting? I suppose you take the trade journals?

A. Yes, we do get them. But there are very few trade journals in India.

Q. But don't you get them from England or America?

A. Yes, from America. The Universal Weekly.

Q. And you get information about what pictures you are showing.

A. Yes.

Q. Now, do you use posters largely in Calicut?

A. Yes.

Q. You get them along with the pictures?

A. Yes.

Q. Where are they printed?—in America or here?

A. In America. But for Indian films they print in India.

Q. For western films the posters are printed in America. And you get them along with the pictures? When you buy the picture or hire a picture they send you the poster.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you find the posters in any way objectionable?

A. No.

Q. Would you like to have more Indian pictures?

A. Not at present.

Q. That means your audience has acquired a taste for western pictures.

A. Rather I have created a taste for western pictures, because the hire for Indian pictures was exorbitant.

Q. They are more costly because the number of producers is small, because the Indian market is small they say.

A. Of course the market is small for Indian pictures. That is why they say we cannot give any reductions in hire. That is why we are obliged to go in for American films.

Q. How many theatres are there on the west coast?

A. I think Calicut and Mangalore are the only two places.

Q. You have got one theatre in Calicut, and you don't show Indian pictures.

A. We show them occasionally, one or two a month.

Q. Out of how many?

A. Out of about 10 programmes. One or two Indian programmes, one serial, and the rest are western dramas.

Q. And you show only one or two Indian pictures a month?

A. Yes.

Q. In Mangalore is the fate of Indian pictures the same?

A. In Mangalore both the cinemas are considered to be failures.

Q. And they don't make a profit?

A. No they don't.

Q. Do they show Indian films?

A. Yes, they do.

Q. Only Indian films?

A. Oh no, both combined.

Q. Do they show more Indian films than you do?

A. We can't say that. They are showing more of western dramas.

Q. So there are similar conditions there? Just as you show Indian films once or twice a month, so do they.

A. Yes. Because they say the hire is too much for Indian pictures.

Q. It doesn't pay the exhibitor to exhibit Indian pictures because he gets western pictures very cheap?

A. Yes.

Q. And what other places do you know?

A. I know Palghat. In Palghat the cinema was a failure. In Cochin it is a failure. In Erode it is a failure. They all started cinemas and they wanted to hire out to any person who would like to run the show.

Q. And they are not getting people to do it?

A. No, because it won't pay them.

Q. Do you know Coimbatore?

A. Yes, there is a cinema there. It is working all right.

Q. Do they show Indian pictures or western?

A. Mostly western pictures.

Q. So that on the whole of the west coast including Coimbatore you show mostly western pictures and very few Indian pictures.

A. Not only because they are appreciated more but also because the exhibitor is forced to show western pictures on account of the exorbitant price of Indian films.

Q. Although Indian pictures will attract larger houses you are not able to get them at rates which are profitable?

A. Yes.

Q. And for your audiences you are able to get western films cheaper?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose most of the western films which you show are poor stuff? I mean not of a very elevating kind or of educative value?

A. No, what they have shown in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, the same pictures come round to our theatre.

Q. How is it they are able to give you these pictures so cheap?

A. Because their rates are fixed to certain constituents and to certain customers. They find out which theatres have got good management and good machinery and if the film is returned in good condition, they trust the showman and give the picture at the rate at which it is possible for them to take it.

Q. You return the film to them after your show?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you get many second-hand pictures, used-up pictures?

A. No, we avoid such pictures as far as possible.

Q. But some of the travelling cinemas use these used-up films?

A. Yes. They buy up sometimes a whole lot of second-hand copies from Bombay, at certain auctions and carry them about.

Q. Well, do you know anything on the producing side at all? I suppose you have no experience?

A. No, but I have seen all the studios in India though I have got no technical knowledge of them.

Mr. Green: If you could get an Indian film at the same cost as a western film, which would pay you better to exhibit? If the cost were the same. Say you were offered a western film and an Indian film at Rs. 40 a night, which would you prefer?

A. I would prefer that which is most interesting to the people.

Q. Well, I am trying to find out which it would be. Would more people come to the Indian film or the western film?

A. If the western picture is better than the Indian film, I would certainly go for that.

Q. We have had it in evidence in other parts that an inferior Indian film is more popular than a western film.

A. I don't think so.

Q. I am not referring to the more famous pictures like "The Thief of Bagdad" and "Ben Hur". The ordinary kind of second-rate pictures. Have you by any chance seen "Aladdin" by the Imperial Film Co.?

A. Yes, that is a better picture than William Fox's.

Mr. Neogy: Of course, that was more popular with us.

A. I have seen William Fox's production myself.

Q. You think the Indian version was better?

A. Yes.

Mr. Coatman: In what way better?

A. To the Indian audience it was better.

Mr. Green: That is the point. Indian audiences would have preferred that. But technically do you think it was better?

A. The photography is not better.

Q. And the acting?

A. Is not better.

Q. Nothing is better?

A. But it appeals to the Indian audience more. But on the other hand a film like Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves, that is another film, not the Imperial's. I think that is a better production than the Imperial's.

Q. Does not that suggest to you that you are wrong in thinking that the Indian audience does not want to see Indian films? You told us that in taking these inferior American ones you had pleased the Indian audiences better.

A. When it pleased the Indian audience it was better from the Indian point of view.

Q. Well, I suggest you are slightly nervous. You are not giving the Indian producer a chance. However, that is a matter of opinion. You mentioned that you had never seen Indian comedy films. If you could get such films, films say of Beerbul or of well-known jesters of Southern India, do you think they would be popular?

A. Nowadays they are not as cheap as American pictures.

Q. Let us assume they are as cheap. Do you think they would be popular?

A. I think so.

Q. More popular than Indian social dramas?

A. I think so.

Q. You suggest there should be a central censorship board with 9 members all of whom should be paid?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you suggest that all 9 members should see every film or only certain of the 9 members?

A. Yes, all members.

Written Statement of Mr. R. W. HANSON, C.I.E., Bar.-at-Law, Postmaster General, Madras, dated the 5th January 1928.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. Yes. I have made a hobby of cinema photography and produced some topical and scenic films in South India. I have also watched methods of film production in South Africa.

GENERAL.

2. I cannot speak with any authority on this subject.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3-5. I am unable to offer any definite opinions on these points.

6. (a) No; but they might gradually attain popularity if the enterprise is properly developed and local films of good quality are produced.

(b) (1) Instructional, historical and educational films as well as other kinds.

(2) Romantic, sensational and amusing films.

7. I do not know.

8. (a) No.

(b) The main difficulties so far as film-production is concerned is want of private capital, and encouragement from those in authority. Films made in India rarely find a market abroad and the risk of placing them with firms in the Trade in England or America is great. Owing to heavy customs and other charges at the other end there is no certainty of their being accepted and, if they are taken delivery of, no definite result can be expected within a reasonable time (vide attached note). In the circumstances, no private individual, or small concern, can hope to reap any benefit thereby. The film

production part of the industry in India should be helped officially by one or other of the following methods:—

- (1) By a preferential tariff on import into Great Britain;
- (2) By being exhibited free of cost at Trade shows in the Imperial Institute or other public hall under the auspices of the India Office;
- (3) By being developed, printed, and titled at cost price in London, the charges being deducted from the subsequent sale or hire price;
- (4) By a grant to genuine producers (who have no capital) from a portion of the proceeds of Amusement Taxes levied at cinema theatres.

For locally produced films to be placed on the Indian market there should be properly-equipped studios for developing, printing, and titling at a reasonable rate, in every province, as the standard of work turned out by private studios is at present poor and many good pictures are either lost, or spoiled by indifferent development and subsequent mishandling.

9—12. I cannot answer these questions authoritatively.

13. Yes, in so far as it relates to positive copies of Indian produced films, the negatives of which are sent out to the country for approval or development.

Please also see my reply to Question 8.

14. Yes; but the control in each Province should be under a reliable officer who understands the business of Film Production, and can advise each department wishing to take advantage of this form of publicity. He should also be able to frame titles and write scenarios, if necessary.

Yes; there will always be a growing demand for such films.

15. Not yet; but there is no reason why conditions should not turn favourable.

16. There is plenty of local talent which can be exploited or developed, but Indian methods of production and scenario-writing require to be diverted into the right channel. I have met Indian producers with European training, but they somehow "miss the point" in their attempt at film-making in India. Production and scenario-writing are arts which require special study and the artist should have aptitude, love for the hobby, considerable powers of observation, and something of an artistic temperament to be successful.

17. I do not think so, unless the financial results of early endeavours are apparent to the ordinary capitalists.

18. Yes. It is difficult for me to suggest suitable action by Government. My experience of Government departments in connection with such enterprise is that there is too much "red-tape" about their methods, especially so far as the Audit and Accounts people are concerned, which kills the initiative of enthusiastic officers, even if funds are placed at their disposal for such objects.

19. The actual cost of spools, developing, printing and titling is not excessive, i.e., about ten annas per foot, apart from overhead, direction and travelling charges. The latter cannot be estimated as the success of film production depends on how much can be spent for proper work to be turned out by experts in the higher branches of the industry all over the country.

20. (a) Yes. Expenditure would certainly be justifiable in the case of educational and instructional films produced in this country, but this would be in the nature of an investment on which there would be a return if the work is properly done and Indian films placed on the foreign markets for sale or exchange.

(b) I do not know whether it would be permissible for a loan to be floated by Government for the purpose.

21. I am not in favour of a regular State agency which would be unworkable and interfere unnecessarily with the development of the industry. All Government departments and Railways might contribute their share of funds to a separately organised trust or body.

Films of the British Commonwealth.

22. Yes, certainly.

(a) Yes.

(b) Undoubtedly.

(c) Probably.

Not having seen the Resolution I cannot offer a definite opinion.

23. (a) To a very large extent as is done in some countries.

(b) By some of the methods already suggested in my answers to Question 8 and other questions preceding.

24—44. I have no special knowledge on these points.

45. (a) There should be some control if funds and facilities are accorded, but no interference or "red-tape," likely to hinder or delay production on right lines.

(b) Not until this is found to be really necessary, as other methods of control in the ordinary way are available.

Oral Evidence of Mr. R. W. HANSON, C.I.E., Bar.-at-Law, Postmaster General, Madras, on Thursday, the 12th January 1928.

Chairman: I notice, Mr. Hanson, you say you have made a hobby of cinema photography?

A. Yes, for some years.

Q. And you yourself have produced films both topical and otherwise?

A. Yes, mostly topical, scenic, and partly instructional. And one or two I took were more or less connected with industries.

Q. I suppose you acquired the knowledge by practice?

A. Chiefly by practice. There is no other way.

Q. I suppose you have not been to the Bombay studios, where they produce films?

A. I have been to the Publicity Branch of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway.

Q. But not to the Indian studios which are there?

A. No, but I have seen them in other countries.

Q. You think there is a great future for the Indian film industry?

A. Well, it all depends on how it is developed. I know nothing about the Indian audiences in cinema theatres. They seem to be always full whether there is an Indian film or not, but I have been told by one or two people,—in Mysore I was told by the proprietor of a large cinema theatre,—that Indian films were not popular, that mythological films especially appealed more to purdah ladies.

Q. Ladies' fancy it more, that is quite true?

A. But as regards the future of making Indian films, I think that if Indian films could be produced which would appeal to western audiences, which are very anxious to know about the conditions of life in India in various ways, I think such films would be profitable. Indian films should be produced to find a market abroad.

Q. On what subject?

A. Of course the less expensive would be the instructional, scenic and topical films. The cost of producing photo plays would be pretty consider-

able. I understand from people at home that they would be more popular if they had English people taking part as well as Indian. That is what is done in South Africa. I have seen some films produced there in Johannesburg. They have local colour and historical interest, something to do with the country or some romance like Rider Haggard's "King Solomon's Mines," where you have the native setting of Zulus and other people forming the back-ground and they contribute a certain number of prominent characters. That is the sort of thing which I think would appeal to western audiences in their cinemas. You could then get a certain return for your money. Otherwise, it is rather difficult to get a return by producing Indian films which appeal to Indian audiences only.

Q. But if you produce historical or mythological films, how could you introduce the westerner there, unless it is modern history?

A. Well, it need not be particularly modern. A historical film connected with, say, Sir Thomas Roe in the time of Shah Jehan would appeal to English people. I have spoken about this to a few professionals who go round India, some of whom have taken part in cinema acting, and they think it is a very good idea. I spoke to some of them last year. Of course, the cost of getting a thing like that done by importing professional film actors (leaving aside competition with people in the United States) might still be prohibitive. You would have to get people who are accustomed to acting and who are touring about India. This would keep down the cost.

Q. But film actors don't go touring about India?

A. No, but there are a lot of ordinary actors who go round. The difficulty would be the scenario writing.

Q. Do you think the foreign actor coming here is likely to know anything of the country and the habits of the people, so as to be able to be a successful actor, to be able to depict Indian conditions?

A. I certainly think so. I have seen a film in which a very prominent film actress—I saw it in Paris—took part in an Indian setting. I don't think it was produced in India. It must have been in Hollywood. It was Miss Mary Pickford as "Miss Bengali." It was a most marvellous thing, the way she took her part, you would have imagined she had spent her whole life in India. It was a very touching little drama too. It was just the sort of thing I mean.

Q. You seem to think to get into the western market the picture must have a western setting?

A. That is so. If it was purely Indian it would not really get a market there. I am only talking from my own point of view, after speaking to people who know. I don't really know the market.

Q. That I understand. That is a point to keep in view. Of course there is very little production in our country?

A. In India? Yes, the great drawback is that there is nowhere where you can get your films developed and printed properly without any flaws. That is the great drawback. I think that studios could be started in India. You need not have one big studio, but small studios for developing and printing. You don't want a big sort of studio with properties and every sort of appliance. You merely want professional men in charge.

Q. You think the Government could establish studios in important centres which private producers can avail themselves of?—at a moderate rent?

A. I think that would be a very good system.

Q. For encouraging the growth of the film industry in the country?

A. Yes. In that case each private producer would send his negative there to be developed and printed. Well, then, if the people who run the studio, or Government, could endeavour to find a market at home, say, through the India Office, for all such films, they can be sent say to London and they could be examined in bond there without paying duty. Those rejected would of course have to come back. For those that they accepted, if there was any

good return, and they sold well or hired well, the studio could take its percentage charges according to the value they got for the producer. The great difficulty about production in India is to get into touch with somebody at home or in America who is reliable.

Q. Do you think if the British Trade Commissioner or a Trade Commissioner is established in America or other places, that would be helpful to the trade? Not only to this trade but also to all other trade?

A. Yes, either a trade agent or some local man who can be relied upon.

Q. And in England the High Commissioner can help?

A. They can have "trade shows" at the Imperial Institute or some of these places.

Q. And you advocate the establishment of studios which private parties might avail themselves of, by Government and also these facilities for marketing abroad?

A. Yes.

Q. Of course, you point out here the great difficulty is the want of capital and encouragement from those in authority. That is how you put it?

A. Well, I have spoken to quite a number of responsible people in Southern India about it and they all say it is a very good thing, but no one will come forward to help. I mean independent men, people outside Government who have got control of funds, Corporations and so on. They are the people who are not bound by so many restrictions, and the cinema is a very good medium for publicity, education and so on. The sort of people who can help the thing along in many ways. But they have very vague ideas on the subject. Most of the people I have spoken to don't know very much about it, and they don't realise the importance of it.

Q. You think a sort of adviser to Government in the Publicity Department who can give advice to people who want to start the industry will be a good idea?

A. Yes, a sort of honorary adviser. You see in any enterprise like this you could not have overhead charges like the Railway Board have in Bombay. Otherwise, it will be rather an expensive proposition.

Q. The only thing then that the Government can do is to establish studios with experts in these lines?

A. Yes. I think the studio should be at a hill station because the effect of the light and the water there is better. You will get better results in your photography.

Q. What do you think of Bangalore?

A. Bangalore would not be bad. But it is very hot there sometimes. The films would deteriorate in the hot weather.

Q. Probably you would prefer Ootacamund?

A. Yes, the Nilgiris would be ideal for South India.

Q. Small studios wherever there is need?

A. There must be one in each province because one wouldn't do for the whole of India.

Q. What do you think would be the cost of a studio such as you suggest?

A. You mean the cost of putting it up and the recurring cost? The sort of studio that I was thinking of was not a studio where they would produce films. It would be merely for developing and printing, and also producing publicity work and public health work. Attached to it you would have some cinema photographer. I don't think each department could afford or would care at the outset to have its own man. You could have one for the several departments and all the films that he took you would get developed and printed there. It would be the duty of the people in charge, to get to the market. The cost will all depend on the apparatus required. I am not referring at all to film acting. That is a totally different proposition. It can be as expensive as possible.

Q. I suppose you would leave that to private enterprise?

A. Certainly.

Q. And give only technical assistance?

A. That is all.

Q. How many thousand feet did you produce?

A. At various times I have done about 5,000 feet altogether.

Q. Do you know what it cost?

A. Well, it works out to about—if you don't happen to undertake special journeys for the purpose, it works out to about 10 or 12 annas a foot.

Q. Including your own supervision and overhead charges?

A. Well, I don't count that at all, nor the capital outlay on the camera outfit. I am only referring to the purchase of spools from Kodak Limited, and giving them to be developed, printed on positives and arranged with titles. But that is only for large quantities. If it is anything under 500 feet it works out to a rupee a foot.

Q. Were any of your films shown in England?

A. They were exhibited at a trade show. I was not there at the time but this invitation was sent out. This is the sort of thing they have—a trade show. This invitation card was sent to Rai Bahadur Naidu, Assistant Postmaster General, who was on leave there in 1925. Item No. 2 was the one he took there for me.

Q. He has sent us a copy. I don't know if it is the same thing?

A. He was there when that was shown in the trade show, Item No. 2, and it was commented on rather favourably in the cinema press. But I don't think the people who organised that are very reputable people judging from the latest reports I have had. That is the worst of people stationed in India, we cannot know.

Q. You don't know where to go?

A. And we can be taken in quite easily.

Q. That is why I have been advocating trade agents all over to help our people. If it is so in your case much more is it so in the case of Indians.

A. Well you see how these people write. I have got the whole of the correspondence with them. Here I have a letter of mine. You might like to keep it on record,—(if it would not be considered libel)—just to show how the people there are simply waiting to catch unwary amateurs. Of course the name ought not to be put in. A friend of mine has written to tell me the whole thing is a fraud.

Q. You would like this to go on the records?

A. Just to show the dangers and pitfalls. Unless there is some authority like the High Commissioner or Trade Commissioner to help the people over here...

Q. I quite see that. You think the Government should do something to foster the trade of film production?

A. Yes. There are several departments that might help. As a matter of fact I have myself got a copy of a film here but I do not know if you will have the time to see it. It is 400 feet. It shows a Fordson "Skidder" at work hauling timber, which is more economical than elephant power. This is a demonstration for exploitation of the products of the Chenai Nair forests, and it is the first of its kind in India. Mr. Tireman and Mr. Martin asked me to do this for them, and I said I would if they paid the actual cost. It was interesting to me to go and take it. At the request of the Skagit Steel Company, in Canada, which supplied the "Skidder" to the Forest Department through Parry & Co., Madras, this film was sent to Canada where it was exhibited.

Q. Were they satisfied with it?

A. Yes, they were very pleased with it: they sent a copy to me. This is the only one now left out of the many films I made. The majority of them

239

were first shown at a big entertainment at the Elphinstone Theatre, Madras, in aid of the flood relief fund in 1924 when the Governor was present. Most of these films were sent to London also.

Q. I suppose you want to keep it?

A. This is the only film I have here and I do not know if you will have the time to see it.

Q. But we are all going away to-morrow morning. That shows that there is a possibility of using the film for publicity purposes, and you think that Government should undertake to encourage its growth?

A. Yes, in the Forest, Agricultural, Health and other departments.

Mr. Green: I take it that the film production is to you a hobby?

A. Yes.

Q. You think that the cost is about 10 As.?

A. Yes, as the developing and printing has to be done by someone else on payment.

Q. Can you tell us approximately what the cost will be?

A. I have not got a printing outfit myself but I had mine done by a firm in Madras and that is why it works up to 10 or 12 As.

Q. I presume you had no actors at all?

A. No.

Q. You were talking about the possibility of getting an international market, and experts have pointed out that it would be possible to spend more money on a film if it had an international market. Have you any idea as to how it could be done?

A. I think we must have some sort of distributing agency in India.

Q. I am talking of the west?

A. I do not know the conditions of the western market, but there ought to be some form of syndicate or agency, I think.

**Written Statement of Dr. K. L. MOUDGILL, M.A., D.Sc., F.I.C.,
Professor of Chemistry, H. H. the Maharaja's College of Science,
Trivandrum, Travancore State, dated the 31st December 1927.**

As a teacher I am interested in the better utilisation of the Cinema for educational purposes in the country. This I consider far more important than questions of Imperial co-ordination and Imperial propaganda which are of remote and doubtful interest to India. All human beings like pictures and they are fascinated when the pictures move. This simple fact gives an advantage to the Cinema over all the other arts which a teacher has to employ for holding attention. The demonstrative value of pictures saves a person from a heavy strain on his imagination and his faith. Some of the directions in which motion pictures can be employed are given below.

1. *Health*.—Take hookworm which is common in India and specially in South India. I have seen an American picture showing how hookworm infection is brought about, its consequences, the cure and the prevention. Since the characters were American children and the doctors were American doctors, the picture lost most of its value for Indians, but if the theme had been photographed in an Indian setting it could have gone a long way in opening the eyes of the audience to the dangers of the disease.

2. *Rural reconstruction*.—The propaganda work has to be carried out so as to be convincing. A whole host of facts and figures given in posters which they cannot read or by lecturers who to the average villager are apparently too well dressed to be taken to know anything about agriculture are comparatively valueless. I have heard of a film dealing with the Rural reconstruction campaign of Gurgaon in the Panjab. If it is anything like what it

is reported to be this film would carry greater conviction than the posters and lectures mentioned above. The Indian villager is conservative because he is a most practical man. He wants to have a thing "in his hand" before he would believe in it. The cinema can do this where nothing else can.

3. Though we often talk of India being a united Nation and though easy and quick transport has conquered distances, there is almost unbelievable ignorance in different Provinces about the habits, manners, resources and occupation of the people of each Province. Even in the teaching of Geography a child is apt to measure Provinces by wall-maps and, unless he has unusual imagination or unless he travels when he grows up, his sense of proportion develops accordingly. Question 23 of the questionnaire seems, more or less, to admit the usefulness of educative work of this nature; but whereas it concerns itself with co-operation between the Governments of the British Commonwealth of Nations I would urge that the Government of India should strive for a co-operation between the different provincial Governments in this direction.

4. Let the above remarks appear to be more insular than intended, I would mention some of the simple, easily understandable institutions of the West which give an undoubted charm to the civilization which has developed them. The value of the "Queue system," the usefulness of the London Policeman, sanitation, care of children and the prevention of cruelty to animals are directions in which both the educated and the illiterate can benefit, provided that no attempt is made to depict them as special developments of the Nations within the Empire.

For all these and similar purposes it is necessary that we should have an Indian Agency—as distinguished from an Agency working in India. It is not likely that such matters will receive adequate attention from private concerns even if the film industry of India were developed and organised. The matter is one where Government attention is essential.

I would now indicate some of the methods which could be adopted for getting people to see such films. It is not likely that any audience in the world, let alone the illiterate and poor peasant of India would pay anything to be lectured to for their good. Government should legislate to make it compulsory for licensed cinemas to show at least one educative film with each change of programme. They would do it readily if such films were easily available. Further, the Development Departments should set apart adequate sums for the production and exhibition of such films at nominal charge or free of charge in the villages.

It may appear that the suggestion in the above paragraph is unpracticable. I foresee the difficulty about funds, the organisation of an Agency but I cannot pretend to solve them. I am convinced, however, that the cinema can be made a valuable asset for the education of the people and, therefore, all sources should be searched to find a solution.

(ANSWERS TO QUESTIONNAIRE.)

1. No.

2. Though I have some knowledge of the cinema theatres in Lahore the following remarks apply to the conditions in Trivandrum in the State of Travancore. The composition of the audience varies very largely with the film which is exhibited. The religious films of the Hindoostan Film Company draw large houses of the educationally un-advanced men and women, and the College student more or less leaves them alone. Literary films and films which have an intricate plot attract the College student and the educated class more than the others. Comics are popular with all classes of people and attract a fair number of children even below the age of 14. I would not however take Trivandrum as a typical town in India, for the people are educationally much ahead of the rest of India and, in my opinion, even the so-called illiterate persons can follow the plot of intricate pieces with the help of the "Interpreter" who is employed when such films are exhibited.

22. I hold definite views about some aspects of Imperial preference but as a Government servant I do not consider myself free to express an opinion beyond the general and the obvious statement that the weakest member of any federation is always the smallest gainer in a mutual-help scheme.

23. I think that propaganda films would be most useful educationally and in other ways in bringing together the peoples of the countries comprising the Commonwealth of Nations but it is yet early to think of such propaganda when there is so much to be done towards making known the conditions, resources and habits of the peoples, and the activities of the Governments, of the various Provinces of India to each other. I shall refer to this question at greater length later.

24. I do not consider that there is any class of films which could be singled out as harmful. The cinema is an agency which could do harm but so far I have found nothing seriously objectionable in the films which I have seen nor do I know of any such complaints in India. I have heard it suggested in England that juvenile crime is on the increase because of the criminally suggestive films which youngsters see but there has been no such complaint in India. I suppose a film depicting crime may be criminally suggestive to one type of person and not to another type.

27. (a) I am not aware of any film misrepresenting the Western civilisation though I concede that Western films as a whole tend to remove the colossal ignorance about western men and manners which are prevalent in the country. I make a difference between Western civilization and the "White Man's prestige." The latter probably suffers through cinema films as it suffers even with advance in education but in my opinion the gain thereby is greater than the loss. I do not think that films representing Western life are generally unintelligible to an uneducated Indian if an Interpreter is employed. I would deprecate and I believe a very large majority of educated Indians would deprecate any attempt that is made to prevent the Indian public from availing themselves of this instrument of enlightenment. Correct understanding of a people has a humanising effect and I would be in favour of Indians being freely educated in this respect.

As far as I can remember the Indian figures either as a villain and/or his understudy in Western films. I doubt if an attempt has been made to misrepresent Indian civilisation, and much as I may resent the fact that the highest role that an Indian can achieve in the imagination of the Foreigner is that of a mystery-man of doubtful antecedents, I do not consider this the result of wilful misrepresentation.

30. I am not aware of the existence of such harmful films that I could recommend the prohibiting of children of any age from visiting cinemas. I would leave this to the parents. I would however recommend that steps be taken to take fuller advantage of the cinema as an agency for the education of children. This is dealt with later.

31. Judging by results alone I would say that Censorship is an effective method of guarding against the misuse of the films. I believe that the inclusion of Indian ladies on Boards of Censors would have a good influence in checking the misuse of films in certain directions in which imported films are apt to err more than indigenous films.

Oral Evidence of Dr. K. L. MOUDGILL, M.A., D.Sc., F.I.C., Professor of Chemistry, H. H. The Maharaja's College of Science, Trivandrum, on Thursday, the 12th January 1928.

Chairman: You come from Trivandrum?

A. I am employed in Trivandrum.

Q. Have you got a cinema there?

A. There is a cinema now?

Q. How long has it been there?

A. For the last five or six years. We have been having one cinema, but it has been changing hands. It changed hands twice or thrice during the last four or five years. There are other touring cinemas also coming now and then.

Q. You think they do not pay well?

A. I cannot tell exactly why there were so many changes but I knew the second proprietor and he gave up the job because he found some more remunerative business to take up.

Q. What sort of films do they show there?

A. We have a large number of students there and the cinemas cater to the students most of the time; but whenever we have festivals, religious films are exhibited and large crowds flock to the shows. The Indian films are very paying; but generally the students prefer to go and see the Western films.

Q. Ordinarily therefore you may take it that the bulk of the films shown there are Western?

A. Yes.

Q. What percentage would you say of Indian films are shown?

A. It is very difficult for me to say that. It is a small quantity. We cannot compare both; I think they are not comparable at all.

Q. I suppose you know nothing about the trade itself?

A. No.

Q. Is there no desire in the education department of your State to use the film for supplementing education?

A. I have not heard of it.

Q. Do you believe in it?

A. I personally believe it.

Q. No suggestion has been put forward either by you or by others?

A. No. Extensive experiments are not being discussed much now-a-days. Moreover this is something which the State by itself could not take up.

Q. But the State will not have to depend on the Government of India?

A. Our State will have to depend upon what is done in the rest of India in regard to this matter.

Q. Supposing the Government of India produced educational films either directly or by subsidising or supporting the industry; do you think your State will buy those films?

A. I am sure they will take advantage of anything which may be done in the neighbouring districts; but since I am an officer of the Education department, I cannot officially say anything in this matter.

Q. If you had to advise the Education department you would advise them to spend money on using the films?

A. I would certainly give expression to that opinion.

Q. But why don't you produce your own films in your own surroundings? Why can't your State do it? I thought you had more educated men and women in greater numbers?

A. It does not naturally follow that we should take up this task.

Q. From your knowledge do you think they will come forward for acting?

A. Yes. I have found much more histrionic taste and talent in the Malabar people than elsewhere. They are extraordinarily good at it.

Q. The Kathakali has more of action in it than art and that is peculiar to the West Coast. I have not seen it myself.

A. I have seen it. There was some sort of interpretation also being given, and though I was not able to understand it, still they expressed the feelings and the passions very well. They have also technical methods of expressing feelings which have nothing to do with actual facial expression as such. Apart from that, I find that the people there are very good at acting.

Q. Has there been any attempted production on the West Coast?

A. I am not aware of any.

Q. You think the students go largely to the Cinema there?

A. Yes.

Q. Of course they get their supply mostly from Madras?

A. I could not say.

Q. Are you satisfied with the moral tone of the films shown?

A. Yes, perfectly satisfied.

Q. You do not think they have any deleterious effect on the people?

A. I do not think so.

Q. You don't think they are affected by the passionate and love-making scenes of the West?

A. I do not think they are affected by such things any more than by some of the looks that we have prescribed for them.

Q. You think there is nothing wrong which can be taken note of by this Committee?

A. No, I do not think there is anything in it at all. That is a point about which as a teacher I have talked to several people, and they said that they could not complain about the cinema.

Q. You have talked with educationalists on this?

A. Yes.

Q. We had a headmaster of a high school here who told us that he was afraid that the cinema was spoiling the youth of the country. Is this the general feeling in the profession?

A. I do not think so. Of course some parents grumble, not because of the moral effect, but because the children are spending three or four rupees per month extra by going to the cinema. Even last night I had a conversation with one educationalist who has just retired from service and he said that he had only one objection and that on the score of finance, because he thought cinema-going entailed extra expense.

Q. Have you seen any Indian films?

A. I have seen several chiefly in Trivandrum itself.

Q. It appeals to the people there?

A. The students are not particularly interested in them because they find fault with the acting. They are not exactly convinced of the spirit which goes into the scenes. It is only the religious and the orthodox people that generally visit such films; but students are highly interested in other films and see them.

Mr. Green: You have mentioned an interpreter, that is a man who explains the films?

A. Yes. He chiefly translates the titles and occasionally gives a little explanation.

Q. What about the rest of the audience who can read. Do they not object?

A. I do not think they worry about it, but of course the titles alone are usually translated and one gets used to that.

Q. I take it that the people would prefer if the titles were in the vernacular?

A. I think so.

Q. You don't see anything objectionable in the films?

A. No.

Q. That is due perhaps to the censorship?

A. That is what I think. I think it may be due to that.

Q. May I ask you if you had been to Europe?

III

A. I have been in England and Scotland for about six years.

Q. Do you think that the western films exhibited in India represent with reasonable accuracy the western civilisation?

A. I think there is nothing wrong.

Q. I take it that they occasionally make exaggerations just for having some histrionic effect? Say, such as will leave an impression?

A. Naturally so, when they have to make up for the absence of spoken word and in comic films, but the civilisation is correctly depicted.

Q. So also in those countries, there may be a possibility of the Indians being sometimes represented in freak characters. You don't think there is real misrepresentation?

A. I do not think that is being done intentionally. I suppose they view us as such and they have no other use for Indian characters.

Q. Which is your native province?

A. I am a Punjabi.

Q. You are strong in your written evidence about the educative and humanising effect of the Western films—that is in removing ignorance about the West and its people. I wonder if you have considered the opposite point of view. Supposing films representing possibly in some exaggerated or inadequate fashion Indian civilisation were exhibited abroad, do you consider that that would have any effect in spreading understanding and actually bringing the two nations close together? A certain number of films are made in India. Unfortunately many of them are not good. If such films were exported to foreign countries, even if they represented Indian civilisation not altogether accurately, do you consider it will be a good thing for India?

A. May I have the question again, please?

(Question repeated in similar terms).

A. It is very difficult to answer with a "yes" or "no."

Mr. Green: I suppose so. I see it is very hypothetical?

A. Yes, but I understand what you have in view and I shall give an answer. If an Indian took the films he would be apt to slur over some things which are not complimentary. A European on the other hand will lay exaggerated emphasis on such things. I would much rather that uncomplimentary things were slurred over than that things which have nothing to do with the normal, moral and mental life of the country were emphasised as a foreign agency is sure to do.

Q. You think with sufficient co-operation between foreign and Indian producers, we could get reasonably good films?

A. I think European technical experts may be employed but the control must be thoroughly Indian.

Q. In short you would agree to European direction but Indian control?

A. Yes. Indian control is necessary.

Written Statement of Mr. M. SAMBANDAM MUDALIAR, Coimbatore.

1. The film industry is necessary both for its suitability for educational purposes and for relaxation.

(a) Western methods of handling the Cinema have got to be adopted if the industry should be made a real adjunct to education. I mean that slow motion films should be introduced and subjects such as History, Geography, Nature Study, Public Health and Agriculture could be effectively taught and propagated. Portable cinemas of the type common in the west should be produced and used as substitutes for the Magic lantern slides in public demonstrative lectures and in schools. So its possibilities as an agency for

impressing principles of practical utility on the minds of educated and uneducated alike must be duly recognised and worked out.

(b) The cinema must be regularly affiliated to the department of education and industries. In order to effect this, the industry must be improved so as to make it answer the purpose. Young men from here may be sent abroad with Government Scholarships to learn the technique of film production. The Government should subsidize the film industry at any rate the education aspect of it without at the same time killing private enterprise.

(c) Stories from Hindu Epics and Puranas for example "The Birth of Sree Krishna" staged as they now are in a religious setting, are very valuable. Such plays carry an untailing popularity. The need to be purged of all alien atmosphere and made Indian in every detail. Such films have to be increased. Besides scenes from Indian life, ancient or modern, capable of illustrating the glory of India's past and infusing ideals of patriotism and solidarity should preponderate and be exhibited.

(d) I think that the cinema is one of the facile means to counteract the calumny and misrepresentation as between East and West and create a tendency for mutual enlightenment and cultural understanding. Mendacious literature like Miss Mayo's Mother India would not find the least favour if true ideas of each other could be faithfully reflected even if it be through the cinema plays.

(e) Social satires could be provided for in films. Films of novels or stories that bring into relief the evils in our society will be of capital importance and possibly supplement the efforts of social reform organisation.

(f) War Scenes may be imported and exhibited.

2. (a) It is easier to teach virtues and morals by amusement in cinema shows than by preaching sermons and homilies. In catering for amusement however, a strict censorship should be exercised to exclude obscenities and indecencies from cinema performances because of the harmful effects they produce on the morals of our youth. We see our youths flocking to plays wherein love in vulgar forms is indulged in and come off with their passions inflamed. I very strongly object to the liberties allowed to this class of plays. Without love stories, plays will cease to attract people, but love stories will have to teach ethics. I particularly desire prominence to be given to life stories of heroines like Sita who typifies the ideal of chastity and single-minded devotion to the husband.

(b) Indians capable of directing the industry on useful lines must be on the Board of censors. Indian women of culture and respectability might also be associated with the central and provincial committees that are proposed to be formed. Young children within the age of 10, as a rule should attend only educational films but they should be strictly prevented from contact with indecent films, which are calculated to poison their juvenile minds. It is not proper that a prohibitive tax should be imposed on the imports from abroad of materials necessary for the manufacture of films having regard to the fact that the industry is yet at its nascent stage in India.

I am of opinion that Government should help for educational films alone; there should be no monopoly for other films.

I am also of opinion 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. There will be demand for such films.

I am afraid that sufficient capital will not be forthcoming in India for film production. I think that suitable Government action, whether legislative or administrative, may be an effective incentive and encouragement to private enterprise for film production.

I think a strict censorship will interfere unreasonably with the recreations of the people and would interfere with the freedom required for artistic and inspirational development.

I am not in favour of a Central Board. Provincial Boards will adequately meet the purpose.

**Oral Evidence of Mr. M. SAMBANDA MUDALIAR, on Thursday,
the 12th January 1928.**

Chairman : You were a Member of the first Assembly?

A. Yes.

Q. You are a leading citizen of Coimbatore?

A. Yes.

Q. You believe in the cinema very much?

A. Yes.

Q. Both for educational purposes and as a source of recreation?

A. Yes, a sort of amusement.

Q. Do you think, as a source of amusement, the Government should take any interest in its development?

A. I believe so.

Q. But the amusement is for the people?

A. So far as amusement for the people is concerned, I do not say the Government should aid much, but so far as education of the masses is concerned, I think Government should come in with some kind of contribution.

Q. What do you think the Government should do? Should they establish studios where educational films should be produced?

A. That is one way. The establishment of studios will greatly facilitate the trade itself. They can also contribute or help private agencies by loan of money at cheap rates of interest.

Q. Do you think these studios should be established with technical experts there?

A. Yes, otherwise they will not be useful. They will be helpful to the producers also.

Q. So that they may be available to the Industrial, Agricultural and Public Health departments for propaganda work?

A. Yes.

Q. At least in one of the provinces there are already private steps taken for producing amusement films? Therefore, there is a lot of fear expressed that if Government established studios, they might interfere with the industry. Having regard to your knowledge, do you think Government studios will be interfering with the private work now carried on?

A. There is not the slightest apprehension of that, because so far as I am aware, there is no private enterprise here at all, and people are not also encouraged to start such things.

Q. Do you think the establishment of studios by Government will encourage private enterprise?

A. Yes, I think so. Later on, they may hand over the studios to the private agencies, just as they have done in the case of the soap industry in Malabar. They worked it till it was a success and then they handed it over to private agency.

Q. You think that will be the more suitable method?

A. I think so. I think the Government ought to do that.

Q. And you think public opinion will support the expenditure of money for this purpose?

A. Yes, so far as education and sanitary arrangements are concerned.

Q. I notice you advocate the giving of scholarships?

A. Yes, for persons who want to go abroad, just like scientific and other scholarships are being given to young men.

Q. How can you get over the difficulty of getting girls to act? Boys taking the part of girls, that does not help the industry very much. Do you think we can get over that difficulty?

A. I do not know whether girls will come forward, taking into consideration the present conditions of the country.

Q. Have you any objection to the employment of girls in the profession for this purpose I mean, from the dancing girl caste?

A. It might be possible. They may well be employed on the histrionic art. They can be made use of, I think.

Q. For want of better stuff I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think this will help them out of their low life and will give them an opportunity to benefit themselves?

A. I think this will be one way of raising them from their present condition instead of leaving them to drift for themselves. It will be a great help to them.

Q. You think those people who are well versed in dancing will do well for film acting?

A. Oh yes. They will be quite all right. Especially in South India, there are very good actresses, who are clever in the art of dancing.

Q. In fact they have now to learn expression by way of hands, eyes and face which would be really useful to the film?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. What is your opinion as to the effect of the cinema on the public?

A. So far as my experience goes, it has no detrimental effect, provided care is taken that good films are shown.

Q. Do you think that sufficient care is now being taken by the censorship board?

A. So far as Coimbatore and Madras are concerned, where I have had occasions to visit cinemas, there is nothing objectionable. I think the present censorship is quite adequate.

Q. You consider that no objectionable stuff is shown?

A. Yes; of course I have also heard complaints, but I have not myself seen anything objectionable.

Q. Since we came here, we have had a lot of people coming before us who warned us against the dangers of extending the cinema?

A. That is only a warning; but I don't think there is anything substantial in those complaints.

Mr. Green : You told the Chairman that you do not see any objection in the films; but in your statement you do refer to them as doing very great harm?

A. My knowledge is only from what I have seen in the papers. I have not seen the films much myself.

Q. So you are satisfied so far as your knowledge goes at present?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy : Have you seen any Indian films used in Coimbatore itself?

A. Yes. Sri Krishna's birth, some scenes from Mahabharata, one or two films of Hanuman from Ramayana.

Q. Any social films?

A. No. There was one occasion for me to see the film on Sri Krishna's birth. It attracted large crowds and many enlightened citizens were pleased with it, and the films shown were really instructive and edifying.

Q. Are they regularly shown at Coimbatore?

A. Only occasionally they are shown. Thousands of people witness them on such occasions and they are immensely satisfied.

Q. Supposing more films of that type were shown, would the people prefer them to the western films?

A. Yes. Our people are religiously inclined and are more orthodox than westerners.

Q. What about the younger people?

A. I do not think they have sufficient attraction. They will be more satisfied with impulsive scenes; but the bulk of the population including the elders will be much more pleased with historical and religious shows of Indian films, say like Sita, etc.

**Written Statement of Diwan Bahadur G. NARAYANASAMY
CHETTY GARU, President, Corporation of Madras.**

I cannot say I have intimate knowledge of Film Industry. But as far as I have seen, I believe that for the expression of Indian sentiments and portrayal of Indian scenery as also the consideration of cheapness of production, film industry assures to have a great future in India. So far as I have seen I find that the uncultured flock to the cinemas. It could be said that 75 per cent. of cinema patrons are of the lower order. The 25 per cent. of elite go there whenever they feel an educative pinch or social pressure. The serials are the favourites of the mob. Wherever a Douglas Fairbanks or a Mary Pickford or a Harold Lloyd illumine a short story, there the educated classes are all in attendance. Generally the last class (i.e.) 2 annas class is almost full with riff-raff of society. The middle classes invariably go to the 4 annas.

FILM INDUSTRY IN INDIA.

Some of the films wherein the most popular cinema actors appear. serials of detective stories and Hindu religious pictures are the most popular in Madras and also generally in India. The latter kind very often bear the renewing of extra weeks which facts show that even with the craze for detective pictures, still the middle class people flock only to the religious pictures, otherwise the social and detective stories are very greatly patronised by the habitual goers of pictures.

The Indian audiences are not adequately catered to for two reasons:—

1. There are not many first rate Indian pictures; probably because the cinema producers are unable to get the first rate actors now alive. Sentiments with the Indians appeal more powerfully than acted speech as shown on pictures. This is probably the reason why the best actors of India have not yet made up their minds to be cinema actors.
2. Secondly the industry is still young. The theme appealing to Indians cardinally differs from the theme intended for the other people of the world. The Indians by nature are more philosophic and would wish therefore to see only pictures governed by the highest principles of Justice, morality and righteousness.

Again some of the latest inventions of the world have not yet been incorporated in the Indian life and the Indians even to-day even the highest of them have not been in the slightest degree affected materially by all the scientific inventions and the conquests made over nature. This is probably the reason why the Indian pictures will only be provincial and cannot attain to have a world wide fame. This again may be the reason for this class of Industrialists not venturing to produce a high class Indian film. Some of the social films produced by the Madan Theatre of Calcutta are exceedingly well acted but still they are not peculiarly Indian, for Western ideas have crept into their life and the new life as depicted in such pictures show a separateness of the western influence and are therefore not wholly Indian in character.

To my mind, financial success is guaranteed only by Western film. But there are cases in which a film has run twice a day show for a month consecutively because it was Birth of Sree Krishna, Krishna Leela, Sati Sulochana, Pathi Bakthi all of them being religious or popular dramas. Anything completely Indian would appeal more to the Indian audience than a combination of West and East. There is one difficulty with the actors. If the actors also are completely Indian, the obvious difficulty of true Indian representation of either a Rama or Krishna would be obliterated. True cinema actors would have to be trained in greater numbers. The educated classes would always like to see a high class, well acted and highly philosophical pictures.

When compared to the industry of the West, India has rarely any or none at all. Some adventurous and enterprising individuals forming a Syndicate should try to produce films purely Indian with the best materials available; and this central board should control the distribution so as to reach all parts of India. Then and there only the educative influence of the films will be realised. Dearth of men and money here as anywhere, are the real drawbacks. Private individuals will not readily form a Syndicate for this purpose unless the Government moves initially in the matter. There is still another way by which the industry might thrive. If the existing Universities send some students each year for at least five years, thereafter with the publicity department of Government of India, something more substantial can be achieved in the National Industry of film producing. The Government will then have given an impetus to the industry which will thereafter strive with the private individuals taking up to it.

The increased use of the cinema for educational purposes in schools and for vocational training would certainly help the growth of the film industry in India. It would then have a place in the practical life of men and the certain necessity of having to know the customs and manners of people far and near, would grow simultaneously. Further the gratification of the intellectual and aesthetic eye will naturally crave for satisfaction and the industry will grow. There is at present a large demand for such films and India will in the near future greatly profit by it.

For the production of films in India, most that is needed is men and money. Actors there are many, rich men innumerable, dramatists and novelists are also living that have won continental fame, natural scenes exist in plenty. An initial move from the Government is all that is necessary to set the industry in motion.

To compare big with the small even the acting of a drama in Southern India either in English, Tamil or Telugu can very favourably compare with any Western Production of a similar type. There is Mr. Harindranath Chatopadyaya the dramatist and actor in one, Rao Bahadur P. Sambanda Mudalliar for the Tamil stage the dramatist and actor and more than all the greatest actor of Southern India, Mr. T. Raghavacharlu of Bellary. There are some of the prominent actors of Southern India who have not made this their profession; and if they should, any one of them would very favourably compare with the best of the actors of England or any place. There are still amateurs of very good parts belonging to the premier institutions of Southern India, the Suguna Vilasa Sabha, the Bangalore Association and to the troupe to which Mr. Harindranath belongs. Some existing dramas of Rao Bahadur P. Sambanda Mudalliar like Two Sisters, Manohara, Buddha, Sarangadara bear a picture representation. Again the genius of Kamala Devi Chatopadyaya has wonderful ideas for stage representation and naturally with little more straining and stretching would more than satisfy any scenario of the West. But the time is not yet come when the educated Indian ladies take active parts in dramas. Still less would it be for the picture. But Mrs. Kamaladevi Chatopadyaya has now braved the social boundaries, if there are any, and it will not be far off when Southern India amateurs also would present ladies for ladies' parts. Then it is possible to have a correct representation on the film. The two gorgeous productions of the professional, Mr. Cunniiah, are fit more for the picture than for the

stage. But under a good scenario I am certain either of them will have remarkable success on the pictures. Bioscope acting differs only in detail from acting on the stage. This, in my opinion, could be realised by the establishment of certain schools in the Presidency Towns and the actors trained to that avocation by experts in picture making. If a competent tutor is not available in India, he should be employed either from England or America.

Capital is lying waste in all the country parts. But a right move in the direction by the Government would fetch enough and more for native industry. The Development Department of the Local Government can, as an experiment, take it and show to the people as they do in the Agricultural Department, the producing and exhibiting of films, the people will take to film making. No doubt my proposal involves some expenditure on the part of the Government. But there are expenditure that do not have substantial return. This at least is one in which some profitable return can be expected in the future in the development of an Industry. The country is bound to become richer materially, intellectually and more than all morally.

I should like to say a few things in regard to the films exhibited in the cinemas. Some of the detective pictures instead of wiping out crimes are only the cause of increasing them in all their subtleties. As aforesaid it is not the highly educated alone that attend the pictures. The lowest class, the pit, is always full. They are ill-educated and if educated, not well educated. The finer ways of stealing, thieving and pickpocketing exhibited in the films appeal to the already criminal mind and now such crimes are done more intelligently. It requires all the intelligence of the Police and the intelligence department to find out the real criminal. As to why people are criminally bent now, is another question. Unemployment is staring them in the face, in some cases work is heavy and recompense not commensurate and in some others avarice, such people assemble in the pit and are very greatly profited by the films of this nature.

Again western pictures are invariably of women. According to the Hindus and the Indians in particular the duty of women is prescribed in unequivocal terms. She should be educated but is finally only an assistance in all her husband's affairs. She is at once a minister, a housewife and a Dasi. Such is the noble conception of womanhood of the ancient Indians. But instead the pictures give a prominence to women. In the west women are men, and in the pictures the men are made women. This is a complete negation of the creation of Man and is detestable to the Hindu idea of womanhood. Naturally therefore some films have a demoralising and injurious effect upon the Indian public.

Again there are children going to the pictures especially on Saturdays and Sundays. It would be better if they are shown educative pictures and not those where crimes prevail and are not detected, nor those where women dance stark naked. If pictures showing where crimes are detected and punishments inflicted they would have moral and educative influences over the minds of children. Otherwise the charm of life and the mysteries of man there will be none for the children in their own lives.

As regards the Board of Censors, I am not in favour of replacing the present Provincial Boards of Censors by a single Central Board. The films will have to be examined at each centre.

Oral Evidence of Diwan Bahadur G. NARAYANASAMY CHETTY GARU, President, Corporation of Madras, on Thursday, the 12th January 1928.

Chairman: You are perhaps one of the oldest residents of Madras and President of the Madras Corporation?

A. Yes.

Q. With regard to the amusement tax, you point out in your statement that the bulk of the audience in the cinemas belong to the lower classes?

A. Yes, the poorer classes.

Q. You mean the 8 annas class forms the greater proportion?

A. It is only the 2 annas and 4 annas classes.

Q. Do you think the amusement tax can be imposed on the 2 annas and 4 annas classes?

A. It will be an unpopular measure.

Q. They won't be able to bear it?

A. Of course they may not care, but it will be an unpopular measure from the Corporation point of view.

Q. You won't advocate it?

A. I do not think the Corporation will levy it. In fact, there is an idea to exempt the 2 annas and the 4 annas people.

Q. Apart from that, supposing you impose an amusement tax on the 8 annas class and upwards, do you think the revenue will come to a good amount?

A. We will make about Rs. 25,000 annually.

Q. Have you ever had any census taken of the revenue derived from the cinema shows?

A. We have not got any correct data. We are only working on the basis given to us by the cinema people.

Q. That means at what rate?

A. We have not yet fixed the rate. The Corporation has decided to levy a tax, but we have sent it to the Finance Committee just now. We will probably exempt the 2 annas and 4 annas classes and charge the other classes.

Q. You think the total revenue got by the ten theatres from the upper classes alone will work up to Rs. 2 lakhs?

A. Yes.

Q. I refer to the income derived by the ten theatres now in existence in Madras?

A. I think they are only nine.

Q. What do you think is the revenue they get from the lowest classes, that is the 2 annas and the 4 annas classes?

A. I think a large amount of contribution is from the lower classes of people. They form the bulk.

Q. I suppose the Corporation's idea is to levy the tax for general purposes, not to ear-mark it for any particular purpose?

A. Only for general purposes.

Q. Do you think if the proceeds are ear-marked for giving aid to the indigenous film producing industry, the tax will be more popular?

A. Yes; but I do not think the local bodies will care to give the whole amount for that purpose. They would like to have a finger in it.

Q. I suppose you go to the cinema pretty frequently?

A. I go occasionally.

Q. Having regard to your knowledge of the people who go to the cinema—and I dare say you have some experience with them—do you think the cinema leaves any marked effect upon the cinema-goers?

A. Except that people go for amusement and not for education.

Q. Does it leave any pernicious effect upon the people?

A. I do not think so. There may be here and there one or two scenes which need not be shown. But for that, I think the effect is generally satisfactory.

Q. Neither by way of demoralisation?

A. As I said, except on a few occasions. Some years ago they used to exhibit one or two objectionable films; but now there has been some improvement, and I do not think the cinema has any serious effect upon the people who go there. But we may also have some films which will have an educative value for children.

Q. Would you advocate showing in the cinema a certain length of films of an educational value?

A. Yes, I think that the cinemas should be compelled to show them. Children are also very fond of going to see scenes showing the culprit, the villain, etc., which would be of an educational value.

Q. But there may be a possible danger in that. If children of tender age see crime committed, they will get a bad impression?

A. But if they also know the punishment undergone, I think it will be quite all right.

Q. But even showing the thing done would have an injurious effect on the children?

A. Showing the punishment later would make it all right. The cinema films would also teach them a moral lesson, I think.

Q. Just as we have such things in tales?

A. Yes. They would know that to commit theft is a crime and that if they do that, they would be taken to task.

Q. But you cannot do too much of that here?

A. It can be done to a certain extent.

Q. Do you think we must compel every one to show some length of such films in the week?

A. It is not necessary every day. A certain length can be shown on Saturdays and Sundays because children generally go to the cinemas only on those days.

Q. Do you think the Corporation is likely to help the growth of the film industry here?

A. I cannot say. I would like it myself, but I do not know what the Corporation will do.

Q. But having regard to its financial position, is it likely to spend much money in this direction?

A. I do not think it will do so now.

Q. Don't you think that local bodies have too many burdens cast on them, of maintaining roads, attending to public health, etc., and they cannot therefore do overmuch in the shape of amusing the people? On the other hand, they would like to have some parks or other places of public resort?

A. Certainly. We are very much handicapped in that matter.

Q. So you don't think it will be safe to depend upon them for providing amusement to the people?

A. I do not think it will be safe.

Q. Do you think amusement to the poor classes is a necessity?

A. Of course. The Government ought to take a large share in providing and encouraging such things.

Q. You think public money raised by taxation should be spent for this purpose?

A. It is a doubtful point. I do not think every one will agree on this, but later on perhaps if there is an improvement, it may be justified.

Q. Do you consider that the cinema-going habit should be encouraged?

A. If the cinema films are improved, a large number of people can go, I think, so that a healthy and moral life can be assured.

Q. So you think that for propaganda purposes public money should be spent?

A. Yes, for educating the younger generation, I think it should be done.

Q. You have not travelled outside India?

A. No.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Is it fair or reasonable to spend the money from entertainments for other purposes?

A. We intend this as an additional source only for general purposes and not for the encouragement of the very industry from which we are getting the income.

Q. Is it fair, I ask?

A. In view of the financial position of the local boards and municipalities, we must first think of other wants before we think of amusements.

Q. You are a member of the board here?

A. Yes.

Q. We were told by the other members that they would recommend an advisory board to advise Government on the encouragement of this industry? Do you agree?

A. I think there must be a separate body altogether.

Q. Or do you think it will be better to have a more representative body of censors in order to do the work of the advisory board also?

A. It is representative now. We have got representatives of all shades of opinion on the present board. We have got the Police Commissioner, the representative of the Corporation, representative of business interests, etc.

Q. But you have not got a lady member?

A. No. I would like to have one on the board.

Q. There are so many other interests. Probably you would like to have the Collector of Customs also?

A. The board may be enlarged.

Q. You are in favour of enlarging the board?

A. Yes.

Q. We were told that the board was not working satisfactorily?

A. They meet only for certifying or censoring the films.

Q. You were referring to the Guindy races when you talked of the amusement tax?

A. It has not been decided yet. I do not know if it can be classified as an amusement. We are not prevented from taking it, but the Government must pass orders whether it should be included or not.

Q. Do you think it is better for Government to give scholarships?

A. Yes. A school may be opened for the purpose. Government should take the initiative.

Q. Do you think Government will agree to do that when you are going to pocket the money yourself?

A. I think we can spend a portion for this purpose, but not now. My personal opinion is that we may contribute one-fourth or one-fifth of what we get, but I do not know whether the Corporation will agree to that.

Mr. Green: You point out that there are many actors available, innumerable dramatists, etc., and that the atmosphere is also favourable for the development of the industry. Why then do you consider that Government should take the initiative?

A. In matters of this sort, if Government do not take the initiative, I do not think people will take it.

Q. I suppose you refer only to your own Presidency?

A. Yes, so far as this Presidency is concerned.

Q. But it is not so in Bombay; because considerable development has taken place in Bombay and even in Calcutta. There the people have already taken steps in this direction, and if Government in this Presidency take a hand in the production of films here, don't you think there will be a legitimate ground for complaint from the Bombay people who will accuse the Government of interference?

A. In Bombay there are wealthy men, but here there are not many and there is no enterprising spirit here. That is why I say that if Government come forward in the first instance, there will be an encouragement to the people to invest money.

Q. Why should the Government encourage the industry here to the detriment of enterprising people in other parts?

A. Our people are a little reluctant to invest money.

Q. Do you think that Government initiative is really a good thing?

A. I think so.

Q. Don't you think that an industry to be on its legs need not necessarily have Government support but should be encouraged by the people?

A. I don't think so.

Q. As regards your remarks about the place of women, you say that there is a rather different conception of wifely duty which pervades this country as compared with the west, and then you go on to say 'in the west women are men and in the pictures men are women'. Why exactly have you put it like that?

A. I mean that the western women have got greater liberty.

Q. Greater liberty than the Indian women?

A. Certainly.

Q. But it seems from what you say that you are nervous lest the exhibition of such films here may make Indian womanhood less docile?

A. Among Indian women we have still got the *gosha* system, though Madras is not so bad in that respect as Bengal.

Q. I take it you are not opposed to female education and the emancipation?

A. I am certainly not against that.

Q. Might I suggest to you, then, that the exhibition of the emancipation of western women might have an emancipating effect on Indian womanhood?

A. I do not think so.

Q. What exactly is your fear?

A. I think it should not be done at the present stage of development.

Q. You are not frightened that it will come in due course?

A. No. I think it must come gradually.

BURMA.

Written Statement of Mr. J. M. SYMNS, M.A., I.E.S., Assistant Director of Public Instruction, Burma, dated the 9th January 1928.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. I was for 2 years a cinema censor in Rangoon. I also superintended as Exhibition Commissioner, the making of cinema films for the British Empire Exhibition.

GENERAL.

2. (a), (b), (c) Cinemas are getting more popular with Burmans in Rangoon; of the various communities I should say that proportionately Anglo-Indians frequent cinemas most, then Burmans, then Indians and Chinese and lastly Europeans. In this connection it may be noted that the prices for first class seats in Rangoon are unduly high. This and the fact that the pictures are mostly American explains why cinemas are not so popular with Europeans. I have noticed that Anglo-Indian children under 14 commonly go to the cinemas but among Burmans and Indians the proportion of children under 14 does not appear to be so high.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. I should say that the most popular films with Burmese audiences are Wild West; after these come the Burmese pictures.

4. Yes. I think so. The number of Burmese pictures increases every year.

5. These pictures are popular and from a photographic point of view are surprisingly good quality but the stories are poorly written and the acting is seldom good.

6. (a) I think not: unless the acting is as good as that in Western Films, and from what I have seen of Burmese acting I should say that this will never be the case.

(b) Excitement appeals to the Burman and since the British occupation there has been less scope for this. A film of an exciting nature will always appeal to him whether he belongs to the educated or illiterate class.

7. I do not understand the question. Films suitable for the general public should also be suitable for soldiers.

8. (a), (b) No. The chief difficulties are (i) the system of "block" and "blind" booking, and (ii) the present monopoly so far as Rangoon is concerned controlled by Messrs. Madan.

9. Good films are frequently seen in Rangoon. I know nothing of their price to exhibitors.

10. Yes. See above.

11. None at all. They have to take whatever is sent to them. It is difficult to suggest how this can be avoided unless the exhibitors have their agents in America and Europe.

12. There is no amusement tax. I should say that it makes little difference: in this connection I would suggest that films of a definitely educational value might be admitted free or at a reduced tariff. The cinema is being used for purposes of public health and at the British Empire Exhibition we

showed some useful agricultural, mining and forest pictures. I think the cinema is more useful as an advertising than an educational agency.

15. Yes. I should say that the conditions are very favourable so far as climate is concerned. The great difficulty is lack of writers, actors and actresses, more especially the latter.

16. From what I have seen of Burmese films, I should say that photographic knowledge is good but other technical knowledge is poor. I think that a State Scholarship might usefully be given to a Burman of promise, who would go for training to England.

17. Yes.

18. Beyond the assistance suggested under 16 I do not think that Government could usefully interfere in film production.

19. It is much cheaper owing to the small cost of personnel.

20. (a), (b) Government expenditure is generally unjustifiable, the profits of the trade are sufficient.

21. The less the film industry has to do with the state the better. Anything in the nature of a monopoly is to be deprecated.

Films of the British Commonwealth.

22. British Empire films should be encouraged and this would (a) assist the development of the Burma Film industry, and (b) help in advertising Burma and (c) improve the standard of Western films, as British films would then be encouraged.

23. (a) To a very large extent, at the British Empire Exhibition all the countries of the Empire used this method of advertisement.

(b) The Governments of the various parts of the Empire might produce films as they did for that exhibition and exchange them with one another. If these are interesting as undoubtedly they would be, local exhibitors would gladly pay for them and the cost of production would be amply covered.

PART II.

Social aspects and control.

24. (a) I think a great deal of nonsense is talked about the demoralising effect of films. They are rather foolish than demoralising.

(b) As far as I know there is none. One hears rumours of immoral films being made for private circulation. Possibly a closer watch on the production of films would be helpful.

(c) I doubt if any class of film as shown to-day in Rangoon is really harmful. I have only seen two disgusting pictures since I have been in Burma; the first was a French picture exhibited in the first cinema hall in Rangoon when there was no system of censorship; the second was a picture which I censored myself. It had been bought outright by the Manager of the Cinema House and on my pointing out its beastliness, the Manager agreed to destroy it and it was burnt in my presence.

(d) I do not consider the present censorship adequate. Most of our pictures are censored in Bombay and these appear in Rangoon without further censorship. Each member of the board visits a house a week and if he objects he can have the picture stopped but this may quite well happen after it has appeared for several days.

(e), (f) I doubt it. I have always been amazed at the sympathy of the audience for the hero or heroine and their hatred of the villain. When virtue wins, as it always does, the event is greeted with greater applause in Rangoon than it would be in England.

25. A very difficult question to answer. The East is being speedily occidentalized and the day is soon coming when a picture that is suitable for the West will be considered suitable for the East. I once censored a film together

with a Burman of the old school who hid his face whenever a kiss occurred and murmured "it is disgusting", but though this may have disgusted him I would not recommend the cutting out of kissing.

26. (a), (b) Yes. It is obvious that a Buddhist country cannot always accept films which cause no offence in India. There is also the Chinese problem. Americans take particular delight on featuring the Chinaman as an out and out black-guard, a fact which makes many films unsuitable in Rangoon where there is a large Chinese population.

27. (a) American cabaret scenes undoubtedly tend to lower the English woman in the eyes of Indians, the less we have of the American pictures and the more of the British, the better.

(b) I have seen American films which purported to represent life in India but were undoubtedly taken in the Southern portion of North America. They were merely foolish and did no harm.

28. Yes. But it is easy to exaggerate this bad effect. All things which are inartistic and untrue to life do harm; beyond that I would not care to go.

29. Certainly not; this has been tried in Rangoon and resulted in filling the house with adults who hoped to see something lecherous.

30. No.

31. I do not understand the expression "misuse of the films" I consider that censorship, if independent, is an effective method of guarding against the exhibition of undesirable pictures.

32. I do not. In the first place more than two-thirds of the pictures that come to Burma are not properly censored at all.

(2) I think it is a handicap to put the Board of Censors under the permanent Chairmanship of a policeman.

(3) I do not think the personnel of the Board is as good as it might be. In England I understand that men and women of outstanding ability in the world of literature and art are chosen for this work. Here in Burma various public bodies of departments send representatives who in most cases are not well fitted for the work. To get the best men and women in a country where everyone is busy, and one cannot command the free public service that is available in the West, it is essential that adequate payment be made to secure the best personnel. Payment should be at least equal to that paid to a Port Commissioner for attendance at a Board meeting. The present rate of remuneration is ridiculously low.

33. (a), (b), (c) I do not think so. The managers of the various houses might resent* a strict censorship and for this reason I would suggest that producers and managers should have one representative on the Board of Censors. A Central Board in India would be of little use to us in Burma where a provincial board would always be essential. What is wanted is rather decentralization and the appointing of a Provincial Board which would censor every picture when it comes to the country and before it is shown.

34. (a), (b), (c), (d) Even the present Board, poorly staffed and inadequately remunerated, feels the need of funds. Producers and exhibitors should be taxed to meet the total cost of the Board and, if necessary, an amusement tax might be levied.

35. (a) I have already answered this question.

(b) Although the Bombay censors have not proved satisfactory from our point of view, I think that the Provincial Board should have the assistance of a well paid censor. His duties are so important that I consider that he should receive at least as much as an officer of a covenanted service in Burma.

36. (a) I do not. I understand that the Bombay Inspectors are poorly qualified and poorly paid; that is why they are worse than useless.

(b) I think there should be a full time Inspector and that in addition every member of the Censor Board should visit houses every week to insure

* But see question 24 (c). They are sensible men and do not resent fair censorship.

that every picture had been (1) censored by the Inspector, (2) seen by at least one member of the Board at a public performance.

37. (a), (b) The safeguards are not adequate. As I have already explained, a film which has been passed by a Board in India is not censored in Burma before it is shewn. It is true that a member of the board is supposed to see it at some public performance or other but he may not go till the picture has been shewn for several days. Then the harm has been done.

38. I have come across many such instances as a censor.

39. No. I have not come across any.

40. I think that posters, etc., should be censored. They really do far more harm than the films. When a girl is manhandled in the films it is a matter of a few seconds, on the posters (advertisers always choose such episodes for representation on the boardings) it is a matter of several days, and around such pictures may always be seen a crowd of gaping natives. I consider that advertisements do more harm than the pictures. I have frequently heard complaints of these undesirable pictures being thrown into school compounds.

41. It has been little changed. The moral standard of British pictures is certainly higher than that of American but unfortunately the local market is flooded with the latter.

42. As I have already suggested, I think producers and exhibitors should be represented on the Board.

43. (a), (b), (c) I know little about the import and export of films so cannot advise.

44. Public bodies might be of more assistance if they selected better representatives for service on the Board of Censors. The press could be of the greatest use if their criticisms were honest. At present cinema criticisms in the press are simply fatuous and obviously written by men who are not qualified to criticise. Such criticisms merely repeat the advertisements.

45. (a), (b) I think that all film producing agencies should be registered and licensed and their studios inspected. This could be done by the Board's Inspector who should see every film whether it is intended for public circulation or not.

Oral Evidence of Mr. J. M. SYMNS, M.A., I.E.S., Assistant Director of Public Instruction, Burma, on Tuesday, the 17th January 1928.

Chairman: Are you the officiating Director of Public Instruction?

A. I am the Assistant Director.

Q. You are now here officially and not in your personal capacity?

A. I understand officially. Of course I have not done any work in this direction officially, but I have had something to do with cinema work as Exhibition Commissioner.

Q. I notice you made some films for the British Empire Exhibition?

A. Yes.

Q. Where did you get them made?

A. They were made by the London Art Company in Rangoon; they did the work for us and some of the films were made by a body, the Port Commissioners, Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, Burma Railways, who made their own arrangements. The bulk of the work was done by the London Art Company in Rangoon.

Q. Are they still working?

A. Yes; they took pictures of teak forests, the varieties of paddy and such other things.

Q. You were there in the Exhibition?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Were these shown pretty often there?

A. Yes, almost every day.

Q. Did the other parts of India show any films then?

A. Yes, in the India pavilion they showed their films. We had a separate pavilion of our own.

Q. Were they well attended?

A. Oh yes, they were very popular, particularly the forest films, I think.

Q. Was there any special fee for the cinema?

A. No fee.

Q. Were they well made in your opinion? That is the films which you took?

A. They were fairly well made. They would not compare with some of the others such as those of Canada or Australia which were really very good. As I shall explain later, the photography of our films was good, but they were not well thought out as to the plot, etc. Of course some experience and training might make it all right.

Q. I notice you recommend scholarships?

A. I think it is better to send some Burmans Home in order to have some training and to have a better standard of Burman films.

Q. Have you gone to the studios at all?

A. Not lately at the time I was a censor, I did on a few occasions, but now I am only a member of the public.

Q. You think for acting or for efficiency in acting it will be useful to send Burman students to England or any other place for training in film production?

A. Yes, we have not got the technicalities at present, which I think are invaluable.

Q. Have you ever thought of getting a director to come to Burma?

A. Yes, that might also be done I think.

Q. Is there any attempt at producing educational films in Burma?

A. The Public Health department are producing some films now and I was asked to attend a meeting the other day for the purpose of examining one on cholera. The Public Health department is doing that but not the Education department.

Q. Nor the Agricultural department?

A. I do not think so.

Q. What has happened to the Exhibition films?

A. We handed them over to a firm who made use of them in England (the Community Service Ltd.) who afterwards handed them over to the Indian Trades Commissioner in England.

Q. What is he doing with them do you know?

A. I do not know.

Q. Were they sold?

A. No, we did not sell them.

Q. Do you think they will be of any use here?

A. I should like to have better done.

Q. Do you think all these departments can co-operate for producing films required for each of the departments?

A. Yes, but I think the business should not be left to an amateur. If Government are going to produce these films, they should get an expert from England. The film companies now producing films in Burma do require outside assistance, I think.

Q. Would you suggest then that the Government should send for an expert and lend his assistance to the producing companies in order to produce the films they require?

A. I am doubtful of that. I have said in my note that I am very doubtful about Government interfering in this matter, but if the idea is to advertise Burma throughout the world and get films representative of Burma, to do Burma justice, that course might be followed; but so far as the working is concerned, I think it is better to do it ourselves.

Q. But so far as the technique is concerned?

A. The technique is now poor in acting and direction although the photography is good. Even that I suppose is capable of improvement.

Q. The Burman pictures are generally good?

A. Yes, they are good, but the plot may be improved I think.

Q. Yes, we saw a very good film last night and it struck us that it was much better than the Indian ones in some respects. What I should like to know is how far the Government can help in the production of the films. Is it their duty to produce first of all the educational films and secondly, is it necessary that they should assist in some way or other in the production of entertainment films?

A. Government spends some money on films in the Public Health Department now and if we want to have some educational films, they will also put some amount in the budget for our department, but then our trouble will be, who is to bring out the pictures? I do not think there is anybody in Burma to-day to produce them satisfactorily. Government of our may give some money so far as the cost is concerned, but I doubt very much if we could produce the pictures we want. I do not think there is any one firm in Rangoon to-day who could produce the pictures. Another difficulty will be how Government should help, i.e., in what particular form.

Q. That of course can be attended to by the existing firms and the difficulty can be removed by having some technical experts for a time whose assistance they can lend to the producing firms. Don't you think it will be a good solution?

A. I think the best course will be for us to send one or two Burmans home.

Q. But what will be the good to this country then?

A. We can send them to two or three films and let them see things—films in the making.

Q. So that is the first step to be taken by the Government?

A. I think so.

Q. But don't you think even with the existing studios you can get some films produced satisfactorily in the meanwhile?

A. I doubt it. If we had another exhibition and I was appointed Commissioner, I would ask for a first-class man to come and organise the films. I could not give all the time necessary for this purpose nor could we ask the people to bring out what we really want. We do want some expert advice, I think.

Q. I only mean films for use in this country?

A. I should think the same remarks should apply.

Q. Don't you think you can try?

A. It may be tried, but it will be more successful if people are trained for this purpose.

Q. I do not know if you have thought about the question. Do you prefer a Government studio to produce the films?

A. I do not think it is possible. I do not believe in it.

Q. It is a matter on which there is considerable divergence of opinion; but anyway, you attach the greatest importance to visual instruction as part of the instruction to be given in schools?

A. I think permanent pictures are of greater value than moving pictures. I think our magic lanterns would better serve the purpose.

Q. That is a point on which we have had a large volume of opinion from educational and other officers; but the bulk of the opinion seems to prefer the cinema to the slides. Only one gentleman from Allahabad held your opinion.

Q. Have you seen the educational films produced in America or England?

A. I have seen some produced in England.

Q. You attach great value to them?

A. I do not attach much value to any educational cinema film.

Q. But there are some produced in Germany and France?

A. I have not seen them.

Q. We saw some in Lahore in Patel & Sons. They had some very good films on natural science. Apparently, you do not seem to attach great importance to the cinema as a supplement to education?

A. Not very much.

Q. What about mass education? Would you use it for mass education?

A. I don't think you want to emphasize too much the educational value of films. Films of course interest many people and they have a great value as a source of amusement. That is a very good thing.

Q. And as education in a broad sense, i.e., getting to know the conditions of life in other parts of the world?

A. Yes, both as an amusement and education.

Q. We can also instruct the people on better educational or agricultural methods or life in industrial towns, hygienic living, etc.?

A. But when I was talking of education I was thinking only of the education in schools.

Q. I am referring to mass education?

A. Undoubtedly it must have some value there.

Q. Is anything being done in Burma in that direction?

A. No. But there is a feeling now towards adult education. Government are giving grants to night schools, and the subject is being freely talked about.

Q. We have heard in other places that the film will be a great factor in giving general knowledge?

A. I agree with you there.

Q. Do you think your Government will be prepared to spend money in that direction?

A. I think they would.

Q. The need for adult education is felt here in the same way as it is felt in India?

A. Not so keen, and public opinion is not so strong about it here. The feeling is getting support that more should be done in the way of opening libraries and encouraging night schools.

Q. But the people are more literate here than in India?

A. Our literacy does not amount to very much; the average Burman when he leaves the lower primary classes can do little more than sign his name.

Q. I suppose his general knowledge is as poor as the average Indian's?

A. Yes.

Q. If you use the cinema in the way I have suggested purely for increasing general knowledge, that will be useful, I suppose?

A. Certainly.

Q. Were you a member of the censorship board yourself?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. For how long?

A. For between two and three years.

Q. What sort of films came in for censorship, more local productions than outside ones, or what?

A. The films that are generally being censored here are those which do not come through India.

Q. Are there many such films coming in?

A. Not many, the bulk comes through India.

Q. I notice in the list of films censored here a lot of Chinese films. Do you know what they are?

A. I do not know, they did not come in when I was on the censorship board.

Q. I find a lot of pictures made in China mentioned in the list. It was not so in your time?

A. No.

Q. Very few better films came up for censoring?

A. Yes, that was due to the monopoly here. Most of the houses here get films through India, and about 10 per cent. only come direct and not through India.

Q. How many times during your period have you had occasions to cut out films?

A. It is difficult to say; but we used to cut out very small portions here and there while the pictures were being shown. We used to cut out portions of pictures which would offend the feelings of the people.

Q. But on general moral grounds you cut out none?

A. Very few. As I have explained in my written note, I had to destroy one indelicate film.

Q. There is a lot of loose talk about the western films spoiling the morals of this country and all that?

A. I think it is rather bad that Indians should get their opinion of the English man or woman from these vulgar American pictures.

Q. Do you think there is much difference between the American and the English pictures?

A. Yes, all the difference in the world. I think the American films are very vulgar. That is the trouble at present.

Q. I notice that. In dealing with the under-world scenes, do you notice a marked difference between the American and the British or French or German films?

A. I think they are more vulgar.

Q. Have you seen the "Rat" or "Triumph of the rat"?

A. I think it is a very good picture.

Q. You don't object to the "Rat" at all?

A. I don't.

Q. Have you seen the portion reproducing the cabaret?

A. I have forgotten it now but my impression was that it was not a vulgar picture.

Q. You do not see any objection to the way in which the under-world was depicted in the picture?

A. I don't think so.

Q. American pictures come in large numbers and probably that leads one to the impression that America deals with them in a worse manner than any other country?

A. The American films are very frequently inartistic. I consider them rather objectionable and vulgar. From an educational point of view also, I think they do little good.

Q. When you say in answer to question No. 24, "I think a great deal of nonsense is talked about the demoralising effect of the films....." you are referring to this I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. You say that the so-called illiterate classes do not care to see western films, but they care more to see Burman films?

A. If you happen to go to the cinema house, you will see that the better educated community prefer the western films, while the coolie and other lower classes prefer the Indian or Burmese films.

Q. Anyway in the films you have seen only very little in the way of indecency or vulgarity?

A. Very little. I think they are generally very good, particularly the Madan pictures.

Q. Do you think there is a tendency to improvement for some time now?

A. Undoubtedly. But in later years looking back over ten years, I do not think there has been much change in the average standard. It is very much the same as it was about ten years ago.

Q. In your answer to question 26, you refer to the Chinese problem.

A. Yes, the trouble is that geographically Burma forms a part of China, and we have got our own problems here.

Q. But don't you think that is a matter on which all of us should feel alike?

A. No; each Burmese must have his own feelings. When in any story vice conquers virtue, the house generally bursts into a loud applause. That is a remarkable feature in the case of crowds who attend the cinema shows here. They raise a louder uproar in Burma than they do in England.

Q. I suppose you recognise that something out of the way has to be depicted on the screen and that we cannot have shows which exhibit only the routine hum-drum life. We cannot be too strict in censoring; otherwise the amusement portion will disappear. Do you agree with that view?

A. Yes; I do not want strict censorship. I only want wise censorship.

Chairman: In how many cases have you differed from Bombay, i.e., after the picture has been passed by Bombay.

A. I do not know: all that I know is that the censoring was not good.

Q. Do you know anything of the personnel of the Bombay Board.

A. No.

Q. There is a paid President and a Secretary? A qualified Secretary with English experience, an Inspector who is paid Rs. 300—500 plus allowances. That is the position.

A. I think a full time censor is necessary here if all the pictures are to be censored.

Q. You want to censor the film even if it has been censored in India?

A. Certainly.

Q. Why?

A. Because our people are so different in the matter of religion and politics.

Q. Is it not a hardship to the trade to have to submit to censorship after one province has passed it. In that case every province would claim this.

A. It may, but it would be worth it.

Q. So far as censorship goes, I suppose general grounds of morality, obscenity and other things are common. What you have in mind is the prejudice of particular classes.

A. Taste, I think.

Q. In that you include taste also?

A. Yes; where it is a religious question local conditions must be taken into account.

Q. Don't you recognise it is a great hardship to the trade that the film should be censored here again in this country and after all you have not

differed from Bombay or Bengal very much. I think you have differed only in about 13 cases.

A. I think that there are many more cases when films have had to be altered for Burmese.

Chairman: What is the number of films in which Burma differed either from Bengal or Bombay in each of the last three years and declared uncertified under sections 6 and 7 of Act.

Mr. Green: The local Government declared uncertified under sections 6 and 7 of the Act films as follows:—

1924-25	1
1925-26	4

Chairman: This is after all a small part.

A. Even if a small portion of 50 feet is uncertifiable it is better we cut it out before it gets before the public. It is not easy to stop it after once it has gone before the public. These small portions that are cut out are not included in the above number I think. I don't think it would be much of a hardship to have the pictures censored, as I suggest.

Q. It will hurt managers a great deal.

A. They make very large profits.

Q. You don't think any harm is done to the people of this country by the importation of western films.

A. No.

Q. What do you think of a central board to deal with differences of opinion between provinces, as an appellate authority, as it were. For instance where one Province passes a film and another rejects it.

A. I don't see how the Central Board could act in time to be of much use.

Q. Setting up a general standard subject always to local conditions, would that help production?

A. I think it would be good in that way. But would the central board take the place of the local board?

Q. No; it will only act as a central authority which would give a uniform standard subject always to local conditions. That is the idea.

A. I think it might help. It can help production, but I don't see how it can be of much use in disputes.

Q. Are you for prohibiting children from going to the performance at all.

A. No.

Colonel Crawford: I understand the standard of literacy in Burma is high?

A. The whole population goes to the lower primary school. They go up to the II standard and then give up.

Q. What of your literacy?

A. Literacy in Burma does not amount to very much. The children go to the primary school and learn to read and write for a year or two. The difficulty is to keep them to the end of the primary stage. It is an economic problem.

Q. Can they read the captions on the film?

A. I don't know. Rangoon people are good at it. But I suppose the vast majority of the people in Burma do not see films at all.

Q. Government propaganda films for public utility purposes such as sanitation, agriculture and general knowledge cannot, we find, be produced as a business proposition by private agency. For the purpose of producing such films do you think the Government might start a Government studio?

A. Yes. I agree.

Q. I presume from what you say that such films should be produced locally?

A. I think so.

Q. You will have to get expert assistance also?

A. I think so.

Q. Well now, supposing you decided to undertake this work of setting up a Government studio, I presume the existence of the studio would be of use to the local industry? Would it provide a suitable training ground?

A. Yes.

Q. You suggested just now that scholarships abroad would be a suitable method. Would it not be better if you got these men trained in the studio that Government will start? I think they will get the required personnel to train them?

A. Yes, given the required personnel, this would be an advantage.

Q. One other point. You suggested that the stories should be good.

A. Yes; the stories do good.

Q. Have you any suggestions to make?

A. I think pictures are definitely doing good. They help to remove the boredom of village life.

Q. So instead of doing harm they are doing good?

A. Harmless amusement is certainly beneficial.

Q. You desire more inspiration in the stories given on the screen. Is there any practical method of encouraging better stories?

A. Great many films give good morals and that is as it should be.

Q. The Board of censors might place some good films in Class A. It only means that Class A should be given preference.

A. A good idea.

Mr. Green: You were stating to the Chairman that for purely educational purposes you prefer permanent pictures to the moving pictures. Have you seen yourself the special cinematograph projector which can slow up at any point in the film?

A. No, but I have heard of it.

Q. Have you seen the new screen which enables you to exhibit films in a light room instead of a dark?

A. No; I have not.

Q. Do you spend very much in this province on visual instruction?

A. A certain amount is given every year for slides and every Government high school has a magic lantern and half the cost of these are given to aided schools under equipment grants.

Q. So a good deal of money must be spent?

A. Yes, in that line.

Q. I take you to censorship. In particular you hold that the peculiar needs of this province would justify the re-censoring of all pictures which have received certificates in India. I gather from your remarks to the Chairman that the cause is usually religious, political, or national. Do I gather from that that the general moral tone, apart from local considerations, is satisfactory?

A. Yes.

Q. Even when you get films certified in Bombay the general moral tone is suitable?

A. There must be certain exceptions of course. I want to justify re-censoring on the ground that the aesthetic standard evinced is not high enough. The Law allows you to show all that are foolish and vulgar.

Q. Do you think that any Board of censors would willingly shoulder the burden of deciding what might be considered vulgar?

A. It all depends on the men sitting in judgment. People who have no artistic temperament ought not to be members of the Cinema Board.

Q. I gather that from your experience you consider that the Bombay board is laxer than Calcutta?

A. Yes.

Q. The Church Missionary Society writing in May 1925 considered that Bombay Board of censors was the most satisfactory in India. "I think the best control was that in the Bombay Presidency. They have gone to great pains to establish a standard and they do not hesitate to turn down any films which they consider do not come up to their standard. They cut out ruthlessly any scenes or sentences which they feel would lower the standard."

A. I do not know how they were able to criticise the standard or what facilities they had for making this comparison. I am very surprised to hear this.

Q. Do you think it would be possible to have well paid censors at each port or particular place where there is much production, with an advisory board, something of the nature that we have at present, and also a Central board for the whole of India which should be an appellate authority and a co-ordinating authority?

A. Yes.

Q. It may be more expensive, but it would get round your difficulty?

A. I think it would.

Q. The corollary would follow that if a film were passed in Bengal and received an All-India certificate, it could be legitimately shown in Burma until such time as the Burma censors found anything wrong with it and won the support of the Central Board.

A. Yes.

Q. So you will agree that no board should interfere with the All-India certificate on purely moral grounds as distinct from religious or national grounds?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: Have you seen many films produced in Burma?

A. A few.

Q. In what respect do you think they stand in need of improvement?

A. Stories chiefly and I don't think the acting is good compared with the western films; the photography is quite good.

Q. You have enquired about the difficulties of the producers?

A. I think they need advice.

Q. It is not then so much a question of finance?

A. Well; I think it is.

Q. Do you think if they had the facilities of finance, that that would put things right?

A. It is all a question of giving them proper instruction and this needs money.

Q. That is to say you require expert assistance in Burma?

A. We want a man who is a capable scenario writer and who knows the ropes.

Q. Now, so far as the scenario writing is concerned a great deal depends upon departmental expert advice, e.g., if it were an educational topic, the educational expert would give the directions?

A. No, that was my difficulty. When I produced some of these films I wanted another man to tell me how my suggestions could be produced effectively.

Q. It is for the experts to say how their ideas have to be brought out. A scenario writer who does not know the subject cannot be helpful without expert instructions?

A. Yes, he will shape the materials.

Q. Now, with regard to the utility of films produced elsewhere than in Burma—for instance, with regard to the public health question, would a film produced in the Punjab be useful in Burma?

A. It would, undoubtedly.

Q. I ask this question because we had considerable evidence in other provinces to the effect that if there is a great divergence in the manners and customs of the people shown in the pictures then there might be some difficulty in the matter of concentration of attention on the lesson sought to be imparted.

A. Yes, I quite see the point, but a film such as Malaria shown in Bombay would be useful in Burma. I understand that the Health department is already using films produced in India.

Q. But perhaps such a risk might be exaggerated?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Now, you say that in censoring pictures, one ought to take into account the artistic qualities also?

A. Undoubtedly.

Q. And do the Board of Censors in Burma look into the artistic point of view at all?

A. I don't think so.

Q. As a member of the Board of Censors yourself, did you ever take into consideration the artistic merits of pictures at all?

A. Not particularly, but I used to point out some of the points therein, but then we were working under the law. We could not act according to our taste.

Q. Supposing that was an essential condition, how would you ensure the appointment of men having an artistic sense?

A. There are plenty of artistic people in Burma. They are well known.

Q. You are against Public bodies nominating individuals?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Don't you think that the public patronage would be the best judge of what art is?

A. That may be so in the long run, but where the standard is low I think it is more important that the censors should be carefully selected.

Mr. Green: Are you satisfied that ladies and gentlemen qualified on artistic grounds would always be equally qualified on moral grounds?

A. Certainly.

Mr. Neogy: Could you give us an idea of the cost of the films which you exhibited at the British Empire Exhibition, the length and the subjects dealt with? It would suffice if you could send us a statement later.

A. The details are all in London. I could tell you roughly. The average was roughly 2,000 feet. We had teak films (2,000 feet) cereals 2,000 feet. The Burma Oil Company showed a film about 2,000 feet and the Railways showed a film too. I could not tell you what the cost was but other witnesses could tell you what it was. The London Art Company did a lot of work for us. Mr. Samuel did work too.

Q. Why did you select that particular firm? (London Art Company.) Did you ask for tenders?

A. The Committee asked for tenders. We were naturally rather keen on a Burma Company doing the work for us.

Q. Quite so; and did you consider the terms on the whole satisfactory?

A. Certainly.

Q. Therefore, would it not be much better to make these films in Burma itself?

A. Yes, provided the Burman can be taught to produce first class work.

Q. Are not private producers in a better position to obtain trained actors than Government?

A. At present the companies are not efficient enough. I think Colonel Crawford's idea for naming them is a good one.

Q. You cannot get a better class of actors all at once?

A. No, we cannot.

Q. And so far as acting is concerned the professional people who are at present engaged in the production of these films are better than amateurs?

A. Undoubtedly.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You have said in reply to question 32 (reads).....What suggestions have you got to make with regard to that?

A. I have made some suggestions in my note.

Q. How many members are there now on the Board of Censors in Burma?

A. I don't know.

Q. Don't you think that representatives of public bodies should be on the Board, say, one member each for health, education, etc.?

A. I don't see why public bodies should be represented on the Film Board of Censors.

Q. Supposing you are asked to form the Board, I want to know how you will do it yourself?

A. I would take men of outstanding ability, men or women, gentlemen who have produced good literature, pictures, etc., works which would show that they have an artistic sense. Such people are much more useful than people who represent Municipal Boards or the Y. M. C. A., etc.

Q. Your Director of Public Instruction recommended that half of them should be ladies?

A. I don't think the question of sex comes in at all. It is ability regardless of sex which counts.

Q. You don't want this Board to be under the permanent Chairmanship of Policemen?

A. I don't think it should be in the hands of the police at all.

Q. Then whom do you think should be the Chairman of the Board?

A. I cannot say. I should think that it should not be permanently under a policeman. It is a pity that it is so now.

Q. What remuneration do the members of the Board draw now?

A. I should say they are very much underpaid at present and if you want to get good men to do the work you will have to pay well.

Q. I suppose you know the National Council of Women of Burma have recommended Rs. 10?

A. I do not agree at all with that suggestion. I think it is an exacting job which ought to be done carefully and well. The more you pay the better class of men you get.

Q. Don't you think people will come forward to do the work without any remuneration?

A. You won't get the best people. It is not an easy job at all. It is very wearisome work.

Q. Do you know anything about the Social Hygiene Delegation which recently visited India and Burma?

A. Yes, I arranged some lectures for Mrs. Neville Rolfe.

Q. Did you give any information to them to prepare their report?

A. Mrs. Rolfe and myself had a talk on social hygiene matters.

Q. Do you agree with her suggestions?

A. I agree with her in some matters.

Q. In paragraph 1 of her report she has referred to "the evil influence which the cinema has wrought in the provinces", etc. What have you to say to that?

A. I don't agree with that statement at all. I would say it is very much exaggerated.

Q. So, what she has said about Cinemas is a foolish thing?

A. I won't say it is foolish, but I think she has made an exaggerated statement.

Q. What about the moral trouble which she refers to?

A. The moral trouble in Burma was with us long before films came into existence.

Chairman: She had no talk with you about cinemas at all?

A. She had a talk with me about the advertisements, that is all.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you agree with what she has said in paragraph 10 "about the present laxity of censorship in India"?

A. No, I don't agree with her there either.

Q. You have said something about monopoly. Can you explain how a system of monopoly is bad?

A. I would say any monopoly is bad. Madans are extremely able people and they are showing some extremely good films. I should think it is a very bad thing to have all the Houses under one man. I should like to see some Burman coming forward as a healthy rival to Madans.

Q. You say that because pictures are mostly American, they are not popular with the Europeans. Why do you say so?

A. Because they are getting tired of American pictures. On occasions when good English films are shown Houses are well packed.

Q. So you say it is to the advantage of the exhibitors if good English films are screened?

A. Undoubtedly, it is to their advantage.

Q. Have you seen British films here?

A. Yes.

Q. Have not they got the same bad flavour as American films?

A. No, I don't think so, but of course, there are rare exceptions.

Q. Do you get British films in large numbers?

A. I could not tell you. We get a certain number.

Q. Is there any agency for British films?

A. Of course, Madans are getting British films also.

Written Statement of Mr. F. G. FRENCH, Headmaster of the Government High School, Rangoon.

PRELIMINARY NOTE.

The only aspects of the problem upon which I can give useful information are those relating to Burman schoolboys and young undergraduates, and I have interested myself more particularly in Burmese films locally produced and the attitude of young Burmans towards them.

1. I have no connection with the Industry.

2. (a) Burmans acquainted with English patronise both Western and Burman films; Burmans unacquainted with English attend both but favour the Burmese film.

(b) The audience at a Burmese film show (in Rangoon) is composed very largely of the petty trader and small broker class, and the proportion of women is remarkably large; Burman women do not, as a rule, frequent Western films—I have been unable to obtain a complete explanation of this.

but I suspect that it is largely due to the fact that the Western film very generally offends against the Burmese code of good manners between the sexes. It may, however, be due to the fact that the proportion of Burman women acquainted with English is small. Peasants and cultivators visiting Rangoon visit Burmese films in preference to Western films.

Older schoolboys and undergraduates and young Burmans of that type visit Western films more frequently than Burmese films, very largely because Burmese films generally portray only one or two types of story . . . schoolboys criticise Burmese films as being "unoriginal."

The ordinary Burman schoolboy between the ages of 15 and 20 goes to the cinema four or five times in the month, of which not more than one visit is nowadays to a Burmese film.

3. Films of exciting adventure are most popular with Burman schoolboys; they do not care for American "sob-stuff." The setting of the play—Eastern or Western, ancient or modern—is immaterial, so long as there is plenty of action.

6. (a) At present Burmese films depicting stories from the national literature and mythology are rather less popular with young Burmans than formerly, and than Western films. The decline in popularity is due largely to the poverty of ideas of Burman producers, and partly to the fact that the young Burman is honestly attracted by what he calls "general knowledge" and a Western film depicting ancient or modern history, or the story of a well-known classic, will draw a schoolboy audience. Action is, however, essential; purely educational films he will not pay to see. If he has a choice between a film like, say, "Ben Hur" and "Paris By Night" he will go to "Ben Hur."

(b) To increase the popularity of Burmese films the producers must—

- (1) find good scenario writers,
- (2) improve the technique of their actors,
- (3) establish cinema acting as a profession.

I understand that at present the method of producing a Burmese film is to collect a number of people, none of them trained and many of whom have never acted before the camera before, and after the shortest period of practice photograph the play. There are one or two actors and actresses, who have made a popular name (Mg Ba Tint, Mg Ba Gale, and Kin Kin Nu are examples) but most of the actors are really amateurs. The most popular films have been Burmese adaptations of Western films or Western stories, and they have been very cleverly done.

Good Burman films would attract every section of the Burman population, for all Burmans can read "titles" written in Burmese.

14. Special educational films produced in Burma would serve a most useful purpose, most of all if the projector and illuminant were of a type that permitted the films to tour the villages; but such films would not be a paying proposition, and would have to be financed, produced and exhibited under arrangements made by the Government Departments concerned. Western films are (in my opinion) useless for this purpose, so also would be such films produced in India.

16. The Burmese films now produced are remarkable for the excellence of their photography and the use made of the camera to achieve "supernatural" effects which form an important part of the story. The acting is good, considering that it is all done by untrained actors without competent direction. The Burman is a natural actor and one entirely without self-consciousness on the stage, and properly directed would make a first class film player.

Burmese films suffer from the lack of good scenarios and competent direction and "cutting". I do not think that there is any lack of technical knowledge, enterprise or resource on the part of the producers.

18. I regard the locally produced Burmese film as a factor of the very first importance—one full of the most valuable possibilities, and fraught

with the gravest dangers. At present films produced by Burman companies portray faithfully the traditional moral code of the people. I have never seen anything in any way objectionable in any Burmese film, nor have I personally noticed any tendency towards a weakening of the standard set by the Burmese Code with regard to dress, incident or gesture. But Burman friends have told me that such a weakening is beginning to show . . . their standard in such a matter would be much higher than that of a European.

The national "Anyein pwe" is often coarse and vulgar to the Western taste, but the coarseness and vulgarity consist almost entirely of verbal punning—coarse gestures are rare. On the Burmese film coarse gestures are never seen, and of course the pun is impossible.

I feel strongly that this satisfactory state of affairs is threatened and may not last much longer. Educated and thoughtful Burmans who have the welfare of their people at heart have told me that the real danger with regard to the Burmese film industry is that the scarcity of good scenario writers and the competition of Western films full of exciting incident will lead the Burman producer to introduce into his films dresses (or the lack of them), incidents and gestures copied from the more objectionable Western films. If this happens Burmans will disapprove, but public opinion will not be articulate nor would such films be boycotted, and the standard will rapidly deteriorate. A parallel case on a much smaller scale can be cited: Burmese tradition and custom demanded that the jackets worn by Burman women should be of opaque material, right down to the wrist. Under the influence of Western example jackets of very thin material are now being worn, so that the forearm is easily visible through the sleeve. Burmese conservatives object in private, but the fashion has come to stay. In the same way, public opinion will not be able to prevent immodesty (according to Burman ideas outrageous immodesty) on the films if it once makes its appearance. All Burmans to whom I have spoken have suggested a special Burman Censorship to prevent this occurring. They have noted points which would escape a European observer—touching and handling in courtship scenes are against Burmese tradition, but they are becoming more and more common in and are regarded by educated Burmans as disgusting innovations indicative of a very real danger. Purely European censorship is, from the Burman point of view, useless in this matter.

25. The differences in social customs between the West and Burma do necessitate special consideration. The code governing social relations between the sexes is very strict in this country. An absurd case is necessary to make the point clear—there would be nothing but foolishness in exhibiting in America a film portraying the conjugal relations of camels; it would be a spectacle interesting to the morbidly curious. Many incidents depicted in Western films are similarly portrayals of incidents merely morbidly curious to the Burman mind. There is no point in pretending that Western manners are other than they are; there is no point at all in depicting such of them as are breaches of the moral code of this country. Every thinking man, European or Burman, will object to having foisted on the Burman public films produced to curry the favour of a low-class American public, for while the best American films are welcome those produced to make an appeal in the slums of Chicago are not wanted here either by Britishers or Burmans.

26. I know of only one film which offended Buddhist susceptibilities. It was entitled (I think) "The Life of Buddha"—that at least was its subject. Buddhists were very deeply offended. It was produced by an Indian company. If it comes here again the exhibitors will find trouble.

28. (a), (b) Films produced obviously with the intention of appealing to the sex instinct and depicting Western women practically nude have a bad effect on schoolboys. In this country adolescence is a more trying period even than in Europe and all the arguments which a British headmaster would use against such films apply with greatly increased force here. It does an adolescent boy no harm—it does him good—to see a film full of

pistols, swords and bloodshed; it does him a lot of harm to watch the antics of slave girls and concubines.

29-30. No. It is advertisement camouflaged.

38. Yes, see my answer to Question 26 "The Life of Buddha".

44. The Press—especially the vernacular press—could help a great deal towards maintaining a high standard of Burmese film, through enlightened and helpful criticism, by indicating faults of construction, technique and acting, and by suggesting means of improvement.

NOTE.—I have collected a large number of Burmese advertisements of purely Burmese films, and have translated in brief their contents. They are at the disposal of the Committee.

Oral Evidence of Mr. F. G. FRENCH, Headmaster of the Government High School, Rangoon, on Tuesday, the 17th January 1928.

Chairman: You say in your statement you have collected a large number of advertisements of Burman films?

A. Yes.

Q. What was your object?

A. For your information, Sir.

Q. Do they show anything particular?

A. They prove my point that Burman films are superior to the American and the European films in some respects, the chief factor being morality and cleanliness. That is due to the fact that the Burman's tradition of public relationship between the sexes is much higher than the European.

Q. You mean the captions convey good lesson?

A. Yes, they do that also. But I find now that they are tending to copy the superlative advertisements of the American type, the mass wonder film. There is, however, nothing in the Burman Film which could be objected to.

Q. You think there are many posters in the American and the European films to which exception could be taken?

A. Yes, certainly. As Headmaster of a large Government High School, to me it was a perfect nuisance, until recently. Until about 12 months ago advertisements of the most objectionable type were seen posted up on school walls and other places. This has altered now, the reason for the improvement I cannot explain.

Q. Do you mean to say that better posters have replaced those objectionable ones?

A. There are fewer posters, but the American posters seen posted outside the cinemas have not improved. The managements have left off sending handbills to schools. During the last 12 months I have not received more than three handbills. I have just brought a list of Burman Films here for you to have an idea of what they are about. (Witness handed over a list to the Chairman and the members of the Committee.)

Q. And the posters that you see outside the cinemas still remain objectionable you say?

A. They are offensive to the Burman taste, e.g., according to the Burman tradition, embracing even between man and man in public is not allowed and much more so in the case of man and woman. Embracing even between father and daughter in public is not allowed. Therefore, kissing is not to the taste of the Burmans. You will have noticed in my written note that I have pointed out that this constitutes the chief danger that lies before the Burman Film Industry.

Q. I see, you have said that it is more of a coming danger than an existing danger?

A. Yes, it is so.

Q. You have said in your statement that Burmese women never go to the Cinema?

A. They rarely go to the European Cinema. Burmese women largely attend cinemas where Burmese Films are shown.

Q. They very often see European women in these pictures?

A. Some of the wealthier classes of Burmese women attend the English Cinemas.

Q. Don't you think that Burmese women are now getting more occidentalised people by gradually coming in contact with the West, just as men are now trying to wear European costume?

A. There is of course some truth in that statement.

Q. Don't you think that women as a class in India and Burma require emancipation?

A. In Burma, certainly not; Burmese women are as free as English women.

Q. In knowledge, outlook and life, don't you think they should come in contact with other lives of the world?

A. Yes, with the better side of the world.

Q. You cannot come in contact unless you mix with better life?

A. That is true.

Q. Do you think that the Cinema trade is likely to suffer if we interfere in production or distribution? Do you advise us to do anything in this direction?

A. I think Burmese Films are practically doomed if something is not done to protect them.

Chairman: But the Burmese films are good indeed.

A. Yes, very good indeed.

Q. For that do you think it is necessary to constitute a Burmese Board of Censorship?

A. I do think that it is necessary, for the Burmans, are the best judges to pass opinions on their own films.

Q. You don't approve of a pure European Board?

A. Certainly not. A much larger number should be Burmans. Say, if it is a Board consisting of 10 members to deal with the Burmese films, not more than two should be European. The Burmans themselves are the best judges to say what they require.

Q. Are Burman films becoming very popular both with the educated and the non-educated?

A. With the educated Burmans, as a class, they are losing popularity and losing popularity rapidly.

Q. It is a pity!

A. Oh, yes, a great pity.

Q. You think that something should be done for this.

A. Yes. I do. I feel strongly on this point.

Q. You think that if something is done it will do good.

A. Yes, it will do immense good.

Q. What do you suggest should be done? What do you think that Government can do to help the industry in that direction?

A. If one examines carefully the difficulties confronting the producer of Burmese films, and the reasons why those films are losing popularity it is found that the two are identical.

Firstly, in Burmese historical films it is not possible to use period costumes. There is but the one type of conventional palace dress and the

"uniform" of nats and spirits. But in European Films the producer has a wide variety of historical "period" costumes to choose from.

Secondly, the Burman producer is at present unable to tackle with confidence a foreign setting. When he tries to do it he makes glaring errors, and these errors drive away from his show the educated Burman who knows better.

Thirdly, capital is limited so the Burman producer is unable to afford large sets and numerous actors.

The effects of these difficulties are obvious in the Burmese Films now being produced. In historical and legendary films the producers are attempting to get variety by tampering with the conventional palace dress and adding frills which are anarchisms. This disgusts the educated Burman. Again the producers have exhibited "modern" films with impossible costumes—cowboy hats with lace fringes, velvet brimmings in imitation of sheepskin "chaps," etc. You will find many examples in the advertisements I have collected.

These films may please the uneducated classes but they make no appeal to the educated classes. Thus the educated Burman is declining to patronise his own films.

How to help the industry is an extremely difficult problem. I think that possibly one way of doing it would be to offer a large prize every year for the best scenario. Say, Rs. 2,000 annually or Rs. 1,000 every six months should be offered for the best scenario written in Burmese, Rs. 5,000 or Rs. 7,500 or even a larger sum for the best Burmese film of the year. That would, I think, help to a great extent. That is what is really needed. We have got excellent actors here and with the minimum training I think they will act very well, and will be just as good as English and American Actors.

Chairman: You think that the Government should render such help? And you also think that this sort of encouragement would help the trade considerably?

A. Yes, certainly, I think so.

Q. And you think that the trade will then stand on its own legs?

A. Yes, I should think so. Because I am certain the American and the European Films depend very largely for their success upon the educated Burmans and the educated Indians rather than on Europeans.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you advocate any advisory committee to advise Government on this matter? An advisory committee just to encourage the film industry.

A. It is very difficult indeed in a province like this to find the personnel for such an advisory committee.

Q. Why shall we not arrange for it?

A. It is really very difficult.

Q. Government may nominate their own men, say, from the Education Department, Police Department, etc.

A. But it is not likely that in any Government Department men qualified to give practical advice will be found.

Chairman: I was told somewhere that the Burmans imitated American Films.

A. They do not imitate the undesirable portions; they imitate the adventure and sometimes they imitate (badly) the costumes.

Q. Yesterday when I saw that film, I thought that.

A. Oh! sometimes they imitate the whole story, putting it into a Burmese setting.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: So you say that they are not original ones.

A. Sometimes they imitate the whole thing.

Mr. Neogy: In continuation of Sir Haroon's questions, do you think that such plays are appreciated?

258

A. Yes, they are.

Q. In that case that would be a mixed variety?

A. Yes. That is one of the difficulties. The producers also are people with very small capital, and cannot imitate foreign setting successfully.

Q. What suggestions have you to make to get rid of that difficulty.

A. I am not a businessman.

Q. Do you expect Government to render assistance in any direct manner?

A. If it would be possible to give direct assistance, such assistance would certainly be of very great value. Whether it would be possible or not, I cannot advise. Moreover, one difficulty is in the mode of producing a Burman film. It is not a big company which establishes itself and then produces films. But a few Burmans come and join together, they get a certain set of actors, they rent a hall, run the film, get what profit they can out of it and then disband. This is what they often do. The result is there are very many small companies each with a capital of 10 or 15 thousand rupees. Whether it would not be a better thing to have even one or two companies with a capital of 2 or 3 lakhs of rupees is of course a matter for consideration. I think that would help the industry very much.

Q. Suppose Government appoints a committee to advise the industry in regard to films regarding public health, agriculture, education and so on. Do you think this will succeed?

A. Yes. Of course, with the help of the departments concerned.

Q. Suppose the Government were to adopt that policy, they could also get the different small producers to combine as a condition of getting Government work. And in that way could not these concerns be amalgamated?

A. Yes, I should think it would be a good thing.

Q. Government will not also be involved in any great expenditure of money?

A. No.

Q. And supposing the rates of a Government studio, as compared with the rates of these small individual private concerns for the production of films were a little bit higher, would you still be prepared to aid the private concerns?

A. Yes, support should be given to an indigenous attempt to found a new industry.

Q. Even if the rates were a bit higher?

A. Yes, certainly. Because, considered from a broad point of view it would be of the greatest value. It is merely means to an important end.

Q. Are you of opinion that Government should send Burmans abroad to have training in these directions so that people who are already engaged in the trade might be assisted?

A. Certainly. But always provided that the place to which they were sent was carefully selected.

Mr. Neogy: Yes, of course.

Mr. Green: There is only one point. You said that you would advocate the policy of sending Burmese for training abroad.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you agree that if Government had good men here to teach the Burmese and give instructions in acting, setting, etc., that would be a better way of dealing with the matter?

A. No. I don't think so.

Q. Mr. Symns held that if experts in producing proper films and expert advisers were brought in here, he thought that would be the better way of instructing the producers in this country than sending them abroad?

A. It would be extremely difficult to find a technical adviser abroad who would be competent to come out here, I think, and advise Burmese pro-

ducers on the spot. First of all he would be quite new to the Burmans' tradition and their history as also their language. And it is more difficult, I know from my own personal experience, to get into close personal touch with Burmans and to understand their religious and other views than is the case with the Punjabis and with the Northern Indians.

Q. Surely about management of crowds and stage managements, etc., generally of the like, they can be taught. The last witness when I referred to him said that he had attempted to manufacture films for British Empire Exhibition and found it difficult without expert aid.

A. It would be. But I find that even Burman schoolboys are very imitative and I consider it would be more difficult to train even an English boy to play well than a Burman.

Q. You told us about a few gentlemen getting together, putting up a small capital, producing their film, getting what they can out of it and then dispersing?

A. It is not always so. There are recognised firms also.

Q. That is all right, but have you any idea whether they make a profit before they dispersed?

A. No idea.

Q. You don't know altogether how much their films cost them?

A. I do not exactly know. But I am told that Rs. 9,000 or Rs. 10,000 would be sufficient for each picture. Probably they do make profit also.

Q. Profit will be got entirely from Burma?

A. I should think so, Sir.

Q. Probably in Rangoon itself or Mandalay also or in other parts?

A. I don't think so, Sir, because there are up and down the country a number of Burman Cinema Halls.

Q. I don't think there are more than 50 in total?

A. Probably no.

Q. Is one particular film in every cinema run only once?

A. Even 3 or 4 times. For example the play that I saw last night. Two years ago it was played and it is still drawing a great crowd.

Q. The market is very limited?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. Would it be practical, do you consider to improve your standard or even maintain your standard with such small market? You told us that the Burmans are getting tired of the ordinary Burmese dress on their films?

A. If you would improve the value of the films you would be increasing the market also. A large number of Burmans who now go to European and American Films would then go to the Burmese cinemas. For example, my own boys go only once to the Burmese films for every five times they go to the cinema. If the Burmese films are improved and are more modern I am sure they will go only once to the European films and four times to the Burmese Films.

Q. Do you mean that they should be improved in construction?

A. Yes.

Q. They must also be true to Burman life?

A. Yes. They want original scenarios, scenario taken from legends partly, partly from European stories, novels, etc. Indigenous Burman stories suitable for film work are very few in number. They are using those in the Burmese films but the men who do the adaptation are not really well-qualified nor are they necessarily the best available. Men more capable of doing the work could be produced.

Q. My difficulty is still not cleared. If they are tired of Burmese dress and setting and other things how are you to over-come it?

A. They can be changed to suit the modern taste and they should be changed. At present it is done with many mistakes if it is done at all.

Q. You mean to say that the humdrum aspect, the modern ways, should be introduced and that the present thing should be stopped?

A. Do not stop the Burmese historical film, but help the Burman producer to put on modern Burmese settings. I admit that to give such a film costs more money.

Q. Do you expect to get a return for this amount spent in getting these films?

A. Yes, I think so. Because the Burmans who now go to see the modern European and American film will in its place go to modern Burman films.

Q. Don't you consider the expense too much to get back?

A. The Burman is very nationally minded and that is a very big thing to be considered. If there is any improvement at all, even some improvement will have a great effect because of the national mindedness of the people.

Q. We have the same difficulty in India.

A. I suppose so, Sir.

Q. But even the Indian Market is not large and they spend 15 to 20 thousand rupees on a picture.

Colonel Crawford: Carrying on what Mr. Green has said of marketing your productions, there is no Burman fiction?

A. Very little indeed. They have a few, about 4 or 5, writers of modern stories, but generally they merely take European stories and Burmanise them.

Q. Is it all right?

A. Quite all right. It is very much appreciated.

Q. So for that I presume you want co-operation between an European and a Burman.

A. Not quite so. If you can, get a Burman who can read English well and also an Englishman, but the Burman only is the best man to do it. We can see they have done it. They have adapted King Lear, Merchant of Venice, Much Ado about Nothing, Mark of Zoro, the two Gentlemen of Verona, and another. These 6 came to my mind the other night, and I have got them here. So the Burman producers employ the western stories and Burmanise them. He copies the aspects of the Western films which, in his opinion, will appeal much to the Burman and those aspects are adventure, etc.

Q. That is the point that I wanted to get out. And also in certain scenes which are making an appeal to sex?

A. No. But that is the greatest danger as I see it. His tradition will not allow him to bring in the sex appeal, but he very much wants to do it. For example, in the film Padomna Dewi where the young prince has the princess in his arms. It is unbelievably immodest to a Burman.

Q. The same in India also. You think it is necessary to stop that thing?

A. It is possible and necessary to stop it, but merely stopping it will not solve the problem. You must also help the Burman. If you merely set up censorship that would be killing the Burman films and that would be unfair. With the censorship you must also help them.

Q. What do you think about the Western Films? Do you consider them harmful?

A. Yes. The point is that although adolescence does not begin here in the East earlier than it does in the west, a Burman boy is sexually more alert than a European boy (it may be due to climate or some such factor) and therefore he is more prone to give way to temptations which a straight English boy would be able to bear up against. Teachers in boarding schools and residential schools in England know that even with the well-bred English boy who comes from a clean living home, in the matter of adolescence

and in the matter of temptation he has got a very difficult and dangerous task to deal with. In Burma it is still more so. It is 10 times more disturbing to a Burman boy. And the temptation for immorality is much larger in the case of a Burman boy than it is in the case of Western or English boys.

Q. What do you suggest with regard to censorship?

A. In my opinion the canons of censorship as laid down are very satisfactory, but one has always to bear in mind that things which are common to Europeans are often outrageously immodest to the Burman and therefore very provocative to the Burman school-boy. This great difference in custom should be remembered.

Q. Do you think he differs from the Indian in this respect?

A. No, I don't think he would differ very much; probably not. Anyhow I cannot here to speak for India. I should not like to say anything on that point.

Q. Are you keen on visual instruction?

A. It is a question that I have thought over very carefully indeed. It all depends on the films; for example, certain films which teach nature study, science, etc., are much better than slides and these subjects could be taught through the film. In geography teaching by slides is better than teaching by films, because the film does not give an opportunity for detailed study. For example, if I had to give illustrated lessons to classes of school-boys, say, on the Geography of Australia, I would rather have sixty lantern slides or better still sixty "still" films than have a cinema travelogue of Australia. For the film is a continuous thing and goes on for a considerable period of time and it gives no opportunity for the teacher to explain the pictures, as in the case of the lantern slides; but with reference to nature study, say, growth of plants or the life of small animals, I think the film is much better than lantern slide.

Q. So for mass education and agricultural, education and health purposes you would use the film; but you say your finances are limited. And if the finances are available, you would certainly advocate the spending of a portion on film instruction?

A. For purely educational purposes, no.

Q. Not for school room purposes?

A. For school room purposes, no, for public health purposes, yes.

Oral Evidence of U. BA THIN, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Rangoon, on Tuesday, the 17th January 1928.

Colonel Crawford: You belong to the Police Department?

A. Yes.

Q. You have retired from service?

A. No, I have not retired, I am still in service. I am a Deputy Commissioner of Police.

Q. Are you satisfied with the standard of Burmese films shown?

A. They are not very good.

Q. You want to see them improved?

A. Yes.

Q. How can you improve them?

A. I think with the help of the Government, the Burman films may be improved.

Q. Do you think the western films are harmful in any way?

